

3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

This section of the EIR addresses the potential for loss or conversion of agricultural uses with implementation of the West Village Expansion of the 2018 LRDP, as well as overall effects to agriculture from development.

Comments received on the NOP expressed concern with preservation of open space and cumulative impacts to land outside of campus. As they pertain to implementation of the West Village Expansion component of the 2018 LRDP, these impacts are described and addressed within this section.

3.2.1 Regulatory Setting

Plans, policies, regulations, and laws (applicable to and/or considered for the project) are provided in Volume 1 of this EIR. As the regulatory setting provided in Volume 1 considers potential development, including the project, within the entirety of the UC Davis campus as envisioned through the 2018 LRDP, no additional regulatory setting is provided for the West Village Expansion component.

3.2.2 Environmental Setting

Section 3.2, “Agriculture and Forestry Resources,” in Volume 1 of this EIR, presents the setting related to agriculture and forestry resources for the entire UC Davis campus, including the West Village site.

The 48-acre West Village Expansion site is located within the west campus of UC Davis in Yolo County and consists of farmland under dry agricultural production and open space. The West Village Expansion site is characterized by relatively flat topography and has supported agricultural operations since the early 1900s. As described in Chapter 2, “Project Description,” the West Village Expansion site is currently used for agriculture by the UC Davis Department of Agronomy, Foundation Plant Services, and the Department of Agricultural Engineering.

The West Village Expansion site is designated primarily as Teaching & Research Fields by UC Davis and Prime Farmland under the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP). The proposed 20-acre remote parking area is designated as Grazing Area under the FMMP. This area is highly disturbed open space that has not been used for agricultural purposes for more than 10 years, based on review of aerial imagery.

3.2.3 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Refer to Section 3.2, “Agriculture and Forestry Resources,” in Volume 1 of this EIR for a discussion of applicable Significance Criteria.

ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

See Section 3.2, “Agriculture and Forestry Resources,” in Volume 1 of this EIR for analytical methods relative to agricultural resources.

ISSUES NOT EVALUATED FURTHER

The following impacts were identified as part of the analysis of the 2018 LRDP, and are either (1) adequately evaluated at the program level of analysis of the 2018 LRDP, or (2) not applicable to the West Village Expansion component.

Williamson Act Contracts

Due to its tax-exempt status, lands within UC Davis are not eligible for contracts pursuant to the Williamson Act, and as such, the West Village Expansion site and remote parking area are not under Williamson Act contract. In addition, adjacent properties are not under Williamson Act contract; therefore, no impacts would occur to designated Williamson Act lands. No further project-level analysis of this impact is required.

Forestry Resources

The West Village Expansion site, remote parking area, and surrounding land uses are not designated as forest or timber-production lands, therefore, no forestry resources that could be affected by project implementation. Therefore, no further project-level analysis of this impact is required.

PROJECT-SPECIFIC IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact 3.2-1: Convert agricultural uses, including lands designated as Important Farmlands, to non-agricultural use or involve changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of Important Farmland to non-agricultural use.

Development of the West Village Expansion would result in conversion of Important Farmland to non-agricultural uses. Because the West Village Expansion would result in a conversion of Important Farmland, this impact is considered **significant**.

To determine the total loss of agricultural uses and important farmland through the development at West Village Expansion site, changes to existing land uses were compared to the California Department of Conservation’s Important Farmlands Map. The West Village Expansion site is designated as Teaching & Research Fields under the 2003 LRDP, and Prime Farmland under the FMMP. The proposed 20-acre remote parking area is designated as Grazing Land under the FMMP, and therefore is not considered Important Farmland. Development of the proposed West Village Expansion with student housing would result in conversion of approximately 48 acres to non-agricultural use within the UC Davis west campus. The Prime Farmland that would be converted by the West Village Expansion is included in the acreage reported and analyzed as part of the 2018 LRDP’s programmatic analysis (Impact 3.2-1 in Section 3.2, “Agriculture and Forestry Resources,” in Volume 1). Much of the new development under the 2018 LRDP, including the West Village Expansion component, would occur near existing developed areas and would be clustered; however, implementation of the West Village Expansion would entail the expansion of the previously developed West Village and would result in the conversion of agricultural lands, including Important Farmland, to non-agricultural lands. As a result, impacts would be **significant**.

WVE Mitigation Measure 3.2-1: Preservation of other campus agricultural land.

Implement 2018 LRDP Mitigation 3.2-1.

Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of 2018 LRDP Mitigation Measure 3.2-1, as proposed in Volume 1, would preserve approximately 166 acres of Important Farmland elsewhere within UC Davis property, of which 48 acres would be associated with the West Village Expansion component. Though Important Farmland would be preserved, this mitigation would only serve as prevention of future loss and conversion of agricultural uses. This mitigation would not replace any prime farmland lost or converted as a result of development at West Village. As a result, a net loss in Important Farmland would still occur with implementation of the mitigation measure and the project's impacts would be **significant and unavoidable**.

Impact 3.2-2: Result in other loss or conversion of existing agricultural uses.

Development of the West Village Expansion could result in changes to existing agricultural uses. However, because the West Village Expansion is located near existing urban areas and would include an open space buffer between remaining agricultural land and the proposed development, it is unlikely that conversion of land outside of UC Davis campus boundaries would occur. This impact is considered **less than significant**.

The West Village Expansion of the 2018 LRDP would result in the direct conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses (as evaluated above in Impact 3.2-1), but also has the potential to indirectly result in conversion of agricultural lands. Concern stems from the possibility that land use changes occurring within the UC Davis campus could result in development pressures or land use conflicts that may cause additional conversion of agricultural uses to non-agricultural uses both on campus or surrounding lands outside of campus.

West Village is surrounded by existing urban areas to the north and east with agricultural uses to the south and west. As discussed in Volume 1, objectives of the 2018 LRDP include compact and clustered new development. The proposed West Village Expansion would be adjacent to existing urban uses and two sides and would, as part of project design, include a buffer, at a minimum of 100 feet, between residential areas and agricultural areas surrounding the proposed West Village Expansion.

Agricultural uses proposed or redesignated through the West Village Expansion component, including the remote parking area, are not expected to apply pressures or cause land use conflicts with adjacent uses to the UC Davis campus, simply because neighboring areas are currently developed and include existing urban uses. As discussed in Volume 1, undeveloped agricultural areas adjacent to UC Davis that are not currently under consideration for development under the 2018 LRDP, are located in unincorporated Yolo and Solano counties.

Because land surrounding the West Village Expansion site and remote parking area, outside of campus jurisdiction, consists of developed, urban uses, it is unlikely that conversion or loss of agricultural uses would occur. For these reasons, this impact is considered to be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are necessary.

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