

Appendix E

Biological Technical Report



SOUTH EL MONTE ATHLETIC FIELDS AND BUSINESS PARK PROJECT

BIOLOGICAL TECHNICAL REPORT

Los Angeles County, California

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The South El Monte Athletic Fields and Business Park Project (project or proposed project) consists of approximately 27 acres divided between the City of South El Monte (City) and the unincorporated Whittier Narrows area, in Los Angeles County (County) California (Figure 1). The project site is located approximately 200 linear feet southeast of the Whittier Narrows Reservoir, southwest of State Route (SR)-60, east of Santa Anita Avenue, and north of the Puente Hills Significant Ecological Area (SEA).

The Assessor Parcel Number (APN) for the site is 8119-005-032. Please note that this does not cover the APNs related to any potential off-site improvements along the public rights-of-way. The site is located within the El Monte USGS 7.5' quadrangle (USGS 2023b).

1.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project would include the development of a warehouse on approximately 10.5 acres of the eastern portion of the site. The remaining approximately 10.7 acres on the northwestern portion of the site would be ground leased to the City for future development of a park. The section below describes both the on-site and off-site project components.

Warehouse Component

The warehouse component of the project would include the construction of an approximately 221,815-square-foot (sf) industrial warehouse building. Vehicular access would be from two 40-foot-wide driveways on Lexington-Gallatin Road. Both driveways would provide truck and passenger vehicle ingress/egress to the site. Standard vehicle parking would be provided on the northwest and southeast sides of the building, including within the secured lot. The secured lot would also be utilized as a truck maneuvering area with access to the 27 proposed dock doors, and would be shielded by a 14-foot concrete screen wall.

Landscaping would be provided along Lexington-Gallatin Road in front of the proposed screen wall, along the west elevation of the building, along the northeast and northwest property lines, and internal to the site. The City's landscaping guidelines outlined in Section 17.09.070 of the Municipal Code require 5 percent site coverage; the project proposes approximately 56,470 sf or approximately 12.7 percent site coverage. A mix of accent trees would be planted with smaller understory landscaping including shrubs and groundcover layered beneath the trees and provided throughout the site.

Site lighting would be used to provide adequate lighting for circulation, safety, and security. Night lighting would be provided seven days per week. Outdoor lighting for the parking areas would be provided consistent with the requirements set forth in Municipal Code Section 17.09.100. All exterior lighting would be shielded to direct the source of light downward and would be oriented to not create interference with highways and neighboring properties, consistent with Municipal Code requirements for exterior lighting.

Future Park Component

The remaining northwestern approximately 10.7 acres of the project site would be dedicated to the City pursuant to either a long-term ground lease or property donation agreement for future development of a public park. The project applicant does not propose the construction or operation of the park; therefore, specific information regarding final design and construction is not known at this time because that will later be determined by the City. This analysis of the future park conservatively includes two soccer/athletic fields, open lawn areas, public surface parking, restroom facilities, and site access via one driveway off Santa Anita Avenue.

Landscaping for the future park area could include a mix of trees, shrubs, and groundcover and is expected to be focused along the perimeters of the City park site and parking lots and islands. Lighting for the future park area would include safety and security lighting for the parking lots. This analysis conservatively assumes that park lighting would include 25-foot light poles and approximately 60-80-foot tall stadium lighting for the athletic fields, if ultimately proposed by the City on the park site. A maximum of 12 stadium field lights would be utilized during scheduled games and would be turned off by 10:00 PM.

Digital Billboard

The project applicant also proposes a freeway adjacent digital billboard sign approximately 50 feet in height on the northern portion of the project site within the future park area.

Flood Infrastructure Improvements

As part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Section 408 Program, existing storage volumes on the site cannot be compromised. The project includes the construction of storage and drainage improvements for the required volume of potential flood waters from the Whittier Flood Control Basin (referred herein as the Storage Basin Improvements). The Storage Basin Improvements include (i) installation of a new storage basin approximately three to ten feet below the existing grade of Anita Avenue and (ii) installation of a new gravity storm drain connection for the new storage basin, which would connect to an existing Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) pipeline along the northern property line.

Off-site Improvements

Project implementation would require an approximately 2,600-linear-foot 16-inch water main line extension in Santa Anita Avenue from Durfee Avenue to the project site in Lexington-Gallatin Road to provide potable water service and fire flow water to the warehouse portion of the project site. Off-site improvements associated with the connection and extension of the existing main line would occur with the public right-of-way of Santa Anita Avenue and Lexington-Gallatin Road. Water service to the future park component of the Project would be provided via either connecting to an approximately 550-foot main line extension in Santa Anita Avenue north of the intersection with Lexington-Gallatin Road or running an approximately 2-inch domestic water line through the warehouse component of the Project through a private easement.

The warehouse component of project would utilize existing stormwater infrastructure in Santa Anita Avenue and newly constructed infrastructure on site. Treated stormwater would ultimately

discharge into the nearby Legg Lakes within the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area. The future park area would remain primarily pervious and self-treating. Flows on the future park area would be directed to the existing storm drain line.

Project implementation would extend an existing local sewer main line in Lexington-Gallatin Road near the intersection with Andrews Street 400 feet south toward the project site. A new 6-inch sewer lateral would connect to the extension in the road and continue west for conveyance to the Sanitation District's 33-inch Join Outfall H Unit 5D Trunk Sewer, located in Fawcett Avenue at Santa Anita Avenue. The off-site construction/improvements would be limited to what is typical for connection to an existing sewer main and extension within public rights-of-way. Wastewater collection for the future park component of the Project would be provided via either a septic system or running a domestic sewer line through the warehouse component of the Project through a private easement.

Dry utilities would be extended to the project site from existing facilities along Lexington-Gallatin Road. Southern California Edison Company (SCE) is the primary distribution provider for electricity in the City. There are existing overhead SCE electrical power lines along Lexington-Gallatin Road that the project would connect to. The SoCalGas Company provides gas services to most of Southern California, the project would connect to existing natural gas lines in Lexington-Gallatin Road. Existing telecommunication lines are also located along Lexington-Gallatin Road, which the project would tie into.

Note that for the purposes of this report the off-site improvements area is included in the 'project site'.

Project Construction

Construction of the warehouse and Storage Basin Improvements is expected to commence in 2025 with a construction duration of approximately 12 months and would be completed in one phase following a conventional construction sequence of demolition, site preparation, grading/earthwork, paving, building construction, and architectural coating. The proposed project would use the excavated fill within the future park portion of the project site to raise the finished grade of the warehouse portion above the spillway activation elevation. The future public park component of the project would be constructed by the City of South El Monte at a future date. This analysis assumes that construction would commence in 2025, primarily occur in 2026, and be completed in 2026.

Project implementation would demolish the existing building foundations and slabs and remove all existing vegetation on the project site. Typical construction equipment associated with site development for the warehouse building would include, but not be limited to, graders and scrapers during site preparation; graders, scrapers, and dozers during grading; cranes, lifts, Generators, and welders during building construction; and air compressors during architectural coating. Typical equipment used during site development grading and excavation includes heavy-duty trucks, backhoes, bulldozers, excavators, front-end loaders, and scrapers.

1.3 SCOPE OF WORK

This Biological Technical Report (BTR) includes a description of existing biological resources within and adjacent to the proposed project footprint; provides a description of methods used to assess existing conditions and results of the project-specific biological impact analysis; and includes potential avoidance and minimization measures to eliminate and/or reduce potential project impacts. This report also includes an impact assessment on biological resources associated with the project in the context of County of Los Angeles land use regulations, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and state and federal regulations, such as the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Clean Water Act (CWA), and California Fish and Game Code (CFGC).

1.4 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The project site is a large vacant lot, primarily populated by non-native grasses. Sparse patches of ornamental vegetation occur along the interior project site border, encircling the grassland area. The cement foundation of a demolished building remains on the project site, accessible from Lexington-Gallatin Road. The project site is bordered by SR-60 and residential development to the north/northeast, Legg Lake Park to the west/southwest, and the Whittier Narrows Group Picnic Area to the southeast. A vacant lot is directly east of the project site, comprised of disturbed land with compacted soils and non-native vegetation.

The project also includes off-site improvements to accommodate utility connections, these improvements would be located within Santa Anita Avenue public right of way extending from Durfee Avenue to the main project site in Lexington-Gallatin Road, and approximately 550 feet north of the intersection with Lexington-Gallatin Road to the future City park. Additionally, improvements would occur within Lexington-Gallatin Road public right-of-way extending approximately 400 feet north of the main project site to the intersection with Andrews Street. These off-site improvements areas are existing developed roadways.

1.5 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Federal, state, and local agencies have established several regulations to protect and conserve biological and aquatic resources. The descriptions below provide a brief overview of agency regulations that may be applicable to the project. The regulating agencies make the final determination as to what types of permits are required.

1.5.1 FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Federal Endangered Species Act

The federal ESA of 1973 (16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq.), as amended, provides for listing of endangered and threatened species of plants and animals and designation of critical habitat for listed species. The ESA regulates the “take” of any endangered fish or wildlife species, per Section 9. As development is proposed, the responsible agency or individual landowner is required to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to assess potential impacts on listed species (including plants) or their critical habitat, pursuant to Sections 7 and 10 of the ESA. USFWS is required to make a determination as to the extent of impact a project would have on a

particular species. If it is determined that potential impacts on a species would likely occur, measures to avoid or reduce such impacts must be identified. USFWS may issue an incidental take statement, following consultation and the issuance of a Biological Opinion. This allows for take of the species that is incidental to another authorized activity, provided that the action will not adversely affect the existence of the species. Section 10 of the ESA provides for issuance of incidental take permits to non-federal parties with the development of a habitat conservation plan (HCP); Section 7 provides for permitting of federal projects.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA; 16 U.S.C. § 703 et seq.) is a federal statute that implements treaties with several countries on the conservation and protection of migratory birds. The number of bird species covered by the MBTA is extensive and listed at 50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 10.13. The USFWS enforces the MBTA, which prohibits “by any means or in any manner, to pursue, hunt, take, capture, [or] kill” any migratory bird, or attempt such actions, except as permitted by regulation.

Clean Water Act

Pursuant to Section 404 of the CWA (33 U.S. Code § 1344), the Corps is authorized to regulate any activity that would result in the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. (including wetlands), which include those waters listed in 33 CFR 328.3 (88 Federal Register [FR] 61964, September 8, 2023; Revised Definition of “Waters of the United States”; Conforming). The Corps, with oversight from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), has the principal authority to issue CWA Section 404 permits. Substantial impacts on waters of the U.S. may require an Individual Permit. Projects that only minimally affect waters of the U.S. may meet the conditions of one of the existing Nationwide Permits.

A Water Quality Certification or waiver pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA is required for all Section 404 permitted actions. The Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), a division of the State Water Resources Control Board, provides oversight of the Section 401 certification process in California. The RWQCBs are required to provide Water Quality Certification for licenses or permits that authorize an activity that may result in a discharge from a point source into a water of the U.S. Water Quality Certification authorization “is limited to assuring that a discharge from a Federally licensed or permitted activity will comply with water quality requirements” (40 CFR 121.3).

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) is the permitting program for discharge of pollutants into surface waters of the U.S. under Section 402 of the CWA (33 U.S. Code § 1342).

1.5.2 STATE REGULATIONS

California Environmental Quality Act

The CEQA (California Public Resources Code § 21000 et seq.) was established in 1970 as California’s counterpart to NEPA. CEQA requires state and local agencies to identify significant environmental impacts of their actions and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, where feasible.

CEQA applies to certain activities of state and local public agencies. A public agency must comply with CEQA when it undertakes an activity defined by CEQA as a "project." A project is an activity undertaken by a public agency or a private activity, which must receive some discretionary approval (meaning that the agency has the authority to deny the requested permit or approval) from a government agency that may cause either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect change in the environment.

California Endangered Species Act and Natural Community Conservation Planning Act

The California Endangered Species Act of 1984 (CESA; CFGC § 2050 et seq.), in combination with the California Native Plant Protection Act of 1977 (CFGC § 1900 et seq.), regulates the listing and take of plant and animal species designated as endangered, threatened, or rare within the state. California also lists species of special concern based on limited distribution; declining populations; diminishing habitat; or unusual scientific, recreational, or educational value. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is responsible for assessing development projects for their potential to impact listed species and their habitats. State-listed special-status species are addressed through the issuance of a 2081 permit (Memorandum of Understanding).

In 1991, the California Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) Act (CFGC § 2800 et seq.) was approved and the NCCP Coastal Sage Scrub program was initiated in Southern California. The NCCP program was established "to provide for regional protection and perpetuation of natural wildlife diversity while allowing compatible land use and appropriate development and growth." The NCCP Act encourages preparation of plans that address habitat conservation and management on an ecosystem basis rather than one species or habitat at a time.

California Fish and Game Code Sections 1600-1602

Pursuant to Division 2, Chapter 6, Section 1602 of the CFGC, CDFW regulates all diversions, obstructions, or changes to the natural flow or bed, channel or bank of any river, stream or lake that supports fish or wildlife. A Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement Application must be submitted to CDFW for "any activity that may substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow or substantially change the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake" (CFGC § 1602). CDFW has jurisdiction over riparian habitats associated with watercourses. Jurisdictional waters are delineated by the outer edge of riparian vegetation or at the top of the bank of streams or lakes, whichever is wider. CDFW jurisdiction does not include tidal areas or isolated resources. CDFW reviews the proposed actions and, if necessary, submits (to the applicant) a proposal that includes measures to protect affected fish and wildlife resources. The final proposal that is mutually agreed upon by CDFW and the applicant is the Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement.

California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3511, 3513, 3801, 4700, 5050, and 5515

CDFW protects and manages fish, wildlife, and native plant resources within California. The California Fish and Game Commission (CFGC) and/or CDFW are responsible for issuing permits for the take or possession of protected species. The following sections of the CFGC address protected species: Section 3511 (birds), Section 4700 (mammals), Section 5050 (reptiles and amphibians), and Section 5515 (fish). In addition, the protection of birds of prey is provided for in Sections 3503, 3513, and 3800 of the CFGC.

California Native Plant Protection Act (California Fish and Game Code §§ 1900–1913)

The California Native Plant Protection Act requires all state agencies to use their authority to carry out programs to conserve endangered and rare native plants. The California Native Plant Protection Act prohibits the take of such plants, with certain exceptions.

California Desert Native Plants Act (California Food and Agriculture Code §§ 80001–80201)

The California Desert Native Plants Act prohibits the removal of certain species of California desert native plants on public and privately owned lands without a valid permit from the sheriff or commissioner of the county where collecting would occur. This act applies within the boundaries of Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Mono, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties.

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (California Water Code § 13000 et seq.) provides for statewide coordination of water quality regulations. The State Water Resources Control Board was established as the statewide authority and nine separate RWQCBs were developed to oversee water quality on a day-to-day basis.

The RWQCBs have primary responsibility for protecting water quality in California. As discussed above, the RWQCBs regulate discharges to surface waters under the CWA. In addition, the RWQCBs are responsible for administering the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act.

Pursuant to the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, the state is given authority to regulate waters of the state, which include wetlands, rivers, lakes, and the ocean, also defined as any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters within the boundaries of the state. As such, any person proposing to discharge waste, which includes discharges of dredged or fill material, into waters of the state that could affect its water quality must first file a Report of Waste Discharge per the 2019 State Policy for Water Quality Control if a Section 404 permit is not required for the activity. The 2019 State Policy also includes Procedures for Discharges to Waters of the State and wetland delineation methods.

1.5.3 REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLANS

County of Los Angeles Code of Ordinances

Chapter 22.102 of the County of Los Angeles Code of Ordinances, SEAs, outlines regulations established to protect and preserve biologically and aquatically valuable areas of the County. The location and expanse of SEAs can be found using the County Planning SEAs Inventory Geographic Information System (GIS) (Los Angeles County 2019). SEAs are maintained in perpetuity by regulating the type and size of potential developments, managing edge effects and habitat fragmentation, conserving biological diversity, and avoiding impacts within delineated SEA regions (County of Los Angeles 2023).

Chapter 22.174 of the County Code of Ordinances prohibits the damage or removal of oak (*Quercus* sp.) trees that meet the below specifications without possession of a permit (County of Los Angeles 2023). This ordinance applies to all trees of oak which are:

- 1) 25 inches or more in circumference (eight inches in diameter) as measured four and one-half feet above mean natural grade; in the case of an oak with more than one trunk, whose combined circumference of any two trunks is at least 38 inches (12 inches in diameter) as measured four and one-half feet above mean natural grade, on any lot within the unincorporated area of the County; or
- 2) Any tree that has been provided as a replacement tree, pursuant to Section 22.174.070 (Conditions of Approval), on any lot within the unincorporated area of the County, unless an Oak Tree Permit is first obtained as provided by this Chapter (County of Los Angeles 2023).

South El Monte General Plan

The South El Monte General Plan Resources Element provides measures to protect and enhance open space, natural habitat, and biological and cultural resources. The General Plan notes that “no rare or endangered species of plants, fish, or wildlife have been found in the City.” Therefore, no policies or goals from the General Plan are relevant to the proposed project as it relates to biological resources.

2 METHODS

Rocks Biological Consulting (RBC) biologists conducted vegetation mapping, habitat assessments for special-status species, and a general biological survey on April 21, 2023. Additionally, RBC performed a general reconnaissance survey for potentially jurisdictional aquatic resources; however, a formal aquatic resources delineation was not conducted. Following the general biological survey, RBC biologists conducted a focused survey for southern tarplant (*Centromadia parryi* ssp. *australis*). One reconnaissance non-breeding season burrowing owl survey and follow up general biological survey were conducted on November 15, 2024. Focused breeding season burrowing owl surveys were conducted from March 24 to June 25, 2025.

The general biological survey, vegetation mapping, and habitat assessments were conducted within the approximately 27.4-acre project site and a surrounding 100-foot buffer (survey area) for a total of 49.4 acres. The constraints-level aquatic resources assessment was conducted within the project site plus a surrounding 50-foot buffer (review area), and the southern tarplant survey and non-breeding season burrowing owl survey were conducted within the 27.4-acre project site. Note that for the purposes of this report the term 'project site' refers to both the main project site and the off-site improvements.

Note that where applicable, buffer areas are included in this analysis to assess the potential for special-status species or resources in areas immediately adjacent to the project site that could be impacted by the project analyzed herein. Such information should not be considered comprehensive for all biological resources or aquatic resources that may occur in buffer areas, and buffer mapping is intended only for the project analysis outlined herein; such information is not intended for impact analysis of any potential future projects within or adjacent to project buffer areas.

2.1 DATABASE SEARCH

Prior to conducting field surveys, existing information regarding biological resources present or potentially present within the project site was obtained through a review of pertinent literature and databases, including:

- CDFW California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB; CDFW 2023a)
- California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Electronic Inventory (CNPS 2023a)
- USFWS Special-Status Species Database (USFWS 2023a)
- USFWS Information for Planning and Consulting (IPaC) Database (USFWS 2023b)
- USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) Database (USFWS 2023c)
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) Database (USGS 2023a)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soils Survey Database (NRCS 2023)
- iNaturalist (iNaturalist 2025)
- eBird: An Online Database of Bird Distribution and Abundance (eBird 2025)

- The Calflora Database (Calflora 2023) and Consortium of California Herbaria (Consortium of California Herbaria 2023)
- Bumble Bee Watch (The Xerces Society et al. 2025)
- San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study (National Park Service [NPS] 2012)
- Los Angeles County Drainage Area Whittier Narrows Dam Flood Control Project Dam Safety Modification Study Final Environmental Impact Statement (Corps 2019)

Database results, along with local biological knowledge, were used for assessment of special-status species' potential for occurrence on or adjacent the project site. The potential for occurrence tables created for the project include federally and state-listed species, candidate species, and other state-designated special-status species that have been reported within three miles of the project site (CNDDDB and USFWS Special-Status Species Database) and determined to be potentially present in the IPaC Database, as well as California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) 1 and 2 species that occur within the 'Nine Quads' search within an elevational range of 220 to 230 feet above mean sea level (amsl; CNPS 2023a). The potential for special-status species to occur within the project site was refined by considering the habitat affinities of each species, field habitat assessments, vegetation mapping, and knowledge of local biological resources.

2.2 VEGETATION MAPPING AND GENERAL BIOLOGICAL SURVEYS

On April 21, 2023, RBC biologists conducted vegetation mapping in the field to provide a baseline of the biological resources that occur or have the potential to occur within the project site and immediately surrounding areas. RBC performed vegetation mapping by walking throughout the survey area and mapping vegetation communities on aerial photographs at a 1:2400 scale (1 inch = 200 feet). RBC biologists conducted a follow-up survey on November 15, 2024, to evaluate the current conditions at the project site.

The extent of each habitat type (delineated as a habitat polygon on the vegetation maps) was calculated using the GIS application ArcGIS Collector. Habitats were classified based on the dominant and characteristic plant species in accordance with vegetation community classifications outlined in Holland's *Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Natural Communities of California* (Holland 1986). The vegetation communities were also crosswalked with *The Manual of California Vegetation, Online Edition* (MCV; CNPSCNPS 2023b), and the equivalent classification is provided.

RBC biologists conducted a general biological survey for plants and wildlife concurrently with vegetation mapping. Photos taken during the general biological survey are provided in Appendix A. Plant species encountered during the field survey were identified and recorded in field notebooks. Plant species that could not be identified were brought to the laboratory for identification using the dichotomous keys in the *Jepson eFlora* (Jepson Flora Project 2023). A list of the vascular plant species observed in the survey area is presented in Appendix B.

RBC conducted habitat assessments for special-status plants during the general biological field survey. Special-status plant species include those that are: 1) listed or proposed for listing by federal or state agencies as threatened or endangered; 2) CRPR 1 or 2 species (CNPS 2023a); or

3) considered rare, endangered, or threatened by the CDFW (CDFW 2023b) or other local conservation organizations or specialists.

In the state of California, CNPS is a statewide resource conservation organization that has developed an inventory of California’s sensitive plant species. The CRPR system is recognized by the CDFW and essentially serves as an early warning list of potential candidate species for threatened or endangered status. The CRPR system is categorized as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. CRPR Definitions

CRPR	1A	presumed extirpated in California and 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	plants for which more information needed
	4	plants of limited distribution
CRPR Threat Ranks	0.1	Seriously threatened in California (over 80% of occurrences threatened / high degree and immediacy of threat)
	0.2	Moderately threatened in California (20-80% occurrences threatened / moderate degree and immediacy of threat)
	0.3	Not very threatened in California (<20% of occurrences threatened / low degree and immediacy of threat or no current threats known)

Wildlife species were documented during the field survey by sight, calls, tracks, scat, or other signs, and were recorded in field notebooks. Binoculars (10X42 magnification) were used to aid in the identification of wildlife. In addition to species observed during the surveys, expected wildlife use of the project site was assessed based on known habitat preferences of local species and knowledge of their biogeographic distribution in the region. RBC conducted habitat assessments for special-status wildlife during the general biological field survey. Special-status wildlife species include those that are: 1) listed or proposed for listing by federal or state agencies as threatened or endangered; or 2) considered endangered, threatened, or rare by the CDFW (CDFW 2023b).

A list of wildlife species observed in the project site is presented in Appendix B; scientific and common names of wildlife follow CDFW’s Complete List of Amphibian, Reptile, Bird and Mammal Species in California (CDFW 2016). Twilight/nighttime surveys were not conducted, therefore crepuscular and nocturnal animals are likely under-represented in the project species list; however, habitat assessments were performed for all special-status species to ensure that any potentially present rare species are adequately addressed herein.

If observed, the location of biological resources designated as special-status by the USFWS, CDFW, and/or CNPS, were recorded in field notebooks, on aerial maps, and/or through the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) units.

2.3 SPECIAL-STATUS SPECIES SURVEYS

2.3.1 SOUTHERN TARPLANT SURVEY

RBC conducted a focused survey for southern tarplant on the project site July 27, 2023. Off-site reference populations were visited to ensure southern tarplant was in bloom and detectable. All suitable habitat within the project site was walked and assessed for the presence of southern tarplant. Surveyors walked parallel transects which were spaced to allow for 100% visualization of ground cover. The locations of any identified special-status plant species were recorded with estimated population sizes. All vascular plant species observed on site were identified to species, subspecies, or varietal level and added to the project's plant compendium.

The survey was led by biologist Jim Rocks who holds a Master of Science degree in Biological Sciences and has over 20 years of experience in California field biology, with a focus on botany. Mr. Rocks was assisted by RBC biologists Garrett Moss and Kelsey Woldt.

2.3.2 BURROWING OWL SURVEY

During the biological survey on April 21, 2023, the project site was determined to have low-to-moderate potential to support burrowing owl; however, vegetation changes prompted a follow-up survey on November 15, 2024, during which the site was determined to have moderate potential to support burrowing owl. In response, RBC conducted a reconnaissance, non-breeding season burrowing owl survey within suitable habitat on the project site. Survey methods generally followed the guidelines outlined in the *CDFW Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFW 2012; BUOW Guidelines). The survey assessed the presence or absence of burrowing owls by analyzing the presence of suitable burrows and searching for both live burrowing owls and recent burrowing owl sign within the project site and a 500-foot buffer (BUOW survey area).

RBC also conducted focused breeding season burrowing owl surveys within accessible suitable habitat within the BUOW survey area between March 24 and June 25, 2025. Buffer areas not directly accessible were surveyed with binoculars. Four focused burrowing owl surveys were conducted during the species' breeding season, February 1 – August 31 and survey methods generally followed the BUOW Guidelines. Presence/absence of burrowing owls within the survey area was assessed by analyzing the presence of suitable burrows and searching for live burrowing owls and recent burrowing owl sign. Complete survey methodology for the focused burrowing owl surveys is presented in Appendix C.

2.4 CONSTRAINTS-LEVEL AQUATIC RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

RBC conducted a constraints-level assessment of the review area to identify areas that may be considered potentially jurisdictional under the Corps pursuant to Section 404 of the CWA; the RWQCB pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA and the Porter-Cologne Act; or CDFW pursuant to CFGC §1602. RBC evaluated the review area for depressions, drainage patterns, wetland vegetation, or riparian vegetation. All habitats within the review area were assessed for potential jurisdictional status, with focus on the presence of defined channels, soils, and hydrology. No formal jurisdictional delineation was conducted as part of this effort.

3 RESULTS

This section includes results of the literature review, vegetation mapping, general biological survey, and the constraints-level aquatic resources assessment. Special-status biological resources are also addressed in this section and are defined as follows: 1) species that have been given special recognition by federal, state, or local conservation agencies and organizations due to limited, declining, or threatened/endangered population sizes; 2) species and their associated habitat types recognized by local and regional resource agencies as sensitive; 3) habitat areas or vegetation communities that are unique, are of relatively limited distribution, or are of particular value to wildlife; 4) wildlife corridors and habitat linkages; and/or 5) biological resources that may or may not be considered sensitive, but are regulated under local, state, and/or federal laws.

3.1 PHYSICAL SETTING

The project site is a relatively flat parcel that supports primarily non-native grassland with smaller areas of disturbed and developed land as well as small patches of ornamentals, primarily eucalyptus trees (*Eucalyptus* spp.), pine trees (*Pinus* sp.), and blue elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*). A cement foundation and piping of a demolished building remain in the center of the project site, adjacent to disturbed land and a wooden shed. The project site is immediately south and east of Santa Anita Avenue and north/northwest of Lexington-Gallatin Road. An open lot, residential development, and State Route (SR)-60 abut the project site to the east. Whittier Narrows Recreational Center is adjacent to the project site on the north, west, and south. The recreational area includes Legg Lake, a reservoir located near the western corner of the project site which is managed by the Corps as a part of a flood control and water conservation project. The project includes off-site improvements south of the project site along the developed roadways of Lexington-Gallatin Road and Santa Anita Avenue.

On-site elevations range from approximately 219 to 226 feet amsl. Soils mapped on the project site include Urban land-Biscailuz-Pico complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes and Urban land-Pico-Metz complex 0 to 2 percent slopes (Figure 2; NRCS 2023). Neither soil type found on the project site is hydric. Soil type descriptions for the project site are provided below:

- Urban land-Biscailuz-Pico complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes – The Biscailuz series consists of very deep, somewhat poorly drained soils that formed in alluvium from mixed rock sources. The Pico series consists of deep, well drained soils that formed in alluvium from mostly sedimentary rocks.
- Urban land-Pico-Metz complex – Consists of very deep, well drained to somewhat excessively drained soils that formed in alluvial material from mixed, but dominantly sedimentary rocks.

3.2 VEGETATION COMMUNITIES AND LAND USES

The project site supports little diversity in vegetation communities and other land covers. Table 2 provides a summary of vegetation/land cover on the project site and within the survey area buffer, which are depicted on Figure 3.

Table 2. Summary of Vegetation/Land Cover Within the Survey Area and Project Site

Vegetation ¹	Vegetation ²	Global/ State Rank	Survey Area (project site plus 100- foot buffer; acres)	Project Site (including off- site improvements; acres)
Developed	Developed/Disturbed	No Rank	23.8	4.9
Disturbed	Developed/Disturbed	No Rank	0.9	0.01
Southern North Slope Chaparral	Holly Leaf Cherry, Toyon, Greenbark Ceanothus Chaparral	G5/S4	0.5	0
Non-native Grassland	Wild Oats and Annual Brome Grasslands	No Rank	23.3	21.6
Ornamental	Developed/Disturbed	No Rank	1.0	0.9
Total³			49.4	27.4

¹ Vegetation communities recognized by Holland (1986)

² Vegetation communities from Holland (1986) crosswalked to *The Manual of California Vegetation, Online Edition* (CNPS 2023b)

³ Acreages summed using raw numbers provided during GIS analysis (available upon request) and thus the sum of the total rounded numbers may not directly add up in this table.

Natural communities with ranks of S1 through S3 are considered sensitive natural communities by CDFW to be addressed in the environmental review processes of CEQA. The project site does not contain habitat that is considered a sensitive vegetation community by CDFW (CDFW 2023c).

Developed

Developed land is typically classified as lands regularly utilized by humans that are devoid of natural habitat. Developed land within the survey area consists primarily of roads, recreational facilities, and government agency buildings. Developed land on the project site (4.9 acres) is primarily comprised of asphalt roads and recreational spaces. Ornamental landscaping, including species such as sycamores (*Platanus occidentalis*) and pine trees, is present within the developed land on the project site.

Developed habitat is not recognized by CDFW (CDFW 2023c); therefore, it is not considered a sensitive natural community under CEQA.

Disturbed

Disturbed land is typically classified as land on which the native vegetation has been significantly altered by agriculture, construction, or other land-clearing activities, and the species composition and project site conditions are not characteristic of the disturbed phase of a plant association (e.g., disturbed Riversidean sage scrub). Disturbances observed are those typically associated with vacant lots, roadsides, construction staging areas, and abandoned fields. Disturbed land is typically dominated by non-native annual species and perennial broadleaf species.

Disturbed land occurs within the central and northeast regions of project site (0.01 acre). Disturbances observed are those typically associated with vacant lots, including soil compaction and non-native vegetation colonization. Additionally, the project site is currently managed with string trimmers for weed abatement multiple times per year. It is primarily vegetated by non-native species such as common barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), cheeseweed mallow (*Malva parviflora*) and milk thistle (*Silybum marianum*).

Disturbed land is not recognized by CDFW (CDFW 2023c); therefore, it is not considered a sensitive natural community under CEQA.

Southern North Slope Chaparral (Holly Leaf Cherry, Toyon, Greenbark Ceanothus Chaparral)

Southern north slope chaparral (holly leaf cherry, toyon, greenbark ceanothus chaparral; *Prunus ilicifolia* – *Heteromeles arbutifolia* – *Ceanothus spinosus*) includes greenbark ceanothus (*Ceanothus spinosus*), toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), and/or holly leaf cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*) as dominant or codominant shrub species with varied canopy and herb densities.

Southern north slope chaparral was not observed on the project site but occurs off site within the survey buffer. The habitat within the survey buffer is primarily composed of holly leaf cherry but also includes coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), toyon, poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), and white horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*).

Southern north slope chaparral is ranked as G5/S4 meaning it is not considered a sensitive natural community under CEQA (CDFW 2023c).

Non-Native Grassland (Wild Oats and Annual Brome Grasslands)

Non-native grassland (wild oats and annual brome grasslands; *Avena* spp. - *Bromus* spp.) is typified by dense to sparse cover of annual, non-native grasses. Non-native grassland within the project site (21.6 acres) is dominated by ripgut grass (*Bromus diandrus*), common barley, and slender wild oat (*Avena barbata*). Non-native grassland comprises nearly the entire northern half of the project site.

Non-native grassland is not recognized by CDFW (CDFW 2023c); therefore, it is not considered a sensitive natural community under CEQA.

Ornamental

Ornamental vegetation is typically classified as an area containing landscaped, aesthetically appealing plant species. Ornamental vegetation within the project site (0.9 acre) is present in patches bordering the non-native grassland. Ornamental habitat on the project site is primarily comprised of blue elderberry and pine species. Ornamental vegetation is also found throughout the survey area in association with development.

Ornamental habitat is not recognized by CDFW (CDFW 2023c); therefore, it is not considered a sensitive natural community under CEQA.

3.3 PLANTS AND WILDLIFE

The project site supports a very low diversity of wildlife and plant species. A total of 59 plant species (31 percent native, 69 percent non-native) were observed during the general biological surveys (Appendix B). A total of 36 bird species, one reptile species, three mammal species, and six invertebrate species were detected (Appendix B).

3.3.1 SPECIAL-STATUS PLANT SPECIES

No special-status plant species were observed on site during the general biological or the focused rare plant survey. One CRPR 1B.1 list plant, southern tarplant, was initially determined to have moderate potential to occur on site based on the existence of nearby populations subject to similar habitat conditions (i.e., disturbed land and non-native grasslands that periodically retain water).

No additional special status plant species have a moderate or high potential to occur within the project site based on the highly disturbed nature of the site and lack of suitable habitat. Special-status plants assessed for their potential to occur on site are presented in Table 3. Please note that CRPR 3 and 4 species were omitted from the potential to occur analysis below due to their relatively low conservation concern. Furthermore, special-status plant species with low potential to occur or not expected to occur are not addressed further in this report. Because these species have low or no potential for occurrence, no impacts are anticipated on these species.

Table 3. Assessment of Special-Status Plant Species Potential to Occur Within the Project Site

Species	Status	Habitat Description	Potential to Occur
Braunton's milk vetch (<i>Astragalus brauntonii</i>)	FE; CRPR 1B.1	Perennial herb. Blooms January-August. Chaparral and coastal scrub. Elevation 15-2100 feet.	None. No suitable habitat on site.
Brand's star phacelia (<i>Phacelia stellaris</i>)	CRPR 1B.1	Annual herb. Blooms March-June. Coastal dunes and coastal scrub. Elevation 5-1310 feet.	None. No suitable habitat on site.
California Orcutt grass (<i>Orcuttia californica</i>)	SE; FE; CRPR 1B.1	Annual herb. Blooms April-August. Vernal pools. Elevation. 50-2165 feet.	None. No suitable habitat on site.
California satintail (<i>Imperata brevifolia</i>)	CRPR 2B.1	Perennial rhizomatous herb. Blooms September-May. Chaparral, coastal scrub, meadows and seeps, Mojavean desert scrub, and riparian scrub. Elevation 0-3985 feet.	None. No suitable habitat on site.
California saw grass (<i>Cladium californicum</i>)	CRPR 2B.2	Perennial rhizomatous herb. Blooms June-September. Meadows and seeps, marshes and swamps (alkaline, freshwater), Elevation 195-5250 feet.	None. No suitable habitat on site.
Coulter's goldfields (<i>Lasthenia glabrata</i> ssp. <i>coulteri</i>)	CRPR 1B.1	Annual herb. Blooms February-June. Marshes and swamps, playas, and vernal pools. Elevation 5-4005 feet.	None. No suitable habitat on site.

Species	Status	Habitat Description	Potential to Occur
Davidson's saltscale (<i>Atriplex serenana</i> var. <i>dauidsonii</i>)	CRPR 1B.2	Annual herb. Blooms April-October. Coastal bluff scrub and coastal scrub. Elevation 35-655 feet.	None. No suitable habitat on site.
Intermediate mariposa-lily (<i>Calochortus weedii</i> var. <i>intermedius</i>)	CRPR 1B.2	Perennial bulbiferous herb. Blooms May-July. Chaparral, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grasslands. Elevation 345-2805 feet.	Low. Not observed on site during general biological survey. Species is found in rocky sediment, which is not on site. Site is primarily composed of competitive non-natives.
Los Angeles sunflower (<i>Helianthus nuttallii</i> ssp. <i>parishii</i>)	CRPR 1A	Perennial rhizomatous herb. Blooms August-October. Marshes and swamps. Elevation 35-5005 feet.	None. No suitable habitat on site.
Lucky morning glory (<i>Calystegia felix</i>)	CRPR 1B.1	Annual rhizomatous herb. Blooms March-September. Meadows and seeps (sometimes alkaline) and riparian scrub. Elevation 100-705 feet.	None. No suitable habitat on site.
Many-stemmed dudleya (<i>Dudleya multicaulis</i>)	CRPR 1B.2	Perennial herb. Blooms April-July. Chaparral, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grasslands. Elevation 45-2590 feet.	None. Grassland on site is composed of competitive non-natives and project site is surrounded by development.
Mesa horkelia (<i>Horkelia cuneata</i> var. <i>puberula</i>)	CRPR 1B.1	Perennial herb. Blooms February-July (September). Chaparral, cismontane woodland, and coastal scrub. Elevation 230-2660 feet.	None. No suitable habitat on site.
Nevin's barberry (<i>Berberis nevini</i>)	SE; FE; CRPR 1B.1	Perennial evergreen shrub. Blooms (February) March-June. Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, and riparian scrub. Elevation 230-2705 feet.	None. No suitable habitat on site.
Parish's brittlescale (<i>Atriplex parishii</i>)	CRPR 1B.1	Annual herb. Blooms June-October. Chenopod scrub, playas, and vernal pools. Elevation 80-6235.	None. No suitable habitat on site.
Parish's gooseberry (<i>Ribes divaricatum</i> var. <i>parishii</i>)	CRPR 1A	Perennial deciduous shrub. Blooms February-April. Riparian woodland. Elevation 215-985 feet.	None. No suitable habitat on site. Last documented in the local area in the mid 1990s.
Peruvian dodder (<i>Cuscuta obtusiflora</i> var. <i>glandulosa</i>)	CRPR 2B.2	Annual vine (parasitic). Blooms July-October. Marshes and swamps. Elevation 50-920 feet.	None. No suitable habitat on site.

Species	Status	Habitat Description	Potential to Occur
Prostrate vernal pool navarretia (<i>Navarretia prostrata</i>)	CRPR 1B.2	Annual herb. Blooms April-July. Coastal scrub, meadows and seeps, valley and foothill grassland (alkaline), and vernal pools. Elevation 10-3970 feet.	None. Grassland on site is composed of competitive non-natives and project site is surrounded by development.
Salt spring checkerbloom (<i>Sidalcea neomexicana</i>)	CRPR 2B.2	Perennial herb. Blooms March-June. Chaparral, coastal scrub, lower montane coniferous forest, Mojavean desert scrub, and playas. Elevation 50-5020 feet.	None. No suitable habitat on site.
San Bernardino aster (<i>Symphyotrichum defoliatum</i>)	CRPR 1B.2	Perennial rhizomatous herb. Blooms July-November. Cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, lower montane coniferous forest, meadows and seeps, marshes and swamps, and valley and foothill grasslands (vernally mesic). Elevation 5-6695 feet.	None. Not known from the project vicinity. Grassland on site is composed of competitive non-natives and project site is surrounded by development.
Smooth tarplant (<i>Centromadia pungens</i> ssp. <i>laevis</i>)	CRPR 1B.1	Annual herb. Blooms April-September. Chenopod scrub, meadows and seeps, playas, riparian woodland, and valley and foothill grasslands. Elevation 0-2100 feet.	None. Not known from the project vicinity. Grassland on site is composed of competitive non-natives and project site is surrounded by development.
Sonoran maiden fern (<i>Pelazoneuron puberulum</i> var. <i>sonorense</i>)	CRPR 2B.2	Perennial rhizomatous herb. Blooms January-September. Meadows and seeps. Elevation 165-2000 feet.	None. No suitable habitat on site.
Southern mountains skullcap (<i>Scutellaria bolanderi</i> ssp. <i>austromontana</i>)	CRPR 1B.2	Perennial rhizomatous herb. Blooms June-August. Chaparral, cismontane woodland, and lower montane coniferous forest. Elevation 1395-6560 feet.	None. No suitable habitat on site.
Southern tarplant (<i>Centromadia parryi</i> ssp. <i>australis</i>)	CRPR 1B.1	Annual herb. Blooms May-November. Marshes and swamps (margins), valley and foothill grassland (vernally mesic), vernal pools. and some disturbed habitats. Elevation 0-1575 feet.	Absent. Not observed during focused rare plant surveys targeting this species.
White rabbit tobacco (<i>Pseudognaphalium leucocephalum</i>)	CRPR 2B.2	Perennial herb. Blooms (July) August-November (December). Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, and riparian woodland. Elevation 0-6890 feet.	None. No suitable habitat on site.

Species	Status	Habitat Description	Potential to Occur
CRPR: California Rare Plant Rank FE: Federally Endangered SE: State Endangered			

Southern Tarplant (Centromadia parryi ssp. australis)

Southern tarplant is an annual herb in the sunflower family (*Asteraceae*) with hairy or puberulent yellow flowers that bloom from May to November. Southern tarplant is native to California and Baja, Mexico; it occurs in the U.S. from San Diego County to Santa Barbara County at elevations less than 1,575 feet amsl. This species is commonly found within vernal mesic valleys and foothill grasslands, within vernal pools, and along the margins of marshes and swamps (CNPS 2023a). Southern tarplant is a CRPR rank 1B.1 species, meaning it is rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere and eligible for state-listing under CEQA. Southern tarplant is also a State Rank S2, meaning it is “imperiled in the state because of rarity due to very restricted range, very few populations (often 20 or fewer), steep declines, or other factors making it very vulnerable to extirpation from the nation or state” (CNPS 2023a).

Immediately prior to the focused survey, RBC biologists observed an off-site reference population of southern tarplant at LA Clay’s Shooting Sports Park, confirming that the survey was temporally accurate for detection of the focal species. Southern tarplant was not detected on the project site during general biological or focused rare plant surveys.

3.3.2 SPECIAL-STATUS WILDLIFE SPECIES AND CRITICAL HABITATS

Three special-status species were observed during the general biological survey, as detailed below. Additionally, nine special-status species have a moderate potential to occur and one special status species has a low-to-moderate potential to occur on site. A full list of special-status wildlife assessed and their potential to occur on the project site is presented in Table 4. Please note that wildlife species with low potential to occur or that are not expected to occur are not addressed further in this report. Because these species have low or no potential for occurrence, no impacts are anticipated on these species.

Table 4. Assessment of Special-Status Wildlife Species Potential to Occur Within the Project Site

Species	Status	Habitat Description	Potential to Occur
INVERTEBRATES			
Crotch bumblebee (<i>Bombus crotchii</i>)	SC; SSC	Found in open grasslands and scrublands from coastal California east toward the Sierra-Cascade Crest. Less common in western Nevada (Williams et al. 2014). Current populations of Crotch bumble bee are primarily found in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties. Occurs near food plants including <i>Acmispon</i> , <i>Asclepias</i> , <i>Antirrhinum</i> , <i>Chaenactis</i> , <i>Lupinus</i> , <i>Medicago</i> , <i>Salvia</i> , <i>Phacelia</i> , <i>Clarkia</i> , <i>Dendromecon</i> , <i>Eschscholzia</i> , and <i>Eriogonum</i> .	Very low. No suitable habitat occurs on site. No preferred Crotch's bumble bee nectar sources are present on site as none were observed during rare plant surveys or other biological surveys. The nearest observation of this species is approximately five miles northeast of the site (CDFW 2025b). All nearby observations have occurred in association with preferred nectar sources (The Xerces Society 2025).
Monarch butterfly, California overwintering population (<i>Danaus plexippus plexippus</i> pop. 1)	FPT	Found in a variety of habitats across the United States and Mexico (e.g., grasslands, urban land, mountains, and coastal habitats). Exclusively oviposit on milkweed. Nectivorous adults require flowering plants. Roost in eucalyptus, Monterey pines, and Monterey cypresses in California.	Presumed absent. Three monarch butterfly individuals were observed during rare plant focused survey on July 27, 2023; however, due to the time of year, this observation does not indicate overwintering. No milkweed observed; thus, the site does not have potential to support reproduction. A eucalyptus tree exists in survey area near the on-site development but is unlikely to provide the necessary conditions for a suitable overwintering site, which require protection from high wind and storms, absence of freezing temperatures, varying levels of sunlight, high humidity, and the presence of water.
AMPHIBIANS			

Species	Status	Habitat Description	Potential to Occur
Western spadefoot (<i>Spea hammondi</i>)	SSC	Found in temporary ponds, vernal pools, and backwaters of flowing creeks, as well as adjacent upland habitats such as grasslands and coastal sage scrub for burrowing.	Very low. No suitable habitat occurs on site.
REPTILES			
Coast horned lizard (<i>Phrynosoma blainvillii</i>)	SSC	Found in a variety of habitats including sage scrub, chaparral, and coniferous and broadleaf woodlands. Observed on sandy or friable soils with open scrub. Requires open areas, bushes, and fine loose soil.	Very low. No suitable habitat occurs on site. Vegetation is too dense to support this species.
Coastal whiptail (<i>Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri</i>)	SSC	Found in a variety of rocky, sandy, dry habitats including sage scrub, chaparral, woodlands on friable loose soil. Coastal whiptail occupies a variety of habitats including coastal sage scrub, chaparral, riparian areas, woodlands, and rocky areas (Lemm 2006). Coastal whiptail ranges north to south from Ventura County to Baja California and east to west from the Peninsular Ranges to the coast. Found in coastal scrub, chaparral, woodlands, riparian areas, and other native habitats with sparse foliage.	Very low. No suitable habitat occurs on site. Vegetation is too dense to support this species.
Red-diamond rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus ruber</i>)	SSC	Chaparral, coastal scrub, along creek banks, and in rock outcrops or piles of debris. Often associated with dense vegetation in rocky areas.	Very low. Scrub habitats and rocky outcrops are not present.
Southern California legless lizard (<i>Anniella stebbinsi</i>)	SSC	Found in a variety of habitats including coastal dunes, chaparral, coastal scrub, sandy washes, and alluvial fans, containing moist, loose soils.	Very low. No suitable habitat occurs on site and soils are too compacted to support this species.
Western pond turtle (<i>Emys marmorata</i>)	SSC	Found in permanent to semipermanent aquatic features across various habitats. Requires 10 cm of humid sediment for nest construction and egg incubation.	Very low. No suitable habitat occurs on site.

Species	Status	Habitat Description	Potential to Occur
BIRDS			
American Peregrine falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>) ¹	FP	Found within a variety of habitats, though perennially dependent on wetlands and riparian habitats. Breeds near a water source and nests on natural or anthropogenic ledges (less frequently in trees). Winters in the Central Valley and Channel Islands.	Moderate. Site is adjacent to Whittier Narrows Reservoir. Tall pine and sycamore trees in surrounding Whittier Narrows Recreational Area serve as potential nesting sites.
Bald eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>) ³	SE	Nests at the tallest branch crux of large-canopied trees, often near a body of water. Breeds in forested habitats. Requires water source with abundant fish for hunting.	Low. Whittier Narrows Reservoir borders the site to the northwest and supports suitable habitat. The project site does not support suitable nesting or hunting habitat for this species. Species may fly over the site.
Bank swallow (<i>Riparia riparia</i>) ¹	ST	Predominantly forages over open riparian areas but also over brushland, grassland, wetlands, water, and cropland. Seeks refuge in holes in riverbanks or cliffs, telephone wires, logs, and shoreline vegetation.	Low. Suitable foraging habitat may occur on site. Suitable nesting habitat is not present on site but may occur near Whittier Narrows Reservoir northwest of the project site. Species may fly over the site.
Burrowing owl (<i>Athene cunicularia</i>) ²	SE (Candidate); SSC	Found in grasslands and open scrub from the coast to foothills. Strongly associated with California ground squirrel (<i>Otospermophilus beecheyi</i>) and other fossorial mammal burrows. Occurs in open to sparsely vegetated habitats or in regions of low vegetative height.	Moderate (Surveys Negative). Symbiont (California ground squirrel) was observed on site, suitable burrows present. Tall grasses likely would preclude year-round inhabitation of project site; however, periodic weed management increases site suitability for nesting and foraging. Focused breeding season surveys were negative in 2025.
California horned lark (<i>Eremophila alpestris actia</i>)	WL	Found from coastal deserts and grasslands to alpine dwarf-shrub habitat above treeline. Also seen in coniferous or chaparral habitats.	Low. On-site non-native grassland height and density preclude nesting and foraging. Species may fly over the site.

Species	Status	Habitat Description	Potential to Occur
Coastal California gnatcatcher (<i>Poliophtila californica californica</i>)	FT; SSC	Found in sage scrub habitats, often on slopes. Nests in shrubs including California sagebrush (<i>Artemisia californica</i>), buckwheat (<i>Eriogonum fasciculatum</i>), and sage (<i>Salvia</i> sp.).	Very low. No suitable habitat occurs on site. Species may fly over the site.
Cooper's hawk (<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>) ¹	WL	Usually found in oak woodlands but occasionally in willow or eucalyptus woodlands. Hunts on habitat edges often near riparian areas. Occasionally observed in urban areas.	Moderate. Suitable hunting habitat and fossorial prey occur on site. Project site is surrounded by potential perches (e.g., ornamental trees and light posts).
Costa's hummingbird (<i>Calypte costae</i>) ¹	BCC	Found in Sonoran and Mojave Desert scrub, coastal California chaparral and sage scrub, and deciduous forest and desert scrub.	Very low. No suitable habitat occurs on site. Species may fly over the site.
Double-crested cormorant (<i>Nannopterum auritum</i>) ¹	WL	Found along the California coast and within inland lakes of fresh, brackish, or salt water. Less commonly observed in riverine habitats. Feeds on crustaceans, amphibians, and fish.	Very low. No suitable habitat occurs on site. Species may fly over the site.
Ferruginous hawk (<i>Buteo regalis</i>) ⁴	WL	Found in grassland, desert, and scrubland habitats and at the edges of low/moderate elevation forests.	Moderate. Suitable foraging habitat present on site. Species does not nest in southern California.
Golden eagle (<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>) ³	FP; WL	Found in rolling foothills, mountain areas, sage-juniper flats, and desert habitats. Diet consists primarily of lagomorphs and rodents.	Very low. No suitable habitat occurs on site. Species may fly over the site.
Lawrence's goldfinch (<i>Spinus lawrencei</i>) ¹	BCC	Found in dry, open oak woodlands, coastal scrub, pinyon pine-juniper woodlands and streamside habitats.	Present. Observed on site in ornamental vegetation, namely blue elderberry (<i>Sambucus mexicana</i>), during the general biological survey on April 21, 2023.
Least Bell's vireo (<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>) ¹	FE; SE	Found within riparian woodland with understory of dense young willows or mule fat and willow canopy. Nests often placed along internal or external edges of riparian thickets.	Very low. No suitable habitat occurs on site. Species may fly over the site.

Species	Status	Habitat Description	Potential to Occur
Least bittern (<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>) ¹	SSC	Found in freshwater and brackish wetlands with tall, dense emergent vegetation. Nests in cattails surrounded by water. Feeds on amphibian and aquatic prey.	Very low. No suitable habitat occurs on site. Species may fly over the site.
Loggerhead shrike (<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>) ¹	SSC	Found within grassland, chaparral, desert, and desert edge scrub, particularly near dense vegetation used for nesting.	Present. Observed during follow up biological survey on November 15, 2024. Suitable foraging habitat occurs on site. Dense ornamental vegetation suitable for nesting.
Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>) ⁴	WL	Found in a wide variety of open and semi-open habitats. Primarily found in grasslands when wintering in southern California but will inhabit any habitat except dense woodland.	Moderate. Suitable foraging habitat present on site. Species does not nest in southern California.
Northern harrier (<i>Circus hudsonius</i>) ¹	SSC	Found in wetlands (e.g., sloughs and marshes), meadows, open fields, agriculture, and shrublands. Nests on the ground, often near an aquatic resource or within the waterbody itself using sticks or sedge tussocks as a foundation.	Moderate. Suitable foraging habitat and fossorial prey present on site. On-site non-native grassland may provide suitable nesting habitat considering proximity to Whittier Narrows Reservoir.
Redhead (<i>Aythya americana</i>) ¹	SSC	Nests in freshwater emergent vegetation such as cattails or tules (<i>Scirpus</i> sp.) rooted in deep open waters. Forages in waters exceeding one meter in depth where submergent plants are abundant.	Very low. No suitable habitat occurs on site. Species may fly over the site.
Sharp-shinned hawk (<i>Accipiter striatus</i>) ¹	WL	Roost in mid- to high-canopy forests, nest in single layered forest canopy, prefer conifers, and hunt migratory birds and small animals (e.g., reptiles and insects) at the edge of woodlands, brushy pastures, and shorelines.	Low. Project site lacks conifers and forest canopy; however, it supports reptile and insect prey items and is near the shoreline of Whittier Narrows Reservoir. Species may fly over the site.
Southern California rufous-crowned sparrow (<i>Aimophila ruficeps canescens</i>)	WL	Found in mostly in sage scrub and chaparral, but also grassland habitats with scattered scrubs. Prefers open habitat with rocky slopes.	Low. Although grasslands are present on site, scrub habitat and rocky slopes are not present. Species may fly over the site.

Species	Status	Habitat Description	Potential to Occur
Southwestern willow flycatcher (<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>) ¹	FE; SE	Breeds in dense riparian forests and woodlands with structural diversity, often with open water. Restricted to a few colonies throughout southern California.	Very low. No suitable habitat occurs on site. Species may fly over the site.
Swainson's hawk (<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>) ¹	ST	Found in open habitats for foraging including grasslands, prairies, and sometimes pastures. Nest in solitary trees or sometimes very small groves near water.	Low. Suitable breeding habitat is not present. Preferred foraging habitat is not present on site and species has not been documented in the vicinity since 1880. Species may fly over the site.
Tricolored blackbird (<i>Agelaius tricolor</i>) ¹	SSC	Nests in cattail (<i>Typha</i> spp.) in freshwater marshes or in willow canopies in riparian habitat. Open water, nest protection (e.g., flooded or thorny vegetation), and access to insect prey are required for nesting.	Low. Suitable wetland habitat not present. Grasslands present with low suitability to support a nesting colony. Species may fly over the site.
Vermilion flycatcher (<i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>) ¹	SSC	Found in deserts, scrub, grasslands, agricultural fields, parks, golf courses, and riparian woodlands, often near a water source.	Moderate. Site is primarily composed of non-native grassland, is surrounded by sycamore trees, and lies adjacent to Whittier Narrows Reservoir and park.
Western yellow-billed cuckoo (<i>Coccyzus americanus occidentalis</i>) ¹	FT; SE	Found primarily in riparian forests and woodlands.	Very low. No suitable habitat occurs on site. Species may fly over the site.
White-faced ibis (<i>Plegadis chihi</i>) ¹	WL	Found in marshes with emergent vegetation such as sedges (<i>Carex</i> sp.) or rushes (<i>Juncus</i> sp.) near rivers, ponds, or flooded agricultural/pastoral fields	Very low. No suitable habitat occurs on site. Species may fly over the site.
White-tailed kite (<i>Elanus leucurus</i>) ¹	FP	Found in coastal and valley lowlands across a wide variety of habitats during herbaceous stage. Hunts in open grasslands, meadows, farmlands, and emergent wetlands that have not experienced disturbance.	Low. Disturbed foraging habitat occurs on site; higher quality hunting grounds occur in the adjacent Whittier Narrows Reservoir and park. Majority of project site is herbaceous (i.e., grasses). Species may fly over the site.

Species	Status	Habitat Description	Potential to Occur
Yellow breasted chat (<i>Icteria virens</i>) ¹	SSC	Nests in early stage riparian habitats with adequate shrub cover and an open canopy where dense thickets and tall perching trees are present.	Low-to-moderate. On-site ornamental shrubs may provide nesting habitat for this species.
Yellow warbler (<i>Dendroica petechia brewsteri</i>) ¹	SSC	Found in riparian habitats along aquatic resources containing willows and cottonwoods or in wet meadows. Riparian species generalist depending on geographic location. Occasionally found in disturbed or semiurban areas.	Moderate. Site is adjacent to Whittier Narrows Reservoir. On-site non-native grassland and surrounding ornamentals provide suitable habitat for this species.
MAMMALS			
Pallid bat (<i>Antrozous pallidus</i>)	SSC	Found in a variety of habitats including grasslands, shrublands, woodlands, and forests. Especially common in open, arid habitats with rock outcrops for roosting. Roosts in caves, crevices, mines, hollow trees, and buildings.	Moderate. Suitable foraging habitat is present on site. Abandoned sheds may provide shelter for roosting and thermoregulation.
BCC: USFWS Bird of Conservation Concern FC: Federal Candidate Species for listing under the Endangered Species Act FE: Federally Endangered FP: California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Fully Protected FT: Federally Threatened FPT: Federally Proposed Threatened under Endangered Species Act SC: State Candidate for listing under the California Endangered Species Act SE: State Endangered ST: State Threatened SSC: CDFW Species of Special Concern WL: CDFW Watch List Species ¹ CNDDDB, administered by CDFW, only tracks documented nest sites and behavior indicating reproduction for this species ² CNDDDB, administered by CDFW, tracks detections of burrow sites and some wintering sites for this species ³ CNDDDB, administered by CDFW, tracks detections of nest sites, behavior indicating reproduction, and wintering locations for this species ⁴ CNDDDB, administered by CDFW, only tracks detections of wintering locations for this species			

Threatened and Endangered Wildlife Species

Burrowing Owl (Athene cunicularia)

On October 10, 2024, the CFGC unanimously approved western burrowing owl as a candidate species for potential listing under CESA. The CDFW is currently undertaking a 12 month species status review process to inform its recommendation to the CFGC as to whether and to what extent the species should be formally listed, and at the earliest, a recommendation will be provided in October 2025. As a candidate for potential listing under CESA, the species is temporarily afforded the same protections as a state-listed endangered or threatened species (CFGC 2024).

The western subspecies of burrowing owl (*A. c. hypugaea*) breeds from southern Canada to the western half of the United States and into Baja California and central Mexico. In California, suitable habitat for burrowing owl is generally characterized by short, sparse vegetation with few shrubs, level to gentle topography, and well-drained soils, such as naturally occurring grassland, shrub steppe, and desert habitats (Haug et al. 1993). Burrowing owl may also occur in agricultural areas, ruderal grassy fields, vacant lots, and pastures containing suitable vegetation structure and useable burrows with foraging habitat in proximity (Gervais et al. 2008). Burrowing owl usually use burrows dug by California ground squirrel (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*) and round-tailed ground squirrel (*Citellus tereticaudus*) and dens or holes dug by other fossorial species including badger (*Taxidea taxus*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), and fox (e.g., San Joaquin kit fox [*Vulpes macrotis mutica*]) (Ronan 2002). Burrowing owl also frequently use natural rock cavities, debris piles, culverts, and pipes for nesting and roosting (Rosenberg et al. 2004) and have been documented using artificial burrows for nesting and cover (Smith and Belthoff 2001).

Burrowing owls have declined throughout much of their range because of habitat loss due to urbanization, agricultural conversion, and destruction of ground squirrel colonies (Remsen 1978). The incidental poisoning of burrowing owls and the destruction of their burrows during eradication programs aimed at rodent colonies have also caused their decline (Collins 1979; Remsen 1978). Although burrowing owl are relatively tolerant of lower levels of human activity, human-related impacts, such as shooting and introduction of non-native predators, have negative population impacts. Burrowing owl often nest and perch near roads where they are vulnerable to roadside shooting, fatal car strikes, and general harassment (Remsen 1978).

No burrowing owl or burrowing owl sign were documented during the general biological survey, rare plant survey, the reconnaissance non-breeding season survey, or focused breeding season surveys. However, burrowing owls have been documented less than three miles south of the project site (Figure 4a). Additionally, the fossorial symbiont, California ground squirrel, and prey species (*Eleodes* sp.) occur on site. Vacated burrows created by California ground squirrels are present on site, which burrowing owls may use for shelter, roosting, or nesting. Further, the general biological survey on April 21, 2023, the reconnaissance non-breeding season survey on November 15, 2024, and the four focused 2025 breeding season surveys determined that even though no burrowing owls were present, the project site supports suitable habitat for burrowing owl, dependent in part on weed management. For example, if weed abatement is performed periodically, the on-site suitability for burrowing owl nesting and foraging within the non-native grassland would increase (i.e., when the vegetation height on site is low, the grassland on site is suitable for burrowing owl). Considering the presence of symbiotic California ground squirrel, the variability of vegetation height and density on the project site, and the proximity of off-site burrowing owl observations, the potential for this species to occur is moderate.

Monarch Butterfly, California Overwintering Population (Danaus plexippus plexippus pop. 1)

As of December 10, 2024, the monarch butterfly is a candidate for potential listing under FESA when overwintering in California. Protections under FESA would only apply if and when the monarch butterfly is formally listed as threatened under FESA, and listing would apply to the designated population only, California overwintering population.. The USFWS is currently

undertaking a 12 month species status process review as to whether and to what extent the species should be formally listed, and at the earliest, that determination will be made in March 2026.

The California overwintering population range extends from northern Baja California, Mexico, to Mendocino County, California. Overwintering sites require specific conditions including protection from high wind and storms, absence of freezing temperatures, varying levels of sunlight, high humidity, and the presence of water. Most of the California overwintering population cluster on non-native blue gum trees (*Eucalyptus globulus*), but they may also utilize native trees. Asserted threats to this population include loss of suitable overwintering habitat from development, tree trimming, fire and fire management, tree disease, herbicide and pesticide use, and climate change.

Only three monarch butterflies were observed flying through the project site during the singular focused rare plant survey dated July 27, 2023 (Figure 33). No host plants – milkweed – were observed, and no colonial roosting monarchs were observed. The lemon-scented gum tree (*Corymbia citriodora*) present in the ornamental vegetation near the southeastern border of the project site near Lexington-Gallatin Road is highly unlikely to provide the necessary conditions for a suitable overwintering site.

The project site is not mapped as a Monarch Overwintering Area within the Areas of Conservation Emphasis (ACE) dataset (CDFW 2025a) and this species has never been known to overwinter within proximity to the project site. The nearest known occurrence of the California overwintering population of monarch butterfly is approximately 24 miles west of the project site (CDFW 2025b).

Based on the site conditions described above and known overwintering occurrences, the California overwintering population of monarch butterfly is presumed absent.

Wildlife Species of Special Concern & Watch List Species

American Peregrine Falcon (Falco peregrinus anatum)

American peregrine falcon is a CDFW Fully Protected (FP) species when nesting. Its range extends across much of North America inhabiting tundra, savannas, coasts, mountains, wetlands, and cities. This species primarily preys upon birds. Typical prey includes shorebirds, waterfowl, pigeons, and songbirds; however, at least 450 North American bird species have been documented as peregrine falcon prey. They also hunt bats and will pirate fish and rodents from other raptor species (White et al. 2002). Peregrine falcons nest on cliffs and manmade structures such as tall buildings, bridges, and transmission towers. They do not build nests and instead “scrape” the nest ledge to create a shallow depression; however, they will occasionally use abandoned raven, osprey, bald eagle, red-tailed hawk, or cormorant nests when cliffs are unavailable (White et al. 2002).

American peregrine falcon was once a species of great conservation concern. The number of known breeding pairs had dropped by 95% from the early 1900s to 1970 due to habitat loss and the widespread use of the pesticide DDT, which caused eggshell thinning and thus failed nesting attempts. The species was listed as endangered under the FESA in 1970 and the CESA in 1971 (CDFW 2023e). Due to the banning of DDT in 1972 and widespread recovery efforts, American

peregrine falcon has recovered across its range and was delisted by USFWS in 1999 and CDFW in 2009.

The project site is situated adjacent to Whittier Narrows Reservoir and supports an abundance of aerial prey. Peregrine falcon has a moderate potential to occur on the project site considering its affinity for aquatic resources and ability to inhabit urban areas.

Cooper's Hawk (Accipiter cooperii)

Cooper's hawk is a CDFW WL species. Cooper's hawk breeds throughout the United States and into Canada and Mexico (Cornell University 2019). In California, Cooper's hawk nests in live oak, riparian, and other forest habitats from sea level to 9,000 feet. The Cooper's hawk is tolerant of human disturbance and habitat fragmentation and nests in suburban and urban settings (Murphy et al. 1988). Cooper's hawk hunt in open woodland and habitat edges, catching avian prey in the air, on the ground, and in vegetation. The Cooper's hawk hunts a variety of small birds and may also hunt small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Their nest is typically a platform of sticks and twigs lined with bark (Call 1978) and eggs are laid in February through June with the clutch size of 4 to 5 eggs (Brown and Amadon 1968).

Habitat loss, especially in riparian areas, is attributed to declining populations of Cooper's hawk in southern California. Other threats include direct or indirect human disturbance at nest sites, and eggshell thinning from pesticide use, although this threat is largely abated through the change in pesticide chemicals used after the 1970's (Terres 1980).

Though Cooper's hawk was not observed within the project site during biological surveys, its potential to occur is moderate based on the presence of suitable ornamental trees within the project site and adjacent lands and its ability to inhabit urban environments.

Ferruginous Hawk (Buteo regalis)

Ferruginous hawk is a CDFW WL species found in open grasslands, sagebrush flats, desert scrub, low foothills surrounding valleys, and fringes of pinyon-juniper habitats of California. In winter months, ferruginous hawks are often found in agricultural or grassland habitats in southwestern California. This species primarily hunts rodents, especially lagomorphs, by diving from open air or a perch, and occasionally consumes other small vertebrates such as lizards or birds. Ferruginous hawk is not known to nest in California; adult migration takes place mid-April to reach breeding grounds which span from Oregon to Canada. Development of wintering habitat is leading to the decline of ferruginous hawks in southern California as this species tends to avoid anthropogenic structures and requires open, connected expanses of land (Zeiner et al. 1990).

The project site supports suitable hunting grounds for ferruginous hawk due to the presence of non-native grasslands and California ground squirrel. Though the non-native grassland on site is limited, the project area is bordered by Whittier Narrows Reservoir and Park which provide additional, conjunct grassland habitat. Due to the presence of suitable winter foraging habitat, the potential for ferruginous hawk to occur on site is moderate.

Lawrence's Goldfinch (Spinus lawrencei)

Lawrence's goldfinch is a USFWS BCC (Bird of Conservation Concern) found in chaparral, open woodlands, riparian, disturbed lands, weedy fields, semi-urban, and agricultural land (Watt et al. 2016). The species breeds in central and southern California, west of the Sierra Nevada and south into Baja California (Cornell University 2019). Like many goldfinches, the Lawrence's goldfinch eats almost exclusively seeds, mostly from annual plants, and may rarely supplement their diet with insects, buds, or fruits (Watt et al. 2016). This species is gregarious and travels in flocks year-round. Lawrence's goldfinch lays a clutch of 3-6 eggs in a loose cup of leaves and grass stems placed in a forked branch a tree or shrub (Cornell University 2019).

One Lawrence's goldfinch was observed in ornamental vegetation on the project site, foraging in a blue elderberry shrub, during the general biological survey April 21, 2023 (Figure 3). Suitable habitat is present on site and this species is known from the project vicinity.

Loggerhead Shrike (Lanius ludovicianus)

Loggerhead shrike is a CDFW SSC. This species is a non-migratory year-round resident in southern California. Loggerhead shrikes prefer open habitat, typically with short vegetation and scattered shrubs. This species consumes a diet mainly consisting of insects but also feeds on reptiles, birds, and small mammals. Loggerhead shrikes use a feeding technique where the bird impales prey on spines or thorns of shrubs. Thus, loggerhead shrike suitable habitat requires vegetation with spines or thorns (Yoseff 1996), or artificial objects such as barbed wire.

Leading causes of decline for this species include urban development and ingestion of pesticide-laden prey. Loggerhead shrike numbers are still fairly large across North America; however, the species has dramatically declined over the past century (Yosef 1996).

Loggerhead shrike was observed on the project site during the follow-up biological survey on November 15, 2024. One adult individual was seen perched on a tree in the south-central project site (Figure 3). The project site supports suitable nesting and foraging habitat for loggerhead shrike.

Merlin (Falco columbarius)

Merlin is a CDFW WL species and uncommon winter migrant in the low elevations of California (i.e., less than 3,900 feet). Merlin prefers coastlines, open grasslands, savannahs, woodlands, lakes, wetlands, edges, and herbaceous stage habitats. This species relies on a diet primarily comprised of small birds and occasionally preys on insects and small mammals. Shorelines act as particularly important hunting grounds during winter months.

Merlin experienced stark population declines from pesticide use prior to environmental legislation in 1972. Since the ban on DDT, populations have increased slowly, though sightings in southern California are still considered rare (Zeiner et al. 1990).

The project site supports grasslands suitable for merlin foraging and is within the elevational range preferred by this species. Additionally, this species has been observed in the surrounding Whittier Narrows Reservoir and Park area; therefore, the potential for merlin to occur on site is moderate.

Northern Harrier (Circus cyaneus)

Northern harrier is a CDFW SSC and USFWS BCC. It breeds from sea level to 5,700 feet amsl in California's central valley. Typical habitats include meadows, grasslands, open rangelands, desert sinks, and fresh and saltwater emergent wetlands. They are found in flat, open areas with tall dense grasses, shrubs, and edges used for nesting, cover, and foraging. Their nests are placed on the ground, usually at a marsh edge (Brown and Amadon 1968). While they usually nest in emergent wetlands or along rivers or lakes, they can nest in grasslands, grainfields, and sagebrush flats several miles from water; however, their home range usually includes fresh water (Zeiner et al. 1988-1990).

Populations of northern harrier, including breeding populations in southern California, have been in decline since the mid-1900s (Grinnell and Miller 1944, Remsen 1978). Major threats include destruction of wetland habitat, native grassland, and moist meadows, and burning and plowing of nesting areas during the beginning for breeding season.

Non-native grassland on site provides suitable foraging habitat for northern harrier. Additionally, the project site is adjacent to Whittier Narrows Reservoir, a high-quality water source. However, non-native grassland on site is comprised of exotic, invasive species and does not exhibit signs of flooding or moisture retention required for nesting. Considering the high quality foraging grounds yet lack of nesting habitat on site, northern harrier has a moderate potential to occur on the project site.

Pallid Bat (Antrozous pallidus)

Pallid bat, a CDFW SSC, is found throughout much of California at low elevations. It inhabits open, dry habitats such as grasslands, shrublands, woodlands, and forests. Pallid bat is a nocturnal species that day roosts in caves, rock crevices, mines, and occasionally hollow trees and buildings. It forages in open areas about 1.6 to 8 feet above ground level and mainly captures prey on the ground (Zeiner et al. 1988-1990). Pallid bats consume a wide variety of insects and arachnids, including large, hard-shelled, flightless insects. They occasionally carry prey items back to the roost before consuming. They form maternity colonies in early April, which may have as many as 100 individuals (Zeiner et al. 1988-1990). Pallid bats do not migrate and will hibernate solitarily or in small groups during winter near their typically used day roost.

Pallid bats have undergone a major decline in coastal California (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department 2023a). Pallid bats are highly sensitive to disturbances of roosting sites, which are essential for maintaining normal metabolic function and juvenile growth (Zeiner et al. 1988-1990). Factors contributing to its decline include closure of mines, loss of roost trees to timber harvest, pest extermination in buildings, pesticide use, and destruction of roost sites (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department 2023a).

Abandoned wooden sheds, London plane trees (*Platanus hispanica*), and the lemon-scented gum tree on the project site may be suitable for pallid bat roosting and thermoregulation. Additionally, suitable foraging habitat exists on site in the non-native grassland vegetation community; therefore, pallid bat has moderate potential to occur on the project site.

Vermillion Flycatcher (Pyrocephalus obscurus)

Vermillion flycatcher is a CDFW SCC found in deserts, scrub, agricultural fields, parks, golf courses, and riparian woodlands, often near a water source. In California, vermilion flycatchers are known to exist in cottonwood-willow woodlands, residential areas, and parks. They commonly nest in willows (*Salix* spp.), cottonwoods (*Populus* spp.), mesquites (*Prosopis* spp.), and western sycamores (*Platanus racemosa*), and occasionally in non-native trees, such as elms (*Ulmus* spp.), olives (*Olea europaea*), black locusts (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), tamarisks (*Tamarix* spp.), and eucalyptus. Vermillion flycatchers prefer to nest along channels and are negatively impacted by development and anthropogenic water use. Depletion of desert ground water and habitat destruction are of concern in certain regions. Flying insects (e.g., members of Diptera, Coleoptera, Orthoptera, and Lepidoptera) make up the majority of the vermilion flycatcher's diet.

The project site provides suitable habitat for vermilion flycatcher in the form of non-native grassland. London plane trees and a lemon-scented gum tree suitable for nesting, were observed within the project site. Additionally, the project site's proximity to the Whittier Narrows Recreational Area and reservoir offers potential water sources and contiguous suitable habitat. Vermillion flycatcher has a moderate potential to occur on site.

Yellow-breasted Chat (Icteria virens)

Yellow-breasted chat is a CDFW SCC found widely across the U.S and Central America (Cornell University 2019). This species inhabits riparian habitats in the foothills, deserts, and low elevation mountains of California, and can also be found in some disturbed and successional habitats (Zeiner et al. 1988-1990). Yellow-breasted chat is an omnivore, gleaning insects and spiders from foliage and foraging on berries and other fruit (Zeiner et al. 1988-1990). Nesting is generally restricted to areas along streams, creeks, sloughs, and rivers (Shuford and Gardali 2008). Females build cup nests in usually low, dense vegetation and lays three to six eggs (Eckerle and Thompson 2001). Yellow-breasted chats are migratory summer residents in California; they arrive on their breeding grounds in late March and depart in late September (Shuford and Gardali 2008). Threats to this species include destruction of riparian woodlands, parasitism by brown-headed cowbirds, and vegetation removal associated with flood control measures in connection to urban development and agriculture (Shuford and Gardali 2008).

Yellow-breasted chat was not documented during the general biological surveys; however, on-site ornamentals may provide nesting habitat for this species. As such, yellow-breasted chat has low-to-moderate potential to occur on site.

Yellow Warbler (Setophaga petechia)

Yellow warbler is a CDFW SSC. In southern California, yellow warbler nests in lowland and foothill riparian woodlands dominated by cottonwoods, alders, or willows and other small trees and shrubs in open-canopy riparian woodland up to about 8,000 feet (Lowther et al. 1999). The species arrives in California in April and leaves by October and holds a small territory for nesting and foraging. The yellow warbler forages for insects and spiders in the upper canopy of deciduous trees and shrubs. It builds a cup nest 2-16 feet off the ground in in alders, cottonwoods, and willows and usually lays 4-5 eggs (Garrett and Dunn 1981). Yellow warblers are threatened by

habitat destruction and fragmentation especially of riparian habitats and brood-parasitism by brown-headed cowbirds.

On site ornamental vegetation supports suitable habitat for yellow warbler foraging and the project site is adjacent to a reservoir. Considering yellow warbler's tolerance of disturbed and semiurban environments, this species has a moderate potential to occur on site.

Critical Habitat

The ESA defines critical habitat as a specific geographic area, or areas, that contains features essential for the survival and recovery of federally endangered and/or threatened species. USFWS designates critical habitat for endangered and threatened species and may include sites for breeding and rearing, movement or migration, feeding, roosting, cover, and shelter. Critical habitat may also include areas that are not currently occupied by the species, but that will be needed for its recovery.

No USFWS designated critical habitat occurs on or immediately adjacent the project site; although, coastal California gnatcatcher critical habitat is located approximately one mile south of the project site (Figure 4b). Least Bell's vireo occurs within the project vicinity along the San Gabriel River, but critical habitat per USFWS is not present.

3.4 WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

A wildlife corridor is a physical feature that connects wildlife habitats, typically consisting of native vegetation, and links two or more larger areas of similar habitat (Ogden Environmental and Energy Services 1996). Corridors enable migration, colonization, and genetic diversity through interbreeding and are therefore critical for the movement of animals and the continuation of viable populations. Corridors can consist of large, linear stretches of connected habitat (such as riparian vegetation) or as a sequence of stepping-stones across the landscape (discontinuous areas of habitat such as wetlands and ornamental vegetation), or corridors can be larger habitat areas with known or likely importance to local fauna.

Regional corridors are defined as those linking two or more large patches of habitat, and local corridors are defined as those allowing resident animals to access critical resources (food, cover, and water) in a smaller area that might otherwise be isolated by urban development (Ogden Environmental and Energy Services 1996). A viable wildlife migration corridor consists of more than an unobstructed path between habitat areas. Appropriate vegetation communities must be present to provide food and cover for both transient species and resident populations of less mobile animals. There must also be a sufficient lack of stressors and threats within and adjacent to the corridor for species to use it successfully.

Based on a review of the CDFW Biogeographic Information and Observation System (BIOS) data, no large scale habitat connectivity corridors are mapped within the project site (CDFW 2023d). The land within and around the project site is designated as Rank 1, "Limited Connectivity Opportunity", which is the lowest rank within the Terrestrial Connectivity, ACE dataset (CDFW 2023d). The project site is composed primarily of vacant, undeveloped areas that are highly disturbed and generally surrounded to the north and east by development. No large areas of native

vegetation are contiguous with the disturbed land on site; however, the Puente Hills SEA is situated directly south of the project's off-site improvements area on the south side of Durfee Avenue. This SEA is associated with the San Gabriel River and floodplain and a BIOS 'missing California linkage' follows the San Gabriel River alignment to the south of the site (Figure 5). The Puente Hills SEA is likely used as a wildlife corridor because of its size and ecological value (i.e., native riparian vegetation and the San Gabriel River). Impacts to the Puente Hills SEA are not anticipated to occur with project implementation. Additionally, the northern border of the Puente Hills SEA is fenced; therefore, terrestrial locomotion of wildlife from the SEA to the project site is somewhat impeded.

A very small portion of the site in the northwest corner falls within the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Natural Small Areas category as shown on Figure 5. The site likely provides some movement opportunities for common wildlife species locally; however, the project will not result in fragmentation as those opportunities are afforded by adjacent lands to the south, east, and west as well. These lands are protected open spaces or fall within other sensitive land designations, such as County SEAs and/or federally designated critical habitat, making development or creation of movement barriers on these surround lands unlikely. With the exception of urban adapted species such as raccoons, skunks, opossums, etc., the existing roadways, urbanization, and California State Route 60 already impede movement onto the site from the north, and as described above the site itself is not attractive as habitat for sensitive species (Figure 5).

3.5 POTENTIAL FEDERAL AND STATE JURISDICTIONAL AQUATIC RESOURCES

NHD records show one operational underground pipeline for stormwater conveyance occurring in the northern quarter of the site. The inlet to the NHD-mapped underground pipeline is off-site, at the Whittier Narrows Reservoir. No additional aquatic resources were identified within the project site and 50-foot buffer during desktop review of the NWI and NHD databases. During the constraints-level aquatic resources assessment, no aquatic resources potentially jurisdictional by the U.S./State or indicators thereof were observed on site. Vernal pools and/or seasonal wetlands are presumed absent from the site as depressions with indicators of hydrology (i.e. soil cracking, algal mats) were not observed. Additionally, much of the site is characterized by well drained soils.

During the constraints-level aquatic resource assessment, RBC recorded a culvert approximately fifteen feet north of the project site that runs beneath SR-60 and directs water flow to the south. Based on the lack of hydric soils and wetland hydrology indicators observed within this area, the feature would not qualify as a wetland water of the U.S./State per the Corps and the SWRCB/RWQCB or associated wetland potentially jurisdictional by the CDFW. The feature would also not qualify as a non-wetland water of the U.S./State as it did not display an observable Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) or defined bed and bank.

Please note that in order to receive an 'official' determination from the regulatory agencies of their concurrence with these findings related to potential aquatic resources, a project-specific aquatic resources delineation and reporting per Corps, SWRCB/RWQCB, and CDFW standards and guidelines and further coordination with the Corps, SWRCB/RWQCB, and CDFW would be

required. We do not believe this is warranted for this site unless requested by the local permitting jurisdiction or by the regulatory agencies.

4 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Direct impacts are caused by the project and occur at the same time and place as the project. Any alteration, disturbance, or destruction of biological resources that would result from project-related activities is considered a direct impact. Direct impacts would include direct losses to native habitats, potential jurisdictional waters, wetlands, and special-status species; and diverting natural surface water flows. Direct impacts could include injury, death, and/or harassment of listed and/or special-status species. Direct impacts could also include the destruction of habitats necessary for species breeding, feeding, or sheltering. Direct impacts on plants can include crushing of adult plants, bulbs, or seeds.

Indirect impacts can result from project-related activities where biological resources are affected in a manner that is not direct. Indirect impacts may occur later in time or at a place that is farther removed in distance from the project than direct impacts, but indirect impacts are still reasonably foreseeable and attributable to project-related activities. Examples include habitat fragmentation; elevated noise, dust, and lighting levels; changes in hydrology, runoff, and sedimentation; decreased water quality; soil compaction; increased human activity; and the introduction of invasive wildlife (domestic cats and dogs) and plants (weeds). As noted in Section 2, the survey area included a 100-foot buffer to identify nearby biological resources and to aid in assessment of potential indirect impacts on protected resources, if present.

Cumulative impacts refer to incremental individual environmental effects of two or more projects when considered together. Such impacts taken individually may be minor but are collectively significant in light of regional impacts.

The significance thresholds as outlined in Appendix G of the state CEQA Guidelines (CCR Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000–15387) have been used to determine whether project implementation would result in a significant direct, indirect, and/or cumulative impact. A significant biological resources impact would occur if the project would:

- 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 CDFW or USFWS;
- 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 CDFW or USFWS;
- Have a substantial adverse effect on federal protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the CWA (including, but not limited to, marshes, vernal pools, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means;
- 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;
- Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy, or ordinance;

- Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan; Natural Community Conservation Plan; or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

CEQA Threshold 1: 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 CDFW or USFWS?

4.1 SPECIAL-STATUS PLANTS AND WILDLIFE IMPACTS

4.1.1 SPECIAL-STATUS PLANT SPECIES

Despite the moderate suitability of the project site to support southern tarplant, focused species surveys conducted on site were negative. Southern tarplant would not be impacted with project implementation, as it is absent from the project site. The proposed project would not impact federally and/or state listed or other special-status plants as none are present and no additional species have a moderate to high potential to occur within the project site due to lack of suitable habitat and the overall disturbed nature of the site.

4.1.2 SPECIAL-STATUS WILDLIFE SPECIES AND CRITICAL HABITATS

Threatened and Endangered Wildlife Species

Although monarch butterfly, a candidate for listing under FESA when overwintering in California, was observed during the general biological survey, the California overwintering population is presumed absent, as discussed above in Section 3. Thus, impacts on monarch resulting from the project would be less than significant. Western burrowing owl (state candidate for listing under the CESA and CDFW SSC) has a moderate potential to occur on the project site. The proposed project has the potential to impact this species, as discussed below.

The proposed project would not impact other federally and/or state listed wildlife species as no listed species were observed during general biological surveys and none have moderate to high potential to occur on site based on lack of suitable habitat and the disturbed nature of the site.

Burrowing Owl

Based on the general biological survey on April 21, 2023, the rare plant survey on July 27, 2023, the reconnaissance non-breeding season burrowing owl survey on November 15, 2024, and four focused breeding season surveys in 2025, the project site seasonally supports suitable habitat for burrowing owl, however suitability can vary dependent on weed management. When vegetation height is low due to plant seasonality or weed abatement/line trimming, burrowing owl has a moderate potential to occur on the project site. Considering site suitability and the presence of the symbiotic California ground squirrel and burrows, the project site has a moderate potential to support burrowing owl.

With project implementation, direct impacts on burrowing owl could occur in the form of death, injury, or harassment of nesting birds, their eggs, and their young, if owls are present. Such impacts, if they were to occur, are potentially significant due to the direct reduction in local

populations and loss of genetic diversity. Injury or mortality occurs most frequently during the vegetation clearing stage of construction and affects eggs, nestlings, and recently fledged young that cannot safely avoid equipment. Impacts are potentially significant. To avoid such impacts on burrowing owls, the following measures would be implemented:

- Pre-construction burrowing owl clearance surveys would be conducted immediately prior to project initiation and ground disturbance in accordance with the BUOW Guidelines (CDFW 2012) to ensure no occupied burrowing owl burrows are present within or adjacent to construction areas during ground disturbance (BIO-1A).
- If burrowing owls are detected on site or within a 500-foot buffer of the site during pre-construction surveys, CDFW would be contacted within 48 hours and disturbance avoidance buffers would be installed by a qualified biologist in accordance with recommendations from CDFW, and no work would occur within avoidance buffers until consultation with CDFW (BIO-1A).
- If pre-construction burrowing owl surveys are positive and avoidance is not possible, either directly or indirectly, CDFW would be consulted. If necessary, a CESA ITP would be obtained and all Conditions of Approval outlined in the CESA ITP would be fully implemented and strictly followed (BIO-1B).

In addition to owls that may occur on-site prior to construction initiation, direct impacts on burrowing owl could still occur if owls were to enter the project site during active construction. Burrowing owls, if present, are particularly susceptible to vehicle strikes because they utilize roadways and adjacent areas for hunting. In addition, burrowing owls, if present, are known to use manmade materials, such as pipes and culverts, for shelter and nesting. Impacts are potentially significant, and best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to minimize the potential for burrowing owls to use staged project materials (BIO-2.8); thereby reducing the likelihood of burrowing owl being impacted by construction activities.

Indirect impacts on burrowing owls could occur if burrowing owl is present within suitable habitat and construction occurs at night using lighting. Such impacts are potentially significant because lights could reduce burrowing owls' hunting success and make burrowing owls easier targets for predators. To avoid impacts on burrowing owl from nighttime construction and lighting, construction would occur during the day (BIO-2.4). In addition, indirect impacts on burrowing owl, if present adjacent to the project site, could occur during construction due to elevated noise, vibration, and dust levels generated by equipment. These disturbances are temporary and relatively short in duration, and thus unlikely to affect burrowing owl behavior. In addition, burrowing owl pre-construction surveys would include a 500-foot buffer around the project site; therefore, burrowing owls occurring near to the site would be detected, if present (BIO-1A). As such, indirect impacts during project construction are anticipated to be less than significant.

Indirect impacts on burrowing owls could potentially occur during the operational phase of the project if burrowing owls are present within nearby habitat and light from the future City park athletic fields (if ultimately proposed) is directed into or near their habitat. Such impacts would be potentially significant because lights could reduce burrowing owls' hunting success and make burrowing owls easier targets for predators. To avoid impacts on burrowing owl from nighttime

lighting, best practices to be implemented to ensure that direct light or glare is not emitted towards adjacent lands and that lighting use is restricted to specific times (BIO-3). With implementation of the measures in Section 5.3, indirect impacts during project operations are anticipated to be less than significant.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, with the adherence of mitigation measures as discussed in Section 5 below, impacts on burrowing owls resulting from the project would be less than significant.

Other Special-Status Wildlife Species

Two non-listed special-status wildlife species, Lawrence's goldfinch (BCC) and loggerhead shrike (SSC), were detected during general biological surveys. An additional nine non-listed special-status wildlife species have a moderate or low-to-moderate potential to occur on the project site, including Cooper's Hawk, ferruginous hawk, merlin, northern harrier, peregrine falcon, vermilion flycatcher, yellow-breasted chat, yellow warbler, and pallid bat.

The proposed project will not impact any other additional special-status wildlife species, beyond those discussed in the paragraph above, as no additional special-status species were observed during general biological surveys and no additional species have a moderate to high potential to occur on site based on a lack of suitable habitat.

Other Non-Listed Special-status Wildlife Species

The project would impact 21.6 acres of non-native grassland. As such, loss of habitat for non-listed special-status species observed or with potential to occur on-site could occur, including Cooper's Hawk, ferruginous hawk, Lawrence's goldfinch, loggerhead shrike, merlin, northern harrier, peregrine falcon, vermilion flycatcher, yellow-breasted chat, yellow warbler, and pallid bat. Impacts on this habitat may be potentially significant due to its potential to support sensitive wildlife. However, habitat-based mitigation through the purchase of credits as outlined in Section 5.4, would adequately address these impacts. With adherence to project BMPs (BIO-2), the non-native grassland mitigation measure (BIO-4), and nesting bird and roosting bat avoidance and minimization measures (BIO-5), impacts on non-listed special-status wildlife species would remain less than significant.

Additionally, adult avian and bat species would likely flush during initial project activities, and with implementation of nesting bird and roosting bat protections (BIO-5), potential impacts on nests and roosts would be avoided. Thus, direct avian and bat impacts would be avoided. Furthermore, the implementation of best management practices, as outlined in Section 5.2 and 5.3, would reduce indirect impacts on these species.

CEQA Threshold 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 CDFW or USFWS?

4.2 VEGETATION COMMUNITY IMPACTS

The proposed project would result in impacts on four land uses/vegetation communities, non-native grassland, developed, disturbed, and ornamental land covers (Figure 6; Table 5).

Developed, disturbed, and ornamental land covers are not considered sensitive vegetation communities; as such, no significant impacts would occur with project implementation. Southern north slope chaparral, which is native vegetation community but is not considered sensitive under CEQA, occurs to the south of the site. This vegetation community does not occur within the project site and would not be directly impacted by project construction or operation. Potential indirect impacts on this community would be avoided and/or minimized through implementation of best management practices (BMPs), as outlined in Section 5.2. As such, no significant impacts on native vegetation communities would occur as a result of the project.

Table 5. Vegetation Communities/Land Cover Project Impacts

Vegetation ¹	Vegetation ²	Impacts (acres)
Developed	Developed/Disturbed	4.9
Disturbed	Developed/Disturbed	0.01
Non-native Grassland	Wild Oat and Annual Brome Grassland	21.6
Ornamental	Developed/Disturbed	0.9
Total		27.4

¹ Vegetation communities recognized by Holland (1986)

² Vegetation communities from Holland (1986) crosswalked to *The Manual of California Vegetation, Online Edition (CNPS 2023b/CNPS23b)*

CEQA Threshold 3: *Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?*

4.3 POTENTIAL JURISDICTIONAL AQUATIC RESOURCES IMPACTS

The proposed project would not impact potentially jurisdictional aquatic resources as no potentially jurisdictional aquatic resources were observed on site (see Section 3.5).

CEQA Threshold 4: *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?*

4.4 NESTING BIRD IMPACTS

The proposed project has the potential to impact active bird nests if vegetation is removed or ground disturbing activities are initiated during the nesting season. Disturbed, developed, non-native grassland, and ornamental land covers within the project site have the potential to support avian nests and impacts on nesting birds are prohibited by the MBTA and/or CFGC §3503. However, with the adherence of avoidance and minimization measures proposed in Section 5 (BIO-5), impacts on nesting birds resulting from the project would be less than significant.

4.5 WILDLIFE CORRIDOR IMPACTS

The project site does not serve as part of a regional wildlife corridor. The primary impact of the project would be 27 less acres of non-native annual grassland for temporary movement/foraging of more common wildlife species but the project will not create a dispersal or movement barrier.

As such, the project would not result in impacts on wildlife movement and regional corridors.

CEQA Threshold 5: Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy, or ordinance?

4.6 LOCAL POLICIES AND ORDINANCES IMPACTS

4.6.1 SOUTH EL MONTE GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan does not include goals or policies associated with biological resources; therefore, the project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources.

4.6.2 COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES CODE OF ORDINANCES

The southern extent of the project's off-site improvements occurs near the border of the Puente Hills SEA (Figure 6). Direct impacts would be strictly contained to the project site and indirect impacts would be avoided with adherence to the BMPs outlined in BIO-2. As such, the nearby Puente Hills SEA would incur no impacts with project implementation.

Coast live oak trees occur in the southern north slope chaparral mapped at the southern extent of the survey area, in the Puente Hills SEA. This area is outside the project site and no oak trees occur on site. As such, no impacts on oak species would occur with project implementation and no additional permitting is required.

4.7 HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN; NATURAL COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PLAN; OR OTHER APPROVED LOCAL, REGIONAL, OR STATE HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN IMPACTS

The project site is not located with an active HCP or NCCP area; therefore, the project would not result in impacts on HCPs or NCCPs.

4.8 INDIRECT IMPACTS ON BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Indirect impacts are the effects on biological resources from the development of areas adjacent to native open space. Potential indirect effects associated with development include water quality impacts from site drainage into adjacent open space/downstream aquatic resources; lighting effects; noise effects; invasive plant species from landscaping; and effects from human access into adjacent open space, such as recreational activities (including off-road vehicles and hiking), pets, dumping, etc. Temporary, indirect effects may also occur as a result of construction-related activities.

The project site is surrounded by the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area and Puente Hills SEA. To minimize and avoid impacts to adjacent open space and biological resources, project construction

must occur in accordance with BMPs outlined in Section 5.2. With adherence to BMPs, indirect impacts during construction would be reduced to less than significant.

During the operational phase of the proposed project, approximately 60-80-foot tall stadium lighting may be used to illuminate the athletic fields, if such fields are ultimately proposed by the City. Exact lighting specifications are not known at this time; however, stadium lighting in general has the potential to indirectly impact wildlife. Potential indirect impacts may include disruption of day and night patterns/cycles and interference with natural behaviors, such as foraging, hunting, predator avoidance, migration, dispersal, and breeding. The project site is adjacent to the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area which is home to a variety of native wildlife species, thus the proposed project may have the potential to impact wildlife. To minimize and avoid impacts to adjacent open space and biological resources, project lighting would be designed in accordance with the measures outlined in Section 5.3. With adherence to such measures, indirect impacts during operations would be reduced to less than significant.

4.9 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS ON BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Cumulative impacts are defined as the direct and indirect effects of a proposed project which, when considered alone, would not be deemed a substantial impact, but when considered in addition to the impacts of related projects in the area, would be considered potentially significant. 'Related projects' refers to past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects, which would have similar impacts to the proposed project. The project site is degraded and does not support sensitive native vegetation communities, nor does it provide essential habitat for any special-status species. As mentioned previously, the project is surrounded by existing development, the Whittier Narrows recreational and natural area, and the Puente Hills SEA. The Whittier Narrows located to the west is maintained as public open space and a wildlife preserve by the County, thus this area would not be subject to development. The Puente Hills SEA and federally designated critical habitat located to the south is subject to a substantial County and USFWS, respectively, review and mitigation process for any development related impacts and therefore is unlikely to be converted to an urbanized or developed condition. Adjacent developments including California State Route 60 to the northeast were developed decades ago (prior to 1985 based on the oldest GoogleEarth imagery available). As such, related projects, which would produce similar impacts (e.g., the conversion of non-native grassland to developed land), are not anticipated to occur in the vicinity of the project site. Focusing development on parcels with lower biological constraints such as the subject project site is of cumulative benefit to locally sensitive resources as higher quality habitats in the vicinity are avoided and, in this case, preserved as open space or designated as SEAs and/or critical habitat for listed species. Considering the low ecological value of on-site habitat and the absence of related projects in the surrounding area, the proposed project would not result in significant cumulative effects.

5 AVOIDANCE, MINIMIZATION, AND MITIGATION

The following discussion provides project-specific avoidance and minimization measures; adherence with these measures is necessary to avoid and minimize impacts on biological resources resulting from the project.

5.1 BURROWING OWL AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION MEASURES

It was determined that the project site has moderate potential to support burrowing owl, a candidate species under CESA, based on the presence of suitable habitat. As such, adherence with the following avoidance and minimization measures for burrowing owl is recommended:

BIO-1A: A qualified biologist shall conduct a take avoidance pre-construction survey no less than 14 days prior to the onset of construction activities within the construction limits of the project site and a 500-foot buffer. A second survey shall be conducted within 24 hours prior to the onset of construction activities. Surveys will be conducted at least seven days apart. The surveys shall assess the presence of burrowing owls and occupied nest burrows and be conducted in accordance with the most current CDFW survey methods. If burrowing owls are not observed during the pre-construction survey, no additional conditions may be required to avoid impacts to burrowing owl. A pre-construction survey shall be repeated if project activities are suspended or delayed more than 14 days from the second survey.

If burrowing owl is documented on site, occupied burrowing owl burrows shall not be disturbed without CDFW authorization. Disturbance avoidance buffers shall be determined and set up by a qualified biologist in accordance with the recommendations included in the BUOW Guidelines (CDFW 2012). A biologist shall be contracted to perform monitoring during all construction activities approximately every other day. The definitive frequency and duration of monitoring shall be dependent on whether it is the breeding versus non-breeding season and the efficacy of the exclusion buffers, as determined by a qualified biologist and in coordination with CDFW.

The project applicant shall submit at least one burrowing owl pre-construction survey report to the satisfaction of the City of South El Monte and CDFW to document compliance with this avoidance and minimization measure. For the purposes of this avoidance and minimization measure, 'qualified biologist' is a biologist who meets the requirements set forth in the BUOW Guidelines (CDFW 2012).

BIO-1B: If take avoidance pre-construction burrowing owl surveys are positive and avoidance is not possible, either directly or indirectly, CDFW shall be consulted. If necessary, a CESA ITP shall be obtained authorizing take of burrowing owl incidental to approved project activities. All Conditions of Approval outlined in the CESA ITP shall be fully implemented and strictly followed. Conditions of Approval may include, but are not limited to, worker education program, construction/compliance monitoring, best management practices, CDFW notifications, compliance reporting, final mitigation reporting, take minimization measures, burrowing owl mortality reduction plan, burrow

replacement plan, pre-construction surveys, burrow avoidance measures, burrow blockage requirements, burrow excavation requirements, operations and maintenance take avoidance measures, habitat management land acquisition, and endowment fund. If the burrowing owl is no longer a candidate or listed species under CESA at the time of Project construction, an ITP would not be required.

5.2 BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

To avoid impacts to special-status resources and inadvertent disturbance to areas outside the limits of the proposed project activities, the following monitoring requirements and BMPs shall be implemented:

BIO-2:

- 1) To prevent inadvertent disturbance to areas outside the limits of work, the construction limits shall be clearly demarcated (e.g., installation of flagging or temporary visibility construction fence) prior to ground-disturbance activities, and all construction activities, including equipment staging and maintenance, shall be conducted within the marked disturbance limits. The work limit delineation shall be maintained throughout project construction. The use of whiskers with stakes or marking paint is recommended to maintain integrity of work limits.
- 2) With the exception of burrowing owl, a qualified biologist shall flush special-status species (i.e., avian or other mobile species) from suitable habitat areas within the project development footprint to the maximum extent practicable immediately (e.g., within 24 hours) prior to initial vegetation removal activities. The biologist shall flush wildlife by walking through habitat to be imminently removed.
- 3) Construction vehicles shall not exceed 15 miles per hour on unpaved roads adjacent to the project site or the right-of-way accessing the site.
- 4) To the degree feasible, construction activities shall occur during daytime hours. Permissible nighttime activities could include pouring of concrete for the warehouse foundation during early and/or nighttime hours.
- 5) If trash and debris need to be stored overnight during maintenance activities, fully covered trash receptacles that are animal-proof and weather-proof shall be used by the maintenance contractor to contain all food, food scraps, food wrappers, beverage containers, and other miscellaneous trash. Alternatively, standard trash receptacles may be used during the day but must be removed each night.
- 6) The operator shall not permit pets on or adjacent to construction sites.
- 7) At the end of each workday and in the morning prior to the start of each workday during construction, the applicant, or its contractors, shall cover all excavated, steep-sided holes or trenches more than eight inches deep and that have sidewalls steeper than 1:1 (45 degree) slope with plywood or similar materials, or provide a minimum of one escape ramp per 100 feet of trenching (with slopes no greater than 3:1) constructed of earth fill or

wooden planks. The project biologist shall thoroughly inspect holes and trenches for trapped animals during biological monitoring.

- 8) The applicant, or its contractors, shall screen, cover, or elevate at least one (1) foot above ground, all construction pipe, culverts, or similar structures with a diameter of three (3) inches or greater that are stored on site overnight. These pipes, culverts, and similar structures shall be inspected by the project biologist for wildlife before such material is moved, buried, or capped.

The applicant, or its contractors, shall avoid the use of invasive plant species in the landscaping associated with the development. Invasive species with Moderate or High on the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) list (<https://www.cal-ipc.org/plants/inventory>) are prohibited from use and shall be removed if found on site. The applicant or contractor shall refer to state resources for lists of appropriate native plant replacements (e.g., Calscape [<https://www.calscape.org>] and CNPS [<https://www.cnps.org/gardening>]).

5.3 LIGHTING MEASURES

The proposed project has the potential to impact adjacent open space and biological resources through the potential use of stadium lighting. As such, adherence with the following avoidance and minimization measure is recommended:

BIO-3: If installed, stadium lights at the potential future athletic fields shall comply with the following requirements:

- 1) Orientation: Fixtures shall be oriented in such a way that they direct light downward and toward the field, ensuring that no direct light is emitted towards adjacent lands.
- 2) Full Cutoff: Fixtures shall be “full cutoff” type to direct light exclusively onto the playing surface and avoid light spill and glare beyond the field boundaries.
- 3) Shielding: Shielding or deflectors shall be installed to reduce light spill.
- 4) Lighting Intensity: The lighting intensity shall not exceed necessary levels for safety and visibility.
- 5) Dimming Capabilities: Lights shall be dimmable to adjust levels based on the activity or time of day.
- 6) Scheduling Controls: The lighting system shall have an automatic timer to turn off all lights promptly after events and practices, and to limit unnecessary lighting during non-use periods (e.g., after 10:00 PM).
- 7) Maintenance and Adjustments: The lighting system shall be subject to annual inspection and adjustments to ensure ongoing compliance with the requirements outlined above. In the event that the above requirements are no longer being met, corrective measures, including re-aiming lights, upgrading fixtures, or adjusting light levels, shall be implemented immediately.

5.4 NON-NATIVE GRASSLAND MITIGATION

To mitigate potential impacts on non-native grasslands, the following shall be completed by the applicant prior to issuance of grading permits:

BIO-4: Project impacts on non-native grassland (21.6 acres) shall be mitigated at a 0.5:1 ratio through the purchase of 10.8 acres of grassland habitat at an approved mitigation bank, such as the Petersen Ranch Mitigation Bank.

5.5 NESTING BIRD AND ROOSTING BAT AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION MEASURES

The project site supports suitable habitat for nesting birds and roosting bats. As such, adherence with the following avoidance and minimization measures is required to reduce impacts on nesting birds:

BIO-5A: To ensure compliance with the MBTA and CFGC sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 and to avoid potential impacts to nesting birds, vegetation clearing, and ground-disturbing activities shall be conducted outside of the bird nesting season (generally January 15 – August 31 for raptors and February 15 – August 31 for other bird species). If avoidance of the nesting season is not feasible, then a qualified biologist shall conduct a nesting bird survey within seven (7) days prior to any disturbance of the site, including but not limited to vegetation clearing, disking, demolition activities, and grading. If the qualified biologist determines that no active bird or raptor nests occur, the activities shall be allowed to proceed without any further requirements.

If active nests of any species protected by the MBTA or CFGC are identified, the biologist shall establish suitable disturbance limit buffers around the nests marked using flagging or staking. The disturbance limit buffer size shall depend on the site conditions, level of activity within the buffer, and species observed, and the disturbance limit buffer zones shall be avoided until the nests are no longer occupied. Any active nests shall be monitored by a qualified biologist during active construction, at a frequency determined using their best professional judgment, but not less than twice per week. If potential affects to nesting birds are observed, avoidance and minimization measures may be adjusted, and construction activities stopped or redirected by the qualified biologist using their best professional judgement to avoid take of nesting birds. Once a nest is no longer occupied and the juvenile birds can survive independently from the nest, the project can proceed without further regard to the nest site.

BIO-5B: To avoid impacts on pallid bat, all on-site abandoned structures and trees with suitable roosting cavities shall be surveyed by a qualified biologist prior to demolition or removal. Pre-construction surveys shall take place no more that 14 days prior to the start of demolition activities. If active roosts are identified, a biological monitor shall be employed to direct avoidance measures.

If bats are detected during pre-construction surveys, biological monitoring shall be conducted by a qualified biologist to ensure that project activities do not result in direct take. The biologist shall be present for all demolition or tree removal activities in areas known or suspected to support roosting bats as determined by the qualified biologist. The biological monitor shall perform clearance surveys at the start of each workday in areas scheduled for immediate demolition. The monitor shall direct project activities away from special-status bat species, should they be found on site, to ensure that impacts on these species are avoided to the fullest extent possible. If present, bats are expected to flush from the project site at the onset of demolition activities. However, if they persist on site through demolition of non-roost site areas, consultation with the CDFW may be required.

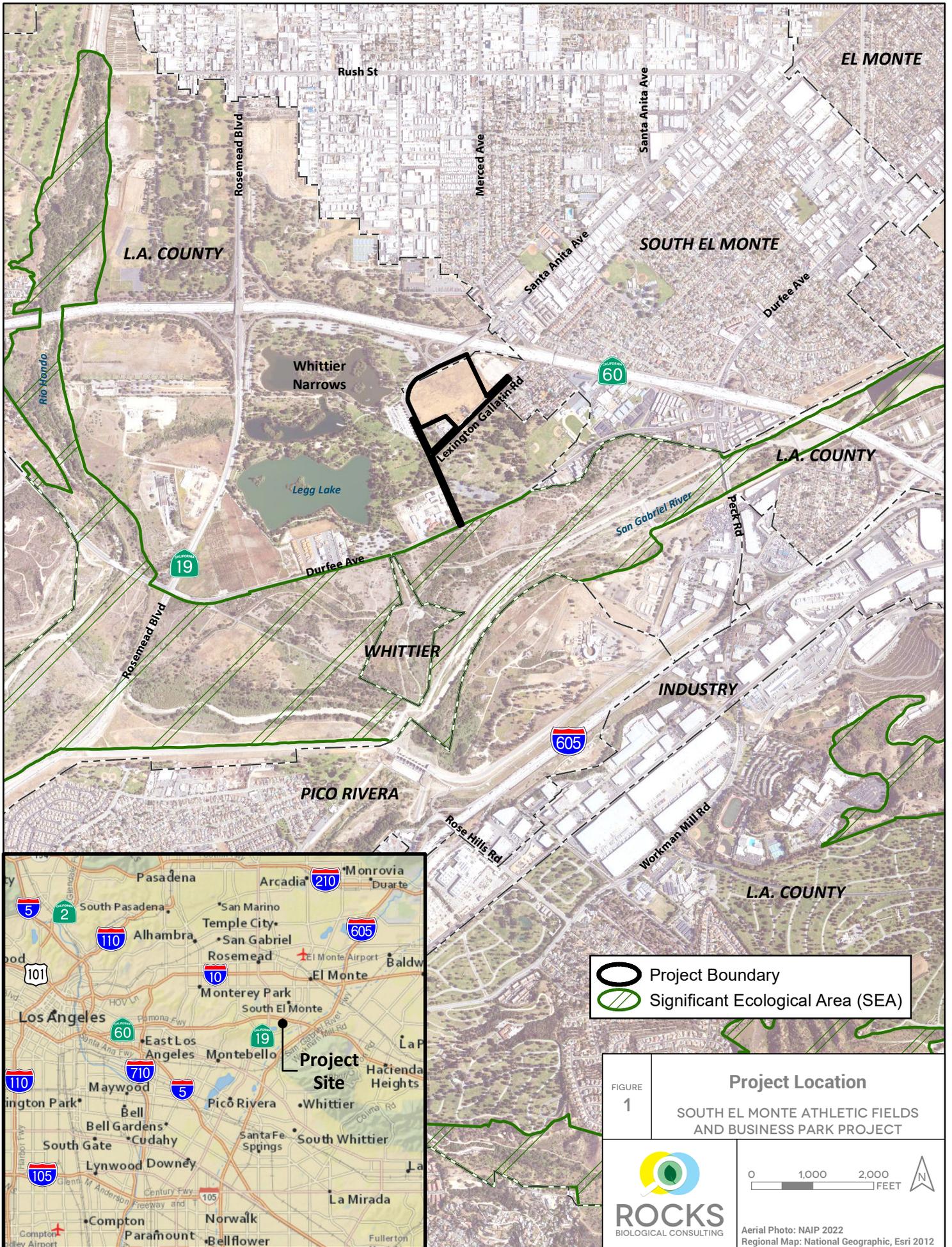
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-  Project Boundary
-  Significant Ecological Area (SEA)

FIGURE 1
Project Location
 SOUTH EL MONTE ATHLETIC FIELDS AND BUSINESS PARK PROJECT

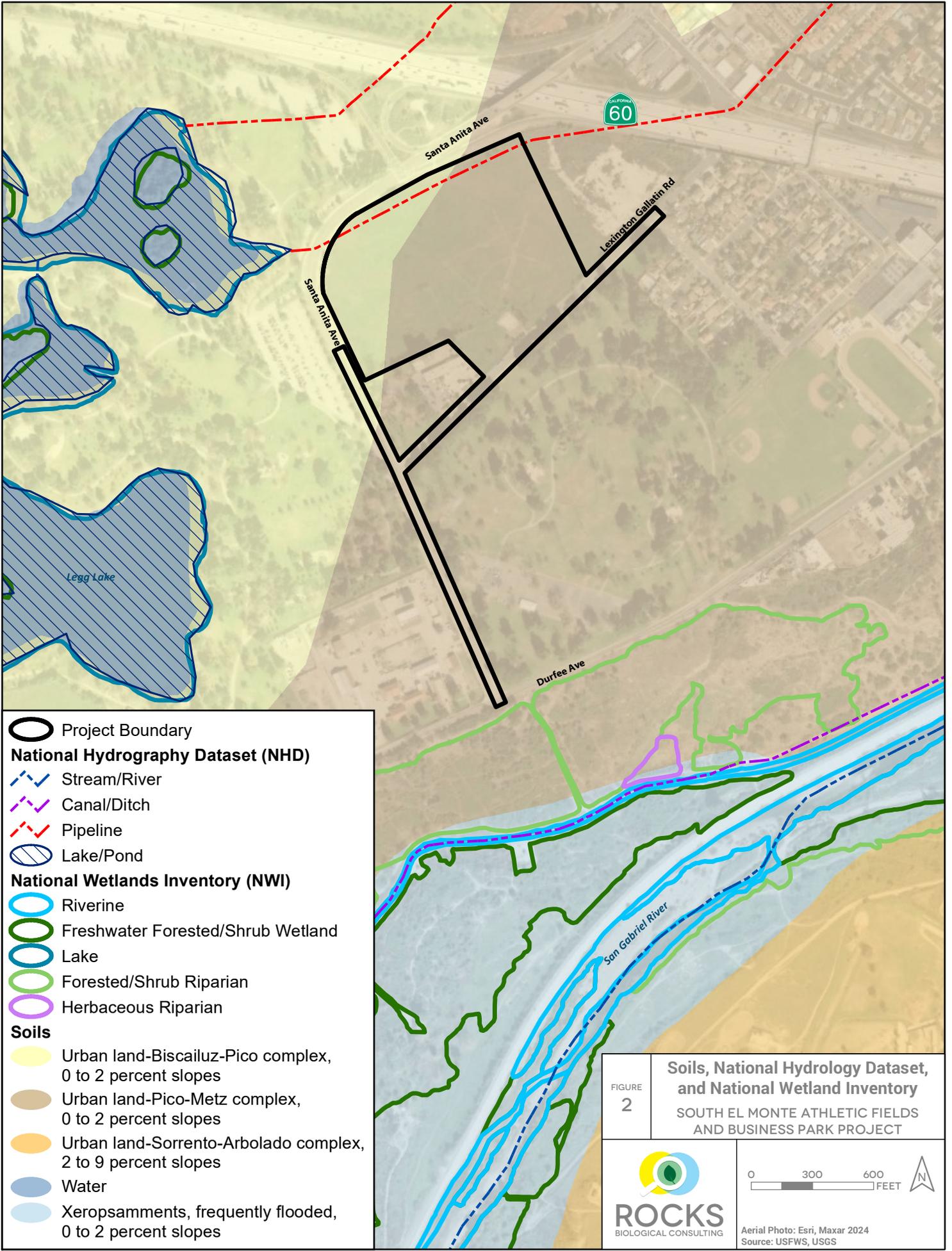


ROCKS
BIOLOGICAL CONSULTING

0 1,000 2,000 FEET



Aerial Photo: NAIP 2022
 Regional Map: National Geographic, Esri 2012



- Project Boundary
- National Hydrography Dataset (NHD)**
- Stream/River
- Canal/Ditch
- Pipeline
- Lake/Pond
- National Wetlands Inventory (NWI)**
- Riverine
- Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
- Lake
- Forested/Shrub Riparian
- Herbaceous Riparian
- Soils**
- Urban land-Biscailuz-Pico complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes
- Urban land-Pico-Metz complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes
- Urban land-Sorrento-Arbolado complex, 2 to 9 percent slopes
- Water
- Xeropsamments, frequently flooded, 0 to 2 percent slopes

FIGURE 2
Soils, National Hydrography Dataset, and National Wetland Inventory
 SOUTH EL MONTE ATHLETIC FIELDS AND BUSINESS PARK PROJECT

ROCKS
BIOLOGICAL CONSULTING

0 300 600 FEET

N

Aerial Photo: Esri, Maxar 2024
Source: USFWS, USGS

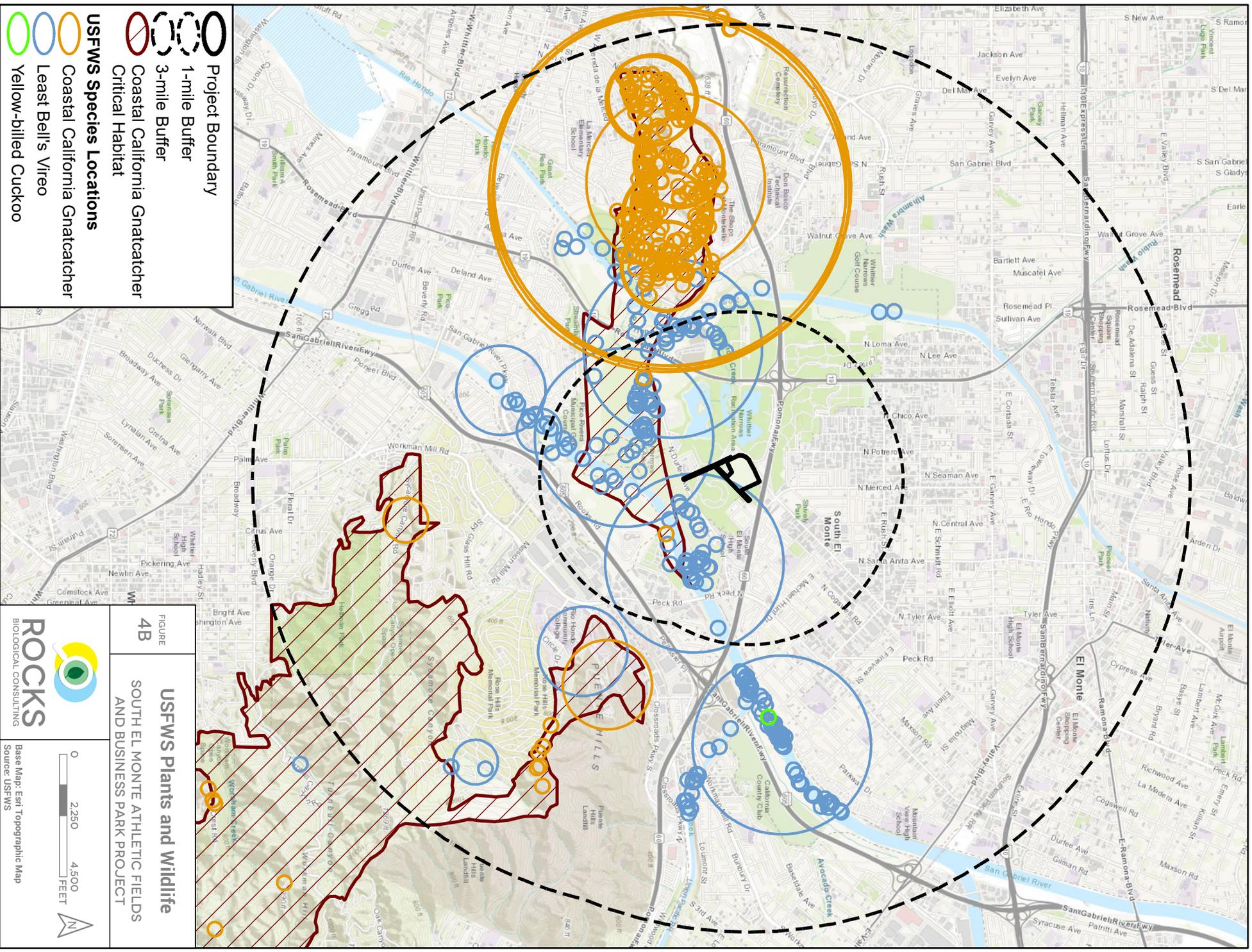


Project Boundary
 Survey Area
Vegetation
 Holly Leaf Cherry, Toyon, Greenbark Ceanothus Chaparral
 Non-native Grassland
 Ornamental
 Disturbed
 Developed
Special-Status Species
 Lawrence's Goldfinch (*Spinus lawrencei*)
 Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)
 Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*)

FIGURE 3
Biological Resources
 SOUTH EL MONTE ATHLETIC FIELDS AND BUSINESS PARK PROJECT

0 100 200 FEET

Aerial Photo: Nearmap 2023



-  Project Boundary
-  1-mile Buffer
-  3-mile Buffer
-  Coastal California Gnatcatcher Critical Habitat
-  USFWS Species Locations
-  Least Bell's Vireo
-  Coastal California Gnatcatcher
-  Yellow-billed Cuckoo

FIGURE
4B

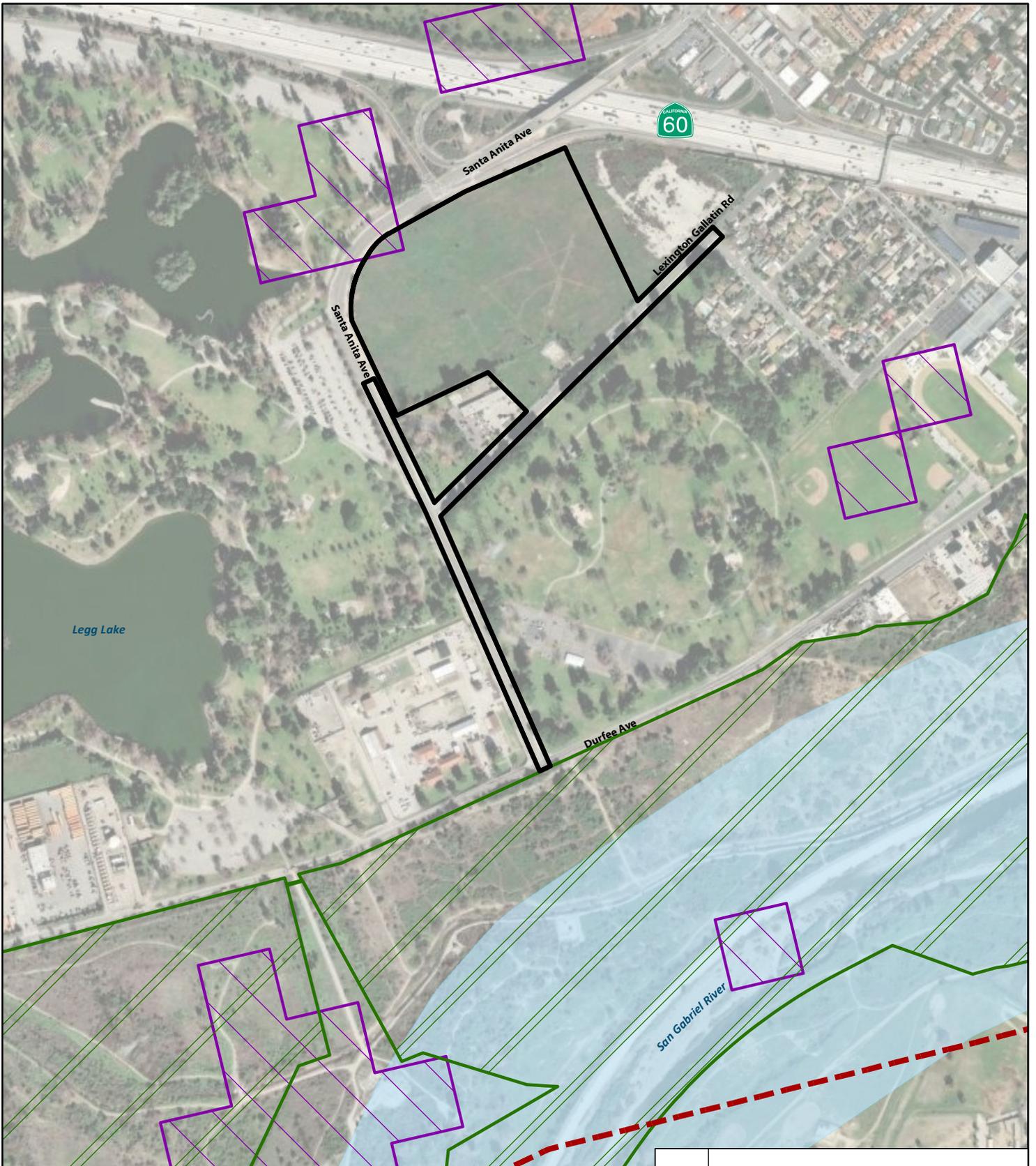
USFWS Plants and Wildlife
SOUTH EL MONTE ATHLETIC FIELDS
AND BUSINESS PARK PROJECT



ROCKS
BIOLOGICAL CONSULTING

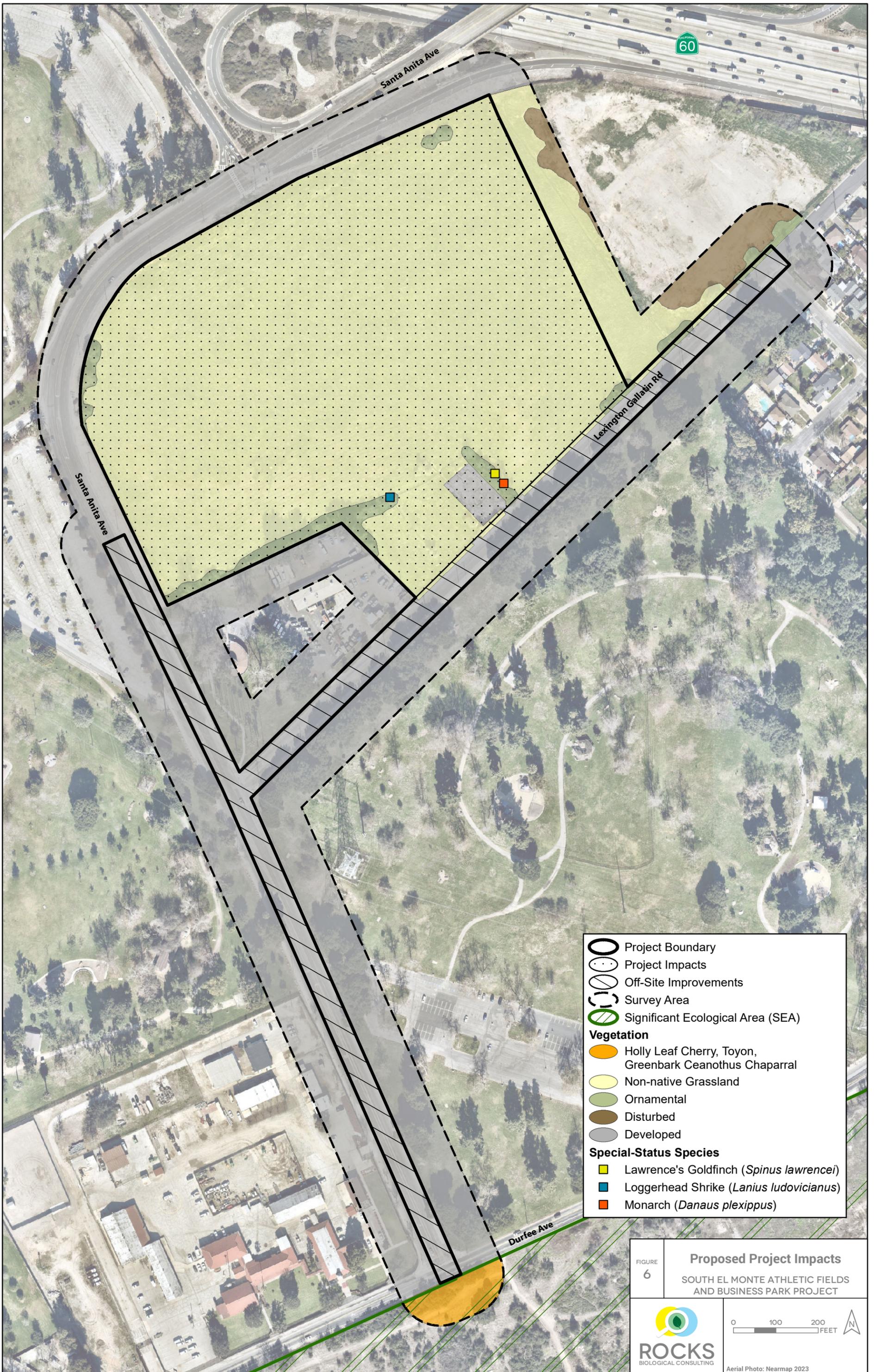


Base Map: Esri Topographic Map
Source: USFWS



-  Project Boundary
-  Significant Ecological Area (SEA)
-  Natural Areas Small - California Essential Habitat Connectivity
-  Potential Riparian Connections - California Essential Habitat Connectivity
-  Missing Linkages in California's Landscape

FIGURE 5	Habitat Connectivity SOUTH EL MONTE ATHLETIC FIELDS AND BUSINESS PARK PROJECT
	  <small>Aerial Photo: Esri, Maxar 2024 Source: Los Angeles County, CDFW</small>



	Project Boundary
	Project Impacts
	Off-Site Improvements
	Survey Area
	Significant Ecological Area (SEA)
Vegetation	
	Holly Leaf Cherry, Toyon, Greenbark Ceanothus Chaparral
	Non-native Grassland
	Ornamental
	Disturbed
	Developed
Special-Status Species	
	Lawrence's Goldfinch (<i>Spinus lawrencei</i>)
	Loggerhead Shrike (<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>)
	Monarch (<i>Danaus plexippus</i>)

FIGURE 6	Proposed Project Impacts SOUTH EL MONTE ATHLETIC FIELDS AND BUSINESS PARK PROJECT
<small>Aerial Photo: Nearmap 2023</small>	

APPENDIX A

SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

Appendix A
Site Photographs



Photo 1. Overview of non-native grassland in the southern portion of the project site, facing north. April 21, 2023.



Photo 2. View of non-native grassland and ornamental vegetation in the southern portion of the project site, facing west. April 21, 2023.



Photo 3. View of non-native grassland along the eastern border of the project site and disturbed land comprising the eastern buffer, facing north. April 21, 2023.



Photo 4. View of non-native grassland in the center of the project site, facing west. April 21, 2023.



Photo 5. View of overgrown vegetation surrounding an unoccupied burrow that is potentially suitable for burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) burrow, facing north. Ornamental vegetation and State Route (SR)-60 are visible in background. April 21, 2023.



Photo 6. View of developed land in the central region of the project site, exhibiting asphalt and concrete staircase remanent from previous development, facing north. April 21, 2023.



Photo 7. View of developed land at the southern extent of the project site, facing south. April 21, 2023.



Photo 8. View of developed land within and adjacent to off-site improvement area on Santa Anita Avenue, facing north. April 21, 2023.



Photo 9. View of culvert north of the project site directing flow beneath SR-60 and associated sheetflow outletting towards project site. April 21, 2023.



Photo 10. View of non-native grassland in the central portion of the project site, facing southeast. Developed land in southeast buffer is visible in the background. April 21, 2023.



Photo 11. View of non-native grassland in the eastern portion of the project site, facing west.
July 27, 2023.



Photo 12. View of Rocks Biological Consulting (RBC) biologists walking transects in the center of the project site, in search of southern tarplant (*Centromadia parryi* ssp. *australis*), facing north. This species was not detected on the project site. July 27, 2023.



Photo 13. View of RBC biologists walking transects in the southern portion of the project site, in search of southern tarplant, facing west. This species was not detected on the project site. July 27, 2023.



Photo 14. View of off-site reference population of southern tarplant, located less than one mile west of the project site, facing north. July 27, 2023.



Photo 15. View of a previously developed area on site, facing southwest. November 15, 2024.



Photo 16. View of tall, dried jimsonweed (*Datura* sp.) in disturbed habitat near the southern edge of the site, facing northwest. November 15, 2024.



Photo 17. View of many small mammal burrows in disturbed habitat in the southwestern portion of the site, facing northeast. November 15, 2024.



Photo 18. View of dried Russian-thistle (*Salsola* sp.) in the eastern buffer of the project site, facing northeast. November 15, 2024.

APPENDIX B

PLANT AND WILDLIFE SPECIES OBSERVED

Appendix B
Plant and Wildlife Species Observed

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name	Status
Plants			
Aceraceae	<i>Washingtonia robusta</i>	Mexican fan palm	Non-native
Adoxaceae	<i>Sambucus mexicana</i>	Blue elderberry	-
Amaranthaceae	<i>Amaranthus blitoides</i>	Prostrate amaranth	-
Amaranthaceae	<i>Amaranthus</i> sp.	<i>Amaranthus</i> species	-
Amaranthaceae	<i>Chenopodium album</i>	White goosefoot	-
Anacardiaceae	<i>Schinus terebinthifolius</i>	Brazilian pepper tree	Non-native
Apiaceae	<i>Conium maculatum</i>	Common poison hemlock	Non-native
Apocynaceae	<i>Nerium oleander</i>	Oleander	Non-native
Asteraceae	<i>Ambrosia acanthicarpa</i>	Annual bur-sage	-
Asteraceae	<i>Baccharis salicifolia</i>	Mulefat	-
Asteraceae	<i>Erigeron canadensis</i>	Horseweed	-
Asteraceae	<i>Glebionis coronaria</i>	Garland/crown daisy	Non-native
Asteraceae	<i>Heterotheca grandiflora</i>	Telegraph weed	-
Asteraceae	<i>Lactuca serriola</i>	Prickly lettuce	Non-native
Asteraceae	<i>Pseudognaphalium californicum</i>	California everlasting	-
Asteraceae	<i>Pseudognaphalium stramineum</i>	Cottonbatting plant	-
Asteraceae	<i>Silybum marianum</i>	Milk thistle	Non-native
Asteraceae	<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	Common sowthistle	Non-native
Boraginaceae	<i>Amsinckia menziesii</i>	Rigid fiddleneck	-
Brassicaceae	<i>Brassica tournefortii</i>	Sahara mustard	Non-native
Brassicaceae	<i>Hirschfeldia incana</i>	Short pod mustard	Non-native
Brassicaceae	<i>Raphanus sativus</i>	Wild radish	Non-native
Brassicaceae	<i>Sisymbrium irio</i>	London rocket	Non-native
Chenopodiaceae	<i>Salsola</i> sp.	<i>Salsola</i> species	Non-native
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Euphorbia helioscopia</i>	Wartweed	Non-native
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Euphorbia maculata</i>	Spotted spurge	Non-native

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name	Status
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Ricinus communis</i>	Castor bean	Non-native
Fabaceae	<i>Melilotus indicus</i>	Indian sweetclover	Non-native
Fabaceae	<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>	Coast live oak	-
Geraniaceae	<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Red-stem filaree/storksbill	Non-native
Lamiaceae	<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>	Horehound	Non-native
Malvaceae	<i>Malva parviflora</i>	Cheeseweed	Non-native
Myrtaceae	<i>Eucalyptus citriodora</i>	Lemon-scented gum	Non-native
Myrtaceae	<i>Eucalyptus</i> sp.	<i>Eucalyptus</i> species	Non-native
Nyctaginaceae	<i>Bougainvillea</i> sp.	<i>Bougainvillea</i> species	Non-native
Passifloraceae	<i>Passiflora caerulea</i>	Bluecrown passionflower	Non-native
Pinaceae	<i>Pinus</i> sp.	<i>Pinus</i> species	Non-native
Platanaceae	<i>Platanus hispanica</i>	London plane tree	Non-native
Poaceae	<i>Avena barbata</i>	Slender wild oat	Non-native
Poaceae	<i>Bromus diandrus</i>	Ripgut brome	Non-native
Poaceae	<i>Bromus rubens</i>	Red brome	Non-native
Poaceae	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>	Bermuda grass	Non-native
Poaceae	<i>Digitaria</i> sp.	<i>Digitaria</i> species	Non-native
Poaceae	<i>Hordeum vulgare</i>	Common barley	Non-native
Poaceae	<i>Sorghum halepense</i>	Johnson grass	Non-native
Poaceae	<i>Stipa miliacea</i> var. <i>miliacea</i>	Smilo grass	Non-native
Rosaceae	<i>Heteromeles arbutifolia</i>	Toyon	-
Rosaceae	<i>Prunus ilicifolia</i>	Holly-leaf cherry	-
Rosaceae	<i>Pyrus calleryana</i>	Callery pear	Non-native
Rubiaceae	<i>Galium aparine</i>	Common bedstraw	-
Simaroubaceae	<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	Tree of heaven	Non-native
Solanaceae	<i>Datura stramonium</i>	Jimsonweed	Non-native
Solanaceae	<i>Datura wrightii</i>	Western jimsonweed	-
Solanaceae	<i>Nicotiana glauca</i>	Tree tobacco	Non-native
Solanaceae	<i>Solanum douglasii</i>	Douglas' nightshade	-

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name	Status
Ulmaceae	<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>	Chinese elm	Non-native
Urticaceae	<i>Urtica urens</i>	Dwarf nettle	Non-native
Vitaceae	<i>Vitis californica</i>	California wild grape	-
Zygophyllaceae	<i>Tribulus terrestris</i>	Puncture vine	Non-native
Invertebrates			
Apidae	<i>Bombus vosnesenskii</i>	Yellow faced bumblebee	-
Nymphalidae	<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	Monarch	FPT
Nymphalidae	<i>Dione vanillae</i>	Gulf fritillary	-
Salticidae	<i>Phidippus cardinalis</i>	Cardinal jumping spider	-
Scarabaeidae	<i>Cotinis mutabilis</i>	Figeater beetle	-
Tenebrionidae	<i>Eleodes</i> sp.	Eleodes species	-
Reptiles			
Phrynosomatidae	<i>Sceloporus occidentalis</i>	Western fence lizard	-
Birds			
Accipitridae	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	Red-tailed hawk	-
Aegithalidae	<i>Psaltriparus minimus</i>	Bushtit	-
Anatidae	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	Canada goose	-
Ardeidae	<i>Ardea alba</i>	Great egret	-
Cathartidae	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	Turkey vulture	-
Certhioidea	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>	Bewick's wren	-
Columbidae	<i>Columba livia</i>	Rock pigeon	Non-native
Columbidae	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	Mourning dove	-
Corvidae	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Common raven	-
Estrildidae	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	Scaly-breasted munia	Non-native
Falconidae	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	American kestrel	-
Fringillidae	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	House finch	-
Fringillidae	<i>Spinus lawrencei</i>	Lawrence's goldfinch	BCC
Fringillidae	<i>Spinus psaltria</i>	Lesser goldfinch	-
Hirundinidae	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Barn swallow	-

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name	Status
Hirundinidae	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	Northern rough-winged swallow	-
Icteridae	<i>Icterus bullockii</i>	Bullock's oriole	-
Icteridae	<i>Icterus cucullatus</i>	Hooded oriole	-
Laniidae	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	Loggerhead shrike	SSC
Mimidae	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	Northern mockingbird	-
Passerellidae	<i>Melospiza crissalis</i>	California towhee	-
Passerellidae	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	Savannah sparrow	-
Passerellidae	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	White-crowned sparrow	-
Passeridae	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	Song sparrow	-
Passeridae	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	House sparrow	Non-native
Phalacrocoracidae	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	Double-crested cormorant	-
Picidae	<i>Picoides nuttallii</i>	Nuttall's woodpecker	-
Psittacidae	<i>Brotogeris chiriri</i>	Yellow-chevroned parakeet	Non-native
Pycnonotidae	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>	Red-whiskered bulbul	Non-native
Trochilidae	<i>Calypte anna</i>	Anna's hummingbird	-
Trochilidae	<i>Selasphorus sasin</i>	Allen's hummingbird	-
Turdidae	<i>Sialia mexicana</i>	Western bluebird	-
Tyrannidae	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	Black phoebe	-
Tyrannidae	<i>Sayornis saya</i>	Say's phoebe	-
Tyrannidae	<i>Tyrannus vociferans</i>	Cassin's kingbird	-
Tytonidae	<i>Tyto alba</i>	Barn owl	-
Mammals			
Canidae	<i>Canis latrans</i>	Coyote	-
Sciuridae	<i>Otospermophilus beecheyi</i>	California ground squirrel	-
Sciuridae	<i>Sciurus niger</i>	Fox squirrel	Non-native
BCC: USFWS Bird of Conservation Concern SSC: CDFW Species of Special Concern FPT: Federally Proposed Threatened			

APPENDIX C

PROTOCOL PRESENCE/ABSENCE 2025 SURVEY REPORT FOR BURROWING OWL (ATHENE CUNICULARIA)



SOUTH EL MONTE ATHLETIC FIELDS AND BUSINESS PARK PROJECT

PROTOCOL PRESENCE/ABSENCE 2025 SURVEY REPORT FOR BURROWING OWL (*Athene cunicularia*)

Los Angeles County, California

August 11, 2025

Prepared for:
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FIGURES

Figure 1. Survey Results

APPENDICES

Attachment A – Site Photographs

Attachment B – Bird Species Observed

Attachment C – Surveyor Field Notes

1 Summary

This report is a summary of the results of focused burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*; BUOW) surveys conducted by Rocks Biological Consulting (RBC) for the South El Monte Athletic Fields and Business Park Development Project (project) in the City of South El Monte (City) and the unincorporated Whittier Narrows area, in Los Angeles County, California. Based on the presence of suitable habitat, RBC conducted breeding season (February 15 – July 15) BUOW surveys between March 24 and June 25, 2025, in accordance with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (BUOW Guidelines; CDFW 2012). No BUOW, active burrows, or BUOW sign were documented within the project site or 500-foot buffer.

2 Introduction

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION & PROPOSED ACTIVITY

The approximately 27-acre project site is divided between the City and the unincorporated Whittier Narrows area, in Los Angeles County, California (Figure 1). The project site is located approximately 200 linear feet southeast of the Whittier Narrows Reservoir, southwest of State Route (SR)-60, east of Santa Anita Avenue, and north of the Whittier Narrows Natural Area.

The proposed project would include the development of a warehouse on approximately 10.5 acres of the eastern portion of the site. The remaining approximately 10.7 acres on the northwestern portion of the site would be ground leased to the City for future development of a park.

The project also includes off-site improvements to accommodate utility connections. These improvements would be located within Santa Anita Avenue public right-of-way extending from Durfee Avenue to the main project site on Lexington-Gallatin Road, and approximately 550 feet north of the intersection with Lexington-Gallatin Road to the future City park. Additionally, improvements would occur within Lexington-Gallatin Road public right-of-way extending approximately 400 feet north of the main project site to the intersection with Andrews Street.

2.2 BURROWING OWL NATURAL HISTORY

On October 10, the California Fish and Game Commission unanimously approved the BUOW as a candidate species for potential listing under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). As such, BUOW is afforded the same protections as a state-listed endangered or threatened species (CDFW 2024).

Suitable habitat for BUOW in California is typically characterized by short, sparse vegetation with few shrubs, level to gentle topography, and well-drained soils, such as naturally occurring grassland, shrub steppe, and desert habitats (Haug et al. 1993). In addition, BUOW may also occur in agricultural areas, ruderal grassy fields, vacant lots, and pastures containing suitable vegetation structure and useable burrows with foraging habitat in proximity (Gervais et al. 2008). Typically, BUOW use burrows dug by California ground squirrel (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*) and round-tailed ground squirrel (*Citellus tereticaudus*) and dens or holes dug by other fossorial species, including badger (*Taxidea taxus*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), and fox (e.g., San Joaquin kit fox

[*Vulpes macrotis mutica*] (Ronan 2002). Additionally, BUOW frequently use natural rock cavities, debris piles, culverts, and pipes for nesting and roosting (Rosenberg et al. 1998) and have been documented using artificial burrows for nesting and cover (Smith and Belthoff 2001). Occupancy of BUOW habitat is confirmed at a site when at least one BUOW, or its sign at or near a burrow entrance, is observed within the last three years (Rich 1984).

3 Methods

3.1 SURVEY METHODS

Based on the presence of suitable habitat within the survey area (project site and 500-foot buffer), RBC biologists Alec Goodman, Imran Badar, and Melissa Tamarkin conducted four focused breeding season BUOW surveys between March 24 and June 25, 2025, in accordance with CDFW BUOW Guidelines (CDFW 2012).

RBC biologists walked transects spaced 10-20 meters apart through suitable BUOW habitat within the survey area. RBC used binoculars (10x42 magnification) to scan the survey area at least every 100 meters for BUOW, active burrows, and/or sign of BUOW and to aid in the identification of avian species. Care was taken to minimize disturbance near suitable burrows to avoid flushing any potential BUOW. RBC examined all burrows for BUOW sign, including feathers, pellets, whitewash, and/or prey remains. Burrows were considered active if a BUOW was observed at or near the entrance or if recent sign was present. Any BUOW, active burrows, and BUOW sign were mapped in the geographic information system (GIS) program ArcGIS Collector.

3.2 SURVEYOR QUALIFICATIONS

Alec Goodman is a senior biologist and has over nine years of experience in environmental consulting and Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science. Imran Badar and Melissa Tamarkin are staff biologists with approximately two years and one year of field experience in southern California, respectively. Biologists are experienced at conducting BUOW surveys and are familiar with the calls, scolds, and alarm calls of BUOW as well as the plumage characteristics of adult and juvenile BUOW and appearance of BUOW sign.

4 Results

4.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS & HABITAT ASSESSMENT

The survey area is composed primarily of developed land and non-native grassland habitat. Developed land within the survey area consists of paved roads, recreational facilities, and government agency buildings. Non-native grassland habitat is present throughout the primary project parcel and is dominated by ripgut grass (*Bromus diandrus*), common barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), slender wild oat (*Avena barbata*), London rocket (*Sisymbrium irio*), and Sahara mustard (*Brassica tournefortii*). Suitable BUOW habitat within the survey area includes non-native grassland habitat when vegetation height and density are low (Figure 1).

The suitability of on-site non-native grassland habitat is dependent, in part, on weed management. If weed abatement is performed periodically, the on-site suitability for burrowing owl nesting and foraging within the non-native grassland increases. Due to lack of weed management, non-native vegetation height and density increased as focused surveys were performed, resulting in reduced site suitability for BUOW (Attachment A).

4.2 FOCUSED BURROWING OWL SURVEY RESULTS

RBC conducted four focused BUOW surveys during the breeding season between March 24 and June 25, 2025. Survey dates, times, personnel, and weather conditions are presented in Table 1, below.

Table 1. Focused Breeding Season Burrowing Owl Survey Dates and Conditions

Survey	Date	Personnel	Time (Start-End)	Temperature (F)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind Speed (mph)	Precipitation	Visibility (Low, Med, High)
1	3/24/25	AG, MT	0715-0900	54-62	0-0	1-3; 1-3	None	High
2	5/08/25	MT, IB	0820-1020	64-72	0-0	1-3; 1-3	None	High
3	5/30/25	MT, IB	0700-0930	67-69	100-0	2-5; 1-3	None	High
4	6/25/25	IB	1800-2000	78-70	20-10	1-3; 1-3	None	High

Personnel: AG = Alec Goodman, IB = Imran Badar, MT = Melissa Tamarkin

No BUOW, active burrows, or BUOW sign were observed within the survey area. Several small mammal burrows suitable for BUOW were observed; however, tall non-native vegetation cover reduced the suitability of these burrows by the end of the survey period (Figure 1). Representative site photographs are presented in Attachment A, and compiled list of the 38 bird species observed during focused surveys is presented in Attachment B. Surveyor field notes are presented in Attachment C.

5 Burrowing Owl Avoidance & Minimization

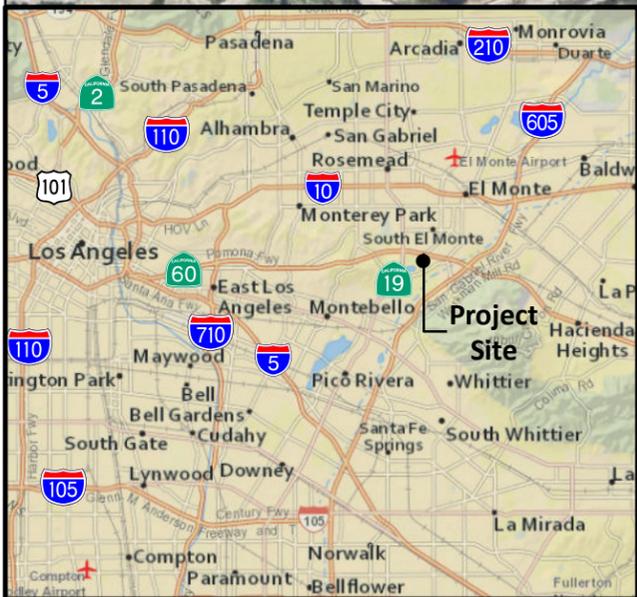
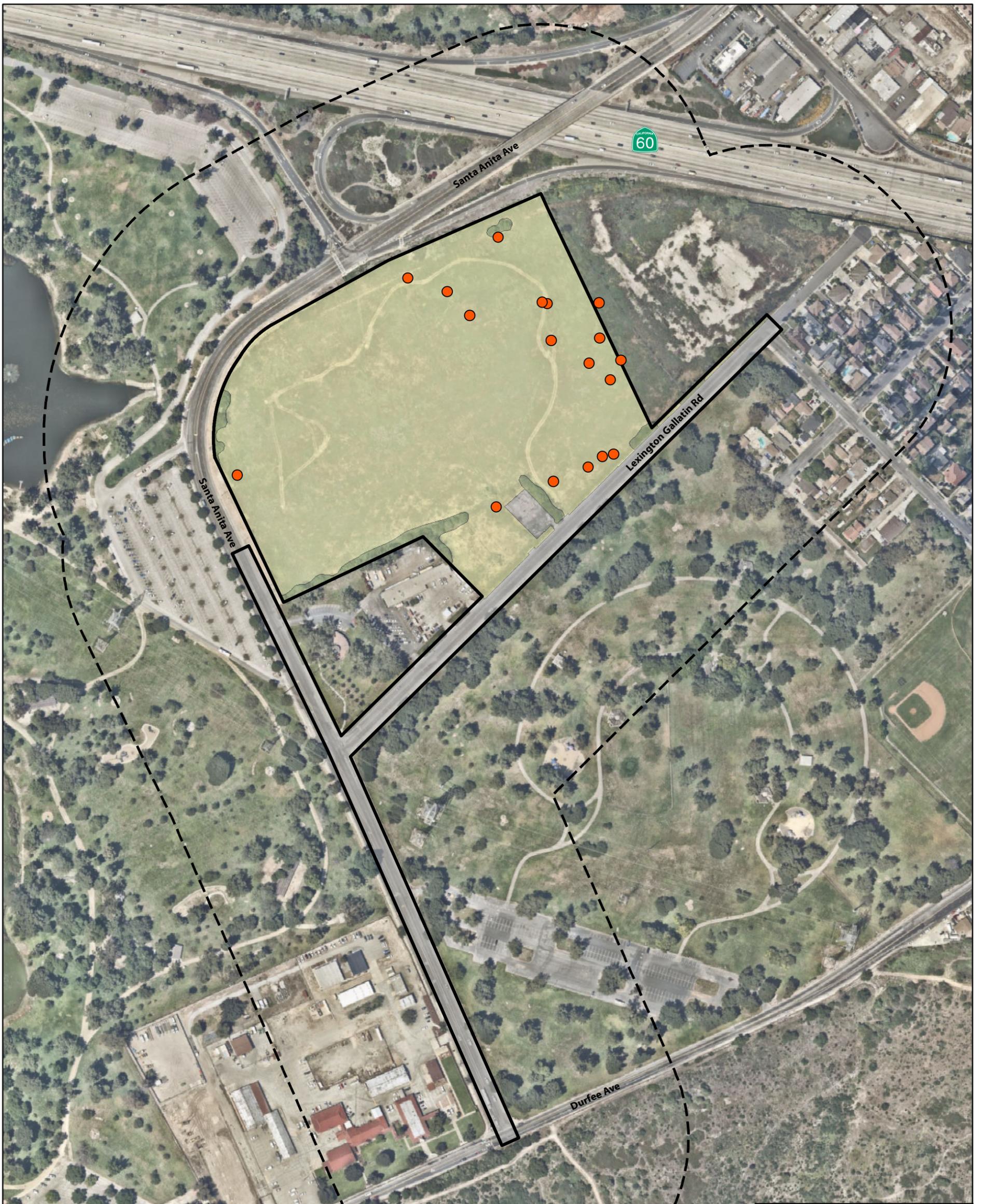
Due to the presence of suitable habitat, pre-construction take avoidance surveys should be conducted in accordance with the CDFW BUOW Guidelines at least 14 days and 24 hours prior to ground disturbing activities. If BUOW is documented during pre-construction surveys, CDFW shall be consulted to determine proper avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

6 Conclusions

No BUOW, active burrows, or BUOW sign were documented within the survey area during the focused BUOW surveys conducted between March 24, and June 25, 2025. Due to the presence of suitable habitat, BUOW has the potential to colonize the project site in the future; therefore, pre-construction take avoidance surveys would be required to avoid potential direct impacts on BUOW resulting from the project.

7 References

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Project Boundary
 Burrowing Owl Survey Area
Burrowing Owl Survey Results
 Suitable unoccupied burrow
Vegetation
 Non-native Grassland
 Ornamental
 Disturbed
 Developed

FIGURE 1
Survey Results
 SOUTH EL MONTE ATHLETIC FIELDS AND BUSINESS PARK PROJECT

0 140 280 FEET

Aerial Photo: Nearmap 2023

ATTACHMENT A

SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

Attachment A
Site Photographs



Photo 1. View of non-native grassland habitat from eastern project boundary, facing west. March 24, 2025.



Photo 2. View of proposed off-site improvements area along Lexington-Gallatin Road, facing east. March 24, 2025.



Photo 3. View of berm and non-native grassland habitat in the central project site, facing south. March 24, 2025.



Photo 4. Representative view of small mammal burrows present throughout the project site. March 24, 2025.



Photo 5. View of previously developed area in the southern project site, facing south. May 30, 2025.



Photo 6. Representative view of ornamental vegetation within Whittier Narrows Recreation Area in the northwest project buffer, facing southwest. May 8, 2025.



Photo 7. Representative view of tall and dense non-native grassland dominated by London rocket (*Sisymbrium irio*; background) and clearing formed by vehicle tracks (foreground) within the central project site, facing northeast. May 30, 2025.



Photo 8. View of thatched non-native grass cover from the southwest project site, facing north. May 30, 2025.



Photo 9. View of tall non-native grass cover with 5'5" surveyor for scale, facing northwest. May 8, 2025.



Photo 10. View of tall and dense non-native grass cover with a pathway formed by vehicle tracks in the northwestern project site, facing northeast. June 25, 2025.

ATTACHMENT B

BIRD SPECIES OBSERVED

Attachment B
Bird Species Observed

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name
Accipitridae	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	Red-tailed hawk
Aegithalidae	<i>Psaltriparus minimus</i>	Bushtit
Anatidae	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Mallard
Anatidae	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	Canada goose
Ardeidae	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	Great blue heron
Columbidae	<i>Columba livia</i>	Rock pigeon*
Columbidae	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	Mourning dove
Corvidae	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	American crow
Corvidae	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Common raven
Fringillidae	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	House finch
Fringillidae	<i>Spinus lawrencei</i>	Lawrence's goldfinch (BCC)
Fringillidae	<i>Spinus psaltria</i>	Lesser goldfinch
Hirundinidae	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Barn swallow
Hirundinidae	<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>	Cliff swallow
Hirundinidae	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	Northern rough-winged swallow
Icteridae	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	Red-winged blackbird
Icteridae	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>	Brewer's blackbird
Icteridae	<i>Icterus bullockii</i>	Bullock's oriole
Icteridae	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>	Great-tailed grackle
Mimidae	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	Northern mockingbird
Parulidae	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	Common yellowthroat
Parulidae	<i>Setophaga coronata</i>	Yellow-rumped warbler
Passerellidae	<i>Melospiza crissalis</i>	California towhee
Passerellidae	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	White-crowned sparrow
Passeridae	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	Song sparrow
Passeridae	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	House sparrow*
Phalacrocoracidae	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	Double-crested cormorant
Picidae	<i>Picoides nuttallii</i>	Nuttall's woodpecker

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name
Psittacidae	<i>Brotogeris chiriri</i>	Yellow-chevroned parakeet*
Rallidae	<i>Fulica americana</i>	American coot
Trochilidae	<i>Calypte anna</i>	Anna's hummingbird
Trochilidae	<i>Selasphorus sasin</i>	Allen's hummingbird
Troglodytidae	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	House wren
Turdidae	<i>Sialia mexicana</i>	Western bluebird
Turdidae	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	American robin
Tyrannidae	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	Black phoebe
Tyrannidae	<i>Sayornis saya</i>	Say's phoebe
Tyrannidae	<i>Tyrannus vociferans</i>	Cassin's kingbird
*Non-native BCC: USFWS Bird of Conservation Concern		

ATTACHMENT C

SURVEYOR FIELD NOTES

At Sath el Monte Buw #1 5/24 93

MT: 0715 54 1-3 0%

0900 62 1-3 0%

HDFE BLPH AMKO CACT MOPD

CABO SOSP ANHU YRWA WCSO

CAKE POP2 AMUR CARA SIAPH

GALR BASW AMLO MATU BRBL

GBHE DCCO NRSW RTTA WE-SL

Drinking beetle; HOSP

Water boat beetle

Some new Coptis larvae

imposed. Many existing larvae

B South El Monte BUOW 5/8 27
MT Start: 820 69°F 1-3 0%
End: ~~1020~~ 5100 72°F 1-3 0%

CAES
NWVO BASW
CALT DCCO
HOFI
RTHA
LEGO
MODO
RWBL
BLPH
SAPH

- Veg consists of *Sisymbrium* in (dom),
Amsynkla menzezi HERINC, ONCPIL,
bromes (nonnative), Dwarf nettle, wild
radish

- tall veg throughout site is unsuitable
- We walked through suitable areas
where veg is low.

NO BUOW or BUOW sign

South. El Monte BUW2 5/8/25 MTH
 Time Temp Wind CC

Start	1820	64	1-3	0
End	1020	72	1-3	0

CHGS MODO RTHA HOFI
 NUWO CALI LE(O)
 RWBL Cabbage white ALHU
 Monarch butterfly SAPH BASW
 DCCD BLPH CALD GRHH
 ROPJ

Urtica urens Sisymbrium irio
 Wild radish Bromus sp.
~~Wt~~ Avena sp. Datura sp.

No BUOW or BUOW sign

NGS Veg of Chin height in

Eastern project. Tall grass throughout,
 not BUOW suitable

B South El Monte BUOW 5/30⁴¹
NT Start: 7:00 AM 67°F 2-5 mph 100%
End: 9:30 AM 69°F 1-3 mph 0%

Parakeets	AMRO	Salt marsh moth
HOFI	LAGO	Red admiral
BOSH	CLSW	
CALT	BASW	
CORA	ANTU	
MODO	BOOR (bullock's Oriole)	
COYE	NOMO	
BLPA	ROPI	
RWBL	CAGO	
MALL	GBHE	
WEBL	LEGO	
GTGR		
Domestic duck		

No BUOW or sign

Extremely thick and tall veg
throughout site - UNSUITABLE for BUOW

South El Monte BUOW. MT, IB
05/30/25

	Time	Temp	Wind	CC
Start	700	67	2-5	100
End	930	69	1-3	0

HOPI Parakeets CALT CORA
BLPH MODO COYE AMRO
LAGO BASW CLSW GBHE
RWBL ANHU BUOR WEBL
CAGO ROPI HOSP MALD LEGO

Cannid scat throughout site

Salt Marsh Moth Caterpillar

Red admiral

California ladybettle

Convergent ladybettle

No BUOW or BUOW sign

6/25 South el Monte BUOW 4 1B

Start: 6:00 PM 78°F 1-3 mph 20%

End: 8:00 PM 70°F 1-3 mph 10%

BUSH MALL

MODO CAGO

HOPI

RTHA

Parakeet

Ctel

ANAD

AMKO

BRBL

HOWR

BUOR? - female

NOMO

NUWE

CORA

- 2 new suitable unoccupied burrows mapped

- RTHA pair calling and circling around Southern butter and entered project shortly

- Lots of coyote scat

* NO BUOW or sign