Environment | Planning | Development Solutions, Inc.

Date:	April 7, 2026
Prepared by:	EPD Solutions, Inc.
To:	Erik Pfahler, Borstein Enterprises
Subject:	**Land Evaluation and Site Assessment for the Nerio Farms Project**

1. Land Evaluation and Site Assessment

This report is an evaluation of potential impacts to agricultural land associated with the proposed Nerio Farms Project (Project). This report has been prepared by EPD Solutions, Inc., 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 thresholds.

2. Project Overview

Environmental Setting and Location

The Project site is located at 4257 Phillips Boulevard in the unincorporated area of the City of Chino in San Bernardino County, at the southeast corner of Pipeline Avenue and Phillips Boulevard. The Project site encompasses approximately 24.16 acres across three parcels identified as Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 1013-161-01, 1013-111-01, and 1013-111-02. Figure 1, *Aerial View*, provides an aerial view of the Project site.

The site is predominantly disturbed agricultural land and includes an active plant nursery in the southwestern portion. Developed areas include a cellular communications facility in the northwest corner and a single-family residence with accessory structures in the northeast corner.

The site has a San Bernardino County General Plan land use designation of Very Low Density Residential (VLDR) and is zoned Single Family Residential 1-Acre Minimum (RS-1). Surrounding land uses consist of residential and limited agricultural uses to the east, residential uses to the north and south, and residential uses and a church facility to the west.

The California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (2022) designates 24.16 acres of the site as Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on Figure 2, *Farmland Classifications*.

Project Description for Proposed Project

The proposed Project would develop the 24.16-acre site with 90 single-family residential units, resulting in a density of 3.7 dwelling units per acre. The Project also includes offsite sewer extension up Pipeline Avenue and Norton Avenue. The project requires approval of a General Plan Amendment, Tentative Parcel Map

and a Zone Change from the County of San Bernardino. Project implementation would result in the conversion of approximately 24.16 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use.

3. California LESA Model 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.

4a. Land Evaluation Factors

The Land Evaluation portion of the LESA Model considers two features that are separately rated:

- **The Land Capability Classification (LCC) Rating:** The LCC indicates the suitability of soils for most kinds of crops. Soils are rated on a scale from Class I to Class VIII. Soils having the fewest limitations receive the highest rating.

- **The Storie Index Rating:** The Storie Index provides a numeric rating (based on a 100-point scale) of the relative degree of suitability or value of a given soil for intensive agriculture use. The rating is based on soil characteristics only.

Table A details the LCC and Storie Index rating for the soil type present on the Project's agriculture site. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Web Soil survey and as shown in Figure 3, *Soils Map*, the 24.16 acres of farmland within the Project area are comprised of entirely of Tujunga loamy sand (0-5 percent slopes) (USDA, 2025a,b). This soil is a Capability Class IV-e soil with a Storie Index of 65. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), Class IV soils have very severe limitations that restrict the choice of plants or require very careful management, or both. The subclass "e" designates that the main limitation for this soil group is risk of erosion. Refer to Table A, below, for the LCC and Storie Index Rating Scores of the Project site.

Table A. Land Capability Classification (LCC) and Storie Index Scores

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Soil Type[1]	**Project Acres**	**Portion of Project Area**	**LCC[2]**	**LCC Rating**	**LCC Score (C x E)**	**Storie Index**	**Storie Index Score (C x G)**
Tujunga loamy sand, 0 to 5 percent slopes	24.2	1.0	IVe	50	50	65	65
Total:	24.2	1.0	**LCC Total Score:**		50	**Storie Index Total Score:**	65

[1] The Soil Type information and acreage, LCC and Storie Index information were determined from the current soil survey information available at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS, 2025b).
[2] The LCC Rating was determined using the the LCC Point Rating Table 2 from the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model Instruction Manual (DOC, 1997).

4b. Site Assessment Factors

The LESA Model includes four Site Assessment factors that are separately rated and are as follow:

A. Project Size Rating
B. Water Resources Availability Rating
C. Surrounding Agricultural Land Rating
D. Surrounding Protected Resource Land Rating

A. Project Size Rating

Project Size Rating recognizes the role that farm size plays in the viability of commercial agricultural operations. In general, larger farming operations can provide greater flexibility in farm management and marketing decisions and tend to have greater impacts upon the local economy through direct employment (California Department of Conservation, 1997).

In terms of agricultural productivity, the size of the farming operation can be considered not just from its total acreage, but the acreage of different quality lands that comprise the operation. Lands with higher quality soils lend themselves to greater diversity in crop selection and the potential for greater economic return per acre unit. The Project Size rating is determined by summing the acres in a project that fall within one of three consolidated LCC categories. The site contains 24.16 acres of LCC Class IV-VIII soils. Based on LESA Instruction Manual Table 3, which states that the highest score generated across all the columns becomes the overall project size score, a Project Size score of 24.2 is applicable to the site.

Table B. Project Size Score

	I	J	K
	LCC Class I-II	**LCC Class III**	**LCC Class IV-VIII**
	0	0	24.2
Total	0	0	24.2
Project Size Scores	0	0	24.2
Highest Project Size Score[1]	**24.2**		

[1] Project Size Score was determined from the Project Size Scoring Table from the LESA Instruction Manual (DOC, 1997)

B. Water Resources Availability Rating

The Water Resources Availability Rating is based on the water sources that supply the agricultural site and then determining whether different restrictions in supply would take place in years characterized as being periods of drought and non-drought. According to the landowner, water is obtained from a well located in the northeastern portion of the Project site and distributed through the site through an onsite irrigation system. Based on the presence of this infrastructure, irrigated agricultural production is considered feasible. No evidence of physical restrictions, such as interruptions in water supply, reduced irrigation season, or degraded water quality, was identified. Similarly, because water is supplied by an on-site well, no economic restrictions related to water cost are known that would limit agricultural use. Thus, the site was given the highest Water Resource Availability Rating (i.e., 100) due to the consistent water availability (Table C).

Table C. Water Resources Availability

A	B	C	D	E
Project Proportion	**Water Source**	**Proportion of Project Area**	**Water Availability Score[1]**	**Weighted Availability Score (C X D)**
1	On-site well	1.0	100	100
			Total Water Resource Score[1]:	100

[1]Water Resources Score was determined from the Water Resources Availability Scoring Table from the LESA Instruction Manual (DOC, 1997)

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 north, south, and west of the Project site is composed entirely of residential uses except for one church facility to the west. Land to the west of the Project site is mostly comprised of residential uses with some parcels used for agricultural uses. Figure 4, *Project Zone of Influence*, shows the ZOI within 0.25 miles of the Project site boundary. The total acreage within the Project's ZOI is 301.1-acres. Figure 5, *Project Zone of Influence Surrounding Agricultural Land,* shows parcels within the ZOI that are in agricultural production. As shown, there are 13.1 acres of Grazing Land and 27.6 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance within the ZOI. According to the LESA Instruction Manual, since 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 D.

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 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
- Lands with agricultural, wildlife habitat, open space, or other natural resource easements that restrict the conversion of such land to urban or industrial uses.

There are no Williamson Act Contracts in effect on any parcel in the Project site's ZOI (County of San Bernardino, 2019). Additionally, there are no publicly owned lands maintained as park, forest, or watershed resources within the Project's ZOI. Further, there are no lands with agricultural, wildlife habitat, open space, or other natural resource easements that restrict the conversion of such land to urban or industrial uses within the Project's ZOI. 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.

Table D. Surrounding Agricultural and Protected Resources Land

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Zone of Influence					Surrounding Agricultural Land Score[1]	Surrounding Protected Resource Land Score[1]
Total Acres	Acres in Agriculture	Acres of Protected Resource Land	Percent in Agriculture (B/A)	Percent Protected Resource Land (C/A)		
301.1	40.7	0	13.5%	0	0	0

[1]The Surrounding Agricultural and Protected Resources Land Score was determined using the Surrounding Agricultural Land Rating Scoring Table and Surrounding Protected Resource Land Rating from the LESA Instruction Manual (California Department of Conservation 1997)

4. Weighting of Factors and Final LESA Scoring

The final project scoring is based on a scale of 100 points, with a given project being capable of deriving a maximum of 50 points from the Land Evaluation factors and 50 points from the Site Assessment factors. Scoring thresholds are based upon the total LESA score as well as the component Land Evaluation and Site Assessment subscores. Table E shows the Final LESA score of the Project's agriculture site.

Table E. Final LESA Score Sheet

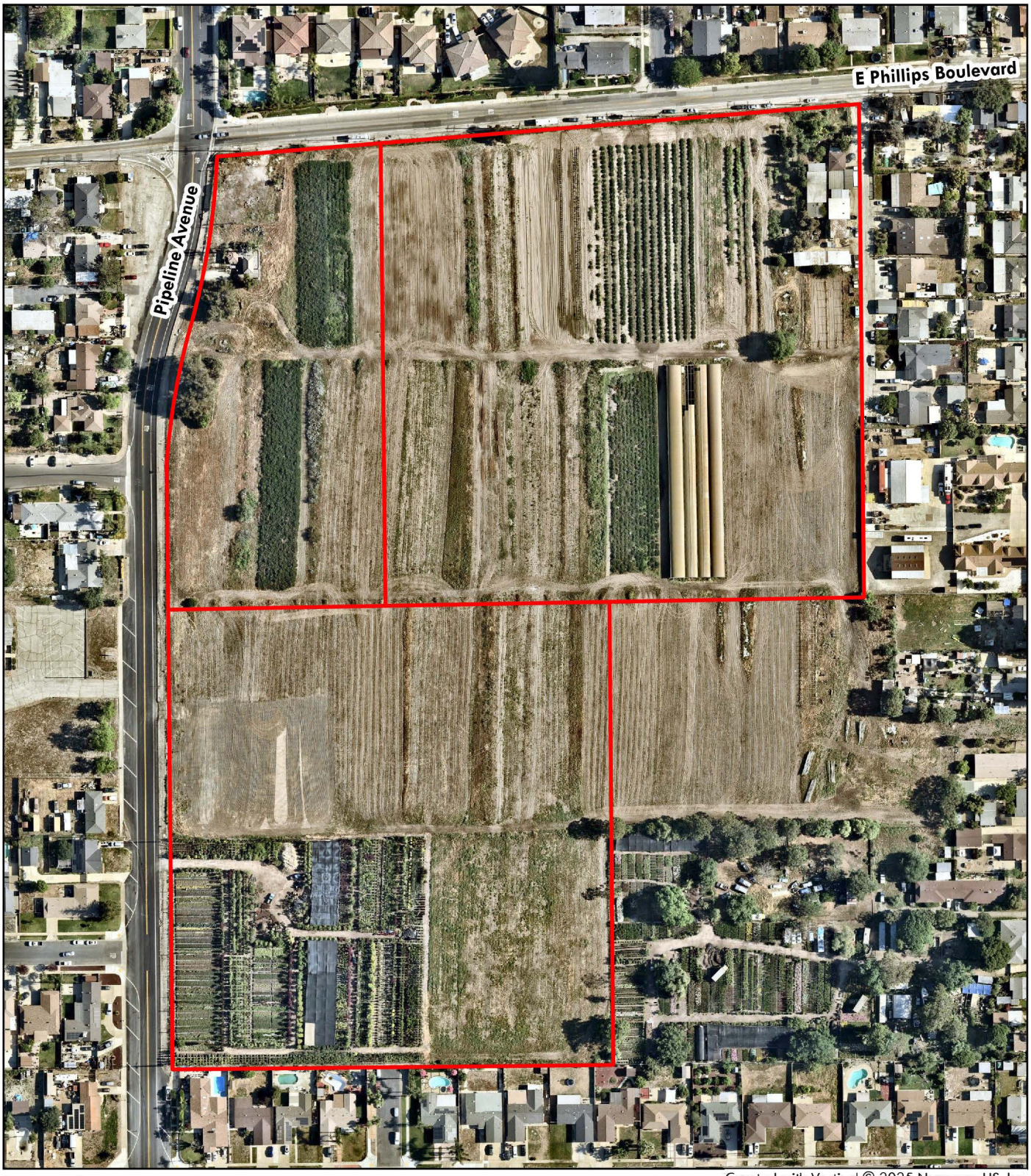
	Factor Scores	Factor Weight	Weighted Factor Scores
Land Evaluation Factors			
Land Capability Classification	50	0.25	12.5
Storie Index Rating	65	0.25	16.3
		Land Evaluation Subtotal	28.8
Site Assessment Factors			
Project Size	24.2	0.15	3.6
Water Resource Availability	100	0.15	15
Surrounding Agricultural Land	0	0.15	0
Protected Resource Land	0	0.05	0
		Site Assessment Subtotal	18.6
		Final LESA Score	**47.4**

Table F. LESA Model Significance Determination

Total LESA Score	Scoring Decision
0-39 Points	Not considered significant
40-59 Points	Considered significant *only* if LE *and* SA subscores are each *greater* than or equal to 20 points
60-70 Points	Considered significant *unless* either LE *or* SA subscore is *less* than 20 points
80-100 Points	Considered significant

The LESA Model is weighted so that one-half of the total score is derived from the Land Evaluation and one-half from the Site Assessment. As shown in Table E, the Land Evaluation sub-score is 28.8, while the Site Assessment sub-score is 18.6. The final LESA score is 47.4. 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 Land Evaluation and Site Assessment sub-scores are each greater than or equal to 20 points. In this case, the Land Evaluation sub-score is greater than 20 points (28.8); however, the Site Assessment sub-score is less than 20 (18.6). 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.

Figure 1: Aerial View



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Legend

Project APNs

0 200 400 US Feet

N

Figure 2: Farmland Classifications



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Legend

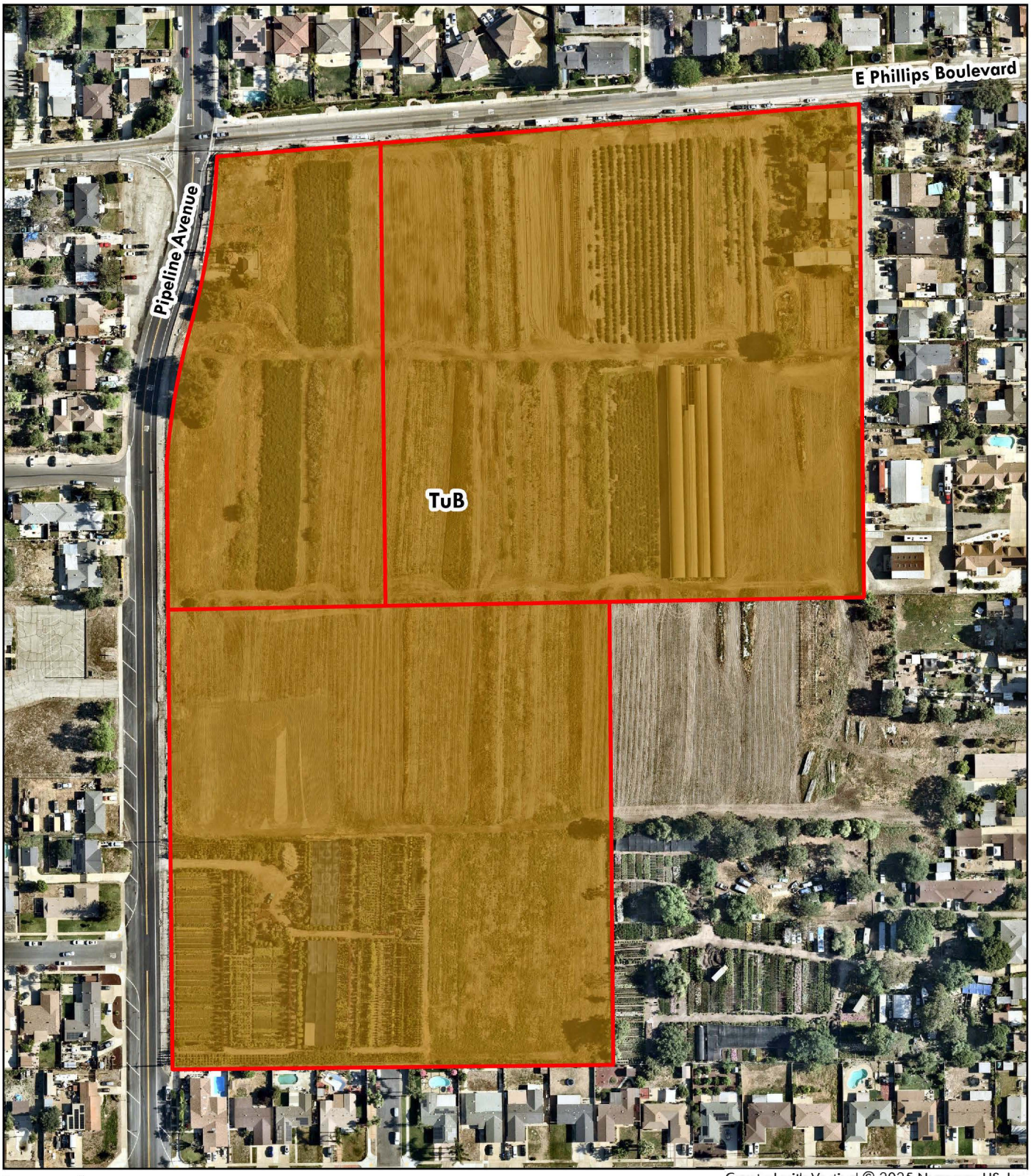
Project APNs

Farmland of Statewide Importance

Urban and Built-Up Land

0 200 400 US Feet

N



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Legend

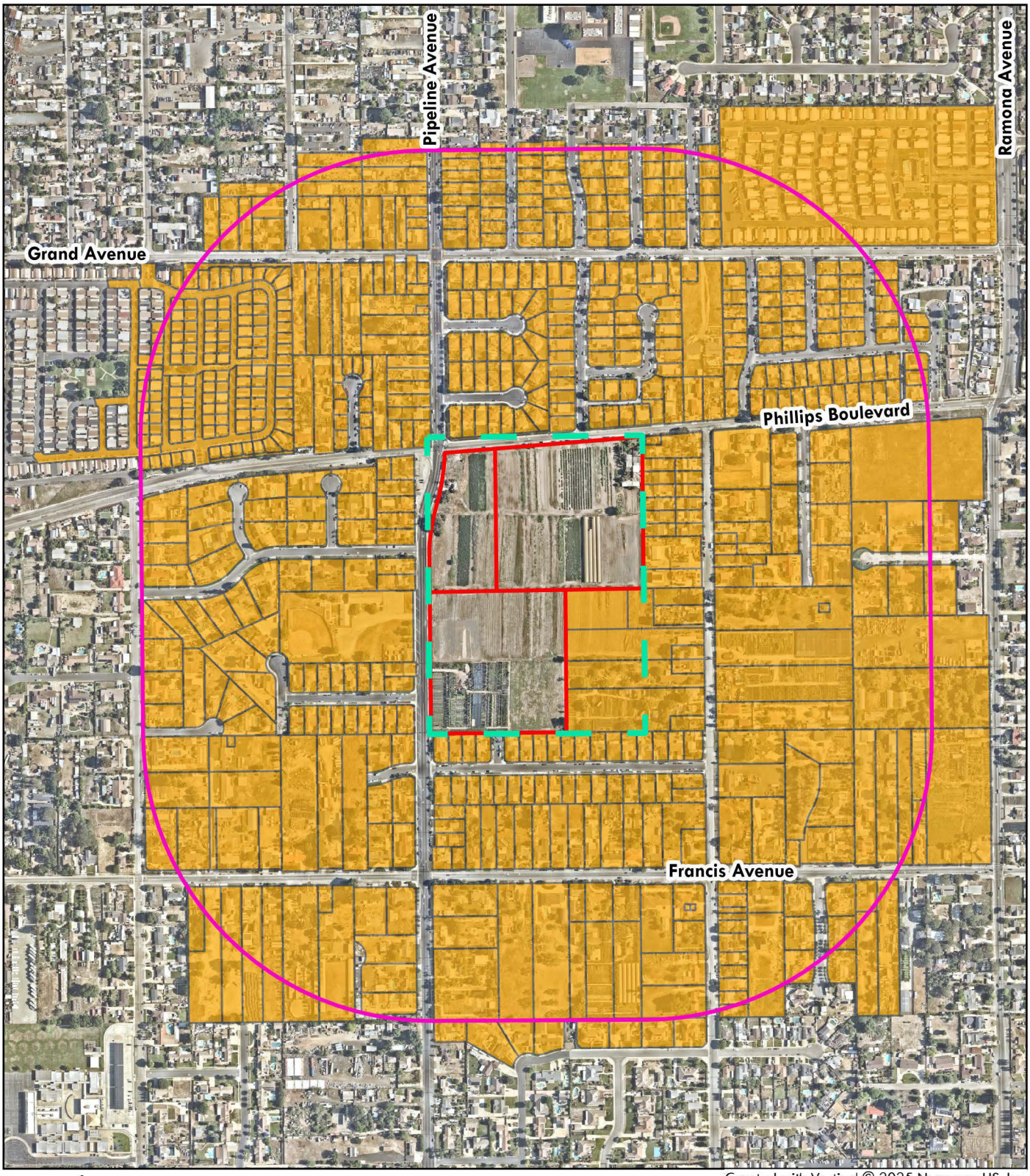
Project APNs

TUB - Tujunga loamy sand, 0 to 5 percent slopes

0 200 400 US Feet

N

Figure 4: Project Zone of Influence



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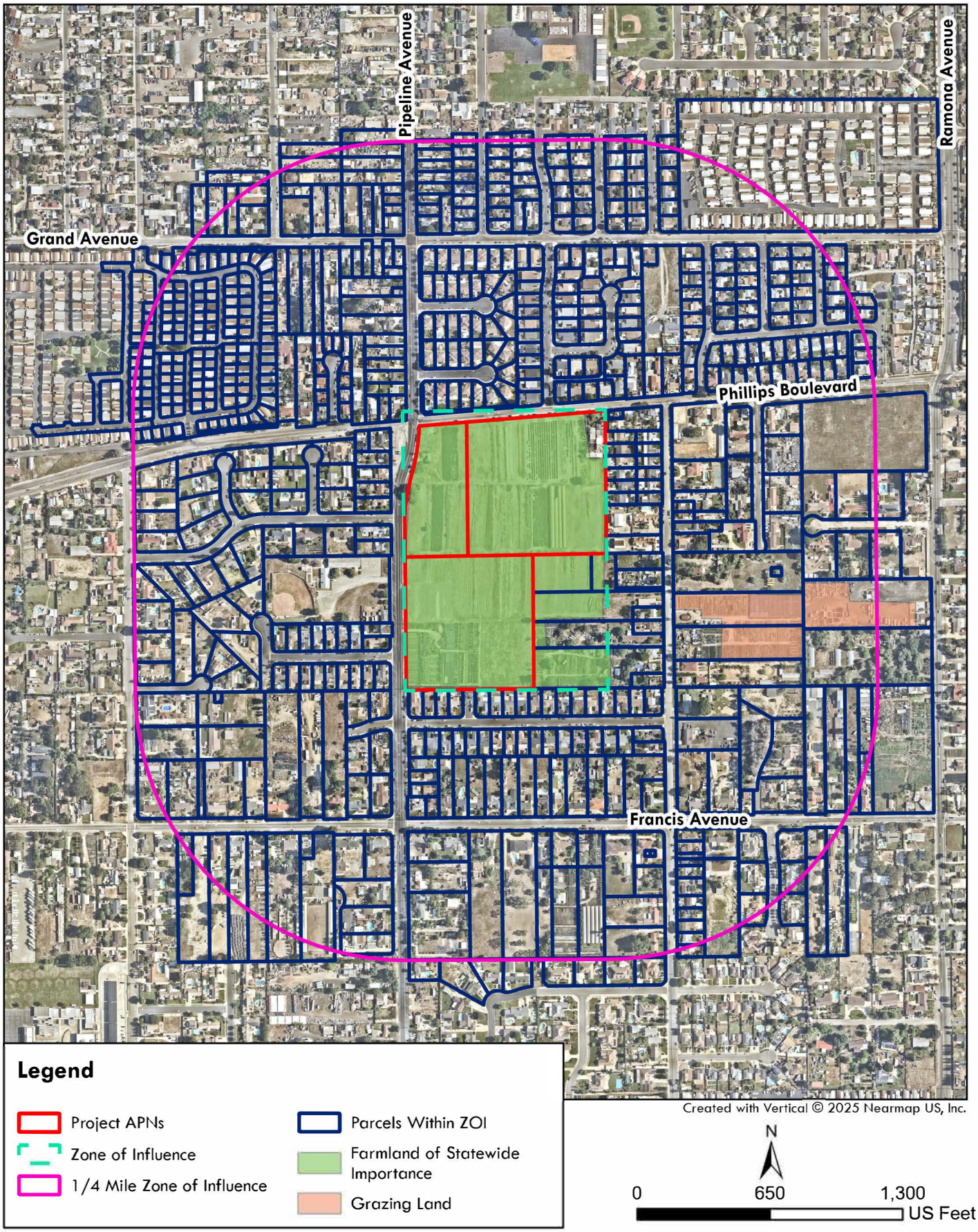
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- Project APNs
- Zone of Influence
- 1/4 Mile Zone of Influence
- APNs within Zone of Influence

0 650 1,300 US Feet

N

Figure 5: Project Zone of Influence Surrounding Agricultural Land



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