

This section of the General Plan EIR describes the existing agricultural resources within the City of Rancho Cordova Planning Area and appropriate General Plan policies to reduce identified impacts, where necessary. Sources utilized in this section to assess impacts of the General Plan include the current City of Rancho Cordova General Plan Conservation Element, the Sacramento County General Plan Update and EIR, the California Department of Conservation Farmland Conversion Report (2002), the California Department of Conservation Important Farmlands Map, and the Soil Survey of Sacramento County, California (April 1993).

4.2.1 EXISTING SETTING

EXISTING SACRAMENTO COUNTY AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS

Sacramento County ranked 24th of the 58 California counties in agricultural production in 2004, producing \$325.5 million in revenue. The most lucrative commodities were wine grapes followed by milk, nursery stock, pears, and poultry (see **Table 4.2-1**).

**TABLE 4.2-1
SACRAMENTO LEADING FARM COMMODITIES, 2004**

Commodity	Value
Grapes, (Wine)	\$74 million
Milk	\$55 million
Nursery Stock	\$35 million
Pears, (Bartlett)	\$24 million
Poultry	\$17.5 million

Source: Sacramento County 2004 Crop & Livestock Report

Dry beans was the highest grossing field crop yielding \$609 per ton, followed by safflower at 227 per ton, rice at \$199 per ton, hay/alfalfa at \$107 per ton, and barley at \$105 per ton. Livestock and poultry produced revenues of \$37,214,000, which was slightly lower than 37,777,000 totals for 2003. Milk production saw considerable gains in 2004 producing \$55,475,00 in revenue, a 45% increase over 2003 totals. The leading fruit/nut and vegetable crops included cherries at \$1,897 per ton and asparagus at \$2,820 per ton, which produced \$4,642,000 in revenues in 2004. Farmers markets are an important aspect of Sacramento County agriculture with 67 County certified seasonal/weekly markets being held at various locations through the County. There are not any farmers markets currently held within the Planning Area boundaries.

Agricultural related operations represented 0.4% of the County's employment force, providing nearly 23,000 jobs in 2004. Due to rapid development in the County, agricultural, manufacturing, and mining related jobs were the only industries that showed a decline between 2000-2004, with agriculture losing approximately 700 jobs during the last five years (Sacramento County Farm Bureau, 2005).

Planning Area

There are approximately 29,712.97 acres of agricultural land within the General Plan Planning Area boundaries, with 8,811.55 acres existing within the current City limits. Much of this agricultural land is grazing land (26,326.53 acres). There are no major intensive agricultural activities in the Planning Area (though small family farms and medium size (less than 150 acres) farms still operate in the area between Grant Line Road and the Cosumnes River). These

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farming operations are outside the existing City limits. The majority of the agricultural land in the Planning Area was historically used for row crops, field crops, orchards, small vineyards, and livestock grazing. The majority of agricultural land consists of non-native annual grasslands and was used primarily for dry crop farming and cattle grazing. The majority of this land is considered fallow (vacant or underutilized). See **Table 4.2-4** for a complete inventory of farmland in the Planning Area.

FARMLAND CLASSIFICATIONS AND RATING SYSTEM

Farmland classification programs are used to determine the agricultural productivity of a soil. The two systems used by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to determine a soil's agricultural productivity include the Soil Capability Classification System and the Storie Index Rating System. The Soil Capability Classification System takes into consideration soil limitations, the risk of damage when the soils are used, and the way in which soils respond to treatment; whereas, the Storie Index Rating System ranks soils based on their suitability for agriculture.

Storie Index Rating System

The Storie Index Rating System ranks soil characteristics according to their suitability for agriculture. Ratings range from Grade 1 soils (80 to 100 rating), which have few or no limitations for agricultural production to Grade 6 soils (less than 10), which are not suitable for agriculture. Under this system, soils deemed less than prime can function as prime soils when limitations such as poor drainage, slopes, or soil nutrient deficiencies are partially or entirely removed. The six grades, ranges in index rating, and definition of grades, as defined by the NRCS, are provided below in **Table 4.2-2**.

**TABLE 4.2-2
STORIE INDEX RATING SYSTEM**

Grade	Index Rating	Definition
1 – Excellent	80 through 100	Soils are well suited to intensive use for growing irrigated crops that are climatically suited to the region.
2 – Good	60 through 79	Soils are good agricultural soils, although they may not be so desirable as Grade 1 because of moderately coarse, coarse, or gravelly surface soil texture; somewhat less permeable subsoil; lower plant available water holding capacity, fair fertility; less well drained conditions, or slight to moderate flood hazards, all acting separately or in combination.
3 – Fair	40 through 59	Soils are only fairly well suited to general agricultural use and are limited in their use because of moderate slopes; moderate soil depths; less permeable subsoil; fine, moderately fine or gravelly surface soil textures; poor drainage; moderate flood hazards; or fair to poor fertility levels, all acting alone or in combination.
4 – Poor	20 through 39	Soils are poorly suited. They are severely limited in their agricultural potential because of shallow soil depths; less permeable subsoil; steeper slope; or more clayey or gravelly surface soil textures than Grade 3 soils, as well as poor drainage; greater flood hazards; hummocky micro-relief; salinity; or fair to poor fertility levels, all acting alone or in combination.
5 – Very Poor	10 through 19	Soils are very poorly suited for agriculture, are seldom cultivated and are more commonly used for range, pasture, or woodland.
6 – Nonagricultural	Less than 10	Soils are not suited for agriculture at all due to very severe to extreme physical limitations, or because of urbanization.

Source: USDA Soil Conservation Service, Soil Survey of Sacramento County, April 1993.

The "prime" soil classifications of both systems indicate the absence of soil limitations, which if present, would require the application of management techniques (e.g., drainage, leveling, special fertilizing practices) to enhance production.

The Planning Area contains 59 separate soil groups. **Table 4.2-3** identifies each soil group, erosion and runoff potential, permeability, slope, water-holding capacity and Storie Index Rating associated with each group.

TABLE 4.2-3
ONSITE SOIL CAPABILITY CLASSIFICATION AND STORIE INDEX RATING

Map Unit Name	Erosion Potential	Runoff	Subsoil Permeability (inches)	Slopes	Water Holding Capacity	Storie Index Rating
(101) Amador-Gillender complex	Slight to moderate	Very slow to medium	4 to 20	2 to 15%	Very low to low	4
(102) Americanos-Urban land complex	Slight	Slow	60+	0 to 2%	High	6
(112) Bruella sandy loam	Slight	Slow	60+	0 to 2%	High	2
(118) Columbia sandy loam	Slight	Very slow to slow	60+	0 to 2%	Moderate	2
(125) Corning complex	Slight to moderate	Very slow to medium	60+	0 to 8%	Low to moderate	4
(126) Corning-Redding complex	Moderate to severe	Medium to rapid	20 to 60+	8 to 30%	Low to moderate	4
(132) Creviscreek sandy loam	Slight	Slow	40+	0 to 3%	Moderate	2
(135) Dierssen clay loam	Slight to none	Very slow	40 to 60	0 to 2%	Moderate	5
(137) Durixeralfs	Slight to none	Very slow	10 to 30	0 to 1%	Very low to low	5
(145) Fiddyment fine sandy loam	Slight	Slow to medium	20 to 40	0 to 1%	Low	4
(156) Hadselvillee-Pentz complex	Slight to moderate	Very slow to medium	4 to 20	2 to 30%	Very low to low	4
(157) Hedge loam	Slight	Slow	20 to 40	0 to 2%	Low to moderate	4
(158) Hicksville loam	Slight	Slow	60+	0 to 2%	Very high	2
(159) Hicksville gravelly loam	Slight	Slow	60+	0 to 2%	High	3
(160) Hicksville sandy clay loam	Slight	Slow	40 to 60	0 to 2%	Moderate	3
(162) Kaseberg-Fiddyment-Urban land complex	Slight to moderate	Slow to medium	14 to 40	2 to 15%	Low	6
(163) Keyes sandy loam	Slight to moderate	Slow to medium	13 to 20	2 to 15%	Very low	5
(164) Kimball silt loam	Slight	Slow	60+	0 to 2%	Moderate	3
(165) Kimball silt loam	Moderate	Medium	60+	2 to 8%	Moderate	3
(166) Kimball-Urban land complex	Slight	Slow	60+	0 to 2%	Moderate	6

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Map Unit Name	Erosion Potential	Runoff	Subsoil Permeability (inches)	Slopes	Water Holding Capacity	Storie Index Rating
(175) Madera loam	Moderate	Medium	20 to 40	0 to 8%	Low	5
(181) Natomas loam	Slight	Slow	60+	0 to 2%	Very high	1
(182) Natomas-Xerorthents, Dredge tailings complex	Slight to none	Very slow to slow	60+	0 to 50%	Very low to very high	5
(187) Pardee-Ranchoseco complex	Slight to moderate	Very slow to medium	4 to 20	3 to 15%	Very low	5
(188) Pentz-Lithic xerorthents complex	Severe	Rapid	1 to 20	30 to 50%	Very low to low	5
(189) Peter's Clay	Slight	Very slow to medium	10 to 20	1 to 8%	Low	4
(190) PITS	–	–	–	1 to 8%	–	–
(191) Red Bluff loam	Slight	Slow	60+	0 to 2%	High	3
(192) Red Bluff loam	Slight to moderate	Slow to medium	60+	2 to 5%	High	3
(193) Red Bluff-Redding complex	Slight to moderate	Very slow to medium	20 to 60+	0 to 5%	Low to high	4
(194) Red Bluff-Urban land complex	Slight to moderate	Slow to medium	60+	0 to 5%	Moderate to high	6
(195) Red Bluff-Xerarents complex	Slight	Slow	60+	0 to 2%	Moderate to high	5
(196) Red Bluff-Xerorthents, Dredge tailing complex	Slight to moderate	Very slow to medium	60+	2 to 50%	Very low to high	5
(197) Redding loam	Slight to moderate	Slow to medium	23 to 40	2 to 8%	Low	4
(198) Redding gravelly loam	Slight to moderate	Very slow to medium	20 to 40	0 to 8%	Low	5
(199) Reiff fine sandy loam	Slight	Slow	60+	0 to 2%	High	2
(203) Riverwash	–	–	–	–	–	6
(204) Rossmoor-Fine sandy loam	Slight	Slow	60+	0 to 2%	High	1
(205) Rossmoor-Urban land complex	Slight	Slow	60+	0 to 2%	High	6
(213) San Joaquin silt loam	Slight to none	Very slow	23 to 40	0 to 1%	Low	4
(214) San Joaquin silt loam	Slight	Slow	23 to 40	0 to 3%	Low	4
(215) San Joaquin silt loam	Moderate	Medium	23 to 40	3 to 8%	Low	4
(216) San Joaquin-Durixeralfs complex	Slight to none	Very slow	10 to 40	0 to 1%	Very low to low	4
(218) San Joaquin-Galt complex	Slight to none	Slow to ponded	20 to 40	0 to 3%	Low	4
(219) San Joaquin-Urban land complex	Slight	Slow	23 to 40	0 to 2%	Low	6
(221) San Joaquin-Xerarents complex	Slight to none	Very slow	23 to 60+	0 to 1%	Low to high	4

Map Unit Name	Erosion Potential	Runoff	Subsoil Permeability (inches)	Slopes	Water Holding Capacity	Storie Index Rating
(223) Slickens	Slight	Slow to ponded	–	0 to 3%	Very high to high	5
(227) Urban Land	–	–	–	–	–	–
(228) Urban land-Natomas	Slight	Slow	60+	0 to 2%	Very high	6
(229) Urban Land-Xerarents-Fiddymet complex	Slight to moderate	Slow to medium	20 to 80	0 to 8%	Low to high	6
(234) Vina fine sandy loam	Slight	Slow	60+	0 to 2%	High	1
(235) Vleck gravelly loam	Slight to moderate	Slow to medium	20 to 40	2 to 15%	Low	5
(238) Xerarents-Redding complex	Slight to none	Very slow to slow	23 to 60+	0 to 1%	Low to high	4
(239) Xerarents-Redding complex	Slight	Very slow to slow	23 to 60+	0 to 2%	Low to high	4
(240) Xerarents-Urban land-San Joaquin complex	Slight	Very slow to slow	23 to 60+	0 to 5%	Low to high	6
(242) Xerofluvents	Slight to moderate	Very slow to slow	60+	0 to 2%	Very low to low	6
(243) Xerolls	Severe	Rapid to very rapid	10 to 80+	30 to 70%	Very low to high	5
(245) Xerorthents, Dredge tailings	Slight to none	Very slow to slow	60+	2 to 50%	Very low to low	6
(246) Xerorthents, Dredge tailings-Urban land complex	Slight	Very slow	60+	0 to 2%	Very low to low	6
(247) Water	–	–	–	–	–	–

Source: *Soil Survey of Sacramento County, California, 1993; Soil Candidate Listing for Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance, Sacramento County, California Department of Conservation, 1993.*

As indicated in **Table 4.2-3**, there are few soils groups in the Planning Area having a Storie Index Rating of one and two or having little or no agricultural related limitations. Soils with a Storie Index rating of one or two are generally located in areas adjacent to the American River, in areas surrounding Mather Field, and in areas south of Grant Line Road adjacent to the Folsom South Canal. The majority of the Planning Area is composed of soils having a Storie Index Rating of three through six, which indicates soils with moderate to severe agricultural constraints and very low cultivation potential.

FARMLAND MAPPING AND MONITORING PROGRAM

The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program maps out agricultural areas based on soil quality and land use. The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) was established in 1982 to continue the important Farmland mapping efforts begun in 1975 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service (USDA-SCS). The intent of the USDA-SCS was to produce agricultural resource maps based on soil quality and land use across the nation. As part of the nationwide agricultural land use mapping effort, the USDA-SCS developed a series of definitions known as Land Inventory and Monitoring (LIM) criteria. The LIM criteria classified land's suitability for agricultural production; suitability included both the physical and chemical

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characteristics of soils and the actual land use. Important Farmland Maps are derived from the USDA-SCS soil survey maps using the LIM criteria.

Since 1980, the State of California has assisted the USDA-SCS with completing its mapping in the state. The FMMP was created within the California Department of Conservation (DOC) to carry on the mapping activity on a continuing basis, and with a greater level of detail. The DOC applied a greater level of detail by modifying the LIM criteria for use in California utilizing the SCS and Storie Index Rating Systems, but also consider physical conditions such as a dependable water supply for agricultural production, soil temperature range, depth of the ground water table, flooding potential, rock fragment content, and rooting depth.

Important Farmland Maps for California are compiled using the modified LIM criteria and current land use information. The Important Farmland Maps identify five agriculture-related categories: Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, and Grazing land. Each is summarized below, based on *A Guide to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (1994)*, prepared by the Department of Conservation.

The DOC has classified Important Farmland in Sacramento County by the following categories:

- *Prime Farmland* - Farmland with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long-term production of agricultural crops.
- *Farmland of Statewide Importance* - Farmland similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or with less ability to hold and store moisture.
- *Unique Farmland* - Farmland of lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops.
- *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.
- *Urban and Built-up Land* - Land occupied by structures with a building density of at least one unit to one and one-half acres, or approximately six structures to a ten-acre parcel.
- *Other Land* - Land not included in any other mapping category is included as other land. 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, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than forty acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is also mapped as Other Land.

Important Farmland Maps

Sacramento County Farm Bureau monitors all types of farmland within the County and produces the Sacramento Important Farmland Map. The Important Farmland Map for the Planning Area is based on the County's Important Farmland Map and is depicted in **Figure 4.2-1**. **Table 4.2-4** illustrates the important farmland categories and associated acreages within the Planning Area boundaries.

TABLE 4.2-4
PLANNING AREA IMPORTANT FARMLAND INVENTORY (IN ACRES)

Land Use Category	City of Rancho Cordova	Planning Area (Unincorporated Portion)	Total Planning Area
Prime Farmland	154.93	70.72	225.65
Farmland of Statewide Importance	18.80	871.49	890.29
Farmland of Local Importance	404.65	1,589.29	1,993.94
Unique Farmland	250.62	25.94	276.56
Grazing Land	7,982.55	18,343.98	26,326.53
Urban and Built-up Land	6,950.59	8,589.55	15,540.14
Other	5,393.49	10,223.54	15,617.03

Source: California Department of Conservation, 2004; City of Rancho Cordova.

As indicated in **Figure 4.2-1** and **Table 4.2-4**, Grazing land represents the majority of agricultural resources in the Planning Area, with approximately 46 percent designated for grazing and livestock uses. The grazing resources are generally located north of Florin Road, east of Bradshaw Road, and south of White Rock Road. **Table 4.2-4** shows the Planning Area contains small sections and swaths of Prime Farmland soils. The largest concentration of Prime Farmland is located north of SR-16 and east of Grant Line Road, near Blodgett Reservoir. A lesser concentration of Prime Farmland is located between Bradshaw and Excelsior Roads, south of SR-16. There is also a sizable section containing Farmland of Local Importance, approximately 1,500 acres, near Mayhew Road and south of SR-16. The Planning Area also contains approximately 871 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, which is generally located adjacent to those areas containing Prime Farmland.

FARMLAND CONVERSION

Farmland conversion is monitored on a countywide basis; as such this discussion reflects conversion of farmland in Sacramento County (of which a portion is in the General Plan Planning Area). The County's rate of land use conversion reflected that of California's due to a strong economy and specific agricultural trends of the late 1990's and the huge increase in urbanization over the past five years. The conversion of farmland in Sacramento County from years 2000 to 2002 is presented in **Table 4.2-5**. The conversion totals for 2002 through 2004 are not yet available from the Sacramento County Farm Bureau.

TABLE 4.2-5
SACRAMENTO COUNTY FARM LAND CONVERSION – YEAR 2000-2002

Land Use Category	Total Acreage Inventoried		2000-2002 Acreage Changes			
	2000-2001	2002	Acres Lost (-)	Acres Gained (+)	Total Acreage Change	Net Acreage Change
Prime Farmland	115,389	111,984	3,824	419	4,243	-3,405
Farmland of	63,536	60,773	3,395	632	4,027	-2,763

City of Rancho Cordova
March 2006

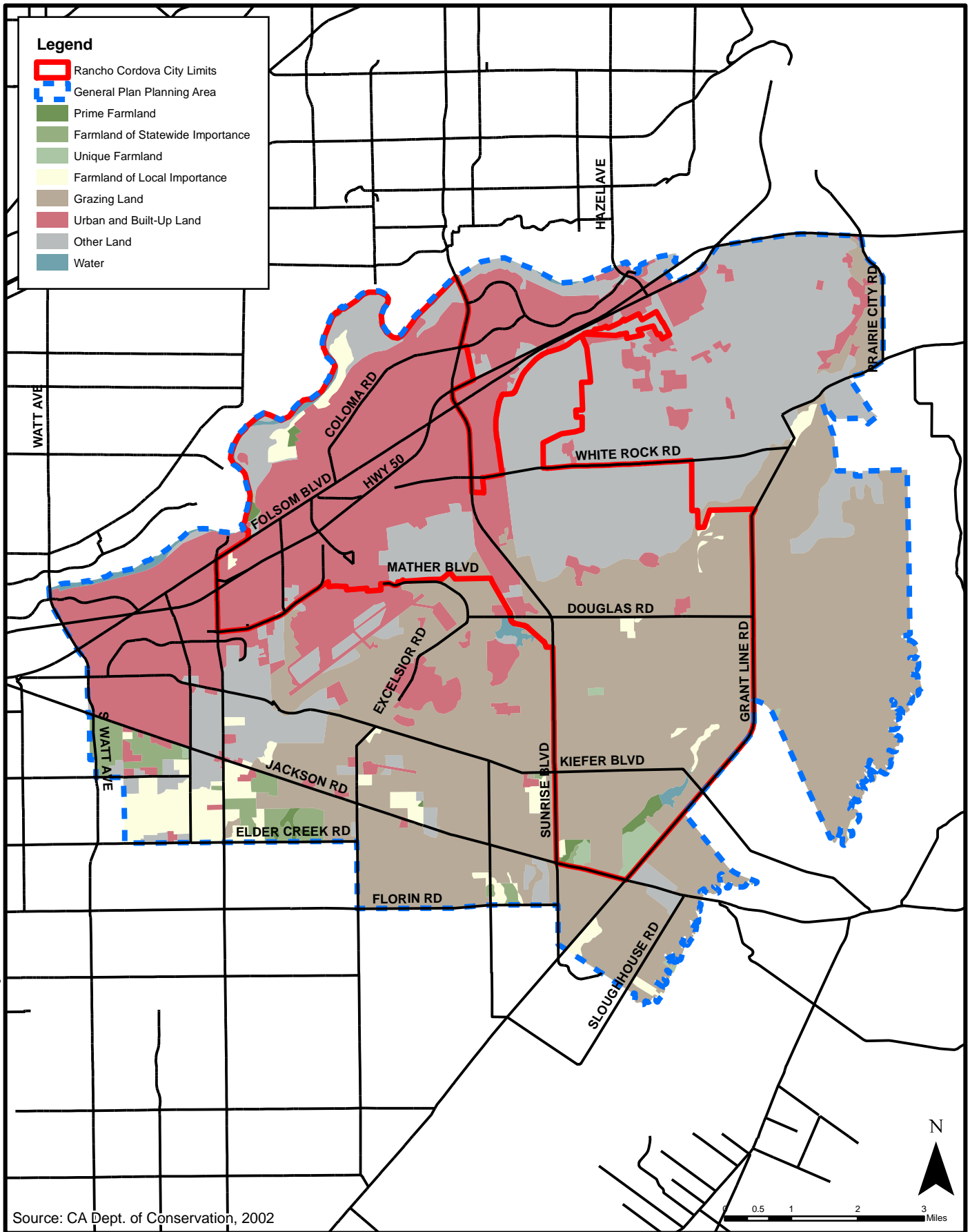
City of Rancho Cordova General Plan
Draft Environmental Impact Report

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Land Use Category	Total Acreage Inventoried		2000-2002 Acreage Changes			
	2000-2001	2002	Acres Lost (-)	Acres Gained (+)	Total Acreage Change	Net Acreage Change
Statewide Importance						
Unique Farmland	15,476	15,834	363	721	1,084	+ 358
Farmland of Local Importance	33,530	37,885	1,756	6,111	7,867	+ 4,355
Important Farmland Subtotals	227,931	226,476	9,338	7,883	17,221	-1,445
Grazing	168,144	165,048	4,045	949	4,994	-3,096
Agricultural Land Subtotal	396,075	391,524	13,383	8,832	22,215	-4,551
Urban and Built-up Land	157,162	159,903	1,751	4,492	6,243	2,741
Other Land	64,593	66,403	2,965	4,775	7,740	1,810
Water Land	18,253	18,253	0	0	0	0
Total Area Inventoried	636,083	636,083	18,099	18,099	36,198	0

Source: California Department of Conservation, 2004.

As indicated in **Table 4.2-5**, Sacramento County experienced a loss of approximately 6,168 acres of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance from 2000 through 2002, or approximately 3% of these farmland categories were converted to other uses. In contrast, the County actually showed an increase in *Unique Farmland* and *Farmland of Local Importance*, with approximately 4,713 more acres in the County than prior to 2000. The increases in these categories are due to changes in the development of low-density residential projects, increased irrigation practices, and large set-asides of wetland preserves and other mitigation programs (Saunders, 2005).



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City of Rancho Cordova
Planning Department

Figure 4.2-1
Important Farmland
Within the General Plan Planning Area

4.2.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

FEDERAL

Farmland Protection Policy Act

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), a federal agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is the agency primarily responsible for implementation of the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA). The purpose of the FPPA is to minimize federal programs' contribution to the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses by ensuring that federal programs are administered in a manner that is compatible with state, local, and private programs designed to protect farmland. NRCS provides technical assistance to federal agencies, state and local governments, tribes, or nonprofit organizations that desire to develop farmland protection programs and policies.

NRCS summarizes FPPA implementation in an annual report to Congress. The FPPA also established the Farmland Protection Program and the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA), which are discussed below.

Farmland Protection Program

NRCS administers the Farmland Protection Program (FPP), which is a voluntary program aimed at keeping productive farmland in agricultural uses. Under the FPP, NRCS provides matching funds to state, local, or tribal government entities and nonprofit organizations with existing farmland protection programs to purchase conservation easements. The goal of the program is to protect between 170,000 and 340,000 acres of farmland per year (U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service 2002). Participating landowners agree not to convert the land to nonagricultural use and retain all rights to use the property for agriculture. A conservation plan must be developed for all lands enrolled based upon the standards contained in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide. A minimum of 30 years is required for conservation easements and priority is given to applications with perpetual easements. NRCS provides up to 50% of the fair market value of the easement being conserved (U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service 2002).

To qualify for a conservation easement, farmland must meet several criteria. The land must be:

- Prime, Unique, or other productive soil, as defined by NRCS based on factors such as water moisture regimes, available water capacity, developed irrigation water supply, soil temperature range, acid-alkali balance, water table, soil sodium content, potential for flooding, erodibility, permeability rate, rock fragment content, and soil rooting depth;
- included in a pending offer to be managed by a nonprofit organization, state, tribal, or local farmland protection program;
- privately owned;
- placed under a conservation plan;
- large enough to sustain agricultural production;
- accessible to markets for the crop that the land produces; and
- surrounded by parcels of land that can support long-term agricultural production

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In Sacramento County, the FPP is supplemented by the DOC's Important Farmland Inventory System and Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, which is discussed in further detail under "State Regulatory Programs" below.

Land Evaluation and Site Assessment

The LESA system ranks lands for suitability and inclusion in the FPP. LESA evaluates several factors, including soil potential for agricultural use, location, market access, and adjacent land use. These factors are used to numerically rank the suitability of parcels based on local resource evaluation and site considerations (U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service 2002). The LESA system has spawned many variations, including the California LESA model, described below.

STATE

California Department of Conservation

The DOC administers and supports a number of programs, including the Williamson Act, the California Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP), the Williamson Act Easement Exchange Program (WAEPP) and the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. These programs are designed to preserve agricultural land and provide data on conversion of agricultural land to urban use. The DOC has authority for the approval of agreements entered into under (WAEPP). The population of California is expected to grow from its current 34 million to 50 million by 2025. This population growth and the need for new homes will put strain on the nation's leading agricultural economy. Key DOC tools available for land conservation planning are conservation easement grants, tax incentives to keep land in agriculture or open space, and farmland mapping and monitoring.

Important Farmland Inventory System and Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

As discussed above, the Important Farmland Inventory System initiated in 1975 by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (now NRCS) classifies land based on 10 soil and climatic characteristics. The DOC started another similar system of mapping and monitoring for California in 1980, known as the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP). The DOC system was designed to document how much agricultural land in California was being converted to nonagricultural land or transferred into Williamson Act contracts. The DOC's definitions of Important Farmland types are provided under "Development Pressures" above. To be shown on the FMMP's Important Farmland Maps as Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance, a piece of land must meet both of the following criteria:

- **Land Use:** The land must have been used for production of irrigated crops at some time during the 4 years before the Important Farmland Map date, as determined by FMMP staff during examination of current aerial photos, local comment letters, and field verification; and
- **Soil:** The soil must meet the physical and chemical criteria for Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance as determined by NRCS.

Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model

The California LESA model was developed in 1997 and was designed based on the federal LESA system and can be used to rank the relative importance of farmland and the potential significance of its conversion on a site-by-site basis. The California LESA model considers the

following factors: land capability, Storie index, water availability (drought and non-drought conditions), land uses within 1/4 mile, and “protected resource lands” (e.g., Williamson Act lands) surrounding the property. A score can be derived and used to determine if the conversion of a property would be significant under CEQA. The LESA model provides a broad range of scores and other factors that can be considered in determining impact significance.

Farmland Security Zones

Farmland Security Zones (FSZs) were established by the legislature in 1998. FSZs are meant to protect participating Important Farmland from development pressure. An FSZ must be located within an agricultural preserve (area designated as eligible for a Williamson Act contract) and designated as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance. The agricultural and open space lands enrolled in the program are protected for a minimum of a 20-year term under an FSZ and are offered an even greater property tax reduction than land under a Williamson Act contract.

Land protected in an FSZ cannot be annexed by a city or county government or school district (which would result in cancellation of a Williamson Act contract) (California Department of Conservation 2001). Nonrenewal and cancellation procedures are similar to those for Williamson Act contracts.

Williamson Act

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly referred to as the Williamson Act, is a non-mandated State program, administered by counties and cities to preserve agricultural land, and discourage the premature conversion of agricultural land to urban uses. The Act authorizes local governments and property owners to (voluntarily) enter into contracts to commit agricultural land to specified uses for ten or more years. Once enforceably restricted, the land is valued for taxation based on its agricultural income rather than unrestricted market value. This results in a lower tax rate for owners. In return, the owners guarantee that these properties remain under agricultural production for an initial ten-year period. The contract is renewed automatically unless the owner files a notice of non-renewal thereby maintaining a constant ten-year contract. Currently, approximately 70 percent of the state’s prime agricultural land is protected under this act. Prime farmland under Williamson Act includes land that qualifies as Class I and II in the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) classification of land that qualifies for rating 80 to 100 in the Storie index rating. Participation is on a voluntary basis by both landowners and local governments and is implemented through the establishment of Agricultural Preserves and the execution of Williamson Act contracts.

Termination of a Williamson Act contract through the nonrenewal process is the preferred method to remove the enforceable restriction of the contract. Cancellation is not appropriate when objectives served by cancellation could be served by nonrenewal. Cancellation is reserved for unusual, “emergency” situations. In order to approve tentative cancellation, a board or council must make specific findings based on substantial evidence that a cancellation is consistent with the purposes of the Act or in the public interest. Contracts can specify that both findings must be made in Order to approve tentative cancellation. The contract on the Schilling Property, (Resolution No. 70-185, page 5) dated December 7, 1970 requires that both consistency and public interest findings must be made. **Figure 4.2-2** illustrates the location of properties within the Rancho Cordova Planning Area that are currently under Williamson Act contracts. As illustrated, there are approximately 24 parcels (five only partially within the Planning Area) with Williamson Act contracts within the Planning Area (approximately 3,794.78 non-prime acres, 181.44 prime areas and 325.29 acres in nonrenewal), one of which is in existing city boundaries (120 acres). A Notice of Nonrenewal has been filed on one of the contracts.

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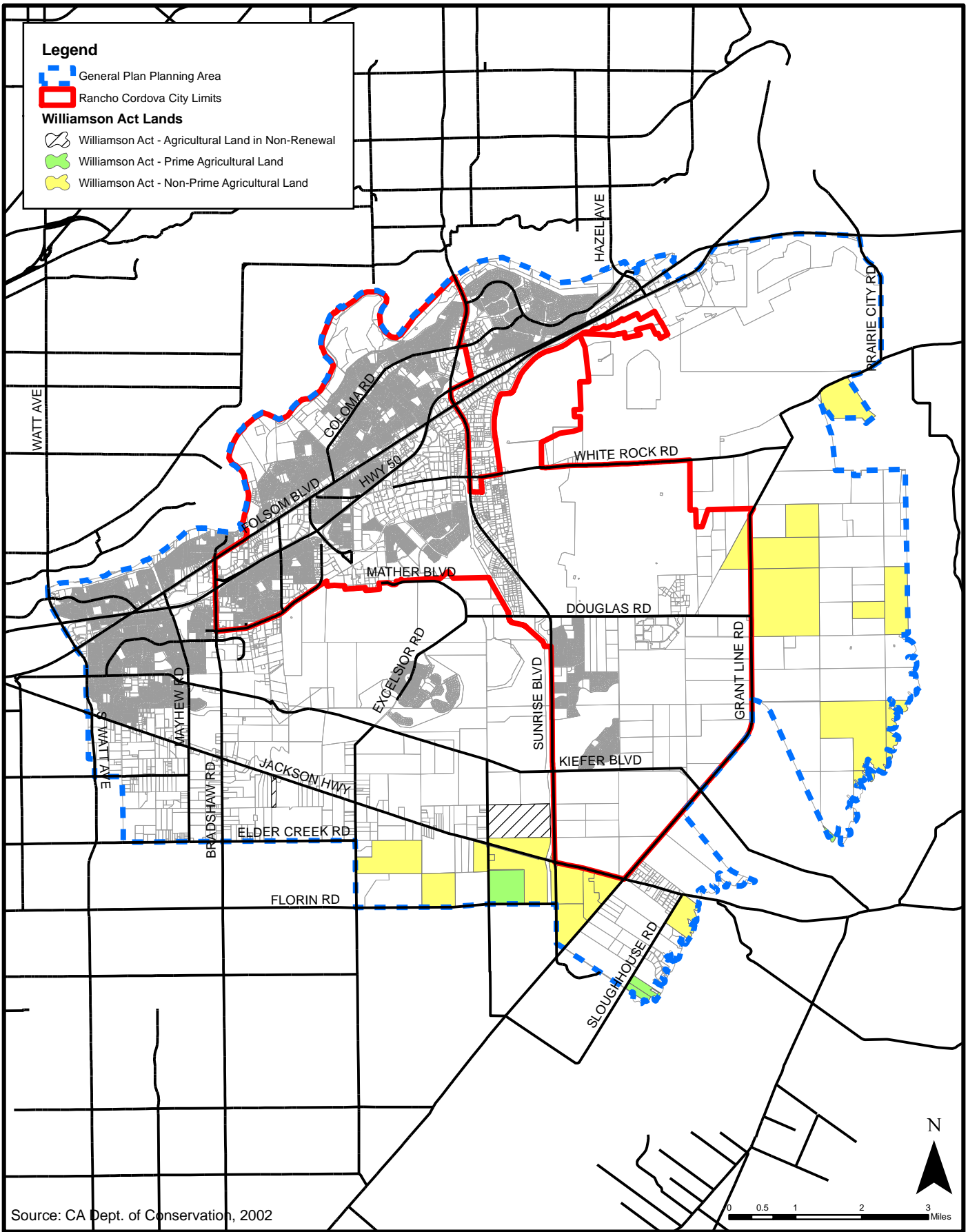
LOCAL

City of Rancho Cordova Right-to-Farm Ordinance

The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors passed the Right-to-Farm Ordinance on July 10, 1990. This Ordinance was adopted by the City of Rancho Cordova upon incorporation in July 2003. The ordinance was established provide legal assurance that established agricultural operations are allowed to continue, and to inform residents of areas zoned or designated for agriculture that they may be subject to inconvenience or discomfort resulting from accepted agricultural operations. Those residents that choose to reside adjacent to these uses must be prepared to accept such inconveniences when they occur. Only in the event that an agricultural production does not appear to be consistent with accepted standard practices, then any person may file a complaint with the Agricultural Commissioner.

Sacramento County General Plan

The Sacramento County General Plan is used to guide future development in unincorporated areas of the County, including sections of the Planning Area that are outside the Rancho Cordova city limits. County General Plan is currently applicable to the Planning Area outside the existing city limits of Rancho Cordova and will remain so until annexed by the City. Key Agricultural Element policies include AG-1, which calls for the protection of intensive agricultural investments from urban encroachments, AG-2, which prohibits the conversion of prime farmlands or lands with intensive agricultural investments to other uses (with exceptions), AG-3, which allows agricultural uses on buffers between agricultural and urban uses, AG-5, which requires the mitigation of lost farmland through in-kind protection nearby, AG-9, which calls for a balance of farmland and the preservation of natural habitat and AG-22, which requires the County to actively encourage enrollment into the County's Williamson Act program. Additionally, the Conservation Element includes policies (CO-54 and CO-55) for the protection of Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance.



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City of Rancho Cordova
Planning Department

Figure 4.2-2
Williamson Act Contracts
in the General Plan Planning Area

4.2.3. IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

For purposes of this EIR, the following criteria were used in determining whether the implementation of the proposed General Plan would result in a significant impact:

- 1) Conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use.
- 2) Involve other changes in the existing environment which due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural uses.
- 3) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract

METHODOLOGY

Evaluation of potential agricultural impacts of the proposed City of Rancho Cordova General Plan and Planning Area was based on review of the Sacramento County General Plan and Zoning Code, and a field review of the city. The agricultural analysis is based on information gathered from the Sacramento County Agricultural and Conservation Elements, the Sacramento County General Plan Update EIR, the California Department of Conservation Farmland Conversion Report 2000 – 2002, the California Department of Conservation Important Farmlands Map, the Soil Survey of Sacramento County, California (April 1993), and the Sacramento County Agricultural Commissioner's Report (2000). The proposed project is then compared to the existing conditions to determine the impacts due to loss of agricultural resources.

An attempt was made to use the California LESA model to determine the relative importance of farmland and the potential significance of its conversion. However, after further investigation into the use of this modeling tool it was determined that the LESA model is not designed for projects the size and scale of the General Plan. While the identification of acreage of important farmland within the Planning Area was available, determining the water availability, land uses within 1/4 mile, and "protected resource lands" surrounding the Planning Area was impractical due to the size of the project. Therefore, using the LESA model to determine the impact of implementation of the General Plan would have on farmland is considered inappropriate and was rejected as a possible impact determination source.

PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Loss and Conversion of Agricultural Land

Impact 4.2.1 Implementation of the proposed General Plan would result in the loss of important farmlands (Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance, etc) as designated by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. This is considered a **significant** impact.

According to the California State Department of Conservation Important Farmland Map (2000) as indicated in **Table 4.2-4** and depicted in **Figure 4.2-1**, the Planning Area contains approximately 225.65 acres of Prime Farmland and 890.29 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance. The Planning Area also contains approximately 1,993.94 acres of Farmland of

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Local Importance, 276.56 acres of Unique Farmland, and approximately 26,326.53 acres of Grazing Land.

General Plan Planning Area – Areas Outside of Existing City Boundaries

Within the General Plan Planning Area outside of existing City boundaries is approximately 20,900 acres of agricultural land. This consist of approximately 70.72 acres of Prime Farmland, 871.49 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, 1,589.29 acres of Farmland of Local Importance, 25.94 acres of Unique Farmland and 18,343.98 areas of Grazing Land.

The majority of the Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance and Unique Farmland in the Planning Area outside of existing City limits is located within the proposed Jackson Planning Area and Grant Line South Planning Area. Proposed land uses in the Jackson Planning Area include Village Centers, employment centers, and mixed-use commercial, and residential neighborhoods. The Jackson Planning Area does not include areas reserved for agricultural lands.

The Grant Line South Planning Area currently consists primarily of open space and abuts areas to the south that are planned to be retained by Sacramento County for agricultural uses. Located along the perimeter of the City's General Plan Planning Area boundary, land uses in this Grant Line South Planning Area is anticipated to serve as a transition area from urban to rural uses at the City's "edge". As with the Jackson Planning Area, the Grant Line South Planning Area, proposed land uses include Village Centers, employment centers, and mixed-use commercial, and residential neighborhoods. The Planning Area does not include areas reserved for agricultural lands.

Therefore, implementation of the General Plan Land Use Map would result in the conversion of approximately 1,392.50 acres of important farmland (225.65-acres of Prime Farmland and 890.9 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance and 276.56 acres of Unique Farmland). Loss of this farmland is considered a significant impact.

General Plan Planning Area – Areas within Existing City Boundaries

As indicated in **Table 4.2-4**, the City contains approximately 154.93 acres of Prime Farmland and 18.80 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance. The City also contains approximately 404.65 acres of Farmland of Local Importance, 250.62 acres of Unique Farmland and approximately 7,982.55 acres of Grazing Land.

Within the City's current boundaries, the majority of the Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance and Unique Farmland is located within the proposed Grant Line North Planning Area. There are also two areas of Prime Farmland and two areas of Farmland of Local Importance located adjacent to the American River Parkway, which is managed by Sacramento County. These areas have been historically and are currently under agricultural production and the proposed General Plan does not proposed any development of areas within the American River Parkway. Proposed land uses in the Grant Line North Planning Area include Village Centers, employment centers, and mixed-use commercial, and residential neighborhoods. Agricultural land is not anticipated to be included as a land use designation when the Planning Area land uses are finalized.

Agricultural land is not identified as a land use in the General Plan and is therefore assumed to result in a loss of this land use type. Therefore, implementation of the General Plan would result in the conversion of farmland and this impact is considered a significant.

Proposed General Plan Policies and Action Items That Provide Mitigation

The following General Plan policy is included in the General Plan Urban Design Element to ensure that proposed land uses associated with General Plan do not conflict with existing or future agricultural practices:

Policy UD.2.3 Transition the density and intensity of uses from an urban to rural character with a clear city edge and establish a sense of entry and arrival to the City.

Action UD.2.3.1 Land uses along the eastern and southern boundaries of the City shall transition down the intensity and density of development from urban to rural at the City edge.

Mitigation Measures

MM 4.2.1a The following shall be added as policies to the Land Use Element under Goal LU.1:

While agricultural uses are anticipated to be phased out within the City Limits, the City recognizes the right of these uses to continue as long as individual owners/farmers desire.

The City shall require development to protect one acre of existing farmland of equal or higher quality for each acre of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance that would be converted to non-agricultural uses. This protection may consist of the establishment of farmland conservation easement, farmland deed restriction, or other appropriate farmland conversion in perpetuity, but may also be utilized for compatible wildlife conservation efforts. The farmland to be preserved shall be located within Sacramento County and must have adequate water supply to support agricultural use. As part of the consideration of land areas proposed to be protected, the City shall consider the benefits of preserving farmlands in proximity to other protected lands.

MM 4.2.1b The following shall be added an action item to the Land Use Element under Goal LU.1:

The City shall ensure that the following standards are met regarding agricultural conservation easement content:

- Provisions of an accurate legal document that prohibits any activity that substantially impairs or diminishes the agricultural productivity of the land.
- Protection of any existing water rights necessary to maintain agricultural uses and retain such water rights for on-going use on the agricultural land.
- Interests in the agricultural land shall be held in trust by an entity acceptable to the City and/or the City in perpetuity.

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While implementation of above mitigation measures would reduce General Plan impacts to agricultural land conversion, it would not fully avoid conservation of important farmlands. Thus, this impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

Agricultural/Urban Interface Conflicts

Impact 4.2.2 Implementation of the proposed General Plan could result in the placement of urban uses adjacent to agricultural uses within and adjacent to the City. This is considered a **significant** impact.

Implementation of the proposed City of Rancho Cordova General Plan Land Use Map would place urbanized land uses adjacent to and would replace existing agricultural uses. It is anticipated that as the City builds out, agriculture/urban interface conflicts may occur.

Agricultural and urban land use conflicts are expected to be limited to types of inconveniences or discomforts associated with small and medium owner-occupied farms that generally include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Inconveniences or discomforts associated with dust, smoke, noise, and odor from agricultural operations;
- Restrictions on agricultural operations (such as pesticide application) along interfaces with urban uses;
- Conflicts with farm equipment and vehicles using roadways;
- Trespassing and vandalism on active farmlands; and
- Farmland proximity to urban areas can place growth pressure to convert land to urban uses as a result of above mentioned conflicts and increases in property value.

General Plan Planning Area – Areas outside of Existing City Boundaries

As discussed previously, the General Plan Planning Area has approximately 29,713 acres of agricultural land including approximately 20,901 acres within the Planning Area outside existing City limits. Urban development adjacent to this farmland while under production result in agriculture/urban interface conflicts, until such time that the agricultural land is developed for urban uses.

Additionally, areas within Sacramento County adjacent to the General Plan Planning Area are anticipated to remain in agricultural use for the long-term. **Figure 4.2-1** illustrates that there are important farmland areas adjacent to or near the Planning Area boundaries however, these areas exist beyond the General Plan Planning Area and are located within the jurisdiction of Sacramento County and have the Sacramento County land use designation of General Agriculture and Agricultural Cropland. Additionally, these areas are located outside of the Urban Services Boundary for Sacramento County. Agricultural uses in these areas may become more intensive over time, which may increase agriculture/urban conflicts in these portions of the Planning Area.

General Plan Planning Area – Areas within Existing City Boundaries

There are 8,811.55 acres of farmland currently within the City boundaries. Urban development adjacent to this farmland while under production result in agricultural/urban interface conflicts, until such time that the agricultural land is developed for urban uses. Additionally, until such time that agricultural lands outside of the existing city limit are developed for urban uses, the potential for agricultural/urban conflicts exist.

Proposed General Plan Policies and Action Items That Provide Mitigation

The following General Plan policies and action items are contained in the General Plan Land Use and Urban Design Element to ensure that proposed land uses associated with General Plan do not conflict with existing or future agricultural practices:

- Policy LU.1.4 Promote high quality, efficient, and cohesive land utilization that minimizes negative impacts (e.g., traffic congestion and visual blight) and environmental hazards (e.g. flood, soil instability) on adjacent neighborhoods and infrastructure and preserve existing and future residential neighborhoods from encroachment of incompatible activities and land uses.*
- Action LU.1.4.3 Require the disclosure of potential land use compatibility issues in all parts of the City, such as noise, dust, odors, etc., in order to provide potential purchasers with the information necessary to make informed decisions about the property and its future land uses.*
- Action LU 1.4.4 Develop guidelines for the buffering of incompatible land uses in ways that retain community character but do not consume large land area, create pedestrian barriers, or result in unsafe conditions.*
- Action LU 1.4.5 Require an urban/agricultural buffer between development and existing agricultural uses. Design each buffer area to match the specific needs of each urban/agricultural interface, and to take into account the specific urban and agricultural uses. Buffers may be established through the use or combination of increased setbacks, roadways, barriers, landscaping or other appropriate methods to avoid conflicts. Development of this buffer must be done in consultation with Sacramento County and will not require the taking of existing agricultural land nor impede agricultural existing uses.*
- Policy LU.2.1 Ensure future land use and growth within the Planning Area adheres to the City's eight smart growth principles, as described as follows:*
- Provide a variety of Transportation Choices*
 - Offer Housing Choices and Opportunities*
 - Encourage a Mix of Land Uses*
 - Promote Compact Urban Development*
 - Create Walkable Neighborhoods*

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- *Promote Integration of Natural Resources with Urban Land Uses*
- *Foster Attractive Communities with Quality Design and a Strong Sense of Place*
- *Encourage Regeneration/Infill in Existing Developed Areas*

Action LU.2.1.1 Amend the Zoning Code and Citywide Design Guidelines to include the City's smart growth principles as appropriate.

Policy UD.2.3 Transition the density and intensity of uses from an urban to rural character with a clear city edge and establish a sense of entry and arrival to the City.

Action UD.2.3.1 Land uses along the eastern and southern boundaries of the City shall transition down the intensity and density of development from urban to rural at the City edge.

Policy UD.4.2 Design new development to be compatible with surrounding development in ways that contribute to the desired character of the City and District.

Mitigation Measures

Implementation of the above General Plan policies and associated action items would assist in reducing agriculture/urban interface, and zoning conflicts within and adjacent to the City's associated nuisance effects (dust, smoke, noise, odor), and restrictions on agricultural operations from interfaces with urban uses. However, implementation of these policies would not fully mitigate agriculture/urban interface conflicts, especially in regards to farm equipment and vehicle conflicts on area roadways, potential trespassing and vandalism to active farmlands, and growth pressures on farmland in proximity to urban uses in the City. Therefore, this impact is considered **significant and unavoidable**.

Williamson Act Contracts

Impact 4.2.3 Implementation of the proposed General Plan could result in a conflict with existing Williamson Act contracts. This is considered a **significant** impact.

Pursuant to Government Code Section 51243, the City is required to provide for the exclusion of uses other than agricultural, and other than those compatible with agricultural uses, for the duration of a Williamson Act contract. If a city annexes land under Williamson Act contract, the city must succeed to all rights, duties and powers of the county unless conditions in Government Code Section 512343.5 apply to give the city the option to not succeed the contract. However, these stipulations do not apply to those lands within the General Plan Planning Area because all lands under Williamson Act contract were contracted prior to city incorporation. Therefore the City must allow agricultural uses to continue on lands under Williamson Act contracts until those contracts are removed.

As previously discussed and indicated in **Figure 4.2-2**, the Planning Area contains 24 parcels (five only partially within the Planning Area) with Williamson Act contracts (approximately 3,794.78 non-prime acres, 181.44 prime areas and 325.29 acres in nonrenewal), one of which is in existing city boundaries (120 acres). A Notice of Nonrenewal has been filed on one of the contracts.

General Plan Planning Area – Areas outside of Existing City Boundaries

Located within the Planning Area currently beyond of existing City limits are 23 of the 24 parcel with Williamson Act contracts (4,181.51 acres). The California Department of Conservation has identified three of these parcels as Prime Agricultural Land, while the other 20 are considered Non-Prime. One of these parcels has had a Notice of Non-Renewal filed on it.

The majority of agricultural lands under Williamson Act contract are located in the Jackson, Grant Line South, and East Planning Areas (see **Figure 4.2-2**).

As discussed under **Impact 4.2.1**, all agricultural lands within the General Plan Planning Area would be converted to urban uses under the proposed General Plan. As the General Plan does not identify agricultural land use designation it is assumed that these lands will be converted to urban uses including those areas surrounding an existing Williamson Act contract. This urban development may impede the ability for the landowner to farm his or her land according to the Williamson Act contract and therefore be in violation of that contract.

While currently only one parcel under Williamson Act contract has a Notice of Non-Renewal filed on it, as the Planning Area develops, it is anticipated that most, if not all, lands under Williamson Act contracts will be converted to urban uses.

General Plan Planning Area – Areas inside of Existing City Boundaries

As previously stated, there is only one parcel within the existing city limits under a Williamson Act contract. This parcel, 120 acres, is located within the Grant Line West Planning Area adjacent to Grant Line Road. The parcel is identified as Grazing Land in the Important Farmland Map, **Figure 4.2-1**. The Grant Line West Planning Area will contain a mix of medium and high-density residential units with an average density of approximately 8 units per acre. The Grant Line West Planning Area may include as many as six neighborhoods could be developed with up to two on-site village centers. The Planning Area may include a small amount of business and professional office uses. Agricultural uses are not identified for the Grant Line West Planning Area.

Development of this type may impede the ability for the landowner to farm his or her land according to the Williamson Act contract and therefore be in violation of that contract.

Proposed General Plan Policies and Action Items That Provide Mitigation

The following General Plan policies and action items are contained in the General Plan Land Use and Urban Design Element to ensure that proposed land uses associated with General Plan do not conflict with existing or future agricultural practices.

Action LU 1.4.4 Develop guidelines for the buffering of incompatible land uses in ways that retain community character but do not consume large land area, create pedestrian barriers, or result in unsafe conditions.

Action LU 1.4.5 Require an urban/agricultural buffer between development and existing agricultural uses. Design each buffer area to match the specific needs of each urban/agricultural interface, and to take into account the specific urban and agricultural uses. Buffers may be established through the use or combination of increased setbacks, roadways, barriers, landscaping or other appropriate methods to avoid conflicts. Development of this buffer must be done in consultation with Sacramento County and will not require

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the taking of existing agricultural land nor impede agricultural existing uses.

Policy UD.2.3 *Transition the density and intensity of uses from an urban to rural character with a clear city edge and establish a sense of entry and arrival to the City.*

Action UD.2.3.1 *Land uses along the eastern and southern boundaries of the City shall transition down the intensity and density of development from urban to rural at the City edge.*

Mitigation Measures

Implementation of the above General Plan policies and action items as well as mitigation measures **MM 4.2.1a through b** would assist in reducing this impact, it would not completely avoid conflicts with Williamson Act contract lands. Thus, this impact is considered **significant and unavoidable**.

4.2.4. CUMULATIVE SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

CUMULATIVE SETTING

As discussed in Section 4.2.1 Farmland Conversion, the existing and projected future urban development throughout the state is expected to further contribute to the loss of important farmlands. The cumulative impact takes into account planned and proposed development anticipated in Sacramento County (see Section 4.0 for a further description of cumulative growth conditions); however, it is acknowledged that cumulative important farmland conversion contributions by the proposed General Plan are of a statewide concern.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Cumulative Impacts to Agricultural Resources

Impact 4.2.4 Implementation of the General Plan Land Use Map Book along, with other proposed development in Sacramento County, would contribute to the additional conversion of important farmlands to other uses and may increase agriculture/urban interface conflicts. This is a **cumulatively considerable** impact.

As previously discussed, implementation of the City of Rancho Cordova General Plan would result in the conversion and/or conflict with agricultural resources in and adjacent to the Planning Area. Important farmland and grazing land conversions within the Planning Area would represent approximately seven percent of the total important farmland and grazing acreage inventoried in Sacramento County in 2002 (approximately 391,524 acres).

It is important to note, that farm/grazing land conversion associated with implementation of the General Plan planned land uses would be in addition to important farmland conversions associated with development anticipated under the applicable land use plans of Sacramento County and the cities of Sacramento, Folsom (Sphere of Influence), Galt and the City of Elk Grove. Urban development within Sacramento County resulted in the loss of approximately 6,168 acres of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance between 2002-2002. Several thousand additional agricultural acres have been converted to other uses since 2002;

however, specific conversion acreages are not yet available from the Sacramento County Farm Bureau (Saunders, 2005).

Proposed General Plan Policies and Action Items That Provide Mitigation

- Policy UD.2.3* *Transition the density and intensity of uses from an urban to rural character with a clear city edge and establish a sense of entry and arrival to the City.*
- Policy LU.1.4* *Promote high quality, efficient, and cohesive land utilization that minimizes negative impacts (e.g., traffic congestion and visual blight) and environmental hazards (e.g. flood, soil instability) on adjacent neighborhoods and infrastructure and preserve existing and future residential neighborhoods from encroachment of incompatible activities and land uses.*
- Action LU.1.4.3* *Require the disclosure of potential land use compatibility issues in all parts of the City, such as noise, dust, odors, etc., in order to provide potential purchasers with the information necessary to make informed decisions about the property and its future land uses.*
- Action LU 1.4.4* *Develop guidelines for the buffering of incompatible land uses in ways that retain community character but do not consume large land area, create pedestrian barriers, or result in unsafe conditions.*
- Action LU 1.4.5* *Require an urban/agricultural buffer between development and existing agricultural uses. Design each buffer area to match the specific needs of each urban/agricultural interface, and to take into account the specific urban and agricultural uses. Buffers may be established through the use or combination of increased setbacks, roadways, barriers, landscaping or other appropriate methods to avoid conflicts. Development of this buffer must be done in consultation with Sacramento County and will not require the taking of existing agricultural land nor impede agricultural existing uses.*
- Policy LU.2.1* *Ensure future land use and growth within the Planning Area adheres to the City's eight smart growth principles, as described as follows:*
- Provide a variety of Transportation Choices*
 - Offer Housing Choices and Opportunities*
 - Encourage a Mix of Land Uses*
 - Promote Compact Urban Development*
 - Create Walkable Neighborhoods*
 - Promote Integration of Natural Resources with Urban Land Uses*
 - Foster Attractive Communities with Quality Design and a Strong Sense of Place*

4.2 AGRICULTURE

- Encourage Regeneration/Infill in Existing Developed Areas

Policy LU.1.5	Maintain consistency between the land use categories of this General Plan and the City Zoning Code.
Action LU.2.1.1	Amend the Zoning Code and Citywide Design Guidelines to include the City's smart growth principles as appropriate.
Policy UD.2.3	Transition the density and intensity of uses from an urban to rural character with a clear city edge and establish a sense of entry and arrival to the City.
Action UD.2.3.1	Land uses along the eastern and southern boundaries of the City shall transition down the intensity and density of development from urban to rural at the City edge.
Policy UD.2.3	Transition the density and intensity of uses from an urban to rural character with a clear City edge and establish a sense of entry and arrival to the City.
Policy UD.4.2	New development should be designed to be compatible with surrounding development in ways that contribute to the desired character of the City and District.

Mitigation Measures

Implementation of the above General Plan policies and action items as well as mitigation measures **MM 4.2.1a through b** would reduce the General Plan's contribution to cumulative impacts to agricultural resources. However, implementation of the General Plan Land Use Map would still substantially contribute to cumulative impacts on agricultural resources as a result of adjacent urban development and this impact is **cumulatively considerable** and is considered a **significant and unavoidable** impact.

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