

**AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES REPORT  
SHADY OAK  
SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

MND  
REZONE  
TENTATIVE MAP

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## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS**

CDC	California Department of Conservation
CWA	County Water Authority
FMMP	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
LARA	Local Area Resources Assessment
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey

## SUMMARY

The project is a Tentative Map to subdivide 5.2 acres into 47 detached residential lots. The site is subject to the General Plan Regional Category Village, Land Use Designation Village Core Mixed Use, and Zoning S90 (Holding Area). The project requires a Rezone to allow the lot size and setbacks proposed. Access is proposed via Street A, which will be a public road connecting Mirar de Valle Road to old Mirar De Valle Road. Sewer and water would be provided by Valley Center Municipal Water District.

The project site is located at 27522 Valley Center Road in the Valley Center Community Plan area, within unincorporated San Diego County, immediately south of Mirar de Valle Road and west of Valley Center Road. As shown on the Valley Center 7.5 U.S. Geographical Survey quadrangle, the project site is situated within Township 11 South Range 2 East; in the northeast quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 24 at an approximate elevation of 1301 feet above mean sea level (AMSL). A single-family residential structure previously existed on-site; however, all structures have since been removed.

As discussed below, as early as circa 1928 a residence was constructed and occupied within the southern portion of the project site. The property has been owned by a variety of persons over the years since 1912; however, based on a review of historical aerial photos, it appears that agricultural use on the project site was discontinued sometime between 1964 and 1967. Since that time, the site has been periodically mowed/disked for weed control and a portion has been used for a rural residence which has been recently demolished.

Based on a review of historic aerial photographs, by 1967, the prior agricultural uses were replaced with a single-family residence occupying a portion of the site and the remainder being periodically mowed. The biology report for the project states that the majority of the site is mapped as non-native grassland and disturbed. The site has not been used for any significant commercial agricultural use within the last 50 years; therefore, as defined by the County of San Diego's Guidelines for Determining Significance – Agricultural Resources, the project site does not meet any of the three criteria to be considered an agricultural resource. Due to the lack of agricultural resources on the project site (as detailed in Section 2.2.1), a Local Area Resources Assessment model was not completed for the site. Since no resources are present, the project would have no direct impacts to agricultural resources and no mitigation would be required.

This report discusses the fact that the area surrounding the project site is similarly designated for Village Mixed Use and that there is a lack of any intensive agricultural operations within one mile of the project site. Therefore, the project would not cause land use compatibility/agricultural interface impacts, nor would it expose a sensitive population or a concentration of people (e.g., school, church, or daycare) to potential adjacency impacts. Further, there are no Williamson Act contracts or agricultural preserves within the project site or within the proximity of the site. Therefore, no significant indirect impacts would result from implementation of the project.

Lastly, since the project is not an important agricultural resource, and there would be no conversion of Important Farmlands or Williamson Act contract lands, there would be less than significant cumulative impacts associated with these resources. In addition, the lack of active agricultural operations existing in the area would avoid the potential for agricultural interface impacts that contribute to a cumulative impact. For these reasons, cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Purpose of the Report**

This technical report serves to evaluate potentially adverse impacts that the Shady Oak project may have on agricultural resources. This document utilizes the County of San Diego Guidelines for Determining Significance – Agricultural Resources to evaluate these potential impacts on agriculture. Specifically, the primary purpose of this analysis is the following:

- To determine the importance of on-site agricultural resources and assess the potential impacts to those resources.
- To determine potential impacts to surrounding active off-site agricultural operations and/or lands under a Williamson Act contract.
- To address potential indirect effects on surrounding active off-site agricultural operations resulting from implementation of the project.
- To address consistency with General Plan policies pertaining to agriculture.
- To determine the significance of cumulative impacts to agricultural resources.
- To identify project design elements and/or mitigation measures that would minimize significant adverse effects.

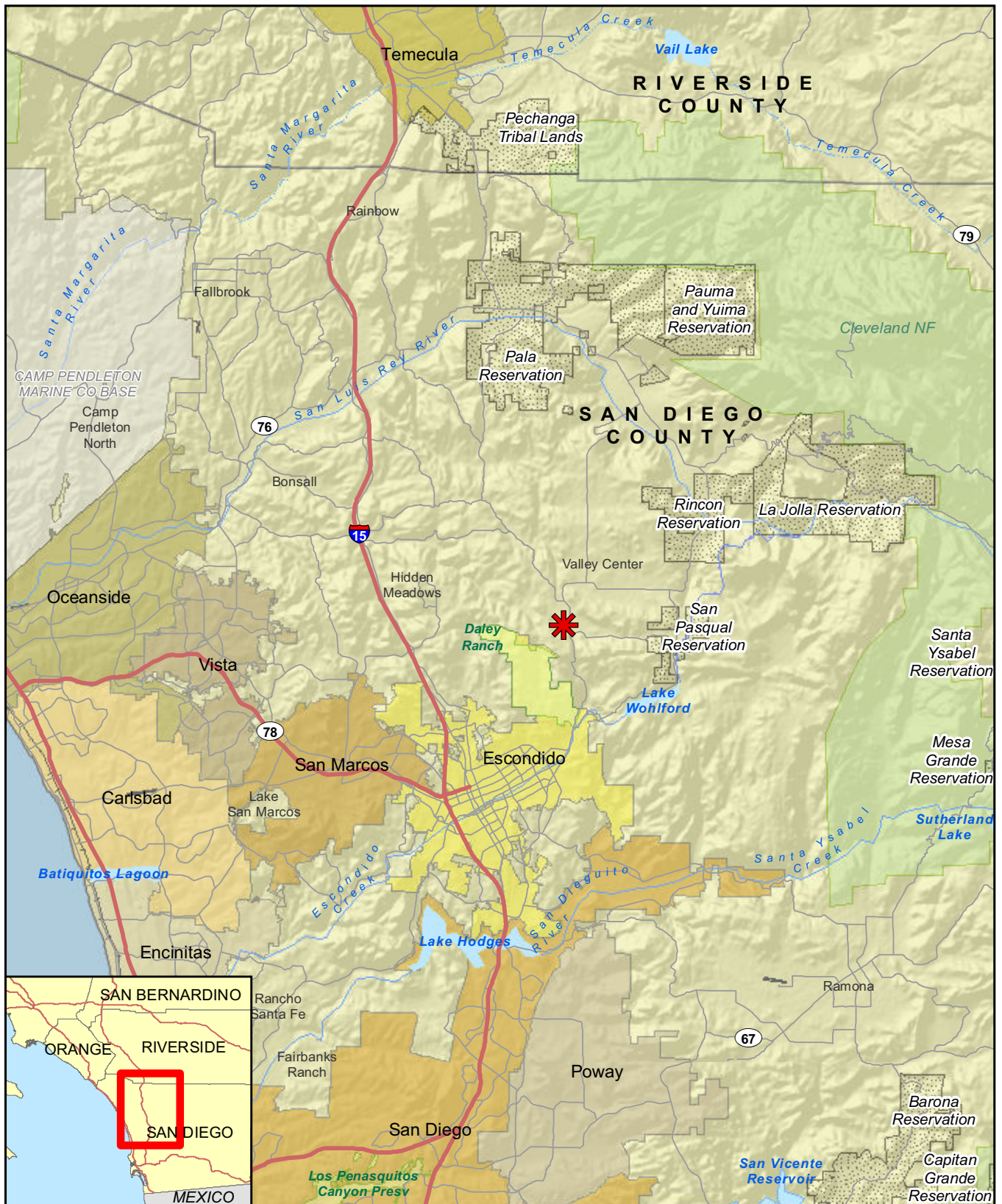
### **1.2 Project Location and Description**

#### **1.2.1 Project Description**

The project is a Tentative Map to subdivide 5.2 acres into 47 detached residential lots. The site is subject to the General Plan Regional Category Village, Land Use Designation Village Core Mixed Use, and Zoning S90 (Holding Area). The project requires a Rezone from S90 to RR to allow the lot size and setbacks proposed. Access is proposed via a public road connecting Mirar de Valle Road to old Mirar de Valle Road. Sewer and water would be provided by Valley Center Municipal Water District.

#### **1.2.2 Project Location**

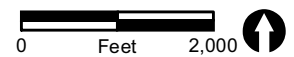
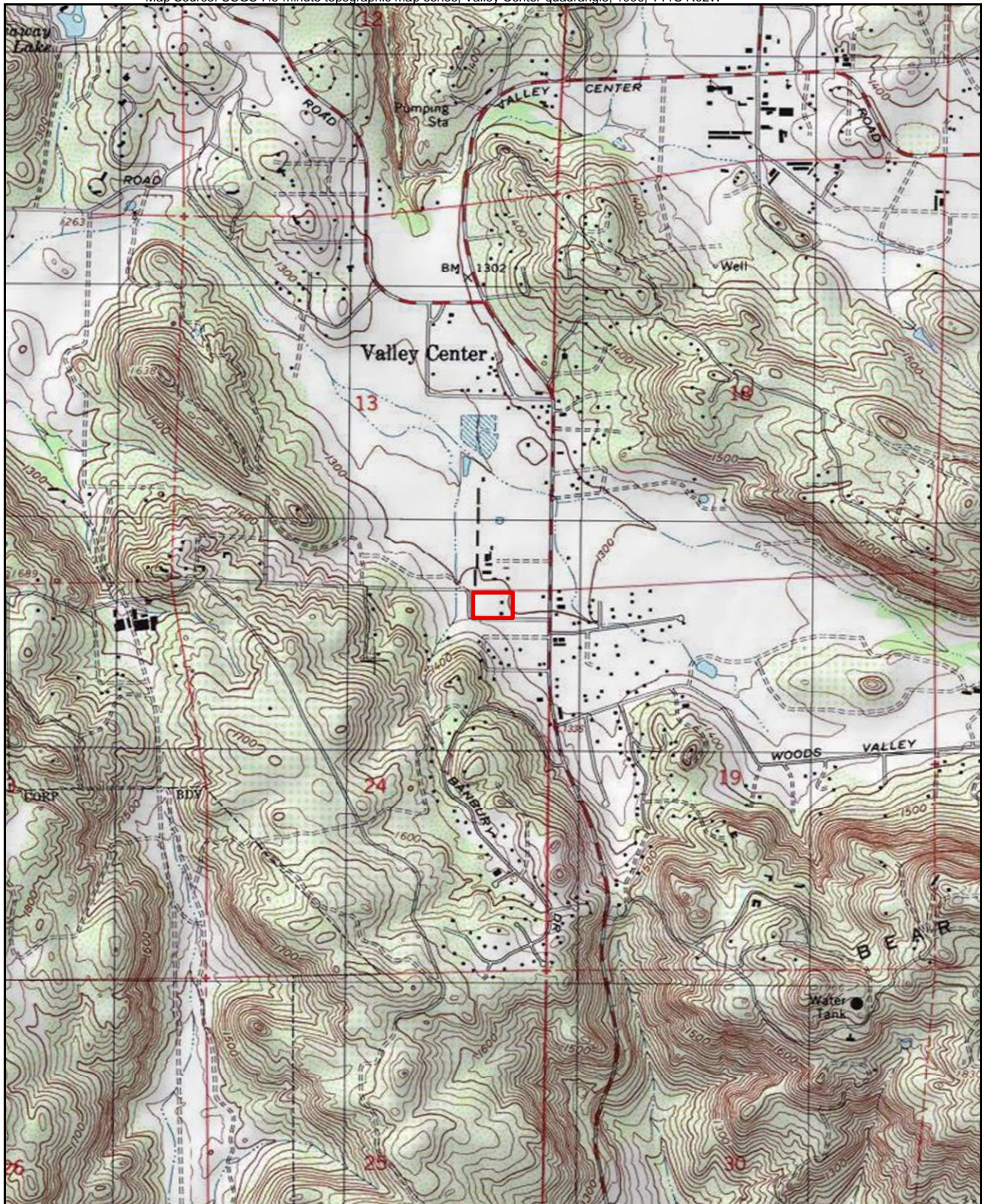
The project is located at 27522 Valley Center Road in the Valley Center Community Plan area, within unincorporated San Diego County immediately south of Mirar de Valle Road and west of Valley Center Road (Figures 1 and 2). As shown on the Valley Center 7.5 U.S. Geographical Survey (USGS) quadrangle, the parcel is situated within Township 11 South Range 2 East; in the northeast quarter of the northeast quarter of section 24 at an approximate elevation of 580 feet above mean sea level (AMSL; Figure 3). A single-family residential structure previously existed on-site; however, all structures have since been removed.



 Project Location

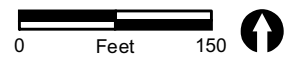
FIGURE 1  
Regional Location





 Project Boundary





 Project Boundary

### **1.3 Analysis Methods**

The methodology in this analysis includes the following steps:

- Review or use of the following informational sources or documents: (1) California Department of Conservation (CDC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) data bases; (2) Williamson Act contract records; (3) soil data bases; (4) Phase I or II Environmental Site Assessment reports; (5) topographic quadrangle maps; (6) cultural resources reports; (7) aerial photographs; (8) biology report; and (9) San Diego County General Plan, Community Plan, and Zoning Ordinance documents.
- Indicate the percentage (or acreage) of significant agricultural structures or infrastructure, farmland, agricultural preserves, Williamson Act contract lands, and Important Farmland Map Categories to be converted to a non-agricultural use by the proposed development.
- Evaluate Williamson Act contract, agricultural preserve, or agricultural zoning consistency or conflicts.
- Evaluate indirect impacts on- and off-site, as a result of project implementation, and determine whether agricultural conversion will occur indirectly.
- Discuss potential land use conflicts, between ongoing agriculture as it is phased-out, and new development is phased-in.

The cumulative impact analysis for agriculture defines the geographic scope of the cumulative impact study area and includes a discussion of the reasoning and justification for the chosen boundaries of the cumulative impact study area. This report analyzes the significance of any agricultural conversion on a cumulative level, pursuant to the County of San Diego's Guidelines for Determining Significance – Agricultural Resources (see Section 5.1).

Finally, the report makes a clear statement indicating: whether the project will result in a significant adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative impact on agricultural resources; whether the potential impacts can be mitigated to a level below significance; recommends mitigation if needed; and includes a brief summary conclusion.

### **1.4 Environmental Setting**

#### **1.4.1 Regional Context**

The project site is located approximately 11 miles south of the San Diego/Riverside County line, within the unincorporated area of northern San Diego County, within the Valley Center Community Plan area. The project site is located within close proximity to the commercial corridor along Valley Center Road, within the village of Valley Center. The Interstate 15 corridor is approximately 5.5 miles to the west. Escondido and San Marcos are to the south and southwest; Vista is to the west, Fallbrook lies to the northwest, and Palomar Mountain is to the northeast. To the east is the village of Valley Center, including the Woods Valley golf course and residential development.

The topography on-site is mostly flat (with a few mounds and depressions), with a gradual slope running northeast to southwest from 1301 feet AMSL in the northeastern corner up to 1318 feet AMSL in the southwestern corner.

### **1.4.2 On-site Agricultural Resources**

As stated in Attachment D of the Pre-App County Summary Letter, and based upon a review of historic aerial photos, the site does not appear to have any prior or existing agricultural operations. However, the project site is located in the Valley Center Community Plan area, which has the goal to preserve and enhance existing and future agricultural uses. The project site is zoned S90 (Holding Area) and subject to the Village Core Mixed Use General Plan Designation. The project is not located on or near any Agricultural Preserves and is not under or near to a Williamson Act contract.

#### **1.4.2.1 Soils**

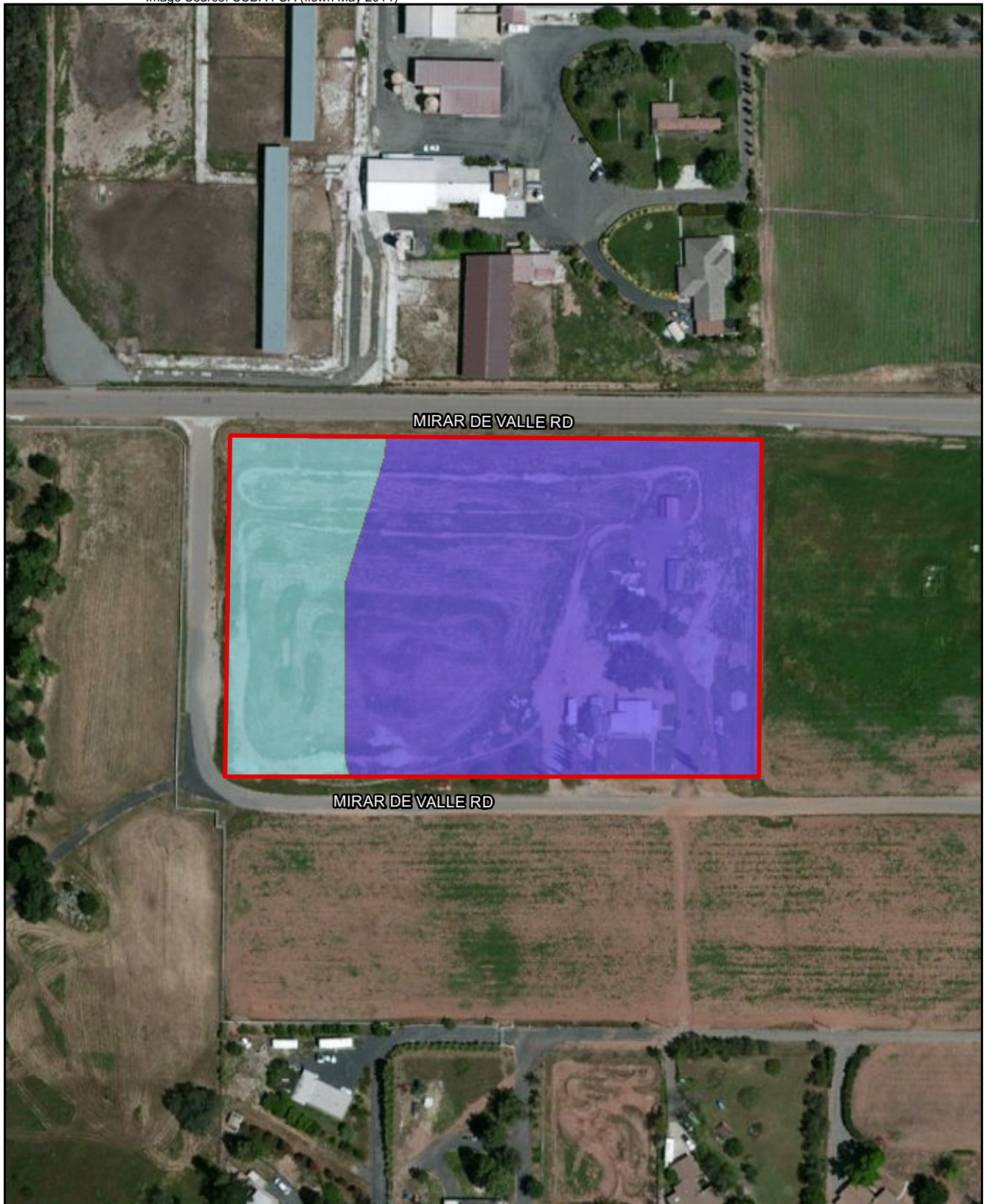
There are two main soil types within the project site: clayey alluvial land (CO) (3.54 acres) and Las Posas fine sandy loam, 5-9 percent slopes, eroded (LpC2) (1.11 acres) (USDA 1973) (Figure 4). Clayey alluvial land consists of moderately well drained, very deep, neutral to mildly alkaline clay loams to clays. This land type occurs as nearly level areas in narrow swales and on foothill terraces. The subsoil is often stratified with lenses of clay to fine sandy loam and in a few place the soil is calcareous. Permeability is slow and the erosion hazard is slight. The Las Posas series consists of well-drained, moderately deep stony fine sandy loams that have a clay subsoil. These soils are on uplands and have slopes of 2-65 percent. They formed in material weathered from basic igneous rocks. LpC2 is not stony and is 26-40 inches over hard rock. Runoff is slow to medium and the erosion hazard is slight to moderate, but shallow rills form on this soil.

#### **1.4.2.2 FMMP Farmland Designations**

The FMMP is implemented by the CDC, Division of Land Resource Protection, and recognizes the suitability of land for agricultural production. The FMMP is non-regulatory and was developed to inventory land and provide categorical definitions of important farmlands and consistent and impartial data to decision makers for use in assessing present status, reviewing trends, and planning for the future of California's agricultural land resources. The program does not necessarily reflect local General Plan actions, urban needs, changing economic conditions, proximity to market, and other factors, which may be taken into consideration when government considers agricultural land use policies. *Important Farmland Maps*, which are a hybrid of resource quality (soils) and land use information, are produced by the FMMP. In addition, data is released in statistical formats--principally the biennial *California Farmland Conversion Report* (CDC 2012).

The last statewide update was completed in 2012 and reflects land use changes to agriculture, through the year 2010. Figure 5 shows the most recent farmland data, within the surrounding area and project site, respectively. As shown in Figure 4, there is only one FMMP type on-site: Farmland of Local Importance (CDC 2012). Farmland of Local Importance is defined as farmland which is important to the local agricultural economy, as determined by the County Board of Supervisors and a local advisory committee. The County of San Diego defines Farmland of Local Importance as land with the same characteristics as Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance with the exception of irrigation. There are 5.2 acres of Farmland of Local Importance (100 percent) mapped within the project site.





Project Boundary

**Soil Classification**



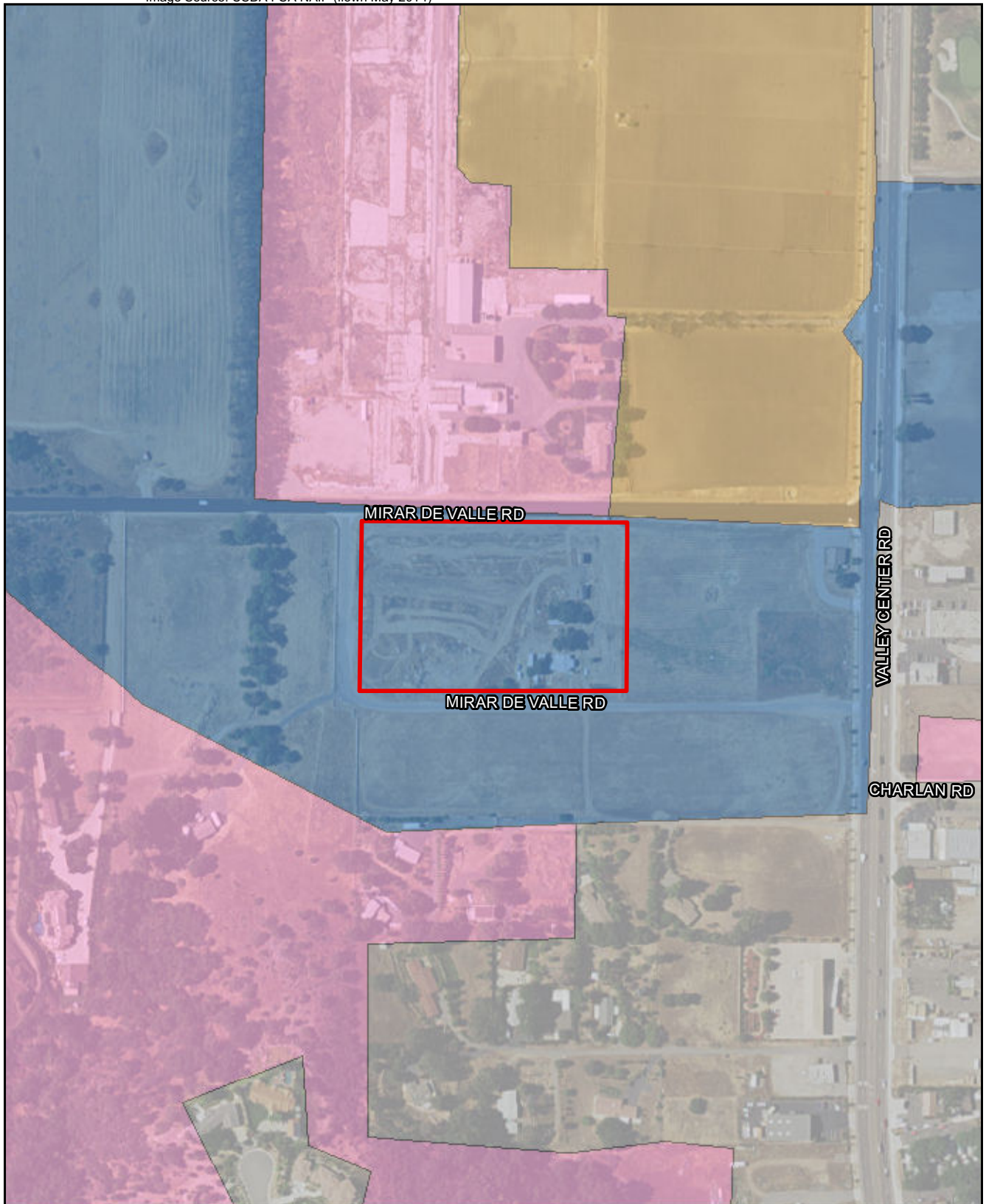
Las Posas fine sandy loam, 5-9% slopes, eroded




Clayey alluvial land










 Project Boundary **FMMP San Diego (2012)**

 Farmland of Local Importance

 Prime Farmland

 Other Land

 Urban and Built Up Land

 0 Feet 300



#### **1.4.2.3 History of Agricultural Use**

A review of historic maps and background indicated that as early as circa 1928 a residence was constructed and occupied within the southern portion of the parcel. It is possible that this early structure was demolished and replaced in the 1950s with a more modern and substantial dwelling. The property has been owned by a variety of persons including the Richardsons in the late 1960s, the Berrys prior to that, the McWades prior to 1962, and to George Jacob circa 1912. The archaeological report concludes that it does not appear that the residence was associated with important persons or families linked to the early settlement or development of the Valley Center region. Based on a review of historical aerial photos, it appears that agricultural use on the project site was discontinued sometime between 1964 and 1967. Since that time, the site has been mowed/disked for weed control and a portion for a rural residence which has been recently demolished.

#### **1.4.2.4 Climate**

San Diego County is divided into a series of "plantclimates," which occur as a series in which specific plants, groups or associations are evident and will grow satisfactorily, assuming water and soil are favorable. Plantclimates in San Diego County occur as a series of five generally north-south trending linear zones, including the Maritime, Coastal, Transitional, Interior and Desert zones. These areas are influenced by factors including topography and proximity to the ocean, and are generally gradational inland.

Localized climate zones were adapted from the described plantclimates, and are termed Generalized Plantclimate Zones, or Sunset Zones. Sunset Zones differentiate local microclimates, freeze/frost potential, and air/water drainage based on conditions such as latitude, elevation, topography, and the influence of oceanic and/or continental air masses. Sunset Zones were not developed as a tool to determine the suitability for commercial agricultural production; therefore, their use is not intended to determine suitability for specific crops. They are a measure of overall climate suitability for the typical agricultural commodities produced in San Diego County.

The project site lies within Zone 21 of the Sunset Zone plant climates, which are characterized by mild year round temperatures and lack of freezing temperatures that allow year round production of high value crops. Zone 21 is also favorable due to its location close to urban areas and transportation infrastructure and is accordingly assigned a **High** rating in the Local Agricultural Resource Assessment (LARA) model due to the favorable growing conditions of this zone.

#### **1.4.2.5 Water Resources**

The project site is within the County Water Authority (CWA) and is served by the Valley Center Municipal Water District (VCMWD), which has existing water transmission, storage, and distribution facilities, in the vicinity of the project site. The groundwater aquifer type, under the project site, is Alluvial Sedimentary, which has a much greater capacity to store groundwater as compared to fractured crystalline rock; this aquifer type accordingly gets a **High** rating under the LARA model.

#### **1.4.2.6 Williamson Act Contracts and Agricultural Preserves**

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, better known as the Williamson Act (California Administrative Code Section 51200 et seq.), creates an arrangement; whereby, private landowners contract with local governments to voluntarily restrict land, to agricultural and open space uses. In return, restricted parcels are assessed for property tax purposes, at a rate consistent with their actual use, rather than potential market value, which saves landowners from 20 percent to 75 percent in property tax liability each year. Agricultural preserves are areas that are eligible for Williamson Act contracts; the boundaries of the preserve areas are drawn by the County and are adopted by resolution of the Board of Supervisors (U.S. Department of Conservation 2005). Williamson Act contracts are currently being phased-out due to the current state budgetary constraints.

There are no Williamson Act contracts or agricultural preserves within the project site nor within two miles.

#### **1.4.3 Off-site Agricultural Resources**

##### **1.4.3.1 Active Agricultural Operations**

The off-site land uses within the project vicinity are similar to those within the project site. These land uses have historically been composed primarily of undeveloped open space, rural residential, and agricultural uses. As discussed above, and shown in Figure 5, the parcels to the south and east are similarly undeveloped and periodically mowed/disked for weed control. In addition, the parcels to the east and north have active development proposals – the parcel to the north is the Park Circle residential subdivision proposed by Touchstone Communities while the three parcels to the east are anticipated to be developed with commercial/retail uses consistent with what can be seen nearby along Valley Center Road. The parcel to the south is sometimes grazed by goats for fire management purposes to eat (cut) the weeds down, and as reported by the Shady Oak property owner, is often mowed/disked for weed control. There are no intensive agricultural operations ongoing on the parcel.

##### **1.4.3.2 Williamson Act Contract Lands/Agricultural Preserves**

There are no Williamson Act contract lands or agricultural preserves within the project site nor are there are contract lands or preserves located within two miles.

##### **1.4.3.3 FMMP Important Farmland Designations**

As shown on Figure 5, the areas surrounding the project site are primarily comprised of Farmland of Local Importance, however, there is also Prime Farmland and Other Land present to the north.

#### **1.4.4 Zoning and General Plan Designation**

The project site's General Plan Land Use Element Regional Category is Village. The General Plan Land Use Designation for the project site is Village Core Mixed Use and the zoning is S90 (Holding Area). The project requires a Rezone to RR in order to allow the lot size and setbacks proposed.

## **2.0 ON-SITE AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **2.1 Guidelines for the Determination of Significance**

The following significance guideline is the basis for determining the significance of impacts to important on-site agricultural resources in San Diego County. Direct impacts to agricultural resources would be potentially significant when the following occurs:

- The project site has agricultural resources that are “important” as defined by the LARA model, and the project would result in the conversion of agricultural resources that meet the soil quality criteria for Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as defined by the FMMP; as a result, the project would substantially impair the ongoing viability of the site for agricultural use.

The first step to evaluating the significance of the project's impact on an agricultural resource is to define whether agricultural resources exist on the project site. The County of San Diego's Guidelines for Determining Significance – Agricultural Resources defines agricultural resources as follows:

. . . the term “agricultural resource” refers to any of the following:

- a site with an active agricultural operation;
- a site designated as, *and that meets the definition of*, an Important Farmland Category (Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Local Importance) as defined in the DOC's FMMP;
- a site with a history of agricultural production based on aerial photography or other data sources identifying agricultural land uses. Examples of other data sources that identify agricultural land use include data from the County Department of Agriculture Weights and Measures (AWM), the State Department of Water Resources (DWR) Land Use data, and vegetation data from the County Department of Planning and [Development Services].

## **2.2 Analysis of Project Effects**

### **2.2.1 On-site Agricultural Resources**

Considering the County's definition of a significant resource, the first criteria would not apply to the project site. Agriculture has not been the primary use of the land since sometime between 1964 and 1967 according to a review of historic aerial photographs. The prior agricultural use of the land is no longer visible in aerial photography as of 1967.

For the second bullet in the County's definition of agricultural resources, the site would need to be designated as, and meet the definition of, an Important Farmland Category (Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Local Importance) as defined in the FMMP. As discussed in Section 1.4.2.4, the site is designated as Farmland of Local Importance which would qualify the site as an agricultural resource if it was appropriately mapped and met the definition as defined by the FMMP and the County. In this case, the mapped Farmland of Local Importance does not meet the FMMP and County definition, as detailed below.



According to the FMMP and the unique definitions for Farmland of Local Importance developed for each county, Farmland of Local Importance is defined as follows:

Land that meets all the characteristics of Prime and Statewide, with the exception of irrigation. Farmlands not covered by the above categories but are of significant economic importance to the county. They have a history of good production for locally adapted crops. The soils are grouped in types that are suited for truck crops (such as tomatoes, strawberries, cucumbers, potatoes, celery, squash, romaine lettuce, and cauliflower) and soils suited for orchard crops (avocados and citrus).

Considering the above definition of Farmland of Local Importance, the project site does not meet the definition due to the lack of any recent history of agricultural production and low economic importance to the County. There is no evidence of intensive, high-value crop production on the project site, within the past approximately 50 years (circa 1967). In addition, there is no evidence of irrigated agriculture on the project site. The Farmland of Local Importance areas are aligned with soil candidates for Prime Farmland (Clayey alluvial land (CO)) and Farmland of Statewide Importance (Las Posas fine sandy loam, 5-9 percent slopes, eroded [LpC2]) (see Figure 4). It appears that these areas were mapped primarily based on underlying soil data and did not consider actual agricultural potential, economic value, or agricultural history of the site. As discussed in the biological (REC Consultants Inc. 2016) and archaeological reports (Carrico 2015), there has been a structure on-site since approximately 1928 (possibly replaced or rehabilitated in the 1950s) and agriculture appears in historic aerial photography between 1928 and 1964. Based upon both historical aerial photography and an interview with the Shady Oak property owner, between 1964 and present, it appears that a variety of non-agricultural plant species have occurred with the project site (the biology report maps the majority of the site as non-native grassland), as well as dirt trails and remnants of a BMX track. The property owner also stated that the site, as well as the parcels to the east and south are mowed or disked periodically for weed control but no active agriculture has occurred for approximately the last 30–50 years. Based on these facts, it appears that a more appropriate designation for the Farmland of Local Importance mapped lands would be Grazing Land except that the minimum mapping unit for Grazing Land is 40 acres.

Moving to the third criteria in the County's agricultural resource definition, an agricultural resource is defined as "a site with a history of agricultural production based on aerial photography or other data sources identifying agricultural land uses." As discussed above, aerial photographs were researched for the project site to determine the history of agricultural production. The site does have a history of agricultural production starting in the 1920s. However, more recent use of the site has been as vacant land, with aerial photographs showing the discontinuation of agriculture between the 1964 and 1967 photographs. As discussed above, pursuant to a conversation with the property owner, it is understood that the project site and surrounding parcels have not been utilized for active agriculture (last 30 years for surrounding parcels, 50 years for the project site); rather they are kept mowed/disked for weed control.

As a result of the analysis based on the County's definition, the site is not considered to have agricultural resources. Thus, direct impacts would be less than significant. Due to the lack of agricultural resources on the project site, a LARA model was not completed for the site.

### **2.3 Mitigation Measures and Design Considerations**

As direct impacts to agricultural resources would be less than significant, mitigation measures are not required.

### **2.4 Conclusions**

As described above, the site does not meet the definition of an agricultural resource because it:

- Is **not** a site with an active agricultural operation;
- Does **not** (for reasons listed in Section 2.2.1) meet the definition for any Important Farmland category as defined in the FMMP; and
- Does **not** have a history of agricultural production based on a review of historic aerial photography, which places the last identifiable agricultural use of the site at circa 1967.

Because the site is not an agricultural resource, a LARA Model was not completed. By definition, if no resources are present, no impacts could occur and no mitigation would be required.

## **3.0 OFF-SITE AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **3.1 Guidelines for the Determination of Significance**

The County Guidelines for Determining Significance – Agricultural Resources (Section 4.2.2, page 43) identifies the following significance guidelines for determining the significance of indirect impacts to off-site agricultural operations and Williamson Act contract lands:

- 3.1.a The project proposes a non-agricultural land use within one-quarter mile of an active agricultural operation or land under a Williamson Act contract (contract) and as a result of the project, land use conflicts between the agricultural operation or contract land and the project would likely occur and could result in conversion of agricultural resources to a non-agricultural use.
- 3.1.b The project proposes a school, church, day care or other use that involves a concentration of people at certain times within one mile of an agricultural operation or land under contract and as a result of the project, land use conflicts between the agricultural operation or contract land and the project would likely occur and could result in conversion of agricultural resources to a non-agricultural use.
- 3.1.c The project would involve other changes to the existing environment, which due to their location or nature, could result in the conversion of off-site agricultural resources to a non-agricultural use or could adversely impact the viability of agriculture on land under a contract.

### **3.2 Analysis of Project Effects**

The County Guidelines for Determining Significance – Agricultural Resources (County of San Diego 2007) states on page 43 (footnote 16) that the extent to which a project proposes a use that is similar to those already present in the surrounding area is an important factor in

considering the significance of the placement of a non-agricultural use in proximity to an agricultural operation . . . A project proposed contiguous to an agricultural operation or Williamson Act contract land would require greater scrutiny than a project separated from the agricultural operation or Williamson Act contract land by other land uses. Additionally, the Guidelines describe in Section 4.1.2 that where incompatible land uses are located near existing agricultural operations, adverse indirect impacts may include (but are not limited to) liability concerns, trespass, vandalism, theft, pesticide or farm practice complaints, pollutants, erosion, importation of pests, pathogens, and weeds, and increased traffic and conflicts at the agriculture-urban interface flow in two directions: from existing agricultural use to a newly established non-agricultural use, and vice versa.

Further, the County of San Diego's Guidelines for Determining Significance – Agricultural Resources, Section 4.1.2, states that while the focus of this document is on impacts to agricultural resources rather than the impacts to the proposed new residents caused by farming, the adverse impacts perceived by the new residents contribute to the degradation of viability of surrounding farms (page 40). This is caused when nuisances or safety concerns perceived by urban neighbors trigger complaints about farming practices; subsequently, farmers may feel pressure to discontinue their operations or reduce investment/productivity in their operation. Nuisance complaints may also cause farmers to modify or restrict their farming practices, causing economic hardships. The County of San Diego's Guidelines for Determining Significance – Agricultural Resources state that compatibility buffers are the primary tool for increasing compatibility between existing agricultural uses/resources and proposed new non-agricultural uses (page 53).

### **3.2.1 Indirect Impacts - Williamson Act Lands**

As described in Section 1.4.3.2 of this report, there are no Williamson Act contracts or agricultural preserves within the project site or within two miles.

Therefore, because the project would not impact any Williamson Act contracted lands and there are no Williamson Act contract lands or agricultural preserves within two miles, no significant indirect impacts are anticipated to occur.

### **3.2.2 Indirect Impacts—Land Use Conflicts**

Indirect effects resulting from agricultural interface conflicts or compatibility issues that arise when development is placed adjacent to existing agriculture include pesticide applications, dust generation, and noise that originate from the farming activities, causing complaints by the surrounding new residential uses. These types of complaints can create pressures resulting in the conversion of adjacent agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses. Many of these farming concerns are addressed through the implementation of the County Agricultural Enterprises and Consumer Information Ordinance disclosure statements and mitigation measures.

Other indirect impacts of farmland conversions could result from “edge effects,” defined as changes that can occur where two different land use types meet. For purposes of this report, the two different land use types are urban (residential and institutional for the proposed project) and agriculture. For example, residents from the project may complain about noises, odors, and dust; and the farmers may complain about trespass, vandalism, water runoff, and damage to property. In addition, complaints about pesticide applications have been discussed in preceding sections. The pressure from adjoining neighbors' complaints related to legal farming activities may heighten the attractiveness of selling the farm for development. If this were to occur,

eventually another indirect conversion could result from a leapfrog or non-contiguous development pattern.

As shown in Figure 6, the project surroundings include:

- North - future urban/residential development (the Park Circle and Orchard Run projects proposed by Touchstone Development).
- East – three parcels currently going through the discretionary review process and anticipated to be utilized for commercial/retail development. These three parcels are mowed/disked for weed control but are not under active agriculture. Further east, across Valley Center Road, is the Village of Valley Center.
- South – periodically mowed/disked or grazed for weed control, but has not been under active agriculture since sometime between 1980 and 1989.
- West –periodically mowed/disked for weed control. A review of historic aerial photos reveals that the site was likely discontinued for intensive agriculture between 1953 and 1964.

Therefore, because of the urban and semi-urban nature of the surrounding land uses, and the lack of any intensive agricultural operations within one mile of the project site, the project would not expose a concentration of people (e.g., school, church, or daycare) to a potential land use conflict. Therefore, no land use compatibility/agricultural interface impacts would occur.

### **3.2.3 Indirect Impacts—Changes to the Existing Environment**

Due to the lack of intensive agricultural operations in the existing area, the project would not result in indirect impacts to any existing surrounding agricultural operations.

### **3.3 Mitigation Measure and Project Design Considerations**

No significant land use compatibility/agricultural interface (indirect) impacts were identified. Therefore, no mitigation would be required.

### **3.4 Conclusions**

As discussed in Section 3.2.1 above, there are no Williamson Act contracts or agricultural preserves within the project site or within the proximity of the site. No significant indirect impacts to Williamson Act contract lands or agricultural preserves would result from implementation of the project.

The area surrounding the project site is designated Village Core Mixed Use and is composed of semi-urban land uses. There are currently development proposals on the parcels to the north and the three parcels to the west. The only agriculturally related land use within the vicinity is a low-intensity use, goat grazing for weed control, on the adjacent parcel to the south. Therefore, the project would not cause land use compatibility/agricultural interface impacts, nor would it expose a sensitive population or a concentration of people (e.g., school, church, or daycare) to potential adjacency impacts.





## **4.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

Cumulative impacts are those caused by the additive effects of other impacts to agricultural resources over time. A project's impact may not be individually significant, but the additive effect when viewed in connection with the impacts of past projects, present projects, and probable future projects may cause the significant loss or degradation of agricultural resources.

The cumulative impact analysis for agriculture defines the geographic scope of the cumulative impact study area and includes a discussion of the reasoning and justification for the chosen boundaries of the cumulative impact study area. This report analyzes the significance of any agricultural conversion on a cumulative level, pursuant to the Guidelines for Determining Significance – Agricultural Resources.

### **4.1 Guidelines for the Determination of Significance**

The County of San Diego's Guidelines for Determining Significance – Agricultural Resources for determining the significance of cumulative impacts are based on the same guidelines used to determine the significance of direct and indirect impacts, with the exception that the analysis considers the significance of the cumulative impact of the individual project impact in combination with the impacts caused by the projects in the cumulative study area that would also impact important agricultural resources.

While agriculture is a regional commodity, the California Environmental Quality Act requires the selection of a cumulative project area that allows a meaningful analysis of potential impact, and too large of an assessment area could make it impossible to identify the project's potential incremental effects.

### **4.2 Analysis of Project Effects**

While Valley Center is known to be one of the centers of agricultural production in the County, the immediate vicinity of the project site is comprised of the village of Valley Center and its associated semi-urban uses. The project site and vicinity have not been used extensively for agriculture within the last 30–50 years, with the exception of the occasional goat grazing for weed control taking place to the south. Since the project is not an important agricultural resource, and there would be no conversion of Important Farmlands or Williamson Act contract lands, there would be less than significant cumulative impacts associated with these resources. In addition, the lack of active agricultural operations existing in the area would avoid the potential for agricultural interface impacts that contribute to a cumulative impact. For these reasons, cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

### **4.3 Mitigation Measures and Design Considerations**

As the project and other projects in the area would result in less than significant impacts to agricultural resources, cumulative impacts would be less than significant. No additional mitigation measures or design considerations are required.

### **4.4 Conclusions**

As the project and other projects in the area would result in less than significant impacts to agricultural resources, cumulative impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.

## **5.0 SUMMARY OF PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION**

### **5.1 Project Impacts**

The project was analyzed against the three components of the County's definition of an agricultural resource. As described in Section 2.1, the site is **not** a site with an active agricultural operation, does **not** meet the definition for any Important Farmland category as defined in the FMMP, and does **not** have a history of agricultural production based on a review of historic aerial photography which places the last identifiable agricultural use of the site at circa 1967. Because the site lacks any agricultural resources, a LARA model was not completed. By definition, if no resources are present, no significant impacts would occur and no mitigation would be required.

As discussed in Section 3.2, there are no Williamson Act contracts or agricultural preserves within the project site or within two miles of the site. The lands within the vicinity of the project site comprise the village of Valley Center, and with the exception of the occasional goat grazing for weed control to the south, there are no existing agricultural operations within the vicinity. Therefore, the project would not cause land use compatibility/agricultural interface impacts, nor would it expose a sensitive population or a concentration of people (e.g., school, church, or daycare) to potential adjacency impacts. No significant indirect impacts would occur and no mitigation would be required.

The project would be consistent with applicable General Plan and Valley Center policies.

Cumulative impacts were discussed in Section 4. The project would not cause a significant cumulative impact with respect to land use compatibility/agricultural interface impacts, sensitive land uses, or Williamson Act contract lands.

As there would be no conversion of Important Farmlands or Williamson Act contract lands, there would be less than significant cumulative impacts associated with these resources. In addition, due to the lack of active agricultural operations existing in the area the potential for agricultural interface impacts that contribute to a cumulative impact would not exist. For these reasons, cumulative impacts are less than significant.

### **5.2 Mitigation Measures**

No significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts were identified. Therefore, no mitigation would be required.

## **6.0 REFERENCES**

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