

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

PROPOSED VILLAGE AT GOLDEN TRIANGLE PROJECT

SANTA CLARITA, CALIFORNIA

DECEMBER 2020

PREPARED FOR

City of Santa Clarita, Planning Division 23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 302 Valencia, California 91355

PREPARED BY

SWCA Environmental Consultants



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SWCA Project No. 63682

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1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION & LOCATION

Intertex Property Advisors, Incorporated (Applicant) is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) from the city of Santa Clarita (city) to authorize the development of The Village at Golden Triangle Project (project) located at 20600 Golden Triangle Road, Santa Clarita, California (Figure 1). The project would include the construction of 164 units within nine multi-family residential buildings and appurtenant structures and amenities, a detention basin, parking areas, and designated open space (herein referred to as the project area). Figure 2 illustrates the proposed development plan while Figure 3 shows the four lots comprising the subject property and the proposed development area, the latter referred to herein as the Project Area. The Project Area would be contained within Lot 1, with Lot 3 proposed for a detention basin. No development is proposed on Lots 2 or 4.

1.1 Project Location

The site is located on the *Mint Canyon*, *CA* United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5' topographic quadrangles (quad) within T4N, R15W, Section 19, as shown on Figure 4.

The project site is vacant land which contains disturbed/ruderal vegetation, manufactured slopes, coastal sage scrub, sandbar willow thickets, and upland mustards. Surrounding land uses include residential, commercial, high-tension power transmission lines, and undeveloped open space.

The property is biologically depauperate (low diversity, quality and quantity of flora and fauna), likely due to the combination of years of drought and on-going human disturbances, vegetation management for fire safety, and homeless activities.

1.2 Site Characteristics

The subject property ranges from level to steep slopes, the latter with south, southwest, and southeast aspects. The maximum elevation is approximately 1,400 feet above mean sea level (amsl) in the southern extent of the parcel (Lot 4) and the minimum elevation is approximately 1,280 feet amsl near Golden Valley Road (Lots 2, 3, and part of Lot 1).

The project area (development envelope) is vacant, consisting primarily of disturbed upland habitats comprised of ruderal areas, manufactured slopes, and a small area of California Sagebrush Scrub Alliance. One potential jurisdictional area is present in Lot 3, where seasonal ponding is evident. Appendix A provides several photos of the site taken November 13, 2020.



Figure 1. Vicinity Map.

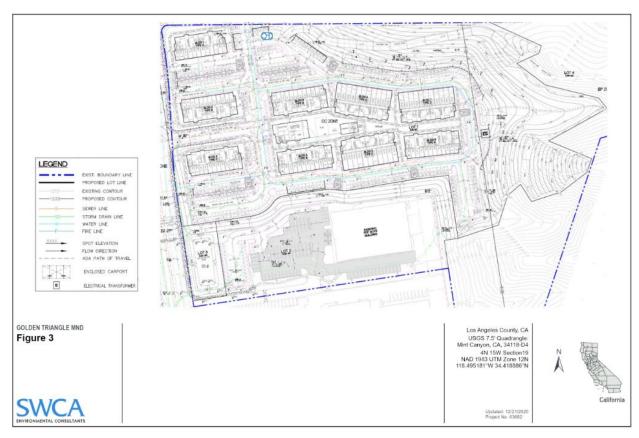


Figure 2. Site Development Plan.



Figure 3. Project Lots and Development Area.

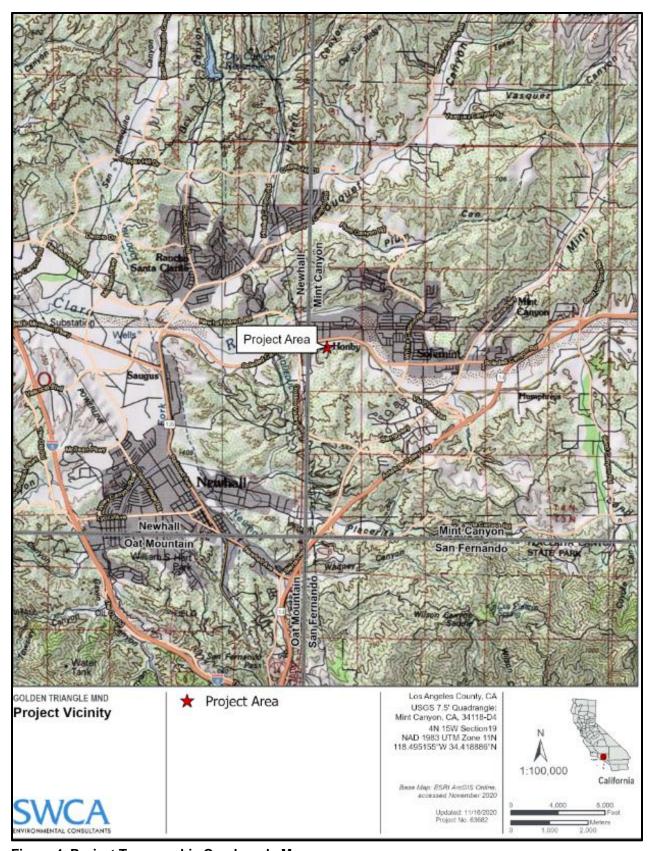


Figure 4. Project Topographic Quadrangle Map.

2 REGULATORY SETTING

The following discussion reviews policies federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies relating to plants, wildlife, and special status habitats. Only those regulations potentially applicable to the proposed project are included herein.

2.1 Federal Regulations

2.1.1 Federal Endangered Species Act

The U.S. Congress passed the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1973 to protect endangered species and species threatened with extinction (federally listed species). The ESA operates in conjunction with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to help protect the ecosystems upon which endangered and threatened species depend.

Section 9 of the ESA prohibits the "take" of endangered or threatened wildlife species. The legal definition of "take" is to "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct" (16 United States Code USC 1532 [19]). Harm is further defined to include significant habitat modification or degradation that results in death or injury to listed species by significantly impairing behavioral patterns (50 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 17.3). Harassment is defined as actions that create the likelihood of injury to listed species to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavior patterns (50 CFR 17.3). Actions that result in take can result in civil or criminal penalties.

The ESA authorizes the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to issue permits under Sections 7 and 10 of that act. Section 7 mandates that all federal agencies consult with the USFWS for terrestrial species and/or National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for marine species to ensure that federal agency actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species or adversely modify critical habitat for listed species. Any anticipated adverse effects require preparation of a biological assessment to determine potential effects of the Project on listed species and critical habitat. If the Project adversely affects a listed species or its habitat, the USFWS or NMFS prepares a Biological Opinion. The Biological Opinion may recommend "reasonable and prudent alternatives" to the Project to avoid jeopardizing or adversely modifying habitat including "take" limits.

The ESA defines critical habitat as habitat deemed essential to the survival of a federally listed species. The ESA requires the federal government to designate "critical habitat" for any species it lists under the ESA. Under Section 7, all federal agencies must ensure that any actions they authorize, fund, or carry out are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species, or destroy or adversely modify its designated critical habitat. These complementary requirements apply only to federal agency actions, and the latter only to specifically designated habitat. A critical habitat designation does not set up a preserve or refuge, and applies only when federal funding, permits, or projects are involved (i.e., a federal nexus). Critical habitat requirements do not apply to activities on private land that do not involve a federal nexus.

Section 10 of the ESA includes provisions to authorize take that is incidental to, but not the purpose of, activities that are otherwise lawful. Under Section 10(a)(1)(B), USFWS may issue permits (incidental take permits) for take of ESA-listed species if the take is incidental and does not jeopardize the survival and recovery of the species. To obtain an incidental take permit, an applicant must submit a habitat conservation plan outlining steps to minimize and mitigate permitted take impacts to listed species.

2.1.2 Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) prohibits any person, unless permitted by regulations, to

...pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, attempt to take, capture or kill, possess, offer for sale, sell, offer to purchase, purchase, deliver for shipment, ship, cause to be shipped, deliver for transportation, transport, cause to be transported, carry, or cause to be carried by any means whatsoever, receive for shipment, transportation or carriage, or export, at any time, or in any manner, any migratory bird, included in the terms of this Convention ... for the protection of migratory birds ... or any part, nest, or egg of any such bird. (16 United States Code (USC) 703)

The list of migratory birds includes nearly all bird species native to the United States. The statute was extended in 1974 to include parts of birds, as well as eggs and nests. The Migratory Bird Treaty Reform Act of 2004 further defined species protected under the act and excluded all non-native species. Thus, it is illegal under MBTA to directly kill, or destroy a nest of, nearly any native bird species.

2.2 State Regulations

2.2.1 California Endangered Species Act

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) administers the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), which prohibits the "taking" of listed species except as otherwise provided in state law. Section 86 of the Fish and Game Code defines "take" as "hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill." Under certain circumstances, the CESA applies these take prohibitions to species petitioned for listing (state candidates). Pursuant to the requirements of the CESA, state lead agencies (as defined under CEQA Public Resources Code Section 21067) are required to consult with the CDFW to ensure that any action or Project is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species or result in destruction or adverse modification of essential habitat. Additionally, the CDFW encourages informal consultation on any proposed Project that may impact a candidate species. The CESA requires the CDFW to maintain a list of threatened and endangered species. The CDFW also maintains a list of candidates for listing under the CESA, and of species of special concern (or watch list species).

2.2.2 Fully Protected Species

The California Fish and Game Code provides protection from take for a variety of species, referred to as fully protected species. Section 5050 lists protected amphibians and reptiles, and Section 3515 prohibits take of fully protected fish species. Eggs and nests of fully protected birds are under Section 3511. Migratory nongame birds are protected under Section 3800, and mammals are protected under Section 4700. Except for take related to scientific research, all take of fully protected species is prohibited.

2.2.3 Nesting Birds and Raptors

Section 3503 of the Fish and Game Code states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation made pursuant thereto. Section 3503.5 provides protection for all birds of prey, including their eggs and nests.

2.2.4 Migratory Bird Protection

Take or possession of any migratory non-game bird as designated in the MBTA is prohibited by Section 3513 of the Fish and Game Code.

2.2.5 Bats

Fish and Game Code Section 4150 prohibits the take of bats, regardless of their listing status.

2.2.6 California Environmental Quality Act

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was adopted in 1970 and applies to discretionary actions directly undertaken, financed or permitted by State or local government lead agencies. CEQA requires that a Project's effects on environmental resources must be analyzed and assessed using criteria determined by the lead agency. CEQA defines a rare species in a broader sense than the definitions of threatened, endangered, or California species of concern. Under this definition, the CDFW can request additional consideration of species not otherwise protected.

2.3 Federal, Regional and Local Conservation Plans

There are no federal, state or local parks, designated wildlife corridors or conservation areas, or Los Angeles County Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) on or adjacent to the subject property. Similarly, there is no USFWS designated critical habitat or Habitat Conservation Plan, and no CDFW Natural Community Conservation Plan at or adjacent to the project site.

Oak Tree Preservation

The city's Oak Tree Preservation ordinance (Chapter 17.51.040) protects native oak trees (*Quercus* genus) with a circumference at breast height (4.5 ft above ground level) of six inches (1.91" diameter) or 108" circumference (34.38" diameter) for single trunk or 72" (22.9" diameter) for multi-trunk oaks). Work impacting such oaks requires an oak tree permit from the city (Section 17.23.170)

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Literature Review

Existing databases and literature were reviewed to discover previously identified special status biological resources that could occur on or in the immediate vicinity of the project site. The data search centered on the USGS 7.5-minute Mint Canyon quad where the project site is located. Additional quads in the search area were Newhall, Warm Springs Mountain, Green Valley, Sleepy Valley, Agua Dulce, Oat Mountain, San Fernando, and Sunland. The data search included occurrence records in the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) RareFind 5 and the California Native Plant Society's (CNPS) Online Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants (CDFW 2020, CNPS 2020). This search was used to determine which special status plant and wildlife species required analysis within the survey area based on both previous reports and existing on-site conditions.

Additional resources queried included eBird, aerial imagery, FWS species lists and critical habitat maps, vegetation and land-use mapping, and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) soils maps and vegetation mapping.

Preliminary mapping of on-site vegetation communities was conducted through desktop research with subsequent field verification. Vegetation alliances were classified using *A Manual of California Vegetation* (Sawyer et al. 2009).

3.2 Field Surveys

A one-day reconnaissance-level flora and fauna survey was conducted over the entire project site in November 2020. This survey should be considered preliminary since late fall is not the optimal time of year for biological surveys. Multi-season surveys may be necessary to fully identify the property's flora and fauna.

3.2.1 Flora and Fauna Surveys

On November 13, 2020, SWCA senior biologist Jackie Worden surveyed the subject parcel developed areas and public roadways. Existing biological conditions were noted and vegetation alliances were surveyed and mapped, and the vegetation map prepared in the office was verified and refined. Comprehensive lists of all plant and wildlife species identified were compiled (Appendix B & C). Particular focus was given to the potential occurrence of special-status species and the identification of suitable habitats and conditions to support them.

4 RESULTS – EXISTING CONDITIONS

4.1 Soils

Two soil series are mapped in the Project area (NRCS 2018), shown on Table 1 and Figure 5. Soils are an important component of plant distribution, at times predictive of the occurrence of special status species and/or habitats.

The majority of the subject parcel is mapped as Saugus loam, and highly erosive soil subject rapid runoff. The level areas of the site are mapped as Hanford sandy loam, including the project development area of Lot 1 and Lots 2 and 3. This soil type is more resistant to erosion, with slower runoff potential.

Table 1: Soil Map Units

Soil Map Symbol	Map Unit Name (NRCS 2006)				
ScF2	Saugus loam, 30 to 50 percent slopes				
HcA	Hanford sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes				

4.2 Vegetation

Two native covertype occurs on the parcel, California Sagebrush Scrub Alliance and Sandbar Willow Shrubland Alliance. Three other communities were found, including Upland Mustards and Other Ruderal Forbs, Manufactured Slopes, and Ruderal areas. Scattered cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) and gum (*Eucalyptus sp.*) trees were encountered on Lot 1. The general distribution of these habitat conditions is shown on Figure 6. Appendix B lists all plants identified during the field survey.



Figure 5. Soils Map.



Figure 6. Vegetation Map.

California Sagebrush Scrub

California Sagebrush (*Artemisia californica* Shrubland Alliance) alliance occurs in the south and southeastern portions of Lot 1 and is the dominant covertype throughout Lot 4. The community is defined by the dominance of the namesake California sagebrush, along with sparse occurrences of interior goldenbush (*Ericameria linearifolia*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*), and chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*) as well as unvegetated soil patches between the shrubs. Plants in this community are senescent with evidence of new or recent growth and no recruitment of new plants.

Sandbar Willow Shrubland Alliance

Sandbar willow (*Salix exigua*) thickets are found on Lot 3 in the northwest corner of the parcel, where evidence of seasonal ponding is present in the form of cracked soil surface and tire ruts in the unvegetated areas between two patches of willows. The area is topographically a few feet lower than the surrounding area and appears to receive runoff from one or two culverts that daylight at the northern edge of the Pep Boys parking lot, as well as other surface runoff. These culverts seem to convey natural flow from the slopes in the south and southwest portions of Lot 1 (behind/south of the Pep Boys building) under the Pep Boys building and parking lot.

Substantial amounts of litter and other debris is present in this area, as well as evidence of homeless activity.

Ruderal

The majority of the area proposed for development on Lot 1 is highly disturbed ruderal land, which appears to have previously been graded into a level development pad and regularly mowed and/or disked for fire safety vegetation management. Wide dirt roadways and trails crisscross the area, and litter is scattered throughout the area. The most common plants encountered include tumbleweed (*Salsola tragus*), dove weed (*Croton setiger*), wild oats (*Avena spp.*) and telegraph weed (*Heterotheca grandiflora*).

Upland Mustards - Brassica (nigra) and Other Mustards Semi-Natural Herbaceous Stands

Areas vegetated with upland mustards and other ruderal forbs were found on Lots 1 and 4, where they occupy western, southwestern and east-facing slopes. Strongly dominated by shortpod (wild) mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), few other plants coexist.

Manufactured Slopes

North-facing manufactured slopes occur in the southwest area of Lots 1 and 4. These multi-terrace slopes were previously planted with primarily non-native trees and shrubs, including Peruvian pepper tree (*Schinus molle*), acacia (*Acacia sp.*) and a few small-diameter coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*), now mostly dead (one living oak was found, approximately 1.7" diameter at breast height). Irrigation lines traverse the slopes and do not appear to be active. Non-native invasive saltcedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*) trees are also present. This area is transitioning to coastal sage scrub, with California sagebrush, black sage and chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*) scattered about.

4.3 Wildlife

Few species of wildlife were observed or detected during the November 2020 field survey, due to a combination of the time of year and the highly disturbed, dry, and senescent conditions of the site. Wildlife considered common and typical of such areas near urban development were noted, including

California scrub-jay, northern mockingbird and Anna's hummingbird. Site use by domestic dogs was evident in abundant tracks and scat. Appendix C provides a list of all wildlife detected on the subject property.

4.4 Wildlife Movement Corridors and Habitat Linkages

Wildlife corridors and habitat linkages are features that promote habitat connectivity. Wildlife corridors are typically discrete linear features within a landscape that are constrained by development or other non-habitat areas. Habitat linkages are networks of corridors through and between larger natural open space that facilitate movement of wildlife, thus providing long-term resilience of ecosystems against the detrimental effects of habitat fragmentation. Regional connection between high quality open space habitats is critical to ongoing interchange of genetic material between populations, wildlife movement in to escape natural disasters (fires, floods), colonization and expansion of populations, and plant propagation.

The project site currently provides unrestricted wildlife movement for animals of all sizes within the property. However, residential, commercial and industrial land uses, a high school, and the well-traveled Golden Valley Road surround the site and form significant restrictions to wildlife movement into and out of the site. Birds are typically able to move freely over these barriers, but the movement of other animals would be restricted.

5 SPECIAL-STATUS FLORA AND FAUNA

Appendix D & E provide lists of special-status plants and animals previously reported as occurring on the Mint Canyon USGS quadrangle where the project lies and the eight quads surrounding it. These tables summarize the occurrence potential for each species based on current natural resource conditions of the project site and general knowledge of the project region.

No special-status species were found on-site during the November 2020 survey and only a few have a moderate potential for occurrence (discussed in detail below). This finding is based solely on habitat conditions found on-site during the November 2020 field survey and the biologist's knowledge of the species and project vicinity. Field surveys conducted in the appropriate season(s) will be necessary to verify the flora and fauna on the parcel and within the proposed development envelope and may yield different results.

5.1.1 Special-Status Flora

Special Status flora includes taxa listed as endangered or threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act, the California Endangered Species Act, or both. This term also includes plant species listed by the state as rare and those species listed by the CNPS with a Rare Plant Rank (RPR) of 1 or 2 on the most current CDFW "Special Vascular Plants, Bryophytes, and Lichens List" (CDFW. September 2020).

The literature search identified 21 special-status plant species in the nine quadrangle search area. On the subject property, potentially suitable habitat is present for one of these, slender mariposa lily.

Slender Mariposa Lily

Slender mariposa lily (*Calochortus clavatus var. gracilis*) carries the RPR of 1B.2, where 1B indicates 'plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere' and 0.2 indicates 'Moderately threatened in California (20-80% occurrences threatened / moderate degree and immediacy of threat)'.

Slender mariposa lily is somewhat common in the region, where it occurs in chaparral, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grasslands. Surveys conducted in spring and early summer are best suited to locate this plant while in flower.

5.1.2 Special Status Fauna

Special-status fauna includes species or subspecies listed as endangered, threatened, or candidate for listing as endangered or threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act, the California Endangered Species Act, or both. All wildlife species designated by the CDFW as Fully Protected, Species of Special Concern, Watch List species, and other wildlife included in the most current CDFW "Special Animals" list are also included (CDFW, 2018a).

Forty-two special-status species of fauna were reported in the literature as occurring within the nine quadrangle search area, with the subject property in the center. Of these, two are considered to have a moderate occurrence potential; western spadefoot and San Diego [coastal] whiptail.

Western Spadefoot

Western spadefoot (*Spea hammondii*) is a CDFW species of special concern. This primarily nocturnal toad occurs in a variety of habitats including open treeless grassland, scrub, or mixed woodland and grasslands. The adult toads are terrestrial, using aquatic habitats only for breeding. Spadefoot toads require temporary rain pools, which may occur as ephemeral ponds, depressions, even tire tracks in dirt roads. Western spadefoots are known to occur in a vernal pool about ½ mile south of the project site. For successful breeding, this toad generally requires adequate rainfall to create rainpools that will remain for 5-10 weeks in temperatures 40°F or higher.

San Diego [Coastal] whiptail

This subspecies of whiptail lizard (*Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri*) is a California Species of Special Concern. It is a fast-running ambush predator that require relatively open/sparse vegetative cover to hunt their prey. The less dense scrub communities on-site may offer suitable habitat.

6 JURISDICTIONAL WATERS AND WETLANDS

One seasonally ponded area (Feature 1) and two ephemeral drainages (Features 2 & 3) were identified on the parcel. Feature 1 is described above in Section 4.2 under sandbar willow shrubland. This area contains hydric plants (willows) and wetland hydrology and may contain the physical characteristics of hydric soils. Features 2 and 3 appear to be erosional features; however, field investigation is essential for verification.

A full wetland delineation is required to characterize these areas, determine state and/or federal agencies with jurisdiction, and define permitting requirements.

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APPENDIX A

Site Photos

Site Photos



Lot 1 overview, viewing north from top of manufactured slope, south of development area. Existing Pep Boys building to left. Note cottonwoods (circled).



Lot 1, overview of proposed development area, viewing west from base of slope near Isabella Parkway. Pep Boys building and parking lot in background, left and mid-photo.



Lot 1, proposed development area, viewing southeast. Pep Boys building to right, manufactured slopes in background.



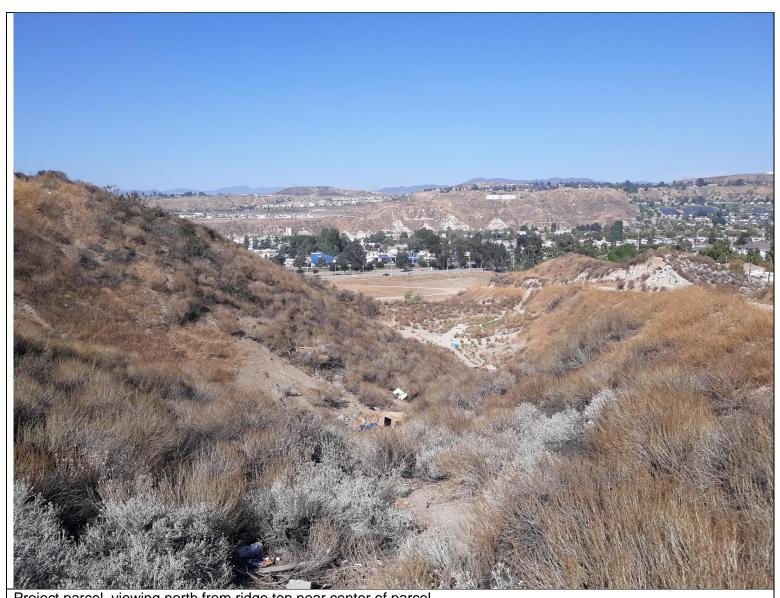
Lot 3, Feature 1: Seasonally ponded area at Golden Triangle Road and Pep Boys driveway (viewing northeast). Note dense willows along north side, evidence of ponding in mid-photo.



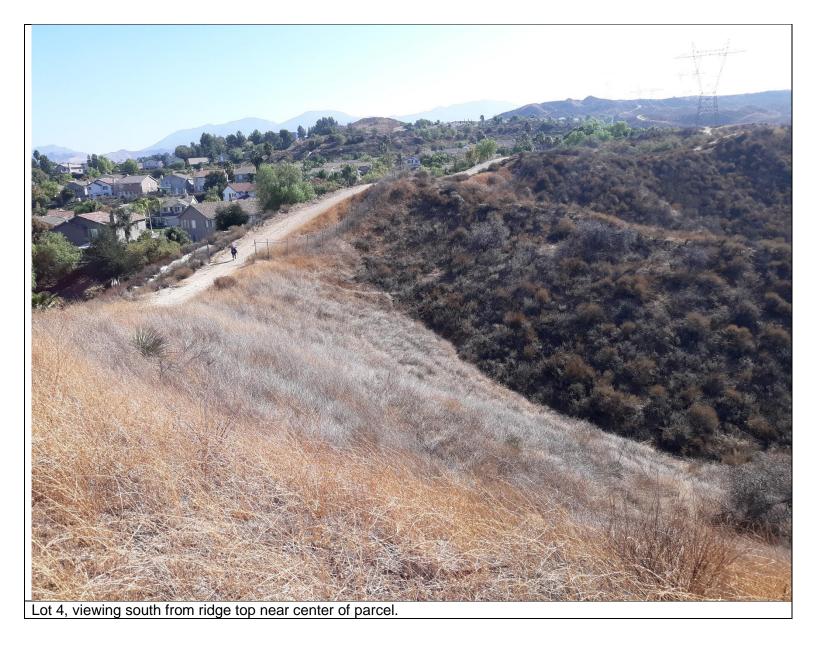
Lot 3, Feature 1: Seasonally ponded area at Golden Triangle Road and Pep Boys driveway (viewing easternortheast). Note dense willows along south side.



Lots 1 & 4, manufactured slopes on of Lot 1. Viewing west. Feature 3 (headcut erosion gully) in foreground.



Project parcel, viewing north from ridge top near center of parcel.



APPENDIX B

Flora

Golden Triangle Project Site Flora November 13, 2020

	140 VCITIBET 13, 2020			
	Latin Name & Taxonomic Reference	Vernacular Name		
GYMNOSPERMS -	- Conifers			
FAMILY				
Pinaceae	Cypress Family			
	Pinus sp.	Pine (landscape planting)		
DICOTS - Flowerin	ng Plants			
Adoxaceae	Muskroot Family			
	Sambucus nigra L. subsp. caerulea (Raf.) Bolli	Blue elderberry		
Anacardiaceae	Sumac Family			
	Schinus molle L.*	Peruvian pepper tree (landscape planting)		
Apocynaceae	Milkweed Family			
_	Asclepias fascicularis Decne.	Narrow leaf milkweed		
Asteraceae	Sunflower Family			
	Ambrosia acanthicarpa Hook.	Annual bursage		
	Artemisia californica Less.	California sagebrush		
	Artemisia dracunculus L.	Wild tarragon		
	Baccharis salicifolia (Ruiz Lopez & Pavon) Pers.	Mule fat		
	Deinandra fasciculata (DC.) Greene	Common tarplant		
	Ericameria linearifolia (DC.) Urb. & J. Wussow	Interior golden-bush		
	Ericameria nauseosa (Pall. ex Pursh) G.L. Nesom & Baird	Rubber rabbitbrush		
	Ericameria pinifolia (A. Gray) H.M. Hall	Pineleaf goldenbush		
	Erigeron foliosus Nutt. var. foliosus	Leafy fleabane		
	Heterotheca grandiflora Nutt.	Telegraph weed		
	Stephanomeria virgata Benth.	Twiggy wreath-plant		
Boraginaceae	Borage Family			
	Eucrypta chrysanthemifolia (Benth.) E. Greene var. chrysanthemifolia	Common eucrypta		
Brassicaceae	Mustard Family			
	Hirschfeldia incana (L.) LagrFossat*	Wild mustard, shortpod mustard		
	Sisymbrium altissimum L.*	Tumble mustard		
Chenopodiaceae	Goosefoot Family	2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2		
	Atriplex canescens (Pursh) Nutt.	Four-wing saltbush		
	Chenopodium californicum (S .Watson) S. Watson	California goosefoot		
	Salsola tragus L.*	Russian thistle, tumbleweed		
Euphorbiaceae	Spurge Family			
	Chamaesyce albomarginata (Torrey & A. Gray)	Rattlesnake weed		
	Croton setiger Hook.	Dove weed; turkey-mullein		
	Ricinus communis L.*	Castor bean		
	Stillingia linearifolia S. Watson	Narrow leaved Stillingia		
Fabaceae	Legume Family			
-	Acacia sp.	Acacia (landscape planting)		
	Acmispon glaber (Vogel) Brouillet	Deerweed, California broom		
Fagaceae	Oak Family	, 1 1		
<u> </u>	Quercus agrifolia Nee	Live oak (landscape planting)		

	Latin Name & Taxonomic Reference	Vernacular Name
Lamiaceae	Mint Family	
	Salvia mellifera E. Greene	Black sage
Myrtaceae	Myrtle Family	
	Eucalyptus sp.*	Eucalyptus
Polygonaceae	Buckwheat Family	
	Eriogonum fasciculatum var. polifolium (Benth.) Torr. & A. Gray	Interior buckwheat
	Eriogonum gracile Benth. V ar. gracile	Slender buckwheat
Rosaceae	Rose Family	
	Adenostoma fasciculatum Hook. & Arn.	Chamise
Salicaceae	Willow Family	
	Populus fremontii S. Watson	Fremont cottonwood
	Salix exigua Nutt.	Narrow-leaf willow
Solanaceae	Nightshade Family	
	Datura wrightii Regel	Jimson weed
	Nicotiana glauca Graham*	Tree tobacco
Tamaricaceae	Tamarix Family	
	Tamarix ramosissima*	Saltcedar
MONOCOTS - Gr	rasses and Allies	
Agavaceae	Century Plant Family	
	Hesperoyucca whipplei (Torr.) Trel.	Chaparral yucca
Poaceae	Grass Family	
	Avena fatua L.*	Common wild oats
	Bromus diandrus Roth*	Ripgut brome
	Bromus madritensis L. ssp. rubens (L.) Husnot*	Red brome
	Bromus tectorum L.*	Cheat grass, downy brome
	Schismus barbatus (L.) Thell.*	Mediterranean grass

^{*} Non-Native Species

APPENDIX C

Fauna

Vertebrate Species Observed or Detected on the Golden Triangle Project Site November 13, 2020

Scientific Name	Common Name	Notes
BIRDS		
Cathartidae	New World Vultures	
Cathartes aura	Turkey vulture	Fly-over
Accipitridae	Hawks	-
Buteo jamaicensis	Red-tailed hawk	Fly-over
Columbidae	Pigeons & Doves	
Columba livia*	Rock dove	
Zenaida macroura	Mourning dove	
Trochilidae	Hummingbirds	
Calypte anna	Anna's hummingbird	
Tyrannidae	Tyrant Flycatchers	
Sayornis nigricans	Black phoebe	
Corvidae	Jays & Crows	
Aphelocoma californica	California scrub-jay	
Corvus brachyrhynchos	American crow	Fly-over
Mimidae	Thrashers	
Mimus polyglottos	Northern mockingbird	
MAMMALS	-	
Canis latrans	Coyote	Scat
Canis lupus familiaris*	Domestic dog	Tracks; scat

^{*}Non-native species

APPENDIX D

Special-Status Flora

Special Status Plant Species Recorded in the Vicinity of the Golden Triangle Project Site¹

Common Name Scientific Name	Status				Elevation Range, Life Form, and	
	Federal	State	CNPS	Habitat Requirements	Flowering Period	Potential Occurrence
Mt. Pinos onion Allium howellii var. clokeyi			1B.3	Great Basin scrub, Pinyon and juniper woodland.	1300-1850m PH April-June	Not expected. No suitable habitat on site.
Braunton's milk-vetch Astragalus brauntonii	E		1B.1	Recent burns or disturbed areas, usually sandstone on shallow carbonite soils (substrate endemic). Chaparral, coastal scrub and Valley and foothill grassland.	4-640 PH Jan-Aug	Not expected. No Astragalus species were observed. Suitable are not present; carbonate soils are not mapped for this site.
Nevin's barberry Berberis [Mahonia] nevinii	E	E	1B.1	Sandy or gravelly soils, wash margins in alluvial scrub or chaparral.	274-825m S March-June	Not expected. Suitable habitat present on site, but no recent or local records of occurrence.
Slender mariposa lily Calochortus clavatus var. gracilis			1B.2	Chaparral, coastal scrub, valley and foothill grassland.	320-1000m PH March-June	Moderate Potential: Common in the project vicinity and suitable habitat is present in the southern portions of the site.
Palmer's mariposa-lily Calochortus palmeri var. palmeri			1B.2	Vernally moist areas and mesic soils in yellow- pine forest, chaparral, meadows and seeps.	195-2530m PH April-July	Not expected. No suitable habitat on site.
San Fernando Valley spineflower Chorizanthe parryi ssp. fernandina		E	1B.1	Coastal scrub, valley and foothill grassland on sandy, gravelly or disturbed soils	150-1220m AH April-July	Not expected. Limited suitable habitat is present.
Parry's spineflower Chorizanthe parryi ssp. parryi		1	1B.1	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, valley and foothill grassland/ sandy or rocky, openings.	275-1220m AH April-June	Not expected. Suitable habitat is not present.
White-bracted spineflower Chorizanthe xanti var. leucotheca			1B.2	Coastal scrub (alluvial fans), Mojavean desert scrub, Pinyon and juniper woodland, sandy or gravelly soils.	300-1200m AH April-June	Not expected. Suitable habitat does not occur on-site.
Santa Susana tarplant Deinandra minthornii		R	1B.2	Chaparral, coastal scrub on sandstone, rocky (substrate endemic on Santa Susana Sandstone).	280-760m. S July-Nov	Not expected. Suitable substrate not present.
Slender-horned spineflower Dodecahema leptoceras	E	Ш	1B.1	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub on sandy soils, alluvial fans.	200-760m AH April-June	Not expected . Suitable habitat is not present.
San Gabriel bedstraw Galium grande		1	1B.2	Broadleaved, upland forest, Chaparral, Cismontane woodland, Lower montane coniferous forest.	425–1220 m AH May-July	Not expected . Suitable habitat is not present.
Newhall sunflower Helianthus inexpectatus			1B.1	Marsh and swamp, meadow and seeps.	0-300m PH Aug-Oct	Absent. No suitable wetland habitat on site.
Southern tarplant Hemizonia parryi ssp. australis			1B.1	Marshes and swamps (margins), valley and foothill grassland (vernally mesic), vernal pools.	0-480m AH May-Nov	Low Potential. This plant could occur in the seasonnally ponded area of Lot 3; however, that location is currently highly disturbed.
Ross' pitcher sage Lepechinia rossii			1B.2	Chaparral	470–1200 m PH May-Sept	Not expected. No suitable habitat on site.

Common Name Status Scientific Name				Elevation Range, Life Form, and		
	Federal	State	CNPS	Habitat Requirements	Flowering Period	Potential Occurrence
Davidson's bush mallow Malacothamnus davidsonii			1B.1	Coastal bluff scrub, coastal scrub.	10-00m S June	Low potential. Suitable habitat is present but this distinctive plant was not observed.
Spreading navarretia Navarretia fossalis	Т		1B.1	Chenopod scrub, marshes and swamps (assorted shallow freshwater), playas, vernal pools.	30-655m AH April-June	Low Potential. This plant could occur in the seasonnally ponded area of Lot 3; however, that location is currently highly disturbed. This plant is known to occur within about ½ south of the project site in vernal pool.
Pine Mountains navarretia Navarretia setiloba			1B.1	Cismontane woodland, Pinon and juniper woodland, valley and foothill grassland.	500–2100 m AH April-July	Not expected. No suitable habitat on site.
Short-joint beavertail Opuntia basilaris var. brachyclada			1B.2	Chaparral, Joshua tree woodland, Mojavean desert scrub, pinyon and juniper woodland.	425-1800 PC April-August	Not expected. No suitable habitat on site.
California Orcutt grass Orcuttia californica	E	E	1B.1	Vernal pools.	15-660m AH April-August	Low Potential. This plant could occur in the seasonnally ponded area of Lot 3; however, that location is currently highly disturbed.
Chaparral ragwort Senecio aphanactis			2B.2	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub/ alkaline soils.	15-800m AH January-April	Low potential. Suitable habitat is present but soils are not be suitable.
Greata's aster Symphyotrichum greatae			1B.3	Broad-leafed upland forest, chaparral, cismontane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest, riparian woodland/ mesic.	300-2010m PH June- October	Not expected. No suitable habitat on site.

¹November 2020 CNDDB Query for: Mint Canyon (project site), Agua Dulce, Green Valley, Newhall, Oat Mountain, San Fernando, Sleepy Valley, Sunland, and Warm Springs Mountain

E =: Endangered	<u>CNPS</u>	Rare Plant Rank	AH	Annual Herb
T =: Threatened	1A:	Plants presumed extirpated in California and either rare or extinct elsewhere	AG	Annual Grass
PE =: Proposed Endangered	1B:	Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere	PG	Perennial Grass
PT =: Proposed Threatened	2A:	Plants presumed extirpated in California, but more common elsewhere	PH	Perennial Herb
C =: Candidate	2B:	Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California but more common elsewhere	PC	Perennial Cactus
R = Rare		Threat Rank	S	Shrub
	0.1	Seriously threatened in California (over 80% of occurrences threatened / high degree and immediacy of threat)	Ss	Subshrub
	0.2	Moderately threatened in California (20-80% occurrences threatened / moderate degree and immediacy of threat)	Т	Tree
	0.3	Not very threatened in California (less than 20% of occurrences threatened / low degree and immediacy of threat or no current threats known)		

APPENDIX E

Special-Status Fauna

Special-Status Fauna Reported as Occurring in the Vicinity of the Golden Triangle Project Vicinity¹

Common Name	Status					
Scientific Name	Federal State		Habitat Requirements	Potential Occurrence on the Project Site		
Crustaceans			•	•		
Vernal pool fairy shrimp Branchinecta lynchi	FT		Endemic to central valley grasslands, central coast mountains, and south coast mountains in changing rain-filled pools. Requires small, clear-water sandstone depression pools and grassed swale, earth slump or basalt flow depression pools.	Not Expected: The seasonal pond on-site may not provide suitable habitat, since this species requires cool-water ponds.		
Insects						
Crotch bumble bee ² Bombus crotchii		CE (candidate)	Inhabits open grasslands and shrublands. Visit a wide variety of flowering plants when foraging. Flight periods are from late March through Sept. for workers and males; Feb-late Oct. for queens and again in July.	Low Potential: Habitat is marginal for this bee due to the apparent lack of flowering plants.		
Quino checkerspot butterfly Euphydryas editha quino	FE		Occupies a range of habitat types that support their primary larval host plants, specifically native plantain (<i>Plantago</i>) species. Habitats may include grasslands, coastal sage scrub, chamise chaparral, red shank chaparral, juniper woodland and semi-desert scrub.	Not Expected: No plantain plants were identified on the project site and the site is outside the current range of this subspecies (the record is from 1920).		
Amphibians						
Western spadefoot Scaphiopus hammondii		SSC	Open areas in lowland grasslands, chaparral, and pine-oak woodlands; require temporary rainpools that last approximately three weeks and lack exotic predators.	Moderate Potential: Known to occur within ½ mile of project site, and suitable seasonally ponded habitat is present. However, the site is highly disturbed and may be too compacted, and the area may be too shallow to support water long enough for breeding.		
Arroyo toad Anaxyrus californicus	FE	SSC	Restricted to rivers that have shallow, gravely pools adjacent to sandy terraces that have a nearly complete closure of cottonwoods, oaks, or willows, and almost no herbaceous cover; require shallow pools with minimal current, little to no emergent vegetation, and a sand or pea gravel substrate overlain with flocculent silt for egg deposition.	Absent: No suitable habitat is present on the project site.		
Southern mountain yellow-legged frog Rana muscosa	FE	SE	High mountain lakes, ponds, tarns, and streams (370-2300m; 1214-7546 feet). Also use stream habitats, particularly in the northern section of their range. Breeding habitat consists of deep ponds, lakes and streams that do not dry out in summer or freeze to the bottom in winter, and do not contain fish.	Absent: No suitable aquatic habitat is present on the project site.		
Coast Range newt Taricha torosa		SSC	Wet forests, oak forests, chaparral, and rolling grasslands. Oak woodland, grasslands and drier chaparral are used in Southern California habitat.	Not Expected: Although here is a small area of aquatic habitat is present on the project site, the surrounding habitat is not suitable and the site is likely too highly disturbed for this newt.		

Common Name	Status					
Scientific Name	Federal	State	Habitat Requirements	Potential Occurrence on the Project Site		
California red-legged frog Rana draytonii	FT	SSC	Any are within 1-2 miles of a breeding site that stays moist and cool through the summer, such as slow-moving streams, perennial or ephemeral ponds, or upland habitat such as rocks, small mammal burrows, logs, densely vegetated areas, and some man-made structures.	Absent: Suitable aquatic habitat is present on the project site.		
Reptiles						
Coast horned lizard Phrynosoma blainvillii	-	SSC	Friable, rocky, or shallow sandy soils within coastal sage scrub and chaparral in arid or semi-arid climate.	Not Expected: Limited areas of suitable soils are present on the property, with most areas highly compacted. Native ants (preferred prey) were not found.		
Silvery legless lizard Anniella pulchra ssp. pulchra		SSC	Stabilized dunes, beaches, dry washes, pine, oak, and riparian woodlands, and chaparral; associated with sparse vegetation with moist/mesic sandy or loose, loamy soils. This species requires moist sandy or loamy soils and/or dense leaf litter.	Not Expected: Limited areas of suitable soils are present on the property, with most areas highly compacted; site lacks mesic, loose soils.		
California legless lizard Anniella spp.		SSC	Occurs in soils that are moist and loose with plant cover. Moisture is essential. Sparsely vegetated areas of beach dunes, chaparral, pine-oak woodlands, desert scrub, sandy washes and stream terraces.	Not Expected: Limited areas of suitable soils are present on the property, with most areas highly compacted; site lacks mesic, loose soils.		
California glossy snake Arizona elegans occidentalis		SSC	Desert, chaparral, sagebrush, valley-foothill hardwood, pine-juniper and annual grasses with loose soils.	Low Potential: Marginal habitat is present; loose soils are generally absent.		
coast patch-nosed snake Salvadora hexalepis virgultea		SSC	Brushy areas in semi-arid regions along with chaparral in canyons, rocky hillsides and plains.	Low Potential: Marginal habitat is present.		
two-striped gartersnake Thamnophis hammondii		SSC	Found near water sources such as creeks, streams, pools, cattle tanks. Oak woodland, willow, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, scrub oak, sparse pine and brushland.	Absent: No suitable aquatic habitat is present on the project site.		
coastal whiptail Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri		SSC	Deserts, semiarid shrubland with sparse vegetation, woodlands, dry open forests, and riparian growth.	Moderate Potential: Suitable habitat is present but this lizard was not seen during the November 2020 field survey.		
Birds ³						
White-tailed kite (nesting) Elanus leucurus		CFP	Open vegetation and uses dense woodlands for cover. Nests in riparian woodlands were nests are placed near the top of dense oak, willow or sycamore trees.	Not Expected: White-tailed kites may forage over the site, but suitable nesting habitat is not present.		
Northern Harrier (nesting) Circus cyaneus		SSC	Grasslands and open scrub.	Not Expected (nesting): May forage in the area but does not nest in the region.		

Common Name Scientific Name	Status			
	Federal	State	Habitat Requirements	Potential Occurrence on the Project Site
Swainson's hawk (nesting) Buteo swainsoni		СТ	Open riparian habitat, in scattered trees or small groves in sparsely vegetated flatlands; typical habitat is open desert, grassland, or cropland. Typically nests within 1 mile of riparian habitats in oaks, cottonwoods, and sycamores.	Not Expected (nesting): Swainson's hawks are known to migrate through the project. Does not nest in the area.
California condor Gymnogyps californianus	FE	CE; FP	Nesting habitat includes scrubby chaparral to forested mountain regions up to 6,000ft elevation. Foraging areas are in open grasslands. Rely on windy, open areas to assist with extended soaring flight.	Not Expected: No suitable habitat is present.
Bald eagle Haliaeetus leucocephalus	Delisted	CE; FP	Forested areas near large bodies of water with mature coniferous or deciduous trees that give a wide view of surroundings	Absent: Suitable habitat is not present.
Vaux's swift Chaetura vauxi		SSC	Coniferous forests such as Redwoods and Douglas fir. Nest in large hollow trees and snags and are often in large flocks. Prefers foraging over rivers and lakes but has been found foraging over most terrains.	Absent: Suitable habitat is not present. Occurs at higher elevations.
Western yellow-billed cuckoo (nesting) Coccyzus americanus occidentalis	FT	CE	Riparian forest nester, along the broad, lower flood-bottoms of larger river systems. Nests in riparian jungles of willow, often mixed with cottonwoods, with understory of blackberry, nettles, or wild grape.	Absent: Suitable riparian nesting habitat is not present.
Burrowing owl (burrow sites) Athene cunicularia		SSC	Grasslands and open scrub, fallow agricultural fields.	Not Expected: Soils are highly compacted and lack burrowing animal activity to provide burrows for this owl.
Willow flycatcher Empidonax traillii		CE	Areas with willows or other shrubs near standing or running water	Absent: Suitable nesting habitat is not present.
Southwestern willow flycatcher (nesting) Empidonax traillii extimus	FE	CE	Riparian woodlands that contain water and low willow thickets.	Absent: Suitable nesting habitat is not present.
California gnatcatcher Polioptila californica	FT	SSC	Coastal sage scrub in areas of flat or gently sloping terrain.	Low Potential: Coastal sage scrub habitat does not appear to be suitable (too steep and of poor quality). Repeated surveys on the Via Princessa site about ½ mile to the south have not discovered this bird.
Loggerhead shrike (nesting) Lanius Iudovicianus		SSC	Grasslands with scattered shrubs, trees, fences or other perches where key prey items (lizards) are scouted.	Low Potential: Suitable habitat is limited on-site; no lizards were seen during the November 2020 field survey, despite the warm day.
Yellow-breasted chat Icteria virens		SSC	Riparian habitats; willow thickets, brushy areas along watercourses.	Absent: Suitable riparian habitat is not present.
Least Bell's vireo (nesting) Vireo bellii pusillus	FE	CE	Riparian vegetation with extensive willows below 2,000 ft.	Absent: Suitable riparian nesting and foraging habitat is not present.
Yellow warbler (nesting) Setophaga petechia		SSC	Dense willow riparian woodlands and thickets along watercourses and in wetlands	Absent: Suitable riparian nesting and foraging habitat is not present.

Common Name Scientific Name	Stat	us		Potential Occurrence on the Project Site
	Federal	State	Habitat Requirements	
Summer tanager		SSC	Edges or gaps in open deciduous or pine-oak	Absent: No suitable habitat present on site.
Piranga rubra			forests.	
Grasshopper sparrow (nesting)		SSC	Open grasslands and prairies with patches of	Not Expected (nesting): Suitable habitat is not present on-
Ammodramus savannarum			bare ground.	site. Does not nest in area.
Mammals ⁴				
California leaf-nosed bat		SSC	Desert riparian, desert wash, desert scrub,	Not Expected: This bat may forage over the site but
Macrotus californicus			desert succulent scrub, alkali desert scrub, and palm oasis. Roosts in rocky, rugged terrain with mines and caves, and occasionally in abandoned buildings.	suitable roosting habitat is absent.
Hoary bat		sa	Generally roosts in dense foliage of medium to	Not Expected: Unlikely to forage over the site; suitable
Lasiurus cinereus			large trees. Require areas close to water and refers open habitats or habitat mosaics, with access to trees for cover and open areas or habitat edges for feeding	roosting habitat is absent.
Spotted bat		SSC	Deserts, scrublands, chaparral, and coniferous	Not Expected. No suitable roosting habitat is present on-
Euderma maculata			woodlands. Roosts in rock crevices, occasionally caves or buildings.	site.
Pallid bat		SSC	Arid habitats, including grasslands, shrublands, woodlands, and forests; prefers	Not Expected: This bat may forage on the site but suitable roosting habitat is absent.
Antrozous pallidus			rocky outcrops, cliffs, and crevices with access to open habitats for foraging. Day roosts are in caves, crevices, mines, and occasionally in hollow trees and buildings; night roosts may be in porches and open buildings; hibernation probably occurs in rock crevices.	
Greater Western mastiff bat		SSC	Primarily arid lowlands and coastal basins with	Not Expected: This bat may forage over the site but
Eumops perotis ssp. californicus			rugged, rocky terrain, along with suitable crevices for day-roosts. Requires high cliff faces, trees, buildings for sufficient vertical drop. Forages within extensive open areas where abundant roost locations are available.	suitable roosting habitat is absent.
San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit Lepus californicus bennettii		SSC	Coastal sage scrub with open shrub, herbaceous and tree elements and herbaceous edges.	Low Potential: Marginally suitable habitat is present but this diurnal rabbit was not seen during field the survey.

Common Name	Status			
Scientific Name	Federal	State	Habitat Requirements	Potential Occurrence on the Project Site
San Diego desert woodrat		SSC	Arid chaparral and coastal sage scrub, usually with rocky areas and/or cliffs/rock outcrops.	Low Potential: Suitable rocky habitat/cliffs are not present and no stick nests were observed.
Neotoma lepida intermedia				
Townsend's big-eared bat Corynorhinus townsendii		SSC	Uses a variety of habitats, usually near caves or other roosting areas. Can be found in pine forests and arid desert scrub habitat. Prefer large open areas for roosting.	Not Expected: This bat may forage on the site but suitable roosting habitat is absent.
American badger Taxidea taxus		SSC	Dry, open stages of most shrub, forest and herbaceous habitats with friable soils	Not Expected: Suitable friable soils are not present on-site. No burrows were found during the November 2020 field survey.
Southern grasshopper mouse Onychomys torridus ramona		SSC	Desert areas, especially scrub habitats with sandy, diggable soil and low to moderate shrub cover. Almost exclusively feeds on arthropods, such as scorpions and orthopterans.	Not Expected: Suitable loose soil habitat is present. No recent records for this mouse (report is from 1930).

¹November 2020 CNDDB Query for: Mint Canyon (project site), Newhall, Agua Dulce, Green Valley, Oat Mountain, San Fernando, Sleepy Valley, Sunland, and Warm Springs Mountain).

³Breeding bird information derived from the 2016 Los Angeles County Breeding Bird Atlas (Allen, Larry W., Kimball Garrett, and Mark C. Wimer. Los Angeles County Breeding Bird Atlas. Los Angeles Audubon Society, Los Angeles, CA).

⁴Bat habitat & distribution information: Western Bat Working Group (http://wbwg.org/)

NOTE: Entirely aquatic species (fish) were excluded from this discussion due to lack of habitat on the project site.

<u>Not Expected:</u> There is no suitable habitat present on the property (i.e., habitats on the property are clearly unsuitable for the species requirements [e.g., substrate, elevation, hydrology, plant community, disturbance regime, etc.]). The species has an extremely low probability of being found on the property.

<u>Low Potential:</u> Either significantly limited quantity and/or quality of suitable habitat is present on the property (i.e., few of the habitat components meeting the species requirements are present and/or the majority of habitat on the property is unsuitable or of very low quality). And, there are no or few recent known records of occurrence in the near vicinity of the property. The species has a low probability of being found on the property.

<u>Moderate Potential</u>: Some suitable habitat is present on the property (i.e., some of the habitat components meeting the species requirements are present and/or the quantity of habitat on the property is marginal). Additionally, there are known records of occurrences in the region of the property, but not necessarily in the immediate vicinity. The species has a moderate probability of being found on the property.

<u>High Potential:</u> Suitable quantity and quality of habitat is present on the property (i.e., all habitat components meeting the species requirements are present and/or habitat(s) on the property is highly suitable or of high quality). Additionally, there are recent records of occurrences in the vicinity of the property. This species has a high probability of being found on the property.

Present: Species was observed on the property during surveys associated with this report or by other persons.

²Hatfield, Rich, S. Jepsen, S. Foltz Jordan, M. Blackburn, A. Code. October 2018. A Petition to the State of California Fish and Game Commission to List the Crotch bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*), Franklin's bumble bee (*Bombus franklini*), Suckley cuckoo bumble bee (*Bombus suckleyi*), and western bumble bee (*Bombus occidentalis*) as Endangered under the California Endangered Species Act. The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, Defenders of Wildlife, Center for Food Safety.

Status:

Federal -- US Fish and Wildlife Service

FE: Federally Endangered FT: Federally Threatened

FC: Federal Candidate for listing as threatened or endangered

State -- California Department of Fish and Game

CE: California Endangered
CT: California Threatened
CFP: California Fully Protected

SSC: California Species of Special Concern

WL: CDFW Watch List

sa: California Special Animal (species with no official federal or state status, but are included on CDFG's Special Animals list)

(nesting) =The CNDDB only tracks nesting locations. CDFW is generally interested in nesting for species thus noted.

WBWG (Western Bat Working Group) ranks species as H-High, M-Medium, or L-Low Priority; CNDDB includes categories for Medium-High, and Low-Medium Priority