

**APPENDIX E**  
**Biological Resources Technical Report**

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# **Sylmar Ground Return System Replacement Project**

## *Biological Resources Technical Report*

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*Sylmar Ground Return System Replacement Project  
Los Angeles County, California*

*Biological Resources Technical Report*

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFG	California Department of Fish and Game
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFGC	California Fish and Game Code
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CFWC	California Fish and Wildlife Codes
CNDDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CSC	California Species of Special Concern
CWA	Clean Water Act
DC	direct current
DC-XLPE	DC Cross Linked Polyethylene
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FR	Federal Register
HDPE	High Density Polyethylene
kV	kilovolt
LADWP	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPPA	Native Plant Protection Act
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
PCH	Pacific Coast Highway
PDCI	Pacific Direct Current Intertie Transmission Line
PFM	protected furbearing mammal
Project	Sylmar Ground Return System Replacement Project
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Boards
SGRS	Sylmar Ground Return System
SWPPP	permit, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
TPZ	Tree Protection Zone
U.S.C.	United States Code
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
WBWG	Western Bat Working Group

## INTRODUCTION

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) proposes to replace the existing underground and marine electrical cables and the existing marine electrode portions of the Sylmar Ground Return System (SGRS), although not in the same alignment. The project is known as the Sylmar Ground Return System Replacement Project (Project) (refer to Figure 1).

The SGRS is the ground return system for the Pacific Direct Current Intertie (PDCI), which transmits bulk direct current (DC) power between Los Angeles and the Pacific Northwest; the PDCI cannot operate without a functioning ground return system. The proposed Project will enhance the operational capabilities of the PDCI, minimize voltage gradients even under the most severe credible operating conditions, and minimize on-shore electrostatic corrosion.

The existing SGRS runs from the Sylmar Converter Station in the San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles, California, into the Santa Monica Bay and terminates on the ocean floor approximately 6,000 off-shore from Pacific Palisades. The existing ground return system consists of an overhead segment, an underground segment, and a marine segment.

The Project would begin at the Kenter Canyon Terminal Tower (where the existing overhead segment terminates) and would include the replacement of the existing underground and marine segments of the system. The proposed alignment for the underground segment would run from the Kenter Canyon Terminal Tower to the proposed West Channel Vault near Will Rogers State Beach. The marine segment of the Project would begin at the proposed West Channel Vault, proceed underground below Will Rogers State Beach, and then would continue below the ocean floor to a location approximately three miles off-shore in Santa Monica Bay.

This Technical Report evaluates the biological resources for the proposed alignment for the underground segment that would run from Kenter Canyon Terminal Tower to the proposed West Channel Vault, and the terrestrial portion of the marine alignment that runs from the West Channel Vault to the Pacific Ocean. This report does not discuss potential marine-related impacts within the Pacific Ocean; a separate technical report has been prepared to assess the Project’s potential to affect marine resources.

## 1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### 1.1 PROJECT LOCATION AND SURROUNDING LAND USES

The Project, consisting of replacing the underground and marine segments of the SGRS, would be located in the City of Los Angeles, within the communities of Brentwood and Pacific Palisades, and in the City of Santa Monica; it would also extend into the Pacific Ocean in the Santa Monica Bay. Figure 1 illustrates the location of the proposed Project, whereas Table 1 describes jurisdictions crossed within the Project area.

**Table 1 Jurisdictions Crossed By Proposed Facilities**

JURISDICTION	UNDERGROUND SEGMENT	MARINE SEGMENT
City of Los Angeles, Communities of Brentwood and Pacific Palisades (Portion within Local Coastal Program - City of Los Angeles Coastal Zone)	18,000 feet (2,200 feet)	1,100 feet (1,100 feet)
City of Santa Monica	8,400 feet	N/A
California Department of Parks and Recreation (Will Rogers State Beach)/County of Los Angeles Department of Beaches and Harbor	N/A	700 feet

JURISDICTION	UNDERGROUND SEGMENT	MARINE SEGMENT
California Coastal Commission for Santa Monica Bay/State Lands Commission/ US Army Corp of Engineers	N/A	23,000 feet

Source: POWER Engineers, Inc.

The underground segment of the Project would be installed within and located below existing streets, extending for approximately five miles from the existing Kenter Canyon Terminal Tower to a proposed new vault on West Channel Drive, east of Will Rogers State Beach. Approximately 9.0 linear miles of residential land use and 0.4 linear mile of commercial land use front the proposed Project along both sides of each street<sup>1</sup>. The marine segment would extend from the proposed West Channel Vault, under Will Rogers State Beach, and along the ocean floor to a location in the Santa Monica Bay approximately three miles from shore.

The existing underground and marine SGRS segments would be decommissioned after the new underground and marine segments are in-service.. At that point, as necessary and feasible, existing facilities would be recovered, or they may be abandoned in place.

## 1.2 PROJECT COMPONENTS

### **Proposed Underground Segment**

The proposed underground segment would begin at the Kenter Canyon Terminal Tower where the existing overhead segment would be connected to the new underground segment. From there, it would be located underground through existing city streets to the proposed West Channel Vault, where it would connect to the new marine segment.

#### **Kenter Canyon Terminal Tower**

The Kenter Canyon Terminal Tower is an existing LADWP facility located on Homewood Road in the community of Brentwood. The existing facility includes an overhead rack which holds the protection and switching equipment necessary to make the transition from the existing SGRS overhead segment to the existing SGRS underground segment. A new rack would be assembled near the existing rack, and similar protection and switching equipment would be installed to facilitate the transition from the existing overhead segment to the new underground segment. The proposed SGRS underground segment would connect to the existing SGRS overhead segment at this facility. The Project would not alter the overhead SGRS or the overhead configuration of the existing 138 kilovolt (kV) and 230 kV transmission lines currently strung on the steel lattice towers in area.

#### **Underground Cables and Vaults**

Extending from the Kenter Canyon Terminal Tower, the SGRS underground segment would require two copper cables insulated with DC Cross Linked Polyethylene (DC-XLPE), a plastic compound designed specifically for DC applications. The DC-XLPE is an oil-free material, unlike the existing SGRS underground cable insulation. The DC-XLPE insulated cables would be installed within two six-inch conduits encased in a concrete conduit bank located within existing streets with the conduit bank top at a minimum of five feet underground. The conduit bank would include four cable conduits; two would be utilized and two would be empty. The vacant conduits would be utilized for emergency repair and maintenance. Two communication conduits would also be included within the conduit

<sup>1</sup> Mileage calculations are computed by adding land use frontage on each side of the Project alignment to derive the total mileage frontage.



bank. Approximately 20 new underground vaults would be required, one approximately every 1,500 feet along the alignment, to provide access to the conduits and cables.

The proposed alignment would be installed below the following streets:

- Homewood Road between the existing Kenter Canyon Terminal Tower and North Kenter Avenue
- North Kenter Avenue between Homewood Road and Sunset Boulevard
- Sunset Boulevard between North Kenter Avenue and South Greta Green Way
- South Greta Green Way between Sunset Boulevard and San Vicente Boulevard
- San Vicente Boulevard between South Greta Green Way and 7th Street
- 7th Street between San Vicente Boulevard and Entrada Drive
- Entrada Drive between 7th Street and West Channel Road
- West Channel Road between Entrada Drive and the proposed West Channel Vault.

The existing SGRS underground segment would be abandoned in place or recovered as necessary and feasible.

### **Proposed Marine Segment**

The proposed marine segment would be directionally drilled underground from the proposed West Channel Vault, cross under Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) and Will Rodgers State Beach, and continue under the ocean floor to a location approximately 1,000 feet offshore in Santa Monica Bay. From there, it would continue below the ocean floor, extending to the proposed electrode array which would be located on the surface of the ocean floor at a depth of about 160 feet. The existing SGRS marine facilities would be abandoned in place or recovered as feasible; however, it is likely portions of the existing marine cables and electrode elements would be removed and the existing concrete boxes of the electrode array would be decommissioned but remain in place.

### **West Channel Vault**

The proposed West Channel Vault would be located under the existing street, on the center median, near 216 West Channel Road. It would serve as the transition between the proposed underground and marine segments. During construction, directional drilling for the installation of a portion of the proposed marine segment would occur at this location. Once directional drilling was completed, a permanent vault 40 feet long by 12 feet wide by 12 feet deep would be installed to provide access for maintenance and testing.

### **Marine Cables**

From the proposed West Channel Vault, eight marine cables would extend to a new location in the Santa Monica Bay approximately three miles offshore. From the West Channel Vault to a location approximately 1,000 feet offshore, four marine cables would be installed underground within each of the two bore holes which would be stabilized with bentonite or similar material. From the location approximately 1,000 feet offshore to the proposed electrode array, the eight cables would be bundled into two sets of four cables each. The two sets would be installed in parallel trenches, approximately twenty feet apart. The cable depth, as practicable, would be approximately five feet below the ocean floor.

### **Electrode Array**

The electrode array would be located about three miles off-shore on the ocean floor at a depth of approximate 160 feet below the water surface. Based on a preliminary design (that may be subject to

change), the array would be composed of approximately 88 cylindrical boxes weighing about 100 tons each, arranged in a circular formation approximately 0.25 miles in diameter. Each open-topped cylindrical box would house an electrode element covered by layers of coke and gravel. The cylindrical boxes would have an internal diameter of approximately 13 feet and be approximately seven feet high. The base for each box would be 25 feet in diameter and two feet high. The eight marine cables would each be spliced into 11 smaller cables. Each of the 11 smaller cables would connect to a separate cylindrical box.

FIGURE 1 PROPOSED PROJECT



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## 2.0 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The Project must comply with various federal, state, and local laws. While some laws and policies provide constraints, others provide intent and direction for certain actions to occur. The following is a general overview of such guidance, which gives intent or direction for the proposed Project relevant to biological resources.

### 2.1 FEDERAL

#### **Endangered Species Act of 1973; 16 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 1531 et seq.; 50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 17 and 222**

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) includes provisions for protection and management of species that are federally listed as threatened or endangered or proposed for such listing, and of designated critical habitat for these species. The administering agency for the above authority for non-marine species is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

#### **Migratory Bird Treaty Act: 16 U.S.C. § 703-711; 50 CFR Subchapter B**

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) includes provisions for protection of migratory birds, including basic prohibitions against any taking not authorized by federal regulation. The administering agency for the above authority is the USFWS. The law contains no requirement to prove intent to violate any of its provisions. Wording in the MBTA makes it clear that most actions that result in “taking” or possession (permanent or temporary) of a protected species can be a violation of the act. The word “take” is defined as “pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect (including nests, eggs, and feathers).”

#### **Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act**

Bald eagle protection began in 1940 with the passage of the Eagle Protection Act, which was later amended to include golden eagle and was renamed. The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act makes it unlawful to import, export, take, sell, purchase, or barter any bald eagle or golden eagle, their parts, products, nests, or eggs. Take includes pursuing, shooting, poisoning, wounding, killing, capturing, trapping, collecting, molesting, or disturbing. Exceptions may be granted by USFWS for scientific or exhibition use, or for traditional and cultural use by Native Americans. However, no permits may be issued for import, export, or commercial activities involving eagles.

#### **Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1251 et seq.)**

The Clean Water Act (CWA) is the principal federal statute protecting navigable waters and adjoining shorelines from pollution. The Clean Water Act is administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). USACE is responsible for regulating the discharge of fill material into waters of the United States. Waters of the United States include lakes, rivers, streams and their tributaries, as well as wetlands. Since its enactment, the CWA prohibits the discharge of pollutants into waters of the United States without a permit. Section 404 of the CWA provides that whenever any person dredges or places any fill material from or into waters of the United States including, without limitation, wetlands, streams, and bays (e.g., while undertaking road construction, bridge construction, or streambed alteration), a permit is required from USACE. Through field reconnaissance surveys and analyses of National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) and watershed data, it is unlikely that there are any jurisdictional waters of the United States within the Project area. It is anticipated that USACE will not assert jurisdiction over any waters and/or aquatic features occurring within the disturbance area.

## 2.2 STATE

### **California Endangered Species Act of 1984, California Fish and Wildlife Code § 2050-2098**

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) includes provisions for the protection and management of species listed by the state as endangered or threatened, or designated as candidates for such listings. CESA includes a requirement for consultation “to ensure that any action authorized by a state lead agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species... or result in the destruction or adverse modification of habitat essential to the continued existence of the species” (§ 2090). Plants of California declared to be endangered, threatened, or rare are listed at 14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) §670.2. Animals of California declared to be endangered, threatened, or rare are listed at 14 CCR §670.5. The administering agency for the above authority is the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) (formerly California Department of Fish and Game [CDFG]).

### **California Fish and Wildlife Code Section 3503, 3511, 4700, 5050, and 5515**

These California Fish and Wildlife Codes (CFWC) list bird (primarily raptor), mammal, amphibian, and reptile species that are classified as fully protected in California. Fully protected species are prohibited from being taken or possessed except under specific permit requirements. These Codes also prohibit the take, possession, or needless destruction of the nests or eggs of any bird, including birds of prey or their nests or eggs, except as otherwise provided by the code or any regulation made pursuant thereto.

### **Native Plant Protection Act (California Fish and Game Code [CFG] Section 1900 et seq.)**

The California Native Plant Protection Act prohibits importation of rare and endangered plants into California, “take” of rare and endangered plants, and sale of rare and endangered plants. CESA defers to the California Native Plant Protection Act, which ensures that State-listed plant species are protected when State agencies are involved in projects subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In this case, plants listed as rare under the California Native Plant Protection Act are not protected under CESA but rather under CEQA.

### **California Fish and Wildlife Code §1600-1616 – Streambed Alteration Agreement**

This Code requires that any person, state or local government agency, or public utility notify CDFW and obtain a streambed alteration agreement before they begin any construction project that will divert, obstruct, or change the natural flow or the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake, use materials from a streambed, or result in the disposal or disposition of debris, waste, or other material containing crumbled, flaked, or ground pavement where it can pass into any river, stream, or lake. In general, CDFW jurisdiction extends to the top of the stream or bank, or to the outer edge of riparian vegetation, whichever is wider.

### **Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act of 1969 (California Water Code Section 13000 et seq.)**

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act provides state coordination with the Clean Water Act, which is described above. It provides a mechanism by which the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) certify federally issued CWA permits to ensure the compatibility of federal and State water quality guidelines. The act provides for the development and periodic review of water quality control plans (basin plans) that designate beneficial uses of California’s major rivers and groundwater basins and establish narrative and numerical water quality objectives for those waters. Basin plans are primarily implemented by using the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permitting system to regulate waste discharges to ensure that water quality objectives are met. Waste

discharges may include fill, any material resulting from human activity, or any other “discharge” that may directly or indirectly impact waters of the State relative to the implementation of Section 401 of the CWA.

### **2.3 LOCAL ORDINANCES**

California State Senate Concurrent Resolution 17 and several city and county ordinances regulate effects on native oak and riparian trees and woodlands, as well as designated landmark or heritage trees. These local ordinances generally require permits for any activities that directly remove covered trees of specific size and species, or indirectly affect them by work under or adjacent to their canopy driplines. The ordinances typically have specific quantitative mitigation ratios for replacement of trees affected by projects.

The City of Los Angeles Oak Tree Protection Ordinance (153478) requires a person shall not cut, destroy, remove, relocate, inflict damage, or encroach into the protected zone of oak trees measuring at least four inches in diameter that are 4.5 feet above ground level. The ordinance specifically prohibits the destruction of Valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) and California live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and any tree of the oak genus indigenous to California which measures eight inches or more in diameter, four and one-half feet above the ground. It excludes scrub oaks (*Quercus berberidifolia*) and nursery grown oaks. The Department of Public Works, as the primary enforcement agency, has the authority to authorize relocation or removal under certain circumstances, such as public endangerment.

The City of Santa Monica Community Forest Management Plan mandates that measures be implemented for the protection of existing City trees during construction activities. The mandate requires any utility that will be within the Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) or have a negative impact on the tree’s root adjacent to the Project; a plan should be submitted to the Community Forest Operations on how the tree will be protected. The TPZ needs to encompass the canopy plus an additional radial distance of 10 feet beyond the dripline. In the event root pruning is required to accommodate grade changes or the installation of hardscape features, the root pruning procedures shall be directed by Community Forest Operations staff.

### **3.0 INVENTORY METHODS**

The evaluation of biological resources included a review of applicable documents and the identification of resources during the reconnaissance-level survey and focused surveys conducted by qualified biologists. The details and methods used in this evaluation are presented below.

For the purpose of the field surveys, “Project area” refers to the Project alignment and a buffer area of approximately 100 feet on either side of the exiting roadway. A two-mile buffer around the Project area was used for the database and literature search; this was assumed to account for the home ranges of most avian and bat species that could occur based on their habitat needs and potential nesting opportunities within the Project area.

#### **3.1 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Preliminary investigation included a literature search to identify special status plants, wildlife, and habitats known to occur in the vicinity of the Project site. Sources reviewed include the California Native Plant Society’s (CNPS) Electronic Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California (CNPS 2013) and the CDFW’s California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) (CDFW 2013a). Database searches included the USGS Topanga and Beverly Hills quadrangles.

In 2011, LADWP retained BonTerra to conduct a biological resources evaluation for a range of routing alignments, a portion of which is consistent with the current Project alignment. As part of this evaluation, POWER reviewed BonTerra’s 2011 Biological Resources Technical Report to obtain information, as applicable, regarding biological resources conditions for the current Project area.

For the purposes of this document, “special-status” is defined as species that are:

- Listed, proposed for listing, or candidates for listing as threatened or endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) (50 CFR Part 17.12 [listed plants], 50 CFR Part 17.11 [listed animals], 67 Federal Register [FR] 40657 [candidate species], and various notices in the FR [proposed species]);
- Listed or proposed for listing by the State of California as threatened or endangered under the CESA (CDFW 2013a);
- Identified by the CDFW as species of concern or fully protected species, including fish and wildlife that do not have state or federal threatened or endangered status but may still be threatened with extinction (CDFW 2013a);
- California Species of Special Concern, vertebrate species that have been designated as “species of special concern” by the CDFW because declining population levels, limited range, and/or continuing threats have made them vulnerable to extinction (CDFW 2013c);
- Species that are listed by the CNPS as List 1A (presumed extinct in California), 1B (rare, threatened, and endangered in California and elsewhere), or 2 (rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere). CNPS List 1A, 1B, and 2 species are considered special-status plant species if they fall within any of these categories as defined in the Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA), CFWC Section 1901, or the CESA, CFGC Sections 2050 through 2098 (CNPS 2013); or
- Covered as a State-protected furbearing mammal (PFM).

The term “special-status species” excludes those avian species solely identified under Section 10 of the MBTA for federal protection. Nonetheless, protected species under MBTA Section 10 are



afforded avoidance and minimization measures per federal and State requirements. Only CNPS Lists 1 and 2 are considered to be “special-status” species because of their higher sensitivity to impacts.

### **3.2 FIELD SURVEY METHODS**

General surveys and vegetation mapping were conducted in 2010, 2011, and 2013 (BonTerra 2011; POWER 2013). Vegetation was mapped to evaluate the potential habitat to support special status species and to conduct general plant and wildlife surveys. Habitat was mapped from the centerline to approximately 100 feet on either side of the roadway within urban areas (BonTerra 2011). The survey was conducted by vehicle and on foot. Not all parcels within the buffer were surveyed by transect or entered because some were privately owned, fenced, or did not support native habitat.

Plant species were identified in the field or collected for subsequent identification using keys in Baldwin et al. (2011), Hickman (1993), and Munz (1974) (BonTerra 2011). Taxonomy follows Baldwin et al. (2011) and current scientific data (e.g., scientific journals) for scientific and common names. Nomenclature for vegetation types generally follows that of *The Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program: List of California Terrestrial Natural Communities Recognized by the California Natural Diversity Database* (CDFG 2003).

Active searches for reptiles and amphibians included lifting, overturning, and carefully replacing rocks and debris. Birds were identified by visual and auditory recognition. Surveys for mammals were conducted during the day and involved searching for and identifying diagnostic signs including scat, footprints, scratch-outs, dust bowls, burrows, and trails. Taxonomy and nomenclature for animals generally follows Boundy et al. (2011) for amphibians and reptiles, American Ornithologists' Union (2011) for birds, and Baker et al. (2003) for mammals.

## 4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The results of the literature review, records search, and field data are provided below.

### 4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The proposed Project alignment traverses an urban environment surrounded by homes, buildings, paved surfaces, and other human-made structures. The alignment is within paved roadways that provide little to no suitable habitat for sensitive species. Portions of the northern Project area that begin at Kenter Canyon Terminal Tower on Homewood Road and continue south contains some large trees, including coast live oak trees. Portions of the alignment that would be installed on San Vicente Boulevard contain large coral trees in the median, which are generally unsuitable for nesting birds. A very small segment of the alignment, on West Channel Road, between East Channel Road/Ocean Avenue and Mesa Road, contains several large ornamental trees, mainly eucalyptus, which can be utilized by birds for nesting, even in an urbanized setting such as this.

#### 4.1.1 Habitat Types

Two habitat types were identified within the Project area during the field surveys, including Coast Live Oak Woodland – Ornamental, and Developed (Figure 2, *Biological Resources*).

##### **Coast Live Oak Woodland-Ornamental**

A small portion of Coast live oak woodland-ornamental was observed near the Kenter Canyon Tower on Homewood Road (POWER 2013). This particular area is dominated by coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and a host of non-native trees and shrubs such as oleander (*Nerium oleander*), eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* spp.), and pines (*Pinus* spp.). It was not possible to determine if the woodland existed and the non-native species were planted among them, or if the entire area was planted at the same time.

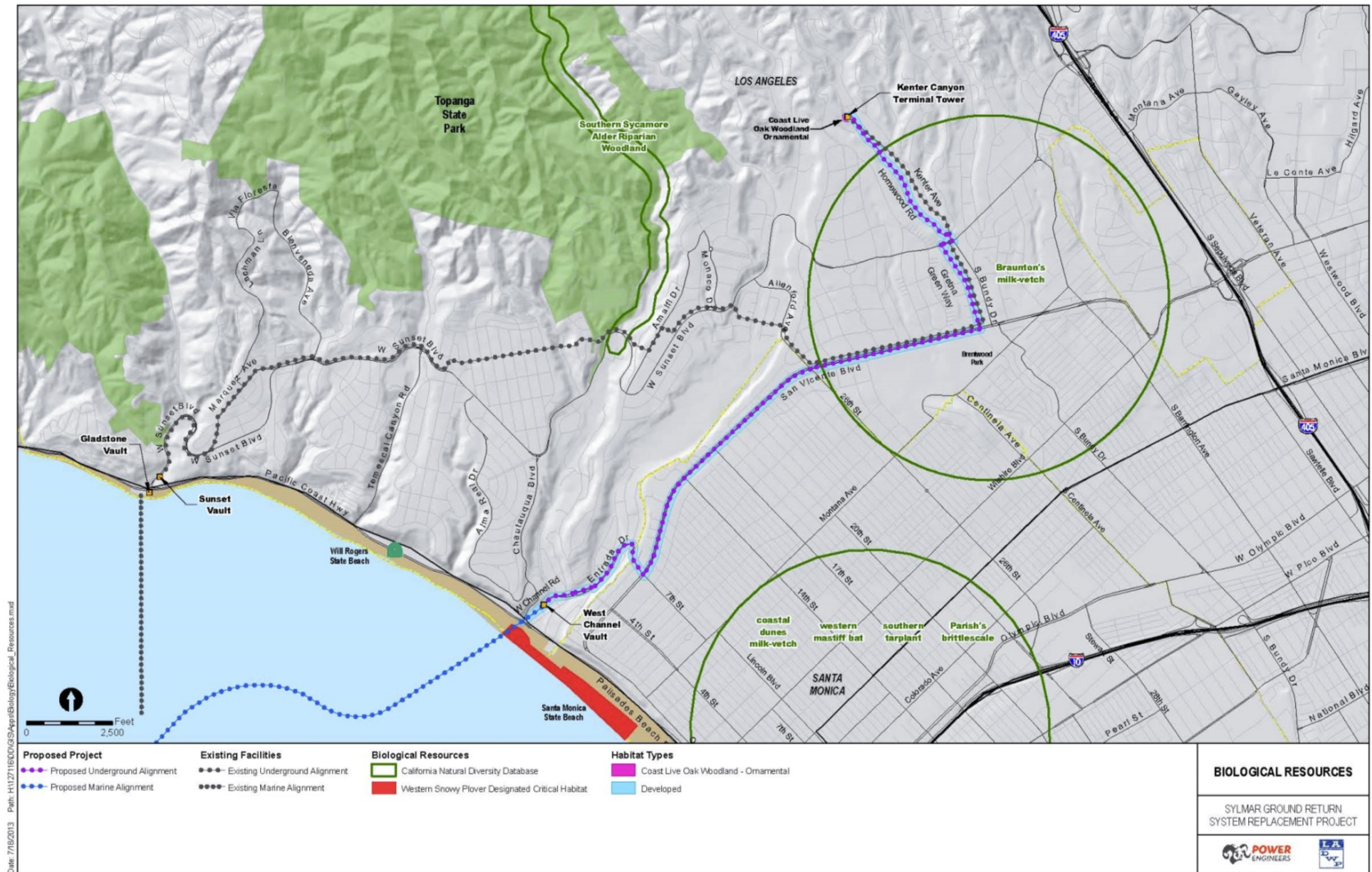
##### **Developed**

The entirety of the Project alignment is within the Developed habitat type, which includes residences, commercial and industrial development, paved surfaces, golf courses, and other human-made structures.

### 4.2 SENSITIVE SPECIES

Tables 2 and 3 provide a listing of the sensitive plant and wildlife species, respectively, compiled during the database search and literature review. These tables also describe the regulatory agency status, habitat requirements, and potential to occur within the Project area for each species (Figure 2). The following discussion highlights the threatened and endangered species with a potential to occur in the Project area.

FIGURE 2 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES



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#### **4.2.1 Special-Status Plant Species**

The Project would be constructed within paved roadways and would not directly impact native habitat; therefore, it is determined that no sensitive plant species would be directly affected by the proposed Project (refer to Table 2) (Figure 2).

##### **Braunton's Milk-vetch**

Braunton's milk-vetch (*Astragalus brauntonii*) is a short-lived perennial shrub in the legume family (Fabaceae) that typically occurs in fire-afflicted areas in dry, open chaparral below 2,100 feet in elevation. Braunton's milk-vetch was historically found in gravelly clay soils overlaying granite and sandstone, but is currently associated with carbonate soils derived from scattered limestone lenses; soil specificity accounts for its limited distribution. Braunton's milk vetch typically appears the spring following a chaparral fire, living for a few years before senescing or being crowded out by developing vegetation (Skinner 1991). Braunton's milk-vetch has white, wooly foliage with bright purple inflorescences blooming from January through August and can reach a height of six feet.

Braunton's milk-vetch is federally listed as endangered (CDFW 2013a, and placed on List 1B.1 by the CNPS (CNPS 2011). Braunton's milk-vetch is endemic to southern California, and has been documented only in Los Angeles and Orange counties and the one record within 0.5 mile of the Project area is presumed extirpated from the area (CDFW 2013a) (Figure 2). Braunton's milk-vetch is threatened by development, vegetation/fuel management activities, and alteration of local fire regimes (CNPS 2009).

##### **Coastal Dunes Milk-Vetch**

Coastal dunes milk-vetch (*Astragalus tener var. titi*) is a federally and State-listed Endangered species and a CNPS List 1B.1 species (CDFW 2013). It typically blooms between March and May (CNPS 2011). This annual herb occurs in moist sandy depressions near the coast, in coastal bluffs, and dunes at elevations between sea level and 65 feet above mean sea level (Baldwin et al. 2011). This species may be extirpated in Southern California (Baldwin et al. 2011). In the past, it was found in Los Angeles, Monterey, and San Diego Counties (CNPS 2010). In the vicinity of the Project area, this species has been reported as possibly extirpated (CDFW 2013a, 1903 record) (Figure 2). Critical habitat has not been designated for this species. No suitable habitat is present within the Project site.

##### **Parish's Brittlecale**

Parish's brittlecale (*Atriplex parishii*) is a CNPS List 1B.1 species (CDFW 2013a). It typically blooms between June and October (CNPS 2010). This annual herb occurs in alkaline or clay soils in flats or grasslands (Baldwin et al. 2011). It is found in southwestern California and the western Mojave Desert, south to Baja California, Mexico (Baldwin et al. 2011). In the vicinity of the Project area, Parish's brittlecale has been historically reported from Santa Monica (CDFW 2013a). No suitable habitat for this species is present on the Project site.

##### **Slender Mariposa Lily**

Slender mariposa lily (*Calochortus clavatus var. gracilis*) is a bulbiferous herb in the Lily Family (Liliaceae). This species has yellow flowers that are reddish-brown at the base and it blooms during March to June (CNPS 2010). It occurs in shaded foothill canyons associated with chaparral, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grassland, at elevations of 1,200 to 3,330 feet (Hickman 1993; CNPS 2010). It is on CNPS List 1B.2 species. Slender mariposa lily is threatened by development, mining, non-native plants, and vehicles. There are no records within the Project area (CDFW 2013a). Based on range and habitat preferences, slender mariposa lily is absent from the Project area.

### **Round-leaved Filaree**

Round-leaved filaree (*California macrophylla*) is an annual white-flowered herb occurring from Shasta County south through most of the coastal California counties. It blooms from March to May and occurs in open sites, grassland, and scrub associated with cismontane woodlands and valley and foothill grasslands, in clay soils from 49 to 3,937 feet (CNPS 2013). It is on List 1B.1 by the CNPS, indicating that it is rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere and seriously endangered in California (CNPS 2013; CDFW 2013a). Round-leaved filaree is threatened by urbanization, habitat alteration, vehicles, pipeline construction, feral pigs, and non-native plants, and is potentially threatened by grazing (CNPS 2013). There are no records within the Project area (CDFW 2013a). Based on range and habitat preferences, the species is absent from the Project area.

### **Southern Tarplant**

Southern tarplant (*Centromadia parryi* ssp. *australis*) is a yellow-flowered annual herb in the Sunflower Family (Asteraceae) that blooms from May to November. This species is associated with vernal moist saline grasslands, marshes and swamps, valley and foothill grassland (vernal mesic), and vernal pools, at elevations of 0 to 1,401 feet (Hickman 1993; CNPS 2013). It is a CNPS List 1B.1 species and is threatened by urbanization, vehicles, development, foot traffic, grazing, habitat disturbance, and competition from non-native plants. There are no known occurrences within the Project area and based on habitat preferences the species is expected to be absent from the Project area (CDFW 2013a).

### **San Fernando Valley Spineflower**

San Fernando Valley spineflower (*Chorizanthe parryi* var. *fernandina*) is a white-flowered annual herb in the Buckwheat Family (Polygonaceae) that blooms from April to July (CNPS 2013). It occurs in sandy places associated with coastal scrub and valley and foothill grassland, from 490 to 4,000 feet (Hickman 1993; CNPS 2013). San Fernando Valley spineflower is a candidate for federal listing, and is state-listed as endangered (CDFW 2008a). The CNPS online Inventory (CNPS 2013) includes it on List 1B.1. Threats include urban development on private land and invasive non-native plants (CNPS 2010). However, there are no known records within the Project area (CDFW 2013) and the species is expected to be absent due to a lack of habitat.

### **Many-stemmed Dudleya**

Many-stemmed dudleya (*Dudleya multicaulis*) is a yellow-flowered succulent perennial herb in the Stonecrop Family (Crassulaceae) that blooms from April to July (CNPS 2013). It is associated with open sites within chaparral, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grassland, in dry stony soils, often with high clay content, from 45 to 2,590 feet in elevation (Hickman 1993; CNPS 2013). Many-stemmed dudleya is not federally- or State-listed, but is on List 1B.2 of the CNPS online Inventory (CNPS 2013). Many-stemmed dudleya is seriously threatened by development, road construction and maintenance, fire suppression, invasive non-native plants, mining, grazing, and recreation (CNPS 2013). Many-stemmed dudleya is endemic to the coastal and foothill areas of Los Angeles, Orange, western San Bernardino, western Riverside, and San Diego Counties. The CNDDB (CDFW 2013a) lists 111 occurrences for this species; most of these are on private land in Orange County. There are no known localities within the Project area (CDFW 2013a) and considered absent from the Project area.

**Table 2 Special-status Plant Species with Potential to Occur within the Project Area**

COMMON NAME SCIENTIFIC NAME	SENSITIVITY STATUS <sup>1</sup>	GENERAL HABITAT DESCRIPTION	PLANT HABIT, FLOWERING PERIOD	POTENTIAL FOR OCCURRENCE <sup>2</sup>
<i>Astragalus brauntonii</i> Braunton's milk- vetch	FE: Endangered CA: None CNPS: 1B.1	Typically occurs in fire-afflicted areas in dry, open chaparral below 2,100 feet in elevation.	March-May	One historical record is within 0.5 mile of the Project area is presumed extirpated from the area (CDFW 2013). This species is considered absent from the Project area.
<i>Astragalus tener</i> var. <i>titi</i> Coastal dunes milk-vetch	FE: Endangered CA: Endangered CNPS: 1B.1	Occurs in moist sandy depressions near the coast, in coastal bluffs, and dunes at elevations between sea level and 65 feet above mean sea level.	March-May	Last known record is from 1930 and it is considered extirpated from the Project area (CDFW 2013). In addition, the record is over 0.5 mile from the Project area. This species is considered absent from the Project area.
<i>Atriplex parishii</i> <i>Parish's</i> <i>Brittlescale</i>	Fed: None CA: None CNPS: 1B.1	This annual herb occurs in alkaline or clay soils in flats or grasslands.	June-October	In the vicinity of the Project area, Parish's brittlescale has been historically reported from Santa Monica (CDFW 2013). No suitable habitat for this species is present on the Project site.
<i>California macrophylla</i> round-leaved filaree	Fed: None CA: None CNPS: 1B.1	Cismontane woodlands and valley and foothill grasslands in clay soils. 49 to 3,937 feet.	March-May	No suitable habitat within the Project area. This species is considered absent from the Project area.
<i>Calochortus clavatus</i> var. <i>gracilis</i> slender mariposa lily	Fed: None CA: None CNPS: 1B.2	Chaparral, coastal scrub Shaded foothill canyons; often on grassy slopes within other habitat. 1,200 - 3,330 feet.	March-June	No suitable habitat within the Project area. No records within two miles of the Project area (CDFW 2013). This species is considered absent from the Project area.
<i>Centromadia</i> [ <i>Hemizonia</i> ] <i>parryi</i> ssp. <i>Australis</i> southern tarplant	Fed: None CA: None CNPS: 1B.1	Marshes and swamps (margins), valley and foothill grassland. Often in disturbed sites near the coast at marsh edges; also in alkaline soils sometimes with saltgrass. Sometimes on vernal pool margins. 0-1,401 feet.	May- November	No suitable habitat within the Project area. All records within CNDDDB are presumed extant and over 0.5 mile from Project area. This species is considered absent from the Project area.
<i>Chorizanthe parryi</i> var. <i>fernandina</i> San Fernando Valley spineflower	Fed: FC CA: SE CNPS: 1B.1	Coastal scrub; sandy soils. 490 - 4,000 feet.	April-July	No suitable habitat within the Project area. This species is considered absent from the Project area.

COMMON NAME SCIENTIFIC NAME	SENSITIVITY STATUS <sup>1</sup>	GENERAL HABITAT DESCRIPTION	PLANT HABIT, FLOWERING PERIOD	POTENTIAL FOR OCCURRENCE <sup>2</sup>
<i>Astragalus brauntonii</i> Braunton's milk-vetch	FE: Endangered CA: None CNPS: 1B.1	Typically occurs in fire-afflicted areas in dry, open chaparral below 2,100 feet in elevation.	March–May	One historical record is within 0.5 mile of the Project area is presumed extirpated from the area (CDFW 2013). This species is considered absent from the Project area.
<i>Dudleya cymosa</i> ssp. <i>ovatifolia</i> Santa Monica dudleya	Fed: None CA: None CNPS: 1B.2	Chaparral, coastal scrub in canyons on sedimentary conglomerates; primarily N-facing slopes. 210-500 meters.	March-June	No suitable habitat within the Project area. This species is considered absent from the Project area.
<i>Dudleya multicaulis</i> many-stemmed dudleya	Fed: None CA: None CNPS: 1B.2	Coastal scrub, chaparral, and valley and foothill grassland; usually on clay soils or grassy slopes. 45 - 2,590 feet.	April–July	No suitable habitat within the Project area. This species is considered absent from the Project area.

<sup>1</sup>Sensitivity Status Key

**Federal status**

- FE = listed as Endangered under the federal ESA
- FT = listed as Threatened under the federal ESA
- FC = candidate for listing

**State status**

- SE = listed as Endangered under the CESA
- ST = listed as Threatened under the CESA
- SR = listed as Rare under the California Native Plant Protection Act

**CNPS: California Native Plant Society Lists:**

- 1B: Considered rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere.
- 2: Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere

Decimal notations: .1 - Seriously endangered in California, .2 - Fairly endangered in California, .3 - Not very endangered in California

<sup>2</sup>Species Potential for Occurrence

- Absent – no suitable habitat
- Low Potential–low potential to occur because suitable habitat is of marginal quality
- Moderate Potential–has moderate potential to occur because suitable habitat was expected to be present but the species was not found during focused plant surveys
- High Potential–has high potential to occur because suitable habitat was expected to be present, and species is known to occur within the vicinity but was not found during focused plant surveys
- Present–detected during surveys or recorded in previous surveys

## 4.2.2 Special-Status Wildlife Species

The Project would be constructed within paved roadways and would not directly impact native habitat, however, there is a potential for several species to forage within the Project area (refer to Table 3) (Figure 2).

### Reptiles

#### Coast Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma [coronatum] blainvillii*)

Coast (San Diego) horned lizard is a Department of Fish and Wildlife Species of Special Concern. It inhabits coastal sage scrub and chaparral in arid and semi-arid climate conditions, preferring friable, rocky, or shallow sandy soils. Habitat elevation is typically from sea level to approximately 8,000 feet. Eggs are laid between May and June, and hatch between August and September. Diet consists of mainly ants, but other invertebrates such as spiders, beetles, termites, flies, bees, and grasshoppers are also consumed. Hibernation occurs in the fall, with reemergence in the spring. The coast horned lizard occurs throughout much of California, west of the desert and Cascade-Sierra highlands south to Baja California, Mexico (Stebbins 2003). However, many of the populations in lowland areas have been reduced or eliminated due to urbanization and agricultural expansion (Stebbins 2003). Three factors have contributed to its decline: loss of habitat, overcollecting, and the introduction of exotic ants. In the vicinity of the Project area, this species has been reported from the south end of Devil Canyon in the Santa Susana Mountains, five miles west of Granada Hills, just west of Browns



Canyon Road in the Santa Susana Mountains, Stunts Ranch and Cold Creek Preserve (1980s record), and other locations (CDFW 2013a). Due to the level of disturbance within the Project area, there is no suitable habitat for this species and therefore the species is absent from the Project area.

California Mountain Kingsnake (San Diego population) (*Lampropeltis zonata [pulchra]*)

California mountain kingsnake (San Diego population) is a California Species of Special Concern. Habitat for this species includes coniferous forest, oak-pine woodland, riparian woodland, chaparral, and coastal sage scrub from sea level to higher elevations in the mountains. The California mountain kingsnake prefers well-lit wooded areas with rotting logs, talus, and/or rock outcroppings (Stebbins 2003). The California mountain kingsnake (San Diego population) enters into winter hibernation in November and emerges between February and April depending on the location and weather conditions. This subspecies is found in the central San Diego County peninsular ranges, Laguna Mountains, Palomar Mountain, Volcan Mountain, Hot Springs Mountain, Santa Ana Mountains, Hollywood Hills, and Santa Monica Mountains (CaliforniaHerps 2011). In the vicinity of the Project area, this species has been reported from the Malibu Beach quadrangle but is outside the Project area (CDFW 2013a). Due to the urban environment, there is a lack of suitable habitat for this species and it has a low potential to occur.

## **Birds**

Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*)

Cooper's hawk is a CDFW Watch List species. Breeding populations of this former California Species of Special Concern have increased in recent years as they have expanded into urban areas (Shuford and Gardali 2008). In coastal regions of Southern California, this species is more common in winter than in summer (Garrett and Dunn 1981). Wintering Cooper's hawks are often seen in wooded urban areas and native woodland vegetation types. Preferred nesting habitats are oak and riparian woodlands dominated by sycamores (*Platanus* sp.) and willows (*Salix* spp.). Cooper's hawks prey on small birds and rodents that live in woodland, scrub, and chaparral vegetation types. This species is relatively tolerant of man-altered landscapes; however, threats to this species include the loss of appropriate woodlands for breeding and foraging; collisions with man-made objects; and possibly pesticides (Curtis et al. 2006). Suitable foraging and nesting habitat for this species is present in ornamental trees along portions of the Project area. Additionally, Cooper's hawk was observed along the Project alignment during 2011 biological surveys (BonTerra 2011).

White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*)

White-tailed kite is a California Fully Protected species. Kites nest primarily in oaks (*Quercus* sp.), willows, and sycamores, and forage in grassland and scrub habitats. White-tailed kites show strong site fidelity to nest groves and trees. This species is uncommon to locally fairly common resident in coastal Southern California, and a rare visitor and local nester on the western edge of the deserts (Garrett and Dunn 1981). Many populations in North America have declined in the 1980s and 1990s, including those in Southern California (Dunk 1995). There is a potential for foraging habitat for this species; however, there is no suitable habitat for nesting within the Project area.

American Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*)

American peregrine falcon is a California Fully Protected species that, due to recent population gains, was delisted from the federal list of Endangered species by the USFWS (1999), and the California Fish and Game Commission voted for its removal on December 12, 2008, from the CDFW's list of Endangered species. As a delisted species, the peregrine falcon will continue to be periodically monitored until 2015 (USFWS 1999). Peregrine falcons prey almost exclusively on birds and use a variety of habitats, particularly wetlands and coastal areas. This falcon is a rare summer resident in

Southern California, although it is more common during migration and the winter season. For nesting, this falcon prefers inaccessible areas such as those provided by cliffs, high building ledges, bridges, or other such structures. American peregrine falcon has potential to occur for foraging, but is not expected to nest within the Project area.

#### Western Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*)

Western snowy plover is a federally listed Threatened species and a California Species of Special Concern. The USFWS states that “The Pacific coast population of the western snowy plover is defined as those individuals that nest adjacent to or near tidal waters, and includes all nesting colonies on the mainland coast, peninsulas, offshore islands, adjacent bays, and estuaries” (USFWS 1993). In California, this subspecies nests primarily on dune-backed beaches, barrier beaches, and salt- evaporation ponds; on the coast, it forages on beaches, tide flats, salt flats, and salt ponds (Page et al. 1995). The Pacific coast populations of the western snowy plover breed from southern Washington south through Baja California, Mexico (USFWS 2005). On September 29, 2005, the USFWS published a final critical habitat for the western snowy plover. This final rule designated 12,145 acres along the coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California. Within California, critical habitat was designated in San Diego, Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Mateo, Marin, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte Counties (USFWS 2005). This includes the portion of Will Rogers State Beach within the Project alignment (Figure 2). The portion of the Project alignment that would be installed via directional drilling beneath Will Rogers State Beach would cross under designated critical habitat for the western snowy plover. The snowy plover has potential to occur in the Project alignment.

#### Loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)

Loggerhead shrike is listed as a CDFW Species of Special Concern and Fish and Wildlife Service Bird of Conservation Concern. Their range in California extends throughout most of the state except for the northwest. Habitats typically occupied by loggerhead shrike include those possessing open space with patchily distributed trees or shrubs. Deserts possessing spiny shrubs and scrubby vegetation as well as pastoral, agricultural, or suburban settings are frequently occupied (Yousef 1996). Nests will usually be constructed in isolated trees or large shrubs within the occupied habitat. Pairs in California remain together year-round and defend their territories from other individuals of their kind. They typically nest earlier than most other passerines, perhaps as a result of their year-round association with mates (Yousef 1996). This bird species preys mainly on arthropods, reptiles, small mammals and other birds. Another common name of this species is “butcher bird” as they are known to store their prey on thorns and barbed wire. Based on reported sightings and availability of suitable habitat, this species is unlikely to occur in the due to a general lack of open areas.

#### Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Osprey is a CDFW Watch List species. A former California Species of Special Concern, numbers of this raptor in California have increased in recent decades (Shuford and Gardali 2008). This species occurs near large bodies of water including rivers, lakes, reservoirs, bays, estuaries, and surf zones (Zeiner et al. 1990a). Along the coast, ospreys occur most commonly through the fall and winter, although a few birds remain throughout the summer (Garrett and Dunn 1981). This species nests on platforms of sticks at the top of large snags, dead-topped trees, cliffs, or man-made structures (Zeiner et al. 1990a). Potentially suitable foraging habitat for this species is present in the San Vicente Alignment. Therefore, osprey has potential to occur in this alignment for foraging, but is not expected to nest on the Project site.

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

Merlin is a CDFW Watch List species (CDFW 2013). A former California Species of Special Concern, numbers of this raptor in California have increased in recent decades (BonTerra 2011). This species is generally a rare to uncommon migrant and winter visitor to California. It prefers vast open space areas such as estuaries, grasslands, and deserts where it hunts small flocking birds such as sandpipers, larks, sparrows, and pipits. This raptor is an uncommon fall transient and rare winter visitor throughout most of Southern California (Garrett and Dunn 1981). The Project site is outside the breeding range of this species; however, suitable foraging habitat occurs within the Project area. Therefore, merlin has potential to occur for foraging, but is not expected to nest on the Project site.

Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*)

Prairie falcon is a CDFW Watch List species. Preferred foraging habitats include grassland and scrub vegetation types. Prairie falcons nest almost exclusively on cliffs (Clark and Wheeler 1987). It is an uncommon, year-round resident in the interior of Southern California (Garrett and Dunn 1981). The prairie falcon is an increasingly scarce winter resident and very rare summer resident along the Southern California coast (BonTerra 2011). Suitable foraging habitat for this species is present; therefore, prairie falcon has the potential to occur for foraging, but is not expected to nest within the Project area.

Coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*)

Coastal California gnatcatcher is a federally Threatened species and Department of Fish and Wildlife Species of Special Concern. Its entire range extends from coastal southern California to Baja California. It is an obligate permanent resident of low coastal sage scrub below 2,500 feet in arid washes on mesas and slopes in southern California. Nests are built in shrubs, with the first eggs appearing in late March. Diet mainly consists of arthropods. There are no reported sightings within the Project area (CDFW 2013). In addition, there is no potential habitat; therefore, this species is not expected to occur in the Project area.

**Mammals**

Pallid Bat (*Antrozous pallidus*)

The pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) is a of Fish and Wildlife Species of Special Concern, and Western Bat Working Group High Priority species. Pallid bats inhabit low elevation (less than 6,000 feet) rocky arid deserts and canyonlands, and shrub-steppe grasslands, but also occur in higher elevation coniferous forests (greater than 7,000 feet). It is most abundant in xeric ecosystems, including the Great Basin, Mojave, and Sonoran Deserts (Hermanson 1983). Pallid bats roost alone, in small groups, or in large groups composed of hundreds of individuals. Day and feeding roosts include escarpments and cliffs, caves, mines, trees (especially oak cavities, exfoliating bark, and deciduous trees in riparian areas) and various human structures such as bridges, barns, porches, bat boxes, and buildings. Roosts are generally warmer than ambient temperature, have unobstructed entrances/exits, and are at such a height that access by terrestrial predators is dissuaded (Brown 1997). Although roost fidelity is common, they may switch day roosts on a daily or seasonal basis.

This species occurs throughout California except for in the high Sierra Nevadas from Shasta to Kern Counties and in the northwestern portion of the state (Zeiner et al. 1990). Pallid bats forage over open shrub-steppe grasslands, oak savannah grasslands, open Ponderosa pine forests, talus slopes, gravel roads, lava flows, fruit orchards, and vineyards (Vaughn and O'Shea 1976). The pallid bat appears to be particularly sensitive to human disturbance during warm summer months when night roost temperatures are high. At cooler temperatures when their activity levels are low, however, they are more tolerant of disturbance (Vaughn and O'Shea 1976). The Project area and nearby areas contain

trees and man-made structures that may provide suitable roosting habitat for this species. However, a lack of sight records and no species detected during the surveys the species is considered to have a low potential to occur within the Project area (CDFW 2013). Suitable foraging and day roosting habitat is absent from the work limits.

Spotted Bat (*Euderma maculatum*)

Spotted bat is a California Species of Special Concern. This species forages in a wide variety of habitats, including subalpine meadows, forest openings, pinyon-juniper woodlands, juniper, sagebrush, along the rims of cliffs, riparian habitat wetlands, meadows, and agricultural fields. Roosting habitat includes buildings, cliffs, caves, and trees. Spotted bats feed primarily on moths. This species is currently distributed across western North America from Mexico to southern British Columbia. Within the vicinity of the Project area, this species was reported from Malibu Creek State Park near rocky pool and Century Lake (CDFW 2013). Suitable foraging and roosting habitat for this species is present; therefore, spotted bat has potential to occur throughout the vicinity of the Project route.

Western Mastiff Bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*)

Western mastiff bat is a Department of Fish and Wildlife Species of Special Concern, and Western Bat Working Group High Priority species. It occurs throughout southern California, along the coast from Monterey County south, and along the California Central Valley (CDFG 2008). It occurs in open semi-arid to arid habitats such as conifer and deciduous woodlands, coastal scrub, annual and perennial grasslands, palm oases, chaparral, desert scrub, and urban areas. Roosting generally occurs in crevices in cliff faces, high buildings, trees, and tunnels, preferably with an opportunity to drop off vertically for flight. This species is non-migratory and will move between different roosts either alone or with a colony of other bats. Breeding will generally occur from early March, with birth occurring through September, although birth-giving dates can vary more for this species than for any other American bat species (CDFG 2008). This species is nocturnal and catches and consumes insects while in flight. Individuals may travel up to 15 miles to foraging grounds from their roosts (Reid 2006). The species was reported 0.5 mile from the Project area (CDFW 2013). Suitable foraging and roosting habitat is present; therefore, western red bat has potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project route.

Western Red Bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*)

Western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*) is a Department of Fish and Wildlife Species of Special Concern and Western Bat Working Group High Priority species. Its range extends between North, Central, and South America, and it migrates south in the winter for hibernation. Western red bat is closely associated with riparian habitats, particularly those containing willows (*Salix* spp.), cottonwoods (*Populus* spp.) and sycamores (*Platanus racemosa*). Western red bats roost in trees from sea level to the mountains with preferred roost sites protected from above, open below, and located above dark ground cover. This species feeds on a variety of insects in grasslands, shrublands, open woodlands, forests, and agricultural areas. Mating occurs in late summer or early fall, but females do not become pregnant until spring. Parturition lasts 80 to 90 days. The western red bat occurs from Shasta County to the Mexican border, west of the deserts and the Cascade and Sierra Nevada crests. This species migrates between its summer and winter ranges. Within the vicinity of the Project area, this species was reported from Stunt Ranch, approximately 4.5 miles north-northeast of Malibu Beach south and west of Cold Creek (CDFW 2013a). Suitable foraging and roosting habitat is present; therefore, western red bat has potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project route.

San Diego Desert Woodrat (*Neotoma lepida intermedia*)

San Diego desert woodrat is a California Species of Special Concern. This subspecies occupies arid areas with sparse vegetation, especially those comprised of cactus and other thorny plants. The San Diego subspecies is restricted to the Pacific slope in a range that stretches from San Luis Obispo south to northwestern Baja California, Mexico (Verts and Carraway 2002). Threats to this species involve the loss of habitat due to development. Within the vicinity of the Project site, this species was reported from Weldon Canyon near the intersection of Interstate 5 and SR-14 in the Santa Susana Mountains and on the western edge of the Pepperdine University Campus in Malibu (CDFW 2013a). Due to the urban location of the Project area and lack of suitable habitat, this species is not expected to occur.

**Table 3 Sensitive Wildlife Species with Potential to Occur in the Project Area**

SPECIES/NATURAL COMMUNITIES	SPECIAL STATUS	HABITAT CHARACTERISTICS	POTENTIAL TO OCCUR IN STUDY AREA
<b>Reptiles</b>			
San Diego Coast Horned Lizard ( <i>Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillii</i> )	SSC	Found in a wide variety of communities, from grasslands and shrublands to woodlands. Critical factors are the presence of loose soils with a high sand fraction; an abundance of native harvester ants or other insects; and the availability of both sunny basking spots and dense cover for refuge. May not eat the introduced Argentine ant.	No habitat within the Project area, therefore the species is considered to be absent from Project area.
<i>Lampropeltis zonata (pulchra)</i> California mountain kingsnake (San Diego population)	CA: SSC	Coniferous forest, oak-pine woodland, riparian woodland, chaparral, and coastal sage scrub from sea level to higher elevations in the mountains. The California mountain kingsnake prefers well-lit wooded areas with rotting logs, talus, and/or rock outcroppings.	No habitat within the Project area, therefore this species is considered absent from Project area.
<b>Birds</b>			
<i>Falco columbarius</i> Merlin (nonbreeding/wintering)	CA: WL	Prefers estuaries, grasslands, and deserts where it hunts small flocking birds such as sandpipers, larks, sparrows, and pipits. This raptor is an uncommon fall transient and rare winter visitor throughout most of Southern California.	Potential for foraging only. Nesting does not occur within the Project alignment.
<i>Falco mexicanus</i> prairie falcon (nesting)	CA: WL	Preferred foraging habitats include grassland and scrub vegetation types. Prairie falcons nest almost exclusively on cliffs.	Potential for foraging only. Nesting does not occur within the Project alignment.
<i>Riparia riparia</i> Bank Swallow	CA: Threatened	Colonial nester; nests primarily in riparian and other lowland habitats west of the desert. Requires vertical banks/cliffs with fine-textured/sandy soils near streams, rivers, lakes, ocean to dig nesting hole.	Absent from Project area. This species is considered extirpated from the area.

SPECIES/NATURAL COMMUNITIES	SPECIAL STATUS	HABITAT CHARACTERISTICS	POTENTIAL TO OCCUR IN STUDY AREA
Osprey ( <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> )	CA: WL	This large, distinctive hawk is highly adapted to a diet consisting almost entirely of fish. One of the most widespread bird species in the world, it was formerly a common and widespread breeder in Southern California, but no longer breeds regularly in California anywhere south of the northern San Francisco Bay.	Moderate potential within the study area for foraging habitat. Nesting does not occur within the Project alignment.
White-tailed Kite ( <i>Elanus leucurus</i> )	CA: FP	Found widely across California west of the Sierra Nevada and deserts, from north of the San Francisco Bay south into northern Baja California, Mexico. Nests are flimsy, often not lasting to the next breeding season, and are located low in trees and large shrubs near foraging areas in savannahs and at edges between open habitat and woodland or forest areas. Its diet is largely restricted to small mammals such as voles and mice.	Moderate within study area for foraging habitat. Nesting does not occur within the Project alignment.
Cooper's Hawk ( <i>Accipiter cooperii</i> )	CA: WL	This medium sized hawk specializing in hunting small birds in closed quarters. It winters widely and fairly commonly in California as birds breeding to the north move in. In Southern California, Cooper's hawks breed primarily in woodland habitats, especially riparian zones, but also oak woodland, walnut woodland, gum trees, and occasionally in dense, abandoned or otherwise undisturbed orchards.	Moderate within Project Area for foraging and Low as breeder. Species was observed along the Project alignment in 2011 (BonTerra 2011).
American Peregrine Falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i> )	CA: FP	This subspecies breeds in small numbers through much of the non-desert portions of California. Nesting was historically limited to tall cliffs and similar inaccessible situations although some individuals have used artificial structures in urban areas. Most foraging occurs in areas of accessible shore and open water with high densities of prey species. Within Southern California the species remains generally rare.	No records within the immediate vicinity. Moderate within Project area for foraging, and Low as breeder. Nesting does not occur within the Project alignment.
Western Snowy Plover ( <i>Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus</i> )	FE: FT CA: SSC	The coastal population of western snowy plover breeds along the Pacific coast from southern Washington to southern Baja California on sparsely vegetated beaches backed by dunes, dredged spoils, flats of salt evaporation ponds, and river bars. During winter months it withdraws from the northerly parts of its range southwards.	The portion of the Project alignment that would be installed via directional drilling beneath Will Rogers State Beach would cross under designated critical habitat for the western snowy plover. Therefore the snowy plover has potential to occur in the Project alignment.

SPECIES/NATURAL COMMUNITIES	SPECIAL STATUS	HABITAT CHARACTERISTICS	POTENTIAL TO OCCUR IN STUDY AREA
Loggerhead Shrike ( <i>Lanius ludovicianus</i> )	CA: SSC	Forages in open country of many types (including non-intensive agricultural areas) and nests in small trees and large shrubs, often at the edges of such open areas. Like most birds of prey, loggerhead shrikes generally occur at low densities. The species is widely distributed in Southern California, with some seasonal movements evident.	Unlikely within Project area due to lack of open space. Absent within work limits.
Coastal California Gnatcatcher ( <i>Poliophtila californica californica</i> )	FE: FT CA: SSC	This species is a year-round resident of coastal sage scrub of several subtypes. This subspecies is found from the Mexican border north to southern and eastern Los Angeles County north to the San Jose Hills, with several small populations known north to the Moorpark area of Ventura County. Its range also extends into southwestern San Bernardino County and western Riverside County.	The closest record is within the vicinity of Culver City (CDFW 2013a). Suitable habitat is absent from work limits. Foraging and poor quality nesting habitat present within portions of Project area. Not expected to occur within the study area.
<b>Mammals</b>			
spotted bat <i>Euderma maculatum</i>	CA: SSC	This species forages in a wide variety of habitats, including subalpine meadows, forest openings, pinyon-juniper woodlands, juniper, sagebrush, along the rims of cliffs, riparian habitat wetlands, meadows, and agricultural fields. Roosting habitat includes buildings, cliffs, caves, and trees.	Previous bat surveys along the Project alignment did not detect any species of bat. However, there is suitable foraging and roosting habitat for this species; therefore, spotted bat has potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project route.
Western red bat <i>Lasiurus blossevillii</i>	CA: SSC	riparian habitats, particularly those containing willows ( <i>Salix</i> spp.), cottonwoods ( <i>Populus</i> spp.) and sycamores ( <i>Platanus racemosa</i> ). Western red bats roost in trees from sea level to the mountains with preferred roost sites protected from above, open below, and located above dark ground cover.	Suitable foraging and roosting habitat is present; therefore, western red bat has potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project route.
Pallid Bat ( <i>Antrozous pallidus pacificus</i> )	CA: SSC	This bat species is widely distributed in the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. They are locally common across most of California except in the far northwest and in higher portions of the Sierra Nevada. Habitats utilized include a wide variety of grasslands, shrublands, woodlands, and forests, including mixed conifer forest. They appear to be most common in open, dry, rocky lowlands. Roosts are in caves, mines, as well as crevices in rocks, buildings and trees. This is a colonial species that forages low over open ground, often picking up beetles and other species of prey off the ground.	Previous bat surveys along the Project alignment did not detect any species of bat; density of urban development precludes this species. Suitable foraging and day roosting habitat is absent from the Project area.

SPECIES/NATURAL COMMUNITIES	SPECIAL STATUS	HABITAT CHARACTERISTICS	POTENTIAL TO OCCUR IN STUDY AREA
Western Mastiff Bat ( <i>Eumops perotis californicus</i> )	CA: SSC	Primarily a cliff-dwelling species, where maternity colonies of 30 to several hundred (typically fewer than 100) roost generally under exfoliating rock slabs (e.g., granite, sandstone or columnar basalt). It has also been found in similarly crevices in large boulders and buildings. Roosts are generally high above the ground, usually allowing a clear vertical drop of at least 9.8 feet below the entrance for flight. Forages in broad open areas. Generally, this bat is found in a variety of habitats, from dry desert washes, flood plains, chaparral, oak woodland, open ponderosa pine forest, grassland, montane meadows, and agricultural areas.	Previous surveys along the Project alignment did not detect any species of bat. The species was reported 0.5 mile from the Project area. Suitable foraging and roosting habitat is present; therefore, western red bat has potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project route
<i>Neotoma lepida intermedia</i> San Diego desert woodrat	CA: SSC	This subspecies occupies arid areas with sparse vegetation, especially those comprised of cactus and other thorny plants. The San Diego subspecies is restricted to the Pacific slope in a range that stretches from San Luis Obispo south to northwestern Baja California, Mexico.	Due to the urban location of the Project area and lack of suitable habitat this species is not expected to occur.

**Listing Status:**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)**  
 FE = listed as Endangered under the Federal ESA  
 FT = listed as Threatened under the Federal ESA  
 FS = listed as Sensitive under the Federal ESA  
 FPE = proposed listing under the Federal ESA  
 BCC = Bird of Conservation Concern  
 Delisted = Formerly listed as threatened or endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act  
**California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)**  
 SE = listed as Endangered under the CESA  
 ST = listed as Threatened under the CESA  
 SR = listed as Rare under the CESA  
 SC = listed as Species of Concern  
 FP = listed as Fully Protected under CDFW/CDFG Code

**Western Bat Working Group (WBWG)**

H = listed as High Priority  
**Other**  
 CA Fur-bearing Mammal = Listed under California Fur-bearing Mammal Statute § 4000 – 4012  
**Occurrence Code:**  
 Absent – no suitable habitat  
 Low Potential–low potential to occur because suitable habitat is of marginal quality  
 Moderate Potential–has moderate potential to occur because suitable habitat was expected to be present but the species was not found during surveys  
 High Potential–has high potential to occur because suitable habitat was expected to be present, and species is known to occur within the vicinity but was not found during surveys  
 Present–detected during surveys or recorded in previous surveys

**4.2.3 Wildlife Movement**

The underground portion of the Project alignment is located in a highly urbanized area of Los Angeles and Santa Monica. The Project would not overlap a documented regional wildlife corridor (South Coast Wildlands 2008). Patches of habitat in this urban landscape are not linked together with similar habitat, but rather occur mostly isolated. Therefore, wildlife movement is not expected to occur along the Project alignment.

**4.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

An impact assessment was conducted to define the various levels of potential Project-related impacts. Impacts to wildlife would result from actions that alter wildlife habitats. Three areas are the focus of this analysis: habitat change, habitat fragmentation, and disturbance. Alteration may occur through



direct habitat loss via surface disturbance or indirectly through the reduction in habitat quality such as increased noise levels or the presence of anthropogenic structures. Both the direct and indirect impacts of the installation of the underground cable are associated with ground disturbances. The proposed Project is expected to create short-term construction-related impacts from the installation of the underground cable system.

Mitigation measures are listed below in detail and referenced in the impact section when used to reduce potential impacts.

#### **4.3.1 CEQA Significance Criteria**

The *Application of CEQA Significance Thresholds* sections describe the criteria used to determine which impacts should be considered potentially significant. Significance thresholds are based on criteria identified in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines (CCR, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 1500-15387). A biological resources impact is considered significant if implementation of the proposed Project would do any of the following:

- BIO-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 the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).*
- BIO-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.*
- BIO-3) Have a substantial adverse effect on federal protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) (including, but not limited to, marshes, vernal pools, and coastal areas) or any State-protected jurisdictional areas not subject to regulation under Section 404 of the CWA through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means.*
- BIO-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.*
- BIO-5) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.*
- BIO-6) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan; natural community conservation plan; or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan.*
- BIO-7) Substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species; cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels; threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community; or substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species.*

Biological resource impacts can be direct, indirect, or cumulative. Direct impacts occur when biological resources are altered, disturbed, or destroyed during or after Project implementation. Indirect impacts that could affect biological resources include elevated noise and dust levels, increased human activity, decreased water quality, and the introduction of invasive wildlife (e.g., domestic cats and dogs) and plants. Cumulative impacts occur when biological resources are either directly or indirectly impacted to a minor extent as a result of a specific project, but the project-related impacts are part of a larger pattern of similar minor impacts. The overall result of these multiple minor impacts from separate projects is considered a cumulative impact to biological resources.

Biological resources impacts may also be classified as temporary or permanent. Temporary impacts can be direct or indirect and are considered short-term and reversible. Examples include elevated noise levels and increased levels of dust during construction. Permanent impacts can be direct or indirect and are not considered reversible. Examples include the removal of vegetation from areas that will have permanent structures placed on them, or landscaping an area with non-native plant species.

### 4.3.2 Applicable Best Management Practices

As part of the Project, implementing the following BMPs would minimize the environmental impacts to biological resources resulting from the proposed Project.

**Table 4 Best Management Practices**

BMP	DESCRIPTION
BMP-1	<p><b>Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan</b>                      In compliance with requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) would be developed and prepared for the Project to ensure that protection of water quality and soil resources is consistent with County and State regulations. The plan would identify site surface water runoff patterns and include measures that prevent excessive and unnatural soil deposition and erosion throughout and downslope of the Project site and Project-related construction areas, and would also include measures for non-stormwater discharge and waste management. The SWPPP would cover all activities associated with the construction of the Project, including clearing, grading, and other ground disturbance such as stockpiling or excavation erosion control. The plan would prevent off-site migration of contaminated stormwater, changes in pre-Project storm hydrographs, or increased soil erosion.</p>
BMP-2	<p><b>Fugitive Dust Control Plan</b>                      Construction of the Project would be subject to SCAQMD Rule 403, Fugitive Dust. In compliance with this rule, a dust control supervisor shall be identified for the Project and shall supervise implementation of the SCAQMD-approved dust control plan. The plan will itemize measures related to vehicle trackout, stabilizing soils, water application, and maintenance of soil moisture content.</p>
BMP-3	<p><b>Hazardous Materials</b>                      As required by the Clean Air Act, Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, the Toxic Substance Control Act, and the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, all vehicles and equipment must be in proper working condition to ensure that there is no potential for fugitive emissions or accidental release of motor oil, fuel, antifreeze, hydraulic fluid, grease, or other hazardous materials. Equipment must be checked for leaks prior to operation and repaired as necessary. Refueling of equipment must take place on existing paved roads, where possible, and not within or adjacent to drainages. Hazardous spills must be cleaned up immediately. Contaminated soil would be disposed of at an approved off-site landfill, and spills reported to the permitting agencies. Service/maintenance vehicles should carry appropriate equipment and materials to isolate and remediate leaks or spills, and an on-site spill containment kit for fueling, maintenance, and construction will be available.</p>

### 4.3.3 CEQA Significance Threshold Discussion

For each potential impact associated with the proposed Project, a determination is made regarding level of significance. Conclusions of significance are defined in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines as follows: potentially significant impact; less than significant with mitigation incorporated; less than significant impact; and no impact. If implementation of mitigation would not diminish potentially significant impacts to a less-than-significant level, the impacts are classified as “significant unavoidable impacts.”

An analysis of the proposed Project’s potential to impact biological resources using the pertinent questions from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines is presented below.

- a) *Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species*

***in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?***

*Special-status plants:* There is no potential for special-status plants or their habitat to occur within the Project area. Therefore, no adverse effects will occur. It is also expected that there would be no indirect significant adverse impacts to sensitive plant species. BMPs would be implemented to control wind and water soil erosion, and such erosion would not be expected to deposit in amounts sufficient to affect existing adjacent vegetation. Watering for dust control and street sweeping would be contained by existing curbs, and not alter natural growth cycles of adjacent vegetation.

*Special-status wildlife:* No impacts to terrestrial wildlife would occur during Project operations because all facilities would be located underground and future maintenance activities would be relatively minimal and similar to existing activities in the area. However, there is a potential for temporary indirect impacts to birds during Project construction. Several raptor species, such as Cooper's hawk, may nest along the Project alignment. The season and timing of construction activities could potentially disrupt/disturb or negatively impact or influence mating rituals and/or nesting, breeding efforts and success, largely due to the high potential for flushing birds off of nests due to construction noise or presence of people and/or vehicles/equipment nearby. If birds are currently nesting and feel threatened by the presence of construction, this may cause them to abandon their nests, leaving the eggs or young behind. Nesting birds, their active nests, eggs, and chicks are protected under the MBTA. Construction related actions that resulted in the take of birds, eggs, chicks or nests would be a violation of the MBTA. Disturbances from construction could result in nest, roost, or territory abandonment and subsequent reproductive failure if these disturbances were to occur during an affected species' breeding seasons (CDFW 2000). Potential construction-related indirect impacts to special-status would be potentially significant. Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would be implemented to reduce impacts.

Suitable foraging, but not nesting, habitat for white-tailed kite, osprey, prairie falcon, and American peregrine falcon occurs within the Project alignment. Nesting individuals, as opposed to foraging individuals, of these species are protected. Therefore, there would be less than significant impacts to these special-status species. The portion of the Project alignment that would be installed via directional drilling beneath Will Rogers State Beach would cross under critical habitat for the western snowy plover (Figure 2). Installation by directional drilling would proceed from the West Channel Vault southwest along West Channel Road, under PCH, and under Will Rogers State Beach where the critical habitat occurs. However, because this installation is anticipated to be over twenty feet below the surface at the beach impacts to the critical habitat would be voided. Potential construction-related indirect impacts to the western snowy plover could be potentially significant; however, Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would be implemented to reduce impacts to less than significant.

Suitable foraging and roosting habitat for spotted bat, western red bat, and western mastiff bat is present within the vicinity of the Project route; however, construction and operation of the proposed Project would not result in direct loss of habitat for these species. Based on the species' range and availability of habitat for these species in the vicinity of the Project route, and because the Project would not result in direct loss of associated habitat, impacts would be less than significant to these species of special concern.

- b) Suitable foraging and roosting habitat for spotted bat, western red bat, and western mastiff bat is present within the vicinity of the Project route; however, construction and operation of the proposed Project would not result in direct loss of habitat for these species. Based on the species' range and availability of habitat for these species in the vicinity of the Project route, and because the Project would not result in direct loss of associated habitat, impacts***

***would be less than significant to these species of special concern. Would the Project 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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?***

The landside portion of the proposed Project alignment is located almost entirely within existing paved roadways and would not, therefore, adversely affect any riparian habitat or sensitive natural communities identified by local, State, or Federal agencies. The only exception to this relates to the critical habitat established for western snowy plover at Will Rogers State Beach. However, as discussed above, the electrode cables would be installed at a depth of over twenty feet below the beach surface via directional drilling, which would commence within West Channel Road approximately 850 feet northeast of the beach. Therefore, no impact to snowy plover habitat would occur.

***c) Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on federal protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) (including, but not limited to, marshes, vernal pools, and coastal areas) or any State-protected jurisdictional areas not subject to regulation under Section 404 of the CWA through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?***

The portion of the proposed Project that would be constructed and operated on land, as addressed in this section, is not expected to directly affect any potential jurisdictional waters or wetland habitat (refer to the Project's *Marine Resources Assessment* regarding an analysis of impacts to ocean areas subject to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act). No equipment or material will be placed within the Pacific Ocean during the directional drilling for the underground installation of the electrode cables under Will Rogers State Beach.

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

The proposed Project would have no significant impact on regional or local wildlife movement. The Project site is not located within documented important migration routes for any terrestrial wildlife species, and most of the animals expected to move across the Project area are considered common in California. The existing dense urban environment and high level of human activity associated with the Project area already hinder wildlife movement across the Project alignment. Wildlife species that may potentially move through the area are acclimated to the existing human use. Potential construction activities that would create dust or noise within and adjacent to the Project alignment are not expected to impact wildlife movement.

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

Any impacts to City of Los Angeles-protected trees (i.e., *Quercus* spp. other than scrub oak, southern California black walnut, western sycamore, and California bay) would be subject to the City of Los Angeles Municipal Code (Chapter IV, Article 6, Section 46.00). Any impacts to the City of Santa Monica's street or public trees would be subject to the Tree Code. Impacts to these trees are potentially significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2 would be required.

**f) *Would the Project conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan; natural community conservation plan; or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan?***

As discussed above, the landside portion of the proposed Project alignment is located almost entirely within existing paved roadways and would not, therefore, conflict with any adopted habitat conservation plan or natural community plan. As mentioned previously, the only exception to this relates to the critical habitat established for western snowy plover at Will Rogers State Beach. However, as discussed above, the electrode cables would be installed at a depth of over twenty feet below the beach surface via directional drilling, which would commence within West Channel Road approximately 850 feet northeast of the beach. Therefore, no conflicts with a habitat conservation plan would occur.

#### **4.3.4 Mitigation Measures**

The proposed Project construction activities would occur entirely within existing paved roadways and is not anticipated to result in any significant direct impacts to any sensitive habitat or species. The Project site consists of roadways that are heavily used by vehicles and people. In addition, the Project is adjacent to other urban features that subject the Project area to an even higher degree of baseline disturbance. These all contribute to existing high levels of vibration, noise, dust, and vehicle-caused ground-borne vibration. Nonetheless, certain impacts to wildlife and tree species have been identified related to the Project construction phase. These impacts are addressed with the mitigation measures below.

**BIO-1:** If construction activities occur during the breeding season (February 1 to August 31), preconstruction surveys for nesting birds shall be conducted in segments of the Project alignment identified to contain suitable nesting habitat. These include the segments on Homewood Road beginning at the Kenter Canyon Terminal Tower and the intersection of Homewood Road between Kenter Avenue, and the segment on West Channel Road between East Channel Road/Ocean Avenue and Mesa Road.

If nesting raptors or native passerines are found, the active nest shall be protected until nesting activity has ended to ensure compliance with State Fish and Wildlife Code and MBTA. This may be accomplished by establishing an appropriate buffer zone, which in the highly urbanized setting of the project will be at the discretion of the Project biologist in consultation with the CDFW and USFWS.

**BIO-2:** The Proposed Project shall avoid protected trees, within the City of Los Angeles and the City of Santa Monica, to the greatest extent practicable. If this impact cannot be avoided, the Project shall adhere to the applicable Tree Ordinance(s) and create an inventory of the individual protected trees to be impacted. No protected trees shall be cut, trimmed, pruned, injured, relocated, or removed, and no protected root zones shall be encroached upon, without prior authorization and/or a permit from the governing jurisdiction. If protected trees are not affected by proposed Project activities, no further mitigation will be required.

#### **4.3.5 Cumulative Impacts**

The proposed Project is within a densely developed urban setting and consists of highly disturbed land. Several non-listed wildlife species such as raptors and bats potentially use the Project area for foraging; however, the Project would not result in loss of existing wildlife habitat. Therefore, the proposed Project would not result in a significant adverse cumulative impact. The construction activity would present temporary disturbances that are within baseline conditions present within the urban Project area. The proposed project would not reduce or contribute to a trend of reducing

acreage of native habitat, critical habitat, or open space. Further, the proposed Project would not directly impact or contribute to a cumulative trend of direct impact to a sensitive or protected plant or wildlife species, water resource, or natural community or open space. The potential indirect impacts of the proposed Project would be less than significant with the proposed mitigation measures. There would be no cumulative indirect impact to sensitive biological resources.

With the implementation of Mitigation Measures Bio-1 and Bio-2, impacts to terrestrial biological resources would be less than significant.

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