

## **4.2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES**

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## 4.2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

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### INTRODUCTION

This section of the EIR evaluates the conversion of farmland to urban uses, potential conflicts with nearby agricultural uses, and potential conflicts with the City of Yuba City General Plan policies adopted to protect agricultural resources from future development of the Lincoln East Specific Plan (LESP or proposed project) and Sutter County LAFCO policies related to annexation of the project site.

Comments received in response to the NOP (see Appendix B) raised concerns associated with the loss of agricultural land and resources in the area as well as conflicts with land under Williamson Act contracts. The project site is within the city's Sphere of Influence (SOI). No parcels within the SOI were included in Sutter County's Agricultural Preserve.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, because land must be within an Agricultural Preserve, as designated by the County, to qualify for a Williamson Act contract, no land within the project site could be under a Williamson Act contract. Thus, any potential conflict with Williamson Act contracts is not discussed in this section.

The Yuba City General Plan, the Sutter County General Plan, the Sutter County LAFCO Policies and Procedures, the California Department of Conservation Land Use Conversion Reports, and the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) Soil Candidate Listings, and communication with the Sutter County Community Services Department were all referenced in preparation of this section.

### ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

#### Existing Agriculture in Sutter County

"Agriculture around Sutter County can be traced to 1840 when John Sutter started a stock ranch called the "Hock Farm" near the site of what would become Yuba City."<sup>2</sup> Currently, the ten leading crops include: rice, beans, tomatoes, melons, alfalfa, hay, and tree crops of peaches, almonds, walnuts, and plums.<sup>3</sup> The 2002 Census of Agriculture for Sutter County (Census), prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), noted 1,391 farms in 2002, which was a decrease of 8 percent from 1997. However, the Census also noted that the land in farms totaled 371,964 acres in 2002, which was a 3 percent increase from 1997. The USDA completed the data collection for the 2007 Census of Agriculture in February 2007 and expects to release the reports in February 2009.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Personal communication, Dale Follas, Sutter County Community Services Department, October 23, 2006.  
2 <http://syix.com/yubacity/ycag/html>, *Yuba City's Agricultural Heritage*, accessed September 9, 2005.  
3 <http://syix.com/yubacity/ycag/html>, *Yuba City's Agricultural Heritage*, accessed September 9, 2005.  
4 United States Department of Agriculture, *The Census of Agriculture*, <<http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/index.asp>>, accessed November 25, 2008.

The most recent California Farmland Conversion Table (2004-2006) inventoried 389,439 acres of land in Sutter County. According to the Department of Conservation, the County contains 165,817 acres of Prime Farmland, 107,194 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, and 19,245 acres of Unique Farmland totaling 292,256 acres of Important Farmland. Sutter County does not include any land designated Farmland of Local Importance. The survey also inventoried 51,516 acres of Grazing Land, 12,928 acres of Urban and Built-up Land, 30,856 acres of Other Land, and 1,883 acres of Water.<sup>5</sup>

### **Existing Agriculture Activities On and Adjacent to the Project Site**

Existing agricultural operations within the project site are dominated by orchards, including walnut and plum orchards. Adjacent agricultural uses are primarily located to the south and west of the project site and are also dominated by walnut, prune, and peach orchards.

### **California Department of Conservation Important Farmland Classifications**

The California Department of Conservation (CDC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) combines technical soil ratings and current land use information to create an inventory of Important Farmland. Information on soils is primarily taken from the U.S. Department of Agriculture soil surveys. The CDC divides Important Farmland into four categories: 1) Prime Farmland, 2) Farmland of Statewide Importance, 3) Unique Farmland, and 4) Farmland of Local Importance. According to the FMMP, the project site is classified as Farmland of Statewide Importance, Urban/Built-Up, and Other.<sup>6</sup> The site is dominated by Farmland of Statewide Importance with approximately 911 acres falling under this classification. The remainder of the site is classified as Urban/Built-Up and Other. An explanation of these classes is contained in Table 4.2-1, below. Farmland classifications as they occur on the project site are illustrated on Figure 4.2-1.

### **Soil Classifications**

There are several methods of classifying soil quality for agricultural uses. One method involves a soil capability rating provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Capability ratings indicate, in a general way, the suitability of soils for most kinds of field crops. The classes are developed according to the limitation of the soils when used for field crops, the risk of damage when they are used, and the way they respond to treatment. Another method of evaluating soil quality for agricultural uses is the Storie Index. This index numerically expresses the relative degree of suitability of a soil for general intensive agriculture, as it exists at the time of evaluation. The rating is based on soil characteristics only and is obtained by evaluating such factors as soil depth, surface texture, subsoil characteristics, drainage, presence of salts and alkali, and topography. There are four soil types on the project site; Conejo-Tisdale complex, 0 to 2 percent slope; Marcum-

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5 California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, Sutter County 2004-2006 Land Use Conversion Table, Table A-41.

6 California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, Sutter County, 2002.

TABLE 4.2-1

## FMMP FARMLAND CLASSIFICATIONS

| Land Classification   | Definition  |
|---|---|
| <b>Prime Farmland</b>   | Land with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long-term production of agricultural crops. The land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. The land must have been used for the production of irrigated crops at some time during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date to be classified as prime.<br><br>Prime Farmland generally consists of Class I and II soils. They have the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed, including water management, according to current farming methods. |
| <b>Farmland of Statewide Importance</b>   | Similar to Prime Farmland but with some minor differences, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. The land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.   |
| <b>Unique Farmland</b>  | Farmland that is not classified as prime or of statewide importance, which produces one of California's 40 leading economic crops, such as grapes, artichokes, avocados, and dates. Soil characteristics and irrigation are not considered.   |
| <b>Farmland of Local Importance</b>   | Land other than Unique Farmland, which may be important to the local economy due to its productivity or value. Determined by each county's board of supervisors and a local advisory committee.   |
| <b>Grazing Land</b>   | Land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock. The minimum mapping unit for Grazing Land is 40 acres.   |
| <b>Urban and Built-up Land</b>  | Land occupied by structures with a building density of at least 1 unit to 1.5 acres, or approximately 6 structures to a 10-acre parcel. Common examples include residential, industrial, commercial, institutional facilities, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment, and water control structures.  |
| <b>Other Land</b>   | Land not included in any other mapping category. Examples of land classified as Other Land include low density rural developments; timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than forty acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is also mapped as Other Land.   |
| Source: California Department of Conservation, <i>California Farmland Conversion Report 1998-2000</i> , page 5. |   |

Gridley clay loams, 0 to 1 percent slope; Oswald Clay, 0 to 2 percent slope; and Tisdale clay loam, 0 to 2 percent slope.<sup>7</sup> All of these soils are listed as Farmland of Statewide Importance on the Soil Candidate Listing for Sutter County.<sup>8</sup>

## REGULATORY CONTEXT

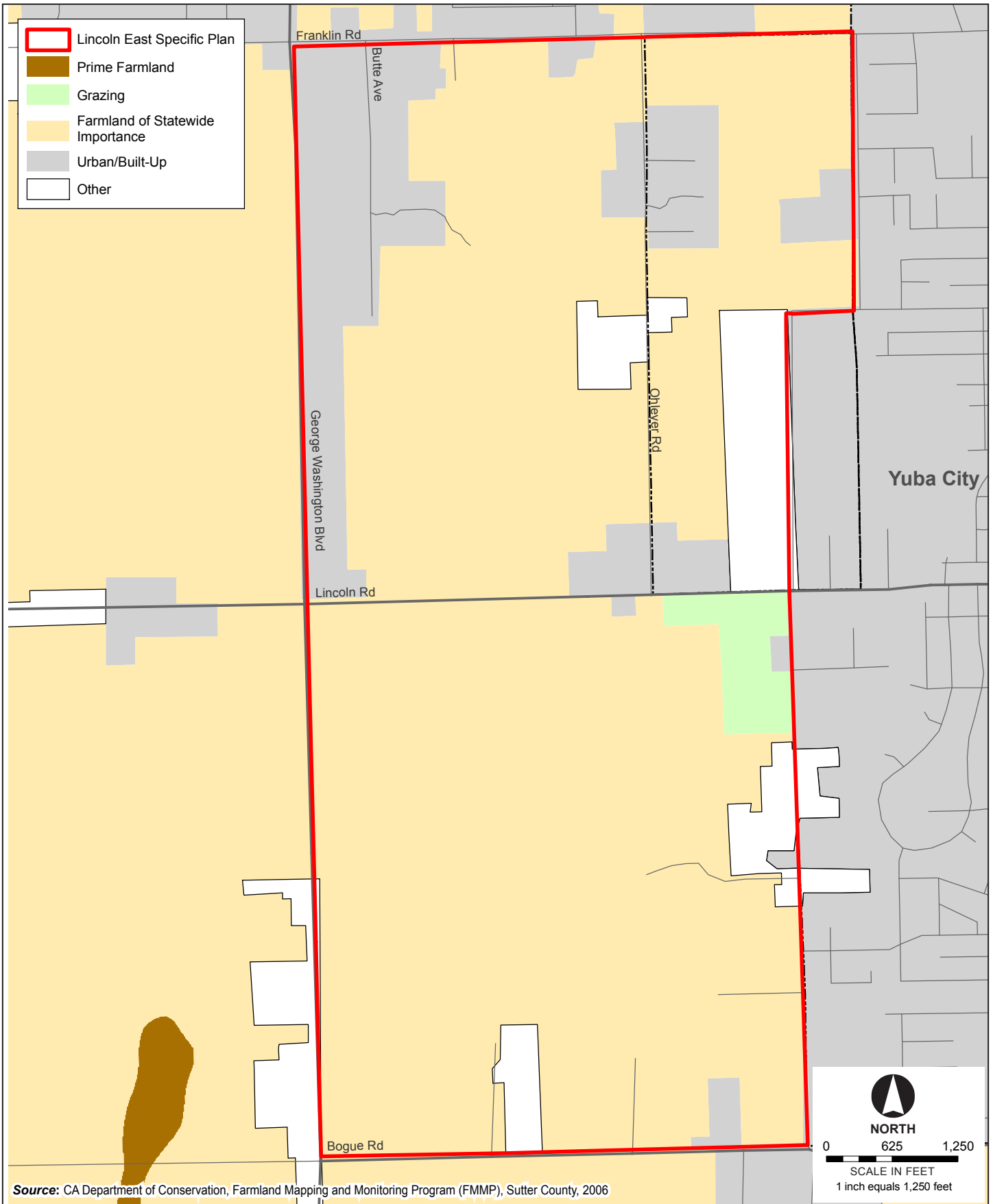
### Federal

There are no specific federal regulations pertaining to local agriculture resources that would be applicable to the proposed project.

7 U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service, *Web Soil Survey*, accessed October 16, 2006.

8 California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, *Soil Candidate Listing for Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance: Sutter County*, November 20, 1995, updated May 3, 2005.





**FIGURE 4.2-1**  
**Agricultural Resources**

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Lincoln East Specific Plan EIR



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## State

### **California Food and Agricultural Code**

Section 3482.5.(a)(1) of the California Food and Agricultural Code states that no agricultural activity, operation, or facility, or appurtenances thereof, conducted or maintained for commercial purposes, and in a manner consistent with proper and accepted customs and standards, as established and followed by similar agricultural operations in the same locality, shall be or become a nuisance, private or public, due to any changed condition in or about the locality, after it has been in operation for more than three years if it was not a nuisance at the time it began.

(2) No activity of a district agricultural association that is operated in compliance with Division 3 (commencing with Section 3001) of the Food and Agricultural Code, shall be or become a private or public nuisance due to any changed condition in or about the locality, after it has been in operation for more than three years if it was not a nuisance at the time it began. This paragraph shall not apply to any activities of the 52nd District Agricultural Association that are conducted on the grounds of the California Exposition and State Fair, nor to any public nuisance action brought by a city, county, or city and county alleging that the activities, operations, or conditions of a district agricultural association have substantially changed after more than three years from the time that the activities, operations, or conditions began.

(b) Paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) shall not apply if the agricultural activity, operation, or facility, or appurtenances thereof obstruct the free passage or use, in the customary manner, of any navigable lake, river, bay, stream, canal, or basin, or any public park, square, street, or highway.

(c) Paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) shall not invalidate any provision contained in the Health and Safety Code, Fish and Game Code, Food and Agricultural Code, or Division 7 (commencing with Section 13000) of the Water Code, if the agricultural activity, operation, or facility, or appurtenances thereof constitute a nuisance, public or private, as specifically defined or described in any of those provisions.

(d) This section shall prevail over any contrary provision of any ordinance or regulation of any city, county, city and county, or other political subdivision of the state. However, nothing in this section shall preclude a city, county, city and county, or other political subdivision of this state, acting within its constitutional or statutory authority and not in conflict with other provisions of state law, from adopting an ordinance that allows notification to a prospective homeowner that the dwelling is in close proximity to an agricultural activity, operation, facility, or appurtenances thereof and is subject to the provisions of this section consistent with Section 1102.6a.

(e) For purposes of this section, the term "agricultural activity, operation, or facility, or appurtenances thereof" shall include, but not be limited to, the cultivation and tillage of the soil, dairying, the production, cultivation, growing, and harvesting of any agricultural commodity including timber, viticulture, apiculture, or horticulture, the raising of livestock, fur bearing animals, fish, or poultry, and any practices performed by a farmer or on a farm as incident to or in conjunction with those farming operations, including preparation for market, delivery to storage or to market, or delivery to carriers for transportation to market.

3482.6(a) No agricultural processing activity, operation, facility, or appurtenances thereof, conducted or maintained for commercial purposes, and in a manner consistent with proper and accepted customs and standards, shall be or become a nuisance, private or public, due to any changed condition in or about the locality, after it has been in continuous operation for more than three years if it was not a nuisance at the time it began.

(b) If an agricultural processing activity, operation, facility, or appurtenances thereof substantially increases its activities or operations after January 1, 1993, then a public or private nuisance action may be brought with respect to those increases in activities or operations that have a significant effect on the environment. For increases in activities or operations that have been in effect more than three years, there is a rebuttable presumption affecting the burden of producing evidence that the increase was not substantial.

(c) This section does not supersede any other provision of law, except other provisions of this part, if the agricultural processing activity, operation, facility, or appurtenances thereof, constitute a nuisance, public or private, as specifically defined or described in the provision.

(d) This section prevails over any contrary provision of any ordinance or regulation of any city, county, city and county, or other political subdivision of the state, except regulations adopted pursuant to Section 41700 of the Health and Safety Code as applied to agricultural processing activities, operations, facilities, or appurtenances thereof that are surrounded by housing or commercial development on January 1, 1993. However, nothing in this section precludes a city, county, city and county, or other political subdivision of this state, acting within its constitutional or statutory authority and not in conflict with other provisions of state law, from adopting an ordinance that allows notification to a prospective homeowner that the dwelling is in close proximity to an agricultural processing activity, operation, facility, or appurtenances thereof and is subject to provisions of this section consistent with Section 1102.6a.

(e) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Agricultural processing activity, operation, facility, or appurtenances thereof" includes, but is not limited to rendering plants licensed pursuant to Section 19300 of the Food and Agricultural Code and collection centers licensed pursuant to Section 19300.5 of the Food and Agricultural Code, the canning or freezing of agricultural products, the processing of dairy products, the production and bottling of beer and wine, the processing of meat and egg products, the drying of fruits and grains, the packing and cooling of fruits and vegetables, and the storage or warehousing of any agricultural products, and includes processing for wholesale or retail markets of agricultural products.

(2) "Continuous operation" means at least 30 days of agricultural processing operations per year.

(3) "Proper and accepted customs and standards" means the compliance with all applicable state and federal statutes and regulations governing the operation of the agricultural processing activity, operation, facility, or appurtenances thereof with respect to the condition or effect alleged to be a nuisance.

(f) This section does not apply to any litigation pending or cause of action accruing prior to January 1, 1993.

## **Local**

### **Yuba City General Plan**

The following policies from the Yuba City General Plan (2004) are applicable to the proposed project:

#### Guiding Policies:

3.4-G-1 Maintain a well-defined compact urban form, with a defined urban growth boundary and urban development intensities on land designated for urban uses.

8.2-G-1 Promote preservation of agriculture outside of the urban growth area.

Implementing Policies

3.4-I-2 Establish standards for urban edges and ensure that designated intensities and uses provide an appropriate transition to rural land at these edges.

3.4-I-4 Support the County's efforts to maintain viable agricultural uses surrounding the City in areas outside the proposed Urban Growth Boundary.

8.1-I-1 Coordinate with Sutter County in the creation of a greenway/open space buffer around the perimeter of the City's urban growth area. Explore regulatory incentives (e.g., Williamson Act) and financing mechanisms necessary to ensure preservation of these lands as open space. Open space lands may be publicly or privately owned. One mechanism to ensure open space is to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the County for establishing long term agricultural zoning outside the UGB and for reciprocal review of projects along the urban/rural edge.

8.2-I-1 Work with the County to preserve agricultural uses in areas outside the Urban Growth Boundary and within greenbelts established around the exterior of the UGB. The City should work with Sutter County to encourage the continuation of farming activities outside the City's and Urban Growth Boundary. Programs such as conservation easements and Williamson Act contracts should be pursued.

8.2-I-6 Work with government agencies and non-profit land trusts to assist owners of undeveloped lands (sufficient in size to allow continued agricultural uses) to remain in agricultural open space on the perimeter of the urban growth area. Potential programs may include purchase of conservation easements or creation of agricultural land trusts.

8.2-I-2 Facilitate the continuance of agricultural activities within the City's urban growth area until the land is needed to accommodate population and employment growth. During this interim, minimize conflicts between agricultural uses and urban/suburban uses through site design techniques (not necessarily structural barriers).

8.2-I-3 Require property developers adjacent to sites where agricultural uses are being conducted to inform subsequent buyers of potential continued agricultural production and the lawful use of agricultural chemicals, including pesticides and fertilizers.

8.2-I-4 Require anti-vandalism designs (appropriate fencing or other landscape features) to ensure that new development has conditions that minimize increased vandalism of adjacent agricultural activities.

## **Sutter County Agricultural Operations Disclosure**

Upon annexation of the proposed project into the City of Yuba City, urban uses, as proposed under the LESP, would be adjacent to agricultural land in unincorporated Sutter County to the south and west. Because of potential conflicts between the proposed project and agricultural uses to the south and west, the Sutter County Agricultural Operations Disclosure is discussed in this analysis.

As contained in Ordinance Code 1013, Chapter 13.30, the Board of Supervisors of Sutter County finds that it is in the public's interest to preserve and protect agricultural land and operations within Sutter County and to specifically protect these lands for exclusive agricultural use. The purposes of this chapter are to promote the general health, safety, and welfare of the county, and to preserve and protect for exclusive agricultural use those lands zoned for agricultural use, to support and

encourage continued agricultural operations in the county, and to warn prospective purchasers and residents of property adjacent to agricultural operations of the inherent problems associated with such purchases including, but not limited to sounds, odors, dust, smoke, fertilizers, and pesticides that may accompany agricultural operations.

As stated in the disclosure:

(1) Where a building designed for residential occupancy is to be located on or adjacent to agricultural land, the owners of the property shall sign, prior to the issuance of a building permit, a statement of acknowledgement on a form approved by the County which contains substantially the following:

“The property whose address, map number or Assessor’s parcel number is \_\_\_\_\_ is adjacent to land or included within an area zoned for agricultural purposes, and residents of this property may be subject to inconveniences or discomfort arising from the use of agricultural chemicals, including but not limited to herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers as well as noise and odors associated with animal husbandry; and from the pursuit of agricultural operations including, but not limited to cultivation, plowing, spraying, pruning, and harvesting which occasionally generate dust, smoke, noise, and odor. Sutter County has established zoning for agricultural land which sets a priority on the use of the lands therein included for productive agricultural purposes, and residents within said zones and within adjacent property should be prepared to accept such inconvenience or discomfort as normal and necessary to farm operations. For more details see Sutter County Ordinance Code Chapter 1330.

“In light of the importance of the above considerations, I/we agree that in the event the property described above is sold, I/we will disclose to any subsequent purchaser the agricultural character of the surrounding lands and provide to the purchaser a copy of this statement.”

(2) Evidence satisfactory to the Building Inspector that the disclosure statement set for in (1) above has been duly signed shall be presented prior to the issuance of a building permit.

(3) Where a building permit for a building subject to this section has been issued and the property upon which said building is situated is subsequently sold, the seller shall disclose to the buyer that the property is adjacent to land or included within an area zoned for agricultural purposes and shall provide to the buyer a copy of a statement conforming to the provisions of subsection (1) hereof.

(4) When transfers of a real property occur, the seller shall ensure the disclosure statement set forth in subsection (1) above is included in or reference too it made in the disclosure form required by California Civil Code § 1102 and 1102.6. Failure to do so constitutes misrepresentation and failure to disclose neighborhood conditions as required by Subsection II-C-10 of said § 1102.6.

## **Sutter Local Agency Formation Commission**

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Act) (Government Code section 56000 et seq.) guides the procedures of the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) and any proposal submitted must conform to the requirements outlined in the Act. The proposed project includes the annexation of the project site into the City of Yuba City. LAFCO must consider many factors during their review such as land use, topography, population and growth, adequacy of governmental services, and SOIs. The purpose of LAFCO includes discouraging urban sprawl, encouraging orderly formation and development of local governmental agencies, initiating and making studies of governmental agencies, and developing spheres of influence for each local

governmental agency. The following policies are provided for informational purposes only. LAFCO determines if a project is consistent with their policies.

Policy #4 – Priorities for Annexation and Formation

The Commission will consider the following priorities or guidelines for annexation and formation with the provision that overriding circumstances must be stated in exceptions:

- a) Annexation to an existing city or district instead of formation of a new agency.
- b) Annexation to a city rather than a district if both can provide comparable services.
- c) Annexation to a multi-purpose district in preference to annexation to a single purpose district.
- d) Formation of a new political entity as the last and least desirable alternative.

Policy #6 – Concurrent City-District Annexations and Detachments.

For any annexation to a city which has lands provided municipal service(s) by an independent special district(s) or County Service Area(s), the Commission shall require concurrent detachment from the district or service area as part of the annexation proposal. Municipal services shall not include services provided by reclamation, levee or drainage districts.

## **Methods of Analysis**

Potential impacts were assessed by reviewing the City of Yuba City General Plan goals and policies related to agricultural resources, consulting the current California Department of Conservation's FMMP map, and taking inventory of existing agricultural uses on, and surrounding, the project area through a site visit. The City of Yuba City has determined that the loss of any amount of Important Farmland is considered a significant environmental impact.

## **Lincoln East Specific Plan**

The *Draft* Lincoln East Specific Plan (March 2009) would be the primary guiding policy document for the proposed project. The goals and policies applicable to the proposed project as it relates to potential environmental impacts are analyzed below. In addition, Chapter 9.0 Implementation, includes strategies to address the agriculture interface with residential and the Design Guidelines and Standards (Appendix A of the LESP) also include measures to address agriculture in proximity to residential development.

### **Resource Management Objective-1**

Provide a transition area between urban development and existing agricultural environments adjacent to the Plan Area boundary to support and preserve viable farming operations.

### Agricultural Policies

1. Establish land use designations that provide a transition between the urban and surrounding agricultural environment on the fringes of the Plan Area.

2. All developers of new residential units within the Plan Area shall be notified and sign a disclosure statement acknowledging nearby existing farming operations in accordance with Sutter County Right-to-Farm Ordinance.
3. New residential developments sharing a boundary with agriculture designated lands outside the Plan Area boundary shall provide a minimum of a 30-foot setback. This 30-foot buffer may take the form of a rear building setback or physical improvements, such as a road.
4. Conflicts between agricultural uses and urban uses shall be minimized through site design techniques, per the General Plan.
5. Anti-vandalism designs (fencing, landscape features, etc.) shall be required along properties adjacent to agricultural activities, per the General Plan to reduce vandalism of adjacent agricultural facilities and activities.

### **Standards of Significance**

For the purposes of this EIR, impacts on agricultural resources are considered significant if the proposed project would:

- Convert Important Farmland, as shown on maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Department of Conservation, to non-agricultural use;
- Develop uses such that the productivity of adjacent agricultural activities is substantially reduced due to nuisances associated with project development or operation;
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use; or
- Conflict with adjacent land uses such that a physical environmental impact would result.

### **Project-Specific Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

#### **4.2-1 The proposed project could convert Important Farmland to non-agricultural use.**

As discussed above, the CDC divides Important Farmland into four categories: 1) Prime Farmland, 2) Farmland of Statewide Importance, 3) Unique Farmland, and 4) Farmland of Local Importance. Approximately 911 acres of the 1,160-acre project site are designated as Farmland of Statewide Importance, an Important Farmland (shown on Figure 4.2-1). The remainder of the site is not classified under one of the other four Important Farmland categories; therefore, the conversion of this portion of the project site is not considered a significant impact with regards to farmland conversion. While the adoption of the Specific Plan would not directly and immediately convert this land to non-agricultural use it would facilitate future development of the project site and eventually cause the loss of this farmland as the Specific Plan is built out. The City of Yuba City has evaluated the loss of farmland within the city's SOI or Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) as part of the 2004 General Plan process and have included policies designed to reduce the impact of converting agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses. Development proposed under the LESP is consistent with the policies in the General Plan designed to minimize the loss of farmland outside of the city's SOI. The City has determined that there are no feasible mitigation measures to address the

conversion of agricultural land to developed uses other than to prevent development from occurring altogether. Therefore, the loss of farmland associated with buildout of the LESP would be considered a *significant impact*.

### Mitigation Measure

There are no feasible mitigation measures that would replace the loss of agricultural land associated with the project, resulting in a ***significant and unavoidable impact***.

#### **4.2-2 The proposed project could develop uses such that the productivity of adjacent agricultural activities is substantially reduced due to nuisances associated with project development or operation.**

The project is proposing adoption of a Specific Plan for the 1,160-acre project site, which would facilitate future mixed-use development within the plan area by changing the land use designations on portions of the site that are currently used for agricultural purposes. Adjacent agricultural activities are located primarily to the west and south of the plan area boundaries with a limited area of agricultural uses to the north. Conflicts between agricultural activities and their residential neighbors often involve nuisance complaints associated with an increase in dust or noise produced by farming equipment, or pesticide or herbicide spraying on agricultural properties along the urban/rural edge, especially during times of planting and harvest. The LESP includes policies to minimize these types of conflicts, including Resource Management Objective 1 and Agricultural Policies 1 and 3, which call for buffer zones and transitional areas and zoning for properties along the urban/rural edge; Agricultural Policy 2, which requires homeowners in these areas to sign disclosure statements acknowledging the presence of nearby agricultural activities in compliance with the Sutter County Right-to-Farm Ordinance; and Agricultural Policies 4 and 5, which call for specific design techniques aimed at minimizing conflict between urban and agricultural uses. In addition, Bogue Road would have a 60-foot minimum rear yard setback for residential units backing alongside the roadway (refer to LESP, Appendix A.4.1m) that provides an agriculture buffer from new residential development and existing agriculture operations outside the plan area. This setback may be modified based on adjustments to the City's Sphere of Influence or other adopted general plan policies adopted at the time of tentative map submittal. Along the northern portion of the roadway, a curb and gutter separates an 8-foot planting strip from the bicycle and travel lanes. A 10-foot multi-use trail and additional planting strip are located along the northern side of the roadway to provide pedestrian and alternative transportation access and to help define the City's urban edge. The planting strips and multi-use trail are a part of the 35.5-foot minimum landscape easement. This roadway is also part of the 168-foot buffer required by Sutter County. Bogue Road east of Sanborn Road would have a total right-of-way of 73 feet. This includes two travel lanes, one 11-foot and one 12-foot; a 6-foot Class II bicycle lane in each direction; and a 15-foot tree-lined median that would narrow to accommodate left hand movements within the ROW. No sidewalk or planting strips along the southern side of the roadway would be included where it abuts agricultural property consistent with the City's General Plan policies.

Additional information regarding increase in dust is available in Section 4.3, Air Quality, of this EIR. Similarly, information pertaining to nuisances associated with noise from agricultural operations is

available in Section 4.9, Noise, while impacts associated with pesticide and herbicide spraying on adjacent agricultural properties is analyzed in Section 4.6, Hazards. Farm equipment on adjacent roadways can also be considered a nuisance to other users of the roadways; this issue is discussed in Section 4.12, Transportation and Circulation. The likelihood that conflicts would arise between future uses on the project site and adjacent agricultural activities is reduced due to the fact that the project site is buffered on all sides by roadways, in addition to the agricultural policies incorporated into the Specific Plan which call for a minimum 30-foot setback between residential uses and agricultural land and the requirement that disclosure statements be provided to residents near any existing farming operations. Roadways provide a buffer of a minimum of 50 feet between the project site and adjacent lands.

Approximately half of the land north of the project site is currently developed with either residential or industrial uses. The northern portion of the project site itself currently consists of low density residential with some limited agricultural uses intermixed. It is anticipated that the existing residential uses would remain within the project site; however, the proposed project calls for future development of additional residential, commercial, and a fire station in this portion of the plan area. New development adjacent to the northern boundary of the project site would have little impact on the agricultural uses to the north, since this area is already largely intermixed with single family residential development; therefore the residential development proposed by the Specific Plan would be largely compatible with these adjacent uses. Orchards are located north of the project site; however they are separated from the project site by Franklin Road.

The areas adjacent to the western and southern boundaries of the project site are primarily agricultural, containing orchards with a few scattered rural residential areas included. Within the plan area adjacent to the western portion of the project site, north of Lincoln Road, low density single-family residences exist; these residences would remain. South of Lincoln Road along the west side of George Washington Boulevard, outside of the project boundary, are orchards with a few rural residential areas. Similar uses exist south of Bogue Road with the exception of the smaller residential lots located near the intersection with Sanborn Road. Upon buildout of the Specific Plan, the western portion of the project site would be dominated by low-density residential uses. Residential uses and a high school would replace the agricultural uses along the southern boundary of the project site. Agricultural uses currently exist side-by-side with residential development throughout this area of the county; therefore the addition of the proposed residential and commercial uses is not expected to impede agricultural operations beyond the project boundary. As mentioned above, existing roadways including George Washington Boulevard, Bogue Road, and Franklin Road would provide a buffer between the project site and adjacent uses.

The area east of the project site is currently developed, or slated for residential development; therefore, no agricultural operations would be affected in this area.

The California Food and Agricultural Code includes language that protects existing farming operations from conflicts with their neighbors with regards to standard operating procedures. In addition, the LESP includes several policies to minimize conflicts between the proposed project and adjacent agricultural operations. LESP Resource Management Objective 1 provides a transition

between agricultural and urban environments meant to support and preserve farming operations. Similarly, LESP Agricultural Policy 1 calls for land use designations within the project site that provide a transition between the agricultural and urban uses, while Agricultural Policy 3 creates a minimum buffer/setback of 30 feet for urban uses adjacent to agricultural operations. LESP Agricultural Policy 4 minimizes conflicts between agricultural and uses through design techniques, while Agricultural Policy 2 requires a disclosure of agricultural operations for residences near existing farming operations.

Compliance with the policies contained within the LESP as well as the General Plan would ensure that residential uses adjacent to any active agricultural activities would be fully informed as to the potential inconveniences so it is anticipated that conflicts would be minimal. In addition, build out of the plan area is not expected to substantially reduce adjacent agricultural operations beyond the project boundary, resulting in a ***less-than-significant impact***.

### Mitigation Measure

*None required.*

### **Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

The cumulative context for the proposed project is buildout of the City of Yuba City, including the City's SOI, as well as future buildout of Sutter County. The project site is located adjacent to the city limits and land to the north and west, in the unincorporated county, is within the City's SOI. The majority of the land in the SOI is slated for low density residential development. Some residential subdivisions are already present in the SOI; therefore, while a large portion of the SOI is in agricultural production, some urban-type development exists. The City of Yuba City General Plan included acreage calculation by land use for land within the city limits as well as unincorporated land within the SOI (a.k.a. Urban Growth Boundary).<sup>9</sup> The General Plan noted that there were 4,821 acres of agricultural land in the unincorporated portion of the SOI, accounting for 68.1 percent of this area. Within the county, the majority of the urban growth anticipated by the county is expected to occur within the SOIs of the two incorporated cities, Yuba City and Live Oak, although some growth is anticipated in the unincorporated community of Sutter.

Issues related to the adjacency of agricultural lands in proximity to urban development are site-specific in nature. Additional development located adjacent to agricultural land would not affect the productivity of that land contributing to a larger, additive effect, so this issue is not addressed in the cumulative analysis below.

#### **4.2-3 The proposed project, in combination with other projects in the City's SOI and Sutter County, could convert Important Farmland to non-agricultural use.**

The most recent California Farmland Conversion Table (2004-2006) inventoried 389,439 acres in Sutter County, 107,194 acres of which is classified as Farmland of Statewide Importance. The

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9 City of Yuba City, *Yuba City General Plan Update*, Chapter 3 Land Use, page 3-2, 2006.

proposed project would cause the conversion of approximately 911 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance; this equals to roughly 0.8 percent of this type of Important Farmland in Sutter County and 19 percent of the remaining agricultural land within the unincorporated SOI. Development pressures on Sutter County from growing cities such as Yuba City continue to result in the conversion of Important Farmland throughout the county, which is considered a cumulative impact. The project's contribution to the conversion of 911 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance would be considerable, resulting in a *cumulatively significant impact*.

### Mitigation Measure

There are no mitigation measures available to prevent the direct loss of farmland or to create new farmland to replace that which would be lost, resulting in a ***significant and unavoidable cumulative impact***.

*None available.*