

SECTION 4.2

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

4.2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to analyze potential Project-related impacts associated with the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural use. Where needed, mitigation measures are recommended to avoid or lessen the significance of potential impacts. This section also discusses the potential conflicts between the proposed uses and ongoing agricultural activities in the vicinity of the Project site. Information presented in this section is based on site photographs and visits, the City of Banning General Plan and EIR, the most currently available reports from the California Department of Finance, California Department of Conservation, Riverside County Agricultural Production Report (2008), and the Riverside County General Plan and General Plan EIR. In 2010, the CEQA *Guidelines* were amended to change the title of the Agricultural Resources section and expanded its thresholds to include potential impacts on forest land and timberland. While these thresholds are shown in Section 4.2.3 (*Significance Threshold Criteria*) the Project site does not contain forest or timberland-related resources. Accordingly, such impacts are not addressed in this Section; refer to Section 7.0 (*Effects Found Not to Be Significant*).

4.2.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

4.2.2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

State of California

More than one-quarter of California's landmass is used for agricultural. Just over half of the 27.6 million acres of agricultural land is pasture and range and about 40 percent is cropland¹. Agriculture in California is large, diverse, complex, and dynamic. It generated nearly 36.6 billion in cash receipts in 2007. California has been the nation's top agricultural state in terms of cash receipts every year since 1948 and has gradually increased its share of U.S. farm cash receipts from 9.5 percent in 1960 to 12.8 percent in 2007. Including multiplier effects, California farms and closely related processing industries generate 7.3 percent of the State's private sector labor force and account for 5.6 percent of the State labor income (2002). For every \$1 billion in farm sales, there are 18,000 jobs created in the State, about 11,000 in the farm sector itself plus about 7,000 in other industries. Agricultural employment has been reduced as result of the current recession as well as by fluctuations in the availability of water for irrigation and the conversion of agricultural land to other developed uses. In 2009 the State's Employment Development Department (EDD) estimated that agriculture employed a seasonally adjusted

¹ Agricultural Issues Center, University of California Davis, *The Measure of California Agriculture*, August 2009, accessed June 28, 2010.

average of 385,066 people as compared to 390,900 in 2008 as estimated by EDD.² The California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program identifies lands that have agriculture value and maintains a statewide map of agricultural lands in its Important Farmlands Inventory (IFI). IFI classifies land based upon its productive capabilities, which is based on many characteristics, including fertility, slope, texture, drainage, depth, salt content and availability of water for irrigation. The state employs a variety of classification systems to determine the suitability of soils for agricultural use. The two most widely used systems are the Capability Classification System and the Storie Index. The Capability Classification System classifies soils from Class I to Class VIII based on their ability to support agriculture with Class I being the highest quality soil. The Storie Index considers other factors such as slope and texture to arrive at a rating.

As noted, in addition to soil suitability, other factors are used to determine the agricultural value of land including whether soils are irrigated, the depth of productive soil and its water-holding capacity, and physical and chemical characteristics of soils. Areas considered to have the greatest agricultural potential are designated as Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Prime Farmland includes areas with irrigated Class I or Class II soil at least 40 inches deep with a water holding capacity of at least 4 inches, capable of producing sustainable high yield crops. Farmland of Statewide Importance is land other than Prime Farmland that has a good combination of physical and chemical characteristics but does not have the minimum soil depth and water holding capacity requirements. Other productive farmlands are classified as Unique Farmland or as Farmland of Local Importance. Unique Farmland is land other than Prime or Statewide Importance that supports high-value food and fiber crops. Farmland of Local Importance includes non-irrigated land used for dry farming and grazing that is either currently producing or has the capability for production, but does not meet the criteria established for Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland. Farmland of Local importance is more fully defined by each county's local advisory committee. Lands that have lesser agricultural potential are classified as Grazing Land, Urbanized, or Other. Other Land typically includes areas that are generally unsuitable for agriculture because of geographic or regulatory constraints.

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly referred to as the Williamson Act, allows local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners to restrict specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. Landowners in return receive lower-than-normal property tax assessments, based upon farming and open space uses as opposed to full market value. Local governments receive an annual subsidy of property tax revenues from the state. Refer to additional discussion of the Williamson Act below.

² California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division, *Detailed Agricultural Employment and Earnings Data*, 2009, www.edd.ca.gov, accessed June 25, 2010 and *California's Agricultural Employment Report 2008*, accessed June 25, 2010.

Riverside County

The County of Riverside has an agricultural industry valued at over one billion dollars (\$1,268,589,900) in 2009, and utilizes approximately 246,012 acres of county land³. The County represents 3 percent of the State's agriculture industry and ranks 12th among the other 58 agriculture counties. Seventy-nine percent (194,349 acres) of County's agricultural land is designated as "Prime Farmland", "Farmland of Statewide Importance", and "Unique Farmland"⁴. Overall the County's agricultural production values increased approximately 3 percent between 2007 and 2008, the last year for which statistics are currently available. Certain parts of the industry, however, have seen declines in value, most notably livestock and poultry (-5.3 percent), nursery crops (-15.4 percent) and tree and vine production (- 8.2 percent); however, overall the County has seen a substantial increase in agricultural production values since 1994.

Agriculture has remained economically viable in the County in spite of pressures such as increased agricultural land values, increased water cost, and compatibility problems with urban uses because of the area's climate, soils, and air quality.

Pursuant to State policy, the Riverside County has its own criteria for designating Farmland of Local Importance, which include: (1) soils that would be classified as Prime and Statewide but lack available irrigation water; (2) lands planted with dry-land crops of barley, oats, and wheat; (3) lands producing summer squash, okra, eggplant, radishes, watermelons or that are in permanent pasture (irrigated); (4) dairy lands including enclosed pasture of 10 acres or more; and (5) lands identified by city or county ordinance as Agricultural Zones or as subject to Williamson Act contracts.⁵

City of Banning

According to the City of Banning General Plan EIR (III-2), approximately 22 percent of the General Plan Study Area is developed. Residential land uses represent approximately 66 percent of the developed lands, dominated by rural residential single family dwelling units in the City limits and in the balance of the General Plan Study Area. Agricultural uses are accounted for under the land use designations of Ranch/Agriculture (1 du/10 acres), Ranch/Agriculture/Hillside (1 du/10 acres); Rural Residential (0-1 du/acre) and Rural Residential/Hillside uses, which allow for agricultural and ranching activities. These Rural Agricultural and Rural Residential uses account of approximately 1,203.1 acres in the City's

³ County of Riverside, Office of Agriculture, Agricultural Commissioner's Office, *Riverside County 2008 Agricultural Production Report*, 2008, <http://www.rivcoag.org/opencms/publications/>, accessed June 25, 2010.

⁴ Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP), 2002.

⁵ California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, *Farmland of Local Importance Definition - Riverside County* (2008), http://www.dera.saccounty.net/portals/0/docs/EnvDocs_Notices/200400961720090401114732.pdf, accessed 10/19/2010.

municipal boundaries and 5,550.6 acres in the combined Sphere of Influence and Planning Area. The agricultural acreage, with potential for use for either dry farming or ranching/grazing, accounts for approximately 28 percent of the total General Plan Study Area.⁶ The City's Very Low Density Residential land use designation (0-2 du/acre) permits private equestrian uses and grazing is not included in the above calculation.

Agricultural activity in the Banning area is not a major source of revenue and employs approximately 3 percent or less of the total Banning labor force. Since EDD includes farm workers, nursery workers; delivery truck drivers for produce and flower, horticulturists, landscapers, tree trimmers, and landscape maintenance personnel in this category, the percentage of the City's labor force actually involved in agriculture production is probably well under 3 percent. There are no migrant farm labor camps in or near Banning, nor is there significant agricultural activity in the City's planning area of the type that would attract a substantial number of migrant farm workers. Within the General Plan Study Area, agricultural uses include a fruit orchard located on the Banning Bench, and privately owned equestrian estates used for horse grazing, particularly on the south side of the planning area. These lands are not designated for open space, but rather are ultimately planned for residential land uses.⁷

Based on information provided by Riverside County at the time the City's 2005 General Plan was written, there were currently three Williamson Act contracts in effect over approximately 3,500 acres in the planning area. Lands were identified in the City limits near the Banning Bench, in the northwest portion of the Planning Area between Highland Springs Avenue and Highland Home Road, and in the City's southerly Sphere of Influence, south of Westward Avenue. The Project site, located between Highland Springs Avenue and Highland Home Road, was one of these sites. The General Plan EIR (2005), however, does not identify agricultural uses on the Project site and, by the time the General Plan EIR was certified, all Williamson Act contracts on the Project site had been cancelled.

Conversion of farmland of various types to other uses within the Banning area is an ongoing process that is expected to continue into the future as marginal agricultural lands that are no longer in active agricultural use are developed pursuant to the City's General Plan.

Project Site

The Project site has historically been used for intermittent dry and irrigated farming and livestock grazing. The EIR prepared for the Deutsch Specific Plan indicates irrigation ceased in approximately 1981, while cultivation ceased completely around 1988⁸. Since acquiring the

⁶ City of Banning *Environmental Impact Report for the City of Banning Comprehensive General Plan and Zoning Ordinance*, Section III – Environmental Impacts and Mitigations, III-2, June, 2005.

⁷ City of Banning, *City of Banning Comprehensive General Plan (2005, Environmental Resources Element, Open Space*.

⁸ Deutsch Banning Specific Plan EIR, 1992, pp 47 (*Agriculture*).

property, Pardee Homes has allowed the use of the site for small scale, occasional cattle grazing under a private lease agreement with local rancher Gabriel Mendoza, which is expected to continue during the Project entitlement and CEQA review process. Limited small scale grazing activities on portions of the site not yet developed may continue while the Specific Plan site is incrementally developed.

Soils on the site consist of various types of sandy loam including those from the Hanford (HcA), Greenfield (GyA), Ramona (RaA), Gorgonio (GIC), Tujunga, and Terrace Escarpment soils series⁹. Sandy loams of the Hanford, Greenfield, Ramona, and Gorgonio series are considered prime agricultural soils by the State Department of Conservation.¹⁰

The EIR prepared and certified for the Deutsch Banning Specific Plan indicates that approximately 120 acres located at the southwester corner of the Project site were considered prime farmland by the State Department of Conservation in 1981, when the area was irrigated and actively cultivated. According to the previously stated criteria of the County of Riverside, sites comprised of soils that would be classified as Prime and of Statewide Importance, but which are not irrigated, could be classified as Farmland of Local Importance by the County and the State Department of Conservation.

According to the Deutsch Banning Specific Plan EIR (1992), the entire 1,552-acre project site was once under Agriculture Preserve (e.g., Williamson Act contract). At the time the Deutsch Banning Specific Plan EIR was written (1992), approximately 924 acres of land on the proposed Project site were within an Agricultural Preserve. The EIR noted that a Notice of Non-renewal was issued for this acreage in 1987 and that the land would be released (cancelled) from Agricultural Preserve status in 1997. The Deutsch Specific Plan EIR also indicates that of the remaining 628 acres within the Project site, approximately 200 acres of land previously under Agricultural Preserve contract had been canceled in the late 1970s and an additional 428 acres of Agricultural Preserve was canceled in 1985. Exhibit 10 of the Deutsch Specific Plan EIR indicates the location of Agricultural Preserve land canceled in the 1970s and in 1985, as well as the property that was still in Agricultural Preserve in 1992.

Each of the current Assessor's Parcel Numbers within the area of the Project site shown as Agricultural Preserve on Exhibit 10 was reviewed for current status in the Riverside County Land Information System database and with the State Department of Conservation. None of these databases indicate the current existence of Agricultural Preserve contracts on any of property located within the Project site, nor are there any Agricultural cases pending or listed for the Project site. The State's Department of Conservation database 2008 Important Farmland Map (September 2009) does not identify any portion of the Project site as containing farmland of

⁹ Deutsch Banning Specific Plan EIR, 1992, pp 51 (*Ground Stability*).

¹⁰ California Department of Conservation, *Soil Candidate Listing for Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance – Riverside County*, http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/pubs/soils/Documents/RIVERSIDE_ssurgo.pdf, accessed 10/19/2010.

Prime or Statewide Importance. Neither does the State identify any existing Williamson Act contracts on the Project site.¹¹ The County of Riverside Land Information System does not identify any existing Williamson Act contracts on the Project site, nor does it identify any pending Notice of Cancellation or Diminishment actions on any of the Assessors Parcels within the Project site.¹² Exhibit 4.2-1, *Farmland Map* depicts the site's farmland designations according to the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Data (2008).¹³

4.2.2.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The Williamson Act

The *California Land Conservation Act*, also known as the *Williamson Act*, was adopted in 1965 in order to encourage the preservation of the state's agricultural lands and to discourage its conversion to urban uses. In order to preserve agricultural uses, this Act established an agricultural preserve contract procedure through which any county or city within the State taxes landowners of Agricultural Preserve contract land at a lower rate using a scale based on the actual use of the land for agricultural purposes, rather than its unrestricted market value. In return, the owners guarantee that these properties will remain in agricultural production for a 10-year period. This contract is renewed automatically unless a Notice of Non-Renewal is filed by the owner. In this manner, each agricultural preserve contract (at any given date) is always operable at least 9 years into the future.

The owner of the property may file a Notice of Non-Renewal, which will cause the contract to expire in 10 years. After the contract has expired, a landowner may apply to remove that property from an agricultural preserve through the filing of a Notice of Diminishment. The landowner also has the option of petitioning the Board of Supervisors for the cancellation of the contract. Cancellation of the contract involves payment of substantial cancellation fees.

Since 1998, another option within the Williamson Act program is the rescission process to cancel a Williamson Act contract and simultaneously dedicate a permanent agricultural conservation easement on other land. Pursuant to Government Code 51243, if a city annexes land under the Williamson Act contract, a city must secede to all rights, duties and powers of the county under the contract. A Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) must notify the State Department of Conservation within 10 days of a city's proposal to annex land under contract.

¹¹ California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Data Riverside County Important Farmland Map 2008 http://redirect.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/fmmp/product_page.asp Accessed March 3, 2011

¹² County of Riverside Land Use Information System, <http://www3.tlma.co.riverside.ca.us/pa/rdis/viewer.htm>, accessed March 3, 2011. Community base map – Banning and Assessor's Parcel Numbers

¹³ California Department of Conservation, *Map of Western Riverside County Important Farmland 2008, Sheet 1 of 3*, http://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/FMMP/pdf/2008/riv08_west.pdf, accessed 10/19/2010

County of Riverside Right-to-Farm Ordinance

Right-to-Farm Ordinances have been adopted by several California counties to protect farmers in established farming areas from legal action that new residents in nearby urban settings may take against nuisances associated with normal, day-to-day farming activities, such as odor, noise, and dust. Riverside County adopted a Right-to-Farm Ordinance (Ordinance 625.1) on March 18, 1986 (amended November 8, 1994). The ordinance states that agricultural activity, operating for more than three years, shall not become a nuisance to the public under changed conditions in or around the locality. While the County's Right-to-Farm Ordinance does not apply to projects in the City of Banning, which has adopted its own Municipal Code, the Right-to-Farm Ordinance incorporates policy and language that may be applied as a mitigation measure to projects within municipal boundaries, should conditions warrant.

City of Banning General Plan and Zoning Code

The City of Banning General Plan and Zoning Code (Title 17) provide for agricultural uses within several of its land use categories. No portion of the Project site is designated in the City's General Plan for agricultural use nor is the Project site zoned for any agricultural land use. The most proximate agriculturally zoned property is located adjacent to the east and is zoned for Ranch Agricultural (Hillside).

4.2.3 SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLD CRITERIA

The criteria used to determine the significance of potential impacts related to agricultural resources are from the Initial Study checklist in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. The project would result in significant impact related to agricultural resources if it would:

- a) *Convert 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.*
- b) *Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.*
- c) *Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g)). Refer to Section 7.0, Effects Found Not to be Significant.*
- d) *Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Refer to Section 7.0, Effects Found Not to be Significant.*
- e) *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.*

4.2.4 IMPACT ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

ANALYTIC METHOD

The previously certified Deutsch Specific Plan EIR addressed development of the Project site with up to 5,400 dwelling units. Impacts discussed below are generally consistent with the impacts described in the 1985 Deutsch Specific Plan EIR and subsequent EIR Update in 1993. This analysis has been updated to reflect the currently proposed Butterfield Specific Plan, including the off-site infrastructure and 21-acre unincorporated parcel with the exception of the changes in the status of then-existing Agricultural Preserve contracts, which has been updated by reference to the State Department of Conservation and County of Riverside Land Information System databases.

PROJECT DESIGN FEATURES AND EXISTING REGULATIONS, RULES, AND REQUIREMENTS

Existing local, State and federal regulations noted below will avoid or mitigate potential agricultural resource impacts. The following Project Design Features will also reduce, avoid or off-set potentially adverse agricultural resource impacts:

- 1) The phased development of the Project site will allow small scale temporary grazing use to continue during a portion of the implementation phase of the Project.

IMPACT ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact 4.2-1: Conversion of Farmland

Threshold: *Would the project convert 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?*

Determination: *Less than Significant*

The proposed Project site is not designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance by the FMMP Program of the California Resources Agency (2008). Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would, however, result in the conversion of approximately 1,500 acres of State-designated "Farmland of Local Importance" to non-agricultural uses. Cultivation of the site ceased in 1988. In terms of soils, the site remains suitable for dry farming and a portion of the site located at the northeast corner of Wilson Street and Highland Springs Avenue, which was once (prior to 1981) irrigated and classified as Prime Farmland by the State, could be irrigated again and used for that purpose; however, use of the site for agriculture would be inconsistent with the City's General Plan and Zoning Map. In addition, the presence of adjacent/proximate developed land uses (including residential

development) could make renewed farming on that portion of the site a nuisance due to potential use of pesticides and fertilizer and would also have an adverse impact on air quality due to the high levels of dust which farming could generate in this area. The Project site is not currently farmed and its only current agricultural use is for intermittent and limited cattle grazing. There is no Williamson Act contract covering any portion of the Project site. The issue of conversion of farmland was originally addressed in the EIR certified for the Deutsch Banning Specific Plan and found to be a less than significant impact. Since this Project is an amendment and restatement of the original Deutsch Specific Plan, the analysis and findings of the original certified EIR are incorporated by reference.

Impact 4.2-2: Conflicts with Existing Zoning or Williamson Act Contracts

Threshold: *Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract?*

Determination: *Less than Significant*

As previously discussed none of the parcels that comprise the Project site are subject to Williamson Act contracts. The site is not zoned or General Plan designated for any agricultural use. Accordingly, impacts would be less than significant.

Impact 4.2-3: Other Environmental Changes

Threshold: *Would the project 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?*

Determination: *Less than Significant*

While the proposed Project will convert land designated as Farmland of Local Importance to a non-agricultural use, the site has not supported agricultural uses, apart from occasional livestock grazing since 1988 and, although property adjacent to the east of the Project site is zoned for Ranch Agricultural (Hillside), there is currently no agricultural activity on any adjacent or nearby property with the possible exception of occasional cattle grazing. The County of Riverside's Right to Farm Ordinance does not affect the Project site because the site is located within the municipal boundaries of the City of Banning. However, consistent with Right to Farm principles, all real estate transactions for residential and non-residential uses will include appropriate disclosure forms, as approved by the Community Development Director, indicating the historic and intended continued small scale, temporary livestock grazing, so as not to hinder ongoing grazing activities on the Project site; however, this temporary agricultural use contributes very little to the regional agricultural economy and the development of the Project would not directly or indirectly catalyze the conversion of additional farmland to urban

uses nor does the Project include any component that would adversely affect the quality or quantity of groundwater available for agricultural production elsewhere in the region; refer to Section 4.14, *Water Supply*, and 4.9, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, for a more detailed discussion of Project impacts on groundwater and surface water quality and water demand.

The scope of the proposed Project does not include any component that would adversely affect the quality or quantity of the ground water used for agricultural production elsewhere in the region.

Betterment:

The following measure is a *betterment*, intended to reduce potentially adverse effects or otherwise create positive benefits, but is not considered necessary as a “mitigation measure”.

AGRI -1 (betterment): As part of the required real estate disclosure process, the Project shall be conditioned to include a disclosure for all property purchases and leases, noting the historic and intended ongoing intermittent livestock grazing, with the intent to avoid or minimize future actions that would limit or preclude ongoing grazing on the Project site. Said real estate disclosures shall be reviewed and approved by the Community Development Director as part of any residential or non-residential site plan approval, and/or prior to any building permit issuance.

4.4.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Determination: Less than Significant

The geographic setting for this cumulative impacts analysis is Riverside County. The analysis utilizes the County of Riverside RCIP, the most current Riverside County Agricultural Production Report (2008), and the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program 2008 Field Report for western Riverside County. The analysis considers the significance of the contribution of the proposed Project to cumulative regional impacts on County agricultural land and agricultural production resulting from the conversion of farmland to urban uses. Conversion of agricultural land to urban uses is an ongoing public policy issue in California. Data from the California Department of Conservation indicate that between 1988 and 2002, about 734,000 acres of land have been converted to urban and built-up uses. The majority of the State’s agricultural land is located the Central Valley, which is comprised of the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys. The Central Valley accounts for 69 percent of California’s cropland, but accounted for only 42 percent of the statewide cropland conversion between 1988 and 2002.

The rate of farmland conversion depends largely on population growth; California’s population increased by 75 percent between 1970 and 2002. For the year 2050, the California Department of

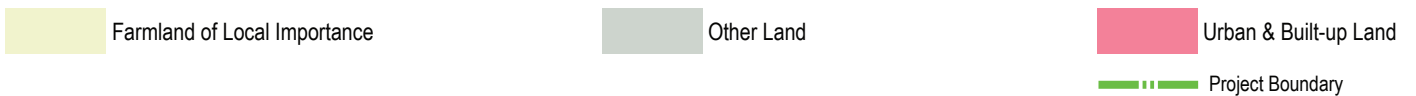
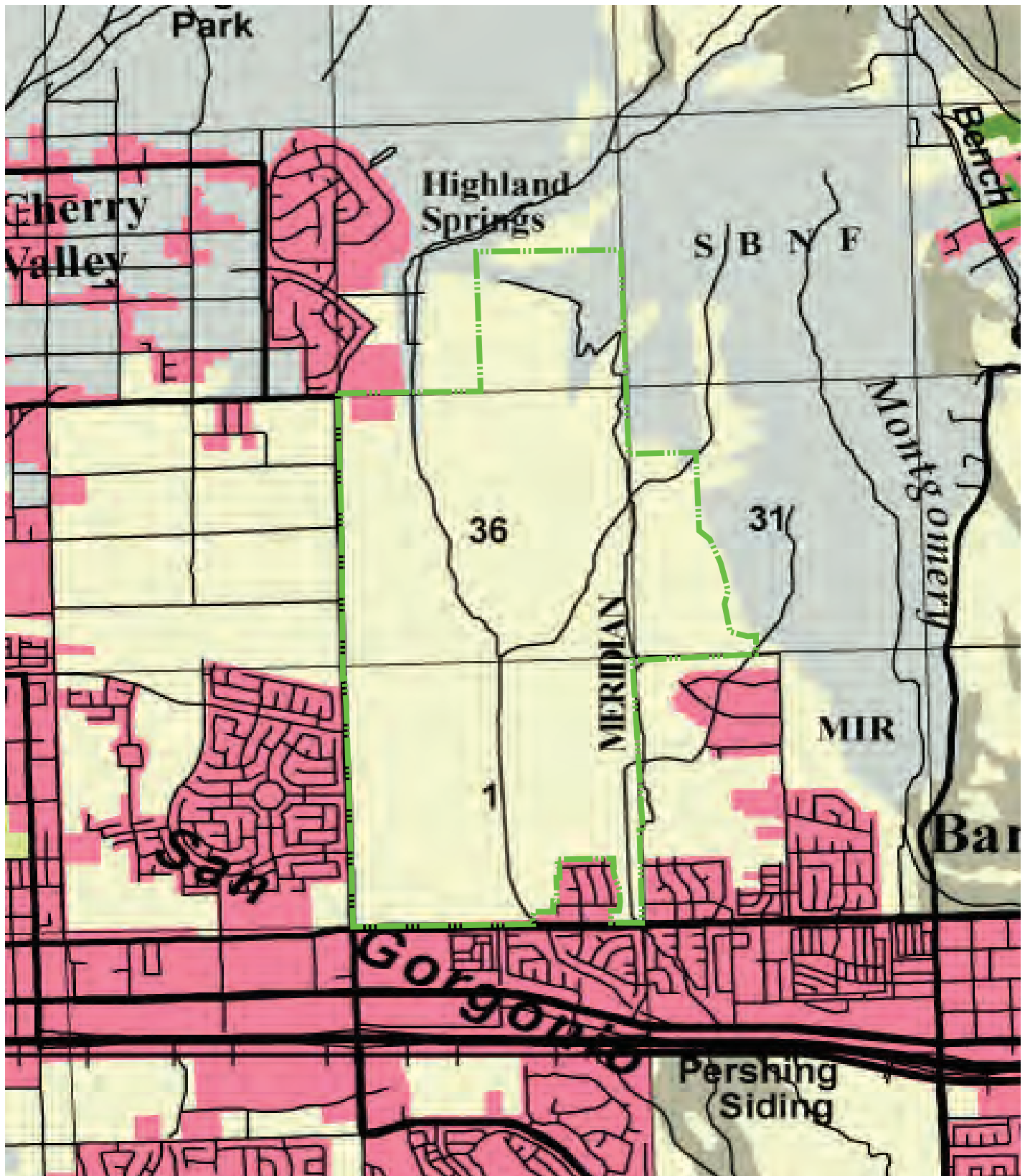
Finance projects a total State population increase that is 56 percent higher than in 2002. The County of Riverside's population has grown by 359 percent since 1970. However, in spite of the incredible population growth experienced in the County and the pressures that places on agricultural land uses, the County has seen an accelerating growth in the value of its agricultural production, though certain segments of the industry have seen substantial net declines. For example, in 1995, the County ranked 7th among California counties in terms of agricultural production. In 2008, the County dropped in rankings to 12th.

In 2005, the Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP) estimated the number of acres of Riverside County land involved in agricultural uses at 266,926 acres. Of that total, 212,005 acres (79 percent) of farmland in the County is designated as "Prime", "Statewide Importance", or "Unique".¹⁴ Though considered "Farmland of Local Importance" by the State Department of Conservation, the Project site is located within the municipal boundaries of a growing City and has been planned for urban development since the 1980s. Though previously subject to Williamson Act contracts, these have since expired and the Project site is no longer in agricultural use, with the exception of small-scale temporary use for livestock grazing that contributes very little to the regional agricultural economy. Accordingly, while the conversion of farmland in western Riverside County, and in the Coachella Valley in particular, may have an adverse cumulative effect on the County's agricultural economy, the incremental loss of this Project site's potential as farmland would not be considered cumulatively considerable and would be less than significant.

4.4.6 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

The impact of the proposed Project on Agricultural Resources would be less than significant.

¹⁴ Riverside County Integrated Project, 2002.



Source: California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
 Riverside County Important Farmland 2008 (Sheet 1 of 3) Map (www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/pages/index.aspx), accessed 5/23/09