

4.2 AGRICULTURAL AND OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

SECTION 4.0

4.2 AGRICULTURAL AND OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

This Draft EIR section considers the potential for the North Canyon Ranch residential project and the Required Island Annexations (together forming the whole project for purposes of this Draft EIR) to result in impacts to agricultural resources and identifies opportunities to avoid, reduce, or otherwise mitigate potential significant impacts to biological resources, where warranted.

This analysis consists of a description of the existing conditions at the proposed project site and surrounding area, a summary of the regulatory framework that guides the decision-making process, thresholds for determining if the proposed project would result in significant impacts, anticipated impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative), mitigation measures, and residual impacts (i.e., level of significance after mitigation). The significance of project impacts has been determined in accordance with Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, and other applicable law. Sources used in the analysis are cited where relevant to the analysis; comprehensive list of references is provided Section 7.0, Organizations and Persons Consulted and References, of this EIR.

4.2.1 Existing Conditions

The environmental setting and regulatory setting, below, establish existing conditions relevant to the project. The analysis of project impacts is based upon these baseline conditions.

Environmental Setting

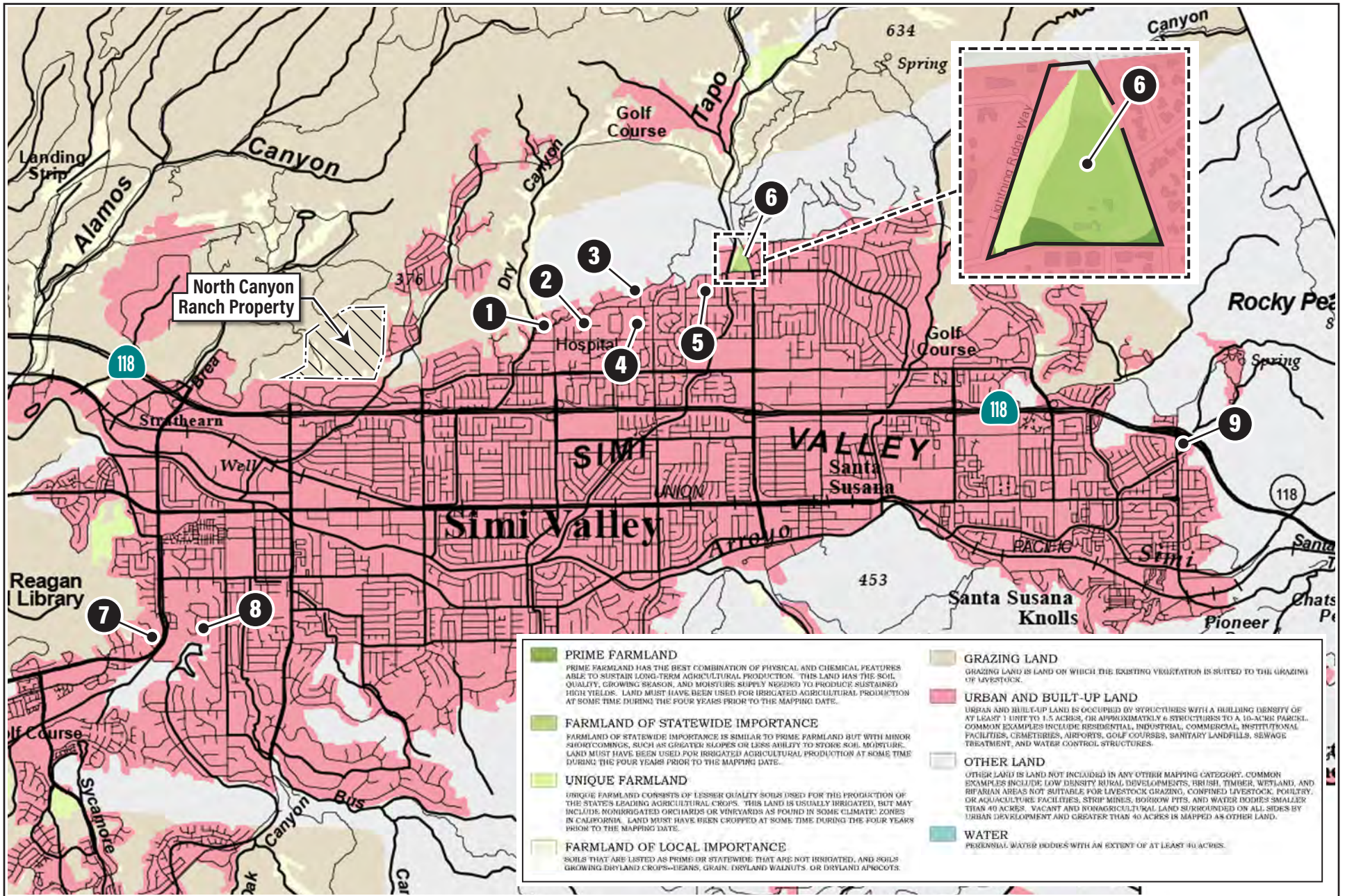
North Canyon Ranch

The project site is currently designated as Open Space in the Ventura County General Plan, and pre-designated as Residential Medium Density (3.6 - 5 dwelling units per acre (du/acre) and Residential Moderate Density (5.1-10 du/acre), and Open Space – Urban Reserve (10-acre minimum lot size) in the Simi Valley General Plan. The current City General Plan designations (pre-planned) for the site are: Open Space (1 du/40 ac), Medium Density Residential (3.6 – 5.0 du/ac), and Moderate Density Residential (5.1 – 10.0 du/ac). The project proposes to keep the same land use designations but in a different configuration, as shown in Section 4.9, Land Use and Planning.

The site is zoned Open Space (OS-160 ac) in the Ventura County General Plan. The applicant proposes that the property would be zoned as Residential Moderate Density (RMod), Residential Medium Density (RM), and Open Space (OS). Grazing activities have occurred over a majority of the site but ceased. The subject property has not been used for grading or irrigated agricultural production at any time during the past seven years.

Required Island Annexations

The vast majority of the Annexation areas are subdivided and developed with urban uses, with an occasional empty lot (up to five single-family homes spread across the City could hypothetically be added over time), and none of these vacant parcels are in existing agriculture or open space use. Only Annexation Areas 6 and 9, two largely undeveloped County Island areas, have land uses, General Plan designations or zoning that suggest agriculture or open space. Annexation Area 6, approximately 14.14 acres in size, is in the northeastern portion of the City, just within the City boundary, contains land classified as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland by the California Department of Conservations, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), as shown in **Figure 4.2-1, California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping**.



Source: California Department of Conservation Division of Land Resource Protection Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, 2018.

The most valued or important category in the FMMP mapping system is Prime Farmland, and only a very small portion of Area 6, along its southern boundary is so classified. The majority of the site is designated Farmland of Statewide Importance. A small sliver of land on the site’s western edge and an even smaller area on its northeastern edge is classified as Unique Farmland. Annexation Area 6 forms a polygon that is a roughly triangular, with the base of the triangle fronting on Walnut Street, Tapo Canyon Road on the east, Lightning Ridge Way on the west, and with the northern tip of the triangle cut at the City’s northerly boundary.

The FMMP classifies the bulk of the Area 6 as Farmland of Statewide Importance (estimated at 8.36 acres), with small portions classified as Unique Farmlands (estimated at 3.18 acres), and yet a smaller piece along Walnut Street as Farmland of Prime Farmlands (estimated at 1.72 acres). The remaining portion of the site is classified as Urban and Built-up Land (estimated at 0.88 acres). The County General Plan designation is Open Space – Urban Reserve and the site currently contains some nursery uses.

Annexation Area 6 is currently pre-zoned as RMod and Residential Low Density (RL), as shown in **Table 4.2-1, Annexation Areas 6 and 9 Land Use Designations and Zoning**. It is comprised of five Ventura County Assessor’s Parcels [Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) 6140010195; 6140010205; 6140010065; 6140010075; and 6140010085]. One of these parcels is (all numbers approximate) 0.37 acres and listed as a single-family parcel; three totaling 2.39 acres are listed as vacant residential; and the 11.3-acre remaining parcel is listed in the “orchards (mixed) and vineyards,” pursuant to the Assessor’s existing land use code categories.

**Table 4.2-1
Annexation Areas 6 and 9 Land Use Designations and Zoning**

Area	General Plan Land Use Designation	Proposed Plan Land Use Designations	Existing County Zoning	Proposed City Zoning ^(a)
• Annexation Area 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OS- Urban Reserve • RL (2.1 – 3.5 du/ac) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential Low Density 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OS-160 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMod • RL
• Annexation Area 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Park • Residential Estate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OS-160 and OS-10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7.90 acres OS • 1.14 acres RE^(a)
Source: Rincon Consultants, Inc., for City of Simi Valley; County of Ventura, Ventura County General Plan, Land Use and Community Character Element, 2020; and City of Simi Valley Data on Pre-Zoning, 2019/2020, and Claudia Pedroso, City of Simi Valley, 2023. ^(a) Portions designated with an “(a)” required a zone change to this designation; the others were previously pre-zoned.				

Annexation Area 9 is comprised of two APNs (657001011 and 657001002) that are designated as Community Park in the Ventura County General Plan. The larger parcel is 7.90 acres and is owned by the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District; the smaller parcel is 1.14 acres and is in private ownership. The site is currently zoned as OS-160 acres OS-160 ac/Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridor (HCWC), and OS-10 ac by the County. The privately-owned portion of Area 9 is pre-zoned as Residential Estate Density (RE). Neither site is in use for agriculture, nor has it been in agricultural use in recent history.

Regulatory Setting

State

California Department of Conservation

The California Department of Conservation operates the FMMP. This program includes an Important Farmland Inventory that classifies farmland as "Prime Farmland," "Farmland of Statewide Importance," "Unique Farmland" or "Farmland of Local Importance."¹ To be shown on the FMMP's Important Farmland Inventory Maps as "Prime Farmland," or "Farmland of Statewide Importance," land must meet both of the following criteria:

- Land Use: Has been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the Important Farmland Map date. Irrigated land use is determined by FMMP staff by analyzing current aerial photos, local comment letters, and related Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data, supplemented with field verification; and
- Soil: The soil must meet physical and chemical criteria for Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), an agency within the United States Department of Agriculture. The 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, and developed irrigation water supply
 - Soil temperature range
 - Acid-alkali balance
 - Water table
 - Soil sodium content
 - Flooding (uncontrolled runoff from natural precipitation)
 - Erodibility
 - Permeability rate
 - Rock fragment content
 - Soil rooting depth

As discussed, land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years before the Important Farmland Map date and the soil must meet the physical and chemical criteria for Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance as determined by the NRCS.

- "Prime Farmlands" are those with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long-term production of agricultural crops. Prime farmland has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Prime farmland must have been used for production of irrigated crops at some time during the four years before the most recent mapping date (2020).
- "Farmland of Statewide Importance" is similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years before the most recent mapping date (2020).

¹ State of California, Department of Conservation, Important Farmland Categories, accessed January 25, 2024 at: <http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Important-Farmland-Categories.aspx>.

- “Unique Farmland” contains lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Unique farmland must have been cropped at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date (2020).
- “Farmland of Local Importance” is determined by each county's board of supervisors and a local advisory committee based on the local agricultural economy.
- The “Grazing Land” designation is intended for land upon which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock. This category was developed in cooperation with the California Cattlemen's Association, University of California Cooperative Extension, and other groups interested in the extent of grazing activities.

As shown in **Figure 4.2-1, California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping**, the majority of Area 6 is designated by the Important Farmland Inventory as “Statewide Importance” while the northwestern edge of the site is “Unique Farmland”, and a small portion of the site at the southern edge is “Prime Farmland.” The California Department of Conservation goal is to update the important farmland maps every two years with the use of a computer mapping system, aerial imagery, public review, and field reconnaissance. However, the State Important Farmland 2020 map for Ventura County is the most recent map available.

Williamson Act

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, or Williamson Act, enables local governments to enroll or enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments lower than market value because they are based upon farming and open space uses as opposed to full market value. Contract terms are either 10 or 20 years and are annually self-renewing unless a Notice of Non-Renewal is filed. The subject property is not enrolled in and thus not subject to a Williamson Act contract.² The nearest lands enrolled in a Williamson Act contract are located approximately one mile north of the project site.³ The proposed project will not affect this Williamson Act contract.

Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act

Under the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000, Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCOs) have the power to act on local agency boundary changes.⁴

Regional and Local

Ventura Local Agency Formation Commission

Annexation of Unincorporated Island Areas by Cities

Any approval of a proposal for a change of organization or reorganization will be conditioned to provide that proceedings will not be completed until and unless a subsequent proposal is filed with LAFCo initiating

² City of Simi Valley, General Plan EIR, June 2012, Section 4.2 Agricultural Resources, Figure 4.2-1: Important Farmland and Williamson Act Lands.

³ Ibid.

⁴ California Assembly Committee on Local Government, Guide to the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000, December 2023. Accessed on January 24, 2024, at <https://calafco.org/resources/cortese-knox-hertzberg-act/ckh-reorganization-act-guide>.

proceedings for the change of organization or reorganization of all unincorporated Island areas that meet the provisions of Government Code Section 56375.3, provided all of the following criteria are applicable:⁵

- a) The approved proposal was initiated by resolution of a city that surrounds or substantially surrounds one or more unincorporated island areas.
- b) The territory in the approved proposal consists of one or more areas that are each 40 acres or more in area.
- c) The territory in the approved proposal consists of one or more areas that are each 40 acres or more in area.
- d) The territory in the approved proposal is not owned by a public agency or used for public purposes.

Agricultural and Open Space Preservation: Findings and Criteria for Prime Agricultural and Existing Open Space Land Conversion

Ventura LAFCo will approve a proposal for a change of organization or reorganization which is likely to result in the conversion of prime agricultural or existing open space land use to other uses only if the Commission finds that the proposal will lead to planned, orderly, and efficient development. For the purposes of this policy, a proposal for a change of organization or reorganization leads to planned, orderly, and efficient development only if all of the following criteria are met:⁶

- a) The territory is likely to be developed within 5 years and has been pre-zoned for non-agricultural or open space use. In the case of very large developments, annexation should be phased wherever possible.
- b) Insufficient non-prime agricultural or vacant land exists within the existing boundaries of the agency that is planned and developable for the same general type of use.
- c) The proposal will have no significant adverse effects on the physical and economic integrity of other prime agricultural or existing open space lands.
- d) The territory is not within an area subject to a Greenbelt Agreement adopted by a city and the County of Ventura. If a city proposal involves territory within an adopted Greenbelt area, LAFCo will not approve the proposal unless all parties to the Greenbelt Agreement amend the Greenbelt Agreement to exclude the affected territory.
- e) The use or proposed use of the territory involved is consistent with local plan and policies.

Greenbelt Agreements

The cities of Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, San Buenaventura, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks along with LAFCo, and the County have adopted greenbelt agreements between these jurisdictions to further the objectives of the County's Guidelines for Orderly Development by preserving agriculture and open space between urban areas. The purpose of a greenbelt is to establish a mutual agreement between these cities regarding the limit of urban growth for each city. Greenbelt agreements are voluntary between the County Board of Supervisors and one or more City Councils regarding development of agricultural or open space areas beyond city limits. They protect open space and agricultural lands and reassure property owners located within these areas that lands will not be prematurely converted to agriculturally incompatible uses. The project site is not within a designated greenbelt area.⁷

⁵ Ventura Local Agency Formation Commission, Commissioner's Handbook: Policies of the Ventura LAFCo, September 20, 2023, Accessed January 24, 2024 at: <https://www.ventura.lafco.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Ventura-LAFCo-Commissioners-Handbook-Revised-2023-09-20-with-Appendix-D.pdf>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ County of Ventura Planning Division, County of Ventura Greenbelts Map, July 2016. Accessed on January 25, 2024, at: https://docs.vcrma.org/images/pdf/planning/programs/greenbelts/Countywide_Greenbelt_Map.pdf

Save Open Space and Agricultural Resources “Measure C” Ordinance

In the County of Ventura and eight cities in the County (San Buenaventura, Camarillo, Oxnard, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, Moorpark, Santa Paula, Fillmore) the voters approved the County-wide Save Open Space and Agricultural Resources (SOAR) initiative. The Simi Valley SOAR initiative was amended by voters in November 2016 and extended until 2050.⁸ The purpose of the SOAR initiatives is to ensure agricultural, open space, and rural lands located beyond urban boundaries are not prematurely or unnecessarily converted to other more intensive development uses, unless approved by a majority of voters within the SOAR area. The County SOAR initiative requires voter approval to allow urban development of lands with agricultural, open space, and rural land use designations. SOAR ordinances adopted by each of the eight cities establish a City Urban Restriction Boundary (CURB). Where CURB boundaries are proposed to be changed, requesting a ballot initiative to adjust the SOAR boundary is the responsibility of the subdivider (however, this is not required for the project as all parts of the project are within the CURB). Section 1F of the County SOAR ordinance states: “Open space designations also include productive lands that are used for agriculture and grazing. These lands are important to the overall economy of the County and the long-term economic viability of these productive lands shall be supported.”

Ventura County Right-to-Farm Ordinance

Ventura County adopted the Right-to-Farm Ordinance in the late 1970s. It is administered by both the Planning Division through the Ventura County zoning regulations and by the County Agricultural Commissioner. The Right-to-Farm Ordinance is intended to support and provide a safeguard for existing agricultural and farming operations that could be threatened by encroaching residential development. This is achieved through mandatory disclosure notifications provided to property owners who will be developing residential uses adjacent or near existing agricultural operations. The disclosure informs people seeking to develop or purchase homes of the Right-to-Farm Ordinance and the potential impacts that may be generated by nearby farming operations. The Ordinance also protects farms from nuisance complaints associated with customary farming practices.

Simi Valley General Plan

The City’s General Plan contains several provisions that relate to open space and agricultural land uses. Chapter 3, Community Development and Chapter 6, Natural Resources, of the General Plan⁹ includes goals and policies that address open space preservation.

4.2.2 Thresholds of Significance

The potential for the proposed project to result in impacts related to agricultural resources has been analyzed in relation to the thresholds below, based upon the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist and the LAFCo Handbook’s Findings and Criteria for Prime Agricultural and Existing Open Space Land Conversion. The proposed project would be considered to have a significant impact to biological resources when the proposed project has potential to:

- 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. (*Convert Farmland*)
- Convert existing Open Space land use to other uses in a way that will not lead to planned, orderly, and efficient development. (*Disorderly Conversion of Open Space or Farmland*)

⁸ SOAR website, Accessed January 21, 2024 at: <https://soarvc.org/communities/simi-valley/>

⁹ Simi Valley General Plan Chapter 1, Introduction, Table 1, General Plan Topics, identifies the nexus between the plan chapters and the California legally required elements. Relevant to this Draft EIR Section, General Plan Chapter 6 addresses the topic of open space, which is relevant to the legally required Open Space Element.

- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract. (*Convert Farmland*)
- Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g)). (*See No Analysis Warranted, below*)
- Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. (*See No Analysis Warranted, below*)
- Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. (*Disorderly Conversion of Open Space or Farmland*)

No Analysis Warranted

None of the project sites contain forest land or timberland, and thus the fourth and fifth criteria as well as the forest land component of the sixth bullet are not relevant to the project and do not warrant further analysis. The remaining topics are covered in the two subheadings evaluated in in Section 4.2.3.

4.2.3 Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

4.2.3.1 Convert Farmland

A significant impact may occur if the project would convert FMMP-designated Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, to non-agricultural use, or would conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.

North Canyon Ranch

The project site does not contain FMMP-designated Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance and is not zoned as an agricultural land use. Although FMMP-designated as Grazing Land, the project site is not used for current or recent grazing or other agricultural uses and the site is not enrolled in a Williamson Act contract.¹⁰ Therefore, the project would not result in the conversion of important farmland to a non-agricultural land use, conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract. No impact would occur to FMMP-designated Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance.

Required Island Annexations

Of all the Required Island Annexations, only Area 6, one of the smaller County Islands within the City, contains FMMP-designated agricultural land that has current and/or recent agricultural uses, and no project properties are zoned for agricultural use. As shown on Figure 4.2-1, the entirety of Area 6 is designated in various FMMP farmland classifications. The area is relatively small, and as shown, is isolated from other FMMP-designated lands.

The five parcels within Area 6 are privately owned, and as recorded by the Ventura County Assessor, one of these parcels is 0.37 acres and listed as a single-family parcel, three totaling 2.39 acres are listed as vacant residential, and the 11.38-acre remaining parcel is listed in the “orchards (mixed) and vineyards,” pursuant to the Assessor’s existing land use code categories. Thus, according to the Assessor, the site is

¹⁰ City of Simi Valley, General Plan EIR, June 2012, Section 4.2 Agricultural Resources, Figure 4.2-1: Important Farmland and Williamson Act Lands.

only partly in agricultural use, and based on available aerial photos, even less of the site is currently in active agricultural use.

None of the parcels within Area 6 are zoned for agricultural use or enrolled in a Williamson Act contract.¹¹ The City has pre-zoned Area 6 for residential uses, but the project does not propose physical changes to this area at this time. Therefore, the annexation of this area would not result in direct conversion of important farmland to a non-agricultural land use, or conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract. No direct impacts to converting FMMP-designated Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance would occur.

Indirectly, the previous pre-zoning of this area could result in an eventual conversion of FMMP-designated important agricultural land to non-agricultural use. However, the current FMMP acreage for the site is very small in comparison to the total agricultural uses in Ventura County and the state and this combined with the isolated location of the site makes it less viable for agricultural use. Further, only a small portion of the site (less than 11.3 acres) is currently in use for agriculture (orchards). In addition, based on analysis using the California Department of Conservation's Land Evaluation & Site Assessment (LESA) Model, the change in use would be less than significant.¹² Based on the above, the project's indirect impact on converting FMMP-designated Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Residual Impacts

Impacts would be less than significant before mitigation.

4.2.3.2 Disorderly Conversion of Open Space or Farmland

A significant impact may occur if the proposed project would convert existing open space or FMMP-designated farmland to other uses in a way that that is counter to planned, orderly, and efficient development.

North Canyon Ranch

The project site is FMMP-designated as Grazing Land, which is relatively common in the statewide FMMP mapping. The subject property has not been used for grading or irrigated agricultural production at any time during the past seven years. The project site is considered undeveloped and County-zoned as Open Space. With development, some of the site will remain in City-designated Open Space zoning, and the portion proposed for development (the project footprint) has limited value as open space because some of it has been previously disturbed, containing large, graded areas, unimproved dirt roads, artificial slopes with concrete terrace drains, two debris basins with associated drainage ditches, and soil imported from off-site construction. The adjacent areas to the south and east of the project site are part of the City and are already developed with residential uses, parks, and roads.

The City planned for the orderly development of the site by including the North Canyon Ranch property within its SOI and CURB boundaries, assigning pre-planned General Plan land use designations, and including plans for the extension of Falcon street on the site. The planned land use pattern demonstrates a

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² The California Department of Conservation's LESA Model is a point-based approach for rating the relative importance of agricultural land resources based upon specific measurable features.

proposed orderly development of the site in a way that would connect to adjacent to existing City land uses and roadways. The project's proposed Tentative Map (TM) implements the City's plans for the site. Its layout focuses land uses close to existing development, with remaining open space on the northerly portions of the site, away from the City. Based on City plans and the proposed TM layout, development would be an orderly extension of City-developed land and there would be no direct or indirect impact regarding disorderly development.

Required Island Annexations

Annexation Area 6

Annexation Area 6, approximately 14.14 acres in size, contains some FMMP-designated agricultural land and is privately owned. This annexation area is adjacent to existing development consisting of single family and multifamily residences and roads, within the current City limits. This annexation area forms a polygon that is a roughly triangular, with the base of the triangle fronting on Walnut Street, Tapo Canyon Road on the east, Lightning Ridge Way on the west, and with the northern tip of the triangle cut at the City's northerly boundary. The site is surrounded by residential property on three sides, and by open space on the smallest, northerly tip of the site, and is isolated from other agricultural lands. For the five-APN site, Ventura County Assessor records identify that one parcel is 0.37 acres and in single-family use, three parcels totaling 2.39 acres are vacant residential, and the 11.38-acre remaining parcel is listed as "orchards (mixed) and vineyards." The small size and isolation of the property, and the fact that it is entirely surrounded by non-agricultural land uses, presents an existing land use pattern (without the proposed project) that does not appear orderly.

Much of Area 6 is zoned as open space, but with the residential land uses surrounding the site on its three longest sides, the open space zoning is isolated and contrasting with the surrounding uses. Annexation of this area and the change to residential General Plan land use and zoning would also not result in a disorderly pattern of development, but instead would result in a more uniform pattern of development. Implementation of the proposed project would effectuate the City zoning and land use designations but would not directly propose development. Development of Area 6 consistent with the proposed zoning and land use designation would likely occur over time, but this indirect impact would not result in disorderly development, and thus there would be no direct in indirect impacts would occur regarding the disorderly conversion of FMMP-designated farmland or open space in Area 6.

Annexation Area 9

Area 9 is an undeveloped two-parcel area that does not contain FMMP-designated agricultural land or existing agricultural uses. The site is currently vacant, and is County zoned as OS-160 for the larger parcel and OS-10 for the smaller parcel. The City pre-planned land use designation is Community Park. Thus, a change to the zoning, planned land use designation, or actual land use would not affect agricultural lands. No impact to orderly development regarding agricultural land would occur.

Although the City pre-planned land use designation for Area 9 is Community Park, the site has never been developed as a community park. The larger of the site's two parcels is 7.90 acres and owned by the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District (RSRPD), which would be consistent with a possible future park. The second, smaller parcel is privately owned and 1.14 acres in size and is located adjacent to single-family residential development. The proposed project would rezone a 1.14-acre portion of this site to Residential Estate (RE), similar to but less dense than the adjacent land use, which is RM. The remaining 7.90 acres that is in RSRPD ownership would stay in City OS zoning.

Area 9 is predominantly surrounded by existing residential development, and adjacent to the State Route 118 on the north/northeast side, limiting its value as natural open space due to discontinuity with other open

space areas. While a future community park could be theoretically possible, the location is problematic for development. The site is rocky and surrounded by single-family residential uses on most sides, with the areas adjacent to the site's north/northeast boundary including the lanes of State Route 118 and related right-of-way areas adjacent to the eastbound lanes. Nevertheless, the proposed General Plan land use designation and zoning would permit future parkland use. The project does not propose any physical change to these parcels or any other within the annexation areas.

Indirectly, the annexation of this area would potentially result in the conversion of a relatively small amount of land (1.17 acres) from County open space zoning to other uses. However, given the small size of the property, its limited value and the most likely conversion to residential use, it would be compatible and consistent with adjacent uses. Thus, the change would not result in the disorderly conversion of open space, and no impact would occur regarding this issue.

Based on the above, no direct or indirect impacts would occur regarding the disorderly conversion of FMMP-designated farmland or open space in Area 9.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Residual Impacts

Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.

4.2.4 Cumulative Impacts

North Canyon Ranch

The North Canyon Ranch project would have no impacts regarding conversion of FMMP-designated Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance and no impact the disorderly conversion of open space or farmland. None of the related projects are adjacent to the North Canyon Ranch site, thus they would not contribute to shared impacts related to FMMP-designated or open space lands or to the orderly development of open space or farmland. Thus, the project's contribution would not be cumulatively considerable. In a broader cumulative sense, where future project areas are proposed on the open space parcels or in FMMP-designated lands, the lead agency would review the development applications of those future projects to determine if they could result in a significant environmental impact, and if a CEQA analysis is required. Cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

Required Island Annexations

The issue of impacts to FMMP-designated Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance Required is only applicable to Area 6, where the project was found to have no direct impact regarding conversion of lands so-designated by the FMMP, and the indirect impact was found to be less than significant. Open space conversion is applicable to Areas 6 and 9, where no direct and indirect impacts regarding disorderly conversion of open space or farmland would occur. None of the related projects are adjacent to Areas 6 and 9, and thus they would not contribute to shared impacts related to FMMP-designated lands or open space lands, or to the orderly development of open space or farmland. Thus, the project's contribution would not be cumulatively considerable. In a broader cumulative sense, where future projects are proposed on the open space parcels or in FMMP-designated lands, the lead agency would review the development applications of those future projects to determine if they could result in a significant environmental impact, and if a CEQA analysis is required. Cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

Combined Project Impacts

Considering the conclusions of both the North Canyon Ranch and Required Island Annexation impacts alone are less than significant without the need for mitigation, then combined, the project as a whole would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts related to FMMP-designated lands or open space lands, or to the orderly development of open space or farmland. Thus, the project's contribution would not be cumulatively considerable. As noted earlier, future projects would be assessed for potential impacts and for CEQA review by the lead agency, which would assure evaluation of future potentially significant impacts.