

B. Agricultural Resources

Environmental Setting

The project site is a vacant brownfield that was the site of the former Union Pacific Railroad switching and maintenance yard. Prior to the early 1900s and use by the railroad, the property was tidal mudflat. The land was systematically filled to support the railroad use. There is no evidence that the site was ever used for agricultural, or aquaculture, purposes.

Environmental Analysis

Significance Criteria

For the purposes of this EIR, implementation of the proposed project would have a significant effect on agricultural resources if, based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, it would:

1. 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;
2. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or conflict with a Williamson Act contract; or
3. Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use.

Regulatory Framework

The following standards and regulations govern agricultural resources and are used to measure impacts.

California Department of Conservation Important Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The California Department of Conservation administers the Important Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), which evaluates the quality of farmlands throughout the State of California.

General Plan and Local Coastal Program

The City of Eureka's adopted General Plan and adopted Local Coastal Program together formalize a long-term vision for the physical evolution of Eureka, and they outline the policies, standards, and programs that guide day-to-day decisions concerning Eureka's development in the coastal zone. The Policy Consistency Analysis, found in Section IV.I, *Land Use and Planning*, provides an evaluation of the Marina Center project's conformity with the policies of the adopted General Plan and Land Use Plan portion of the adopted Local Coastal Program.

Coastal Zoning Regulations

The Coastal Zoning regulations which implement the policies of the Land Use Plan portion of the adopted Local Coastal Program are codified in Chapter 156 of the Eureka Municipal Code (EMC) and are also referenced as Article 29, Part 1, Section 10-5.29 et. seq. of the zoning regulations of the City for the coastal zone.

Zoning Regulations

The Zoning Regulations of the City of Eureka are found in Chapter 155 of the EMC and are adopted pursuant to the City Charter to protect the public health, safety, peace, comfort, convenience, prosperity and general welfare.

Project Impacts

Impact B-1: Would the Marina Center 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 non-agricultural use?

A review of the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) website, <http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Index.aspx>, provides information about Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Humboldt County is not included in the digital map database.

The FMMP uses United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Resource Conservation Service soil survey information, land inventory and monitoring criteria to classify most of the state's agricultural regions into five agricultural and three non-agricultural land types. Included in the five agricultural land classifications are Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland Lands, and Farmland of Statewide Importance.

The definitions used in preparing the Important Farmland Maps and the Farmland Conversion Report were developed by the USDA Soil Conservation Service (SCS) as part of their nationwide Land Inventory and Monitoring (LIM) system. These LIM definitions have been modified for use in California. The most significant modification is that Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance must be irrigated.

Prime Farmland is 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 high yields of crops when treated and managed, including water management, according to current farming methods. Prime Farmland must have been used for the production of irrigated crops at some time during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date. It does not include publicly owned lands for which there is an adopted policy preventing agricultural use.

Unique Farmland is land that does not meet the criteria for Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance and that has been used for the production of specific high economic value

crops at some time during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high quality and/or high yields of a specific crop when treated and managed according to current farming methods. Examples of such crops may include oranges, olives, avocados, rice, grapes, and cut flowers. It does not include publicly owned lands for which there is an adopted policy preventing agricultural use.

Farmland of Statewide Importance must meet all the following criteria:

- a. Water. The soils have xeric, ustic, or aridic (torric) moisture regimes in which the available water capacity is at least 3.5 inches (8.89 centimeters) within a depth of 60 inches (1.52 meters) of soil; or within the root zone if it is less than 60 inches (1.52 meters) deep. They have a developed irrigation supply that is dependable and of adequate quality. A dependable water supply is one that is available for the production of the commonly grown crops in 8 out of 10 years.
- b. Soil Temperature Range. The soils have a temperature regime that is frigid, mesic, thermic, or hyperthermic (pergelic and cryic regimes are excluded). These are soils that, at a depth of 20 inches (50.8 centimeters), have a mean annual temperature higher than 32° F (0° C). In addition, the mean summer temperature at this depth in soils with an O horizon is higher than 47° F (8° C); in soils that have no O horizon, the mean summer temperature is higher than 59° F (15° C).
- c. Acid-Alkali Balance. The soils have a pH between 4.5 and 9.0 in all horizons within a depth of 40 inches (1.02 meters) or in the root zone if the root zone is less than 40 inches (1.02 meters) deep.
- d. Water Table. The soils have no water table or have a water table that is maintained at a sufficient depth during the cropping season to allow cultivated crops common to the area to be grown.
- e. Soil Sodium Content. The soils can be managed so that, in all horizons within a depth of 40 inches (1.02 meters), or in the root zone if the root zone is less than 40 inches (1.02 meters) deep, during part of each year the conductivity of the saturation extract is less than 16 millimhos per centimeter (mmhos/cm) and the exchangeable sodium percentage is less than 25.
- f. Flooding. Flooding of the soil (uncontrolled runoff from natural precipitation) during the growing season occurs infrequently, taking place less often than once every 2 years.
- g. Erodibility. The product of K (erodibility factor) multiplied by the percent of slope is less than 3.0.
- h. Rock Fragment Content. Less than 10 percent of the upper 6 inches (15.24 centimeters) in these soils consists of rock fragments coarser than 3 inches (7.62 centimeters). Farmland of Statewide Importance does not have any restrictions regarding permeability or rooting depth.

Based on the definitions above, the project site contains no Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. The site has not been used recently or historically for growing

crops. Therefore, the project would not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on maps prepared pursuant to the FMMP, to non-agricultural use.

Mitigation

None recommended.

Finding of Significance

The Marina Center project would have *no impact* on Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland).

Impact B-2: Would the Marina Center project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or conflict with a Williamson Act contract?

The existing zoning for the property is predominantly “Public” with some lands zoned for limited industrial or service commercial use. Agriculture is not listed as a principal or conditional use in the Public zone district. The limited industrial and service commercial zoning would not permit the growing of crops or other agriculture activities, although the limited industrial zoning would accommodate food products manufacturing, milling or processing. The proposed zoning would not support agriculture use. Therefore, the project would not conflict with zoning for agriculture use.

The project site contains wetlands, and the Coastal Zoning regulations, EMC § 156.052(M), describe the permitted uses and development allowed in grazed or farmed wetlands. However, because the on-site wetlands are not used for grazing or farming, the use limitations are not applicable.

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965--commonly referred to as the Williamson Act--enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. The purpose of the Williamson Act is to preserve agricultural and open space lands by discouraging premature and unnecessary conversion to urban uses. The project site is not zoned for agricultural use and is not subject to, nor meets the criteria for inclusion in, a Williamson Act contract.

Mitigation

None recommended.

Finding of Significance

The Marina Center project would have *no impact* on existing zoning for agricultural use or Williamson Act contracts.

Impact B-3: Would the Marina Center project involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?

As discussed above, there are no existing Farmlands on the project site or in the vicinity of the project site. The closest agricultural use is oyster aquaculture in Humboldt Bay and the project would have no impact on oyster aquaculture.

Mitigation

None recommended.

Finding of Significance

The Marina Center project would have *no impact* on the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use.

Cumulative Impacts

Impact B.4: Would the Marina Center project, in conjunction with cumulative development, adversely affect agricultural resources?

Because the project would have no impact on agricultural resources, it would not contribute either individually or cumulatively to adverse impacts on agricultural resources.

Mitigation

None recommended.

Finding of Significance

The Marina Center project would have *no impact* on agricultural resources and would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to cumulative impacts on agricultural resources.

References – Agricultural Resources

California Department of Conservation, Important Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), <http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Index.aspx>, accessed September 2, 2008.

California Department of Conservation, Williamson Act Program, <http://www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/lca/Pages/Index.aspx>, accessed September 2, 2008.

City of Eureka, 1966, *Eureka Municipal Code*, Adopted May 1966, amended through April 2008.

City of Eureka, 1997. *City of Eureka General Plan*, Adopted February 1997, amended through April 2008.

City of Eureka, 2005, *Eureka Redevelopment Final Program EIR*, prepared by Environmental Science Associates (ESA), January 10, 2005.

Healthy Humboldt Coalition. Additional Comments for Marina Center DEIR, February 25, 2008.