



AWM Initial Study Findings

DATE: 20 May 2024

TO: AJ Bernhardt: Case Planner
Ventura County Resource Management Agency: Planning Division

FROM: Alec Thille, Department of Agriculture/Weights & Measures
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SUBJECT: Project Number: PL23-0094
APN: 620-0-320-165
Applicant: Nichole Garner
Site Address: 4730 Tapo Canyon Rd, Simi Valley, CA 93063

Initial Study: Area of Review: Initial Study Assessment Guidelines, Topic 5b Agricultural Resources-Land Use Incompatibility, hereafter ISAG 5b.

Project Description: Request for Conditional Use Permit for a Large Organics Processing Facility located at 4730 Tapo Canyon Road in the Unincorporated Area of Simi Valley within the Agricultural Exclusive Zone and the Open Space Ventura County General Plan land use designation for a period of 15 years to allow continued operation of the existing soil amendment and composting operations facility and expansion from medium-scale to a large-scale operation. The proposed operation will increase the amount of allowed material on-site to a maximum of 12,500 cubic yards for Green Material transfer/processing facilities in accordance with State limits. The CUP boundary will be expanded from 5.17 AC to 8.88 AC. The facility will add the following uses and equipment:

- Chipping & grinding for green waste only (tree trimming, not residential curbside).
- Portable Scale House Container (8' x 20').
- Portable Truck Scale (10' x 70').

The facility's hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7:00am to 4:00pm, and Saturday, 7:00am to 12:00pm. The business will be closed on Sundays. Other existing activities onsite which do not require a land use permit in the AE zone include the following:

- 2,000 square feet of open storage which includes 3 storage containers (exempt from Open Storage ordinance per Sec. 8107-1.6.5)
- 1 small skiploader and 1 tractor for fire and road maintenance (exempt from Open Storage ordinance per Sec. 8107-1.6.5(b)) (to be removed following CUP approval)

Animal Husbandry:

- 12 goats (unlimited amount of animal husbandry/keeping units allowed on AE land greater than 10 acres per NCZO Sec. 8107-2.5.2) (to be removed following CUP approval)

County of Ventura
Planning Commission Hearing
Case No. PL23-0094

Exhibit 9 - Ventura County Department of Agriculture/
Weights and Measures Memo, dated May 20, 2024

2 storage containers (exempt from Open Storage ordinance per Sec. 8107-1.6.5; to be removed following CUP approval)

Project Location: APN 620-0-320-165

General Plan Designation: Open Space

Area Plan designation: N/a

Zoning classification: OS – 160 ac/AE – 40 ac [HCWC]

Categorical Exemption: The project does not qualify for a Categorical Exemption.

INITIAL STUDY

Section B Project Impacts:

Project Impacts – Agricultural Resources – Land Use Incompatibility

No Impact	Less than Significant	Potentially Significant	Significant
	X		

Cumulative Impacts – Agricultural Resources – Land Use Incompatibility

	X		
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Section C Analysis Determinations:

Adjacent parcel report				
Parcel	General Plan Designation	General Plan Zoning	Area Plan	Important Farmland
6200320105	Open Space	AE-40ac	N/a	Local Importance
6200320175	Open Space	AE-40ac	N/a	N/a
6200320085	Open Space	AE-40ac	N/a	Local Importance
6200320045*	Open Space	OS-160ac	N/a	Unique, Local Importance
*Separated approx. 40 ft. by Tapo Canyon Rd				

5b Agricultural Resources – Land Use Incompatibility

1) Will the proposed project, if not defined as Agriculture or Agricultural Operations in the zoning ordinances, be closer than the threshold distances set forth in Section 5b.C of the Initial Study Assessment Guidelines?

The proposed project, as an organics processing facility, is not an agricultural use. As such, the threshold distances apply. The project boundary is within 41 feet of classified farmland (Unique) on parcel 6200320045, 147 feet of classified farmland (Local Importance) on parcel 6200320085, and 205 feet of classified farmland (Local Importance) on parcel 6200320105. However, the project is eligible for deviation from the threshold distances under criteria:

- **b.** Existing topography eliminates or reduces any land use conflicts
- **h.** Individuals are not continuously present in the proposed structures or use areas

Given the topography screening parcels 6200320125 & 6200320105, the vegetation screening parcel 6200320045, the lack of invasive pest finds in the area, and continuing nature of the project, the project impacts would be **Less Than Significant** with no additional *Conditions of Approval*.

2) Will the proposed project be consistent with the applicable General Plan Goals and Policies for Item 5b of the Initial Study Assessment Guidelines?

General Plan Policy AG-2.1 states that “The County shall ensure that discretionary development adjacent to Agriculturally designated lands does not conflict with agricultural use of those lands”. The proposed project is neither adjacent nor near to Agricultural designated. As such, the policy does not apply to the project.

Section D Impact Mitigation:

No mitigation required.

End of Initial Study