3.2
AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

This section of the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) describes the agricultural and forestry resources in the SCAG region, discusses the potential impacts of the proposed 2016 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy ("2016 RTP/SCS," "Project," or "Plan") on agriculture and forestry resources, identifies mitigation measures for the impacts, and evaluates the residual impacts. Agriculture and forestry resources were evaluated in accordance with Appendix G of the 2015 State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. Agriculture and forestry resources within the SCAG region were evaluated at a programmatic level of detail in relation to the general plans of the six counties and the 191 cities within the SCAG region; the Forest Management Plans for the four national forests in the SCAG region, Angeles National Forest, San Bernardino National Forest, Los Padres National Forest, and Cleveland National Forest; a query of Important Farmland pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency; a query of Williamson contract lands; a query of agricultural and timberland zoning; a review of published and unpublished literature germane to the SCAG region; as well as a review of SCAG's 2012 SCAG RTP/SCS PEIR[1] and the natural land strategies described in the 2016 RTP/SCS.

California ranked first among the 50 states in 2011 in terms of net farm income at $16.3 billion.[2] Agricultural and related products are also one of California's largest exports to the rest of the world. Important agricultural lands, including farmlands account for more than 2 million acres in the SCAG region.[3] Over 100,000 parcels are designated as farmland parcels in the SCAG region.[4] The most recent available data compiled by the U.S. Forest Service indicates that the Southern California region produces less than 1 percent of the commercial lumber produced in the state.[5]

Definitions

Definitions of terms used in the regulatory framework, characterization of baseline conditions, and impact analysis for agriculture and forestry resources are provided.

Farmland: §21060.1(a) of CEQA (Public Resources Code §§21000-21177) delineates the consideration of agricultural land to include "prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, or unique farmland, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) land inventory and monitoring criteria,

1 Southern California Association of Governments. April 2012. *Final Program Environmental Report: 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy.* Available at: http://rtpscs.scag.ca.gov/Pages/Final-2012-PEIR.aspx

2 Kleinhenz, Robert A., Kimberly Ritter-Martinez, and Ferdinando Guerra. February 2013. *2013-2014 Economic Forecast And Industry Outlook*. Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation, The Kyser Center for Economic Research. Available at: http://laedc.org/reports/2013-14EconomicForecastandIndustryOutlook.pdf

3 California Department of Conservation. Accessed 26 June 2015. *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program – Imperial County: Important Farmland Data Availability*. Available at: http://www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Imperial.aspx

4 California Department of Conservation. Accessed 11 March 2015. *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program*. Available at: http://www.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/FMMP/Pages/Index.aspx

5 Morgan, Todd A., Jason P. Brandt, Kathleen E. Songster, Charles E. Keegan III, and Glenn A. Christensen. August 2012. *California's Forest Products Industry And Timber Harvest, 2006*. General Technical Report PNW-GTR-866. United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station.

as modified for California," and is herein collectively referred to as "Farmland." The following are categories mapped by the CDC:[6]

Prime Farmland: Farmland that has the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long-term agricultural production. This land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

Farmland of Statewide Importance: Farmland 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 prior to the mapping date.

Unique Farmland: Farmland of 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. Land must have been cropped at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

Farmland of Local Importance: Land of importance to the local agricultural economy as determined by each county's board of supervisors and a local advisory committee.

Grazing Land: Land on 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. The minimum mapping unit for Grazing Land is 40 acres.

Urban and Built-Up Land. Land occupied by structures with a building density of at least one unit to 1.5 acres, or approximately six structures to a 10-acre parcel. This land is used for residential, industrial, commercial, institutional, public administrative purposes, railroad and other transportation yards, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment, water control structures, and other developed purposes.

Other Land: Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines and borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than 40 acres. Vacant and non-agricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land.

Forest: §12220(g) of CEQA defines forest land as "land that can support 10-percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits."

Timberland: Public Resources Code §4526 defines Timberland as "land, other than land owned by the federal government and land designated by the board as experimental forest land, which is available for,

[6] California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection. 2004. *A Guide to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program*. Available at: http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Documents/fmmp_guide_2004.pdf

and capable of, growing a crop of trees of a commercial species used to produce lumber and other forest products, including Christmas trees."

Timberland Production Zone: California Government Code Section 51104(g) defines a Timberland Production Zone (TMZ) as "an area which has been zoned pursuant to Section 51112 or 51113 and is devoted to and used for growing and harvesting timber, or for growing and harvesting timber and compatible uses, as defined in subdivision (h). With respect to general plans of cities and counties, 'timberland preserve zone' means 'timberland production zone.'"

3.2.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Federal

United States Forest Service (USFS) National Forest Management Act of 1976

The USFS manages approximately 2.3 million acres of national forests in the SCAG region, which is subject to the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-588), a federal law that governs the administration of national forests. There are four national forests in the SCAG region, each of which is managed in accordance with a Forest Management Plan: the Angeles National Forest,[7] San Bernardino National Forest,[8] Los Padres National Forest,[9] and Cleveland National Forest.[10]

Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981 (FPPA)

Congress passed the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (Public Law 97-98) containing the FPPA subtitle I of Title XV, Section 1539-1549. Pursuant to the FPPA of 1981 Sections 1539–1549, the Secretary of Agriculture is directed to establish and carry out a program to "minimize the extent to which Federal programs contribute to the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses, and to the extent practicable, will be compatible with state, unit of local government, and private programs and policies to protect farmland" (7 U.S. Code [USC] 4201–4209 & 7 USC 658).[11] Projects are subject to FPPA requirements if they may irreversibly convert farmland (directly or indirectly) to nonagricultural use and are completed by a federal agency or with assistance from a federal agency. The purpose of the FPPA to minimize the impacts federal programs have on the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. It ensures that to the extent possible, federal programs are administered to be compatible with state, local units of government, and private programs and policies to protect farmland. Federal agencies are required to develop and review their policies and procedures to implement the FPPA every two years. The FPPA does not authorize the

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7 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. Accessed 25 June 2015. *Angeles National Forest: Planning.* Available at: http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/angeles/landmanagement/planning

8 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. Accessed 25 June 2015. *San Bernardino National Forest: Planning.* Available at: http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/sbnf/landmanagement/planning

9 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. Accessed 25 June 2015. *Los Padres National Forest: Planning.* Available at: http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/lpnf/landmanagement/planning

10 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. Accessed 25 June 2015. *Cleveland National Forest: Planning.* Available at: http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/cleveland/landmanagement/planning

11 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. Accessed 11 May 2015. *Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA).* Available at: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/ca/home/?cid=nrcs144p2_063934

federal government to regulate the use of private or nonfederal land or, in any way, affect the property rights of owners.

For the purpose of FPPA, farmland includes prime farmland, unique farmland, and land of statewide or local importance. Farmland subject to FPPA requirements does not have to be currently used for cropland. It can be forest land, pastureland, cropland, or other land, but not water or urban built-up land.

Agricultural Act of 2014

Every five years, Congress passes a Farm Bill to establish national agriculture, nutrition, conservation, and forestry policy; the Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill; H.R. 2642; Public Law 113-79) provides for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2018.[12] The Agricultural Act of 2014 consolidates agricultural conservation programs for flexibility, accountability, and adaptability at the local level; makes USFS's Stewardship Contracting Authority over forestry resources permanent; provides funding for agricultural research, development, and promoting local and regional food systems; and encourages agricultural producers and partners to design conservation projects that focus on and address regional priorities. Projects that are funded under the Agricultural Act of 2014 are subject to FPPA agricultural conservation requirements. The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP), a voluntary easement purchase program that helped farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture, was repealed under the Agricultural Act of 2014 and replaced with the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP).[13,14] Acres under the FRPP are considered enrolled ACEP.[15] ACEP is composed of an Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) component and a Wetlands Reserve Easement (WRE) component; the purposes of the ALE component are to protect the agricultural use and future viability and related conservation values, of eligible land by limiting nonagricultural uses of that land and to protect grazing uses and related conservation values. The United States Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) manages the program.

Federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP is a voluntary program that provides assistance to farmers and ranchers who face threats to soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land.[16]

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[12] United States Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. Accessed 26 October 2015. *2014 Farm Bill.* Available at: http://www.ag.senate.gov/issues/farm-bill

[13] U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. Accessed 25 June 2015. *Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program.* Available at: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/easements/farmranch/

[14] U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. Accessed 25 June 2015. *2014 Farm Bill – rules: about federal rules.* Available at: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/easements/farmranch/?cid=stelprdb1263599#acep

[15] U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. Accessed 25 June 2015. *2014 Farm Bill – rules: statutory changes made by the 2014 Farm Bill.* Available at: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/farmbill/?cid=nrcseprd323005

[16] U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. Accessed 25 June 2015. *2014 Farm Bill – Environmental Quality Incentives Program – NRCS.* Available at: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/financial/eqip/?cid=stelprdb1242633

State

California Land Conservation Act of 1965

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly referred to as the Williamson Act, is the state's primary program for the conservation of private land in agricultural and open space. The Williamson Act (California Government Code Sections 51200–51297.4) enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners in order to restrict specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use in return for reduced property tax assessments.[17]

Farmland Security Zone Act

The Farmland Security Zone Act (California Government Code Sections 51296–51297.4) is similar to the Williamson Act and was passed by the California State Legislature in 1999 to ensure that long-term farmland preservation is part of public policy.[18] Farmland Security Zone Act contracts are sometimes referred to as "Super Williamson Act Contracts." Under the provisions of this act, a landowner already under a Williamson Act contract can apply for Farmland Security Zone status by entering into a contract with the county. Farmland Security Zone classification automatically renews each year for an additional 20 years. In return for a further 35 percent reduction in the taxable value of land and growing improvements (in addition to Williamson Act tax benefits), the owner of the property promises not to develop the property into non-agricultural uses.

California Department of Conservation (CDC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP)

The FMMP was established in 1982 to assess the location, quality, and quantity of agricultural lands in the State of California and conversion of these lands over time.[19] The goal of the FMMP is to provide consistent and impartial data to decision makers for use in planning for the future of California's agricultural land resources.[20] The CDC applies the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil classifications to identify agricultural lands, and these agricultural designations are used in planning for the present and future of California's agricultural land resources. The CDC has a minimum mapping unit of 10 acres, with parcels that are smaller than 10 acres being absorbed into the surrounding classifications. The following are categories mapped by the CDC: Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, Grazing Land, Urban and Built-Up Land, and Other Land.[21]

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17 California Department of Conservation. Accessed 11 May 2015. *Governing Statutes: California Land Conservation Act*. Available at: http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/lca/lrcc/Pages/governing_statutes.aspx

18 State of California. Accessed 11 May 2015. *Farmland Security Zones.* Available at: http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/lca/farmland_security_zones/Pages/index.aspx#what is a farmland security zone

19 California Department of Conservation. Accessed 11 May 2015. *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program*. Available at: http://www.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/FMMP/Pages/Index.aspx

20 California Department of Conservation. Accessed 11 March 2015. *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program*. Available at: http://www.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/FMMP/Pages/Index.aspx

21 California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection. 2004. *A Guide to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program*. Available at: http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Documents/fmmp_guide_2004.pdf

California Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP)

The CFCP seeks to encourage the long-term, private stewardship of agricultural lands through the voluntary use of agricultural conservation easements. The CFCP provides grant funding for projects which use and support agricultural conservation easements for protection of agricultural lands. As of January 2015, the CFCP has funded more than 175 easement projects in California, including more than 57,000 acres in more than a dozen counties between 1996 and 2014.[22,23] CFCP has also funded a number of planning grants, including some with regional or statewide value. CFCP did not award any new grants for planning and policy projects in the SCAG region between 1996 and 2014.[24]

Local

General Plans

The SCAG region spans six counties, each of which has a general plans containing policies related to protection of agriculture and forestry resources:

- **Imperial County:** Agricultural Element[25] (no policies for forestry resources)
- **Los Angeles County:** Chapter 9: Conservation and Natural Resources Element[26]
- **Orange County:** Chapter VI. Resources Element[27]
- **Riverside County:** Chapter 5: Multipurpose Open Space Element[28]
- **San Bernardino County:** Chapter V. Conservation Element[29]
- **Ventura County:** Resources Appendix[30]

Additional plans and ordinances at the master plan level, city-level, and specific plan level may also apply within the SCAG region.

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22 California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection. Accessed 11 May 2015. *California Farmland Conservancy Program.* Available at: http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/cfcp/Pages/Index.aspx

23 California Department of Conservation. Accessed 25 June 2015. *Completed easements and planning projects.* Available at: http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/cfcp/stories/Pages/index.aspx

24 California Department of Conservation. Accessed 25 June 2015. *Completed easements and planning projects.* Available at: http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/cfcp/stories/Pages/index.aspx

25 Imperial County Planning/Building Department. [Adopted 9 November 1993] Revised 19 November 1996. *Imperial County General Plan: Agricultural Element*. Available at: http://www.icpds.com/CMS/Media/Agricultural-Element.pdf

26 Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning. Adopted 6 October 2015. *Los Angeles County General Plan 2035.* Available at: http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/gp_final-general-plan.pdf

27 Orange County Public Works Development Services. July 2014. *General Plan: Chapter VI. Resources Element*. Available at: http://ocplanning.net/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?blobid=40235

28 Riverside County Planning Department. 9 December 2014. *Riverside County General Plan – Current.* Available at: http://planning.rctlma.org/ZoningInformation/GeneralPlan.aspx

29 County of San Bernardino Land Use Service Division. Amended 24 April 2014. *County of San Bernardino 2007 General Plan.* Available at: http://www.sbcounty.gov/Uploads/lus/GeneralPlan/FINALGP.pdf

30 County of Ventura Resource Management Agency, Planning Division. Amended 28 June 2011. *Ventura County General Plan: resources appendix.* Available at: http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/pdf/plans/General-Plan-Resources-Appendix-6-28-11.pdf

Zoning

City and county zoning codes provide the set of detailed requirements that implement general plan policies at the level of the individual parcel. Zoning codes present standards for different uses and identifies which uses are allowed in the various zoning districts of the jurisdiction, including zones for agricultural use and timberland production. Since 1971, state law has required the city or county zoning code to be consistent with the jurisdiction's general plan. The purpose of agricultural zoning is to protect farmland and farming activities from incompatible non-farm uses.

3.2.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section characterizes the baseline conditions for Important Farmland, zoning for agricultural use, Williamson contracts, zoning for forest land, zoning for timberland, timberland zoned Timberland Production, and existing forest land resources.

Prime and Unique Farmlands and Farmland of Statewide Importance

The distribution of farmlands and rangelands in the SCAG region and vicinity is based primarily on data provided by the California Department of Conservation. Based on the most recent (2012) estimates prepared by the California Department of Conservation (CDC), there are approximately 2.6 million acres of important agricultural lands in the SCAG region: approximately 1.1 million acres of Important Farmland and approximately 1.5 million acres of grazing land/rangeland (**Figure 3.2.2-1, *Regional Distribution of Important Farmlands and Grazing Lands***, and **Table 3.2.2-1, *2012 California Department of Conservation Important Agricultural Land Inventory***).

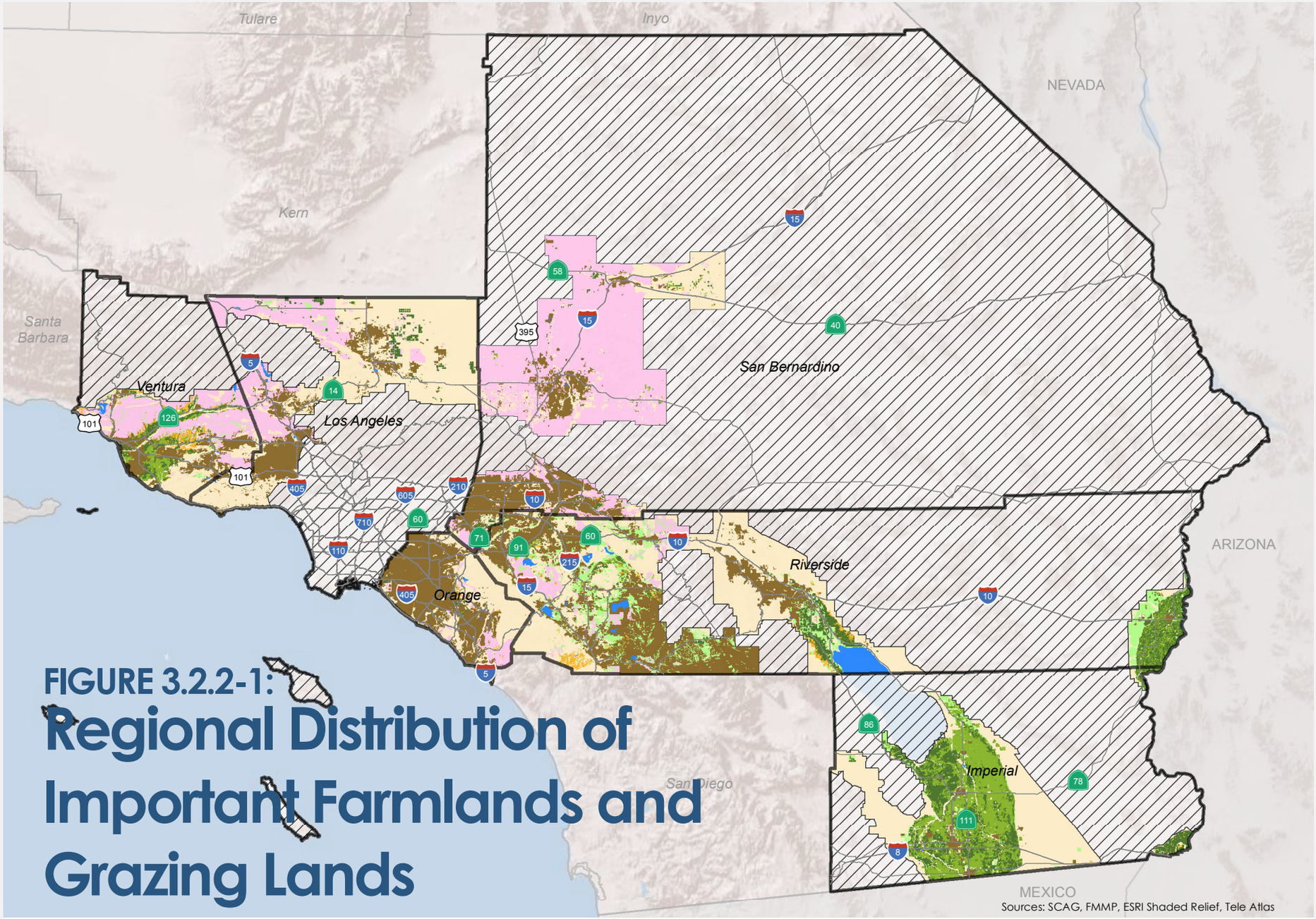

FIGURE 3.2.2-1: Regional Distribution of Important Farmlands and Grazing Lands

TABLE 3.2.2-1
2012 CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL LAND INVENTORY*

Acres	Imperial County	Los Angeles County	Orange County	Riverside County	San Bernardino County	Ventura County	SCAG Region
Prime Farmland	192,951	27,733	3,071	119,309	12,482	41,570	**397,116**
Farmland of Statewide Importance	305,614	841	367	43,919	5,860	33,337	**389,938**
Unique Farmland	2,074	1,088	3,599	33,340	2,623	28,725	**71,449**
Farmland of Local Importance	37,687	5,671	0	229,658	956	15,168	**289,140**
Subtotal – Important Farmland	538,326	35,333	7,037	426,226	21,921	118,800	**1,147,643**
Grazing Land	0	235,829	37,386	110,385	902,869	197,866	**1,484,335**
Total Acres Important Agricultural Land	**538,326**	**271,162**	**44,423**	**536,611**	**924,790**	**316,666**	**2,631,978**
Percent Total Important Agricultural Land	**18.8%**	**8.9%**	**7.3%**	**11.6%**	**7.2%**	**22.4%**	**10.4%**

NOTE:
* This FMMP data is for general planning purposes and has a minimum mapping unit of 10 acres. For information about Farmland parcels that are less than 10 acres, please see Table 3.2.2-2.
SOURCE:
California Department of Conservation. Accessed 26 June 2015. *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program: Important Farmland Data Availability.* Available at: http://www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/

Imperial County contains the highest number of acres of Prime Farmland (6.7 percent of county) and Farmland of Statewide Importance (10.7 percent of county) of the counties within the SCAG region due to a favorable climate, productive soils and the availability of irrigation water from the All American Canal.[31] The top crops within Imperial County, which produced approximately $1.9 billion in agricultural crops and commodities in 2012 and $2.2 billion in 2013, include vegetables, melons, field crops, fruit and nut crops, seed crops and nursery products, and apiary products (honey/beeswax).[32] Although Imperial County does not contain state-designated Important Grazing Land, livestock produced approximately $484 million (24.9 percent) of the county's agricultural income in 2013.

Riverside County contains the highest number of acres of Unique Farmland (0.7 percent of county) and Farmland of Local Importance (5.0 percent of county) of the counties within the SCAG region due its special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high quality of high value crops when treated and managed according to modern farming methods, such as citrus, olives, and avocados, as well as its production of major crops for Riverside County such as irrigated permanent pasture, summer squash, okra, eggplant, radishes, watermelon,

[31] Imperial County Planning/Building Department. [Adopted 9 November 1993] Revised 19 November 1996. *Imperial County General Plan: Agricultural Element*. Available at: http://www.icpds.com/CMS/Media/Agricultural-Element.pdf

[32] Imperial County. 5 August 2014. *Imperial County Agricultural Crop And Livestock Report 2013.* Available at: http://www.co.imperial.ca.us/ag/crop_&_livestock_reports/Crop_&_Livestock_Report_2013.PDF

dairylands, and jojoba.[33] Riverside County produced approximately $1.25 billion in agricultural crops and commodities in 2012 and $1.3 billion in 2013.[34]

Ventura County, which is comprised of 44 percent of the land within Imperial County and 26 percent of the land within Riverside County, has some of the most productive prime and unique farmlands in the nation; the County produced approximately $1.8 billion in agricultural crops and commodities in 2011 and approximately $2 billion in 2013.[35,36] Approximately 8.4 percent of the County has been designated as Important Farmland, located exclusively in the southern half of the County. The top crops in Ventura County include lemons, strawberries, celery, Valencia oranges, avocados, lettuce, broccoli, and fruit and nut crops.

Although only 1.2 percent of Los Angeles County is comprised of Important Farmland (concentrated to the north of the San Gabriel Mountains) because it has become the most urbanized of the counties within the SCAG region, the County did produce approximately $173 million in agricultural crops and commodities in 2011 and approximately $200.5 million in 2013; nursery products are by far the number one agricultural commodity in the County (50.2 percent), followed by flowers and foliage, fruits and nuts crops, vegetable crops, field crops, livestock production, apiary, and forest products.[37,38]

San Bernardino County, which contains the highest number of acres of Important Grazing Land (7.0 percent of county) of the counties within the SCAG region and is comprised of only 0.2 percent designated Important Farmland, produced approximately $386 million in agricultural crops and commodities in 2013, 60.1 percent of which was for milk, 11.3 percent for eggs, 8.4 percent for cattle and calves (meat), 2.1 percent for turf, and two percent or less for other crop categories.[39]

Orange County, which was once a rural community supported primarily by an agricultural economy that included oranges, apricots, and walnuts, has the least remaining acreage of Important Farmlands due to rapid suburbanization in the 1960s and 1970s and conversion of agricultural land to urban development.[40] However, Orange County, which has 11 percent of the land area of Riverside County, still produced approximately $137 million in agricultural crops and commodities in 2013 and

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[33] Riverside County Planning Department. 9 December 2014. *Riverside County General Plan – Current.* Available at: http://planning.rctlma.org/ZoningInformation/GeneralPlan.aspx

[34] Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner's Office. Accessed 10 July 2015. *Riverside County Agricultural Production Report 2013.* Available at: http://www.rivcoag.org/Portals/0/Publications/Crop%20Reports-EntireCounty/2013%20Riverside%20County%20Agricultural%20Production%20Report.pdf

[35] Ventura County Resource Management Agency, Planning Division. Amended 28 June 2011. *Ventura County General Plan: Resources Appendix.* Available at: http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/pdf/plans/General-Plan-Resources-Appendix-6-28-11.pdf

[36] Ventura County Office of Agricultural Commissioner. 5 August 2014. *Ventura County's Crop And Livestock Report 2013.* Available at: http://vcportal.ventura.org/AgComm/docs/crop-reports/2013CropReport.pdf

[37] Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning. Adopted 6 October 2015. *Los Angeles County General Plan 2035.* Available at: http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/gp_final-general-plan.pdf

[38] Los Angeles County Farm Bureau. Accessed 10 July 2015. *2013 Los Angeles County Crop And Livestock Report.* Available at: http://www.lacfb.org/2013.pdf

[39] San Bernardino County. Accessed 10 July 2015. *2013 Crop Report.* Available at: http://cms.sbcounty.gov/Portals/13/CropReports/2013%20Crop%20and%20Livestock%20Report%20-%20Final.pdf?ver=2014-06-18-133337-353

[40] Orange County Public Works Development Services. July 2014. *General Plan: Chapter VI. Resources Element*. Available at: http://ocplanning.net/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?blobid=40235

approximately $132 million in 2014, predominantly through sale of nursery crops, tree and berry crops (especially Valencia oranges and strawberries), and vegetable crops (51 percent, 34 percent, and 14 percent total value, respectively), despite the drought.[41] Orange County does not contain any designated Farmland of Local Importance.

Important Farmland by Parcel Size

There are 54,732 Important Farmland parcels within the SCAG region, approximately 47.1 percent of which are designated Prime Farmland, approximately 28.7 percent of which are designated Farmland of Statewide Importance, and approximately 24.2 percent of which are designated Unique Farmland (**Table 3.2.2-2, *2014 California Department of Conservation Parcels by Size in the SCAG Region***). Approximately 71.7 percent of the SCAG region's Farmland parcels are less than 10 acres in size and not identified by FMMP in **Table 3.2.2-1**. Orange County has the greatest percentage of smaller Farmland parcels, with approximately 91.4 percent of Farmland parcels (1,470 parcels) less than 10 acres in size; in San Bernardino County, approximately 88.0 percent of Farmland parcels (3,118 parcels) are less than 10 acres; in Los Angeles County, approximately 82.9 percent of Farmland parcels (2,528 parcels) are less than 10 acres; in Riverside County, approximately 78.2 percent of Farmland parcels (17,730 parcels) are less than 10 acres; in Ventura County, approximately 76.1 percent of Farmland parcels (8,048 parcels) are less than 10 acres; and in Imperial County, approximately 48.0 percent of Farmland parcels are less than 10 acres.

TABLE 3.2.2-2
2014 CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION FARMLAND PARCELS BY SIZE IN THE SCAG REGION

	Less than 5 Acres		Greater than or Equal to 5 Acres and Less than 10 Acres		10 Acres or Above		Total Number of Important Farmland
County	**Parcels**	**% of Total**	**Parcels**	**% of Total**	**Parcels**	**% of Total**	**Parcels**
Imperial	**5,243**	**39.5%**	**1,129**	**8.5%**	**6,911**	**52.0%**	**13,283**
P	2,335	38.8%	576	9.6%	3,113	51.7%	6,024
S	2,488	36.9%	506	7.5%	3,756	55.6%	6,750
U	420	82.5%	47	9.2%	42	8.3%	509
Los Angeles	**2,237**	**73.4%**	**291**	**9.5%**	**520**	**17.1%**	**3,048**
P	1,719	71.0%	233	9.6%	468	19.3%	2,420
S	174	78.0%	28	12.6%	21	9.4%	223
U	344	84.9%	30	7.4%	31	7.7%	405
Orange	**1,397**	**86.9%**	**73**	**4.5%**	**138**	**8.6%**	**1,608**
P	647	88.0%	25	3.4%	63	8.6%	735
S	75	80.6%	6	6.5%	12	12.9%	93
U	675	86.5%	42	5.4%	63	8.1%	780
Riverside	**15,190**	**67.0%**	**2,540**	**11.2%**	**4,945**	**21.8%**	**22,675**
P	6,658	62.6%	1,164	10.9%	2,812	26.4%	10,634
S	3,674	67.7%	584	10.8%	1,165	21.5%	5,423
U	4,858	73.4%	792	12.0%	968	14.6%	6,618

[41] Orange County Agricultural Commissioner. Accessed 10 July 2015. *2014 Orange County Crop Report.* Available at: http://cms.ocgov.com/documents/2014OrangeCountyCropReport.pdf

TABLE 3.2.2-2
2014 CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION FARMLAND PARCELS BY SIZE IN THE SCAG REGION

	Less than 5 Acres		Greater than or Equal to 5 Acres and Less than 10 Acres		10 Acres or Above		Total Number of Important Farmland
County	**Parcels**	**% of Total**	**Parcels**	**% of Total**	**Parcels**	**% of Total**	**Parcels**
San Bernardino	**2,640**	**74.5%**	**478**	**13.5%**	**427**	**12.0%**	**3,545**
P	1,479	70.8%	352	16.8%	259	12.4%	2,090
S	541	74.3%	67	9.2%	120	16.5%	728
U	620	85.3%	59	8.1%	48	6.6%	727
Ventura	**6,799**	**64.3%**	**1,249**	**11.8%**	**2,525**	**23.9%**	**10,573**
P	2,350	60.7%	498	12.9%	1,021	26.4%	3,869
S	1,461	58.9%	305	12.3%	715	28.8%	2,481
U	2,988	70.8%	446	10.6%	789	18.7%	4,223
SCAG REGION	**33,506**	**61.2%**	**5,760**	**10.5%**	**15,466**	**28.3%**	**54,732**
P	15,188	58.9%	2,848	11.1%	7,736	30.0%	25,772
S	8,413	53.6%	1,496	9.5%	5,789	36.9%	15,698
U	9,905	74.7%	1,416	10.7%	1,941	14.6%	13,262

NOTE:
P = Prime Farmland; S = Farmland of Statewide Importance; U = Unique Farmland.
SOURCE:
California Department of Conservation. Accessed 11 May 2015. *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program*. Available at: http://www.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/FMMP/Pages/Index.aspx

Agricultural Zoning/Williamson Act Preserves

Farmlands and rangelands are agricultural lands that are part of the region's open landscape and entail various types and degrees of modifications to natural lands. Farmlands include irrigated and non-irrigated crop production. Rangelands include any expanse of natural land that is not fertilized, irrigated, or cultivated and is predominately used for grazing by livestock and wildlife.

Within the six-county SCAG region, Imperial County, Riverside County, and San Bernardino County contain several acres of Williamson Act-Non-Renewal Contract Land that will no longer be restricted after the end of the contract; the only Williamson Act Contract land within Los Angeles County is Williamson Act-Mixed Enrollment Agricultural Land for Santa Catalina Island; and Orange County no longer contains Williamson Act agricultural preserves (**Table 3.2.2-3, *Williamson Act Contract Land within the SCAG Region***).

TABLE 3.2.2-3
WILLIAMSON ACT CONTRACT LAND WITHIN THE SCAG REGION

County	Prime Agricultural Land	Non-Prime Agricultural Land	Farmland Security Zone (FSZ)	Mixed Enrollment Agricultural Land	Non-Renewal
Imperial[1]	No	No	No	No	Yes
Los Angeles[2]	No	No	No	Yes	No
Orange[3]	No	No	No	No	No
Riverside[4]	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
San Bernardino[5]	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Ventura[6]	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

SOURCE:
[1] California Department of Conservation. Accessed 26 June 2015. *Imperial County Williamson Act FY 2011-2012.* Available at: ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/WA/imperial_11_12_WA.pdf
[2] California Department of Conservation. Accessed 26 June 2015. *Los Angeles County Williamson Act FY 2012-2013.* Available at: ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/WA/LA_12_13_WA.pdf
[3] California Department of Conservation. 2012. *State of California Williamson Act.* Available at:ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/wa/2012%20Statewide%20Map/WA_2012_11x17.pdf
[4] California Department of Conservation. Accessed 25 August 2015. *Riverside County Williamson Act FY 2008-2009 Sheet 1, Sheet 2, Sheet 3.* Available at: ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/WA/riverside_c_08_09_WA.pdf
[5] California Department of Conservation. Accessed 25 August 2015. *San Bernardino County Williamson Act FY 2012-2013 Sheet 1, Sheet 2.* Available at:ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/WA/sanbernardino_no_12_13_WA.pdf
[6] California Department of Conservation. Accessed 25 August 2015. *Ventura County Williamson Act FY 2013-2014.* Available at: ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/WA/Ventura_13_14_WA.pdf

Forest and Timberland Zoning

Within the SCAG region, forest lands include the Angeles National Forest, Cleveland National Forest, Los Padres National Forest, and San Bernardino National Forest, as well as forest lands within the open space zones of Imperial and Los Angeles counties (**Table 3.2.2-4, *Forest Land, Timberland, and Timberland Production Zones by County***). "Timber" means trees of any species maintained for eventual harvest for forest products purposes, whether planted or of natural growth, standing or down, on privately or publicly owned land, including Christmas trees, but does not mean nursery stock.[42] Timber is permitted in the A-2 and A-3 agricultural zones in Imperial County, the Open Space zone in Los Angeles County with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), and the Open Space Overlay in San Bernardino County with a CUP. "Timberland" means privately or publicly owned land which is devoted to and used for growing and harvesting timber, or for growing and harvesting timber and compatible uses, and which is capable of growing an average annual volume of wood fiber of at least 15 cubic feet per acre. Riverside County permits timberland production within the R-R (rural residential) zone and W-2 (controlled development areas) zone if a CUP has been obtained. There is no Timberland Production Zone land in the SCAG region.

[42] State Government Code, Section 38103 and Section 38103.1. Available at: http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=rtc&group=38001-39000&file=38101-38110

TABLE 3.2.2-4
FOREST LAND, TIMBERLAND, AND TIMBERLAND PRODUCTION ZONES BY COUNTY

County	Forest Land Zone	Timberland Zone	Timberland Production Zone
Imperial[1,2]	Forest industries permitted in S-1 (open space) zone.	Timber permitted in A-2 and A-3 (agricultural) zones.	Not identified in zoning code or General Plan.
Los Angeles[3,4]	OS (open space) zone includes forest preserves. The Angeles National Forest and Los Padres National Forest lands are protected.	Within the OS (open space) zone, harvesting miscellaneous forest products is permitted in this zone if a CUP[1] has been obtained.	Not identified in zoning code or General Plan.
Orange[5,6]	Not identified in zoning code. Cleveland National Forest lands are protected.	Not identified use in zoning code or General Plan.	Not identified in zoning code or General Plan.
Riverside[7,8]	San Bernardino National Forest and Cleveland National Forest lands are protected.	R-R (rural residential) zone and W-2 (controlled development areas) zone permit lumber production of a commercial nature, including commercial logging, or commercial development of timber and lumber mills if a CUP has been obtained.	Not identified in zoning code or General Plan.
San Bernardino[9,10]	Angeles National Forest and San Bernardino National Forest lands are protected. All *Quercus* tree species are protected in all zones, except in association with activities that have been determined to be exempt.	OS (open space) overlay permits limited timber harvesting in scenic areas within or adjacent to the right-of-way to that which is necessary to maintain and enhance the quality of the forest. Timber operations are exempt from requirements regarding the removal of regulated trees or plants as long as they are conducted in compliance with the Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973 (Public Resources Code Section 4526 et seq.).	Not identified in zoning code or General Plan.
Ventura[11,12,13]	Los Padres National Forest lands are protected. The OS (open space) zone permits the managed production of forest lands in the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance. All *Quercus* and *Platanus* tree species, as well as historical trees and heritage trees, are protected in all zones; several other trees are protected within the Scenic Resource Protection Overlay Zone. Forest land is not identified in the Coastal Zoning Ordinance.	Ventura County does not contain land which produces timber commercially for eventual use as lumber or pulp; however, six Christmas tree farms are zoned Timberland Preserve (T-P) pursuant to the provisions of the Timberland Preserve Zone of the County Zoning Ordinance. The "T-P" zone is compatible with the Open Space, Agriculture and Rural land use designations (of the Land Use Chapter of the General Plan). Five of these six properties are located in the Ojai Valley area and one in the Piru area. Together they total approximately 94 acres.	Not identified in zoning code or General Plan.

NOTE:
CUP: Conditional Use Permit
SOURCE:
[1] Imperial County Planning and Development Services. [Adopted 24 November 1998] Amended 9 December 2014. *Title 9: Division 5: Zoning Areas Established.* Available at: http://icpds.com/CMS/Media/TITLE9Div5_2014.pdf
[2] County of Imperial Planning and Development Services Department. Approved 29 January 2008. *Land Use Element of the Imperial County General Plan.* Available at: http://icpds.com/CMS/Media/Land-Use-Element-(2008).pdf
[3] Los Angeles County, California, Code of Ordinances: Title 22 – Planning and Zoning: Division 1 – Planning and Zoning: Chapter 22.40 – Special Purpose and Combining Zones: Part 9 O-S Open Space Zone. Accessed 25 August 2015. Available at: https://library.municode.com/HTML/16274/level4/TIT22PLZO_DIV1PLZO_CH22.40SPPUCOZO_PT9OPSPZO.html
[4] Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning. Adopted 6 October 2015. *Los Angeles County General Plan 2035.* Available at: http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/gp_final-general-plan.pdf
[5] Orange County, CA Code of Ordinances: Article 2 – The Comprehensive Zoning Code. Accessed 25 August 2015. Available at: https://www.municode.com/library/ca/orange_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT7LAUSBURE_DIV9PL_ART2THCOZOCO
[6] County of Orange, Land Use Planning and Subdivision. 2005. *Orange County General Plan 2005: Chapter III. Land Use Element.* Available at: http://ocplanning.net/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?blobid=40236
[7] County of Riverside. Effective 18 June 2015. Ordinance No. 348. Available at: http://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/0/zoning/ordnance/Ord_348_clean_version.pdf
[8] Riverside County Planning Department. 9 December 2014. *County of Riverside General Plan: Chapter 3: Land Use Element.* Available at: http://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/0/genplan/general_plan_2013/1%20General%20Plan/Chapter%203-Land%20Use_clean_120914.pdf
[9] County of San Bernardino Land Use Services Division. [Effective 12 April 2007] Amended 15 January 2015. *County of San Bernardino 2007 Development Code*. Available at: http://www.sbcounty.gov/uploads/lus/developmentcode/DCWebsite.pdf
[10] County of San Bernardino Land Use Services Division. [Effective 12 April 2007] Amended 24 April 2014. *County of San Bernardino 2007 General Plan.* Available at: http://www.sbcounty.gov/Uploads/lus/GeneralPlan/FINALGP.pdf
[11] Ventura County Planning Division. Amended 18 March 2014. *Ventura County Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance: Division 8, Chapter 1 of the Ventura County Ordinance Code.* Available at: http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/pdf/zoning/VCNCZO_03-18-14_revised.pdf
[12] Ventura County Planning Division. Effective 9 March 2013. *Ventura County Coastal Zoning Ordinance: Division 8, Chapter 1.1 of the Ventura County Ordinance.* Available at: http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/pdf/ordinances/zoning/coastal_zone_ord.pdf
[13] County of Ventura Resource Management Agency, Planning Division. Amended 22 October 2013. *Ventura County General Plan Land Use Appendix.* Available at: http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/pdf/plans/GENERAL_PLAN_Land_Use_Appendix_October_22_2013_.pdf

Forestry Resources

Forestry resources within the SCAG region are concentrated in the four national forests in the SCAG region: the Angeles National Forest (Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties), San Bernardino National Forest (San Bernardino and Riverside counties), Los Padres National Forest (Los Angeles and Ventura County), and the Cleveland National Forest (Orange County and Riverside County) (**see Figure 3.2.2-2, *Forest Lands in SCAG Region***). There are no state forests that are used as forestry resources in the SCAG region.[43]

The montane and subalpine vegetation in the SCAG region consists of conifer-dominated forests and woodland. These generally occur at elevations of 3,000 feet or more in the Transverse (Los Padres National Forest, Angeles National Forest, and San Bernardino National Forest) and Peninsular Ranges (San Bernardino National Forest and Cleveland National Forest). Oak-dominated woodlands and forests are found at low- to mid-elevations of the Transverse and Peninsular Ranges. Canyon live oak (*Quercus chrysolepis*) forms forests with Coulter pine (*Pinus coulteri*), bigcone-fir (*Pseudotsuga macrocarpa*), Douglas-fir (*P. menziesii*), and interior live oak (*Q. wislizenii*) on the higher and inner slopes of the mountains, as well as forming riparian forests along seasonal streams. Coast live oak (*Q. agrifolia*) woodland forms on more coastal slopes, while Engelmann oak (*Q. engelmannii*) woodland and valley oak (*Q. lobata*) woodland grow on deeper alluvial slopes and valleys. California walnut (*Juglans californica*) is found associated with coast live oak, usually on north slopes, and in some places becomes the dominant species. Woodland consists of trees with an understory of grasses and herbs. Introduced grasses dominate the understory, although in some cases native bunchgrasses may be present.

At the lower elevations, Coulter pine forms open woodland with canyon live oak, black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*), and ponderosa pine and Jeffrey pine. At somewhat higher elevations, yellow (ponderosa and Jeffrey) pine forest dominate. Farther upslope, upper montane conifer forests are present, consisting of white fir and sugar pine, followed by mountain juniper (*Juniperus occidentalis* ssp. *australis*) woodland on open slopes and ridges and lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) forest on flats and gentle slopes. The highest elevation forests are dominated by limber pine. These forests are found at the highest elevations of the San Bernardino Mountains. The actual elevation range of each forest type is dependent on other site factors, such as precipitation, moisture-holding capability of the soil, slope and aspect.

The Tecate cypress (*Cypressus forbesii*), is a fire-adapted conifer species found only on low-fertility soils. This species grows in several stands in the SCAG region in the vicinity of Sierra Peak in Orange County. Tecate cypress forest is considered a special-status natural community by the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), and the Tecate cypress itself is a California Native Plant Society listed species.

Factors Influencing the Conversion of Agricultural and Forest Lands in the SCAG Region

The spread of urban and suburban development has contributed to the loss of historic agricultural lands in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in the SCAG region. Forest lands are concentrated in the four

[43] California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). December 2014. *CAL FIRE Demonstration State Forests.* Available at: http://www.fire.ca.gov/communications/downloads/fact_sheets/StateForests.pdf

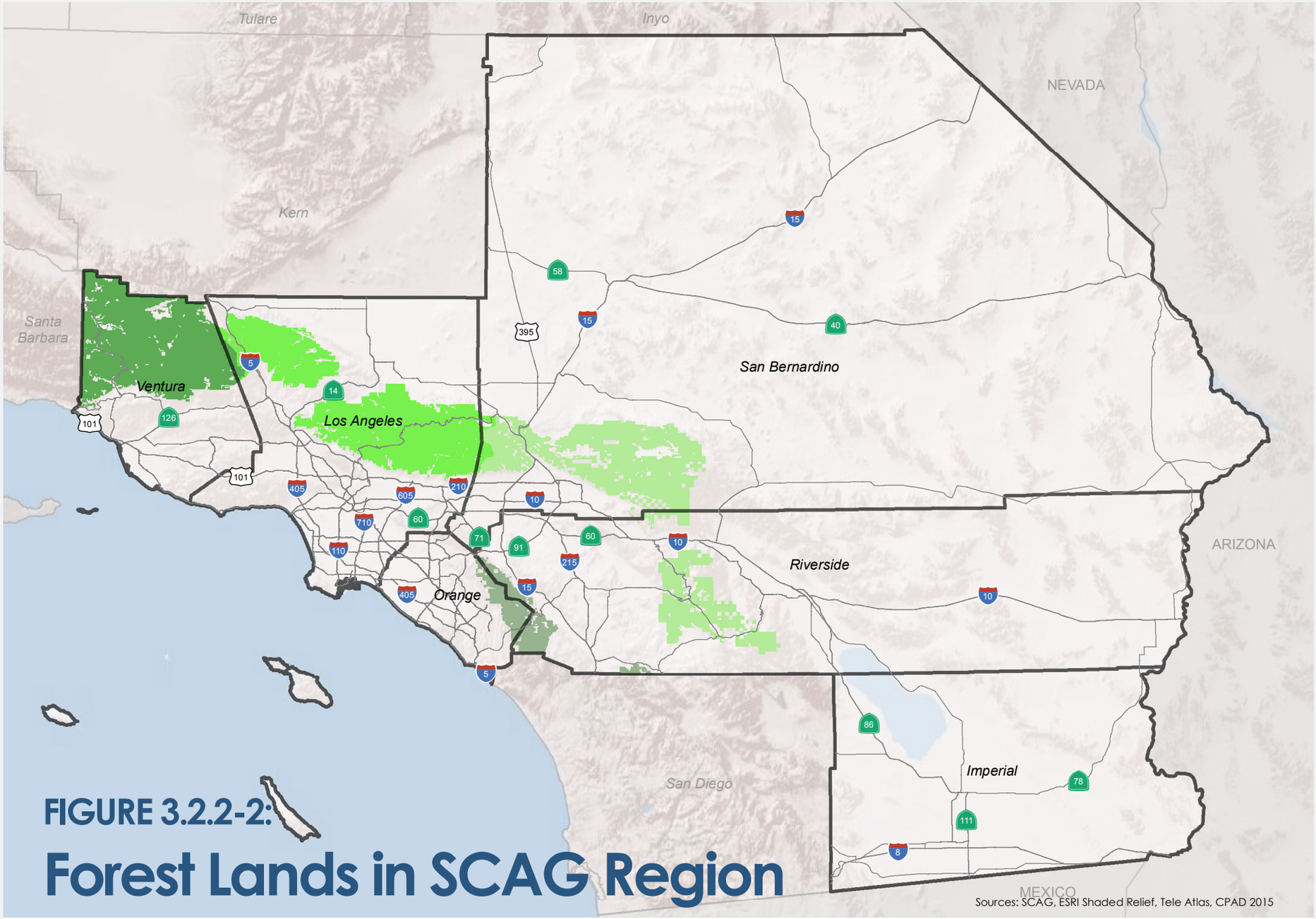

FIGURE 3.2.2-2:
Forest Lands in SCAG Region

national forests within the SCAG region, which are protected from future development but potentially subject to wildfires, especially near the wildland-urban interface where human-caused fires are more prevalent, which can result in the conversion of forest land to other plant communities. For the last 10 years, about 3,500 human-caused wildfires have burned an average of approximately 400,000 acres of National Forest System land annually, with the majority caused by campfires.[44] The 2014 designation of 346,177 acres (or approximately 49 percent) of the heaviest used area within the Angeles National Forest and the San Bernardino National Forest (4,002 acres, or approximately 0.5 percent) as the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument has increased protection afforded to those lands, including protection of the chaparral and oak woodland that represent a portion of the rare Mediterranean ecosystem in California.[45]

Conversion of Forest and Woodlands

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) recognizes valley oak woodland, Engelmann oak woodland, and California walnut woodland as sensitive woodland communities in the SCAG region (see **Table 3.4.2-1, *Riparian Habitat and State Sensitive Plant Communities Reported in the SCAG* Region**, in **Section 3.4, Biological Resources**). These communities have shown a dramatic decline due to urban and agricultural development in this century. Hardwood upland forests are found on higher, wetter sites than oak woodlands and are distinguished from woodlands by a higher tree density. Walnut forests found on the south side of the San Gabriel Mountains to the Santa Ana Mountains, mainland cherry forest historically found in Los Angeles County, island cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia* ssp. *lyonii*) forest and island ironwood (*Lyonothamnus floribundus*) forest found on the Channel Islands are considered sensitive natural communities.

Conversion of Agricultural Lands

Historically, development patterns in the region have been tied as much to the conversion of agricultural lands as to the consumption of natural lands for urban uses. A key issue in the region today is whether the high rate of farmland conversion in recent years can be slowed to prevent irreversible losses. An estimated 370,000 acres of important farmland and grazing land were converted to non-agricultural uses and/or applied for development entitlements between 1984 and 2012 (approximately 13,206 acres per year).[46,47,48,49,50,51]

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[44] U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. Accessed 10 July 2015. *Fire.* Available at: http://www.fs.fed.us/managing-land/fire

[45] U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. Accessed 10 July 2015. *San Gabriel Mountains National Monument.* Available at: http://www.fs.fed.us/visit/san-gabriel-mountains-national-monument

[46] California Department of Conservation. Accessed 1 July 2015. *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program: Imperial County – Important Farmland data availability.* Available at: http://www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Imperial.aspx

[47] California Department of Conservation. Accessed 1 July 2015. *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program: Los Angeles County – Important Farmland data availability.* Available at: http://www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/LosAngeles.aspx

[48] California Department of Conservation. Accessed 1 July 2015. *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program: Orange County – Important Farmland data availability.* Available at: http://www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Orange.aspx

[49] California Department of Conservation. Accessed 1 July 2015. *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program: Riverside County – Important Farmland data availability.* Available at: http://www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Riverside.aspx

[50] California Department of Conservation. Accessed 1 July 2015. *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program: San Bernardino County – Important Farmland data availability.* Available at: http://www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/SanBernardino.aspx

3.2.3 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The potential for the 2016 RTP/SCS to result in impacts related to agriculture and forestry resources was analyzed in relation to the five questions contained in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. The project would normally be considered to have a significant impact related to agriculture and forestry resources if it would:

- 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.
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.
- Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined in Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g)).
- Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.
- 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.

Methodology

The 2016 RTP/SCS includes coordinated strategies for transportation investments and land use distribution patterns. These land use distribution patterns identify forecasted jurisdictional level growth and include land use development distribution regional policies to accommodate the forecasted growth. The Regional Travel Demand Model (RTDM) used for this analysis captures pass-through traffic that does not have an origin or destination in the region, but does impact the region, so that too is included in the project analysis. Although development is anticipated to occur within cities and counties even without the 2016 RTP/SCS, this Plan includes regional policies that could influence growth, including distribution patterns, throughout the region. To address this, the analysis in the PEIR covers overall impacts of transportation investments and land use strategies described in the 2016 RTP/SCS. In addition, this PEIR considers cumulative impacts from other local projects (e.g., development projects that have been approved within each county), which could result in additional impacts inside and outside the region. The methodology for determining the significance of agriculture and forestry resources impacts compares the existing conditions to future (2040) conditions, as required in CEQA Section 15126.2(a). This analysis evaluates the potential for significant impacts of the 2016 RTP/SCS to agriculture and forestry resources in accordance with Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines and guidelines established by Caltrans; Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Imperial Counties; and major cities within the SCAG region.

[51] California Department of Conservation. Accessed 1 July 2015. *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program: Ventura County – Important Farmland Data Availability.* Available at: http://www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Ventura.aspx

To assess potential impacts to agriculture and forestry resources within the SCAG region, a geographic information system (GIS) was used to analyze major highway, transit, and freight rail projects in the 2016 RTP/SCS. A 500-foot worst-case-scenario construction radius was created around the major transportation projects then intersected with Farmland and forest land resources in the SCAG region.[52] The results of the GIS analysis determined whether projects included in the Plan could directly affect Important Farmland, zoning for agricultural use, Williamson Act contract land, forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production in the SCAG region. Indirect impacts were evaluated based on the land pattern assumptions reflected in the Plan that protected lands would remain protected and new growth would be shifted away from high value habitat areas and concentrated in existing urbanized areas or opportunity areas, such as high-quality transit areas (HQTAs) (near transit projects), livable corridors, neighborhood mobility areas, and suburban town centers which are well-served by transit and are conducive to higher density housing, and walkable, mixed-use communities in the future.

3.2.4 IMPACT ANALYSIS

IMPACT AF-1: 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.

Significant Impact

Implementation of transportation projects and anticipated development resulting from land use strategies included in the 2016 RTP/SCS would have the potential to convert Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland in all six counties and affect Local Farmland and Grazing land in five of the six counties because these important farmlands are located in the vicinity (within a worst-case-scenario 500-foot construction radius) of the transportation projects in the Plan, constituting a significant impact (**Table 3.2.4-1, *Estimated Maximum Direct Potential Loss of Important Agricultural Land***). However, based on this worst-case scenario, no more than 1.6 percent of combined existing Important Farmland and Grazing Land (0.8 percent of Important Farmland) would be directly converted to non-agricultural use as a result of the transportation projects and strategies included in the Plan. This would be a negligible reduction in Important Agricultural Land within the SCAG region.

[52] Major Transportation Projects include but are not limited to projects that involve ground disturbing activities and projects outside of existing rights-of-way such as projects that require new rights-of-way, adding traffic lanes, and grade separation.

TABLE 3.2.4-1
ESTIMATED MAXIMUM DIRECT POTENTIAL LOSS OF IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL LAND

County	Important Farmland (Acres)				Subtotal Important Farmland (Acres)	Grazing Land (Acres)	Total Important Agricultural Land (Acres)	Percent Potentially Lost by County
	Prime Farmland	Farmland of Statewide Importance	Unique Farmland	Farmland of Local Importance				
Imperial	648.0	724.6	0.2	283.5	1,656.3	0	2,769.1	0.5%
Los Angeles	619.4	69.5	20.9	403.0	1,112.8	5,374.4	6,866.2	2.5%
Orange	200.0	43.2	135.8	0	379	480.9	6,136.3	13.8%
Riverside	457.1	334.4	131.8	4,353.1	5,276.4	1,076.1	6,492.3	1.2%
San Bernardino	46.5	14.4	72.5	6.4	139.8	8,597.6	9,285.2	1.0%
Ventura	175.1	277.7	15.6	79.4	547.8	325.7	9,985.6	3.15%
Acres potentially lost: SCAG region	2,146.1	1,463.8	376.8	5,125.4	9,112.1	15,854.7	41,534.7	**1.6%**
Acres existing Important Farmland: SCAG region	397,116	389,938	71,449	289,140	1,147,643	1,484,335	2,631,978	
Percent potentially lost by type	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%	1.8%	0.8%	1.1%	1.6%	

SOURCE: California Department of Conservation. Accessed 26 June 2015. *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program: Important Farmland Data Availability.* Available at: http://www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/

Implementation of the transportation projects considered in the 2016 RTP/SCS could result in long-term impacts to agricultural lands in the region that may include Important Farmland or Grazing Land, by adding transportation infrastructure to parts of the region that currently serve as agricultural lands or through development on agricultural lands, which are interspersed throughout urban areas and are also located in less developed portions of the counties. Where there would be new transportation facilities constructed outside of the region's urbanized areas, undisturbed/vacant land could be utilized for transportation purposes. Additionally, development associated with new urban uses could be located on agricultural lands. Transportation projects that are most likely to result in significant impacts to agricultural lands include highway expansion, highway widening projects, and potential connectors. Other transportation projects such as roadway improvements, toll road improvements and connections, grade separated facilities for busways, goods movement roadway facilities, high speed rail and commuter rail projects, and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) / high-occupancy toll (HOT) connectors in areas that currently serve as agricultural could also result in significant impacts, thus requiring the consideration of mitigation measures.

In addition to impacts from transportation projects included in the Plan, anticipated land use strategies included in the Plan could also result in the consumption of agricultural lands. The Plan includes land use strategies that would focus new growth in the region's urbanized areas (primarily HQTAs), livable corridors, neighborhood mobility areas, existing suburban town centers, and walkable, mixed-use communities). However, some development is anticipated to occur on areas that are currently in use as agricultural lands, constituting a significant impact requiring the consideration of mitigation measures.

IMPACT AF-2: Potential to conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.

Significant Impact

Implementation of the transportation projects and anticipated development resulting from land use strategies included in the 2016 RTP/SCS would have the potential to conflict with land managed pursuant to Williamson Act contracts within the SCAG region, constituting a significant impact. Prime Agricultural Land in Riverside County, Mixed Enrollment Agricultural Land in Ventura County, and Non-Renewal land in Imperial and Riverside counties under a Williamson Act contract are located within the 500-foot worst-case scenario construction radius of the transportation projects in the Plan. There is a potential for the Plan to result in direct impacts to lands managed under Williamson Act contracts, constituting a significant impact requiring the consideration of mitigation measures.

Implementation of the transportation projects included in the 2016 RTP/SCS could also directly affect existing zoning for agricultural use. Land zoned for agricultural use within Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties is located within the 500-foot worst-case scenario construction radius of projects in the Plan. The Plan includes land use strategies to focus new growth in urbanized areas. However, despite strategies intended to encourage growth in urbanized areas, some growth would occur in areas that would potentially conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or Williamson Act contracts, constituting a significant impact requiring the consideration of mitigation measures.

IMPACT AF-3: Potential to conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined in Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g)).

Less than Significant Impact

Implementation of the transportation projects and anticipated development projects resulting from the land use strategies included in the 2016 RTP/SCS would result in less than significant impacts to forestry resources in regard to conflicts with existing zoning for forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production. Within the SCAG region, forest industries are permitted in open space zones in Imperial County and Ventura County. National forest lands are protected from future development. Only two of the transportation projects included in the Plan would cross through the SCAG region's national forests. An HOV lane project along the I-15 freeway would cross through the San Bernardino National Forest, and three of the four alternatives that will be evaluated for Phase I of the California High Speed Rail Project in Los Angeles County involve crossing through/under the Angeles National Forest. Impacts to zoning for forest land, timberland, or Timberland Production would be less than significant at a programmatic level from these two projects because (1) there are very few existing trees along the I-15 freeway within the San Bernardino National Forest (predominantly characterized by shrubland adjacent to the freeway, with trees in riparian areas), and (2) the three California High Speed Rail alignment alternatives that would cross through the Angeles National Forest would involve drilling a rail tunnel through the San Gabriel Mountains beneath the Angeles National Forest, preserving the wilderness and the forest at ground surface along the route.[53] These two projects would likely require a Forest Management Plan amendment regarding the preservation of scenic integrity objectives; however, as the HOV project in the San Bernardino National Forest would be located within an existing transportation corridor and other rail alignments would be underground, neither project would conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or Timberland Production in the national forests. As forestry resources within the SCAG region are concentrated in the four national forests in the SCAG region and there are no state forests that are used as forestry resources in the SCAG region, the 2016 RTP/SCS would result in no impact in regard to existing zoning for forest land.

The harvesting of timberland is only permitted in two agricultural zones in Imperial County, in the open space zone in Los Angeles County only if a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) has been obtained, in the rural residential zone and controlled development areas in Riverside County only if a CUP has been obtained, in the open space zone in San Bernardino County, and only Christmas tree farms are permitted in the Timberland Preserve zone in Ventura County. Although implementation of the transportation projects considered in the 2016 RTP/SCS could result in long-term impacts to land zoned for agricultural use and open space in the region that may include zoning for timberland use, timberland harvesting is a minor agricultural use in the SCAG region, the only county that harvested timber in 2013 was Ventura County, worth approximately 0.0005 percent of the county's annual agricultural value.[54,55,56,57,58,59] Therefore, by

[53] Scauzillo, Steve, San Gabriel Valley Times. 25 September 2015. *High Speed Rail Authority Asks Permission to Drill Under Angeles National Forest.* Available at: http://www.sgvtribune.com/general-news/20150925/high-speed-rail-authority-asks-permission-to-drill-under-angeles-national-forest

[54] Imperial County. 5 August 2014. *Imperial County Agricultural Crop And Livestock Report 2013.* Available at: http://www.co.imperial.ca.us/ag/crop_&_livestock_reports/Crop_&_Livestock_Report_2013.PDF

adding transportation infrastructure to parts of the region that currently serve as agricultural lands or through development on agricultural lands, which are interspersed throughout urban areas and are also located in less developed portions of the counties, the 2016 RTP/SCS would result in a less than significant impact, if any, to timberland.

Timberland Production Zones have not been established in the six-county SCAG region. As such, there would be no impact to Timberland Production Zones.

In addition to impacts from transportation projects included in the Plan, anticipated land use strategies included in the Plan could also result in the consumption of agricultural lands or open space lands that permit the harvesting of timberland. Although the Plan includes land use strategies that would focus new growth in the region's urbanized areas (primarily HQTAs), livable corridors, neighborhood mobility areas, existing suburban town centers, and walkable, mixed-use communities), some development has the potential to occur in the very few areas in Ventura County that are currently in use as timberland harvesting lands constituting a less than significant impact to forestry resources, and no mitigation measures are required.

IMPACT AF-4: Potential to result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

Less than Significant Impact

Implementation of transportation projects and anticipated development resulting from land use strategies included in the 2016 RTP/SCS would result in less than significant impacts in regard to the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use because forestry resources within the SCAG region are concentrated in the four national forests in the SCAG region, which are protected from future development, but there is the potential for minor loss of patches of existing forest land near the wildland-urban interface to occur as a result of anticipated development. The Plan does not include transportation projects that would directly result in a significant loss of forest land. As the 2016 RTP/SCS includes land use strategies that aim to concentrate future anticipated development in the region's urbanized areas, existing suburban town centers, and walkable, mixed-use communities (primarily the HQTAs) and other areas that are not protected from future development, the Plan would not indirectly result in the loss or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Although the region's forest land is predominantly concentrated in the four national forests in the SCAG region that are protected from future development, there are also small patches of forest land and sensitive woodland communities

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[55] Ventura County Office of Agricultural Commissioner. 5 August 2014. *Ventura County's Crop And Livestock Report 2013.* Available at: http://vcportal.ventura.org/AgComm/docs/crop-reports/2013CropReport.pdf

[56] Los Angeles County Farm Bureau. Accessed 10 July 2015. *2013 Los Angeles County Crop And Livestock Report.* Available at: http://www.lacfb.org/2013.pdf

[57] San Bernardino County. Accessed 10 July 2015. *2013 Crop Report.* Available at: http://cms.sbcounty.gov/Portals/13/CropReports/2013%20Crop%20and%20Livestock%20Report%20-%20Final.pdf?ver=2014-06-18-133337-353

[58] Orange County Agricultural Commissioner. Accessed 10 July 2015. *2014 Orange County Crop Report.* Available at: http://cms.ocgov.com/documents/2014OrangeCountyCropReport.pdf

[59] Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner's Office. Accessed 10 July 2015. *Riverside County Agricultural Production Report 2013.* Available at: http://www.rivcoag.org/Portals/0/Publications/Crop%20Reports-EntireCounty/2013%20Riverside%20County%20Agricultural%20Production%20Report.pdf

near the wildland-urban interface within the six-county region that are not protected from future development. Implementation of the transportation projects considered in the 2016 RTP/SCS could result in long-term impacts to forest land by adding transportation infrastructure to parts of the region that currently contain forest land or through development on forest land, which is interspersed in small patches throughout urban areas and are also located in less developed portions of the counties. Where there would be new transportation facilities constructed outside of the region's urbanized areas, undisturbed/vacant land could be utilized for transportation purposes. Additionally, development associated with new urban uses could also be located on forest land, resulting in the conversion of small patches of forest land to non-forest use. Transportation projects that are most likely to result in minor impacts to forest lands include highway expansion, highway widening projects, and potential connectors. Other transportation projects such as roadway improvements, toll road improvements and connections, grade separated facilities for busways, goods movement roadway facilities, high speed rail and commuter rail projects, and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) / high-occupancy toll (HOT) connectors in areas that are currently forest land could also result in minor impacts. Therefore, the 2016 RTP/SCS would result in less than significant impacts to forestry resources in regard to the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use, and no mitigation measures are required.

IMPACT AF-5: Potential to 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.

Significant Impact

Implementation of transportation projects and anticipated development resulting from land use strategies included in the 2016 RTP/SCS would result in significant impacts in regard to the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use, constituting a significant impact requiring the consideration of mitigation measures.

Although the Plan would include land use strategies that focus new anticipated development in the region's urbanized areas, some new development is anticipated to occur in agricultural areas on forest land outside the national forests (where forest land is protected from future development), and/or near the wildland-urban interface. As described under Impact AF-1, the Plan would potentially directly impact up to 0.8 percent of existing Farmland in the SCAG region based on a worst-case scenario construction radius, and could indirectly result in the conversion of additional Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use as a result of increased development near the urbanized areas or suburban town enters that result from transit and/or passenger rail projects included in the Plan.

Forestry resources within the SCAG region are concentrated in the four national forests in the SCAG region, which are protected from future development. However, as discussed in the 2016 RTP/SCS, climate change and related drought conditions associated with greenhouse gas emissions and projected population growth would be expected to contribute to the loss of agricultural and forest land. As climate change studies suggest that Southern California will continue to experience more extreme weather scenarios, including longer and hotter heat waves that would increase the threat of wildfire in parts of the SCAG region already prone to wildfires, forested areas in the region are expected to

experience greater threats from wildfires as conditions grow drier and hotter.[60] Agricultural areas in Southern California are "moderately" vulnerable to climate change (i.e., loss of winter chill hours, increased invasive pests, changes to plant and pest interactions, and increased plant and animal diseases in agriculture have the potential to result in the loss of agricultural land).[61] As described in **Section 3.8, *Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change***, the 2016 RTP/SCS would not result in an increase in GHG emissions compared to existing conditions and would exceed SB 375 GHG emissions reduction targets, but it would not meet the AB 32 target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, resulting in an indirect impact in regard to the loss of forest land.

Therefore, transportation projects and land use strategies included in the 2016 RTP/SCS could have the potential to cause other changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use, constituting a significant impact requiring the consideration of mitigation measures .

3.2.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

IMPACT AF-1: 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.

Significant Cumulative Impact

The 2016 RTP/SCS includes transportation projects and strategies that would have the potential to convert Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland in all six counties and affect Local Farmland and Grazing land in five of the six counties because these important farmlands are located in the vicinity (within a worst-case-scenario 500-foot construction radius) of the transportation projects in the Plan, constituting a significant impact when taken into consideration with other infrastructure and development project in the SCAG region and surrounding areas (**Figure 3.2.2-1**). As stated in the Natural & Farmlands Appendix of the 2016 RTP/SCS, the SCAG region lost approximately 19 percent of farmland designated as "important" by the California Department of Conservation from 1984 to 2012.[62] Transportation projects and land use patterns anticipated in the 2016 RTP/SCS would exacerbate the conversion of Farmland in the region that has occurred over the past three decades.

[60] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 2014. *Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report Summary for Policymakers*. Available at: http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5_SYR_FINAL_SPM.pdf

[61] California Department of Food and Agriculture. 2013. *Climate Change Consortium for Specialty Crops: Impacts and Strategies for Resilience.* Available at: https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/environmentalstewardship/pdfs/ccc-report.pdf

[62] California Department of Conservation. Accessed 26 October 2015. *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program: County Data.* Historic land use conversion data for all six counties in the SCAG region, 1984-present (2012). Available at: http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/county_info.aspx

IMPACT AF-2: Potential to conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.

Significant Cumulative Impact

Implementation of the transportation projects included in the 2016 RTP/SCS, when taken into consideration with other development and infrastructure projects within the SCAG region and surrounding areas, would have the potential to conflict with land managed pursuant to Williamson Act contracts within the SCAG region, constituting a significant cumulative impact. As mentioned in the Natural & Farmlands Appendix of the 2016 RTP/SCS, only about 6.6 percent of farmland in the SCAG region is protected under a Williamson Act contract. The loss of agriculture on protected Williamson Act contract lands as a result of transportation projects included in the 2016 RTP/SCS, the anticipated growth targeted in urbanized areas near Williamson Act contract lands, and potential impacts from related projects would be expected to exacerbate an ongoing loss of protected agricultural lands to development.

IMPACT AF-3: Potential to conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined in Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g)).

No Cumulative Impact

Implementation of the transportation projects included in the 2016 RTP/SCS, when taken into consideration with other infrastructure and development projects in the SCAG region and nearby areas, would not contribute to cumulative impacts to conflict with existing zoning for forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned, or potential need to rezone timberland resources. The 2016 RTP/SCS would not contribute to cumulative significant impacts in the region in regard to conflicts with existing zoning for, or causing rezoning of, forest land or Timberland Production because forestry resources are concentrated within the four national forests in the SCAG region, which are protected from future development, timber harvesting is conducted only in Ventura County, and Timberland Production Zones have not been established in the SCAG region.

IMPACT AF-4: Potential to result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

Significant Cumulative Impact

The 2016 RTP/SCS would contribute to cumulative significant impacts when taken into consideration with related transportation projects and anticipated growth and land use development pattern in regard to the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. The loss of forest land in patches near the wildland-urban interface as a result of transportation projects included in the 2016 RTP/SCS, the anticipated growth targeted in HQTAs near forest lands, and potential impacts from related projects would exacerbate an ongoing loss of existing forest lands to development.

IMPACT AF-5: Potential to 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.

Significant Cumulative Impact

The 2016 RTP/SCS would contribute to cumulative significant impacts in regard to other potential 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, as a result of agricultural land and forest land in the wildland-urban interface being developed (anticipated growth and land use pattern). Additionally, the loss of agricultural and forest land as an indirect result of climate change and related drought conditions associated with greenhouse gas emissions and projected population growth, the anticipated growth targeted in HTQAs near the wildland-urban interface, and potential impacts from related projects would exacerbate an ongoing loss of agricultural lands and forest lands to climate change.

3.2.6 MITIGATION MEASURES

Mitigation measures as they pertain to each CEQA question related to agricultural and forestry resources are described below. Mitigation measures are categorized into two categories: SCAG mitigation and project-level mitigation measures. SCAG mitigation measures shall be implemented by SCAG over the lifetime of the 2016 RTP/SCS. Project-level mitigation measures can and should be implemented by the Lead Agencies for transportation and development projects, as applicable and feasible.

IMPACT AF-1: 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.

SCAG Mitigation Measures

MM AF-1(a)(1): SCAG shall facilitate minimizing future impacts to Important Farmland resources through cooperation, information sharing, and regional program development as part of SCAG's ongoing regional planning efforts, such as web-based planning tools for local government including CA LOTS, and other GIS tools and data services, including, but not limiting to, Map Gallery, GIS library, and GIS applications; and direct technical assistance efforts such as Toolbox Tuesday Training series and sharing of associated online Training materials. Lead Agencies, such as county and city planning departments, shall be consulted during this update process.

MM AF-1(a)(2): SCAG shall work with member agencies and the region's farmland interests, through regional forums such as SCAG's Open Space Conservation Work Group, to develop regional best practices information for buffering farmland from urban encroachment, resolving conflicts that prevent farming on hillsides and other designated areas, and closing loopholes that allow conversion of non-farm uses without a grading permit.

MM AF-1(a)(3): SCAG shall expand on the Natural Resource Inventory Database and Conservation Framework & Assessment by incorporating strategic mapping layers to build the database and further refine the priority conservation areas by (1) further investing in mapping and farmland data tracking and (2) working with County Transportation Commissions (CTCs) to support their county-level efforts at data building. SCAG shall encourage CTCs to develop advanced mitigation programs or include them in future transportation measures by (1) funding pilot programs that encourage advance mitigation including data and replicable processes, (2) participating in state-level efforts that would support regional advanced mitigation planning in the SCAG region, and (3) supporting the inclusion of advance mitigation programs at county level transportation measures. SCAG shall align with funding opportunities and pilot programs to begin implementation of the Conservation Plan through acquisition and restoration through (1) seeking planning funds, such as cap and trade auction proceeds that could help prepare for local action on acquisition and restoration, (2) supporting CTCs and other partners, and (3) continuing support of the State Wildlife Action Plan 2015 Update and its implementation. SCAG shall provide incentives to jurisdictions that cooperate across county lines to protect and restore natural habitat corridors, especially where corridors cross county boundaries, as detailed in the Natural & Farm Lands Appendix strategies of the 2016 RTP/SCS.

Project-Level Mitigation Measures

MM AF-1(b): Consistent with the provisions of Section 15091 of the State CEQA Guidelines, SCAG has identified mitigation measures capable of avoiding or reducing the significant effects from the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural uses that are within the jurisdiction and responsibility of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the California Resources Agency, other public agencies, and/or Lead Agencies. Where the Lead Agency has identified that a project has the potential to convert substantial amounts of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural uses, Lead Agency can and should consider mitigation measures to ensure compliance with the Farmland Protection Act and implementing regulations, and the goals and policies established within the applicable adopted county and city general plans to protect agricultural resources consistent with the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency. Such measures may include the following, other comparable measures identified by the Lead Agency taking into account project and site-specific considerations as applicable and feasible:

- For projects that require approval or funding by the USDOT, comply with Section 4(f) U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (USDOT Act).
- Project relocation or corridor realignment to avoid Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local or Statewide Importance.
- Maintain and expand agricultural land protections such as urban growth boundaries.
- Support the acquisition or voluntary dedication of agriculture conservation easements and other programs that preserve agricultural lands, including the creation of farmland mitigation banks. Local governments would be responsible for encouraging the development of agriculture conservation easements or farmland mitigation banks, purchasing conservation agreements or farmland for mitigation, and ensuring that the terms of the conservation easement agreements are upheld.

- Provide for mitigation fees to support a mitigation bank that invests in farmer education, agricultural infrastructure, water supply, marketing, etc. that enhance the commercial viability of retained agricultural lands.
- Include underpasses and overpasses at reasonable intervals to maintain property access.
- Use berms, buffer zones, setbacks, and fencing to reduce conflicts between new development and farming uses and protect the functions of farmland.
- Ensure individual projects are consistent with federal, state, and local policies that preserve agricultural lands and support the economic viability of agricultural activities, as well as policies that provide compensation for property owners if preservation is not feasible.
- Contact the California Department of Conservation and each county's Agricultural Commissioner's office to identify the location of prime farmlands and lands that support crops considered valuable to the local or regional economy and evaluate potential impacts to such lands using the land evaluation and site assessment (LESA) analysis method (CEQA Guidelines §21095), as appropriate. Use conservation easements or the payment of in-lieu fees to offset impacts.

IMPACT AF-2: Potential to conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.

SCAG Mitigation Measures

MM AF-2(a): SCAG shall facilitate minimizing conflicts with existing zoning for agricultural use and Williamson Act contracts through cooperation, information sharing, and regional program development as part of SCAG's ongoing regional planning efforts, such as web-based planning tools for local government including CA LOTS, and other GIS tools and data services, including, but not limiting to, Map Gallery, GIS library, and GIS applications; and direct technical assistance efforts such as Toolbox Tuesday Training series and sharing of associated online training materials. Lead Agencies, such as county and city planning departments, shall be consulted during this update process.

MM-AF-1(a)(2) and **MM-AF-1(a)(3).**

Project-Level Mitigation Measures

MM AF-2(b): Consistent with the provisions of Section 15091 of the State CEQA Guidelines, SCAG has identified mitigation measures capable of avoiding or reducing the significant effects from conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract that are within the jurisdiction and responsibility of the California Department of Conservation, other public agencies, and Lead Agencies. Where the Lead Agency has identified that a project has the potential to conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or convert Williamson Act contract land to non-agricultural uses, Lead Agency can and should consider mitigation measures to mitigate the significant effects of agriculture and forestry resources to ensure compliance with the goals and policies established within the applicable adopted county and city general plans to protect agricultural resources consistent with the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, the Farmland Security Zone Act, and county and city zoning codes, as applicable and feasible. Such measures may include the following, other comparable measures

identified by the Lead Agency taking into account project and site-specific considerations as applicable and feasible:

- Project relocation or corridor realignment to avoid lands in Williamson Act contracts.
- Establish conservation easements consistent with the recommendations of the Department of Conservation, or 20-year Farmland Security Zone contracts (Government Code Section 51296 et seq.), 10-year Williamson Act contracts (Government Code Section 51200 et seq.), or use of other conservation tools available from the California Department of Conservation Division of Land Resource Protection.
- Prior to final approval of each project, encourage enrollments of agricultural lands for counties that have Williamson Act programs, where applicable.

IMPACT AF-5: Potential to 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.

SCAG Mitigation Measures

MM-AF-1(a)(1) through **MM-AF-1(a)(3).**

MM-GHG-1(a)(1) through **MM-GHG-1(a)(11).**

Project-Level Mitigation Measures

MM-AF-1(b) and **MM-GHG-1(b).**

3.2.7 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

IMPACT AF-1: 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.

The loss and disturbance of agricultural lands would be significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measures **MM-AF-1(a)(1)**, **MM-AF-1(a)(2)**, **MM-AF-1(a)(3)**, and **MM-AF-1(b)** would reduce impacts related to disturbance and/or loss of prime farmlands and/or grazing lands; however, direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

IMPACT AF-2: Potential to conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.

Conflicts with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract would be significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measures **MM-AF-2(a)**, **MM-AF-1(a)(2)**, **MM-AF-1(a)(3)**, and **MM-AF-2(b)**

would reduce these impacts; however, direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

IMPACT AF-5: Potential to 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.

The conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use as a result of other changes in the environment would be significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measures **MM-AF-1(a)** through **MM-AF-1(a)(3)**, **MM-AF-1(b)**, **MM-GHG-1(a)(1)** through **MM-GHG-1(a)(11)**, and **MM-GHG-1(b)** would reduce these impacts; however, direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.