

April 17, 2023

00986.00007.021

Sue Richardson, Director of Community Services  
City of La Mesa, Community Services Department  
4975 Memorial Drive  
La Mesa, CA 91942

**Subject: Biological Resources Letter Report for the La Mesa Waite Park Project**

Dear Ms. Richardson:

This letter report presents the results of a biological resources technical study conducted by HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. (HELIX) for the proposed La Mesa Waite Park project (project) located in the City of La Mesa (City), San Diego County, California. This letter report summarizes the existing biological resources within the site and provides an analysis of the proposed project's impacts in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and other applicable federal, state, and local policies related to biological resources. The City would be the Lead Agency for the project responsible for conducting the environmental review process under CEQA, ensuring the project is consistent with pertinent federal/state laws and local ordinances.

## INTRODUCTION

### Project Location

The project site is located 0.1 mile north of State Route 94 within the City of San Diego County (Figure 1, *Regional Location*). The project site is situated in Township 16 South, Range 2 West on the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute National City quadrangle (Figure 2, *USGS Topography*). Specifically, the project is located at the northwest corner of Waite Drive and Murray Hill Road (Figure 3, *Aerial Photography*).

### Project Description

The project involves the redevelopment of a vacant and disturbed 2.84-acre site into a neighborhood park for the surrounding community. The proposed park would encompass the entirety of the 2.84-acre site and include amenities such as a nature-themed playground, a tot lot playground area, a dog run with a decomposed granite surface, a large lawn area, a fitness zone, a shade structure with picnic tables, and a half-court basketball court. Additionally, an eight-foot-wide accessible concrete walking loop would traverse the project site, connecting the various amenities. Seating nooks and benches would be placed

throughout the loop. The park would also provide a family-style restroom with an accessible outdoor sink and water station with a garage and storage on the back side of the structure.

The project would provide 13 parking spaces located within the site, including two Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible parking spaces. An elevated wooden ramp would be located along the eastern edge of the site, providing a connection to the park for users accessing the site from Murray Hill Road. Concrete stairs would also be provided as a more direct connection. The site would also include a vehicle-accessible driveway and pedestrian-accessible walkways along Waite Drive. Bicycle racks would be provided adjacent to the proposed parking spaces to promote a variety of transportation methods to and from the park. A monumental park sign would be located in the southeastern corner of the site.

Residential properties are located along the western and northwestern boundaries of the project site. The project would replace the existing six-foot-tall, irregular, and dilapidated fence along the western site boundary with an eight-foot-tall uniform wooden fence. The replacement fence would allow for proposed changes in topography, and the increase in fence height would provide adequate screening for the homes to the west and northwest of the site, retaining the desired privacy of the residents. Additionally, the park site naturally drops in grade towards the western edge of the site, which creates an opportunity for a bioretention basin. A bio-retention basin would extend along the entire length of the western edge of the site and would provide stormwater storage for the entire site. The project site would be designed to drain into the proposed bio-retention buffer. The bio-retention basin would be planted with native plants and trees to provide shade for the park, give a natural creek bed look, and increase privacy screening for the surrounding residential homes.

The project would require several utility improvements and upgrades. The electrical services available for the project would be provided by San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) and would have a maximum amperage of 200 Amps. An existing transformer along Waite Drive would be reused, with the installation of a new 200 Amp meter pedestal. This amperage would provide sufficient to power the park and the planned comfort station building. Solar-powered lighting would be provided throughout the pedestrian walkways, the proposed parking lot, and the shaded structure. The project would connect to existing water and sewer lines for the bathroom and water fountains located on-site.

Project landscaping would include a variety of plantings and trees throughout the site. Plant qualities such as resiliency, low-water use, pollinator friendliness, and drought-tolerance would be prioritized. As discussed above, multiple Canary Island Pine trees (*Pinus canariensis*), as well as one Peruvian Pepper tree (*Schinus molle*), exist on the property in good condition. These fully mature trees have a low water usage and would be retained in their locations on-site. The remainder of the site would be landscaped utilizing a mix of native and Mediterranean plant species. Invasive plant species would not be planted on-site.

## METHODS

### Literature Review

A thorough review of relevant maps, federal and state databases, and literature pertaining to biological resources known to occur within the vicinity of the project site was conducted prior to the general biological survey. Recent and historical aerial imagery, USGS topographic maps, soils maps (USDA 2023), and other relevant maps of the project site and vicinity were acquired and reviewed to obtain updated

information on the natural environmental setting. A query of special-status species and habitats databases was also conducted, including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB; CDFW 2023a), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) species records, SanBIOS (SANDAG 2023), California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants (CNPS 2023). Any recorded locations of species, habitat types, wetlands, and other resources were mapped and overlaid onto aerial imagery using Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

## **General Biological Surveys**

HELIX biologist, Shawn Carroll, conducted a general biological survey, including vegetation mapping, for the project site on March 16, 2023.

Vegetation was mapped on a 1 inch=100 feet-scale aerial photograph. The project site was surveyed on foot with the aid of binoculars, and observed or detected plant and animal species were recorded in field notes. Animal identifications were made in the field by direct, visual observation, or indirectly, by detection of calls, burrows, tracks, or scat. Plant identifications were made in the field or in the lab through comparison with voucher specimens or photographs. Data from the field maps were digitized into a geographic information system using ArcGIS. Comprehensive lists of plant and animal species that were incidentally observed or detected are provided in Attachments A and B, respectively. These lists of species identified are not necessarily comprehensive accounts of all species that occur in the project site, as species that are nocturnal, secretive, or seasonally restricted may not have been observed.

## **Nomenclature**

Nomenclature for this report is from Baldwin et al. (2012) for plants, Holland (1986) and Oberbauer (2008) for vegetation communities; Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles (SSAR; 2020) for reptiles and amphibians; American Ornithological Society (AOS 2020) for birds; and Bradley et al. (2014) for mammals. Sensitive plant species status is taken from CNPS (2021). Sensitive animal species status is taken from the CDFW (CDFW 2021a-c).

## **REGIONAL CONTEXT**

The project site is located within the boundaries of the County of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP; County of San Diego 1998). Within the MSCP, the project is in the City of La Mesa Subarea and is subject to the adopted La Mesa Subarea Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (Subarea Plan; City of La Mesa 1998). The project is not within an area targeted for MSCP conservation. Also, the project site does not incorporate areas designated or proposed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as critical habitat.

## **RESULTS**

### **General Land Uses**

The project site was used as a road maintenance facility by the County of San Diego from the early 1900s until it was abandoned in 1974. Above-ground structures were subsequently removed, leaving the paved areas and cement building foundations. Since then, the site has been periodically used for materials storage.

Surrounding land uses include vacant land to the north of the project site and residential structures to the east, south, and west.

## Topography and Soils

Elevations within the project site range from approximately 440 feet above mean sea level (AMSL) to 485 feet AMSL. Most of the site is flat, sloping from northeast to southwest, while the eastern third of the site slopes upward to approximately the level of Murray Hill Road. Two soil types are mapped within the project site: Friant rocky fine sandy loam, 9 to 30 percent slopes, and Redding-Urban land complex, 2 to 9 percent slopes. Neither soil type is considered a hydric soil (USDA 2023).

## Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types

The project site supports five different vegetation communities and land cover types. Existing vegetation communities and land cover types identified and mapped within the project site are shown in Figure 4, *Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types*, and Table 1, *Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types*.

**Table 1**  
**VEGETATION COMMUNITIES AND LAND COVER TYPES**

| <b>Vegetation<br/>Community/Land Cover<br/>Type</b> | <b>Area (acres)</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Developed                                           | 1.57                |
| Non-native Grassland                                | 0.69                |
| Disturbed Habitat                                   | 0.36                |
| Non-native Vegetation                               | 0.20                |
| Non-native Vegetation -<br>Giant Reed               | 0.02                |
| Total                                               | 2.84                |

### Developed Land

Developed land includes areas that have been constructed upon or otherwise covered with a permanent, unnatural surface and may include, for example, structures, pavement, irrigated landscaping, or hardscape to the extent that no natural land is evident. These areas no longer support native or naturalized vegetation. Developed lands include the paved or gravel-covered areas dominating the central portion of the project site. Approximately 1.57 acres of developed land occur within the project site (Figure 4).

### Non-native Grassland

Non-native grassland is characterized by dense to sparse cover of annual native grasses, often associated with various species of native and non-native forbs. In San Diego County, grasses such as wild oats (*Avena* sp.) and bromes (*Bromus* sp.) and forbs such as red-stem filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*) and mustards (*Hirschfeldia* sp.) are indicators of this community. Grasses are usually less than three feet in

height and form a continuous or open cover. Depending on past disturbance and rainfall, forbs may be the dominant species but are typically replaced over time by grasses.

The non-native grassland community found within the project site consists primarily of wild oats with small numbers of other species including tocalote (*Centaurea melitensis*), cheeseweed (*Malva parviflora*), and filaree. Approximately 0.69 acre of non-native grassland occurs within the project site (Figure 4).

### Disturbed Habitat

Disturbed habitat includes land cleared of vegetation (e.g., dirt roads), land containing a preponderance of non-native plant species such as ornamentals or ruderal exotic species that take advantage of disturbance (previously cleared or abandoned landscaping), or land showing signs of past or present animal usage that removes any capability of providing viable habitat. Disturbed habitat within the project site consists primarily of bare-ground or non-native, weedy vegetation located around the north, south, and west borders of the site. Plants found in this community within the project site include red-stem filaree, wild radish (*Raphanus sativus*), and crown daisy (*Glebionis coronaria*), as well as grasses such as natal grass (*Melinis repens*) and foxtail barley (*Hordeum murinum*). This habitat type is slowly encroaching on the paved and gravel-covered central areas as sediment is deposited on top of the pavement and non-native plants begin growing on this layer of soil. Approximately 0.36 acre of disturbed habitat occurs within the project site (Figure 4).

### Non-native Vegetation

Non-native vegetation is a category describing stands of naturalized trees and shrubs (e.g., acacia [*Acacia* sp.], peppertree [*Schinus* spp.]), many of which originated in landscaping. This vegetation is not irrigated. This community is represented within the project site by Brazilian peppertree (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), Peruvian peppertree, ngaio tree (*Myoporum laetum*), and Canary Island pine. Non-native vegetation occurs in the western and southern perimeters as well as in several interior locations. Approximately 0.20 acre of non-native vegetation occurs within the project site (Figure 4).

### Non-native Vegetation - Giant Reed

Non-native vegetation - giant reed consists of a densely vegetated thicket dominated almost exclusively by giant reed (*Arundo donax*). Giant reed is a large, aggressive perennial rye grass, which is an introduced, invasive non-native plant species. In riparian settings, this plant may form dense floating mats in riparian areas, streams, ditches, and coastal marshes. Propagation occurs when the rhizomes and culms detach from the plant and are carried downstream. Stands may be up to eight meters in height and exclude many native trees, especially willows.

A small patch of giant reed was mapped in the far northwest corner of the project site in an upland setting, where it is not associated with a riparian or aquatic system but instead, utilizes runoff from neighboring properties. Approximately 0.02 acre of non-native vegetation – giant reed occurs within the project site (Figure 4).

## Plants

A total of 34 plant species were observed in the project site during the general biological survey, of which 30 (approximately 80 percent) are non-native species (Attachment A, *Plant Species Observed*).

## Animals

A total of 13 species of animals were observed in the project site during the general biological survey, all of which were birds (Attachment B, *Animal Species Observed*).

## Sensitive Biological Resources

### Sensitive Vegetation Communities and Habitats

Sensitive vegetation communities and habitats are those considered rare within the local region or sensitive by CDFW; are listed as sensitive under a regional planning program (e.g., MSCP); or support sensitive plants or animals as defined by Section 15380 of the State CEQA Guidelines. They are considered sensitive because they have been depleted, are naturally uncommon, or support sensitive species. Within the project site, no sensitive vegetation communities were identified. Non-native grassland is considered sensitive in some jurisdictions, but is not listed as a sensitive vegetation community in the Subarea Plan.

### Sensitive Plants

Based on a review of available literature, biological resources online database queries for species recorded within two miles of the project, and the City's MSCP Narrow Endemic list, 16 special-status plant species were analyzed for their potential to occur within the project site (Attachment C, *Sensitive Plant Species Potential to Occur*). No special-status plant species were determined to have a high potential to occur on-site due to the prior site development, recent disturbance and site vegetation maintenance, and lack of suitable habitat conditions. The project site does not support the vegetation associations, soils, or hydrology required by many of the special-status plants known to the region.

### Sensitive Animals

Based on a review of available literature, queries through the biological resources online database for special-status species recorded within two miles of the project, and species included on the MSCP Narrow Endemic list, 25 animal species were evaluated for the potential to occur on the project site (Attachment D, *Sensitive Animal Species Potential to Occur*). Two special-status animal species were determined to have a high potential to occur on-site: Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*; CDFW Watch List and MSCP-Covered Species) and western bluebird (*Sialia mexicanus*; MSCP-Covered Species). The remaining 23 species analyzed were determined to have either a low potential to occur or are not expected to occur due to existing site disturbances, site vegetation maintenance, and lack of suitable habitat conditions.

## Jurisdictional Resources

No potentially jurisdictional aquatic resources were identified within the project site during the site visit.

## **Wildlife Corridors and Movement**

Wildlife corridors connect otherwise isolated pieces of habitat and allow the movement or dispersal of plants and animals. Wildlife corridors can be local or regional in scale. Their functions may vary temporally and spatially based on conditions and species presence. Corridors represent areas where wildlife movement is concentrated due to natural or anthropogenic constraints. Local corridors provide access to resources such as food, water, and shelter. Animals use these corridors in their daily routine to move between different habitats. Regional corridors also provide these functions and link two or more large habitat areas providing avenues for wildlife dispersal, migration, and contact between otherwise distinct populations.

No wildlife corridors or linkages have been identified in the Subarea Plan on or in the vicinity of the project site. The project site and surrounding area are highly urbanized and lack the characteristics that would contribute to the function and assembly of any local or regional wildlife corridor or linkage.

## **REGIONAL AND REGULATORY CONTEXT**

The following federal, state, and/or local regulations apply to biological resources on-site.

### **Federal**

#### **Federal Endangered Species Act**

Administered by the USFWS, the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) provides the legal framework for the listing and protection of species (and their habitats) that are identified as being endangered or threatened with extinction. Actions that jeopardize endangered or threatened species, and the habitats upon which they rely, are considered take under the ESA. Section 9(a) of the ESA defines take as “to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to engage in any such conduct.” “Harm” and “harass” are further defined in federal regulations and case law to include actions that adversely impair or disrupt a listed species’ behavioral patterns.

Sections 7 and 4(d) of the Federal ESA regulate actions that could jeopardize endangered or threatened species. Section 7, administered by the USFWS, describes a process of Federal interagency consultation for use when Federal actions may adversely affect listed species. A Section 7 Consultation (formal or informal) is required when there is a nexus between a listed species’ use of a site and if the project is funded (wholly or in part) by the State Revolving Fund. A biological assessment is required for any major construction activity if it may affect a listed species. Take can be authorized via a letter of Biological Opinion, issued by the USFWS, for non-marine related listed species issues. The project would be funded in part by the State Resolving Fund. A Section 7 Consultation would be required if impacts to a federally listed species would occur.

Identified by the USFWS, critical habitat is defined as areas of land that are considered necessary for endangered or threatened species to recover. The ultimate goal is to restore healthy populations of listed species within their native habitat, so they can be removed from the list of threatened or endangered species. Once an area is designated as critical habitat pursuant to the federal ESA, all federal agencies must consult with the USFWS to ensure that any action they authorize, fund, or carry out is not likely to result in the destruction or adverse modification of the critical habitat.

## Migratory Bird Treaty Act

All migratory bird species native to the United States and its territories are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), as amended under the Migratory Bird Treaty Reform Act (MBTRA) of 2004 (FR Doc. 05-5127; USFWS 2004). The MBTA mandates protection for eggs and chicks of all migratory bird species but does not stipulate specific protection measures. In common practice, the MBTA is used to place restrictions on the disturbance of active bird nests during the nesting season (generally February 15 to August 31). In addition, the USFWS commonly places restrictions on disturbances allowed near active raptor nests.

## Clean Water Act and Rivers and Harbors Act

Federal wetland regulation (non-marine issues) is guided by the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and the Clean Water Act (CWA). The Rivers and Harbors Act deals primarily with discharges into navigable waters, while the purpose of the CWA is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of all waters of the U.S. Permitting for projects filling waters of the U.S. is overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the CWA. Most development projects are permitted using Individual Permit or Nationwide Permit instruments.

## State of California

### California Environmental Quality Act

Primary environmental legislation in California is found in CEQA and its implementing guidelines (State CEQA Guidelines), requiring that projects with potential adverse effects or impacts to the environment undergo environmental review. Adverse impacts to the environment are typically mitigated as a result of the environmental review process in accordance with existing laws and regulations.

### California Endangered Species Act

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) established a state policy to conserve, protect, restore, and enhance state endangered species and their habitats. Under state law, plant and animal species may be formally designated rare, threatened, or endangered by official listing by the California Fish and Game Commission. The CESA authorizes that private entities may “take” plant or wildlife species listed as endangered or threatened under the FESA and CESA, pursuant to a federal Incidental Take Permit if the CDFW certifies that the incidental take is consistent with CESA (California Fish and Game [CFG] Code Section 2080.1[a]). For state-only listed species, Section 2081 of the CFG Code authorizes the CDFW to issue an Incidental Take Permit for state-listed threatened and endangered species if specific criteria are met. The MSCP is a regional Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP) that was granted take coverage under Section 2081 of the CESA.

### California Fish and Game Code

Pursuant to CFG Code Section 3503, it is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation made pursuant thereto. Raptors and owls and their active nests are protected by CFG Code Section 3503.5, which states that it is

unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds of prey or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird unless authorized by the CDFW.

## Natural Communities Conservation Planning Act

The NCCP program is a cooperative effort to protect habitats and species. It began under the State's NCCP Act of 1991, legislation broader in its orientation and objectives than the CESA or FESA. These laws are designed to identify and protect individual species that have already declined significantly in number. The NCCP Act of 1991 and the associated Southern California Coastal Sage Scrub NCCP Process Guidelines (1993), Southern California Coastal Sage Scrub NCCP Conservation Guidelines (1993), and NCCP General Process Guidelines (1998) have been superseded by the NCCP Act of 2003. The MSCP is an enrolled NCCP program and was adopted in 2003 by the County.

## Local

### City of La Mesa General Plan

The Conservation and Open Space Element of the La Mesa General Plan (City of La Mesa 2012) includes the following conservation policies and objectives related to biological and sensitive land resources:

**Conservation Policies.** The City will establish policies that encourage the preservation of the City's few remaining areas of sensitive lands and natural habitat, where such features will make a significant contribution to regional or local preservation efforts.

**Conservation Objectives.** The Community Development Department will initiate the creation of an Open Space Overlay Zone, which can effectively protect those areas of natural vegetation determined to be of significant value individually or as part of a regional habitat conservation program.

### City of La Mesa Subarea Habitat Conservation Plan

The California NCCP Act of 1991 (Section 2835) allows the CDFW to authorize take of species covered by plans in agreement with NCCP guidelines. A Natural Communities Conservation Program, initiated by the State of California, focuses on conserving coastal sage scrub, and in concert with the USFWS and the federal ESA, is intended to avoid the need for future federal and state listing of coastal sage scrub-dependent species.

The MSCP Plan, which was approved in August 1998, covers 85 species and includes a 900-square-mile area in southwestern San Diego County (County of San Diego 1998). The City of La Mesa Subarea, portions of the unincorporated County, and 10 additional city jurisdictions make up the MSCP Plan area. It is a comprehensive, long-term habitat conservation plan that addresses the needs of multiple species by identifying key areas for preservation as open space in order to link core biological areas into a regional wildlife preserve. The MSCP is one of several large multiple jurisdictional habitat planning efforts in San Diego County, each of which constitutes a subregional plan under the NCCP Act of 1991. The MSCP includes incorporated cities in southwestern San Diego County that will implement their respective portions of the MSCP through citywide "subarea" plans, which describe the specific implementing mechanisms each city will institute for the MSCP. The City of La Mesa adopted its Subarea Plan on February 1998.

## PROJECT IMPACTS/EFFECTS, SIGNIFICANCE, AND PROPOSED MITIGATION

For the purpose of evaluating potential project effects (i.e., impacts) and as prescribed by the Issues in CEQA Appendix G Section IV Biological Resources, the proposed project would result in a significant impact if it would:

1. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the USFWS or CDFW;
2. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by USFWS or CDFW;
3. Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Clean Water Act Section 404 (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means;
4. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident, migratory fish, or wildlife species, or established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors; or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites;
5. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance; or
6. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state conservation plan.

The significance of impacts to biological resources present, or those with the potential to occur, was determined based on the sensitivity of the resource and the extent of the anticipated impacts. For certain highly sensitive resources (e.g., a federally listed species), impacts would be significant. Conversely, other resources that are of low sensitivity (e.g., species with a large, locally stable population in the County but declining elsewhere) could sustain some impact with a less than significant effect. Analyses of project impacts to biological resources are discussed in detail below.

## IMPACTS

This section describes potential direct and indirect effects (impacts) on biological resources associated with the proposed project. Direct impacts are immediate impacts and typically result in permanent removal. Indirect impacts are actions by the project that are not direct removal of resources but affect the surrounding resources either as a secondary effect of the direct impacts (e.g., construction noise, runoff, nighttime lighting, fugitive dust, etc.) or as the cause of degradation of a biological resource over time (e.g., edge/adjacency effects). The magnitude of an indirect impact can be the same as a direct impact; however, the effect usually takes longer to become apparent.

## Issue 1 – Sensitive Species

*Would the project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS?*

### Issue 1 Analysis of Project Effects

#### Sensitive Plants

**No impact.** No special-status plant species were found to occur within the project site, and none have the potential to occur within the project site. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

#### Sensitive Animals

**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.** No special-status animals are known to occur within the project site; however, two were found to have a high potential to occur due to the presence of several trees and potential foraging habitat: Cooper's hawk and western bluebird. Several Canary Island pine and pepper trees will be preserved as part of the development of the park and will continue to provide potential nesting habitat for these species.

Pursuant to the MBTA and CFG Code, the development of the proposed project could disturb or destroy active migratory bird nests if vegetation clearing occurs during the general bird nesting season (February 15 through August 31) and/or raptor nesting season (January 15 through July 15). Disturbance to or destruction of migratory bird nests are in violation of the MBTA and CFG Code and are, therefore, considered to be a potentially significant impact. Implementation of mitigation measure **BIO-1** would ensure that potential impacts to birds protected under the MBTA and CFG Code are avoided during construction.

### Issue 1 Mitigation Measures

**BIO-1 Nesting Bird and Raptor Avoidance.** In order to avoid violation of the federal MBTA and CFG Code, site-preparation activities (removal of trees and vegetation) shall be avoided during the general avian breeding/nesting season (January 15 to July 15 for raptors; February 15 to August 31 for other avian species), if practicable.

If grubbing, clearing, or grading would occur during the general avian breeding season within 300 feet of general nesting bird habitat or 500 feet of nesting raptor habitat, a qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-construction survey no more than three days (72 hours) prior to the commencement of activities to determine if active bird nests are present in the affected areas. If there are no nesting birds (includes nest building or other breeding/nesting behavior) within this area, clearing, grubbing, and grading shall be allowed to proceed. Furthermore, if construction activities are to resume in an area where they have not occurred for a period of seven or more days during the breeding season, an updated survey for avian nesting will be conducted. If active nests or nesting birds are observed within the area, the biologist shall flag the active nests and construction activities shall avoid active nests with appropriate avoidance buffers and/or impact

avoidance measures as determined by the biologist until a qualified biologist has determined that nesting behavior has ceased, nests have failed, or young have fledged.

## Issue 2 – Sensitive Natural Communities

*Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the CDFW or USFWS?*

### Issue 2 Analysis of Project Effects

**No impact.** No impacts to riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities would occur as a result of the project. Impacts to non-sensitive vegetation communities are not considered significant and, therefore, do not require mitigation. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

## Issue 3 – Wetlands

*Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on federally-protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?*

### Issue 3 Analysis of Project Effects

**No impact.** No impacts to any wetland communities, including freshwater marshes and vernal pools, would occur as a result of the project. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

## Issue 4 – Wildlife Movement and Nursery Sites

*Would the project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?*

### Issue 4 Analysis of Project Effects

**No impact.** While the project site and immediately adjacent native habitats support localized use by wildlife, particularly birds, the project site does not function as a wildlife corridor or habitat linkage for non-avian terrestrial wildlife due to its relatively small size and constrained connectivity to larger habitat areas. The project would not interfere with wildlife movement or impede the use of nursery sites. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

## Issue 5 – Local Policies and Ordinances

*Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?*

### Issue 5 Analysis of Project Effects

**No impact.** The project does not conflict with any local policies or ordinances, including the Conservation and Open Space Element of the La Mesa General Plan. The La Mesa General Plan shows

the project site as Urban Residential, not Open Space. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

## Issue 6 – Adopted Conservation Plans

*Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Conservation Community Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?*

### Issue 6 Analysis of Project Effects

**No Impact.** The project site is located in a heavily urbanized area and has been heavily disturbed since the early 1900s. The project site does not contain any riparian or wetland habitats, coastal sage scrub, or other sensitive habitat identified by the Subarea Plan. Marginally suitable nesting habitat occurs in the project site for two MSCP-covered species, but this habitat, consisting of several non-native trees, is expected to be preserved as part of the project implementation. The project site is not located on or near areas designated as Multiple Habitat Planning Areas or other preserve lands, and does not function as a local or regional wildlife corridor, linkage, or nursery site. Therefore, the project does not conflict with any provisions of the Subarea Plan. Compliance with existing regulations and implementation of measures **BIO-1** would ensure consistency with the general conservation goals and objectives of the County MSCP.

## CONCLUSION

Implementation of the proposed project could result in potentially significant impacts to biological resources, specifically nesting birds. However, the timing of project construction and the implementation of the mitigation measure **BIO-1** described above would ensure potential impacts to biological resources are either avoided or minimized to remain below a level of significance. Please contact me at [shawnc@helixepi.com](mailto:shawnc@helixepi.com) or 619-929-8341 if you have questions or need assistance with project mitigation compliance.

Sincerely,



Shawn Carroll  
Biologist

## Attachments

- Figure 1 Regional Location
- Figure 2 USGS Topography
- Figure 3 Aerial Photography
- Figure 4 Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types

- Attachment A Plant Species Observed
- Attachment B Animal Species Observed or Detected
- Attachment C Sensitive Plant Species Potential to Occur
- Attachment D Sensitive Animal Species Potential to Occur
- Attachment E Representative Site Photos

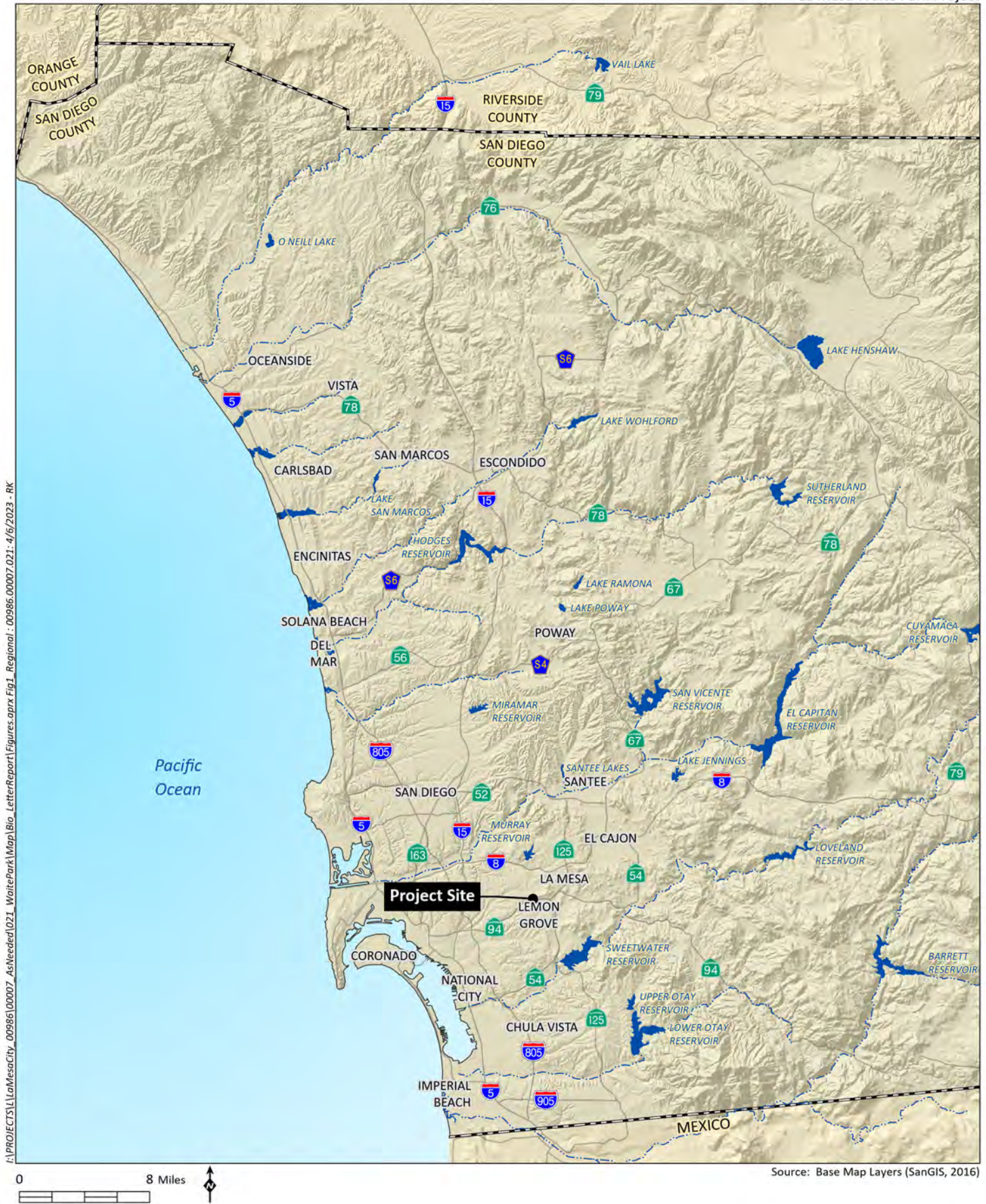
## REFERENCES

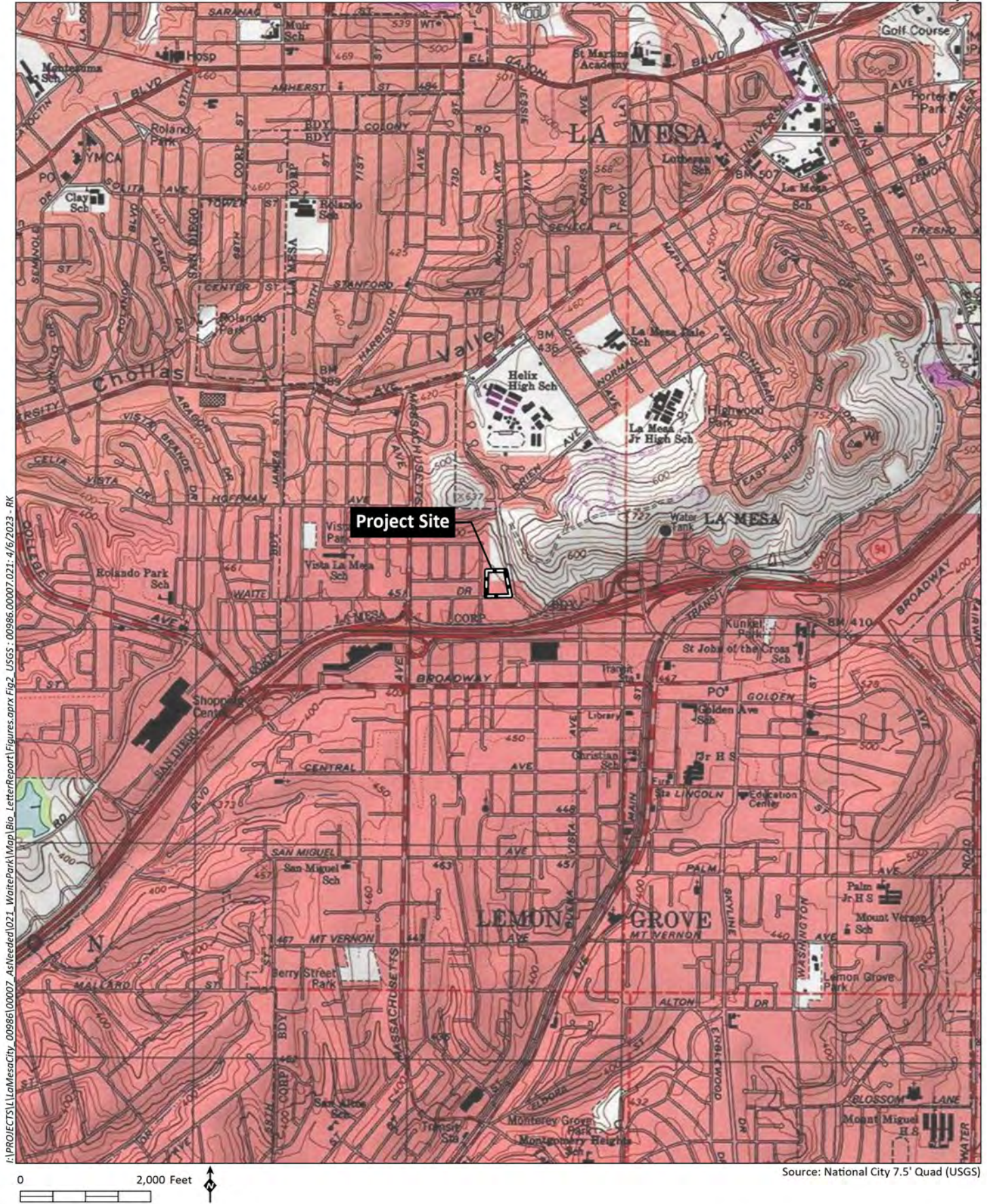
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## Figures

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# Attachment A

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Plant Species Observed

| Family          | Scientific Name*                     | Common Name               |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Dicots</b>   |                                      |                           |
| Anacardiaceae   | <i>Schinus molle</i> *               | Peruvian pepper tree      |
|                 | <i>Schinus terebinthifolius</i> *    | Brazilian pepper tree     |
| Asteraceae      | <i>Baccharis sarothroides</i>        | Broom baccharis           |
|                 | <i>Gazania linearis</i> *            | Gazania                   |
|                 | <i>Glebionis coronaria</i> *         | Crown daisy               |
|                 | <i>Hedypnois cretica</i> *           | Crete weed                |
|                 | <i>Heterotheca grandiflora</i>       | Telegraph weed            |
|                 | <i>Pseudognaphalium luteoalbum</i> * | Jersey cudweed            |
| Brassicaceae    | <i>Raphanus sativus</i> *            | Wild radish               |
| Cactaceae       | <i>Opuntia ficus-indica</i> *        | Tuna                      |
| Chenopodiaceae  | <i>Chenopodium album</i> *           | Lamb's quarters           |
|                 | <i>Salsola tragus</i> *              | Russian thistle           |
| Cucurbitaceae   | <i>Marah macrocarpa</i>              | Chilicothe                |
| Cupressaceae    | <i>Juniperus chinensis</i> *         | Chinese juniper           |
| Fabaceae        | <i>Medicago polymorpha</i> *         | California burclover      |
|                 | <i>Melilotus indicus</i> *           | Annual yellow sweetclover |
| Geraniaceae     | <i>Erodium cicutarium</i> *          | Redstem filaree           |
| Malvaceae       | <i>Malva parviflora</i> *            | Cheeseweed                |
| Myoporaceae     | <i>Myoporum laetum</i> *             | Ngaio tree                |
| Myrtaceae       | <i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i> *    | Red gum                   |
| Onagraceae      | <i>Oenothera elata</i>               | Evening primrose          |
| Pinaceae        | <i>Pinus canariensis</i> *           | Canary island pine        |
| Solanaceae      | <i>Nicotiana glauca</i> *            | Tree tobacco              |
|                 | <i>Solanum nigrum</i>                | Black nightshade          |
| Ulmaceae        | <i>Ulmus parvifolia</i> *            | Siberian elm              |
| <b>Monocots</b> |                                      |                           |
| Areaceae        | <i>Washingtonia robusta</i> *        | Mexican fan palm          |
| Poaceae         | <i>Arundo donax</i> *                | Giant reed                |
|                 | <i>Bromus diandrus</i> *             | Ripgut brome              |
|                 | <i>Bromus madritensis</i> *          | Foxtail brome             |
|                 | <i>Cynodon dactylon</i> *            | Bermuda grass             |
|                 | <i>Hordeum murinum</i> *             | Foxtail barley            |
|                 | <i>Lamarckia aurea</i> *             | Goldentop                 |
|                 | <i>Melinis repens</i> *              | Natal grass               |
|                 | <i>Schismus barbatus</i> *           | Old han schismus          |

\* Non-native

## Attachment B

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Animal Species Observed or  
Detected

| Taxon Order        | Taxon Family  | Scientific Name              | Common Name           |
|--------------------|---------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>VERTEBRATES</b> |               |                              |                       |
| <b>Birds</b>       |               |                              |                       |
| Accipitriformes    | Accipitridae  | <i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>     | red-tailed hawk       |
| Apodiformes        | Trochilidae   | <i>Calypte anna</i>          | Anna's hummingbird    |
| Columbiformes      | Columbidae    | <i>Zenaida macroura</i>      | mourning dove         |
| Passeriformes      | Bombycillidae | <i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>   | cedar waxwing         |
|                    | Corvidae      | <i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i> | American crow         |
|                    | Emberizidae   | <i>Pipilo crissalis</i>      | California towhee     |
|                    | Fringillidae  | <i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>  | house finch           |
|                    |               | <i>Spinus psaltria</i>       | lesser goldfinch      |
|                    | Mimidae       | <i>Mimus polyglottos</i>     | northern mockingbird  |
|                    | Parulidae     | <i>Dendroica coronata</i>    | yellow-rumped warbler |
|                    | Passeridae    | <i>Passer domesticus</i>     | house sparrow         |
|                    | Regulidae     | <i>Regulus calendula</i>     | ruby-crowned kinglet  |
|                    | Troglodytidae | <i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>   | Bewick's wren         |

## Attachment C

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### Sensitive Plant Species Potential to Occur

| Scientific Name                 | Common Name          | Status                                       | Habitat, Ecology and Life History                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Potential to Occur                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Acanthomintha ilicifolia</i> | San Diego thorn-mint | FT / SE<br>CRPR 1B.1                         | Annual herb. Typically grows on clay soils within chaparral, coastal scrub, valley and foothill grassland, and vernal pools. Found in San Diego County. Flowering period: April to June. Elevation: below 30 to 3,150 feet (10 to 960 meters).                                                                                                                                 | None. Suitable chaparral, coastal scrub, valley and foothill grassland, or vernal pool habitats associated with the species does not occur within the study area.                                                                          |
| <i>Adolphia californica</i>     | California adolphia  | -- / --<br>CRPR 2B.1                         | Perennial shrub. Most often found in coastal scrub but occasionally occurs in peripheral chaparral habitats, particularly hillsides near creeks on clay soils. Found in San Diego County. Flowering period: December to May. Elevation: 30 to 2,430 feet (10 to 740 meters).                                                                                                   | None. The study area does not contain coastal scrub habitat or clay soils.                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>Ambrosia pumila</i>          | San Diego ambrosia   | FE / --<br>CRPR 1B.1<br>MSCP Covered Species | Perennial herb. Occurs on sandy loam or clay, sometimes alkaline, soils within grasslands, dry drainages, stream floodplain terraces, and vernal pool margins. Also occurs on slopes, disturbed places, and in coastal sage scrub or chaparral. Found in Riverside and San Diego counties. Flowering period: April to October. Elevation: 65 to 1,360 feet (20 to 415 meters). | Low. Potentially suitable soils and grassland vegetation occurs within the study area, but the project site is surrounded by development and has a long history of disturbance, there are no reported occurrences in the project vicinity. |
| <i>Bloomeria clevelandii</i>    | San Diego goldenstar | -- / --<br>CRPR 1B.1<br>MSCP Covered Species | Perennial bulbiferous herb. Occurs in valley grasslands and coastal scrub, particularly near mima mound topography or in the vicinity of vernal pools, on clay soils. Found in Riverside and San Diego counties. Flowering period: April to May. Elevation: 160 to 1,525 feet (50 to 465 meters).                                                                              | None. Suitable clay soils and valley grassland or coastal scrub habitats near mima mounds or vernal pools do not occur within the study area.                                                                                              |

| Scientific Name                                  | Common Name               | Status                                       | Habitat, Ecology and Life History                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Potential to Occur                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Ceanothus verrucosus</i>                      | wart-stemmed<br>ceanothus | -- / --<br>CRPR 2B.2<br>MSCP Covered Species | Perennial shrub. Found on rocky slopes within chaparral, particularly southern maritime chaparral. Found in Riverside and San Diego counties. Flowering period: December to May. Elevation: below 1,245 feet (380 meters).                   | None. Suitable chaparral habitat does not occur within the study area and there are no reported occurrences of the species in the project vicinity. |
| <i>Ericameria palmeri</i> var. <i>palmeri</i>    | Palmer's goldenbush       | -- / --<br>MSCP Covered Species              | Perennial shrub. Occurs in coastal drainages, mesic chaparral, and occasionally in coastal sage scrub. Flowering period: September–November. Elevation: 95 to 1,970 feet (30-600 meters).                                                    | None. Suitable coastal sage scrub or mesic chaparral does not occur within the study area.                                                          |
| <i>Eryngium aristulatum</i> var. <i>parishii</i> | San Diego button-celery   | FE / SE<br>MSCP Covered Species              | Perennial herb. Occurs in vernal pools or mima mound areas with vernal moist conditions, and in mesic areas on coastal scrub and native grassland. Flowering period: Apr - August. Elevation: below 1,640 ft (500 m).                        | None. Suitable vernal pools, coastal scrub, or native grassland does not occur within the study area.                                               |
| <i>Ferocactus viridescens</i>                    | San Diego barrel cactus   | -- / --<br>CRPR 2B.1<br>MSCP Covered Species | Perennial (stem succulent) shrub. Grows in sandy to rocky areas within chaparral, valley grassland and coastal sage scrub communities. Found in San Diego County. Flowering period: May to June. Elevation: 5 to 492 feet (3 to 450 meters). | None. Suitable chaparral, valley grassland, or coastal sage scrub habitat does not occur within the study area.                                     |

| Scientific Name                                | Common Name          | Status               | Habitat, Ecology and Life History                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Potential to Occur                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Grindelia hallii</i>                        | San Diego gumplant   | -- / --<br>CRPR 1B.2 | Perennial herb. Typically occurs with sunny openings of chaparral and lower montane coniferous forests. Also grows in meadows and seeps, and grasslands. Prefers very wet locales in early spring, although such places usually dry quickly as spring turns to summer. Found in San Diego County. Flowering Period: May to October. Elevation: 605 to 5,725 feet (185 to 1,745 meters). | None. While grassland habitat does occur within the study area, the site is outside of the known elevation range for this species.    |
| <i>Isocoma menziesii</i> var. <i>decumbens</i> | decumbent goldenbush | -- / --<br>CRPR 1B.2 | Perennial shrub. Occurs in sandy soil and disturbed areas on the inland side of dunes, hillsides, and arroyos within coastal sage scrub and chaparral communities. Found in along the coast of southern California, Peninsular Ranges, and Channel Islands. Flowering period: July to November. Elevation: below 656 feet (200 meters).                                                 | None. Suitable coastal sage scrub and chaparral habitat do not occur within the study area.                                           |
| <i>Lasthenia glabrata</i> ssp. <i>coulteri</i> | Coulter's goldfields | -- / --<br>CRPR 1B.1 | Annual herb. Grows in vernal pools, playas, and saline habitats within alkali sinks, coastal salt marshes, and wetland communities. Found along the Coast, Sierra Nevada, and Peninsular Ranges; Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys; central and southern coasts; Mojave Desert, and north Channel Islands. Flowering period: April to May. Elevation: below 4,005 feet (1,220 meters). | None. Suitable vernal pool, playa, saline habitats, coastal salt marshes, and wetland communities do not occur within the study area. |

| Scientific Name                                   | Common Name             | Status                                       | Habitat, Ecology and Life History                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Potential to Occur                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Lepidium virginicum</i> var. <i>robinsonii</i> | Robinson's pepper-grass | -- / --<br>CRPR 4.3                          | Annual herb. Grows in openings of sage scrub and chaparral at the coastal and foothill elevations throughout California. Typically observed in relatively dry, exposed locales rather than beneath a shrub canopy. Also, found in disturbed areas. Flowering period: March to June. Elevation: below 9,186 feet (2,800 meters).                                                                  | None. Suitable native habitat does not occur within the study area.                                                                                                            |
| <i>Orcuttia californica</i>                       | California Orcutt grass | FE / SE<br>CRPR 1B.1<br>MSCP Covered Species | Annual herb. Occurs in vernal pools. Tends to grow in wetter portions of the vernal pool basins but does not show much growth until the basins become somewhat desiccated. Found in the coastal regions of southern California from Ventura County south to San Diego County and in western Riverside County. Flowering period: April to August. Elevation: 45 to 2,165 feet (15 to 660 meters). | None. Suitable vernal pool habitat does not occur within the study area.                                                                                                       |
| <i>Salvia munzii</i>                              | Munz's sage             | -- / --<br>CRPR 2B.2                         | Perennial shrub. Occurs within chaparral and coastal scrub of San Diego County. Flowering period: February to April. Elevation: 370 and 3,500 feet (115 to 1,065 meters).                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | None. Suitable chaparral and coastal scrub associated with this species is not found within the study area.                                                                    |
| <i>Stemodia durantifolia</i>                      | purple stemodia         | -- / --<br>CRPR 2B.1                         | Perennial herb. Grows on wet sand or rocks and drying streambeds within riparian habitats. Found in the San Jacinto Mountains and Peninsular Ranges of southern California and Sonoran Desert. Flowering period: year-round. Elevation: 590 to 985 feet (180 to 300 meters).                                                                                                                     | None. Suitable wet sand or rocky habitat or drying streambeds do not occur within the study area, and the study area is outside of the known elevation range for this species. |

| Scientific Name             | Common Name   | Status               | Habitat, Ecology and Life History                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Potential to Occur                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Stylocline citroleum</i> | oil neststraw | -- / --<br>CRPR 1B.1 | Annual herb. Occurs on clay soils within coastal scrub, chenopod scrub, valleys, and foothill grasslands. Found in western Kern County and southern San Diego County. Flowering Period: March to April. Elevation: 160 and 1,310 feet (50 to 1,310 meters). | None. Suitable coastal or chenopod scrub or valley and foothill grassland habitats associated with this species do not occur within the study area. |

<sup>1</sup> Listing codes as follows: F = Federal; S = State of California; E = Endangered; T = Threatened; CE = Candidate Endangered; R = Rare

CRPR = California Native Plant Society Rare Plant Rank: 1A – presumed extirpated in California and either rare or extinct elsewhere; 1B – rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere; 2A – presumed extirpated in California, but more common elsewhere; 2B – rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere; 3 – more information needed; 4 – watch list for species of limited distribution. Extension codes: .1 – seriously endangered; .2 – moderately endangered; .3 – not very endangered.

<sup>2</sup> Potential to Occur is assessed as follows – **None:** There are no present or historical records of the species occurring on or in the immediate vicinity (within 3 miles) of the study area and the diagnostic habitats and soils associated with the species do not occur on or in the immediate vicinity of the study area; **Low:** Suitable habitat is present in the study area and a historical record of the species occurs in the immediate vicinity (within 3 miles) but existing conditions such as elevation, soils, density of cover, prevalence of non-native species, evidence of disturbance, limited habitat area, and/or isolation reduce the possibility that the species may occur; **Moderate:** The diagnostic habitats associated with the species occur on or in the immediate vicinity of the study area, but there is not a recorded occurrence of the species within the immediate vicinity. Some species that contain extremely limited distributions may be considered moderate, even if there is a recorded occurrence in the immediate vicinity; **High:** Suitable habitat occurs in the study area and the species has been recorded recently on or in the immediate vicinity, but the species was not observed during project surveys; **Present:** The species was observed within the study area during biological surveys for the project.

## Attachment D

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### Sensitive Animal Species Potential to Occur

| Scientific Name                    | Common Name                        | Status                          | Habitat Associations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Potential to Occur                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Bombus crotchii</i>             | Crotch bumble bee                  | -- / SCE                        | Found throughout southwestern California from the Central Valley south to the U.S./Mexico border. Inhabits open grasslands and scrub habitats. Primarily nests underground and forages on a wide variety of flowers, but a short tongue renders it best suited to open flowers with short corollas. Most commonly observed on flowering species in the Fabaceae, Asteraceae, and Lamiaceae families. Occurrence has also been linked to habitats containing Asclepias, Chaenactis, Lupinus, Medicago, Phacelia, and Salvia genera. | None. While non-native grassland habitat occurs within the project site, the site has been highly disturbed, occurs in an urbanized setting, and does not support significant numbers of the food plants this species utilizes. |
| <i>Branchinecta sandiegonensis</i> | San Diego fairy shrimp             | FE / --<br>MSCP Covered Species | Restricted to vernal pools and other ephemeral basin in southern California from coastal Orange County to San Diego County. Found in seasonally astatic pools which occur in tectonic swales or earth slump basins and other areas of shallow, standing water often in patches of grassland and agriculture interspersed in coastal sage scrub and chaparral.                                                                                                                                                                      | None. The site does not contain vernal pool habitats this species requires.                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Anniella stebbinsi</i>          | Southern California legless lizard | -- / SSC                        | Found throughout southern California from the Transverse Ranges south to the U.S./Mexico border. Occurs in sparsely vegetated areas with moist warm, loose soil with plant cover; moisture is essential. Common in several habitats but especially in beach dunes, coastal scrub, chaparral, pine-oak woodlands, desert scrub, sandy washes, and stream terraces. Found primarily in areas with sandy or loose organic soils or where there is plenty of leaf litter. Sometimes found in suburban gardens.                         | None. The project site is highly disturbed with no native habitat communities.                                                                                                                                                  |

| Scientific Name                    | Common Name              | Status                          | Habitat Associations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Potential to Occur                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Aspidoscelis hyperythra</i>     | orange-throated whiptail | -- / WL<br>MSCP Covered Species | Found within the southwestern portion of California in southern San Bernardino, western Riverside, Orange, and San Diego Counties on the western slopes of the Peninsular Ranges at elevations below 3,500 feet. Suitable habitat includes coastal sage scrub, chaparral, juniper woodland, oak woodland, and grasslands along with alluvial fan scrub and riparian areas. Occurrence of the species correlated with the presence perennial plants which provides a food base for its major food source, termites. | Low. While the study area contains grasslands, it lacks the perennial plants that host its primary prey, termites.                                                                          |
| <i>Coleonyx variegatus abbotti</i> | San Diego banded gecko   | -- / SSC                        | Occurs in the coastal regions of southern California from interior Ventura County south to San Diego County, although the species is absent from the extreme outer coast. Inhabits coastal sage scrub and chaparral habitats, most often occurring in granite or rocky outcrops.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | None. The study area does not contain the coastal sage scrub or chaparral habitats associated with this species, nor does it contain granite or rocky outcrops this species uses for cover. |
| <i>Crotalus ruber</i>              | red-diamond rattlesnake  | -- / SSC                        | Occurs in the southwestern California from San Bernardino County south to San Diego County at elevations below 5,000 feet. Has a wide tolerance for varying environments including the desert, dense foothill chaparral, warm inland mesas and valleys, and cool coastal zones. Most commonly found near heavy brush with large rocky microhabitats. Chamise and red shank chaparral associations may offer better structural habitat for refuges and food resources.                                              | None. While suitable habitat for this species may be found near the project site, there have been no documented records of this species within two miles of the site since 1953.            |

| Scientific Name                                | Common Name         | Status                              | Habitat Associations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Potential to Occur                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Phrynosoma blainvillii</i>                  | coast horned lizard | -- / SSC<br>MSCP Covered<br>Species | In California, predominately occurs from Kern County south to San Diego County, west of the desert at elevations below 8,000 feet. Inhabits a wide variety of vegetation types including sagebrush scrub, chaparral, grasslands, forests, and woodlands but is restricted to areas with suitable sandy, loose soils with open areas for basking. Diet primarily composed of native harvester ants ( <i>Pogonmyrmex</i> spp.) and are generally excluded from areas invaded by Argentine ants ( <i>Linepithema humile</i> ).                                                                                                              | None. While marginally suitable grassland habitat occurs within the project site, this species has not been documented within 5 miles of the project site in nearly 50 years. |
| <i>Plestiodon skiltonianus interparietalis</i> | Coronado skink      | -- / WL                             | Occurs in coastal and inland portions of southern San Diego County; though can occur up into Riverside County where it intergrades with Skilton's skink ( <i>Plestiodon skiltonianus skiltonianus</i> ). Suitable habitats include grassland, woodlands, pine forests, and chaparral, especially in open sunny areas such as clearings and edges of creeks or rivers. Prefers rocky areas near streams with lots of vegetation but can also be found in areas away from water. Occasionally seen foraging in leaf litter but more commonly found underneath surface objects, such as bark or rocks, where it lives in extensive burrows. | None. Suitable grassland, woodland, pine forest, or chaparral habitat associated with this species does not occur within the project site.                                    |

| Scientific Name            | Common Name             | Status   | Habitat Associations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Potential to Occur                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Spea hammondi</i>       | western spadefoot       | -- / SSC | Occurs from northern California southward to San Diego County, west of the Sierra Nevada at elevations below 4,500 feet. Terrestrial species requiring temporary pools for breeding. Suitable upland habitats include coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and grasslands. Most common in grasslands with vernal pools or mixed grassland-coastal sage scrub areas. Breeds in temporary pools formed by heavy rains but may also be found in riparian habitats with suitable water resources. Breeding pools must lack exotic predators such as fish, bullfrogs, and crayfish for the species to successfully reproduce. Estivates in burrows within upland habitats adjacent to potential breeding sites. | None. Suitable upland or breeding habitat for this species does not occur within the project site.                    |
| <i>Thamnophis hammondi</i> | two-striped gartersnake | -- / SSC | Found in California from Monterey County south along the coast to San Diego County at elevations below 7,000 feet. Commonly inhabits perennial and intermittent streams with rocky beds bordered by riparian habitats dominated by willows and other dense vegetation. Has also been found in stock ponds, and other artificially created aquatic habitats, if bordered by dense vegetation and potential prey, such as amphibians and fish, are present.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | None. Suitable upland or breeding habitat for this species does not occur within the project site.                    |
| <i>Accipiter cooperii</i>  | Cooper's hawk           | -- / WL  | In California, breeds from Siskiyou County south to San Diego County and eastwards to Owens Valley at elevations below 9,000 feet. Inhabits forests, riparian areas, and more recently suburban and urban areas. Nests within dense woodlands and forests and isolated trees in open areas.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | High. Suitable nesting and foraging habitat for this species is found within and in the vicinity of the project site. |

| Scientific Name                                     | Common Name                                | Status                            | Habitat Associations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Potential to Occur                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Aimophila ruficeps canescens</i>                 | southern California rufous-crowned sparrow | -- / WL<br>MSCP Covered Species   | Year-round resident of southwestern California occurring from Santa Barbara County south to San Diego County at elevations below 5,000 feet. Generally found on moderate to steep slopes vegetated with grassland, coastal sage scrub, and chaparral. Prefer areas with California sagebrush ( <i>Artemisia californica</i> ). Generally absent from areas with dense stands of coastal sage scrub or chaparral. May occur on steep grassy slopes without shrubs if rock outcrops are present.                                                                                     | None. The project site lacks the vegetative and habitat characteristics this species requires.                     |
| <i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus sandiegensis</i> | coastal cactus wren                        | BCC / SSC<br>MSCP Covered Species | One of seven subspecies occurring restricted to southern California from southern Orange County and San Diego County. Occupies native scrub vegetation with thickets of mature cacti consisting of cholla ( <i>Cylindropuntia</i> spp.) or prickly-pear cactus ( <i>Opuntia littoralis</i> ). Cacti must be tall enough to support and protect the bird's nest (typically 3 feet or more in height). Surrounding vegetation usually consists of coastal sage scrub habitat with shrubs normally below the level of nest placement.                                                 | None. The project site does not contain stands of native cacti that are used for nesting habitat for this species. |
| <i>Falco mexicanus</i>                              | prairie falcon                             | -- / WL                           | Uncommon permanent resident and migrant of California ranging from the Sierra Nevada southwest along the inner coastal mountains and east to the southeastern deserts but absent from northern coastal fog belt. Primary habitats include grasslands, savannahs, alpine meadows, some agricultural fields during the winter season, and desert scrub areas where suitable cliffs or bluffs are present for nest sites. Requires sheltered cliff ledges for cover and nesting which may range in height from low rock outcrops of 30 feet to cliffs up to and higher than 400 feet. | None. Suitable nesting and foraging habitat associated with this species is not found within the project site.     |

| Scientific Name                            | Common Name                    | Status                                      | Habitat Associations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Potential to Occur                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus</i> | California black rail          | -- / ST<br>-- / FP                          | In California, breeds in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River delta, San Francisco Bay area, Bolinas Lagoon and Tomales Bay in Marin County, Morro Bay in San Luis Obispo County, White Slough in San Joaquin County, the Salton Sea in Imperial County, and the Lower Colorado River Valley. Inhabits salt and freshwater marshes and wet meadows. Associated with pickleweed ( <i>Salicornia</i> spp.), bulrush, alkali heath ( <i>Frankenia salina</i> ), and cordgrass ( <i>Spartina</i> spp.). Requires dense cover of upland vegetation in tidal areas for protection when rails must leave marsh habitats during high tide events.                                                               | None. The project site does not contain aquatic habitats that this species requires for breeding and foraging. |
| <i>Poliophtila californica californica</i> | coastal California gnatcatcher | FT / --<br>-- / SSC<br>MSCP Covered Species | Year-round resident of California occurring from Ventura County south to San Diego County, and east to the western portions of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. Typically occurs in arid, open sage scrub habitats on gently slopes hillsides to relatively flat areas at elevations below 3,000 feet. Composition of sage scrub in which gnatcatchers are found varies though California sagebrush present as dominant or co-dominant species. Mostly absent from areas dominated by black sage ( <i>Salvia mellifera</i> ), white sage ( <i>Salvia apiana</i> ), or lemonade berry ( <i>Rhus integrifolia</i> ), though may occur more regularly in inland regions dominated by black sage. | None. The project site does not contain coastal sage scrub habitat associated with this species.               |
| <i>Sialia mexicana</i>                     | western bluebird               | MSCP Covered Species                        | Common year-round resident throughout California but absent from the higher mountains and eastern deserts. Breeds in open woodlands, riparian habitats, grasslands, and farmlands. Nests and roosts in cavities of trees and snags, often in holes previously created by woodpeckers, and nest boxes. Winters in a wider variety of habitats.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Moderate. The project site may provide marginally suitable foraging and nesting habitat for this species.      |

| Scientific Name              | Common Name        | Status                             | Habitat Associations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Potential to Occur                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i> | least Bell's vireo | FE / SE<br>MSCP Covered<br>Species | In California, breeds along the coast and western edge of the Mojave Desert from Santa Barbara County south to San Diego County, and east to Inyo, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties. Breeding habitat consists of early to mid-successional riparian habitat, often where flowing water is present, but also found in dry watercourses within the desert. A structurally diverse canopy and dense shrub cover is required for nesting and foraging. Dominant species within breeding habitat includes cottonwood and willows with mule fat ( <i>Baccharis salicifolia</i> ), oaks ( <i>Quercus</i> spp.), and sycamore ( <i>Platanus racemosa</i> ), and mesquite and arrowweed ( <i>Pluchea sericea</i> ) within desert habitats. Can be tolerant of the presence of non-native species such as tamarisk. | None. Suitable riparian habitat associated with this species does not occur within the project site.                                                     |
| <i>Lasiurus frantzii</i>     | western red bat    | -- / SSC                           | In California, locally common occurring from Shasta County south to San Diego County and west of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada Ranges and deserts. Mainly occurs in riparian woodlands populated by willows, cottonwoods, sycamores, and oak trees but can be found in non-native vegetation such as tamarisk, eucalyptus, and orchards. Primarily roosts in trees preferring heavily shaded areas which are open underneath.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | None. While this species may use the project site and vicinity for foraging, suitable roost habitat for this species does not occur on the project site. |
| <i>Lasiurus xanthinus</i>    | western yellow bat | -- / SSC                           | Occurs from southern California from in Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties. In San Diego, commonly found in Anza-Borrego Desert but is also established west of the desert within rural to suburban areas including Escondido, Vista, Ramona, Lakeside, El Cajon, and La Mesa. Roosts primarily on dead palm frond skirts of native and non-native fan palms but has also been observed in cottonwoods and yuccas. Occurs within a variety of habitats where palms are present including desert riparian, desert washes, palm oasis, cottonwood-willow riparian forest, and developed areas.                                                                                                                                                                                                    | None. While this species may use the project site and vicinity for foraging, suitable roost habitat for this species does not occur on the project site. |

| Scientific Name                 | Common Name              | Status   | Habitat Associations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Potential to Occur                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Nyctinomops femorosaccus</i> | pocketed free-tailed bat | -- / SSC | Rare in California occurring from Los Angeles County east to San Bernardino County and south to San Diego County. Closely associated with their preferred roosting habitats consisting of vertical cliffs, quarries, and rocky outcrops. Sometimes roosts under tiled roofs and observed utilizing bat boxes. Habitat generalists foraging in grasslands, shrublands, riparian areas, oak woodlands, forests, meadows, and ponds favoring larger water bodies for drinking. | None. While this species may use the project site and vicinity for foraging, suitable roost habitat for this species does not occur on the project site. |
| <i>Nyctinomops macrotis</i>     | big free-tailed bat      | -- / SSC | Rare in California with species found in urban areas of San Diego County. Closely associated with their preferred roosting habitats consisting of vertical cliffs, quarries, and rocky outcrops. Also roosts in buildings and occasionally holes in trees. Associated with coastal and desert scrub, forests, riparian zones, and montane woodlands.                                                                                                                        | None. While this species may use the project site and vicinity for foraging, suitable roost habitat for this species does not occur on the project site. |

<sup>1</sup> Listing codes as follows: F = Federal; S = State of California; E = Endangered; T = Threatened; CE = Candidate Endangered; R = Rare

CRPR = California Native Plant Society Rare Plant Rank: 1A – presumed extirpated in California and either rare or extinct elsewhere; 1B – rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere; 2A – presumed extirpated in California, but more common elsewhere; 2B – rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere; 3 – more information needed; 4 – watch list for species of limited distribution. Extension codes: .1 – seriously endangered; .2 – moderately endangered; .3 – not very endangered.

<sup>2</sup> Potential to Occur is assessed as follows – **None:** There are no present or historical records of the species occurring on or in the immediate vicinity (within 3 miles) of the study area and the diagnostic habitats and soils associated with the species do not occur on or in the immediate vicinity of the study area; **Low:** Suitable habitat is present in the study area and a historical record of the species occurs in the immediate vicinity (within 3 miles) but existing conditions such as elevation, soils, density of cover, prevalence of non-native species, evidence of disturbance, limited habitat area, and/or isolation reduce the possibility that the species may occur; **Moderate:** The diagnostic habitats associated with the species occur on or in the immediate vicinity of the study area, but there is not a recorded occurrence of the species within the immediate vicinity. Some species that contain extremely limited distributions may be considered moderate, even if there is a recorded occurrence in the immediate vicinity; **High:** Suitable habitat occurs in the study area and the species has been recorded recently on or in the immediate vicinity, but the species was not observed during project surveys; **Present:** The species was observed within the study area during biological surveys for the project.

# Attachment E

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## Representative Site Photos



Photo 1: View from south end of project area looking north/northwest showing unvegetated central site. Photo taken on March 16, 2023.



Photo 2: View from southwest corner looking east showing two Canary Island pines that will be preserved. Photo taken on March 16, 2023.

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Photo 3: View of patch of invasive giant reed (*Arundo donax*) in the northwest corner of the project site. Photo taken on March 16, 2023



Photo 4: View from the southeast corner looking north, showing the non-native grassland on the eastern portion of the project site. Photo taken on March 16, 2023.

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Photo 5: View from the southeast corner looking northwest, showing the non-native grassland and trees (ngaio trees [*Myoporum laetum*] and Brazilian pepper tree [*Schinus terebinthifolia*]) that will be removed as part of the project. Photo taken on March 16, 2023.



Photo 6: Site overview from the northeast corner of the project site. Photo taken on March 16, 2023.