

3.3 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

This section addresses the potential impacts to Agricultural Resources, a standard section in the County's CEQA review process.

3.3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

While there are no agriculturally-zoned parcels or commercial agricultural operations in the project area, there are two community projects. The Community Garden Project is a small organic community garden located in Estero Park. A small community orchard is located on the 6700 block of Sueno Road, APN 075-092-030. Both properties are owned by IVRPD and are zoned for recreational use.

The Community Garden Project offers organic garden space to community members, for a nominal quarterly fee. Gardeners may use their plots to grow vegetables, herbs and flowers for their own use. Sueno Orchard is a non-productive orchard. Currently the trees in the orchard do not produce fruit and are not suited for a coastal habitat. Many trees do not survive during wet periods due to drainage issues.

Implementation of the Community Center, a Catalyst project in the IVMP, will result in the relocation of the community gardens from Estero Park to the Sueno Orchard. In order to make room for the gardens, 57 fruit trees will have to be removed and additional fruit trees will be replanted after garden relocation. All removed trees will be replaced by IVRPD as consistent with Local Coastal Plan Policy 6-2.

Because of its urban nature and high residential density, Isla Vista is not an area that can support viable agriculture. There are no designated Prime Farmlands, nor Prime Farmland soils, or Williamson Act contracts on any properties in the project area.

3.3.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Under CEQA Appendix G, a significant impact on agricultural resources occurs if the project: a) converts Prime, Unique or Important Farmland to non-agricultural use, or b) conflicts with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract, or c) involves other changes in the existing environment that could result in the conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use.

The Agricultural Threshold listed in Santa Barbara County's Thresholds and Guidelines Manual (2002) identifies a potentially significant impact by registering a tally of points given for agricultural stability and viability. There are nine areas weighted according to their estimated resource value. These nine areas are:

- Parcel size, adjacent land uses, water availability, Comprehensive Plan designation, Agricultural Preserve potential, existing land use, soil classification, agricultural suitability, combined farming, and operations.

When the points total 60 or more, the following types of projects will be considered to have a potentially significant impact:

- A division of land (including Parcel or Tract Maps, etc.) which is currently considered viable but would result in parcels which would not be considered viable using the weighting system.
- A Development Plan, Conditional Use Permit, or other discretionary act which would result in the conversion from agricultural use of a parcel qualifying as viable using the weighting system.
- Discretionary projects which may result in substantial disruption of surrounding agricultural operations.

If a potentially significant impact is identified using these criteria, more detailed site-specific evaluation of agricultural impacts is completed in an EIR. This analysis should focus upon factors and criteria, but not the points, in the weighting system of these guidelines, and any other relevant factors such as the history of agricultural use on the site, land use trends, etc.

3.3.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Project Impacts

Proposed development under the IVMP would not result in impacts to agricultural resources since there are no active agricultural operations in the project area and none of the project area is zoned or designated for agriculture. Additionally, no designated Prime Farmland or lands under the Williamson Act contracts are present in the project area. The proposed project would also not result in a disruption to any surrounding agricultural operations.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation for agricultural resources is necessary.

Cumulative Impacts

The IVMP project would not result in cumulative impacts to agriculture resources, as there are no agricultural resources in the project area.