# 4.2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

## 4.2.1 Introduction

This section describes existing agricultural resources within the project area and addresses potential issues associated with the loss of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide or Local Importance (collectively, Farmland) and Williamson Act land.

Important terms for specific parts of the project are discussed in detail in Section 4.0, "Approach to the Environmental Analysis." The following brief discussion is intended to remind the reader how those terms are defined and used in the EIR analysis, including this section. "SAP area" refers to the entire SAP area, which includes the PRSP area. "Net SAP area" refers to the portion of the SAP area outside the PRSP area. The "project" encompasses the entirety of the SAP, including the PRSP and all associated off-site improvements. "Project area" refers to the entire area covered by the project. Because the project area is composed of three pieces (the net SAP area, the PRSP area, and areas where other off-site infrastructure would support the project), the impact analysis typically is divided into three subsections: "Net SAP Area," "PRSP Area," and "Other Supporting Infrastructure." ("Other Supporting Infrastructure" refers to improvements outside the SAP area and is divided into "Pleasant Grove Retention Facility" and "Off-Site Transportation and Utility Improvements.") Some required infrastructure improvements are planned outside the PRSP area but still in the SAP area; those improvements are addressed in the "PRSP Area" sections.

The project area is not used or zoned for forestland (as defined by PRC Section 12220[g]), timberland (as defined by PRC Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104[g]). There are no woodlands or forests in the project area; therefore, there would be no impact. These issues are not discussed further in this EIR.

Comments on agricultural resources received in response to the NOP related to concerns over losing Important Farmland and agricultural land, the need to evaluate impacts on open space, "buffer zone" requirements to protect farmlands, and the need to identify mitigation measures to reduce agricultural impacts.

As discussed in Chapter 1, "Introduction," the PRSP land use plan has been slightly revised since circulation of the NOP. Changes primarily relate to increasing the distance between the landfill property and land designated for residential uses, modifying the density of proposed residential areas, reducing the proposed commercial intensity, slightly decreasing the acreage of open space, and increasing the acreage of parks to meet County parkland provision standards. The size of the PRSP area (2,213 acres) has not changed since release of the NOP, and the overall area of development would be nearly identical. Because impacts on agricultural resources relate primarily to direct or indirect conversion of Farmland to a nonagricultural use, and because the changes to the PRSP land use plan would not change the amount of Farmland converted to nonagricultural use, the potential impacts on agricultural resources resulting from the land use plan identified in the NOP and the current land use plan analyzed in this EIR are essentially the same.

## 4.2.2 Environmental Setting

Over half of the land in the SAP area is vacant, uncultivated fields. Aside from these fields, agriculture is the most common land use in the SAP area, followed by open space. Open space in the SAP area is in the form of conserved lands. The Orchard Creek Conservation Bank encompasses approximately 716 acres of conserved lands. A portion of the SAP (1,122 acres) is developed with commercial and light industrial uses, as well as the landfill.

Agricultural activities in the PRSP area are most closely related to the historical operations of the Spring Valley Ranch, also called Whitney Ranch. At the height of ranch activity, it contained several citrus groves, wheat cultivation fields, vineyards, and a major sheep operation. Between 1875 and 1888, 250 acres of grapevines were planted to produce raisins, but because production costs were less expensive in Europe, the vineyards were soon replaced with orange groves.

The SAP area is currently zoned for industrial, commercial, business park, farm, and open space and has the following designations:

- Industrial (INP-DC, INP-DC-FH, IN-DC, IN-DC-SP),
- Commercial (C2-UP-DC),
- Business Park (BP-DC, BP-DC-FH),
- Farm (F-B-X-DR-160, F-B-X-DR-SP-160, F-B-X-DR-80, F-B-X-80-SP, F-B-X-80, F-B-X-20, F-B-X-DR-20), and
- Open Space (O).

The Pleasant Grove Retention Facility is the off-site retention facility located approximately 1.5 miles west of the SAP area that would be used to minimize downstream flooding associated with development of the southern portion of the SAP area, including the PRSP area. The Pleasant Grove Retention Facility is located in the City of Roseville's Infill Specific Plan Area and is zoned PD, for planned development.

## FARMLAND CLASSIFICATIONS

The State of California maps and classifies farmland through the California Department of Conservation (DOC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP). Classifications are based on a combination of physical and chemical characteristics of the soil and climate that determine the degree of suitability of the land for crop production. The classifications under the FMMP are as follows:

- Prime Farmland—land that has the best combination of features for the production of agricultural crops;
- Farmland of Statewide Importance—land other than Prime Farmland that has a good combination of physical and chemical features for the production of agricultural crops but that has more limitations than Prime Farmland, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture;
- Unique Farmland—land of lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural cash crops;
- Farmland of Local Importance—land of importance to the local agricultural economy;
- Grazing Land—existing vegetation that is suitable for grazing;
- Urban and Built-Up Land—land occupied by structures in density of at least one dwelling unit per 1.5 acres;
- Land Committed to Nonagricultural Use—existing land that has a permanent commitment to development but has an existing land use of agricultural or grazing lands; and
- Other Land— land not included in any other mapping category, common examples of which include low-density rural developments, brush, timber, wetland, and vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development.

Table 4.2-1 shows the approximate acreages of farmland of each classification type in the net SAP area, PRSP area, and the Pleasant Grove Retention Facility.

**Table 4.2-1 Farmland Classification Acreages**

| Classification | Net SAP Area | PRSP Area | Pleasant Grove Retention Facility |
|---|---|---|---|
| Prime Farmland | 10 acres | – | 20 acres |
| Unique Farmland | 180 acres | – | 260 acres |
| Farmland of Local Importance | 3,830 acres | 1,985 acres | 1,010 acres |
| Grazing Land | 1,070 acres | 220 acres | 385 acres |
| Urban and Built-Up Land | 1,120 acres | 2 acres | – |
| Other Land | 70 acres | 2 acres | 90 acres |

Source: Compiled by Ascent Environmental in 2017 using DOC 2014

## WILLIAMSON ACT CONTRACT LANDS

The California Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act) recognizes the importance of agricultural land and includes provisions to protect and ensure the orderly conversion of agricultural land. As is described in greater detail below, the Williamson Act allows property owners to enter into contracts with the County through which it commits to not developing the subject property in exchange for a guarantee that the property will be taxed at agricultural values under minimum 10-year rolling term contracts. The contracts may be cancelled to allow a limited number of public uses, such as open space and natural resource conservation, and a cancellation fee may apply. The process for exiting the contracts involves nonrenewal, which takes place over a 9-year period.

The SAP area includes 716 acres of farmland currently under Williamson Act contract, preserved as the Orchard Creek Conservation Bank. As shown in Exhibit 4.2-1, these properties are located in the northeastern corner of the net SAP area.

As shown in Exhibits 4.2-1 and 4.2-2, no land in the PRSP area or on the Pleasant Grove Retention Facility site is under Williamson Act contracts.

## SOIL CAPABILITY CLASSIFICATION

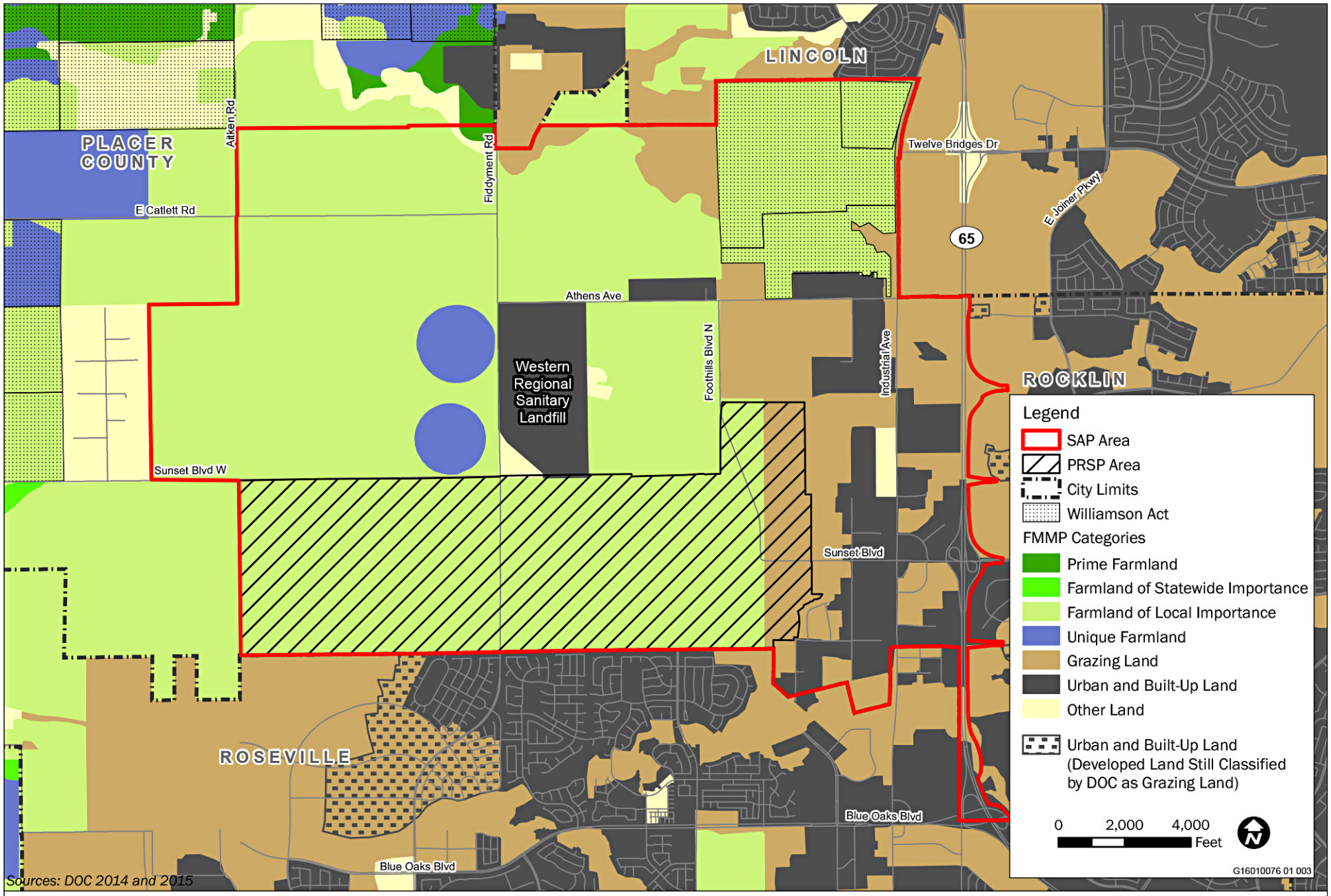
Soils are an important factor in determining the suitability of a site for agriculture. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), a department of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, maintains the Soil Survey Geographic Database of soils information collected by the National Cooperative Soil Survey. Land capability classifications are used to assess the suitability of soils for most kinds of field crops. Soils are grouped according to their limitations for field crops, the risk of damage if they are used for crops, and the way they respond to management. Groupings are designated 1–8, with the numbering indicating progressively greater limitations and narrower choices for practical use. The SAP area, including the PRSP area, is composed of 15 map units, as described below.

### Alamo-Fiddyment Complex (104)

This map unit consists of approximately 50 percent Alamo soil and 30 percent Fiddyment soil, with the remaining 20 percent composed of a mixture of San Joaquin sandy loam, Cometa sandy loam, and Kaseberg loam. The Alamo soil is poorly drained clay at a moderate depth over a hardpan. This soil does not support Prime Farmland and is identified as Class 4 soil.

### Cometa Sandy Loam (140)

This map unit consists of approximately 85 percent Cometa soil, 5 percent of Kaseberg soil, 5 percent of Fiddyment soil, 4 percent of San Joaquin soil, and 1 percent of Alamo soil. The Cometa soil is a well-drained soil forming in alluvium deposits that are derived from granite. This soil supports Farmland of Statewide Importance and is identified as Class 3 soil.




*Sources: DOC 2014 and 2015*

**Exhibit 4.2-1**

**SAP Farmland Categories**

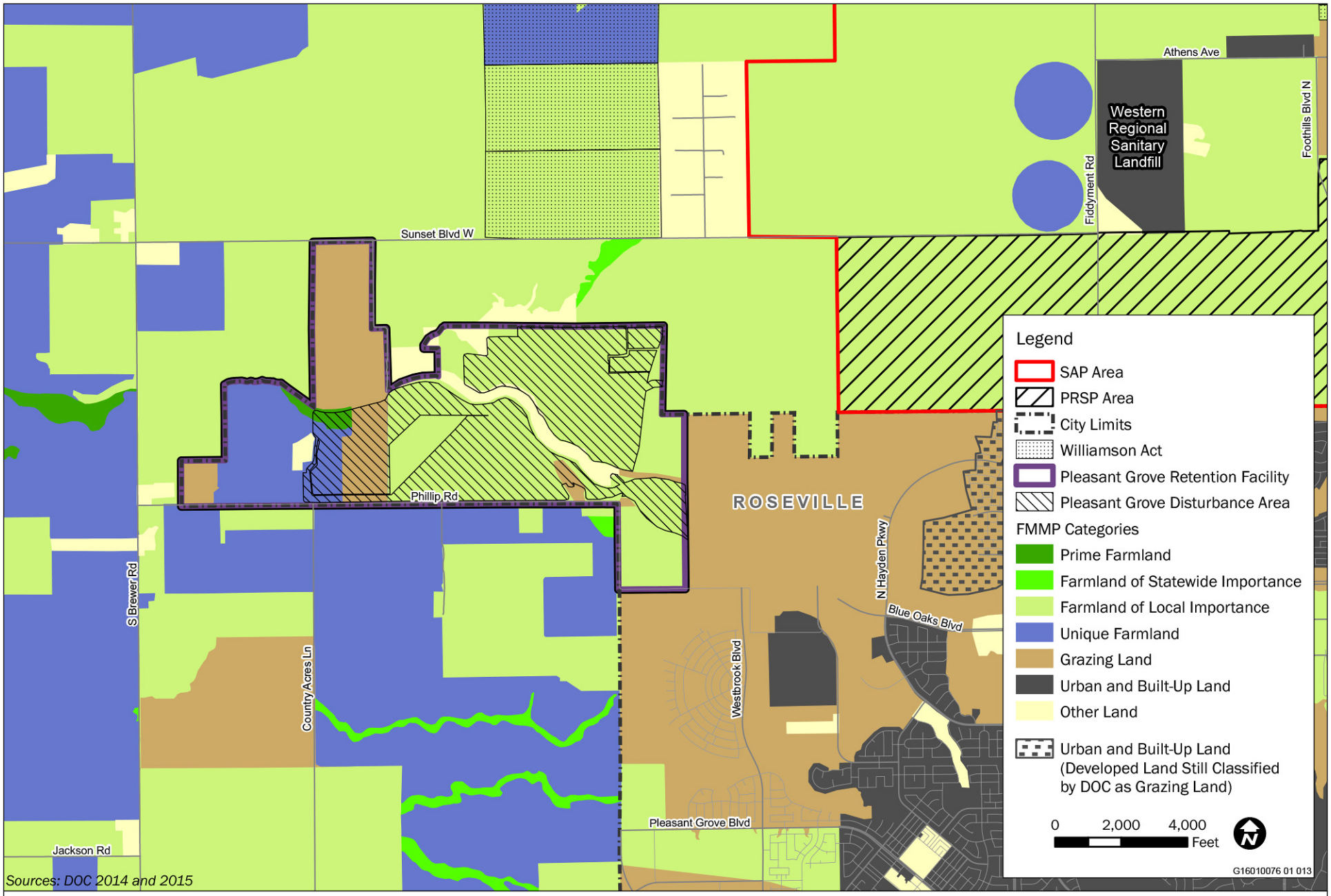



**Exhibit 4.2-2**

**Pleasant Grove Retention Facility Farmland Categories**

ASCENT ENVIRONMENTAL

### Cometa-Fiddyment Complex (141)
This map unit consists of approximately 50 percent Alamo soil and 30 percent Fiddyment soil, with the remaining 20 percent composed of a mixture of San Joaquin sandy loam, Cometa sandy loam, and Kaseberg loam. The Alamo soil is poorly drained clay at a moderate depth over hardpan. This soil does not support Prime Farmland and is identified as Class 4 soil.

### Cometa-Ramona Sandy Loams (142)
This map unit consists of approximately 50 percent Cometa soil and 30 percent Ramona soil, with the remainder composed of a mixture of San Joaquin sandy loam, Fiddyment loam, and Alamo clays. The Ramona soil is a very deep, well-drained soil forming in alluvium from predominantly granitic sources. The Cometa soil is discussed above. This soil supports Farmland of Statewide Importance and is identified as Class 3 soil.

### Exchequer-Rock Outcrop Complex (145)
This map unit consists of approximately 80 percent Exchequer-Rock complex and 20 percent minor components. andesitic breccia (lava cap). The Exchequer-Rock complex is composed of about 60 percent Exchequer soil and 15 percent rock outcrop. The Exchequer soil is shallow, somewhat excessively drained very stony soil with moderate permeability, medium to rapid surface runoff, and slight to high hazard of erosion. This soil does not support Prime Farmland and is identified as Class 7 soil.

### Fiddyment Loam (146)
The Fiddyment soil is moderately deep silty and clayey loam over hardpan. The soils above the hardpan tend to be silts and clays to an approximate depth of 28 inches. This soil does not support Prime Farmland and is identified as Class 4 soil.

### Fiddyment-Kaseberg Loams (147)
This map unit consists of approximately 50 percent Fiddyment soil, 30 percent Kaseberg soil, and 20 percent minor components. The Kaseberg soil is a well-drained soil that is shallow over hardpan. Fiddyment soil is discussed above. This soil does not support Prime Farmland and is identified as Class 4 soil.

### Inks-Exchequer Complex (154)
This map unit consists of approximately 40 percent Inks soil and 30 percent, and 30 percent minor components Exchequer soil. The Inks soil is shallow, well-drained cobbly soil that has moderate permeability, medium surface runoff, and a slight to moderate hazard of erosion. The Exchequer soil is shallow, somewhat excessively drained very stony soil with moderate permeability, medium to rapid surface runoff, and slight to high hazard of erosion. This soil does not support Prime Farmland and is identified as Class 6 soil.

### Kilaga Loam (162)
This map unit consists of approximately 80 percent Kilaga soil, 5 percent San Joaquin soil, 5 percent Cometa soil, 5 percent Ramona soil, 4 percent Xerofluvents, and 1 percent unnamed. Kilaga soil is a very deep, well-drained soil with slow to medium runoff, slow permeability, and is underlain by mixed alluvium. San Joaquin soil is a well-drained loam. If irrigated, this soil supports Prime Farmland and is identified as Class 2 soil. Nonirrigated land is identified as Class 3 soil.

### Ramona Sandy Loam (175)
This map unit consists of approximately 80 percent Ramona soil, 10 percent Kilaga soil, 5 percent Cometa soil, 3 percent Xerofluvents, and 2 percent unnamed. Ramona soil is a well-drained sandy loam. If irrigated, this soil supports Prime Farmland and is identified as Class 2 soil. Nonirrigated land is identified as Class 3 soil.

### San Joaquin Sandy Loam (181)
This map unit consists of approximately 80 percent San Joaquin soil, 10 percent Cometa soil, 5 percent Fiddyment loam, 3 percent unnamed, and 2 percent Alamo soil. San Joaquin soil is a well-drained claypan soil that is moderately deep over hardpan. This soil does not support Prime Farmland and is identified as Class 4 soil.

### Xerofluvents, Occasionally Flooded (193)
This map unit consists of small, moderately well-drained loamy sand to fine sandy loam in minor drainage ways and terraces. This is identified as Class 2 soil and supports Prime Farmland if irrigated.

### Xerofluvents, Frequently Flooded (194)
This map unit consists of small, somewhat poorly drained loamy alluvium in minor drainageways and terraces. This soil does not support Prime Farmland and is identified as Class 4 soil.

### Xerofluvents, Hardpan Substratum (195)
This map unit consists of small, fairly poorly drained loamy alluvium in minor drainage ways and terraces. This soil supports Farmland of Statewide Importance and is identified as Class 3 soil.

### Water (198)
This map unit consists solely of 100 percent water.

## SAP Area
Soils mapped within the net SAP area include Alamo-Fiddyment complex (104), Cometa-Fiddyment complex (141), Exchequer-Rock outcrop complex (145), Fiddyment Loam (146), Fiddyment- Kaseberg loams (147), San Joaquin sandy loam (181), and Xerofluvents, hardpan stratum (195). Of the soils mapped, the near surface soils that make up about 90 percent the SAP area belong to the Fiddyment-Kaseberg loams, Cometa-Fiddyment complex, and the Alamo-Fiddyment complex. These soils are all identified as Class 4 soil and do not support Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance.

## PRSP Area
The soils mapped within the PRSP area are Alamo-Fiddyment complex (104); Cometa-Fiddyment complex (141); Fiddyment loam (146); Fiddyment-Kaseberg loams (147); and Xerofluvents, hardpan substratum (195). Only the Xerofluvents soil is identified as Class 3 soil and supports Farmland of Statewide Importance.

## Other Supporting Infrastructure

#### Pleasant Grove Retention Facility
The soils mapped within the Pleasant Grove Retention Facility are Alamo-Fiddyment complex (104); Cometa-Fiddyment complex (141); Cometa-Ramona sandy loams (142); Fiddyment loam (146); Fiddyment-Kaseberg loams (147); San Joaquin sandy loam (181); Xerofluvents, occasionally flooded (193); Xerofluvents, frequently flooded (194); and Xerofluvents, hardpan substratum (195). Only the Cometa-Ramona sandy loams (10 percent of the area) and Xerofluvents, hardpan substratum (5 percent of the area) are Class 3 soils supporting Farmland of Statewide Importance. Xerofluvents, occasionally flooded (7 percent of the area) is identified as Class 2 soil and supports Prime Farmland if irrigated.

#### Off-Site Transportation and Utility Improvements
The areas of off-site transportation and utility improvements (as shown in Exhibit 3-3 in Chapter 3, “Project Description”) are in areas the FMMP designates as Grazing Land or Urban and Built-Up Land. These improvements would not require conversion of Farmland. Therefore, no additional information related to soils is necessary for these improvement areas.

### ADJACENT LANDS

The SAP area is located in west Placer County in the Sacramento Valley. Portions of the areas north and west of the SAP area are generally characterized by open land containing grazing, field crops, and other agricultural uses. Nearly 5,000 acres of unincorporated land north of the SAP area are planned for development and annexation to the City of Lincoln. To the north and northeast, in the City of Lincoln, former agricultural land adjacent to already developed areas is undergoing conversion to urban uses. To the east, development in the City of Rocklin is expanding along the northern edge of the city, adjacent to the SAP area and the City of Lincoln. To the south, in the City of Roseville, several specific plan areas adjacent to the SAP area are building out.

## 4.2.3 Regulatory Setting

### FEDERAL

There are no federal regulations related to agriculture that apply to the SAP or PRSP.

### STATE

#### California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

Important Farmland in California is classified and mapped according to DOC's FMMP. Authority for the FMMP comes from Government Code Section 65570(b) and PRC Section 612. Government Code Section 65570(b) requires DOC to collect or acquire information on the amount of land converted to or from agricultural use for every mapped county and to report this information to the legislature. PRC Section 612 requires DOC to prepare, update, and maintain Important Farmland series maps and other soils and land capability information.

#### California Land Conservation Act of 1965

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, or the Williamson Act, preserves agricultural and open space lands through property tax incentives and voluntary restrictive use contracts. Private landowners voluntarily restrict their land to agricultural and compatible open space uses under minimum 10-year rolling term contracts. In return, restricted parcels are assessed for property tax purposes at a rate consistent with their actual use rather than potential market value.

### LOCAL

#### Placer County General Plan

The *Placer County General Plan* was updated in May 2013 and contains the following goals and policies relevant to agricultural resources.

**GOAL 1.H:** To designate adequate agricultural land and promote development of agricultural uses to support the continued viability of Placer County's agricultural economy.

- **Policy 1.H.1:** The County shall maintain agriculturally-designated areas for agricultural uses and direct urban uses to designated urban growth areas and/or cities.
- **Policy 1.H.2:** The County shall seek to ensure that new development and public works projects do not encourage expansion of urban uses into designated agricultural areas.
- **Policy 1.H.3:** The County will maintain large-parcel agricultural zoning and prohibit the subdivision of agricultural lands into smaller parcels unless such development meets the following conditions:

a) The subdivision is part of a cluster project and such a project is permitted by the applicable zoning;

b) The project will not conflict with adjacent agricultural operations; and

c) The project will not hamper or discourage long-term agricultural operations either on site or on adjacent agricultural lands.

- **Policy 1.H.4:** The County shall allow the conversion of existing agricultural land to urban uses only within community plan or specific plan areas, within city spheres of influence, or where designated for urban development on the General Plan Land Use Diagram.

- **Policy 1.H.5:** The County shall require development within or adjacent to designated agricultural areas to incorporate design, construction, and maintenance techniques that protect agriculture and minimize conflicts with adjacent agricultural uses, except as may be determined to be necessary or inappropriate within a Specific Plan as part of the Specific Plan approval.

- **Policy 1.H.6:** The County shall require new non-agricultural development immediately adjacent to agricultural lands to be designed to provide a buffer in the form of a setback of sufficient distance to avoid land use conflicts between the agricultural uses and the nonagricultural uses, except as it may be determined to be unnecessary or inappropriate within a Specific Plan as part of the Specific Plan approval. Such setback or buffer areas shall be established by recorded easement or other instrument, subject to the approval of County Counsel. A method and mechanism (e.g., a homeowners association or easement dedication to a non-profit organization or public entity) for guaranteeing the maintenance of this land in a safe and orderly manner shall be also established at the time of development approval.

**GOAL 7.A:** To provide for the long-term conservation and use of agriculturally-designated lands.

- **Policy 7.A.1:** The County shall protect agriculturally-designated areas from conversion to non-agricultural uses.

- **Policy 7.A.3:** The County shall encourage continued and, where possible, increased agricultural activities on lands suited to agricultural uses.

- **Policy 7.A.7:** The County shall maintain agricultural lands in large parcel sizes to retain viable farming units.

- **Policy 7.A.8:** The County shall encourage infill development in urban areas as an alternative to expanding urban boundaries into agricultural areas.

- **Policy 7.A.10:** The County shall facilitate agricultural production by allowing agricultural service uses (i.e., commercial and industrial uses) to locate in agriculturally-designated areas if they relate to the primary agricultural activity in the area. The County shall use the following guidelines to analyze the suitability of a proposed agricultural service use:

  a) The use will not adversely affect agricultural production in the area;
  b) The use supports local agricultural production;
  c) It is compatible with existing agricultural activities and residential uses in the area;
  d) The use will not require the extension of sewer or water lines; and
  e) It will not result in a concentration of commercial or industrial uses in the immediate area.

**GOAL 7.B.** To minimize existing and future conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses in agriculturally-designated areas.

- **Policy 7.B.1:** The County shall identify and maintain clear boundaries between urban/suburban and agricultural areas and require land use buffers between such uses where feasible. These buffers shall occur on the parcel for which the development permit is sought and shall favor protection of the maximum amount of farmland.

- **Policy 7.B.3:** The County shall consider fencing subdivided lands adjoining agricultural uses as a potential mitigation measure to reduce conflicts between residential and agricultural uses. Factors to be considered in implementing such a measure include:

  a) The type of agricultural operation (i.e., livestock, orchard, timber, row crops);
  b) The size of the lots to be created;
  c) The presence or lack of fences in the area;
  d) Existing natural barriers that prevent trespass; and
  e) Passage of wildlife.

- **Policy 7.B.4:** The County shall continue to enforce the provisions of its *Right-to-Farm Ordinance* and of the existing state nuisance law.

Buffer Zones

In addition to the goals and policies identified above, the General Plan requires the use of buffer zones in several types of development. Although the exact dimensions of the buffer zones and specific uses allowed in buffer zones are to be determined through a specific plan, land use permit, and/or subdivision review process, buffer zones must conform to the following standards:

1. Agriculture/Timberland Buffers. These buffer zones are required to separate urban uses (particularly residential) from lands designated Agriculture or Timberland on the Land Use Diagram, where noise from machinery, dust, the use of fertilizers and chemical sprays, and other related agricultural/timber harvesting activities would create problems for nearby residential and other sensitive land uses. These buffers also serve to minimize disturbance of agricultural operations from nearby urban or suburban uses, including trespassing by nearby residents and domestic animals.

   a. Buffer Dimensions: Timber harvesting and agricultural practices associated with crop production can contribute to land use conflicts when development occurs adjacent to agricultural and timberland areas. Since production practices vary considerably by crop type, buffer distances may vary accordingly. The separations shown in the table below are required between areas designated Agriculture or Timberland and residential uses, commercial/office uses, business park uses, and some types of recreational uses; no buffers are required for other uses. The buffer widths are expressed as ranges because of the possible influences of site or project-specific characteristics.

**Minimum Agriculture/Timberland Buffer Zone Width (From Table 1-4 in the Placer County General Plan)**

| Agricultural / Timberland Use | Buffer Zone Width | |
|---|---|---|
| | Residential Exclusion Area[1] | Buffer Width Range[2] |
| Field crops | 100 feet | 100 to 400 feet |
| Irrigated orchards | 300 feet | 300 to 800 feet |
| Irrigated vegetables, rice | 400 feet | 200 to 800 feet |
| Rangeland/pasture | 50 feet | 50 to 200 feet |
| Timberland | 100 feet | 100 to 400 feet |
| Vineyard | 400 feet | 400 to 800 feet |

Notes:
1. Residential structures prohibited; non-habitable accessory structures permitted.
2. Required buffer dependent on site or project-specific characteristics as determined through County's specific plan, land use permit, and/or subdivision review process.

Source: Placer County 2013

b. Uses Allowed in Buffer: Low-density residential uses on parcels of one to 20 acres or open space uses are permitted within the buffer, although the placement of residential structures is subject to the minimum "residential exclusion areas" shown in the table above. Non-habitable accessory structures and uses may be located in the exclusion area, and may include barns, stables, garages, and corrals.

## Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program

The Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program (Placer Legacy Program) was adopted in 1998 to "protect and conserve open space and agricultural lands in Placer County." It implements the goals, policies, and programs of the *Placer County General Plan* and supplements existing open space and conservation programs. The Placer Legacy Program also "provides important resource information to guide and direct decisions on the preparation of environmental documents for compliance with CEQA and for discretionary land use entitlements being examined by County staff." The Placer Legacy Program has the following objectives:

- maintain a viable agricultural segment of the economy,
- conserve natural features necessary for access to a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities,
- retain important scenic and historic areas,
- preserve the diversity of plant and animal communities,
- protect endangered and other special-status plant and animal species,
- separate urban areas into distinct communities, and
- ensure public safety.

It is an objective of the Placer Legacy Project to create a separation between distinct urban and suburban areas in the county. Such separations could occur between the cities of Placer County, between the unincorporated area and the cities, and between unincorporated suburban/urban areas. Such buffers or separations exist in several areas of the county. For example, along the north edge of the SAP area, a permanent buffer exists between the industrial areas to the south in the county and the potential residential areas to the north in the City of Lincoln. This buffer takes two forms: the 100-year floodplain of Orchard Creek, which is designated Open Space, and a wetland mitigation bank, also along Orchard Creek, which traverses the area from east to west. These two buffers will ensure that an open space separation will remain, in perpetuity, up to 1 mile wide, between the county's industrial areas and the City of Lincoln.

## Placer County Right-to-Farm Ordinance

Placer County adopted a Right-to-Farm Ordinance (5.24.040) to reduce the loss of the County's commercial agricultural resources by limiting the circumstances under which agricultural operations may be deemed to constitute a nuisance. The portions of the ordinance relevant to this analysis of potential impacts on agricultural resources are as follows:

A. It is the declared policy of the County of Placer to preserve, protect and encourage the development and improvement of its agricultural land for the production of food and other agricultural products. When non-agricultural land uses extend into the agricultural areas, agricultural operations often become the subject of nuisance suits. As a result, agricultural operations are sometimes forced to cease or are substantially curtailed. Others may be discouraged from making investments in agricultural improvements. It is the purpose of this section to reduce the loss to the County of its commercial agricultural resources by limiting the circumstances under which agricultural operations may be deemed to constitute a nuisance.

B. No agricultural activity, operation, or facility, or appurtenances thereof, conducted or maintained for commercial purposes, and in a manner consistent with proper and accepted customs and standards, as established and followed by similar agricultural operations, shall be or become a nuisance, private or public, due to any changed condition in or about the locality, after the same has been in operation for more than one year if it was not a nuisance at the time it began.

E. Each prospective buyer of property in unincorporated Placer County shall be informed by the seller or his/her authorized agent of the Right-to-Farm Ordinance. The seller or his/her authorized agent will keep on file a disclosure statement signed by the buyer with the escrow process.

F. Whenever a building designated for residential occupancy is to be located on property in the unincorporated area of Placer County, the owners of the property, or their authorized agent, shall acknowledge receipt of the Right-to-Farm Ordinance. (Ord. 4983-B, 1999: prior code § 5.715)

### Placer County Conservation Plan Process

The County is developing the Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP) as a County-proposed strategy to coordinate and streamline the state and federal natural resources regulatory permitting processes. The proposed PCCP would be a habitat conservation plan under Section 10 of the federal Endangered Species Act and a natural communities conservation plan under the California Natural Community Conservation Planning Act. Additional details regarding the PCCP can be found in Section 4.4, "Biological Resources," of this Draft EIR.

## 4.2.4 Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation

### STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Under the Placer County CEQA Checklist and Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, the project would result in a potentially significant impact on agricultural resources if it would:

- convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide or Local Importance (collectively, Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the FMMP of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use;
- conflict with General Plan or other policies regarding land use buffers for agricultural operations;
- conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract or a Right-to-Farm Policy; or
- involve other changes in the existing environment, which, because of their location or nature, could result in conversion of Important Farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forestland to nonforest use.

### METHODS AND APPROACH

Evaluation of potential agricultural impacts of the project was based on review of the project description and review of documents pertaining to the project area, including the *Placer County General Plan* and FMMP Important Farmlands data. In determining the level of significance, this analysis assumes that the project would comply with relevant state and local ordinances and regulations, as well as the adopted policies presented below.

### PROPOSED SUNSET AREA PLAN GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

The SAP includes the following goals and policies related to agricultural resources:

**GOAL LU/ED-11:** To support and protect existing uses in areas not well-positioned for near-term conversion to urban uses.

- **Policy LU/ED-11.1: Continuing Agricultural Operations.** The County supports the continuing operation of agricultural uses in areas designated Urban Reserve on the Land Use Diagram.

- **Policy LU/ED-11.2: Urban Reserve Designation.** The County shall prepare or require the preparation of plans for urban uses in advance of redesignation of Urban Reserve land to urban designations.

- **Policy LU/ED-11.3: Agricultural Buffer.** The County shall require new non-agricultural development immediately adjacent to agricultural lands to be designed to provide a buffer in the form of a setback of 50 feet to avoid land use conflicts between the agricultural uses and the nonagricultural uses.

## IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

### Impact 4.2-1: Conversion of Farmland to a nonagricultural use

Implementation of the project would require conversion of Farmland (Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide or Local Importance, or Unique Farmland) to nonagricultural use. This impact would be **significant**.

#### Net SAP Area

The Placer County CEQA Checklist refers to "Prime Farmland," "Unique Farmland," "Farmland of Statewide Importance," and "Farmland of Local Importance" collectively as "Farmland," the conversion of which may be considered significant.

In the past, the net SAP area has been used for agricultural production (e.g., row crops, irrigated and nonirrigated pastureland). As discussed above, the net SAP area includes approximately 10 acres of Prime Farmland, approximately 180 acres of Unique Farmland, and approximately 3,830 acres of Farmland of Local Importance for a total of 4,020 acres of Farmland, and of this total, not all areas are currently farmed. Most of the net SAP area remains undeveloped and is used for cattle grazing.

As described in Chapter 3, "Project Description," the proposed SAP identifies the following land uses for the project area: general commercial, entertainment mixed-use, business park, innovation center, eco-industrial, light industrial, public facility, preserve/mitigation reserve, and urban reserve. The 10 acres of Prime Farmland, located in the northern portion of the SAP area, is designated as Reserve Acquisition Area. Under the SAP, this area would be designated as Preserve/Mitigation Reserve (P/MR). Typical uses permitted under the P/MR designation are mitigation banks, natural resource conservation areas, and necessary public utility and safety facilities. Because the 10 acres of Prime Farmland is designated as a reserve, implementation of the SAP would not constitute a change in use to nonagricultural land for this classification.

For the remaining 4,010 acres of Farmland, the proposed SAP identifies the following land uses for the net SAP area: general commercial, entertainment mixed-use, business park, innovation center, eco-industrial, light industrial, public facility, and urban reserve. Typical uses include retail stores and restaurants, entertainment venues, professional offices, light industrial and laboratories, manufacturing, government offices, and residential uses ancillary to or supportive of employment uses. This change to a nonagricultural use would be a significant impact.

#### PRSP Area

The PRSP area contains approximately 1,985 acres of Farmland of Local Importance. The proposed PRSP land use map includes residential, commercial and employment, parks and recreation, and public facilities uses. This change to a nonagricultural use would be a significant impact.

#### Other Supporting Infrastructure

##### Pleasant Grove Retention Facility

The Pleasant Grove Retention Facility includes approximately 20 acres of Prime Farmland, approximately 260 acres of Unique Farmland, and approximately 1,010 acres of Farmland of Local Importance for a total of 1,290 acres of Farmland. Implementation of this retention facility would not require conversion of the entire 1,290 acres to nonagricultural use. Rather, as shown in Exhibit 4.2-2, only part of the Pleasant Grove Retention Facility property would be disturbed by construction of the facility. However, the construction of a

retention facility would disaggregate the remaining agricultural lands such that some areas may not be able to support a viable agricultural operation. Therefore, meaningful quantification of affected Farmland is not possible. Because Farmland would be converted, however, this impact would be significant.

#### Off-Site Transportation and Utility Improvements

The areas of off-site transportation and utility improvements are in areas that the FMMP designated Grazing Land and Urban Built-Up Land. None of the areas are located on lands classified as Farmland. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

#### Conclusion

The project could result in the total conversion of up to 7,295 acres of Farmland (although the actual total would likely be less because of the fact that some areas of the Pleasant Grove Retention Facility property would likely continue to be farmed). Direct conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Local Importance to nonagricultural urban uses in the project area would be a **significant** impact.

## Mitigation Measures

### Mitigation Measure 4.2-1a: Preserve Farmland (Net SAP Area and PRSP Area)

Farmland, as defined under the Placer County CEQA Checklist, shall be preserved in Placer County at a minimum ratio of 1:1, or in accordance with the PCCP at such time it is adopted, for each acre of Farmland converted to nonagricultural use. This is to be accomplished through the approval and implementation of a series of Farmland preservation management plans that address management of specific properties to be preserved for mitigation of converted Farmland. According to the requirements specified below, Farmland preservation management plans for individual preserve sites will accompany each proposed development project, or group of projects, in the net SAP and PRSP areas.

No additional mitigation to address the loss of Farmland is required, as long as a substantial portion (as determined by the planning director in consultation with the County agricultural commissioner) of the mitigation lands acquired is undeveloped. Such lands must also have an NRCS soils classification or DOC categorization of the same or greater value than Farmland converted to nonagricultural uses. Mitigation lands will be protected by agricultural conservation easements containing restrictive encumbrances in a form deemed acceptable to and approved by the County. Farmland preserved for the purpose of habitat mitigation may be counted toward the Farmland mitigation measure if the preserved land has the same or better NRCS or DOC classification as the Farmland being converted to nonagricultural use.

### Mitigation Measure 4.2-1b: Preserve Farmland (Pleasant Grove Retention Facility)

The County shall coordinate with the City of Roseville in an effort to preserve Farmland in Placer County at a ratio of 1.35:1 for each acre of Farmland converted to nonagricultural use. This could be accomplished through the approval and implementation of a series of Farmland preservation management plans that address management of specific properties to be preserved for mitigation of converted Farmland. No additional mitigation to address the loss of Farmland would be required beyond the 1.35:1 requirement noted above as long as a substantial portion, as determined by the City's planning director, in consultation with the County agricultural commissioner, of the mitigation lands acquired is undeveloped and has an NRCS soils classification or DOC categorization of the same or greater value than Farmland converted to nonagricultural uses on the Pleasant Grove Retention Facility property. Mitigation lands would be protected by agricultural conservation easements containing restrictive encumbrances in a form deemed acceptable to and approved by the City. Farmland preserved for the purpose of habitat mitigation may be counted toward the Farmland mitigation measure if the preserved land has the same or better NRCS or DOC classification as the Farmland being converted to nonagricultural use.

#### Significance after Mitigation

Although the conservation easements identified for Mitigation Measures 4.2-1a and 4.2-1b could partially offset the direct conversion of Farmland in the project area, this approach would not create new Farmland to

replace Farmland that would be lost, and no additional mitigation is feasible. Therefore, the impact would be **significant and unavoidable.** In addition, the City of Roseville would be the project proponent and CEQA lead agency for implementation of the off-site Pleasant Grove Retention Facility. Therefore, implementation of this mitigation measure could not be enforced by the County.

## Impact 4.2-2: Conflict with existing Williamson Act contracts

The SAP area contains 716 acres under Williamson Act contract, currently preserved as the Orchard Creek Conservation Bank. This area would not be developed under the SAP. Therefore, this impact would be **less than significant**.

### Net SAP Area

The net SAP area contains 716 acres of land under Williamson Act contract. As shown in Exhibit 4.2-1, these parcels are located in the northeastern corner of the net SAP area. The area is currently preserved as permanent open space in the Orchard Creek Conservation Bank.

Under the SAP, the Orchard Creek Conservation Bank (under Williamson Act contract) would be designated Preserve/Mitigation Reserve (P/MR). The P/MR designation covers three existing reserves—Orchard Creek Conservation Bank, Warm Springs Mitigation Bank, and Moore Ranch Conservancy—as well as other land suitable for future reserves and mitigation banks. The area under a Williamson Act contract is preserved as a conservation bank, so the designation of the area as a preserve under the SAP would not change the use of the land. Because the Williamson Act allows for agricultural use, compatible open space uses, and agricultural preserves, maintaining the 716 acres in a preserve would be a less-than-significant impact.

### PRSP Area

The PRSP area contains no lands under Williamson Act contract; therefore, there would be no impact.

### Other Supporting Infrastructure

#### Pleasant Grove Retention Facility

Similar to the PRSP area, the Pleasant Grove Retention Facility area contains no lands under Williamson Act contract; therefore, there would be no impact.

#### Off-Site Transportation and Utility Improvements

The areas of off-site transportation and utility improvements are located primarily in the eastern portion of the net SAP area or in areas that are already developed and do not contain any lands under Williamson Act contract. Therefore, there would be no impact.

### Conclusion

Implementation of the project would not require cancellation of any Williamson Act contracts. The 716 acres currently under contract would be maintained as permanent open space under the P/MR designation, which does not allow for development. This impact would be **less than significant**.

## Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

## Impact 4.2-3: Indirect conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use, or conflict with land use buffers for agricultural operations

Implementation of the project would result in new urban land uses that may impair adjacent agricultural activities. The *Placer County General Plan* requires a buffer between agricultural and nonagricultural uses. The SAP also includes a proposed agricultural buffer policy. In addition, agricultural land adjacent to the PRSP area is currently planned for development. Therefore, the impact would be **less than significant**.

Net SAP Area

The unincorporated area west of the net SAP area is primarily land used mostly for grazing. There are no large-scale agricultural operations (e.g., dairies, processing facilities, pens with large concentration of animals, agricultural equipment and material storage sites) in or adjacent to the net SAP area.

Implementing the project would divide the project area into 9 zoning districts, one of which includes the PRSP. The zoning districts in the net SAP area are Service Commercial, Entertainment Mixed Use, Business Professional, Innovation Center, Eco-Industrial, Light Industrial, Industrial Mixed Use, Farm- Development Reserve, and Open Space. These districts frame the broader land uses that are allowed within the net SAP. The western edges of the Innovation Center, Farm-Development Reserve, and Open Space districts would abut agricultural uses. Because the net SAP area would be developed over a long period, it is also expected that new urban uses would be adjacent to existing agricultural uses in the net SAP area.

*Placer County General Plan* Goal 7.B provides that it is a goal of the County to "minimize existing and future conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses in agriculturally-designated areas." Following Goal 7.B are several policies, including 7.B.4, that support the County's Right-to-Farm Ordinance and state nuisance laws. Agricultural buffers are also defined under the General Plan as those that are intended to separate potentially incompatible uses so that the legitimate use of land for one purpose does not detrimentally affect the use of another. The SAP also includes proposed Policy LU/ED-11.3, which requires non-agricultural development immediately adjacent to agricultural lands to be designed to provide a buffer in the form of a setback of 50 feet to avoid land use conflicts between the agricultural uses and nonagricultural uses.

Most of the area immediately west of the SAP area is used for grazing and is not actively cultivated. For grazing land or pastureland, the *Placer County General Plan* establishes a 50- to 200-foot-wide buffer. The setback provided by the future Dowd Road, a four-lane arterial (with an approximately 90-foot-wide right-of-way), would satisfy this buffer requirement for most of the western border of the net SAP area. The portion of the net SAP area not bounded by the future Dowd Road, the Innovation Center District, would require establishment of a buffer in accordance with General Plan policies. Development of new urban uses in the net SAP area would also be subject to the buffer requirements of the General Plan, which would avoid conflict with existing agricultural uses in the net SAP area. This impact would be less than significant.

PRSP Area

The proposed PRSP land use map includes residential, commercial and employment, university, parks and recreation, and public facilities uses. These uses could impair adjacent agricultural uses and result in the conversion of agricultural land into nonagricultural uses. The PRSP area is bordered to the east by commercial and industrial uses, to the south by existing development in the City of Roseville and vacant land, to the west by irrigated pastureland, and to the north by grazing land and the Western Regional Sanitary Landfill.

The grazing and irrigated pastureland west of the PRSP area will be developed under the *Amoruso Ranch Specific Plan*, which was adopted by the Roseville City Council on June 15, 2016. Therefore, the current agricultural land located west of the PRSP area will be developed as nonagricultural uses. A City of Roseville open space preserve is located immediately adjacent to the southwestern boundary of the PRSP area and may continue to be used as grazing land according to the City's Open Space Preserve Overarching Management Plan. The grazing area to the north is in the proposed net SAP area. Development under the PRSP would likely occur before development of the net SAP area, which would result in new urban land uses that may impair existing adjacent agricultural activities. However, because the PRSP would be subject to the agriculture buffer requirements of the General Plan and SAP, conflict with existing agricultural uses would be avoided, and the impact would be less than significant.

#### Other Supporting Infrastructure

##### Pleasant Grove Retention Facility

The Pleasant Grove Retention Facility has been approved by the City of Roseville. To accommodate project volumetric stormwater retention, the facility would need to be modified to accommodate volumetric retention from the net SAP and PRSP areas. Development of the Pleasant Grove Retention Facility would not result in land use that would be incompatible with agricultural uses. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant. The City of Roseville has a farmer under contract, and the Al Johnson Wildlife Area is expected to continue compatible agricultural uses into the future.

##### Off-Site Transportation and Utility Improvements

The impact associated with implementing off-site transportation and utility improvements would be the same as that identified above for the net SAP and PRSP areas. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

#### Conclusion

Implementation of the project would result in new urban land uses adjacent to existing grazing land. The *Placer County General Plan* requires a buffer between agricultural and nonagricultural uses. The SAP also includes a proposed agricultural buffer policy that would require nonagricultural development to provide a 50-foot setback from agricultural lands. In addition, some agricultural areas adjacent to the PRSP area are planned to be developed as nonagricultural uses. Therefore, implementing the project would not result in conversion of agricultural land to nonagricultural use, and this impact would be **less than significant**.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The cumulative context for agricultural impacts is western Placer County, southeastern Sutter County, and northern Sacramento County. It is generally bounded by the City of Sacramento, I-80, and SRs 99 and 65. Because conflicts with active Williamson Act contracts could occur only in the net SAP area, there would be no cumulative impacts related to conflicts with land subject to Williamson Act contracts.

### Cumulative Impact 4.2-4: Cumulative conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use

Placer County contains a total of 125,044 acres of Farmland (7,431 acres of Prime Farmland, 4,097 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, 18,784 acres of Unique Farmland, and 94,732 acres of Farmland of Local Importance) (DOC 2016). The undeveloped portion of west Placer County is largely composed of Important Farmland, as defined by DOC. Most of the active agricultural acreage is used for grazing, but crops are cultivated in the area. Development in the cities of Roseville, Rocklin, and Lincoln, as well as the unincorporated area of Placer County, has converted grazing and other agricultural lands to urban uses. Thousands of acres of Farmland are approved or proposed for development, including Farmland in the *Regional University Specific Plan*, the *Placer Vineyards Specific Plan*, the *Village 5 Specific Plan*, the *Creekview Specific Plan*, Lincoln Crossing, and the *Amoruso Ranch Specific Plan*. Development of approved projects as detailed in Table 4.0-2 would develop over 50,000 acres in the region. While not all of that acreage is Farmland, there is a substantial amount of Farmland across the various projects. For example, development of the *Regional University Specific Plan*, *Placer Vineyards Specific Plan*, and *Village 5 Specific Plan* would result in the conversion of approximately 1,207.5, 951, and 1,927 acres of Farmland, respectively. The *Sutter County General Plan* concluded that approximately 9,626 acres of Sutter County's Important Farmland, or 3.3 percent, could be lost because of future development associated with buildout of the plan. The *Sacramento County General Plan* identified approximately 8,645 acres of Farmland that could be converted by 2030. The regional conversion of Important Farmland by urban development is a significant cumulative impact.

The project would result in the conversion of up to 7,295 acres of Farmland (although the actual total would likely be less because of the fact that some areas of the Pleasant Grove Retention Facility property would likely continue to be farmed). The project would result in the conversion of almost 6 percent of Placer County's total Farmland. This is a considerable contribution to the significant cumulative impact associated with overall Farmland conversion in the region. This impact would be **significant and unavoidable**.