

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES
LOCAL AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT
(LARA) MODEL RESULTS
for
2260 San Pasqual Valley Road Tentative Map
SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
PDS2017-TM-5620

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project proposes a 14 lot subdivision on 17.6 acres of land located on the north side of San Pasqual Valley Road, approximately 700 feet west of Highgrove Drive and 1600 feet east of Summit Drive. Access is proposed from San Pasqual Valley Road. The project would be served by onsite septic systems. Proposed parcel sizes range from 1.0 to 2.1 acres. A single family house currently exists on the site.

Based on the results of the Local Agricultural Resources Assessment (LARA) Model, the site is not considered an important agricultural resource. The site received a high rating for the two Required Factors of climate and water. The site received a low rating for the Required Factor of soil quality. To be considered an important agricultural resource under the LARA model, a soil rating of either high or moderate must be present. Therefore, the site's low soil quality rating means that the site is not an important agricultural resource. The results of each LARA model factor rating that contribute to this determination are detailed below.

2.0 LOCAL AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE ASSESSMENT (LARA) MODEL

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, the CEQA Guidelines references the California Agricultural LESA Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation (DOC), as an optional methodology that may be used to assess the relative value of agriculture and farmland. In the past, the LESA model has been applied to various agricultural properties throughout the County of San Diego to assess agricultural importance in association with proposed discretionary land use permits. After several years of practical experience with application of the LESA model in San Diego County, the inadequacy of the model in capturing the unique and varied character of San Diego agriculture has become apparent. An alternative approach, referred to as the Local Agricultural Resource Assessment (LARA) model has been developed to assess the relative value of agricultural resources in San Diego County. Specific documentation of the LARA model can be found in the •<http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/pds/procguid.html#Agricultural Resources>.

The LARA model takes into account the following factors in determining the importance of an agricultural resource:

Required Factors

- Water
- Climate
- Soil Quality

Complementary Factors

- Surrounding Land Uses
- Land Use Consistency
- Topography

As shown in Section 3.0, LARA Model Results, when one of the three Required Factors receives a Low rating, the site is not an important agricultural resources. The following subsections detail the rating assigned to the project site for each of the above factors.

2.1 Water

The water rating is primarily based the site’s County Water Authority (CWA) service status, however if the project does not already have imported water service, the underlying groundwater aquifer type and the presence of a groundwater well is also considered (Table 1).

- The project is located inside the CWA. The City of Escondido serves the site with water. The house on the site has a water connection and a water meter.
- Therefore the water rating for the site is **HIGH**.

Table 1. Water Rating ¹

| County Water Authority (CWA) Service Status | Groundwater Aquifer Type and Well Presence | Rating |
|--|---|---------------|
| Inside CWA service area with existing water infrastructure connections and a meter | Any groundwater aquifer type | High |
| Inside CWA service area with infrastructure connections to the site, but no meter has been installed | The site is located in an Alluvial or Sedimentary Aquifer <i>and</i> has an existing well | High |
| | The site is located in an Alluvial or Sedimentary Aquifer, but has no existing well | Moderate |
| | The site is located on Fractured Crystalline Rock and has an existing well | Moderate |
| | The site is located on Fractured Crystalline Rock, but has no existing well | Low |
| Outside CWA or inside CWA but infrastructure connections are not available at the site and no meter is installed | The site is located in an Alluvial or Sedimentary Aquifer <i>and</i> has an existing well | Moderate |
| | The site is located in an Alluvial or Sedimentary Aquifer, but has no existing well | Low |
| | The site is located on Fractured Crystalline Rock (with or without a well) | Low |
| | The site is located in a Desert Basin (with or without a well) | Low |

¹ If more than one underlying groundwater aquifer type exists at a site, usually the aquifer type that could produce the most water should be used to obtain the water rating. If it would be more reasonable to apply the rating based on the aquifer that would produce less water, a clear justification and reason for doing so must be provided.

2.2 Climate

Sunset Zones are used as a standard measure of climate suitability due to the variability of microclimate conditions that the Sunset zones take into account. Recognizing that the Sunset Zones were not developed as a tool to determine the suitability for commercial agricultural production, their use is not intended to determine suitability for specific crops, rather they are a measure of overall climate suitability for the typical agricultural commodities produced in San Diego County. The project site is located within **Sunset Zone 21**, which has a rating of **HIGH**.

| Climate (Sunset Zone) Description | Rating |
|--|-----------------|
| Zone 23 represents thermal belts of the Coastal Areaclimate and is one of the most favorable for growing subtropical plants and most favorable for growing avocados. Zone 23 occurs in coastal incorporated cities and also occurs in the unincorporated communities of Fallbrook, Rainbow, Bonsall, San Dieguito, Lakeside, western portions of Crest and Valle De Oro, Spring Valley, Otay, and western portion of Jamul-Dulzura. | High |
| Zone 21 is an air drained thermal belt that is good for citrus and is the mildest zone that gets adequate winter chilling for some plants. Low temperatures range from 23 to 36 degrees F, with temperatures rarely dropping far below 30 degrees. | High |
| Zone 20 is a cold air basin that may be dominated by coastal influence for a day, week or month and then may be dominated for similar periods of time by continental air. Over a 20 year period, winter lows in Zone 20 ranged from 28 to 23 degrees F. | High |
| Zone 19 is prime for citrus, and most avocados and macadamia nuts can also be grown here. | High |
| Zone 18 is a mountainous zone subject to frosts. Citrus can be grown in Zone 18, but frosts require the heating of orchards to reduce fruit loss. Zone 18 is the home of Julian's apple orchards. | Moderate |
| Zone 13 covers low elevation desert areas (considered subtropical) and is the most extensive of the County's desert Plantclimate zones. Zone 13 includes the extensive agricultural uses in the Borrego Valley. | Moderate |
| Zone 11 is located below the high elevation Zone 3 and above the subtropical desert Zone 13. | Low |
| Zone 3 occurs in the high elevation Palomar Mountains in addition to high elevation areas east of the Tecate Divide. These are locations where snow can fall and wide swings in temperature occur. | Low |
| | |

2.3 Soil Quality

The project's soil quality rating is based on the presence of soils that meet the quality criteria for Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance as defined by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) that are available for agricultural use and that have been previously used for agriculture.

- There are two soil types identified on the site, as shown in Figure 1: Fallbrook sandy loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes, eroded (FaE2); and Ramona sandy loam, 5 to 9 percent slopes (RaC).
- Only one soil type meets the soil quality criteria for the State FMMP Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance Farmland categories: Ramona sandy loam, 5 to 9 percent slopes (RaC). There is less than four acres of RaC soil on the site.
- Most of the site has been used for agricultural purposes and most of both of the two soil types are available for agricultural use (see Table 2, Soil Quality Matrix, and Figures 2 and 3).

The project's soil quality rating is 0.23, as detailed in Table 2, Soil Quality Matrix. The project receives a **LOW** rating for soil quality based on this score.

Table 2. Soil Quality Matrix

| Column A | Column B | Column C | Column D | Column E | Column F | Column G |
|--|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--|----------------|
| Soil Type | Size of project site (acreage) | Unavailable for agricultural use | Available for agricultural use | Proportion of project site | Is soil candidate for prime farmland or farmland of statewide significance? Yes = 1 No = 0 | Multiply E x F |
| Fallbrook sandy loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes, eroded (FaE2) | 13.65 | 0.44 | 13.21 | .77 | 0 | 0 |
| Ramona sandy loam, 5 to 9 percent slopes (RaC) | 3.96 | .06 | 3.90 | 0.23 | 1 | 0.23 |
| Total | 17.61 | Total | 17.11 | | Soil Quality Matrix Score | 0.23 |

Table 3. Soil Quality Matrix Interpretation

| Soil Quality Matrix Score | Soil Quality Rating |
|---|---------------------|
| The site has a Soil Quality Matrix score ranging from 0.66 to 1.0 and has a minimum of 10 acres of contiguous Prime Farmland or Statewide Importance Soils | High |
| The site has a Soil Quality Matrix score ranging from 0.33 to 0.66 or the site has a minimum of 10 acres of contiguous Prime Farmland or Statewide Importance Soils | Moderate |
| The site has a Soil Quality Matrix score less than 0.33 and does not have 10 acres or more of contiguous Prime Farmland or Statewide Importance Soils | Low |

Figure 1. Soil Types

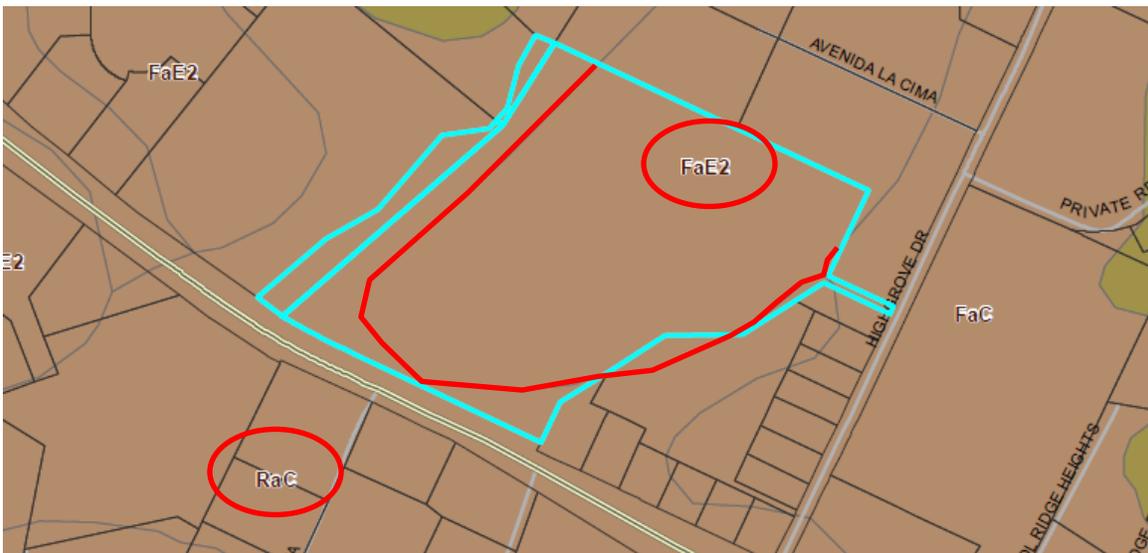
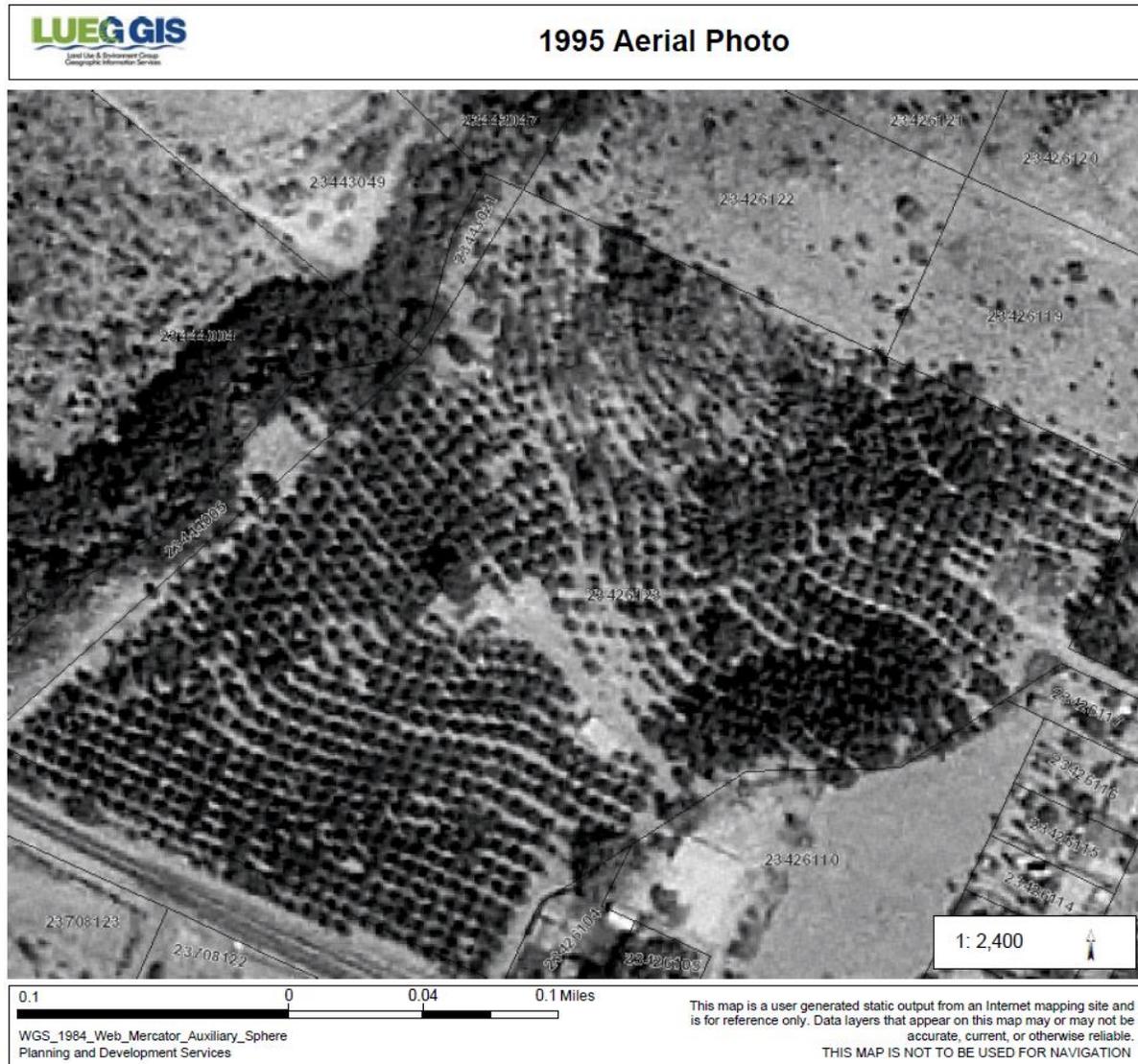


Figure 3. 1995 Aerial Photo



3.0 LARA MODEL RESULTS

The ratings for each LARA model factor for the project site are as follows:

Required Factors

- Water
- Climate
- Soil Quality

Complementary Factors

- Surrounding Land Uses
- Land Use Consistency
- Topography

Table 7. Interpretation of LARA Model Results

| LARA Model Results | | | LARA Model Interpretation |
|--------------------|---|---|---|
| Possible Scenarios | Required Factors | Complementary Factors | |
| Scenario 1 | All three factors rated high | At least one factor rated high or moderate | The site is an important agricultural resource |
| Scenario 2 | Two factors rated high, one factor rated moderate | At least two factors rated high or moderate | |
| Scenario 3 | One factor rated high, two factors rated moderate | At least two factors rated high | |
| Scenario 4 | All factors rated moderate | All factors rated high | |
| Scenario 5 | At least one factor rated low importance | N/A | The site is <i>not</i> an important agricultural resource |
| Scenario 6 | All other model results | | |

Based on the site conditions, the project’s LARA model scoring falls under Scenario 5, indicating that the site is not an important agricultural resource.