

4.2 Agricultural Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-Than-Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
<p>In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland.</p>				
<p>Would the project:</p>				
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 non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regional Setting

The Project sites are located within the cities of Montebello and Monterey Park. Both cities are within the greater Southern California area of Los Angeles County, which has a total land area of nearly 2.6 million ac. While urbanized, Southern California has twice as much farm-related employment as any other region in the state. Despite the large metropolitan areas, Los Angeles County, in 1998 ranked 24th in agricultural production in the state, with a total gross production value of \$260.5 million. The state's farms directly or indirectly support approximately 120,000 jobs in Southern California. The top five crops in Los Angeles County, by value, included: ornamental trees and shrubs, bedding plants, dry onions, root vegetable and peaches (L.A. County Farm Bureau 2000).

Local Setting

While the County of Los Angeles contains abundant agricultural resources, the cities of Montebello and Monterey Park do not possess active agricultural lands. The City of Montebello is predominately comprised of residential uses (over 55 percent of the land area designated in the 1984 City of Montebello Land Use Plan is designated for residential use) (Montebello General Plan 1984). The area surrounding the project area is dominated by residential and recreational uses.

The Main Facility contains a parcel consisting of two lots, located in the southern portion of the City of Monterey Park (south of I-60) that is currently zoned Manufacturing (M) (Monterey Park General Plan 1990). The Preliminary Draft Land Use Policy Map (Monterey Park 2000) proposes to re-designate that parcel as Open Space (OS). The area directly to the west of the SCG parcel is the Operating Industries Inc. Landfill Superfund site (OII), and is also proposed as for an OS land use designation by the City of Monterey Park.

Up until the 1950s, the Main Facility was mined as a sand and gravel aggregate quarry. The portion of the Main Facility (28 ac) located within the City of Montebello is zoned Residential Agriculture (RA), however, there have been no agricultural uses for the site over the last 50 years. The RA zone may be used as a transitional classification for open or agricultural land pending classification (Montebello City Code Chapter 17.12). Permitted uses include single-family detached dwellings and accessory uses.

The East Site (11 ac site) parcel within the City of Montebello is zoned Residential Agriculture Overlay (RAO), but has been primarily a somewhat undisturbed, hilly site, with steep slopes, a paved road and nine gas wells. The Oil and Gas Production District overlay permitted uses include the drilling, re-drilling and servicing of oil and gas wells and related equipment, as well as any use permitted in the underlying zone (Montebello City Code Chapter 17.44). This parcel has had no agricultural use within the history of the SCG operation of the MGSF.

The Townsite lots (14 lots scattered throughout the surrounding neighborhood) have no classified soil suitable for nursery or other agricultural uses. These lots are assumed to be without natural soils while some natural soils persist in the Main Facility, Monterey Park Lots, and the East Site. The lots are planted with landscape species typical of the landscaping found in the yards of the surrounding neighborhood. Each parcel contains a paved driveway, a well head and machinery.

REGULATORY SETTING

State law requires general plans to provide for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, including soils. General plans must also provide for the comprehensive and long-range preservation and conservation of open space land, which includes agricultural and range lands. The general plans of the cities of Montebello and Monterey Park do not include provisions for agricultural lands or uses.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Significance Criteria

The following outlines the significance criteria utilized used to assess potential environmental effects based on established regulatory frameworks or established science:

- Use of lands designated for agricultural uses for uses other than those defined as agriculturally focused would constitute at a minimum a potentially significant environmental impact.
- Use of lands zoned for agriculture or use of lands under Williamson Act contract for activities not deemed consistent with the intent of such provisions would constitute at a minimum a potentially significant environmental impact.
- Use of lands that could directly or indirectly result in changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland, to non-agricultural use would constitute at a minimum a potentially significant environmental impact.

Decommissioning, Sale and Future Development

Checklist Question a) The Project sites are not considered Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance even though zoned by the City of Montebello for RA and RAO, and thereby for A-agriculture. Decommissioning and subsequent development of the lands for urban uses would therefore not result in the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use.

Checklist Question b) The Project sites are zoned for agricultural use but a Williamson Act contract is not in place for the Project area. Decommissioning does not conflict with the current zoning designation. Subsequent development of the lands for urban uses allowed by current zoning would also not result in uses inconsistent with agricultural zoning nor it be in conflict with lands under Williamson Act contract. This is a less-than-significant impact.

Checklist Question c) The Project sites are not located near lands that are considered farmland by state, regional, or local agencies. Decommissioning and subsequent development of the lands for urban uses would therefore not result in uses inconsistent or detrimental to existing or future agricultural activities in the area nor would the decommissioning or subsequent development promote or accelerate the conversion of such existing agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses.

MITIGATION MEASURES

None required.