

**AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES
LOCAL AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT
(LARA) MODEL RESULTS
for
Charles Froehlich Major Subdivision (6 lots)
SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
TM 5494**

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Prepared for:
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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project proposes a 6 lot subdivision on 31.31 acres of land located south of Sierra Roja Road. Access is proposed from a private road easement connecting to Sierra Roja Road. The project will be served by on-site septic systems. Proposed parcel sizes range from 4 to 6.28 acres. Biological open space is proposed on 9.46 acres of the site. The site currently supports an avocado orchard. Parcels directly to the east and northeast are classified as Agricultural Preserves and the parcel directly to the northeast is under a Williamson Contract.

Based on the results of the Local Agricultural Resources Assessment (LARA) Model, the site is not considered an important agricultural resource. The site received a low rating for soil quality and slope. The site received a high rating for water, climate, and surrounding land use. The site received a moderate rating for land use consistency. To be considered an important agricultural resource under the LARA model, a soil rating of either high or moderate must be present. Therefore, the site's low soil quality rating means that the site is not an important agricultural resource and as a result, a less than significant direct impact to agricultural resources would occur as a result of the project. The results of each LARA model factor rating that contribute to this determination are detailed below.

2.0 LOCAL AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE ASSESSMENT (LARA) MODEL

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, the CEQA Guidelines references the California Agricultural LESA Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation (DOC), as an optional methodology that may be used to assess the relative value of agriculture and farmland. In the past, the LESA model has been applied to various agricultural properties throughout the County of San Diego to assess agricultural importance in association with proposed discretionary land use permits. After several years of practical experience with application of the LESA model in San Diego County, the inadequacy of the model in capturing the unique and varied character of San Diego agriculture has become apparent. An alternative approach, referred to as the Local Agricultural Resource Assessment (LARA) model has been developed to assess the relative value of agricultural resources in San Diego County. Specific documentation of the LARA model can be found in the Guidelines for Determining Significance for Agricultural Resources at <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/Resource/3~procguid/3~procguid.html#agr>.

The LARA model takes into account the following factors in determining the importance of an agricultural resource:

Required Factors:

- Water
- Climate
- Soil Quality

Complementary Factors:

- Surrounding Land Uses
- Land Use Consistency
- Topography

The following subsections detail the rating assigned to the project site for each of the above factors.

2.1 Water

The water rating is primarily based the site's County Water Authority (CWA) service status, however if the project does not already have imported water service, the underlying groundwater aquifer type and the presence of a groundwater well is also considered (Table 1).

The project site is located within the County Water Authority (CWA) and is served by the Valley Center Municipal Water District. There are no wells on-site and the site has been irrigated with imported water. The groundwater aquifer type for the entire project site is Fractured Crystalline Rock. Therefore, based on Table 1, if the site is located within the County Water Authority (CWA), with infrastructure connections to the site and a meter has been installed, the project site's water rating is High.

Table 1. Water Rating ¹

County Water Authority (CWA) Service Status	Groundwater Aquifer Type and Well Presence	Rating
Inside CWA service area with existing water infrastructure connections and a meter	Any groundwater aquifer type	High
Inside CWA service area with infrastructure connections to the site, but no meter has been installed	The site is located in an Alluvial or Sedimentary Aquifer <i>and</i> has an existing well	High
	The site is located in an Alluvial or Sedimentary Aquifer, but has no existing well	Moderate
	The site is located on Fractured Crystalline Rock and has an existing well	Moderate
	The site is located on Fractured Crystalline Rock, but has no existing well	Low
Outside CWA or inside CWA but infrastructure connections are not available at the site and no meter is installed	The site is located in an Alluvial or Sedimentary Aquifer <i>and</i> has an existing well	Moderate
	The site is located in an Alluvial or Sedimentary Aquifer, but has no existing well	Low
	The site is located on Fractured Crystalline Rock (with or without a well)	Low
	The site is located in a Desert Basin (with or without a well)	Low

¹ If more than one underlying groundwater aquifer type exists at a site, usually the aquifer type that could produce the most water should be used to obtain the water rating. If it would be more reasonable to apply the rating based on the aquifer that would produce less water, a clear justification and reason for doing so must be provided.

2.2 Climate

Sunset Zones are used as a standard measure of climate suitability due to the variability of microclimate conditions that the Sunset zones take into account. Recognizing that the Sunset Zones were not developed as a tool to determine the suitability for commercial agricultural production, their use is not intended to determine suitability for specific crops, rather they are a measure of overall climate suitability for the typical agricultural commodities produced in San Diego County. The project site is located within Sunset Zone 21, which has a rating of High.

Climate (Sunset Zone) Description	Rating
Zone 21 is an air drained thermal belt that is good for citrus and is the mildest zone that gets adequate winter chilling for some plants. Low temperatures range from 23 to 36 degrees F, with temperatures rarely dropping far below 30 degrees.	High

2.3 Soil Quality

The project's soil quality rating is based on the presence of soils that meet the quality criteria for Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Significance as defined by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) that are available for agricultural use and that have been previously used for agriculture.

The entire site has been used for agricultural purposes and is also available for agricultural purposes. The entire 30.3 acre site has Cieneba Fallbrook rocky coarse sandy loam, 30 to 65 percent slopes, eroded, which has a Storie index of 7 and a Land Capability Classification of VII - VIII. However, Cieneba Fallbrook rocky coarse sandy loam does not meet the soil quality criteria for either Prime Farmland Soils or Soils of Statewide Significance.

Therefore the project's soil quality rating is 0 as detailed in Table 2, Soil Quality Matrix. The project receives a Low rating for soil quality based on this score.

Figure 1. Soil Type

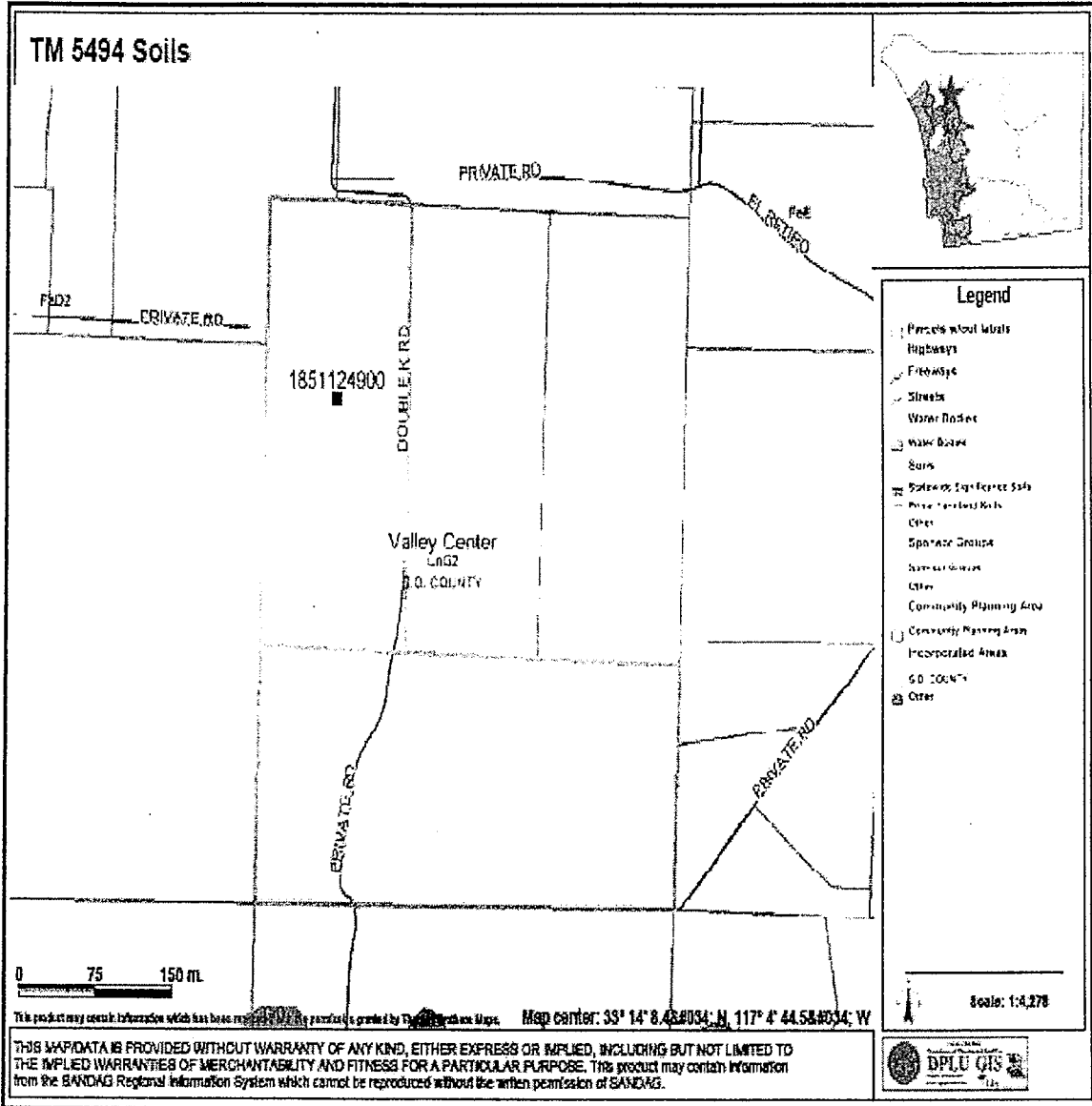


Table 2. Soil Quality Matrix

	Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D	Column E	Column F	Column G
	Soil Type	Size of project site (acreage)	Unavailable for agricultural use	Available for agricultural use	Proportion of project site	Is soil candidate for prime farmland or farmland of statewide significance? (Yes = 1, No = 0)	Multiply Column E x Column F
Row 1	Cieneba-Fallbrook rocky coarse sandy loam, 30 to 65 percent slopes, eroded (CnG2)	31.3	0	31.3	1	0	0
Row 2	Total	31.3	Total	31.3			
Row 3	Soil Quality Matrix Score						0

Table 3. Soil Quality Matrix Interpretation

Soil Quality Matrix Score	Soil Quality Rating
The site has a Soil Quality Matrix score ranging from 0.66 to 1.0 and has a minimum of 10 acres of contiguous Prime Farmland or Statewide Importance Soils	High
The site has a Soil Quality Matrix score ranging from 0.33 to 0.66 or the site has a minimum of 10 acres of contiguous Prime Farmland or Statewide Importance Soils	Moderate
The site has a Soil Quality Matrix score less than 0.33 and does not have 10 acres or more of contiguous Prime Farmland or Statewide Importance Soils	Low

2.4 Surrounding Land Use

Surrounding land use is a factor in determining the importance of an agricultural resource because surrounding land uses that are compatible with agriculture make a site more attractive for agricultural use due to lower expectations of nuisance issues and other potential impacts from non-farm neighbors. This factor also accounts for the degree to which an area is primarily agricultural, assigning a higher rating to areas dominated by agricultural uses than an area dominated by higher density, urban development.

Figure 2 identifies the ¼ mile area surrounding the project site that defines the project's Zone of Influence (ZOI). Based on a review of the land uses within the ZOI, the surrounding land uses are lands compatible with agricultural use. Surrounding lands are occupied by orchards and undeveloped lands with scattered rural residential land uses. In addition, there is a 42.48 acre parcel adjacent to subject property to the west under is an Agricultural Preserve and a 21.11 acre parcel adjacent to the subject property to the northwest that is under a Williamson Act Contract. Based on review of these land uses, at least 50% of the ZOI is compatible with agricultural use and the site receives a high rating for surrounding land use.

Table 4. Surrounding Land Use Rating

Percentage of Land within ZOI that is Compatible with Agriculture	Surrounding Land Use Rating
50% or greater	High
Greater than 25% but less than 50%	Moderate
25% or less	Low

2.5 Land Use Consistency

The median parcel size associated with the project site compared to the median parcel size of parcels located within the ZOI is a complementary factor used in the LARA model.

Two parcels make up the project site. One parcel is 11.07 acres and the other is 20.23 acres. Therefore, the median project parcel size is 15.65. Parcels in the ZOI range in size from 1.64 acres to 43.45 acres. The median parcel size among parcels in the ZOI is 7.52. Therefore, since the project's median (average in this case because there is no median) parcel size is larger than the median parcel size within the project's ZOI by less than ten acres, the project receives a Moderate land use consistency rating.

Table 5. Land Use Consistency Rating

Project's median parcel size compared to ZOI median parcel size	Land Use Consistency Rating
The project's median parcel size is smaller than the median parcel size within the project's ZOI	High
The project's median parcel size is up to ten acres larger than the median parcel size within the project's ZOI	Moderate
The project's median parcel size is larger than the median parcel size within the project's ZOI by ten acres or more	Low

2.6 Slope

The Slope Rating for the site is based on the average slope for the area of the site that is available for agricultural use, as identified the Soil Quality Rating Matrix. Approximately 5.71 acres are in the 0-15% slope range; 9.5 acres are in the 15-25% slope range; and 16.1 acres are above 25% slope. Therefore, the average slope for the site falls in the 27.54 category, resulting in a Low rating for slope.

Table 6. Slope Rating

Average Slope	Topography Rating
Less than 15% slope	High
15% up to 25% slope	Moderate
25% slope and higher	Low

3.0 LARA MODEL RESULTS

The ratings for each LARA model factor for the project site are as follows:

Required Factors
 Water = High
 Climate = High
 Soil Quality = Low

Complimentary Factors
 Surrounding land use = High
 Land use consistency rating = Moderate
 Slope = Low

Table 7. Interpretation of LARA Model Results

LARA Model Results			LARA Model Interpretation
Possible Scenarios	Required Factors	Complementary Factors	
Scenario 1	All three factors rated high	At least one factor rated high or moderate	The site is an important agricultural resource
Scenario 2	Two factors rated high, one factor rated moderate	At least two factors rated high or moderate	
Scenario 3	One factor rated high, two factors rated moderate	At least two factors rated high	
Scenario 4	All factors rated moderate	All factors rated high	
Scenario 5	At least one factor rated low importance	N/A	The site is <i>not</i> an important agricultural resource
Scenario 6	All other model results		

Based on the site conditions, the project's LARA model scoring falls under Scenario 5, indicating that the site is not an important agricultural resource.

Figure 3. Aerial Image

