

Appendix A
LESA Report

Land Evaluation and Site Assessment

Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church

APN 0168-161-02, 03

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Table of Contents

	Page
Land Evaluation and Site Assessment	1
Project Description and Setting.....	1
LESA Evaluation.....	3
Land Evaluation	3
Site Assessment.....	4
A. Project Size Rating	4
B. Water Resources Availability Rating.....	5
C. Surrounding Agricultural Land Rating	6
D. Surrounding Protected Resource Land Rating	6
Conclusion.....	9
References	10

List of Figures

Figure 1 Project Location	2
Figure 2 Zone of Influence	7

List of Tables

Table 1 Land Capability Classification and Storie Index Score	4
Table 2 Project Size Score.....	5
Table 3 Water Resource Availability	6
Table 4 Surrounding Agricultural Lands.....	6
Table 5 Final LESA Score Sheet Summary	9

LAND EVALUATION AND SITE ASSESSMENT

This report is an evaluation of potential impacts to agricultural land associated with a proposal to construct the Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church on a 19.44-acre site located at on the northwest corner of Lugonia Avenue and Dearborn Street in the City of Redlands (APN 0168-161-02 and 03). This report has been prepared by Lilburn Corporation under contract with the City of Redlands as part of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance for the proposed project. Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines identifies the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) Model as an optional method for assessing impacts to agriculture and farmland associated with development projects.

The LESA was prepared in accordance with the California Department of Conservation Office of Land Conservation (1997). LESA is a term used to define an approach for rating the relative quality of land resources based upon specific measurable features. The LESA system is a point-based approach composed of six factors. Two Land Evaluation factors are based upon soil resource quality. Four Site Assessment factors rate the value of the land for agricultural purposes based on the size of the site, water resource availability, surrounding agricultural lands and surrounding protected resource lands. Each factor is separately rated on a 100-point scale and then weighted relative to one another and combined, resulting in a single numeric score with a maximum attainable score of 100 points. It is this project score that becomes the basis for a determination of a project's potential significance, based upon a range of established scoring thresholds¹.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION and SETTING

The Applicant is requesting approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow for the construction and operation of a 163,484 square-foot church on a 19.44-acre site located on the north side of Lugonia Avenue just west of Dearborn Street in the City of Redlands, California. The project site is currently zoned Residential Estate (R-E) and the proposed church is an allowable use per current zoning provided a Conditional Use Permit is approved.

Examination of the project site through the California Important Farmland Finder, revealed that approximately 6.85 acres of the project site is designated Prime Farmland, 12.35 acres is considered Farmland of Statewide Importance, 0.21 acres is listed as Grazing Land, and 0.03 is considered Unique Farmland (see Figure 1 – Project Site Farmland Designations).² The City of Redlands has indicated a LESA is required to evaluate the potential for significant or adverse impacts associated with the loss of agricultural land. If so, mitigation may include the purchase of agricultural land that has been set aside for production in perpetuity.

¹ California Department of Conservation, Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model, 1997

² <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/>, Accessed April 15, 2022.



Figure 1 – Project Site Farmland Designations

LESA EVALUATION

The site was evaluated using the California LESA Model to identify whether the proposed project would meet the threshold criteria as a significant impact to Agricultural Resources under the CEQA Guidelines. The factors used to perform the LESA evaluation are described as follows:

LAND EVALUATION

The Land Evaluation (LE) portion of the LESA Model focuses on two main components that are separately rated:

1. **Land Capability Classification Rating:** The Land Capability Classification (LCC) indicates the suitability of soils for most kinds of crops. Soils are rated from Class I to Class VIII. Soils having the fewest limitations receive the highest rating.
2. **Storie Index Rating:** The Storie Index provides a numeric rating (based upon a 100-point scale) of the relative degree of suitability or value of a given soil for intensive agriculture use. This rating is based upon soil characteristics only.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) survey, Tujunga loamy sand (TuB) (0-5% slopes) is one of the main soil types occurring on approximately 12.56 acres of the 19.44-acre site. This soil is a Capability Class III-e-4 soil with a Storie Index rating of 45.22. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Class III soils have severe limitations which minimizes the selection of plants, requires special conservation practices, or both. The subclass "e" designates that the main limitation is risk of erosion; thus, good management practices are needed to keep erosion to a minimum. Capability units in California are given Arabic numbers that suggest the chief kind of limitations responsible for placement of the soils in the capability class and subclass. In this case, subclass 4 marks a limitation caused by coarse soil texture or excessive gravel.

Another soil type on-site is the Hanford coarse sandy loam (HaC) that occurs on approximately 6.85 acres of the 19.44-acre site. The soil is a Capability Class II-e-1 soil with a Storie Index rating of 86. According to the NRCS, Class II soils have moderate limitations that reduce the choice of plants, and require special conservation practices, or both. The subclass "e" designates that the main limitation is risk of erosion; thus, good management practices are needed to keep erosion to a minimum. The chief limitation is marked as subclass 1, which denotes a potential erosion hazard.

The remaining soil type on-site is the Tujunga gravelly loamy sand (TvC) on approximately 0.03 acres of the site. The soil is a Capability Class IVs-4 soil with a Storie Index rating of 34. According to the NRCS, Class IV soils have severe limitation that make them generally unsuited to cultivation and restrict their use largely to pasture or range, woodland or wildlife habitat. Subclass "s" notes that limitation is mainly due to shallow, droughty, or stony potential. The Arabic number 4 suggests that the chief limitation is caused by coarse soil texture or excessive gravel.

The LESA Model assigns ratings to each land capability class and multiplies that number by the proportion of the project area that contains each soil class to find the Land Capability Classification score. A Storie Index score is calculated by multiplying the proportion of the project within each soil type by the soil type’s Storie Index rating. Table 1 provides a summary of the Land Evaluation (LE) scores.³ In this case, Class IIe-1 soils have a LCC Rating of 90, Class IIIe-4 soils have an LCC rating of 70 and Class IVs-4 have a LCC rating of 40. Since the project site is composed of three different capability classes and three different corresponding Storie Indexes, the sum of these provides a total score that reflects the portion and occurrence of the soil map units on the project site.

Table 1
Land Capability Classification (LCC) and Storie Index Score

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Soil Map Unit	Acres	Proportion of Project Area	LCC	LCC Rating	LCC Score	Storie Index	Storie Score
TuB	12.56	0.646	IIIe-4	70	45.22	70	45.22
HaC	6.85	0.352	IIe-1	90	31.68	86	30.27
TvC	0.03	0.002	IVs-4	40	0.08	34	0.068
TOTALS	19.44	1.0		LCC Total Score	76.98	Storie Index Total Score	75.56

SITE ASSESSMENT

The California LESA Model includes the following four Site Assessment (SA) factors that are separately rated:

- Project Size Rating
- Water Resources Availability Rating
- Surrounding Agricultural Land Rating
- Surrounding Protected Resource Land Rating

A. Project Size Rating

The project size rating recognizes the role that farm size plays in the viability of commercial agricultural operations. In general, larger farming operations provide greater flexibility in farm management and marketing decisions. Further, they tend to have a greater economic impact

³ The final LE and Site Assessment (SA) scores are entered into the Final LESA Score Sheet as shown in Table 5, later in this report.

through direct employment and upon supporting industries that include farm equipment operators, fertilizer/pesticide vendors and food processors.

To define agricultural productivity, the size of the farming operation is considered as well as the proportion of different quality lands comprising the total acreage. Lands with higher quality soils facilitate greater management and cropping flexibility and have the potential to provide higher economic return per acre unit than land with lower quality soils. Thus, rather than rely upon a single acreage figure in the Project Size rating, the project is divided into three acreage groupings based upon possible LCC ratings. Under the Project Size rating, relatively fewer acres of high quality soils are required to achieve a maximum Project Size score. Alternatively, a maximum score on lesser quality soils could also achieve a maximum Project Size score. Table 2 summarizes the Project Size score for the proposed project. As shown, the 19.44-acre site has Class II, Class III and Class IV soils with a corresponding Project Size score of 10.

Table 2
Project Size Score

	LCC CLASS I-II	LCC CLASS III	LCC CLASS IV-VIII
Total Acres	6.85	12.56	0.03
Project Size Scores	0	10	0

B. Water Resources Availability Rating

The Water Resource Availability Rating is based upon the availability of water sources that supply the project site and then determining whether restrictions in supply are likely to take place in years characterized as periods of drought and non-drought.

The 19.44-acre site is currently served by a well water; additionally, a municipal water supply is provided by the City of Redlands with distribution mains in Lugonia Avenue and Dearborn Street. As referenced, without water for irrigation purposes, the soils would not achieve the Class II, III and IV ratings. For the purposes of this discussion, it is assumed an uninterrupted supply of water is available for irrigation. Thus, the site was given the highest Water Resource Availability Rating (i.e., 100) due to the consistent water availability delivery. The project site has no known physical or economic restrictions that could alter water supply during either drought or non-drought years. Table 3 summarizes the Water Resources Availability score.

Table 3
Water Resource Availability

Water Source	Proportion of Project Area	Water Availability Score	Weighted Availability Score
Well water	100%	100	100
Total Water Resource Score			100

C. Surrounding Agricultural Land Rating

The Surrounding Agricultural Land Rating is designed to provide a measurement of the level of agricultural land use within the Zone of Influence (ZOI) of the project site. The “Zone of Influence” is defined as land within one-quarter mile from the project site boundary. Parcels that are intersected by the 0.25-mile buffer are included in their entirety. Based upon the percentage of agricultural land in the ZOI, the project site is assigned a Surrounding Agricultural Land score. The LESA Model rates the potential significance of the conversion of an agricultural parcel that has a large proportion of surrounding land in agricultural production more highly than one that has a relatively small percentage of surrounding land in agricultural production.

Land to the east is composed of a residential tract with minimal buffering agriculture as part of the development. Property to the south of the project site is entirely residential. Land to the west is graded and permitted for a residential development, and land to the north includes both residential and agricultural uses. Figure 2 depicts the ZOI within 0.25 miles of the project site boundary. Per the LESA Instruction Manual, because less than 40 percent of the surrounding land is used for agricultural production, the Surrounding Agricultural Land Score for the proposed project is zero as shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Surrounding Agricultural Lands

Total Acreage within “Zone of Influence”	Acres in Agricultural Production	Acres of Protected Resource Land	Percent in Agriculture	Percent Protected Resources Land	Surrounding Agricultural Land Score	Surrounding Protected Resource Land Score
277	58.2	10	21%	3.7%	0	0

D. Surrounding Protected Resource Land Rating

The Surrounding Protected Resource Land Rating is an extension of the Surrounding Agricultural Land Rating and is scored in a similar manner. Protected resource lands are those

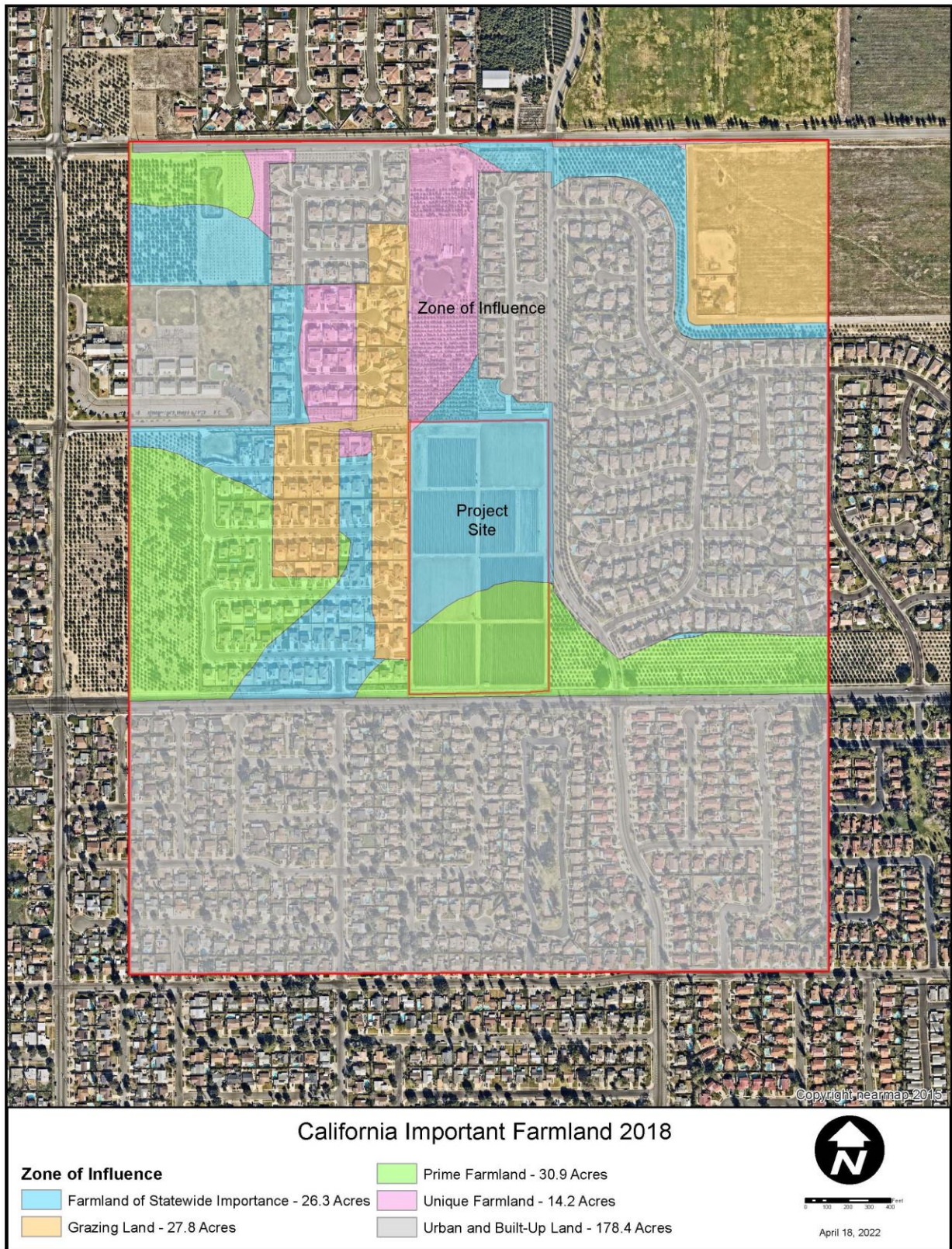


Figure 2 – Project Zone of Influence

lands with long-term use restrictions that are compatible with or supportive of agricultural uses of land. Included among them are the following:

- Williamson Act contracted land;
- Publicly owned lands maintained as park, forest, or watershed resources; and
- Lands with agricultural, wildlife habitat, open space, or other natural resource easements that restrict the conversion of such land to urban or industrial uses.

Approximately ten (10) acres of land in protected land resources (i.e., under Williamson Act Contracts) are located within 0.25 miles of the site. This area comprises approximately 3.7 percent of the total acreage in the ZOI (277 acres). Per the LESA Instruction Guide, since less than 40 percent of the surrounding land is protected, the Surrounding Protected Resource Land Rating score is zero.

CONCLUSION

The LESA Model is weighted so that one-half of the total score is derived from the LE and one-half from the SA. As shown in Table 5, the LE sub-score is 38.13, while the SA sub-score is 16.5. The final LESA score is 54.63. As discussed in Section IV of the LESA Instruction Manual, a final LESA score between 40 and 59 is considered significant only if both the LE and SA sub-scores are each greater than or equal to 20 points. In this case, the LE sub-score is greater than 20 points (38.13); however, the SA sub-score is less than 20 (16.5). Thus, the project would have a less than significant impact on agricultural resources. Therefore, no mitigation for agricultural impacts would be required should the project be developed as proposed.

Table 5
Final LESA Score Sheet Summary

	Factor Rating (0-100 Points)	Factor Weighting (Total = 1.00)	Weighted Factor Rating
Land Evaluation (LE)			
1. Land Capability Classification (LCC Rating)	76.98	0.25	19.24
2. Storie Index Rating	75.56	0.25	18.89
LE Sub-score			38.13
Site Assessment (SA)			
1. Project Size Rating	10	0.15	1.5
2. Water Resource Availability Rating	100	0.15	15
3. Surrounding Agricultural Land Rating	0	0.15	0
4. Surrounding Protected Resource Lands Rating	0	0.05	0
SA Sub-score			16.50
TOTAL			54.63

REFERENCES

California Department of Conservation, *California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model, Instruction Manual*, 1997.

City of Redlands, General Plan, 2017.

United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, Soil Survey of San Bernardino County Southwestern Part, California, Sheet 9 (Redlands Quadrangle), January 1980.