
Appendix B

Biological Resources Memorandum

MEMORANDUM

To: City of La Mesa
From: Olivia Koziel, Dudek
Subject: Jericho Road Project, Meritage Homes Biological Resources Assessment Memorandum
Date: January 5, 2024
cc: Vanessa Scheidel, Dudek
Attachment(s): A: Figure 1, Project Site and Location
Figure 2, Biological Resources
B: Representative Site Photographs

The following memorandum describes the biological site assessment performed by Dudek and a summary of identified biological constraints and impact avoidance options for the proposed Jericho Road Residential Meritage Homes project (Project) within the City of La Mesa, California (Attachment A, Figure 1, Project Site and Location).

This memorandum is intended to describe the existing conditions of biological resources within the Project site, discuss any special-status biological resources with potential to occur on site, and recommend any likely mitigation requirements. It should be noted that no focused surveys for special-status species were conducted during this biological assessment.

1 Location

The approximately 3.49-acre Project site is located at 9407 Jericho Road in the northeastern area of the City of La Mesa, California (Attachment A, Figure 1, Project Site and Location). The site is located roughly one mile east of State Route 125, and a half mile north of Interstate 8. The developed site is immediately surrounded by other existing development including paved streets, residential housing, and apartments.

2 Methods

Dudek reviewed regional California Natural Diversity Database occurrence data (CDFW 2024) to identify special-status species that are known to occur or potentially occur within the Project site. Historic aerial imagery of the site was also reviewed (historicaerials.com).

The reconnaissance survey associated with this memorandum was completed by Dudek biologist Olivia Koziel on January 30, 2024. The Project site was surveyed to determine the vegetation communities or land cover types present, and to determine the presence of appropriate habitat for nesting birds and special-status plant and wildlife species. The potential for special-status species was evaluated when considering whether additional focused surveys would be required.

Dudek also surveyed the site for potential jurisdictional aquatic resources (i.e., waters or wetlands of the United States and/or state).

3 Results

The Project site is developed and is surrounded by other existing development. Historic aerials show that the site has existed in its current disturbed and developed condition since as early as 1964 (historicaerials.com). Topography of the site is mostly flat, with downward slopes around the perimeter of the flatter grade open areas.

This Project site does not support any native vegetation communities. The site is currently comprised of disturbed habitat (1.46 acres) and developed land (2.03 acres). Areas mapped as developed land include paved areas, structures currently associated with an active church facility, and ornamental plantings. Disturbed habitat in the eastern part of the site consists of patches of mowed non-native Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) mixed with non-native and invasive herbaceous species. This area is kept mowed and is frequently used by community members and their dogs. Disturbed habitat in the western part of the site consists of compacted dirt as well as patches of mowed non-native grass and invasive herbs. This western area is used for additional church parking.

The vast majority of vegetation on the site is non-native and ornamental. Two native plant species were observed, Laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*) and California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*). Both of the native species were present in very small amounts and were mostly located on the slope on the eastern side of the property, but were surrounded by non-native and ornamental plant species and did not constitute a native vegetation community.

Special-Status Wildlife and Nesting Birds

Historic occurrences of special-status wildlife recorded in the vicinity of the Project site consist of records of species which are not expected to occur on or adjacent to the site, due to either the developed and disturbed condition of the site or the absence of suitable habitat for the specific species. Given the urban, developed, and frequently disturbed nature of the site, it is unlikely that special-status species would use the site for nesting, breeding, or foraging. Aside from openings to street, the site is mostly fenced with tall chain-link fencing. The site is also surrounded by streets and other urban development and would not serve as a corridor for terrestrial or aquatic wildlife movement.

The majority of wildlife species observed during the survey conducted on January 30, 2024 consisted of common small bird species that often occur in urban environments, as well as one raptor species. Structures, ornamental trees, and bushes on the site have the potential to support common species of nesting small birds such as black phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*), house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), house wren (*Troglodytes aedon*), and Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*). Mature trees such as Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* spp.) on and nearby the site perimeter have the potential to support nesting raptors that are tolerant of human disturbance and urban settings. However, no inactive or active raptor nests were detected in the mature Eucalyptus trees located on or immediately adjacent to the site during the survey, and raptors often re-use old nest sites. A red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) was observed calling and perching on the fence on the eastern side of the site, but then moved northeast to an area with larger pine trees not immediately adjacent to the site.

Special-Status Plants

No special-status plant species were observed during the survey. Historic occurrences of special-status plant species recorded in the vicinity of the Project site consist of species which are not expected to occur on or adjacent to the site, due to either the developed and disturbed condition of the site or the absence of suitable habitat for the

specific species. No historic special-status plant occurrences overlap the Project site. Given the developed and disturbed nature of the site, it is unlikely that rare plants would occur on site. The majority of vegetation observed on site was non-native or ornamental, and the two native species encountered are not considered rare or special-status.

Jurisdictional Aquatic Resources

No jurisdictional aquatic resources were observed on the Project site.

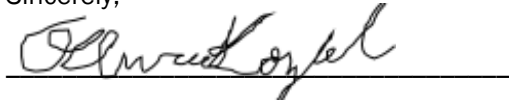
4 Constraints and Impact Avoidance Measures

Based on our initial review of the site and biological resources mapped in the Project vicinity, the Project site does not possess relevant biological constraints that would require mitigation if impacted. Migratory birds, which could nest in structures or ornamental vegetation and trees on or adjacent to the site, are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). In order to comply with the MBTA, a pre-construction nesting bird survey would need to be conducted if demolition or clearing and grubbing occurs within the nesting season (January 15 to August 31).

No additional surveys or biological evaluations are necessary in relation to biological resources on the Project site.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at 760.557.0545 or via email at okoziel@dudek.com.

Sincerely,



Olivia Koziel
Dudek Biologist

5 Literature Cited

CDFW (California Department of Fish and Wildlife). 2024. BIOS. California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB). Accessed January 2024. <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDB/Maps-and-Data>.

historicaerials.com. Historic Aerials by NETROnline. 2024. Accessed January 2024. <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.



SOURCE: SanGIS 2023, Open Street Map 2019

FIGURE 1

Project Location

9407 Jericho Road, La Mesa CA



SOURCE: SanGIS 2023, Open Street Map 2019

FIGURE 2

ATTACHMENT B
REPRESENTATIVE SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

	
Representative photograph of developed land cover type on the site, including paved areas, structures, and ornamental plantings. Photo facing north.	Representative photograph of disturbed land cover type in the eastern part of the site, consisting of patches of mowed non-native Bermuda grass mixed with non-native and invasive herbs. Facing southwest.
	
Representative photograph of disturbed land cover type in the western part of the site, including compacted dirt and patches of mowed non-native grass and invasive herbs. Photo facing northwest.	Photograph of mature Eucalyptus trees located near the perimeter of the site. Photo facing southwest.