
IV. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

B. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

This section of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) addresses the subject of agricultural resources with respect to the proposed Big Wave Wellness Center and Office Park Project (“proposed project”), including: the potential of the proposed project to conflict with zoning for agricultural use or with a Williamson Act contract and the degree to which the project could result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use. In addition, the potential cumulative agricultural resource impacts of the project in combination with all known related projects are evaluated in this section.

METHODOLOGY

The environmental setting was compiled from information taken from sources including the San Mateo County Planning and Building Department, San Mateo County General Plan, California Department of Conservation (DOC), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The impacts analysis was derived by taking into consideration the development proposed by the project, applicable planning policies, existing onsite and nearby agricultural resources, and the cumulative geographic context. Agricultural and soils data are available on a project, city, county, and state level. This DEIR uses data collected and provided at the project and county level wherever feasible in an effort to provide comprehensive analysis.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Countywide Agricultural Resources

Agriculture plays an important role in San Mateo County. As of 2008, approximately 19 percent of the County’s land was agricultural.¹ Total agricultural production has remained relatively stable over the last three years.² San Mateo County’s agricultural products include floral and nursery crops grown both indoors and outdoors, vegetable crops, fruits and nuts, field crops, livestock, apiary, and forest products. In 2007, San Mateo County was one of the leading counties for production of potted plants, nursery stock, cut flowers, mushrooms, and brussels sprouts.³

¹ *Indicators for a Sustainable San Mateo County, 2008, website: <http://www.sustainablesanmateo.org/indicators-report/reports/2008-indicators-report/>, accessed on February 24, 2009 (citing San Mateo County Department of Agriculture and Weights & Measures.)*

² *Indicators for a Sustainable San Mateo County, 2009, website: <http://www.sustainablesanmateo.org/indicators-report/reports/2009-indicators-report/>, accessed on May 5, 2009.*

³ *California Department of Food and Agriculture, Agricultural Statistical Review, 2007 Overview, page 29, website: http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/statistics/files/CDFa_Sec2.pdf, accessed on April 29, 2009.*

The Coastside where the project site is located is predominantly rural and devoted to agricultural, recreational, or open space uses.⁴ Various row crops are grown on broad coastal terraces and in narrow alluvial stream valleys, while cattle grazing and dry farming occur on the surrounding coastal foothills. The prime agricultural soils in the mid- and southcoast, together with climate conditions, provide an ideal environment for growing certain specialty crops.⁵ These crops include artichokes, brussel sprouts, and cut flowers. Thus, these soils are in particular need of protection to provide the maximum opportunity for agricultural production.

Climate

Climate factors are important considerations for the evaluation of agricultural resources with respect to land use. The climate of San Mateo County is of the semi-arid Mediterranean type, characterized by dry, mild summers and moderately moist, cool winters.⁶ Factors associated with the Mediterranean climate in this area contribute to successful agricultural production for many crops, such as brussel sprouts and artichokes. Most of the rainfall that replenishes water resources occurs between November and April. Average annual rainfall varies between 15 to 25 inches on the Bayside, 20 to 30 inches on the Coastside, and 45 to 50 inches in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The Santa Cruz Mountain Range causes this variation and serves as a barrier to storm fronts and coastal fog approaching from the west. Thus, areas east of the Santa Cruz Mountains are in a rain shadow and the majority of rainfall occurs on the Coastside and in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Project Site Agricultural Resources

The site has been in and out of agricultural production since the 1930s. Up until recently, Swiss chard, cauliflower, and broccoli were being grown at the site. In September 2009, beans, peas, pumpkins and native nursery plants were grown at the site. The current property owner started farming the site in 2003. The site comprises approximately 19.4 acres of relatively flat undeveloped land and is currently irrigated during certain periods of the growing season to cultivate vegetable row crops.

As outlined in Section IV.G (Hazards & Hazardous Materials), per a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment conducted by Treadwell & Rollo (March 26, 2007) for the project site, pesticides may have been applied to soil at the site during agricultural use.

⁴ *San Mateo County General Plan, General Land Use, page 7.1, 7.7, website: http://www.sforoundtable.org/P&B/gp/GP%20Ch%2007_General_LU.pdf, accessed on February 27, 2009.*

⁵ *County of San Mateo, General Plan, Land Use Chapter, page 7.18, website: http://www.sforoundtable.org/P&B/gp/GP%20Ch%2007_General_LU.pdf, accessed on February 24, 2009.*

⁶ *County of San Mateo, General Plan, Vegetative, Water, Fish and Wildlife Resources Chapter, pages 1.8-10, website: http://www.sforoundtable.org/P&B/gp/GP%20Ch%2001_VWF%26W.pdf, accessed on May 5, 2009.*

Classification Systems

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) NRCS created various classification systems for agricultural land uses and measures of the suitability of soil for agricultural use. Described below are the Farmland Monitoring and Mapping Program (FMMP), the Land Capability Classification (LCC), and the Storie Index, as well as the application of these systems to the project site area.

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The DOC FMMP was established in 1982 as an informational service to continue the important farmland mapping efforts begun in 1975 by the NRCS.⁷ The FMMP does not constitute state regulation of local land use decisions. The intent of the NRCS was to produce agricultural resource maps based on soil quality and land use across the nation. As part of this nationwide mapping effort, NRCS developed a series of definitions known as the Land Inventory and Monitoring (LIM) criteria. The LIM criteria classifies land suitability for agricultural production, which includes analyzing the physical and chemical characteristics of soils including moisture capacity, soil temperature, pH balance, salinity, rooting depth, and flooding and erosion issues, as well as examining whether the land was used for agricultural production during the last four years. Important Farmland Maps are derived from NRCS soil survey maps using LIM criteria. The minimum mapping unit is generally 10 acres. The program maintains an inventory of state agricultural land and updates its "Important Farmland Series Map" every two years. The FMMP map identifies eight classifications of land capability, which are described below.⁸

Prime Farmland

Prime Farmland is land which has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed according to current farming methods that include water management. Prime Farmland must have been used for the production of irrigated crops at some time during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date. It does not include publicly owned lands for which there is an adopted policy preventing agricultural use.

Farmland of Statewide Importance

Farmland of Statewide Importance is land other than Prime Farmland which has a good combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops. It must have been used for the

⁷ California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, *A Guide to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program*, 2004 edition, page 5, website: http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/pubs/Documents/fmmp_guide_2004.pdf, accessed on February 24, 2009.

⁸ California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, *Important Farmland Mapping Categories and Soil Taxonomy Terms*, website: http://www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/pubs/Documents/soil_criteria.pdf, accessed on February 25, 2009.

production of irrigated crops at some time during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date. It does not include publicly owned lands for which there is an adopted policy preventing agricultural use.

Unique Farmland

Unique Farmland is land which does not meet the criteria for Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance but has been used for the production of specific high economic value crops at some time during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high quality and/or high yields of a specific crop when treated and managed according to current farming methods. Examples of such crops may include oranges, olives, avocados, rice, grapes, and cut flowers. It does not include publicly owned lands for which there is an adopted policy preventing agricultural use.

Farmland of Local Importance

Farmland of Local Importance is either currently producing crops, has the capability of production, or is used for the production of confined livestock. Farmland of Local Importance is land other than Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland. This land may be important to the local economy due to its productivity or value. It does not include publicly owned lands for which there is an adopted policy preventing agricultural use.

Grazing Land

Grazing Land is defined in Government Code §65570(b)(3) as: "...land on which the existing vegetation, whether grown naturally or through management, is suitable for grazing or browsing of livestock." The minimum mapping unit for Grazing Land is 40 acres. Grazing Land does not include land previously designated as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, or heavily brushed, timbered, excessively steep, or rocky lands which restrict the access and movement of livestock.

Urban and Built-up Land

Urban and Built-up Land is used for residential, industrial, commercial, construction, institutional, public administrative purposes, railroad yards, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment plants, water control structures, and other development purposes. Highways, railroads, and other transportation facilities are mapped as a part of Urban and Built-up Land if they are a part of the surrounding urban areas.

Units of land smaller than ten acres will be incorporated into the surrounding map classifications. The building density for residential use must be at least one structure per 1.5 acres (or approximately 6 structures per 10 acres). Urban and Built-up Land must contain man-made structures or buildings under construction, and the infrastructure required for development (e.g., paved roads, sewers, water, electricity, drainage, or flood control facilities) that are specifically designed to serve that land. Parking lots, storage and distribution facilities, and industrial uses such as large packing operations for agricultural produce

will generally be mapped as Urban and Built-up Land even though they may be associated with agriculture.

Urban and Built-up Land does not include strip mines, borrow pits, gravel pits, farmsteads, ranch headquarters, commercial feedlots, greenhouses, poultry facilities, or road systems for freeway interchanges outside of areas classified as Urban and Built-up Land areas. Within areas classified as Urban and Built-up Land, vacant and nonagricultural land which is surrounded on all sides by urban development and is less than 40 acres in size will be mapped as Urban and Built-up. Vacant and nonagricultural land larger than 40 acres in size will be mapped as Other Land.

Other Land

Other Land is that which is not included in any of the other mapping categories. The following types of land are generally included:

- a. rural development which has a building density of less than one structure per 1.5 acres, but with at least one structure per ten acres;
- b. brush, timber, wetlands, and other lands not suitable for livestock grazing;
- c. government lands not available for agricultural use;
- d. road systems for freeway interchanges outside of Urban and Built-up Land areas;
- e. vacant and nonagricultural land larger than 40 acres in size and surrounded on all sides by urban development;
- f. confined livestock, poultry, or aquaculture facilities, unless accounted for by the county's Farmland of Local Importance definition;
- g. strip mines, borrow pits, gravel pits, and ranch headquarters, or water bodies smaller than 40 acres; and
- h. a variety of other rural land uses.

Land Committed to Nonagricultural Use

Land Committed to Nonagricultural Use is land that is permanently committed by local elected officials to nonagricultural development by virtue of decisions which cannot be reversed simply by a majority vote of a city council or county board of supervisors.

Land Capability Classification

Existing soil quality and water availability are some of the predominant factors that determine where agricultural resources will occur and what type of crops will be grown. Soil units are classified according to their characteristics with an emphasis on those features that influence their suitability for the growing of crop plants, grasses and trees. Soil units often form a mixed pattern so that they are grouped based on similar characteristics and are represented as an association. An association is made up of two or more

soil units that are represented as one unit on NRCS maps. Within these soil types, minor soil differences, such as the variations in effective rooting depth, slope, erosion, drainage and salt content or alkali content may be important factors for agricultural production.

The LCC system indicates suitability for most kinds of crops. Groupings are made according to the limitations of the soils when used to grow crops and the risk of damage to soils when they are used in agriculture.⁹ As shown in Table IV.B-1, soils are rated from Class I to Class VIII, with soils having the fewest limitations receive the highest rating (Class I). Subclasses (e, w, s, and c) are also utilized to further characterize soils.

Table IV.B-1
Land Capability Classification System

Class	Definition
I	Soils have slight limitations that restrict their use.
II	Soils have moderate limitations that reduce the choice of plants or require moderate conservation practices.
III	Soils have severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants or require special conservation practices, or both.
IV	Soils have very severe limitations that restrict the choice of plants or require very careful management, or both.
V	Soils have little or no hazard of erosion but have other limitations, impractical to remove, that limit their use mainly to pasture, range, forestland, or wildlife food and cover.
VI	Soils have severe limitations that make them generally unsuited to cultivation and that limit their use mainly to pasture, range, forestland, or wildlife food and cover.
VII	Soils have very severe limitations that make them unsuited to cultivation and that restrict their use mainly to grazing, forestland, or wildlife.
VIII	Soils and miscellaneous areas have limitations that preclude their use for commercial plant production and limit their use to recreation, wildlife, water supply or aesthetic purposes.
Subclass	Definition
e	Made up of soils for which the susceptibility to erosion is the dominant problem or hazard affecting their use. Erosion susceptibility and past erosion damage are the major soil factors that affect soils in this subclass.
w	Made up of soils for which excess water is the dominant hazard or limitation affecting their use. Poor soil drainage, wetness, a high water table, and overflow are the factors that affect soils in this subclass.
s	Made up of soils that have soil limitations within the rooting zone, such as shallowness of the rooting zone, stones, low moisture-holding capacity, low fertility that is difficult to correct, and salinity issues.
c	Made up of soils for which the climate (e.g., temperature or lack of

⁹ California Department of Conservation, *California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model Instruction Manual*, 1997, page 7, website: <http://www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/LESA/lesamodl.pdf>, accessed on February 26, 2009.

**Table IV.B-1
Land Capability Classification System**

Class	Definition
	moisture) is the major hazard or limitation affecting their use.
<i>Source: United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service, National Soil Survey Handbook, Part 622, http://soils.usda.gov/technical/handbook/contents/part622.html#02, accessed on February 25, 2009.</i>	

Storie Index

As shown in Table IV.B-2, the Storie Index provides a numeric rating based on a 100 point scale of the relative degree of suitability or value of a given soil for intensive agriculture. The rating is based on soil characteristics only. Factors that represent the inherent characteristics and qualities of the soil are considered in the index rating. The factors include profile characteristics, texture of the surface layer, slope, and other aspects such as drainage and salinity.¹⁰

**Table IV.B-2
Storie Index Rating**

Grade	Index Rating	Description
1	80-100	Few limitations that restrict their use for crops.
2	60-80	Suitable for most crops, but have minor limitations that narrow the choice of crops and have a few special management needs.
3	40-60	Suited to a few crops or to special crops and require special management.
4	20-40	If used for crops, are severely limited and require special management.
5	10-20	Not suited for cultivated crops, but can be used for pasture and range.
6	Less than 10	Soil and land types generally not suited to farming.
<i>Source: University of California-Berkeley, Storie, R. Earl and Walter W. Weir, Manual for Identifying and Classifying California Soil Series, 1948 with 1958 Supplement, revised 1978, http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/pdf/3203.pdf, accessed on February 25, 2009.</i>		

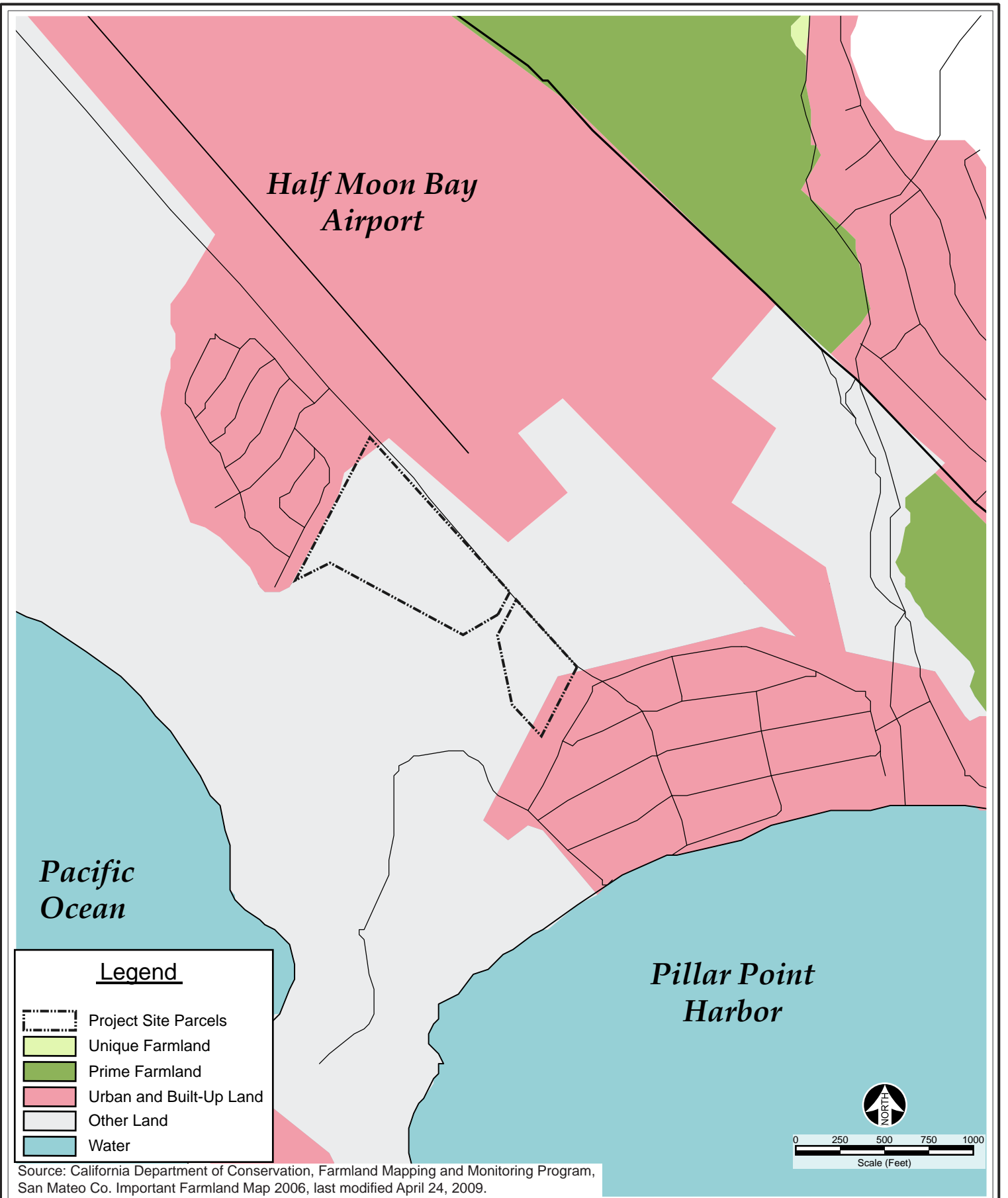
Onsite and Surrounding Classifications

Farmland Mapping

According to the FMMP information as displayed in Figure IV.B-1, the land on the project site is primarily classified as Other Land with minor portions on the outskirts being classified as Urban and Built-up Land.¹¹ Although the project site has historically been used for agricultural purposes, the site is completely surrounded by and located in an area that is mostly classified as Urban and Built-up Land, as

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, San Mateo County Important Farmland Map 2006, website: <ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/FMMP/pdf/2006/smt06.pdf>, accessed on February 26, 2009.*



well as Other Land. Land directly to the north and to the southeast of the project site, including the Half Moon Bay Airport property, is classified as Urban and Built-up Land. Land directly to the southwest of the project site is classified as Other Land. The area located east and northeast of the project site, beyond the Airport, is classified as Prime Farmland with some Unique Farmland. These important farmlands are located approximately 1/3 mile from the project site and are surrounded by Urban and Built-up Land, as well as Other Land.

Land Capability Classification and Storie Index Rating

The NRCS has identified and mapped soils for the project site and surrounding areas, as shown in Figure IV.B-2. The project site consists of two soil types that are presented with their respective LCCs and Storie Index Ratings in Table IV.B-3. Soil at the site consists of “Denison clay loam, nearly level” and “Denison clay loam, nearly level, imperfectly drained”. The Denison clay loam, nearly level, is categorized as Class IIs and the Denison clay loam, nearly level, imperfectly drained, is classified as Class IIw. Hence, the soils within the project site have moderate limitations relating to excessive water issues and soil limitations within the rooting zone. The NRCS Storie Index rates the project site’s soil types as 72 and 65, respectively. As such the soils qualify as Grade 2 soils, which are suitable for most crops, but have minor limitations that narrow the choice of crops and which have a few special management needs.

Table IV.B-3
Project Site Soil Types, Land Capability Classifications, and Storie Index Ratings

Soil Map Unit	Acres	Proportion of Project Area (%)	Soil Classification	Storie Index Rating
Denison clay loam, nearly level	15	0.75	IIs	72
Denison clay loam, nearly level, imperfectly drained	5	0.25	IIw	65
Total	20	100%		

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soil Data Mart information retrieval for County of San Mateo, 2006; and Christopher A. Joseph & Associates, 2006.

Conversion of Farmlands in San Mateo County

The FMMP identifies agricultural land that is lost as well as gained during two year periods. The FMMP data is used to determine the amount of farmland that is being converted to nonagricultural uses in California and in each county. According to the DOC, between the years 2006 and 2008, San Mateo County lost a net total of 2,943 acres of important farmland (i.e., Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance) and gained a net total of 2,665 acres of grazing land, resulting in a net loss of 278 acres of total agricultural land.¹² Of the agricultural land lost

¹² California Department of Conservation, *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, San Mateo County 2006-2008 Land Use Conversion*, website: http://redirect.conservacion.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/county_info_results.asp, accessed on June 16, 2009.

during that period, approximately 29 acres were converted to Urban and Built-up Land. Approximately 17 of those acres were from important farmland. During that same time period 1 acre of Urban and Built-up Land was converted to agricultural land (specifically, important farmland). Therefore, the County experienced a net loss of approximately 28 acres of agricultural land from urban land between the years of 2006 and 2008, and in addition approximately 353 additional acres of agricultural land were converted to Other Land uses, through the acquisition of land by governmental agencies which may, in some cases, lease the land back to agricultural users.

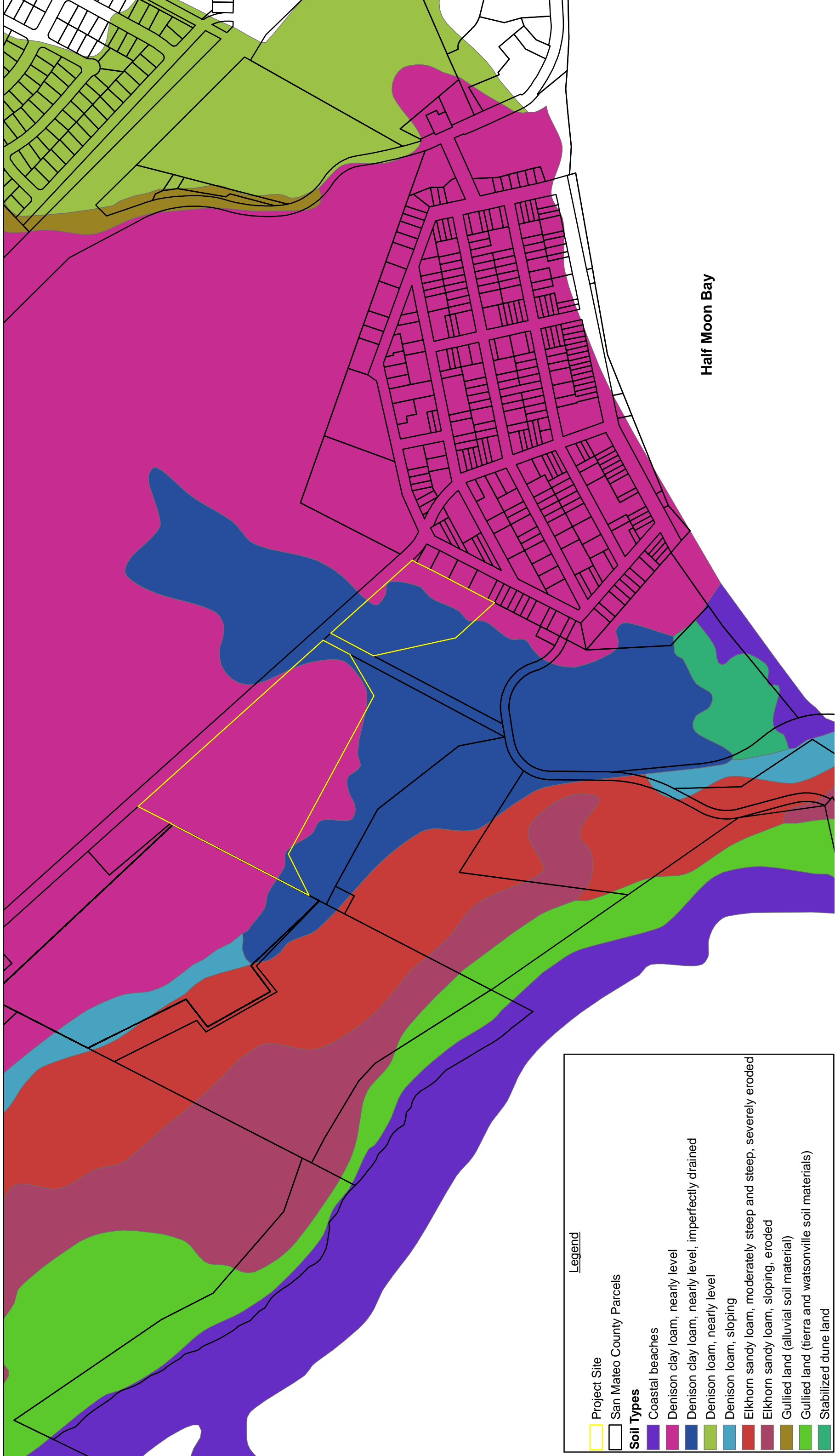
However, as shown in Table IV.B-4, trends in the loss of farmland may fluctuate depending upon the two-year period considered. In comparison to the period of 2006 to 2008, 17 acres of agricultural land (of which seven acres were important farmland) were converted to Urban and Built-up Land between the years 2004 and 2006, and 36 acres of Urban and Built-up Land were converted to agricultural land (of which 10 acres were converted to important farmland).¹³ Therefore, the County experienced a 19 acre gain of agricultural land from urban land during the period. In addition, in the period between 2002 and 2004, 3 acres of agricultural land (all important farmland) were converted to Urban and Built-up Land, and 19 acres of Urban and Built-up Land were converted to agricultural land (all important farmland).¹⁴ Therefore, the County experienced a 16 acre gain of agricultural land (all important farmland) during that period.

Table IV.B-4
County of San Mateo
Agricultural-Urban Land Conversions by Acreage (2002-2008)

Land Conversion	2002-2004	2004-2006	2006-2008
Important Farmland → Urban	3	7	17
Agricultural → Urban	3	17	29
Urban → Important Farmland	19	10	1
Urban → Agricultural	19	36	1
Net Important Farmland Gain (Loss)	16	3	(16)
Net Agricultural Gain (Loss)	16	19	(28)
<i>Source: California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Index.aspx, accessed on June 16, 2009.</i>			

¹³ California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, San Mateo County 2002-2004 Land Use Conversion, website: http://redirect.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/pubs/2002-2004/conversion_tables/smtcon04.xls, accessed on February 25, 2009.

¹⁴ California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, San Mateo County 2000-2002 Land Use Conversion, website: http://redirect.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/pubs/2000-2002/conversion_tables/smtcon02.xls, accessed on February 25, 2009.



Half Moon Bay

Legend

- Project Site
- San Mateo County Parcels

Soil Types

- Coastal beaches
- Denison clay loam, nearly level
- Denison clay loam, nearly level, imperfectly drained
- Denison loam, nearly level
- Denison loam, sloping
- Elkhorn sandy loam, moderately steep and steep, severely eroded
- Elkhorn sandy loam, sloping, eroded
- Gullied land (alluvial soil material)
- Gullied land (tierra and watsonville soil materials)
- Stabilized dune land

Source: County of San Mateo, U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Data, and Christopher A. Joseph & Associates, 2006.



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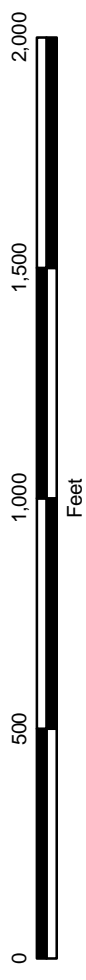


Figure IV.B-2
Local Soil Types

REGULATORY SETTING

Federal

No federal plans, policies, regulations or laws related to agricultural resources are applicable to the proposed project.

State

Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act)

The project sites are not under a Williamson Act Contract.

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (California Government Code Section 51200) also known as the Williamson Act recognizes the importance of agricultural land as an economic resource that is vital to the general welfare of society. The enacting legislation declares that the preservation of a maximum amount of the limited supply of agricultural land is necessary to the conservation of the state's economic resources, and is necessary not only to the maintenance of the agricultural economy of the state, but also for the assurance of adequate, healthful, and nutritious food for future residents of the state and of the nation.¹⁵ Intended to assist the long-term preservation of prime agricultural land in the state, the Act creates an arrangement whereby private landowners contract with counties and cities to voluntarily restrict land to agricultural and open-space uses.¹⁶ The vehicle for these agreements is a rolling term 10 year contract (i.e., unless either party files a "notice of nonrenewal" the contract is automatically renewed annually for an additional year). When under contract, the landowner no longer pays property tax for an assessed valuation based upon the property's urban development potential. Therefore, restricted parcels are assessed for property tax purposes at a rate consistent with their actual use, rather than potential market value. The Williamson Act is estimated to save agricultural landowners from 20 percent to 75 percent in property tax liability each year.¹⁷ To be eligible for Williamson Act designation, land must be used to produce an agricultural commodity that is plant or animal and is produced in California for commercial purposes.

¹⁵ California Government Code §51220(a).

¹⁶ California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, *Williamson Act Questions and Answers, page 1*, website: <http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/lca/Documents/WA%20fact%20sheet%2006.pdf>, accessed on February 27, 2009.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Regional and Local

San Mateo County General Plan

The General Plan does not designate the land as Agricultural. It has a land use designation of General Industrial. Policies related to the protection of agricultural resources are provided below:

Soil Resources

2.17 Regulate Development to Minimize Soil Erosion and Sedimentation

- To regulate development to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation; including, but not limited to, measures which consider the effects of slope, minimize removal of vegetative cover, ensure stabilization of disturbed areas and protect and enhance natural plant communities and nesting and feeding areas of fish and wildlife.

2.18 Encouragement of Soil Protective Uses

- To encourage the continuance and expansion of soil protective uses in rural areas, specifically agriculture and forestry, for their ability to protect soil as an available resource, as well as produce beneficial food, fiber, and decorative crops.

2.19 Preferred Uses in Areas With Productive Soil Resources

- To give preference to soil protective land uses in areas with productive soil resources. Allow other land uses which are compatible with soil protective uses and which minimally impact the continued availability and productivity of productive soil resources.

2.20 Regulate Location and Design of Development in Areas With Productive

- To regulate location and design of development in a manner which is most protective of productive soil resources, including, but not limited to, measures which require clustering of structures; and the continued availability and productivity of productive soil resources.

2.21 Protect Productive Soil Resources Against Soil Conversion

- Regulate land use and subdivision of productive soil resources and encourage appropriate management practices to protect against soil conversion. Regulations should place priorities according to the relative productive characteristics of the resource.

2.28 Regulate Agricultural Activities Against Soil Depletion in Agricultural Areas

- Regulate agricultural activities to minimize against soil depletion.

Park and Recreation Facilities

6.12 Minimize Agricultural Land Use Conflicts

Preserve the best agricultural land for agricultural uses. On other lands capable of supporting agriculture, permit the location of park and recreation facilities when efforts are made to lease land not needed for recreational purposes to farm operations, and clearly defined buffer areas such as strips of land are established between these two uses to minimize land use conflicts.

*Rural Land Use*9.28 Encourage Existing and Potential Agricultural Activities

- To (a) encourage the continuance of existing agricultural and agriculturally- related activities; (b) encourage agricultural activities on soils with agricultural capability that are currently not in production; (c) consider agricultural land use designations for parcels which have existing agricultural activities or which contain soils with agricultural capability that are presently designated General Open Space; and (d) consider open space designations for agricultural parcels that are no longer capable of agricultural activities during future reviews of area plans.

9.30 Development Standards to Minimize Land Use Conflicts with Agriculture

- To (a) avoid to the greatest extent possible locating non-agricultural activities on soils with agricultural capability or lands in agricultural production; (b) locate non-agricultural activities in areas of agricultural parcels which cause the least disturbance to feasible agricultural activities; (c) buffer any non-agricultural activities from agricultural activities by means of distance, physical barriers or other non-disruptive methods; (d) ensure that any extension of public services and facilities to serve non-agricultural activities will not impair feasible agricultural activities.

*Agricultural Water Supplies*10.21 Agricultural Surface Water Uses

Protect downstream agricultural surface water sources by discouraging: (1) the creation of new non-agricultural parcels which would use nearby streams as a source for water supplies; and (2) the transfer of riparian rights to the new parcels.

San Mateo County Local Coastal Program

The San Mateo County Local Coastal Program (LCP) does not designate the project site as Agricultural parcels. Both project site parcels are designated as General Industrial; permitting light industrial, manufacturing, and research and development uses on the most northerly parcel, and permitting waterfront/marine industrial and light industrial on the most southerly parcel, with a small portion of the

site as Open Space (drainage swale).¹⁸ Under LCP 5.1a, the parcels could potentially qualify as Prime Agricultural Lands due to having Class II rating under the Land Use Capability classification system. However, LCP 5.2 does not call for parcels containing prime soils to be designated as Agriculture if the parcel is located in an urban area.

5.1 Definition of Prime Agricultural Lands

Define prime agricultural lands as:

- a. All land which qualifies for rating as Class I or Class II in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service Land Use Capability Classification, as well as all Class III lands capable of growing artichokes or Brussels sprouts.
- b. All land which qualifies for rating 80-100 in the Storie Index Rating.
- c. Land which supports livestock for the production of food and fiber and which has an annual carrying capacity equivalent to at least one animal unit per acre as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- d. Land planted with fruit or nut bearing trees, vines, bushes, or crops which have a non-bearing period of less than five years and which normally return during the commercial bearing period, on an annual basis, from the production of unprocessed agricultural plant production not less than \$200 per acre.
- e. Land which has returned from the production of an unprocessed agricultural plant product an annual value that is not less than \$200 per acre within three of the five previous years. The \$200 per acre amount in subsections d. and e. shall be adjusted regularly for inflation, using 1965 as the base year, according to a recognized consumer price index.

5.2 Designation of Prime Agricultural Lands

Designate any parcel which contains prime agricultural lands as Agriculture on the Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan Map, subject to the following exceptions: State Park lands existing as of the date of Local Coastal Program certification, urban areas, rural service centers, and solid waste disposal sites necessary for the health, safety, and welfare of the County.

¹⁸ *Midcoast LCP Update Project Map, San Mateo County Planning & Building Division, May 30, 2002, website: http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/planning/pdf/midcoast_lcp_update.pdf, accessed on May 20, 2009.*

Montara-Moss Beach-El Granada Community Plan

The Montara-Moss Beach-El Granada community extends along the Pacific Coast from Martini Creek, at the base of Montara Mountain, to the northerly city limits of Half Moon Bay. With respect to agricultural resources, the community plan contains the following policies:

- 5.1 Protect and enhance prime agricultural and open space lands within the community and maintain the existing balance between urban and open lands;
- 5.2 Maintain agricultural production in all viable areas and encourage the placement of prime agricultural soils in agricultural preserves (Williamson Act);
- 5.3 Restrict residential development in areas of prime agricultural soils to development related to agricultural production;
- 5.4 Retain prime agricultural land in A-1 (Agriculture) or RM (Resource Management) zoning for protection against urban development;
- 5.5 Sublease areas of prime soils within publicly owned parks and the Half Moon Bay Airport for agricultural production.

San Mateo County Zoning Regulations

Neither of the parcels is zoned for agricultural use, and instead contains the following zoning:

Northern Parcel:	Light Industrial/Design Review/Coastal Development District (M-1/DR/CD)
	Light Industrial/Airport Overlay/Design Review/Coastal Development District (M-11/AO/DR/CD)
Southern Parcel:	Waterfront/Design Review/Coastal Development District (W/DR/CD)
	Waterfront/Airport Overlay/Design Review/Coastal Development District (W/AO/DR/CD)

Coastal Development (CD) District Ordinance

The CD District covers the entire Coastal Zone within unincorporated San Mateo County. Development in this District requires a Coastal Development Permit, applications for which are evaluated against the applicable policies of the LCP. Development review criteria relevant to soil resources are included in the Agriculture, Hazards, Sensitive Habitats and other components of the LCP.

For a more detailed analysis of the land uses associated with the proposed project, refer to Section IV.I (Land Use and Planning) of this DEIR.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Thresholds of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the proposed project could have a significant environmental impact on agriculture resources if it would:

- (a) 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;
- (b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract; or
- (c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use.

As discussed in Section V.C (Impacts Found to Be Less Than Significant) of this DEIR, impacts associated with State CEQA Guidelines Threshold (b) provided above was determined to be less than significant. Therefore, only Thresholds (a) and (c) listed above are addressed in the following discussion.

Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact AG-1 Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Important Farmland) to Non-Agricultural Use

The project site is depicted as Urban and Built-up Land and Other Land on the Important Farmland Map for San Mateo County. Therefore, the project site has not been designated as important farmland and development of the site would not involve conversion of important farmland.

As discussed previously, the soils at the project site are classified as Class II soils under the LCC system and classified as Grade 2 soils using the Storie Index rating. These classifications generally indicate that the soils are suitable for most crops with moderate limitations. The site has been in an out of agricultural production since the 1930s and was recently being used to grow Swiss chard, cauliflower, and broccoli. However, the site is not designated as an Agricultural land use per the San Mateo County General Plan and the LCP. Both parcels are currently designated as General Industrial.

As discussed above, the proposed development within both parcels would not completely preclude crop production in the future since a component of the proposed project includes Big Wave (BW) Farming. This would include: (1) farming up to 12 acres of row crops on an existing farm (located immediately east of the Wellness Center property) to be leased by the project; and (2) operating a 5-acre onsite native plant nursery.

Therefore, the proposed project would not involve the conversion of important farmland. Impacts related to the conversion of important farmland would be ***less than significant*** and no mitigation measures are required.

Impact AG-2 Changes in the Existing Environment which could Result in the Conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Important Farmland) to Non-Agricultural Use

As described previously, there is no important farmland adjacent to the project site. The nearest important farmlands are located 1/3 mile from the project site, on the other side of the Airport, and are surrounded by lands classified as Urban and Built-up Land, as well as Other Land. No offsite roadway improvements are included as part of the proposed project, as well as all proposed infrastructure for project-related utilities and service systems would be developed onsite or immediately adjacent to the site (e.g., offsite wastewater infrastructure hook-ups for use of tertiary treated water on the adjacent, offsite proposed 12-acre row crop agricultural uses). Therefore, no proposed infrastructure improvements would interfere with existing offsite agricultural uses.

The proposed project includes onsite and offsite agricultural uses, such as: (1) farming up to 12 acres of row crops on an offsite adjacent parcel currently utilized for farming; and (2) operating a 5-acre onsite native plant nursery.

Overall, the proposed project would not involve changes to the existing environment, which could result in the conversion of important farmland. Therefore, impacts would be ***less than significant*** and no mitigation measures are required.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The proposed project does not involve the loss of important farmland or Williamson Act contract land onsite or nearby, and therefore does not contribute to a cumulative loss of agricultural land. Although the agricultural use at the project site would be largely replaced by non-agricultural uses, farming operations would still be maintained on- and off-site as part of the new development and therefore the development would not impact agricultural uses on properties categorized as important farmland or Williamson Act contract land.

Therefore, the proposed project's contribution to significant cumulative impacts would be ***less than significant*** and no mitigation measures are required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

Project specific impacts related to agriculture resources would be ***less than significant***.

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