

3.2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

This section evaluates the potential agricultural resources impacts associated with the adoption and implementation of the proposed Project. This section describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions; identifies criteria used to determine impact significance; provides an analysis of the potential agricultural resources impacts; and identifies proposed General Plan 2045 goals and policies that would minimize potentially significant impacts.

This analysis is based in part on the Livermore General Plan Update Existing Conditions Report prepared in March 2022 (City of Livermore 2022). Where more recent data is available at the time of preparation of this Draft EIR, the analysis provided herein reflects such updated information.

As summarized in Chapter 3, *Environmental Analysis*, concerns related to the need for mitigation for agricultural lands that are converted to nonagricultural uses were provided during the EIR scoping period.

Because the EIR Study Area does not contain any national- or State-designated forestland and the woodland/forest communities in Livermore do not qualify as 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)), the significance thresholds outlined in Appendix G, *Environmental Checklist Form*, of the CEQA Guidelines related to forestry resources are not evaluated in this EIR (California Department of Forestry and Fire Department 2026).

3.2.1 Regulatory Framework

STATE

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The California Natural Resources Agency is charged with restoring, protecting, and maintaining the State's natural, cultural, and historical resources. The California Natural Resources Agency's Department of Conservation (DOC) provides technical services and information to promote informed land-use decisions and sound management of the State's natural resources. The DOC manages the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), which supports agriculture throughout California by developing maps and statistical data for analyzing land use impacts to farmland. Every two years, the FMMP publishes a field report for each county in the state. FMMP released the most recent field report for Alameda County in 2022. The Alameda County Important Farmland Map categorizes land by agricultural production potential, according to the following classifications (DOC 2025a):

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- **Prime Farmland** has the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long-term agricultural production. Prime farmland has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agriculture production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.
- **Farmland of Statewide Importance** is similar to Prime Farmland, but with minor shortcomings, such as steeper slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.
- **Unique Farmland** consists of lesser-quality soils used for the production of the State’s leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Land must have been farmed at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.
- **Farmland of Local Importance** consists of all farmable land not meeting the definitions of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland. This includes land that is or has been used for irrigated pasture, dryland farming, confined livestock or dairy facilities, aquaculture, poultry facilities, and dry grazing. It also includes soils previously designated by soil characteristics as prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, and unique farmland that has since become idle.
- **Grazing Land** is the land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock.
- **Urban and Built-Up Land** is occupied by structures with a building density of at least one unit per 1.5 acres, or approximately six structures to a 10-acre parcel. Common examples include residential structures, industrial structures, commercial structures, institutional facilities, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment structures, and water-control structures.
- **Other Land** is land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low-density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry, or aquaculture facilities; strip mines; borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than 40 acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as “other” land.
- **Water** is used to describe perennial water bodies with an extent of at least 40 acres.

Williamson Act

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, better known as the Williamson Act, conserves agricultural and open space lands through property tax incentives and voluntary restrictive land use contracts administered by local governments under State regulations. Private landowners voluntarily restrict their land to agricultural and compatible open space uses under minimum 10-year rolling term contracts, with counties and cities also acting voluntarily. In return, restricted parcels are assessed for property tax purposes at a rate consistent with their actual use, rather than potential market value. Nonrenewal status is applied to Williamson Act

contracts that are within the nine-year termination process, during which the annual tax assessment for the property gradually increases. Alameda County implements the Williamson Act program through the Alameda County Agricultural Preserve Program.

REGIONAL

Alameda County East County Area Plan

The East County Area Plan (ECAP) outlines goals, policies, and programs to conserve natural resources for the eastern portion of Alameda County while ensuring adequate development to accommodate the growing population (Alameda County 2000). The ECAP covers the area surrounding the EIR Study Area; the EIR Study Area is within the ECAP. First adopted in 1994 as a component of the Alameda County General Plan, the passage of Measure D in November 2000 initiated amendments to the ECAP that were subsequently included by adoption in November 2000 with the passage of the Measure D ballot measure. The amendment to the ECAP in November 2000 revised the ECAP to include the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and to provide specific direction to preserve viticulture and other cultivated agricultural land surrounding the Livermore City Limit.

Measure D

Measure D, an initiative passed by Alameda County voters in November 2000, established a County UGB that generally coincides with existing City boundaries and/or City Limit. Measure D required that the County redesignate undeveloped lands outside the UGB from urban development or “Urban Reserve” to agricultural and open space uses. Any new urban development in Alameda County will be directed to areas within the UGB.

With the passage of Measure D, the North Livermore Intensive Agriculture Area was also established, enabling a minimum parcel size of 20 acres per unit, provided that these parcels be used primarily for cultivated agriculture, and that achievement of numerous economic and environmental criteria pertaining to cultivated agriculture could be demonstrated. Measure D also created the following series of new requirements that must be met before any new development parcels are created in the North Livermore Intensive Agriculture Zone:

- The County Board of Supervisors must find that an adequate, sustainable, and safe supply of water that exists for both agriculture and other new uses.
- Parcel owners must agree to transfer to a land trust a land conservation easement that bars development not included in the initiative.
- Agricultural land must be cultivated for a minimum time period.
- The County is to establish a trail system in intensive agricultural zones for public education purposes.
- Commercial uses are to be limited to agriculture-enhancing uses.

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- Irrigation uses in the area will not diminish the quality of the drinking water supply.
- Customary development fees must be paid.

These conditions, combined with the agricultural and resource management designations applied in North Livermore, effectively limit the potential for new residential uses in North Livermore under County jurisdiction. For the South Livermore Valley, Measure D confines the expansion of residential uses within the South Livermore UGB. These areas include the agricultural land directly to the south of the Livermore City Limit.

Alameda County Municipal Code

The Alameda County Municipal Code (ACMC) establishes Agricultural (A) districts in Chapter 17.06, *A Districts*, to conserve and protect existing agricultural uses, and to provide space for and encourage such uses in places where more intensive development is not desirable. This chapter of the Alameda County Municipal Code outlines the permitted and conditional uses and site development review requirements within this zoning district.

Alameda County Agricultural Preserve Program

The Alameda County Agricultural Preserve Program, enacted under the Williamson Act, is meant to preserve and protect agricultural and open space lands for the production of food and fiber, as well as for limited types of open space that have scenic and habitat value. The program creates an arrangement whereby private landowners contract with the County to voluntarily restrict their land to agricultural and compatible open space land uses for a 10-year term. The contract gives property tax relief to the landowner in exchange for maintaining their land with agricultural production activities. Williamson Act contracts are automatically renewed unless a landowner files a Notice of Non-Renewal. After filing a Notice of Non-Renewal, the property owner must not convert the land to nonagricultural uses for a period of 10 years (Alameda County 2011).

Tri-Valley Conservancy Land Trust

Tri-Valley Conservancy is an accredited land trust protecting and advocating for agricultural land and open space around the EIR Study Area. The Tri-Valley Conservancy's mission is to promote economically sustainable vineyards and orchards and increase permanently protected biologically diverse open spaces. The Tri-Valley Conservancy primarily acts through designation of conservation easements to protect a land's valuable natural resources. Tri-Valley Conservancy works with willing landowners to acquire property development rights through the legal arrangement of a conservation easement, and, once the land is preserved, works with landowners to care for the land. These conservation easements provide landowners with flexible, voluntary alternatives to subdividing or developing their property. To date, the Tri-Valley Conservancy has helped preserve thousands of acres of open space for agriculture and parks (City of Livermore 2022).

South Livermore Valley Area Plan

The South Livermore Valley Area Plan (SLVAP) is administered by Alameda County and regulates the development of land immediately south of the city of Livermore between the City Limit and the southern ridgeland (Alameda County 1993). It accomplishes this by establishing a framework of land use coordination between Alameda County and the Cities of Livermore and Pleasanton with the explicit goal to prioritize and promote the area as a unique and historic wine region by protecting its rural and scenic qualities, discouraging urban development, and maintaining and expanding cultivated agricultural use in the area. It includes prescriptive policies to mitigate the loss of agricultural land. The South Livermore Valley Specific Plan (SLVSP) is administered by the City of Livermore and functions as the city's component of the SLVAP for protecting the valley.

LOCAL

Livermore Municipal Code

The Livermore Municipal Code (LMC) includes various directives to minimize adverse impacts to agricultural resources. The LMC is organized by title, chapter, section, and, in some cases, articles. Most provisions related to agricultural resources are in Title 3, *Revenue and Finance*, and Title 8, *Health and Safety*, as follows:

- **Chapter 3.27, *Transferrable Development Credits In-Lieu Fees***, establishes a revenue fund paid by residential developers in Transferrable Development Credit (TDC)-designated areas in exchange for new residential land use designations or increases in density. The in-lieu fees finance open space acquisition in fee title or conservation easement for permanent protection of agriculture and other open space lands in the north Livermore area. The TDCs implement provisions of the North Livermore UGB Initiative.
- **Chapter 8.16, *Right to Farm***, serves to protect agricultural land uses and designations identified in the General Plan and zoning map from conflicts with nonagricultural land uses that may result in financial hardship to agricultural operators or the termination of their operation. This chapter also promotes harmony between agricultural and residential land uses through the advising of purchasers and residents of property near agricultural operations of the inherent potential inconveniences associated with such purchase or residence, including, but not limited to, sounds, odors, dust, and chemicals.

Livermore Development Code

The City of Livermore regulates land use and design through the Livermore Development Code (LDC), an alternative approach to zoning that reinforces walkable, sustainable mixed-use environments and development, and builds upon community character. Section 3.03.170, *Open Space (OS) Zone*, establishes the Open Space (OS) zone, as well as sub-zones for Agriculture (OS-A), Rural Preservation (OS-R), and Flood Plain (OS-F). Section 3.04.040, *Planned Development/Agriculture (PD-AG)*, states that this zone is applied to areas of the city to

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preserve and promote agriculture and viticulture uses in locations suitable for cultivated agriculture and to protect sensitive or unique environmental or land characteristics. These zones are designated to land where one or more of the following criteria are met:

- Represents the actual use of the land;
- Establishes the best use of the land;
- Indicates land intended by the City not be converted to urban use in the foreseeable future;
- Indicates land having resources found to be in the public interest to preserve; or
- Indicates land found not suitable for urban use due to natural or other hazards associated with the land.

Section 3.04.050, *South Livermore Valley/Agriculture (SLV-AG) Zone*, implements the Agriculture Viticulture General Plan designation. The purpose of this zone is to protect existing viticultural and cultured agricultural uses and provide space for and encourage such uses in places where more intensive development is not desirable or necessary for the general welfare. This zone is used in areas where the urban designation of the SLVSP is not applicable. This zone is designated to land that reflects the criteria above as well as land found inappropriate for the density bonus provisions of the Planned Development/Agriculture (PD-AG) zone.

Urban Growth Boundary Initiatives

The South Livermore UGB Initiative, passed by local voters in March 2000, established the UGB around the southern edge of the City Limit. The South Livermore UGB focuses on protecting prime viticultural and orchard lands and promotion of the wine industry.

In December 2002, the City Council passed the North Livermore UGB Initiative, which completed the UGB around the northern edge of the City Limit. The North Livermore UGB aims to preserve agricultural lands and open space to maintain the viability of farming and ranching operations in North Livermore.

South Livermore Valley Specific Plan

The SLVSP is the City of Livermore's component of Alameda County's SLVAP for protecting the agricultural area and open space of the South Livermore Valley (City of Livermore 2023). Together, the SLVSP and SLVAP provide policies and standards for managing future growth and development of approximately 1,891 acres within the South Livermore Valley. It is the culmination of a collaborative planning effort between the County of Alameda, the Cities of Livermore and Pleasanton, winegrowers, vineyard owners, and associated parties to conserve the agricultural activities and natural landscape that contribute to the valley's rural, wine country character. It allows for limited and focused residential and commercial development in the valley and provides design standards for ensuring new development maintains the existing, small-scale aesthetic of the area.

3.2.2 Existing Conditions

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The most prevalent type of farmland in Alameda County in 2023 are field crops and fruit and nut crops (Alameda County 2024). Field crops total approximately 138,000 harvested acres, consisting of primarily range and pastureland, hay, beans, corn, industrial hems, hops, and other field crops. Fruit and nut crops total approximately 5,202 bearing acres, largely made up of red and white wine grapes, along with miscellaneous fruits and nuts, such as olives, walnuts, pistachios, pomegranates, almonds, and avocados. Vegetable crops total approximately 147 harvested acres, including broccoli, cabbage, corn, leaf lettuce, greens, pumpkins, tomatoes, and squash. Nursery products, including ornamental trees and shrubs, along with bedding plants, cut flowers, and vegetables, total approximately 124 harvested acres. Alameda County also reported approximately 13,200 cattle and calves and an unknown number of sheep, pigs, goats, bee pollination, and apiary products.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN LIVERMORE

Approximately 46 percent of land in the EIR Study Area is set aside for open space, agriculture, and recreational uses, providing a greenbelt around the urbanized area and preserving the vineyards and agricultural lands. The agricultural heritage of the EIR Study Area is an anchor of the tourism industry in Livermore Valley. The EIR Study Area is framed by award-winning wineries, picturesque farmland, and ranches that mirror the valley's rich western heritage. One of California's oldest wine regions, the Livermore Valley, played a pivotal role in shaping California's wine industry, starting in the 1760s (City of Livermore 2022).

IMPORTANT FARMLAND

Alameda County, which includes the EIR Study Area, is predominantly made up of urban and built-up land, open space, and grazing land. Unincorporated areas to the north, east, and west of the EIR Study Area are currently used for rangeland, dry farmland, irrigated cropland, and uncultivated farmland. Agricultural uses south of the EIR Study Area include vineyards, orchards (mainly olives and nuts), rangeland, and uncultivated farmland.

As shown on Figure 3.2-1, *Important Farmland*, the EIR Study Area includes Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance and as classified by the DOC. The EIR Study Area also includes Grazing Land, Urban and Built-Up Land, and Other Land; however, these are not considered "farmlands of concern" under CEQA.

As shown in Table 3.2-1, *Existing Farmland Acreages in the EIR Study Area*, much of the EIR Study Area is made up of Urban and Built-Up Land. Cultivated agricultural lands in the EIR Study Area are largely designated Unique Farmland, followed in descending acreage by Farmland of Statewide Importance and Prime Farmland. There is land outside the City Limit, but within the

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City’s Sphere of Influence (SOI), that is mapped as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance.

Table 3.2-1 Existing Farmland Acreages in the EIR Study Area

Classification	Acres
Prime Farmland	338
Unique Farmland	728
Farmland of Statewide Importance	409
Grazing Land	4,573
Urban and Built-Up Land	13,651
Other Land	2,000

Source: DOC 2022.

Note: Numbers are rounded from original source.

WILLIAMSON ACT CONTRACTS

Alameda County is the agency responsible for entering into Williamson Act contracts with landowners in and around the EIR Study Area. As shown on Figure 3.2-2, *Williamson Act Lands*, agricultural lands under Williamson Act contracts are primarily located south of the City Limit, with select parcels to the north and east of the City Limit. As shown in Table 3.2-2, *Existing Williamson Act Land Acreages in the EIR Study Area*, active Williamson Act contracts account for approximately 1,909 acres of farmland in the EIR Study Area.

Table 3.2-2 Existing Williamson Act Land Acreages in the EIR Study Area

Williamson Act Contract Type	Acres
Prime Farmland	766
Non-Prime Farmland	1,143
Total	1,909

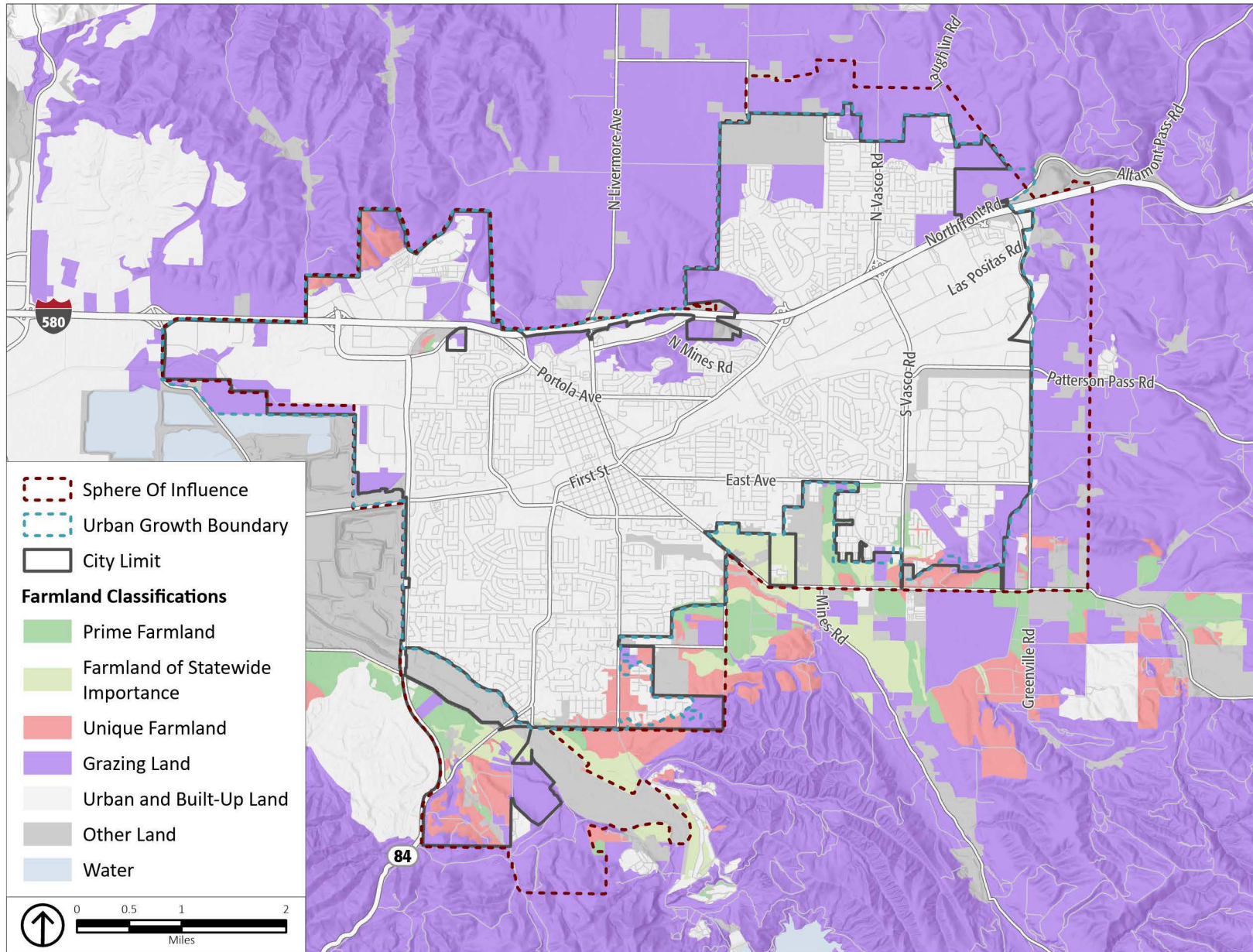
Source: DOC 2025b.

Note: Numbers are rounded from original source.

3.2.3 Standards for Analysis

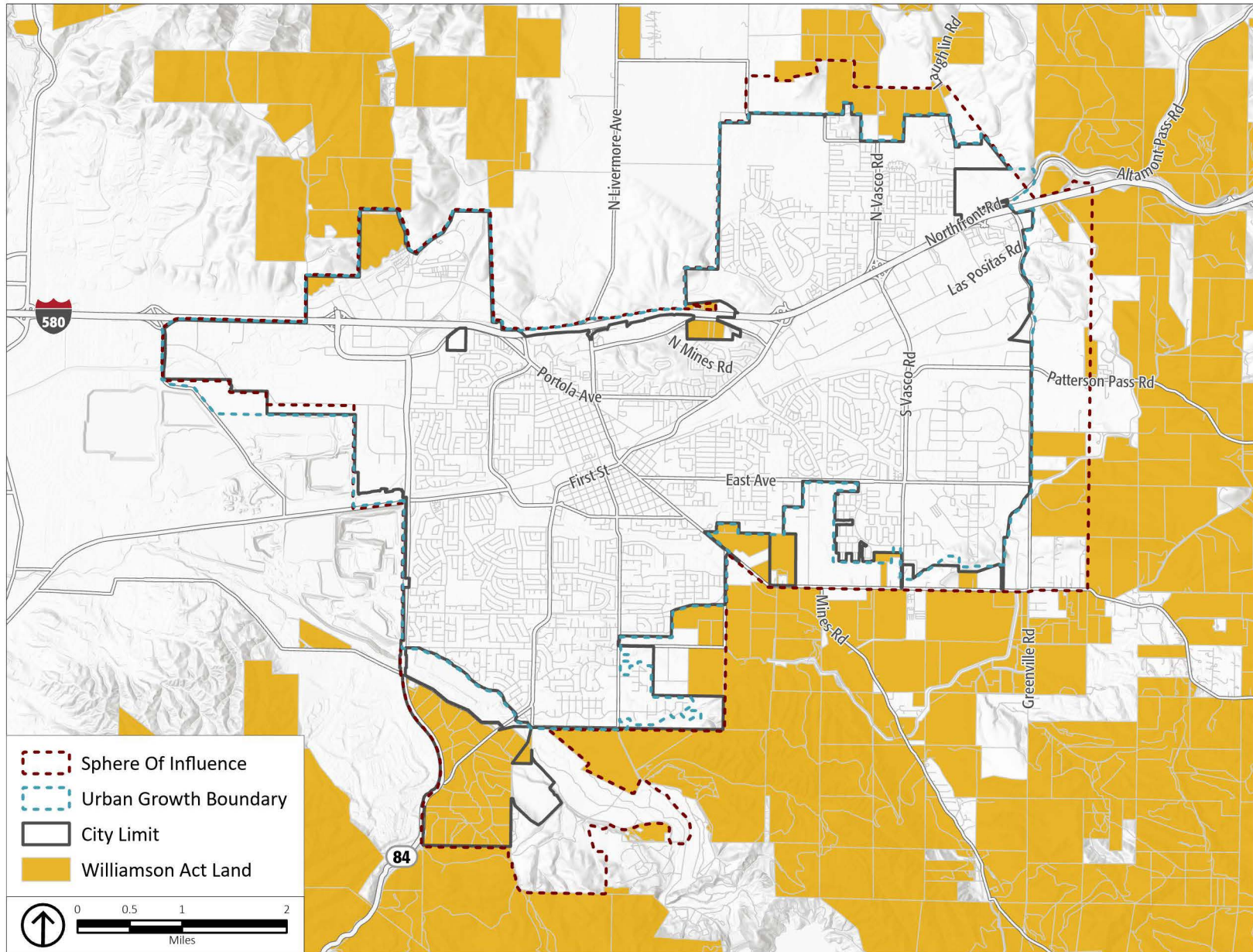
Appendix G, *Environmental Checklist Form*, of the CEQA Guidelines states that the proposed Project would result in a significant impact to agricultural resources if it would:

- a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency to nonagricultural use.



Source: City of Livermore, 2022; California Department of Conservation, 2025.

Figure 3.2-1
Important Farmland



Source: City of Livermore, 2022; California Department of Conservation, 2024.

Figure 3.2-2
Williamson Act Land

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.

Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use.

The EIR Study Area does not contain any national- or State-designated forestland (California Department of Forestry and Fire Department 2026). Woodland and forested habitats are largely restricted to the north and east-facing slopes or higher elevations to the south and west of the EIR Study Area. Dense stands of trees do not exist in the EIR Study Area due to climate conditions and altitude. The two woodland/forest communities (blue oak woodland and coast oak woodland) in the EIR Study Area do not qualify as 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)). Consequently, there would be no impact to forestry resources, and the following potential impacts of the Project are not discussed further in this EIR because the proposed Project would not:

- 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)).
- Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.
- Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

3.2.4 Project Impact Analysis

a) **Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency to nonagricultural use?**

Significant and Unavoidable. As shown in Table 3.2-1, the EIR Study Area contains 338 acres of Prime Farmland, 728 acres of Unique Farmland, and 409 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance for a total of 1,475 acres. As illustrated on Figure 3.2-1, the majority of Farmland (Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland) are in the southern portion of the EIR study area, outside the UGB, with an existing land use designation that allows agricultural, such as Limited Agriculture or SLVSP.

The SLVSP is specifically intended to promote and conserve agricultural resources, as described in Section 3.2.1, *Regulatory Framework*. Furthermore, 435 acres of land designated as SLVSP are under conservation easements, which cannot be converted to nonagricultural uses. While

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the SLVSP designation is intended to conserve agricultural resources, it does allow development on agricultural lands, and therefore, Farmland that is designated SLVSP could be converted to nonagricultural uses. However, much of the land designated SLVSP under the existing general plan land use map would remain SLVSP under the proposed General Plan 2045 land use map, and any potential loss of Farmland could occur with or without implementation of the proposed Project. Additionally, some Farmland is already developed with existing uses that are incompatible with agriculture, such as residential or industrial uses. Implementation of the proposed Project would not convert this Farmland because it has already been converted to other uses.

The city's land use pattern has been shaped by voter-approved UGBs. Specifically, the South Livermore UGB Initiative, passed in 2000, and the North Livermore UGB Initiative, passed in 2002, establish clear limits to urban expansion, preserving agricultural lands and open space while directing growth to areas where infrastructure and services exist. The South Livermore UGB focuses on protecting prime viticultural and orchard lands and promotion of the wine industry. The North Livermore UGB aims to preserve agricultural lands and open space to maintain the viability of farming and ranching operations in North Livermore.

Future residential development would be subject to LMC Chapter 3.27 and would be required to pay TDCs, which could be used to finance conservation easements for the permanent protection of agricultural lands. Additionally, the SLVSP includes Policy 6-1, which lays out specific parameters to mitigate the loss of agricultural and open space land through the dedication of agricultural or open space easements and the planting of agricultural crops.

Furthermore, the Land Use (LU) Element and Open Space and Conservation (OS) Element of the proposed General Plan 2045 contain the following goals and policies that are designed to preserve agricultural uses and reduce the loss of Farmland:

- **Goal LU-12:** Preserve and Enhance the South Livermore Valley as a Premier Agricultural Region, a Thriving Wine Country Economy, and Visitor Destination.
 - **Policy LU-12.2: Agricultural Land Preservation.** Permanently protect existing and potential cultivated agricultural lands through conservation easements, land acquisition, and partnerships with organizations such as the Tri-Valley Conservancy.
 - **Policy LU-12.5: Development Criteria.** Limit urban development to uses that directly support the goals of the South Livermore Valley Specific Plan. Require any proposed development to meet criteria related to location, design, infrastructure availability, and agricultural mitigation.
 - **Policy LU-12.6: Annexation in South Livermore.** Allow annexation when it contributes to the goals of the South Livermore Valley Specific Plan, creates a logical urban edge, and supports the wine country economy and demand for agricultural uses. .

- **Policy LU-12.8: Agricultural Mitigation and Funding.** Require agricultural mitigation fees for development in transitional areas and explore additional funding sources to support land conservation efforts and visitor amenities.
- **Policy LU-12.12: Development Offset for Agricultural Investment.** Use resources generated from urban development within the urban growth boundary to invest in the long-term viability of South Livermore’s agricultural economy. This includes land acquisition and conservation easements, financial resources for viticulture, wine country tourism, recreational amenities, and contributes to overall economic sustainability.
- **Goal OS-4:** Protect agricultural land and working landscapes as vital parts of the Livermore open space network in and around the Planning Area.
 - **Policy OS-4.1: Farmland Preservation.** Preserve undeveloped lands with an agricultural or open space designation, to the greatest extent feasible (i.e., through zoning, conservation easements, or other measures), for open space or agricultural use.
 - **Policy OS-4.4: Permanent Conservation Easements.** Promote awareness of permanent conservation easements as an opportunity to monetize land stewardship and support agricultural production, open space, and sensitive natural resources.
 - **Policy OS-4.6: Agricultural Soil Management.** Protect and manage valuable agricultural soils in the Planning Area.
 - **Policy OS-4.7: Agricultural Preservation Funding.** Monitor and identify potential funding mechanisms to support the preservation of agricultural uses.
 - **Policy OS-4.8: Agricultural Preservation Agency Coordination.** Work with the County of Alameda, land trust organizations, other conservation groups, and water purveyors to preserve agricultural and related supporting uses outside the urban growth boundary.

The proposed General Plan 2045 contains policies that require the City to preserve agricultural lands. Specifically, proposed Policy LU-12.2 requires the City to encourage the establishment and permanent protection of existing and new cultivated agricultural lands through use of conservation easements, land acquisition, and partnerships with organizations. Proposed Policy LU-12.2 limits urban development outside the South Livermore Valley to generate substantial investment in the long-term viability of South Livermore’s agricultural economy. Proposed Policy OS-4.1 and Policy OS-4.6 requires the City to preserve undeveloped lands that have agricultural or open space designation, as well as valuable agricultural soils. Proposed Policy OS-4.4 would promote permanent conservation easements. Proposed Policy OS-4.7 and Policy OS-4.8 require the City to identify funding mechanisms to support the preservation of agricultural lands and work with conservation groups and water purveyors to preserve agricultural uses outside the urban growth boundary.

While LMC Chapter 3.27 and the proposed General Plan 2045 goals and policies identified would protect and preserve farmland, the proposed General Plan 2045 land use map would redesignate small portions of Farmland to nonagricultural uses. For example, there is an area north of Tesla Road just within the City Limit mapped as Farmland of Statewide Importance that

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would be redesignated from Agriculture/Viticulture (AGVT) to Wine Country Commercial (WCC), which could result in the conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural lands. Because the threshold of significance for purposes of analysis under CEQA is the loss of any Farmland (Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland), the potential conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural lands would constitute a *potentially significant* impact.

Impact AGR-1: Implementation of the proposed Project could result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency to nonagricultural uses.

The mitigation measures below have been analyzed and considered for mitigating or avoiding the impact of the conversion of agricultural lands to other uses. However, as described, no feasible mitigation measures are available that would reduce this impact to less than significant.

- **Replacement of Agricultural Resources.** This measure would replace the existing agricultural use with the same use on other property that is not currently used for agriculture. From a statewide perspective, the replacement of Farmland means that there will be no net loss of Farmland in the state. However, Farmland would still be developed. There is limited undeveloped land in the EIR Study Area that is not currently designated as agricultural, restricting the amount of agricultural land that would be able to be replaced elsewhere in the area, and thus conversion of these lands would be insufficient to achieve no net loss. Moreover, even if adequate land could be identified to achieve no net loss, the challenges of creating the soil, irrigation, climatic, and economic conditions that are required for productive farmland (i.e., that achieve the same Farmland status) are significant, and there would be no guarantee that replacement land could be successfully farmed. In addition, replacing existing undeveloped areas with active agriculture could trigger a range of negative environmental impacts, including increased groundwater consumption, habitat destruction, erosion, air quality impacts, and herbicide and pesticide application. As such, the replacement of the existing agricultural uses on other properties within the EIR Study Area is infeasible.
- **Transfer of Development Rights.** Transferring development rights would allow a property owner to purchase the right to build on one parcel of land within Alameda County (typically undeveloped) and apply those rights to another parcel, such as Farmland within the EIR Study Area. This option is also infeasible as mitigation as it would still result in a net loss of Farmland within the EIR Study Area. Even if farmland would be preserved elsewhere in Alameda County, the Farmland in the EIR Study Area would be developed, resulting in a net loss of Farmland. Therefore, this approach to mitigation would not prevent significant impacts from occurring in the EIR Study Area and it would not be an effective mitigation measure. As such, mitigation of Farmland loss through the transfer of development rights is infeasible.

- **Relocation of Prime Farmland Topsoil.** This measure would remove the top 12 to 18 inches of topsoil from affected areas and haul this soil to a farm site or several farm sites that have lower-quality soils. The Prime Farmland soils may assist in increasing crop yield at the relocated site. This measure would have its own environmental impacts, including increased truck traffic on local roadways from both hauling soil off-site and replacement of soil on-site, increased diesel truck emissions, construction noise, and increased duration of construction. The relocation of Prime Farmland soils to another active farm would thus increase other environmental impacts. Therefore, the relocation of Prime Farmland topsoil is infeasible.

As discussed previously, implementation of the proposed Project would designate Farmland to nonagricultural land uses. Existing regulations, such as the LMC Chapter 3.27 and the proposed General Plan 2045 goals and policies identified, would reduce impacts associated with the potential conversion of Farmland. Because the significance criterion considered in this analysis is the conversion of any qualifying Farmland (Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance), the only way to fully avoid a significant impact would be to not allow the conversion of such Farmland to a non-agricultural use. However, doing so is not feasible or practical as the City has a responsibility to meet other conflicting obligations, including increasing the number and types of jobs available and reducing the need for residents to commute to high-quality jobs. Conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural uses is critical to reducing single-occupant vehicle travel to and from Livermore and meeting State targets for greenhouse gas reduction. Additionally, the City is required to permit residential development by State housing law within its adopted growth boundary. Implementing the potential mitigation measures as described above is infeasible as they could potentially lead to greater environmental impacts. While LMC Chapter 3.27 and the various proposed General Plan 2045 policies would conserve agricultural lands in the EIR Study Area, these regulations and policies would not reduce impacts to a less than significant level. Therefore, impacts would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

b) Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?

Significant and Unavoidable. Land currently under a Williamson Act Contract would be subject to the Alameda County Agricultural Preserve Program and contracts would be automatically renewed unless a landowner files a Notice of Non-Renewal and would be required to wait for a period of 10 years before converting the land to nonagricultural uses. The right-to-farm ordinance (LMC Chapter 8.16) serves to protect agricultural land uses by minimizing conflicts with nonagricultural uses, reducing the likelihood that ongoing agricultural operations would be displaced by nonagricultural uses. Future development on lands zoned as Agriculture (OS-A), Planned Development/Agriculture (PD-AG), or South Livermore Valley/Agriculture (SLV-AG) would be subject to the development regulations contained in the LDC to ensure uses complimentary to agricultural uses. Development within the SLVSP area would be subject to the agricultural requirements of the SLVSP. These development regulations and SLVSP

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requirements would restrict the intensity and location of development and prioritize continued agricultural use and operations. The SLVSP includes Policy 6-1, which lays out specific parameters to mitigate the loss of agricultural and open space lands through the dedication of agricultural or open space easements and the planting of agricultural crops.

The proposed General Plan 2045 goals and policies identified under impact discussion (a), in addition to the following goals and policies from the Land Use (LU) Element and Open Space and Conservation (OS) Element, are designed to minimize conflict with existing zoning for agricultural uses and the Williamson Act:

- **Goal LU-7:** Maintain agricultural lands within the Livermore Planning Area to support local food systems, sustain agricultural operations, and guide long-term land use planning.
 - **Policy LU-7.1: Agricultural Land Uses in the City of Livermore.** Provide for agricultural lands and uses within the Livermore Planning Area, ensuring such lands support Livermore’s economy and culture.
 - **Policy LU-7.2: Agricultural Development Standards.** Regularly review development standards in the agricultural zoning districts of the Livermore Development Code and Specific Plans that include agriculture zoning and/or policies to ensure they are suitable to support agricultural operational needs.
 - **Policy LU-7.3: Agricultural Resilience and Visitation.** Allow flexibility in agricultural land uses to adapt to changing economic conditions and support agritourism, farm-to-table enterprises, and other visitor-serving activities that enhance the viability of agricultural operations while maintaining compatibility with agricultural production and the local economy without compromising long-term land use objectives.
- **Goal LU-12:** Preserve and Enhance the South Livermore Valley as a Premier Agricultural Region, a Thriving Wine Country Economy, and Visitor Destination.
 - **Policy LU-12.7: Williamson Act and Agricultural Contracts.** Discourage nonrenewal or early termination of Williamson Act contracts. Allow Williamson Act contract modifications when they further agricultural preservation and compact development goals.
- **Goal OS-4:** Protect agricultural land and working landscapes as vital parts of the Livermore open space network in and around the Planning Area.
 - **Policy OS-4.5: Williamson Act Land Conservation.** Recruit agricultural landowners to enter the agricultural preserve program established under the Land Conservation (Williamson) Act, particularly in areas adjacent to urban designations in the General Plan.
 - **Policy OS-4.9: Agricultural Incentives.** Advocate at the State level to expand incentives, such as Williamson Act contracts, that allow agricultural operations to remain economically viable.

Specifically, proposed Policies LU-7.1 through LU-7.3 would require regular review of and flexibility in development standards for agricultural zoning and uses to support agricultural production and operational needs. Proposed Policy LU-12.7 requires the City to discourage the non-renewal or early termination of Williamson Act contracts in the South Livermore Valley. Proposed Policy OS-4.5 requires the City to recruit landowners to enter the agricultural preserve program established under the Williamson Act. Proposed Policy OS-4.9 requires the City to advocate (at the State level) for the expansion of incentives, including Williamson Act contracts, to allow for economically viable agricultural operations. For proposed Policies OS-4.5 and OS-4.9 to effectively reduce impacts related to conflict with the Williamson Act Contract, landowners would need to agree to the Williamson Act contract, which would only be determined on a case-by-case basis.

While the Alameda County Agricultural Preserve Program, LMC, LDC, and the proposed General Plan 2045 goals and policies identified above would reduce potential impacts related to the conversion of land zoned for agricultural to nonagricultural uses and redevelopment of land under Williamson Act contract to nonagricultural uses, the proposed Project could result in conflicts with existing zoning for agricultural use or Williamson Act contracts. The proposed Project would redesignate small portions of land under a Williamson Act contract to a use that would allow nonagricultural uses. For example, there is an area north of Tesla Road just within the City Limit under a Williamson Act contract with an existing zoning designation of South Livermore Valley Agricultural that would be redesignated from Agricultural/Viticulture (AGVT) to Wine Country Commercial (WCC). The change in the land use designation could result in the development of land currently zoned for agricultural uses under a Williamson Act contract with nonagricultural uses. Because the significance criterion considered in this analysis is conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract, the only way to fully avoid a significant impact would be to not allow the rezoning of land zoned for agricultural uses or allowing land under a Williamson Act contract to be converted such that the future use conflicts with the contract. Therefore, this impact is *potentially significant*.

Impact AGR-2: Implementation of the proposed Project could conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use and Williamson Act contracts.

As described under Impact AGR-1, pursuant to CEQA, the City has considered mitigation to reduce impacts from implementation of the proposed Project that could conflict with agricultural zoning and Williamson Act contracts. However, as described, there are no feasible mitigation measures that would reduce the loss of land with agricultural zoning or land under Williamson Act contracts. With respect to Williamson Act contracts, the City considered a measure that would result in the replacement of Williamson Act land that would place other agricultural land under Williamson Act contract. Even if feasible, the placing of alternative farmland under Williamson Act contract would establish a commitment to retain that alternative farmland for agricultural use. The length of time that the alternative land would remain in agricultural use would depend on the terms of the Williamson Act contract. However, the Williamson Act contract would only reduce the potential that the alternative land would

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convert to nonagricultural use. The individual and cumulative loss of agricultural land allowed by the proposed Project would still occur. Therefore, this mitigation measure would not reduce the proposed Project's impacts on agricultural land under Williamson Act contracts to below the level of significance. For these reasons, placing alternative privately held land under permanent restriction through Williamson Act contracts is considered infeasible.

As discussed previously, implementation of the proposed Project would rezone land currently zoned for agricultural to nonagricultural uses and designate agricultural land under the Williamson Act contract to nonagricultural land uses. Existing regulations, such as the Alameda County Agricultural Preserve Program, LMC, LDC, as well as the proposed General Plan 2045 goals and policies identified would reduce impacts associated with potential conflicts. However, completely avoiding such conflicts is not feasible or practical as the City has a responsibility to meet other obligations, including increasing the number and types of jobs available and reducing the need for residents to commute to high-quality jobs. The City is required to permit residential development by State housing law within its adopted growth boundary. Implementing the potential mitigation measures as described above is infeasible as previously explained.

While regulations of the Alameda County Agricultural Preserve Program, LMC, and LDC, as well as various proposed General Plan 2045 policies, would reduce potential conflicts, these regulations and policies would not reduce impacts to a less than significant level. Therefore, impacts would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

c) Would the project involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use?

Significant and unavoidable. Under existing regulations, future residential development would be subject to LMC Chapter 3.27 and be required to pay TDCs, which could be used to finance conservation easements for the permanent protection of agricultural lands, thereby discouraging the loss of farmland elsewhere in the city. The right-to-farm ordinance (LMC Chapter 8.16) serves to protect agricultural land uses by minimizing conflicts with nonagricultural uses, reducing the likelihood that ongoing agricultural operations would be displaced by nonagricultural uses. Future development on lands zoned as Agriculture (OS-A), Planned Development/Agriculture (PD-AG), or South Livermore Valley/Agriculture (SLV-AG) would be subject to the development regulations contained in the LDC. Development within the SLVSP area would be subject to the agricultural requirements of the SLVSP. These development regulations and SLVSP requirements would restrict the intensity and location of development and prioritize the continued agricultural use and operations.

Furthermore, the proposed Project recognizes that the agricultural history of Livermore contributes to its sense of place and seeks to preserve agricultural land. The proposed General Plan 2045 goals and policies identified under impact discussions (a) and (b), in addition to the following goals and policies from the Land Use (LU) Element, are designed to minimize impacts related to the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use:

- **Goal LU-7:** Maintain agricultural lands within the Livermore Planning Area to support local food systems, sustain agricultural operations, and guide long-term land use planning.
 - **Policy LU-7.4: Interference with Agriculture.** Prohibit proposed projects adjacent to agricultural areas that would substantially interfere with existing agricultural production.
 - **Policy LU-7.5: Right to Farm.** Protect agricultural land from conflicts with adjacent nonagricultural land uses that may threaten the viability of agricultural operations by maintaining the City’s Right to Farm Ordinance.
 - **Policy LU-7.6: Land Uses in Alameda County.** Request that Alameda County limit land uses in the unincorporated part of the Planning Area to agricultural and open space uses and uses allowed in the City’s Urban Growth Boundary policies.
 - **Policy LU-7.7: Rural Areas.** Collaborate with Alameda County and Alameda County Local Agency Formation Commission to protect existing land uses from development inappropriate for rural areas.
- **Goal LU-10:** Advance a strong and resilient Livermore through sustainable land use planning.
 - **Policy LU-10.2: Protect Natural and Agricultural Lands.** Balance strategic urban development and conservation of agricultural lands, open space, and sensitive ecosystems through land use planning, zoning, conservation easements, and long-term land stewardship programs and management strategies.
- **Goal LU-12:** Preserve and Enhance the South Livermore Valley as a Premier Agricultural Region, a Thriving Wine Country Economy, and Visitor Destination.
 - **Policy LU-12.1: South Livermore Valley Implementation.** Implement the South Livermore Valley Specific Plan and related programs to ensure development directly contributes to the long-term viability of cultivated agriculture and wine country economy in terms of both production and visitation.
 - **Policy LU-12.3: Expansion of Viticulture and Compatible Crops.** Expand cultivated agriculture, particularly vineyards, and support crop diversification that aligns with the South Livermore Valley’s climate, soils, and long-term sustainability.
 - **Policy LU-12.4: Wine Country Economy and Tourism.** Allow and promote wineries of various sizes and commercial uses that support wine-related tourism, complement other Livermore visitor amenities, and enhance the South Livermore Valley’s identity as a premier wine-producing region and destination.

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- **Policy LU-12.9: Winery-Supportive Land Use.** Designate and maintain land use categories that allow for a range of winery-related uses, including production, tasting rooms, and event spaces to support active agricultural operations and support the economic viability of South Livermore Valley.
- **Policy LU-12.10: Agri-tourism and Visitor-Serving Uses.** Allow for a variety of land uses that support wine-related tourism, such as farm stays, wine education centers, specialty goods retail, and overnight accommodations, that enhance the visitor experience and contribute to the local economy without requiring large scale urban-scale development.
- **Policy LU-12.11: Clustering and Co-Location of Wine Country Uses.** Allow the clustering of complementary wine country uses, such as wineries, tasting rooms, restaurants and attractions, and commercial services, within designated nodes to create destinations that support tourism and reduce land use conflicts. Use land use planning to facilitate synergies between agricultural production and economic activity.

Specifically, proposed Policies LU-7.4 and LU-7.5 would work to protect agricultural land from conflicts with adjacent existing or proposed nonagricultural land uses that may threaten or interfere with agricultural production. Proposed Policies LU-7.6 and LU-7.7 would require coordination with Alameda County to limit land uses to agricultural and open spaces and protect existing land uses from development inappropriate for rural areas.

Implementation of the proposed General Plan 2045 goals and policies identified would serve to reduce potential impacts related to other changes in the existing environment, which due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses by prohibiting future developments adjacent to agricultural areas that would substantially interfere with existing agricultural production and through collaboration with Alameda County and Alameda County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to protect existing land uses from development inappropriate for rural areas. However, because the proposed Project would establish land use policies and designations that could facilitate long-term development pressure on agricultural lands, the proposed Project would involve changes in the existing environment that could result in the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use. Therefore, this impact is *potentially significant*.

Impact AGR-3: Implementation of the proposed Project could involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use.

As described under impact discussions (a) and (b), pursuant to CEQA, the City has considered mitigation to reduce impacts from implementation of the proposed Project that could result in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use. However, as described, there are no feasible mitigation measures that would avoid completely avoid the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use.

Implementation of the proposed Project would establish land use designations and policies that would guide future development in the EIR Study Area. The proposed General Plan 2045 would not directly result in new development; however, it is a regulatory document that includes proposed changes in land use designation that could increase development pressure on land currently used for agriculture. Due to their location and proximity to planned urban uses, these changes could result in the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use over time. While compliance with existing LMC and LDC regulations, standards and guidelines in the SLVSP, and proposed General Plan 2045 goals and policies would reduce land use conflicts, they would not reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level. Avoiding such impacts entirely would require prohibiting development in or near land under agricultural uses, which would not be feasible nor practical, given the City's obligation to meet State housing law, increase the number and types of jobs available, and reduce the need for residents to commute to high-quality jobs. Therefore, the proposed Project would involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location and nature, could result in the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use, and impacts would be **significant and unavoidable**.

3.2.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The cumulative setting includes growth within the EIR Study Area in combination with projected overall growth trends within Livermore and adjacent cities (e.g., the surrounding cities of Dublin and Pleasanton). The geographic scope of cumulative impacts to agriculture resources is all agricultural resources deemed to be resources of statewide importance in the surrounding incorporated and unincorporated lands, the region, and the State.

Would the project have a cumulative effect related to agricultural resources?

Significant and unavoidable. As described in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, and throughout this EIR, the proposed Project includes a buildout projection and population growth that would increase the urbanization of the EIR Study Area. The proposed Project would allow conversion of agricultural lands to various types of residential and job-generating development. Agricultural lands throughout the region face ongoing development pressure due to population growth, housing demand, and the economic incentives associated with converting agricultural lands to urban uses. As such, the region and the State have been experiencing a decline of agricultural acreages (DOC 2025c). With implementation of the proposed Project in combination with agricultural impacts identified throughout surrounding incorporated and unincorporated lands, the region, and the state, the proposed Project could contribute to cumulative impacts to agricultural resources.

As described under impact discussions (a), (b), and (c), the proposed Project could allow conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural uses, would redesignate land zoned for agricultural to nonagricultural uses, and would allow land under Williamson Act contract to be converted to

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nonagricultural uses, and, due to location and proximity to planned urban uses, could result in the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use over time. Given the programmatic nature of this analysis, it is unknown at this time to what extent, the rate at which, or if this conversion would occur. However, avoiding such impacts entirely would require prohibiting development in or near land with agricultural uses, which would not be feasible nor practical, given the City's obligation to meet State housing law, increase the number and types of jobs available, and reduce the need for residents to commute to high-quality jobs. As such, the proposed Project may contribute to the cumulative impacts of overall conversion of these lands in the surrounding incorporated and unincorporated lands, the region, and the state. Although existing regulations as previously described and the policies in the proposed General Plan 2045 would reduce and partially offset regional agricultural impacts, the proposed Project would contribute to cumulatively significant agricultural impacts in the region. Therefore, this impact is cumulatively *potentially significant*.

Impact AGR-4: Implementation of the proposed Project could result in a significant cumulative impact with respect to the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), existing zoning for agricultural uses, Williamson Act properties, and farmland to nonagricultural uses.

As described previously, implementation of the proposed Project could result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to the conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural uses, conflicts with existing zoning for agricultural use and Williamson Act contracts, and could result in the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use over time. Although existing regulations such as those required per the LMC and the proposed General Plan 2045 goals and policies would reduce potential impacts, they would not reduce them to less than significant, and, as discussed previously, there are no feasible mitigation available to reduce potential impacts. The only way to fully avoid the agricultural impact is to not allow development on Farmland, rezoning of agricultural land to nonagricultural uses, or redesignation of land such that conflicts with Williamson Act contracts occur. However, doing so would be infeasible and inconsistent with City's planning goals and objectives. Further, the amount of growth foreseen in the region and the decisions of the surrounding counties regarding conversion of agricultural land are outside the jurisdiction of the city. Therefore, this cumulative impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

3.2.6 References

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