3.2 Agricultural and Soil Resources

This section describes the existing regulatory setting, the agricultural and soil resources in the PWIMP Planning Area(s), and evaluates how construction and operation of the components of the PWIMP would impact these agricultural and soil resources. This evaluation of agricultural and soil resources was based on an initial review of existing reports and literature from the City of Oxnard. Additional sources of information included the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), the California Department of Water Resources, and the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner's Office.

3.2.1 Introduction

Agricultural activities have played an important role in the City's economic, cultural, and environmental framework since the first arrival of the Spanish missionaries during the 1700's. Ventura County is recognized as one of the principal agricultural counties in the State, with annual gross revenues from the sales of agricultural commodities of approximately 2.2 billion dollars. Ventura County consistently ranks among the highest in agricultural revenues of the 58 counties in the State. Agriculture generates a substantial number of jobs ranging from crop production to processing, shipping and other related industries.

The seasonal row crop production pattern throughout west Ventura County is divided into two general categories: cool season and warm season crops. The cool season crops are generally harvested from fall through spring or early summer and include: broccoli, cauliflower, celery, lettuce and spinach. The warm season crops are harvested from mid-summer through fall and include: Fordhook green lima beans, snap beans, cucumbers, peppers and tomatoes. Year around crops include: cabbage (all year), strawberries (early spring to early summer) and lemons (January to mid-June). Fruit and nut crops and vegetable crops comprise the most valuable crop groups. Strawberries are consistently among the leading crops in revenue. Other high value crops include citrus fruits, raspberries, and nursery stock. Based on information in the City's 2030 General Plan Background Report, over 24,500 acres within the City's Planning Area was designated for Agricultural use, which is just over half of the entire Planning Area.

The California Department of Conservation prepares maps of important farmland throughout the state, based on categories of agricultural land defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture land inventory and monitoring criteria, and regularly reports on the conversion of farmland to other uses (pursuant to Government Code Section 65570). The categories of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Local Importance designations are often referred to collectively as "Important Farmlands". The General Plan Background Report indicates that there are approximately 23,000 acres of land meeting this definition within the Oxnard Planning Area.

The 2030 General Plan EIR concluded that the ultimate development of land, consistent with the land use designations of the 2030 General Plan, would result in the conversion of 2,215 acres of Important Farmlands to other uses. This anticipated conversion of land was identified as a significant impact. Several aspects of the 2030 General Plan Goals and Policies were identified as

contributing to the preservation of agricultural lands. Even with implementation of these goals and policies, however, the 2030 General Plan EIR concluded that the conversion of important farmland to non-agricultural uses would still be considered a significant and unavoidable impact.

The 2030 General Plan EIR analyzed several other issues related to the preservation of agricultural lands, and concluded for each of these issues that there would be a less than significant impact associated with implementing the General Plan. The conclusion is based primarily on implementation of policies within the General Plan, and associated requirements of the zoning ordinance and other programs designed to minimize conflicts between other land uses and agriculture and to address the planned conversion of agricultural lands to other uses within the structure of land use planning in the City of Oxnard.

The Agricultural Greenbelts between Oxnard and Camarillo to the east, and between Oxnard and the unincorporated areas of Ventura County, figure prominently in growth management, land use planning, and other resource values described in the General Plan.

Key Terms and concepts include the following:

- **Commodities.** Any unprocessed or partially processed good (e.g., fruits, vegetables, or grains) used for trade or commerce.
- **Greenbelt Agreement.** Greenbelt agreements are adopted by a joint resolution of the affected agencies and represent a policy commitment to the ongoing preservation of agricultural and open space areas.
- **Important Farmlands.** Collective term for farmlands designated as Prime, Unique, or as Farmlands of Statewide Importance under the Department of Conservation's FMMP.
- **K-Factor.** Provides an indication of a soil's inherent susceptibility to erosion, absent of slope and groundcover factors. Values of "K" range from 0.05 to 0.43. The higher the value, the more susceptible the soil is to sheet and rivulet (or small stream) erosion by water.
- **Soil Quality.** The capacity of a specific kind of soil to function, within natural or managed ecosystem boundaries, to sustain plant and animal productivity, maintain or enhance water and air quality, and support human health and habitation.
- **Williamson Act Contract –Active.** A contract between a landowner and a City or County to restrict land to agricultural or open space uses in return for lower than normal property tax assessments. The minimum term for a Williamson Act contract is 10 years. Since the term automatically renews for 10 more years on each anniversary date of the contract, the actual term can be indefinite.
- **Williamson Act Contract – Cancellation.** Under a set of specifically defined circumstances, a contract may be cancelled without completing the process of term non-renewal. Contract cancellation, however, involves a comprehensive review and approval process, and the payment of fees by the landowner equal to 12 percent of the full market value of the subject property. Once a contract has been canceled, the land cannot be converted for non-agricultural uses for 10 years. Upon cancellation of the contract, the land cannot be converted for agricultural uses for 10 years.

- **Williamson Act Contract – Notice of Non-Renewal.** Contracts may be terminated at the option of the landowner or local government by initiating the process of tem non-renewal. Under this process, the remaining contract term (nine years in the case of an original term of 10 years) is allowed to lapse, with the contract null and void at the end of the term. Property tax rates gradually increase during the non-renewal period, until they reach normal (i.e., non-restricted) levels upon termination of the contract.
- **Williamson Act Contract – Expired.** Expired parcels are those parcels that have previously been subject to a Williamson Act contract and have since been removed from the contract through non-renewal, cancellation, or annexation.

3.2.2 Regulatory Context

Relevant State and local guidelines specific to agricultural and soils resource issues are discussed in this section.

3.2.2.1 State Regulations

The relevant state regulations include the following.

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. The California Department of Conservation (DOC), under the Division of Land Resource Protection, has developed the FMMP that monitors the conversion of the State's farmland to and from agricultural use. County-level data is collected and a series of maps are prepared that identify eight classifications and uses based on a minimum mapping unit size of 10 acres. The program also produces a biannual report on the amount of land converted from agricultural to non-agricultural use. The program maintains an inventory of State agricultural land and updates the "Important Farmland Series Maps" every two years. Table 3.2-1 provides a summary of the rating categories used by the FMMP. The FMMP is an informational service only and does not constitute State regulation of local land use decisions. Agricultural land is rated according to several variables including soil quality and irrigation status with Prime Farmland being considered the most optimal for farming practices.

California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act). The California Land Conservation Act (CLCA) of 1965, Sections 51200 et seq. of the California Government Code, commonly referred to as the "Williamson Act", enables local governments to restrict the use of specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. Landowners enter into contracts with participating cities and counties and agree to restrict their land to agriculture or open space use for a minimum of 10 years. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments that are much lower than normal because they are based upon farming and open space uses as opposed to full market (speculative) value. Local governments receive an annual subvention of forgone property tax revenues from the State via the Open Space Subvention Act of 1971.

The DOC reports that the Land Conservation Act Program has remained stable and effective as a mechanism for protecting agricultural and open space land from premature conversion of land to urban uses. The DOC indicates that the program might have remained small if not for the addition of Article 28 (now part of Article 13) to the State Constitution. Article 13 declares the interest of the State in preserving open space land and provides a constitutional

basis for valuing property according to its actual use. The amendment originated with groups interested in the preservation of open space land. Agricultural interests added their support after recognizing the importance of a constitutional backing for preferential tax assessments. Article 13 allows preferential assessments for recreational, scenic, and natural resource areas as well as areas devoted to the production of food and fiber. Legislation affecting the Williamson Act include the following is discussed below.

- **Farmland Security Zones.** In August 1998, the Williamson Act's farmland security zone (FSZ) provisions were enacted with the passage of Senate Bill 1182 (California Government Code Section 51296-51297.4). This sub-program, dubbed the "Super Williamson Act," enables agricultural landowners to enter into contracts with a specific county for 20-year increments with an additional 35 percent tax benefit over and above the standard Williamson Act contract.
- **Senate Bill 1835 (Johnston, Chapter 690, Statutes of 1998) and the Cortese-Knox Local Government Reorganization Act.** Senate Bill 1835 requires the appropriate Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), to determine whether a particular City is required to succeed (adhere) to the rights, duties and powers of the county under the contract or whether the City may exercise an option to not succeed to the rights, duties and powers of the county. The determination would be required pursuant to any proposal by a City that would result in the annexation of Williamson Act contracted land.

Table 3.2-1
Description of FMMP Designations

Designation	Description
Prime Farmland	Land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained yields of crops when treated and managed, including water management, according to current farming methods. It must have been used for the production of irrigated crops within the last three years. It does not include publicly owned lands for which there is an adopted policy preventing agricultural use
Unique Farmland	Similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to hold and store moisture. Considered to have an excellent combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops.
Farmland of Local Importance	Farmlands not covered by the categories of Prime, Statewide, or Unique. They include lands zoned for agriculture by County Ordinance and the California Land Conservation Act as well as dry farmed lands, irrigated pasture lands, and other agricultural lands of significant economic importance to the County and include lands that have a potential for irrigation from local water suppliers

Table 3.2-1
Description of FMMP Designations

Designation	Description
Urban Build-up Land	Land occupied by structures with a building density of at least 1 unit to 1.5 acres, or approximately 6 structures to 10-acre parcel. This land is used for residential, industrial, commercial, construction, institutional, public administration, railroad and other transportation yards, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment, water control structures, and other developed purposes.
Water	Perennial water bodies with an extent of at least 40 acres.

Source: *California Department of Conservation, 2016*

- **Senate Bill 2227 (Monteith, Chapter 590, Statutes of 1998).** Senate Bill 2227 added new requirements to the Cortese-Knox Local Governmental Reorganization Act regarding any proposed annexation of Williamson contract land. If the proposal would result in the annexation of land that is subject to the Williamson Act, then the petition shall state whether the City shall succeed (adhere) to the contract or whether the City intends to exercise its option to not succeed to the contract.

3.2.2.2 Local Regulations

The relevant local regulations include the following.

Oxnard 2030 General Plan. The combined Open Space/Conservation Element's of the City's existing 2030 General Plan contains an objective and several policies pertinent to agriculture and soils resources.

3.2.3 Environmental Setting

The City of Oxnard lies entirely within the Oxnard Plain, which contains some of the most fertile land in Ventura County. Agricultural areas are found in the northeastern and eastern edges of the City, as well as in large "pockets" within the northwestern portion of the Planning Area. These "pockets" are green buffers surrounding the developed areas and are marked by tall eucalyptus and cypress windrows. According to the California Department of Conservation's FMMP, there are currently about 23,380 acres of agricultural land in the Planning Area. Additionally, the City of Oxnard is a party to the Oxnard-Camarillo Greenbelt Agreement that covers approximately 27,000 acres located between the two cities.

Existing Soils Conditions

The deep, alluvial soils of the PWIMP Planning Area and surrounding area have been classified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Conservation Service (SCS) to determine soil capability for agricultural production. The SCS mapping program rates the agricultural suitability of soils in terms of both the Land Use Capability Classification System and the Storie Index.

The SCS Land Use Capability Classification System takes into consideration soil limitations and the way in which soils respond to treatment. Capability classes range from Class I soils, which have few limitations restricting their use for agriculture, to Class VIII soils, which are unsuitable for agriculture.

The majority of soils in the PWIMP Planning Area are Class I and II, which by definition constitute "prime agricultural soils" under the SCS Land Use Capability Classification System. The Storie Index, the second method for soil classification, expresses the relative degree of soil suitability for general intensive farming, based solely on soil conditions and characteristics. Soils in Grade 1 are rated excellent and are very well suited to general intensive farming. Grade 2 soils are rated good and are well suited to general farming. Grade 3 soils are only fairly suited, Grade 4 soils are poorly suited and Grade 5 are very poorly suited to general intensive farming. Soils and miscellaneous areas that are not suited for farming are in Grade 6. The following soil associations are present within the Oxnard area:

- **Pico-Metz-Anacapa Association.** Level to moderately sloping, very deep, well-drained sand loams and very deep, somewhat excessively drained loamy sands. Soil depth can be up to 60 inches or more. The soils of this association are Class II and Class III and are some of the most productive soils. Their agricultural use is for irrigated vegetables, citrus crops, field crops, strawberries, walnuts and avocados.
- **Mocho-Sorrento-Garretson Association.** Level to moderately sloping, very deep, well-drained loams to silty clay loams. Soil depth can be up to 60 inches or more. The soils in this association are Class I and Class II, and are some of the most productive soils in the City. Their agricultural use is for irrigated vegetables, citrus crops, field crops, strawberries, walnuts and avocados.
- **Camarillo-Hueneme-Pacheco Association.** Level and nearly level, very deep, poorly drained loamy sands and silty clay loams. Soil depth can be up to 60 inches or more. The soils in this association are Class II soils and are also some of the most productive in the City. They are used for irrigated vegetables, field crops, lemons and strawberries. In undrained areas, there is a seasonal water table within a depth of 2 feet and periodically the soils contain soluble salts.
- **Riverwash-Sandy Alluvial Land-Coastal Beaches Association.** Level to gently sloping, excessively drained to poorly drained stratified sand, gravelly and cobbly material with only a small amount of silt and clay. This soil association is subject to flooding, scouring and deposition during and immediately following storms. This soil association has a Class VIII rating and is unsuitable for agriculture.
- **Rincon-Huerhuero-Azule Association.** Level to moderately steep, very deep, well drained and moderately well drained, very fine sandy loams to silty clay loams that have slowly and very slowly permeable sandy clay subsoil.

The locations of the soil associations previously described are identified in Figure 3.2-1, with an estimate of the number of acres for each soil association within the Planning Area provided in Table 3.2-2. The Camarillo- Hueneme-Pacheco association covers almost all of the PWIMP Planning Area, with an estimated 28,070 acres (see Table 3.2-2 and Figure 3.2-1). Limited amounts of the Pico-Metz-Anacapa association are located along the Santa Clara River. A finger of the Mocho-Sorrento-Garretson association (an estimated 2,270 acres) extends into the Planning Area from the north and is located east of Oxnard Boulevard and north of west

Fifth Street. As shown in Figure 3.2-1, the Riverwash-Sandy Alluvial Land- Coastal Beaches Association is located along the entire coastline of the City. The Rincon Ricon-Huerhuero-Azule Association occupies a small area (670 acres) in the northeast portion of the Planning Area.

Erosion

Rates of erosion can vary depending on a number of factors including climate conditions, soil material, soil structure, and levels of human activity. The erosion potential for soils in the Planning Area depend on several soil characteristics, including surface texture, overall permeability, organic matter content, depth, and quantity and type of ground cover. Depending on the local landscape and climatic conditions, erosion may be very slow to very rapid. The City is located within a Mediterranean climatic regime, which is characterized by moist winters and dry summers. The PWIMP Planning Area is therefore, subject to erosion from both natural and human activities depending on the time of year.

Table 3.2-2
Soil Associations and Other Land Uses within the PWIMP Planning Area

Soil Association/Land Use Type	Acreage
Pico-Metz-Anacapa Association	7,530
Mocho-Sorrento-Garretson Association	2,270
Camarillo-Huneme-Pacheco Association	28,070
Riverwash-Sandy Alluvial Land-Coastal Beaches Association	3,040
Rincon-Huerhuero Association	670
Gullied Land-Pits and Dumps	670
Water	1,200
Other	1,800
Total	**45,250**

Other: *The other category includes currently unclassified soil types*
Source: *United States Geological Service, 2016*

Excessive soil erosion can lead to damage of building foundations, roadways, dam embankments, and result in increased sedimentation to local drainage ways. Figure 3.2-2 identifies the K-factor for soil surfaces within the Planning Area. As shown in the figure, several locations are identified as areas easily susceptible to erosion processes. However, the development of structures consistent with local building regulations and the implementation of a variety of commonly used post-construction best management practices minimize the negative effects of erosion.

Beach Erosion

The City's coastline is part of an overall littoral cell that extends from Point Conception to Point Mugu. The concept of a littoral cell is based upon the natural production, transport, and loss or disposal of sediment materials, chiefly sand, along an ocean frontage or beach. The geographic extent of a littoral cell is based upon where sand is generated or introduced to the cell and where sand is eventually lost from the cell. The most common end or termination for a littoral cell is a submarine canyon, where sands tend to flow or sink away from the coast, making them unavailable to be transported to the next littoral cell. The most common source for sand generation within a cell is typically local waterways that deliver sand to the beach.

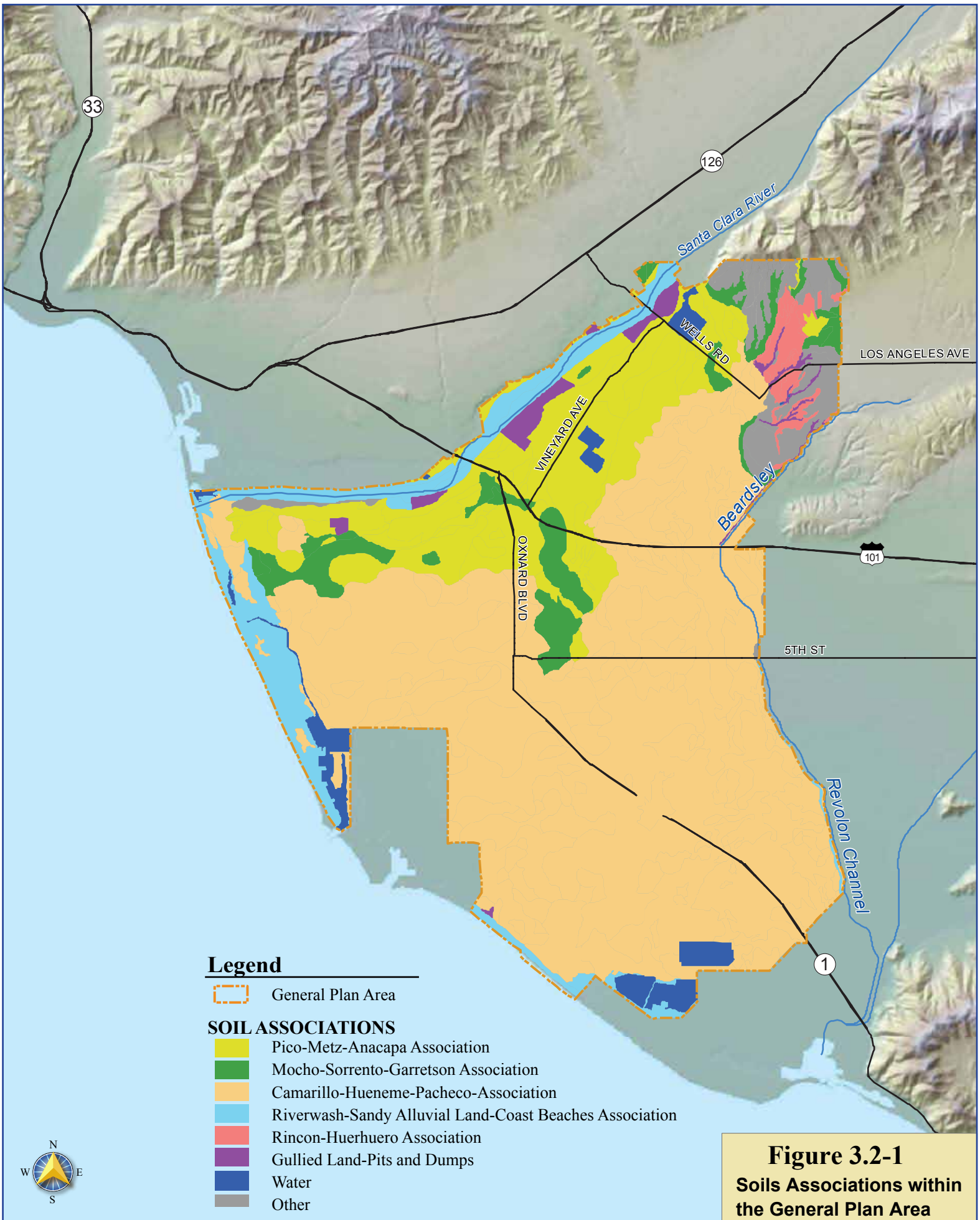

Figure 3.2-1
Soils Associations within the General Plan Area

Source: USGS, 1993r USDA, 2005r City of Oxnard, 2016

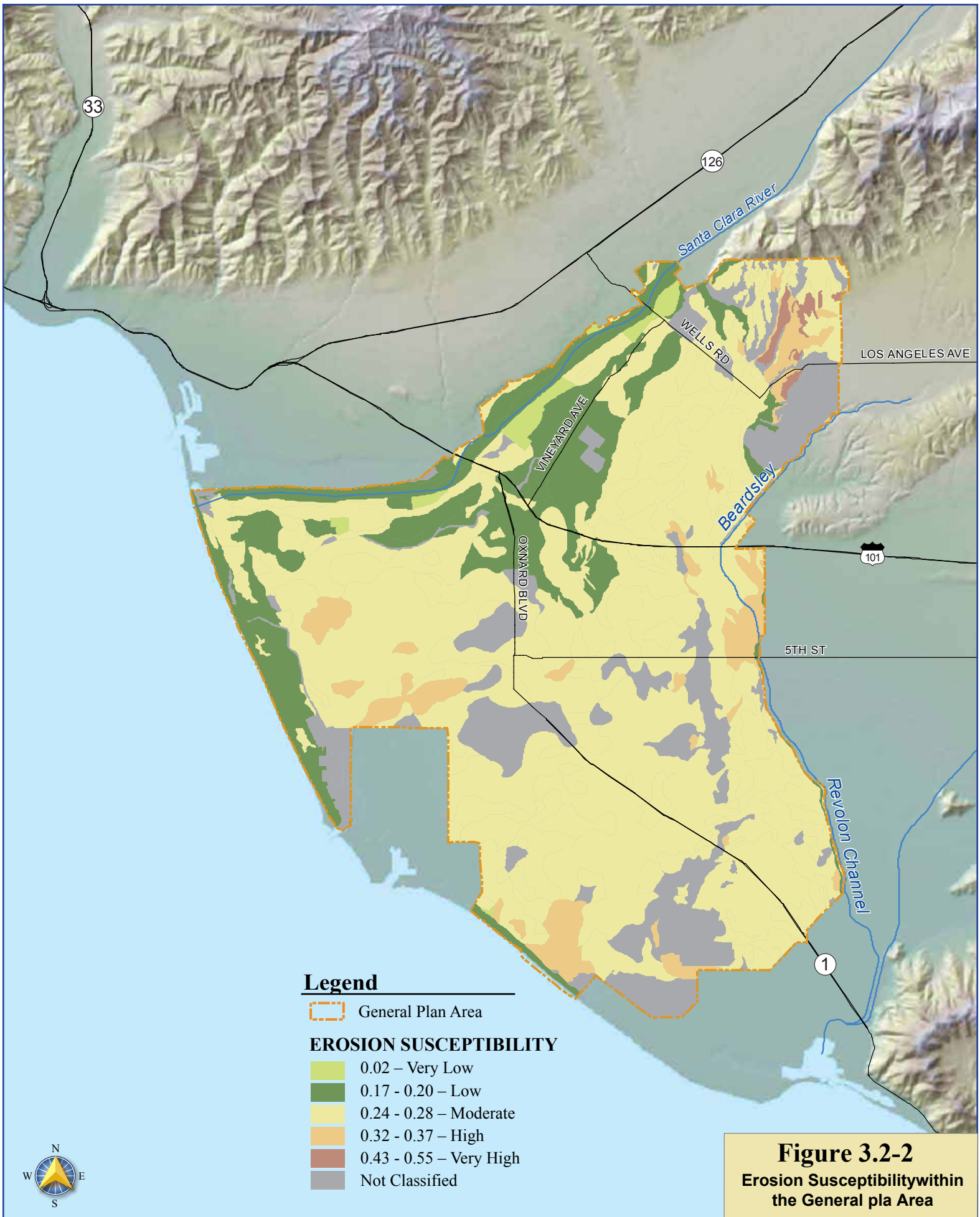

Figure 3.2-2

Erosion Susceptibilitywithin the General pla Area

Source: USGS, 1993r USDA, 2005r City of Oxnard, 2016

Two major rivers, the Ventura and Santa Clara Rivers, and two submarine canyons strongly influence the littoral processes in the PWIMP Planning Area. The entire Oxnard littoral cell is considered very active; that is, substantial volumes of sand are transported annually by littoral currents. The down- coast segment of the Oxnard littoral cell, which includes the City and extends from the Ventura River to Point Mugu, is characterized by relatively wide beaches and low backshore areas. This area has been affected by human activities, including construction of the Ventura and Channel Islands small craft harbors, and the Port of Hueneme. As a result of the construction of these harbors, a regular program of sand bypassing has been implemented to maintain navigation channels and sandy beaches.

Because of the past shoreline erosion and beach sand replenishment problems, a joint powers authority was formed in 1986 to encourage coordination and cooperation between public and private agencies in efforts to protect, maintain, and enhance beaches and the coastline in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. This joint powers authority, called BEACON (Beach Erosion Authority for Control Operations and Nourishment), recently released a draft Coastal Sand Management Plan. The purpose of this report is to promote consideration of a regional program for beach protection and sand replenishment for the Santa Barbara/Ventura coast.

According to the draft Coastal Sand Management Plan, the following conditions characterize the existing shoreline from the Ventura River to Point Mugu:

- The primary sources of sand for this area are the Ventura and Santa Clara Rivers.
- Historically, these rivers supplied an abundance of sand, resulting in broad beaches backed by extensive sand dunes.
- Dam construction and sand mining activities have reduced the rate of fluvial sand replenishment to the coast.
- Imbalances in the amount of littoral sand for this area imply that beach erosion will accelerate beginning in the mid-1990s.

Beaches in this area will continue to be dependent on dredging and sand by-pass operations. Within the PWIMP Planning Area, the McGrath Beach and Oxnard Shores areas are cited by BEACON as erosion "hot spots" because of expected reductions in the delivery of sand to the coast by the Santa Clara River. The report also indicated that a yearly deficit of sand creates chronic erosion problems down-coast of Ormond Beach.

Important Farmlands within the Planning Area

The FMMP monitors the conversion of the State's farmland to and from agricultural use. Land within the City's Planning Area is represented by the breakdown in use between agricultural and urban land. An estimated 23,380 acres (roughly half of the total Planning Area) is designated for some type of agricultural use. As shown in Table 3.2-3, lands designated as Prime Farmland account for an estimated 22% of the Planning Area. The Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Local Importance designations are often referred to collectively as "Important Farmlands". Important Farmlands account for the majority of farmland (22,960 acres) within the Planning Area (see Table 3.2-3). These Important Farmlands are identified in Figure 3.2-3.

Table 3.2-3 Land Use by FMMP Designation, Oxnard Planning Area		
FMMP Designation	**Acreage**	**Percentage**
Prime Farmland	9,890	22
Farmland of Statewide Importance	11,990	27
Unique Farmland	970	2
Farmland of Local Importance	110	Less than 1
Grazing	420	Less than 1
Urban and Built-Up Land	16,520	37
Other Categories	5,250	12
Total	**45,150**	**100**
Source: *California Department of Conservation, 2016*		

Williamson Act Contracts

As more fully described above under the "Regulatory Setting" section, a Williamson Act contract represents an agreement to restrict land to agricultural or open space uses in return for lower than normal property tax assessments. Figure 3.2-3 provides the locations of parcels within the PWIMP Planning Area that have an active Williamson Act Contract.

Agricultural Production

The Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner's Office provides a variety of county specific agricultural statistics (i.e., crop types, production values, etc.) on an annual basis. This section provides a summary of the key agricultural commodities or crops produced in the County. The general location of key agricultural resources within the Planning Area is provided in Figure 3.2-4.

Farming in Ventura County has always been a major contributor to the nation's food supply, as well as an important part of the rural lifestyle, which exists throughout much of the county. Agriculture also generates a substantial number of jobs ranging from crop production to processing, shipping and other related industries. Ventura County is recognized as one of the principal agricultural counties in the State, with gross revenues from the sales of agricultural commodities in the billions of dollars (see Table 3.2-4). Ventura County ranks tenth among the highest in agricultural revenues of the 58 agricultural counties in the State, and approximately 19,600 jobs were created in 2000 by agriculture in the County.

The seasonal crop production pattern through out Ventura County is divided into two general categories: cool season and warm season crops. The cool season crops are generally harvested from fall through spring or early summer and include: broccoli, cauliflower, celery, lettuce and spinach. The warm season crops are harvested from mid-summer through fall and include: Fordhook green lima beans, snap beans, cucumbers, peppers and tomatoes. Year around crops include: cabbage (all year), strawberries (early spring to early summer) and lemons (January to mid- June). The overall mix of agricultural crops within the County has varied

over the past years, but the top three agricultural crops are strawberries, nursery stock, and lemons (see Table 3.2-4).

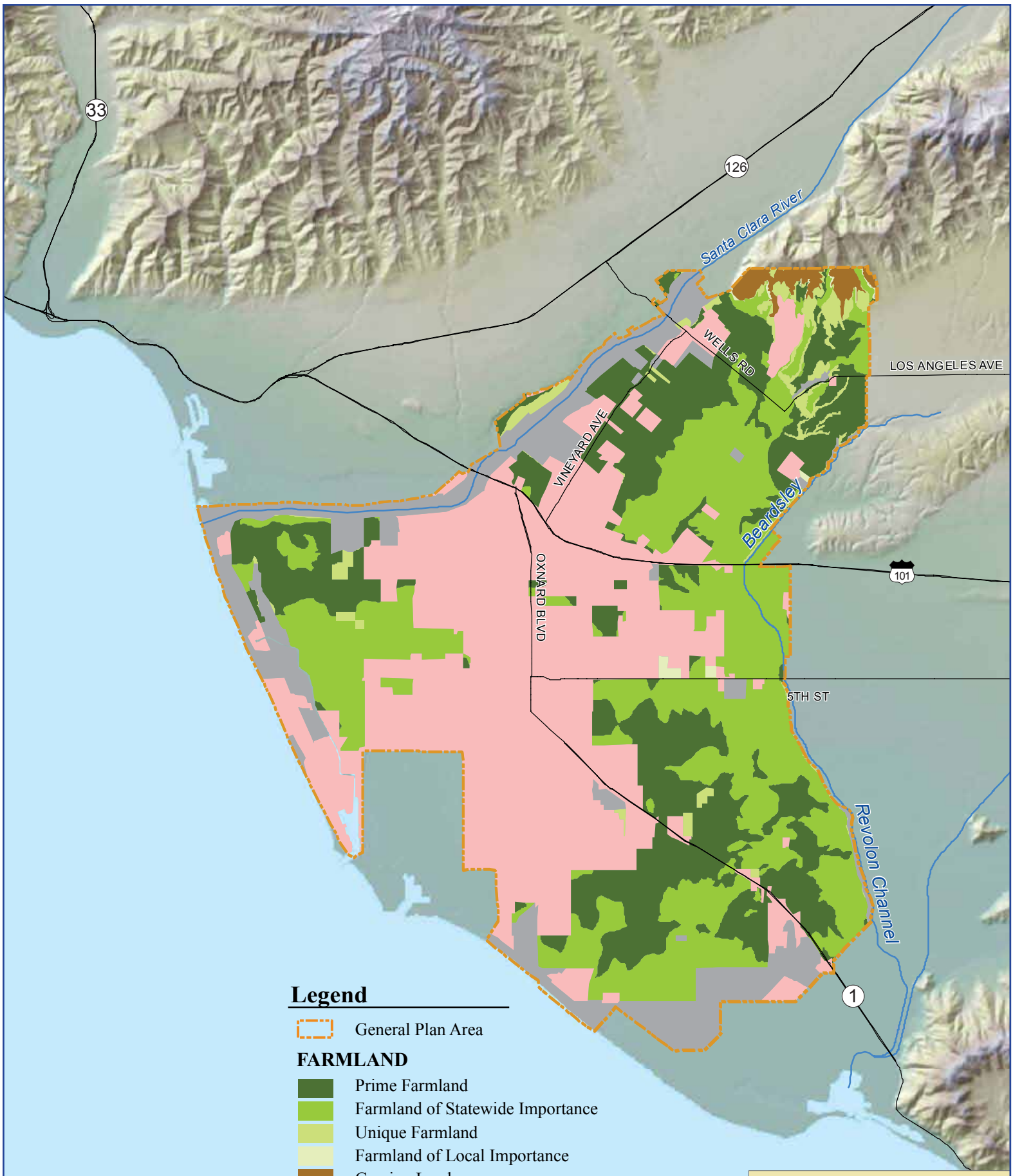

Figure 3.2-3

Important Farmlands within the General Plan Area

Source: USGS, 1993r California Department of Conservation, 2004r City of Oxnard, 2016

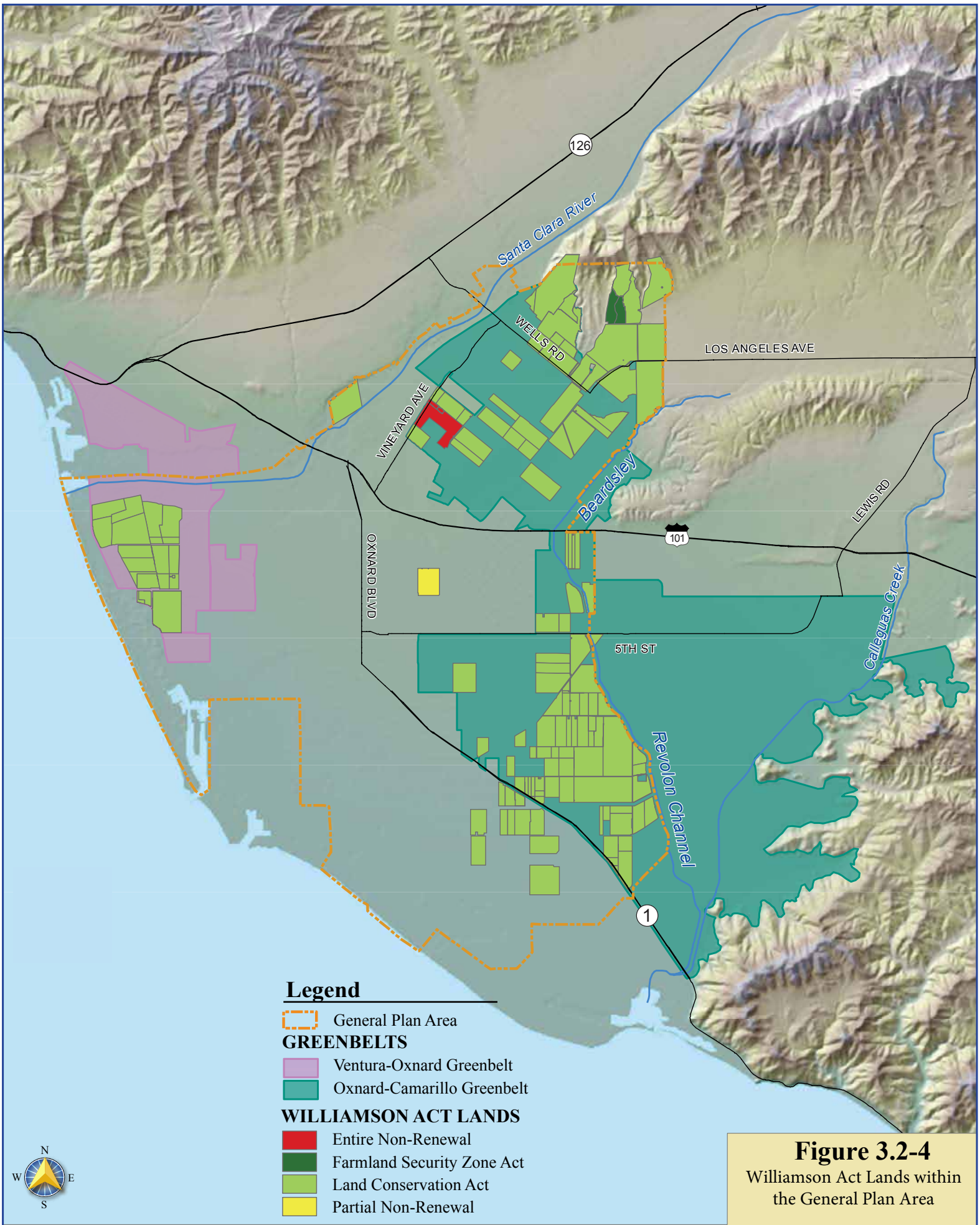

Figure 3.2-4
Williamson Act Lands within the General Plan Area

Source: City of Oxnard, 2016

Table 3.2-4
Leading Crops for Ventura County, 2004

Rank	Crop	Value
1	Strawberries	$363,646,000
2	Nursery Stock	$221,999,000
3	Lemons	$176,361,000
4	Avocados	$124,661,000
5	Celery	$122,832,000
6	Tomatoes	$71,735,000
7	Cut Flowers	$65,663,000
8	Raspberries	$48,586,000
9	Peppers	$34,628,000
10	Valencia Oranges	$20,525,000

Source: *Ventura County, 2016*

In spite of pressures such as increased agricultural land values, increased water cost, and compatibility problems with urban uses, agriculture activities have remained economically viable in the County because of the area's climate, soils and air quality. The total value in constant dollars of Ventura County's agricultural production has been increasing since the 1930's.

Urban Encroachment

The fact that produce makes up such a large part of the County's economy makes protecting agricultural land an important issue. Legislation such as the Williamson Act has been put in place to protect the State's agricultural lands and to avoid their "premature and unnecessary" urbanization.

Greenbelt policies, such as the Oxnard-Camarillo and Oxnard-Ventura greenbelt agreements, have also been put into place in order to protect against urban encroachment. The Oxnard-Camarillo Agreement comprises approximately 27,000 acres of agricultural land between the two cities, combined with an additional 2,200 acres that was added in the Del Norte area when the County of Ventura became a party to the agreement as well. The Oxnard-Ventura Agreement comprises 2,460 acres of land of which a portion lies within the northwestern corner of the Planning Area. The City of Oxnard's 2030 General Plan has supported the expansion of the Oxnard-Camarillo Greenbelt south of State Route 1 (approximately 2,672 acres). Despite these efforts, however, urban encroachment is still an issue facing the City's agricultural resources. Future development will reduce the amount of open land within the Planning Area.

Water Supply Availability

Agricultural operations within the southern portion of Ventura County receive the majority of their water from groundwater (generally privately- owned wells) and public water districts that divert surface water from the Santa Clara River and various lakes and stream watersheds through an extensive network of canals and natural waterways. The United Water Conservation District (UWCD) is responsible for groundwater recharge throughout most of the Santa Clara River Valley and for the wholesale distribution of water to purveyors on the

Oxnard Plain. Lake Piru is UWCD's reservoir for water, which is released into the Santa Clara River for subsequent recharge into the underground aquifers for later urban and agricultural use. The Calleguas Municipal Water District is responsible for providing imported water for wholesale purposes to retail water purveyors serving municipal/industrial customer in the southeastern portions of the County.

Groundwater is the single most important source of water in the County. In 1985, it provided about 67% of the water utilized in the County. It is pumped extensively by individual well owners as well as purveyors who sell it at either retails sales to individuals or at wholesale to other purveyors. Since, overall, more groundwater is used than is replaced, the County's groundwater reserves are slowly decreasing (i.e., water is being extracted more rapidly than it is being replaced).

3.2.4 Impact Analyses

This section includes a discussion of the relevant significance criteria, the approach and methodology to the analyses, and any identified impacts and mitigation measures.

3.2.4.1 Significance Criteria

Significance thresholds below are based on Appendix G (Environmental Checklist Form) of the *CEQA Guidelines* and modified from the City's *May 2017 CEQA Guidelines*, which indicates that a potentially significant impact on agricultural resources would occur if the PWIMP would:

- Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use;
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or an existing Williamson Act contract; and/or
- Involve other changes in the existing environment that, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of off-site farmland to non-agricultural use.

3.2.4.2 Approach and Methodology

As described in Chapter 2, Project Description, the City's PWIMP is comprised of improvements to the City's Water Supply System, Recycled Water System, Wastewater System, and Stormwater System through build-out of the City's 2030 General Plan. However, the design details, final options, and the timing of construction phases are not precisely known, despite the best estimates provided in the schedules in Chapter 2. Further, it is not practical or prudent to try to provide project-level or detailed quantitative analysis at this time as many of the details are not known and the timing will likely change and/or the requirements for project-level analysis could change and be different in the future. As such, the environmental impact analysis for this section has been prepared at a programmatic level of detail and it addresses the full range of potential environmental effects associated with implementation of the PWIMP, but the analysis is more qualitative and general. Specifically, the analysis focuses on providing a discussion on potential significant impacts and provides broad mitigation measures that can and should be implemented at the project-level. This approach is consistent with the State CEQA Guidelines provisions for a Program EIR, as described in Section 15168, which suggests that the level of detail is dictated by "ripeness"; detailed analysis should be reserved for issues that are ripe for consideration.

For purposes of this analysis, the PWIMP and each major component/facilities are considered in relation to farmland (identified on the FMMP Map) in the immediate site vicinity to identify any potential disruption that might cause temporary (during construction) or permanent (siting or operating on land that is currently in agricultural use). In addition, the PWIMP and major components/facilities are examined for its potential to affect land under a Williamson Act contract and/or compatibility with the City's 2030 General Plan.

3.2.4.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Based on the significance criteria and approach and methodology described above, the potential impacts to agricultural resources are discussed below.

Impact 3.2-1: Implementation of the PWIMP and/or identified components/facilities could result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use. The potential impacts due to temporary construction and long-term operations are discussed below.

Temporary Construction Impacts

Implementation of the PWIMP, including the construction of the new facilities and the rehabilitation and/or replacement of existing facilities would not result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide importance. As shown in Figure 3.2-3, the Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance resources are located to the north and east of the urban areas where the PWIMP facilities would be located. Implementation of the PWIMP, including the construction of the new facilities and the rehabilitation and/or replacement of existing facilities would be predominately located within the urban areas and built up areas of the City of Oxnard. Specifically and as described and shown in Chapter 2, Project Description, the location of the new or expanded facilities including the storage tanks, treatment facilities, wells, the desalter, and the TMDL infiltration would not be located on any agricultural lands, let alone on Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide importance. Further, construction of the new pipelines and conveyance facilities as well as the rehabilitation and/or replacement of the existing pipelines and conveyance facilities, the existing blending stations, and the other existing facilities would be located within existing paved roads, disturbed urban areas, and/or existing rights-of-ways and would not result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide importance. As a result, there would be no impact and no mitigation measures are required.

Significance Determination: No Impact

Long-Term Operational Impacts

As described above and shown in Chapter 2, Project Description and Figure 3.2-3, the location of the new or expanded facilities including the storage tanks, treatment facilities, wells, the desalter, and the TMDL infiltration would not be located on any agricultural lands, let alone on Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide importance. Further, the new pipelines and conveyance facilities as well as the rehabilitation and/or replacement of the existing pipelines

and conveyance facilities, the existing blending stations, and the other existing facilities would be located within existing paved roads, disturbed urban areas, and/or existing rights-of-ways and would not result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide importance. Once constructed, implementation of the PWIMP would not result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide importance. In addition, the routine maintenance and operations of the new and/or rehabilitated/replaced PWIMP facilities would not result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide importance. As a result, there would be no impact and no mitigation measures are required.

Significance Determination: No Impact

Impact 3.2-2: Implementation of the PWIMP and/or identified components/facilities could conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or an existing Williamson Act contract. The potential impacts due to temporary construction and long-term operations are discussed below.

Temporary Construction Impacts

Implementation of the PWIMP, including the construction of the new facilities and the rehabilitation and/or replacement of existing facilities would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or an existing Williamson Act contract. As shown in Figure 3.2-4, the location of the new or expanded facilities including the storage tanks, treatment facilities, wells, the desalter, and the TMDL infiltration would not be located on any agricultural lands, let alone on land with an existing Williamson Act contract. Further, the construction of the new pipelines and conveyance facilities as well as the rehabilitation and/or replacement of the existing pipelines and conveyance facilities, the existing blending stations, and the other existing facilities would be located within existing paved roads, disturbed urban areas, and/or existing rights-of-ways and would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or an existing Williamson Act contract. As a result, there would be no impact and no mitigation measures are required.

Significance: No Impact

Long-Term Operational Impacts

As described above and shown in Chapter 2, Project Description and Figure 3.2-3, the location of the new or expanded facilities including the storage tanks, treatment facilities, wells, the desalter, and the TMDL infiltration would not be located on any agricultural lands, let alone on an existing Williamson Act Contract. Further, the new pipelines and conveyance facilities as well as the rehabilitation and/or replacement of the existing pipelines and conveyance facilities, the existing blending stations, and the other existing facilities would be located within existing paved roads, disturbed urban areas, and/or existing rights-of-ways and would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or an existing Williamson Act contract. In addition, the routine maintenance and operations of the new and/or rehabilitated/replaced PWIMP facilities would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or an existing Williamson Act contract. As a result, there would be no impact and no mitigation measures are required.

Significance Determination: No Impact

Impact 3.2-3: Implementation of the PWIMP and/or identified components/facilities could result in conversion of off-site farmland to non-agricultural use. The potential impacts due to temporary construction and long-term operations are discussed below.

Temporary Construction Impacts

Implementation of the PWIMP, including the construction of the new facilities and the rehabilitation and/or replacement of existing facilities would not result in conversion of off-site farmland to non-agricultural use. The location of the new or expanded facilities including the storage tanks, treatment facilities, wells, the desalter, and the TMDL infiltration would not be located on any agricultural lands and would not result in conversion of off-site farmland to non-agricultural use. Further, the construction of the new pipelines and conveyance facilities as well as the rehabilitation and/or replacement of the existing pipelines and conveyance facilities, the existing blending stations, and the other existing facilities would be located within existing paved roads, disturbed urban areas, and/or existing rights-of-ways would not result in conversion of off-site farmland to non-agricultural use. As a result, there would be no impact and no mitigation measures are required.

Significance: No Impact

Long-Term Operational Impacts

As described above and shown in Chapter 2, Project Description and Figures 3.2-3 and 3.2-4, the location of the new or expanded facilities including the storage tanks, treatment facilities, wells, the desalter, and the TMDL infiltration would not result in conversion of off-site farmland to non-agricultural use. Further, the new pipelines and conveyance facilities as well as the rehabilitation and/or replacement of the existing pipelines and conveyance facilities, the existing blending stations, and the other existing facilities would be located within existing paved roads, disturbed urban areas, and/or existing rights-of-ways and would not result in conversion of off-site farmland to non-agricultural use. In addition, the routine maintenance and operations of the new and/or rehabilitated/replaced PWIMP facilities would not result in conversion of off-site farmland to non-agricultural use. As a result, there would be no impact and no mitigation measures are required.

Significance Determination: No Impact

3.2.5 Cumulative Effects

The proposed PWIMP will mostly take place within already-developed roadways and parcels in urbanized areas. The construction and operation of the PWIMP would not result in conversion of off-site farmland to non-agricultural use. Given these factors, the PWIMP will not result in significant impacts to agricultural and soil resources, and would not contribute to potential significant cumulative impacts. No mitigation measures for cumulative impacts are thus proposed.