

C. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Introduction

The West Los Angeles College (WLAC) supports educational and administration facilities, surface parking lots, athletic fields and sports facilities, and some undeveloped areas. The campus currently contains over 32 acres of internal open, vacant, or underutilized space. Due to the predominantly developed infrastructures throughout the campus, vegetation on the campus is very limited and is primarily restricted to landscaped sidewalks and on graded slopes between terraced pads.

The only natural areas of any significance in the vicinity of the WLAC are limited to the Baldwin Hills, located east of the project site. Figure III-2 in the Project Description Section depicts the project site and adjacent Baldwin Hills. The rest of the project area is defined by the highly developed and densely populated cities of Los Angeles, Culver City and Inglewood. The campus is surrounded to the immediate west and south sides by residential, commercial and light industrial land uses.

As identified in Section III - Project Description, all of the proposed activities under Phase I and II will occur in already developed areas on the campus. However, three second access routes off-site through the Baldwin Hills area are being evaluated, as depicted on Figure III-6 in the Project Description. No particular alignment has been selected or approved at this point.

The project essentially consists of the various *on-campus* construction footprints proposed under Phase I and Phase II, depicted in Figures III-4 and III-5, in Section III Project Description, respectively; and an *off-campus* construction foot-print for a second access route through the Baldwin Hills.

Regulatory Framework

The proposed project may be subject to the following state and federal regulations, relative to the protection of biological resources:

Federal Endangered Species Act

Species listed as endangered or threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) are protected under Section 9 of FESA, which forbids any person to “take” an endangered or threatened species. “Take” is defined in Section 3 of the Act as “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in such conduct.” The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1995 that the term ‘harm’ includes destruction or modification of habitat. Sections 7 and 10 of the Act may authorize “incidental take” for otherwise lawful activity (a development project, for example), if it is determined that the activity would not jeopardize the species’ survival or recovery.

California Endangered Species Act

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA), enacted in 1970, provides protection to endangered and threatened species in California. The definition of “take” under the CESA does not include “harm” or harass” as is specified in the FESA; thus no provisions to protect habitat are included. However, Section 2050 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibits any activities that would jeopardize listed as threatened or endangered within the state. Sections 2081 and 2090 provide for consultation by project proponents with the CDFG, regarding measures to minimize impacts to species listed by CESA. Through this consultation, the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) may authorize an Incidental Take Permit under Section 2081. The application for this permit requires project description, detailed analysis of impacts to species, and an analysis of the probability of the species long-term survival as related to the impacts.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)/California Fish and Game Code Section 3503

The federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), first enacted in 1916, prohibits any person to: “pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, attempt to take, capture, or kill, possess, offer for sale, sell, offer to barter, offer to purchase...” any migratory bird.

The list of migratory birds includes nearly all bird species native to the United States; non-native species such as European starlings are not included. The statute extended in 1974 to include parts of birds as well as eggs and nests. Thus, it is illegal under the MBTA to directly kill, or destroy the nest or nearly any bird species, not just endangered species. Activities that result in unauthorized removal or destruction of an active nest (a nest with eggs or young being attended to by one or more adults) would violate the MBTA. Removal of unoccupied nests, or bird mortality resulting indirectly from a project is not considered a violation of the MBTA. In addition to the Federal MBTA, the California Fish and Game Code Section 3503, 3503.5, and 3512 also prohibit “take” of birds or active nests. Depredation permits are issued by the USFWS to allow the take of migratory birds which are causing serious damage to public or private property, pose a health or safety hazard, or are damaging agricultural crops or wildlife.

Clean Water Act (CWA) Requirements

Section 301 of the CWA prohibits the discharge of any pollutants without a permit.

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, any activities that could potentially result in discharge of dredge or fill materials into “waters of the United States” must generally comply with Section 404, which is administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Waters of the U.S. is a broad term that includes, waterways (streams, rivers, navigable waters), wetlands, reservoirs, etc. The regulatory process generally entails authorization through the acquisition of a Department of Army permit for the project, prior to initiating any activities that would result in discharge of dredge or fill materials into these waters. Prior to the submittal of the application forms, a delineation of the potential waters of the U.S. likely to be impacted is required. Depending upon the nature and magnitude of impacts, a project may qualify for a Nationwide or Individual Permit. The applicant must compensate for potential waters of the U.S. impacts that cannot be avoided. The permit is subject to a public review process.

Section 401 of the CWA – Water Quality Certification. Any project that is seeking a Department of the Army permit (Section 404 permit) for the discharge of dredge or fill materials into the Waters of the U.S. must also obtain a Water Quality Certification from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), certifying that the proposed activity will not violate State or Federal water quality standards. The RWQCB may specify conditions or requirements for mitigation of impacts. The certification is subject to a public review process.

Section 402 of the Clean Water Act (NPDES Program). The 1972 amendments to the CWA provide the statutory basis for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System or NPDES permit program and the basic structure for regulating the discharge of pollutants from point sources to waters of the United States. Section 402 of the CWA specifically required the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop and implement the NPDES program, which is administered by the nine (RWQCBs) in the State of California.

California Department of Fish and Game Codes Section 1600-1607 – Steam Bed Alteration Agreement

Pursuant to Section 1600 to 1607 of the Fish and Game Codes, the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) has jurisdiction over activities that affect the “bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream or lake designated by the department in which there is at any time an existing fish or wildlife resource, or from which these resources derive benefit.”

Since the purpose of the Fish and Game is to protect fish and game resources, CDFG interprets Section 1600 as including impacts to riparian habitat adjacent to the waters of the State in addition to drainage itself. Jurisdiction

is typically defined as the bed of the drainage and the bank up to the top of significant cut, and extending to the outer limits of riparian vegetation where it occurs beyond the bank cut. A project with potential impacts to CDFG jurisdictional areas is required to obtain a Streambed Alteration Agreement Permit from the CDFG, by completing a Lake or Streambed Alteration Notification Form, along with the required attachments and enclosures. Compensation for jurisdictional areas impacted may be required by the CDFG.

Methodology for Biological Resources Inventory

As stated in the Introduction section, Envicom Corporation staff conducted a biological reconnaissance survey of the WLAC on April 30, 2003, to ascertain the existing biological resources on the campus, with a focus on assessing the resources existing within the footprint of the proposed development. In addition to documenting all plant species (**Table V.C-1**) and wildlife species observed during the survey, the following literature review and database analysis were conducted to determine the presence of sensitive or “special-status” plants or wildlife species that may likely occur on the campus or in the vicinity:

- Review of the California Natural Diversity (CNDDDB) or RareFind Database, managed by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG, 2003). The database search encompassed Beverly Hills, Hollywood, Venice, and Inglewood USGS Quadrangles surrounding the project site.
- Review of species accounts provided in the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships Database for Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species, including Fully Protected Species and Species of Special Concern.
- Review of *The Biota of the Baldwin Hills: An Ecological Assessment* (Community Conservancy International, 2001). Information about habitat and potential special-status species occurrence at Baldwin Hills was supplemented with that from the CNDDDB database results.

A plant or wildlife species is defined as “special-status” when it has been afforded special recognition by federal or state resource agencies, as well as private conservation organizations, as taxon (species, subspecies, or variety) with a documented or perceived decline or limitation of its population size or geographical extent and/or distribution resulting, in most cases, from habitat loss. Special-status species include those:

- Listed or proposed for listing by state or federal agencies as rare, threatened, or endangered
- Federal or state Species of Concern or state Species of Special Concern,
- Species listed by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) with a designation of Category 2 (indicating species that are rare or endangered in California but more common elsewhere) or 1B (indicating species that are rare or endangered in California or elsewhere),
- Species identified by biologists with regional knowledge as being of conservation concern or local interest.

Environmental Setting

Description of Existing Resources

Campus

On April 30, 2003, Envicom Corporation staff conducted a Biological Reconnaissance Survey to generally assess the vegetation occurring in the proposed development footprint (Phase I and Phase II) on campus, and to determine the potential for occurrence of any sensitive plants and wildlife within the development footprint.

As identified earlier, due to the highly developed and urbanized nature of the environment on campus, there are no native vegetation communities occurring on campus. No listed species, i.e., species recognized as threatened or endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), or by the State of California, are known to exist on the campus. The campus does not support natural wildlife habitats that could potentially support special status species. The survey revealed that the vegetation on campus primarily consists of weedy non-native

vegetation, various (primarily non-native) horticultural tree species, and ornamental shrubs. The only native vegetation consists of a few Sycamore trees (*Platanus racemosa*), an occasional coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*) and toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*). **Appendix 3** provides a list of vegetation observed during the survey, as well as a list of wildlife species observed during the survey. No threatened or endangered species were observed or known to exist on campus. There are also no drainages or (streambed) habitats that may be classified as potential jurisdictional areas under Section 404 of the CWA and/or Section 1600 of the California Fish and Game code.

Baldwin Hills

The Baldwin Hills site adjacent to the project site does support natural areas and therefore is discussed in further detail. Access to the Baldwin Hills site was not available to Envicom Corporation staff, as this is closed to the public and is generally being used for oil production. A fence separates the campus from the Baldwin Hills site. Envicom Corporation staff were able to view the area adjacent to the campus from across the fence and make a general assessment of the habitat, which confirmed the habitat description identified in “*The Biota of the Baldwin Hills: An Ecological Assessment*” (Community Conservancy International, 2001). The habitat within Baldwin Hills immediately east of Sophomore Drive is highly disturbed and generally consists of invasive species including astor bean (*Ricnium communis*), a few gum trees (*Eucalyptus* sp.), wild radish, and tree tobacco. Coastal sage scrub is minimal, and is restricted to the hill slopes.

Vegetation/Habitat

The Baldwin Hills represent the largest remaining expanse of open space (about 1,200 acres) in the Los Angeles Basin. Despite their fragmented and often degraded condition, the Baldwin Hills are important habitat to several species of birds and mammals (Community Conservancy International, 2001). The following major natural vegetation community and habitats are recognized in the Baldwin Hills (Community Conservancy International, 2001), which is depicted in **Figure V.C-1**.

Coastal Scrub: The dominant plant species in the coastal scrub are sage scrub (*Artemisia californica*), California encelia (*Encelia californica*), coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), Mexican elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), and toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*). Prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia occidentalis*) is also present scattered in this habitat.

Coastal Sage Scrub: In addition to the plant species identified in coastal scrub, this community is dominated by black sage (*Salvia mellifera*) and buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*).

Grassland/Prairie: This community is characterized by native purple needlegrass (*Nassella pulchra*), but the majority of this community is dominated by invasive species, including non-native grasses such as wild oats (*Avena fatua*), Foxtail chess (*Bromus madritensis* ssp. *rubens*), cheat grass (*Bromus tectorum*), storksbill filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*) and exotic annuals such as wild radish (*Raphanus sativus*) and mustard (*Brassica nigra*).

Ruderal Annuals (weedy annuals): More than 90% of this community is composed of weedy annuals, including black mustard, wild radish and poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*).

Opuntia Populations: Dominant species are prickly pear cactus with ruderal annual species interspersed.

Drainage/Riparian areas: Generally, this community is associated with erosion channels and urban drainage channels, and consists of both non-native and some native riparian species. Non-native species include pampas

Figure V.C-1 Vegetation Communities at Baldwin Hills

grass (*Cortaderia jubata* and *C. selloana*), tree tobacco (*Nicotina glauca*), and curly dock (*Rumex crispus*). The native riparian species include arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), broad-leaved cattails (*Typha latifolia*) and cocklebur (*Xanthium strumarium*)

Hardpan/Seasonal Pools: These are seasonal pools of standing water, which are generally characterized by the following native species: miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), birdfoot trefoil (*Lotus salsuginosus*), (Pursh's lotus *L. pushianus*), toadrush (*Juncos bufonius*), California cottonrose (*Filago californica*), and Blow-wives (*Achyrachena mollis*). Tarweed (*Hemizonia fasciculata*) are also found in these seasonal pools.

Disturbed Areas: These are generally oil extraction sites with highly disturbed soils and are generally characterized by non-native species such as ice plant (*Carpobrotus edulis*), gum tree (*Eucalyptus* spp.), fan palm (*Washingtonia* sp.), pine (*Pinus* sp.), Peruvian pepper tree (*Schinus molle*) and weedy annuals. In some near-vertical disturbed areas coastal woodfern (*Dryopteris arguta*), a native perennial fern has also been identified (Community Conservancy International, 2001).

Although there are no reports of special-status plant species (State or Federally recognized as threatened or endangered, or CNPS category 1B or 2 species) noted in the Baldwin Hills, one small population of the native succulent species, lanceleaf liveforever (*Dudlea lanceolata*) has been detected in the Baldwin Hills, adjacent to WLAC, east of Sophomore Drive. Although this species is officially not considered to be rare or endangered, there is some concern about the continued threat to this species from increasing development activities (California Department of Fish and Game, 2000).

The CNDDDB database search for the quadrangles surrounding the project site yielded several plant species recognized as special-status species. The following are accounts of these species, which also provides information on status and habitat preference of these species. The likelihood of occurrence of these species in the project area is based on historic occurrence records and presence of suitable habitats in the project area.

Southern tarplant (*Centromadia parryi* ssp. *australis*)

Status: CNPS List 1B

This species is generally associated with marshes and swamps, valley and foothill grasslands and vernal pools. Also found along the coast, in alkaline soils in association with saltgrass. Nearest to the proposed project site, this species was detected in the Ballona marsh and Marina Del Rey in the 1990's, which is approximately 4.2 miles to the southwest. Such habitats are not found within Baldwin Hills and therefore there is very limited potential for occurrence of this species in the project site.

Coulter's goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata* ssp. *coulteri*)

Status: CNPS List 1B

Coulter's goldfields are generally found in salt marshes, playas, valley and foothill grassland and vernal pools and usually found in association with alkaline soils in playas, sinks and grasslands. Nearest to the proposed site, historical collection of this species in 1903, 1905 and 1934 is known from Ballona marsh and Marina Del Rey. According to a 1981 report, this species is presumably extirpated from this area. There are no salt marshes, playas, vernal pools or alkaline soils found within Baldwin Hills and therefore, there is very limited potential for this species to occur in the project site.

Orcutt's pincushion (*Chaenactis glabrisucula* var. *orcuttiana*)

Status: CNPS List 1B

Orcutt's pincushion is generally found in sandy sites between 3 to 100 meters (approximately 10 – 328 feet) in elevation. Nearest to the project site, one population was identified at the Ballona Wetlands, near Playa Del Rey. There is a moderate potential for occurrence of this species to occur in the project site at Baldwin Hills.

Beach spectaclepod (*Dithyrea maritima*)

Status: State Threatened, CNPS List 1B

This species is generally associated with coastal dunes and coastal scrub, found along sea shores, and sandy dunes near the shore. This species was formerly more widespread in southern California. One source of collection in 1903 identified this population at Ballona marsh, near Marina Del Rey. The only potential habitat remaining for this species appears to be the El Segundo Blue Butterfly Preserve at the Los Angeles International Airport. No sandy dunes are found within Baldwin Hills and therefore, there is a very limited potential for this species to occur in the project site.

Parrish's brittle scale (*Atriplex parishii*)

Status: CNPS List 1B

The Parrish's brittle scale are generally found in alkali meadows, vernal pools, chenopod scrub and playas. This species is usually found on drying alkali flats with fine soils. An undated collection is known from Santa Monica. There are no suitable habitats for this species within Baldwin Hills and therefore, there is a very limited potential for occurrence of this species to occur at the project site.

Davidson's salt scale (*Calystegia sepium* ssp. *binghamiae*)

Status: CNPS List 1B

This species is generally associated with coastal scrub habitat, usually in alkaline soils. Nearest to the project site, two collections of this species from 1902 are known from the vicinity of Cienega. Although there are no alkaline soils at Baldwin Hills, there is a moderate potential for occurrence of this species within the project site, given the presence of coastal sage scrub habitat at Baldwin Hills.

Many-stemmed dudleya (*Dudleya multicaulis*)

Status: CNPS List 1B

This species is generally associated with chaparral, coastal scrub, valley and foothill grassland, often found in heavy, clayey soils or grassy slopes up to 790 meters (approximately 2,590 feet) in elevation. The only known collections (1905 and 1925) of this species is from Hollywood Hills, near the Hollywood reservoir. This population is believed to be extirpated at this location. There is a moderate potential for occurrence of this species within the project site, given the presence of coastal sage scrub and grassland habitats at Baldwin Hills.

Braunton's milk-vetch (*Astragalus brauntonii*)

Status: Federal Endangered, CNPS List 1B

Braunton's milk-vetch is generally associated with closed-cone coniferous forest, chaparral, coastal scrub, valley and foothill grassland. This species is usually found in recent burn or disturbed areas, in stiff gravelly clay soils overlying granite or limestone. One specimen was identified in the vicinity of Cienega, although there is some discrepancy regarding its identification. Although there are no granite or limestone underlying gravelly, clay soils, within Baldwin Hills, there is a moderate potential for this species to occur in the project site, given the presence of coastal sage scrub and grassland habitats at Baldwin Hills.

Ventura marsh milk-vetch (*Astragalus pycnostachys* var. *lanosissimus*)

Status: Federal Endangered, State Endangered

This species is generally associated with coastal salt marsh habitat, within reach of high tide or protected by barrier beaches. Historically, nine collections of this species were made between 1888 and 1902 near Marina Del Rey, Ballona marshes and Rancho. Presently the marshes are drained and historical populations are believed extirpated. There are no suitable habitats for this species within Baldwin Hills and therefore, there is a very limited potential for occurrence of this species at the project site.

Coastal dunes milk-vetch (*Astragalus tener* var. *titi*)

Status: Federal Endangered, State Endangered, CNPS List 1B

This species is generally associated with coastal bluff scrub and coastal dune habitats and is usually found in moist, sandy depressions of bluffs or dunes along the coast. Two historical occurrences are known from Santa Monica (1964) and general vicinity of Inglewood (1964). The populations from both these sites are believed extirpated. There are no suitable habitats for this species within Baldwin Hills and therefore, there is a very limited potential for occurrence of this at the project site.

Mud nama (*Nama stenocarpum*)

Status: CNPS List 2

This species is generally associated with marshes and swamps and usually found along lake shores, river banks, and intermittently wet areas. Two collections of this species are known from the general vicinity of Santa Monica, one in 1889 and the other undated. There is a moderate potential for occurrence of this species at the project site, given the presence of seasonally ponded areas and drainages at Baldwin Hills.

Brand's phacelia (*Phacelia stellaris*)

Status: CNPS List 1B

This species is generally associated with coastal scrub and coastal dunes and found in open areas of these habitats. One collection of this species is known from 1943, collected along Pershing Drive, 1 mile south of Culver boulevard in Playa Del Rey. There are no suitable habitats for this species occurring within Baldwin Hills and therefore there is a very limited potential for occurrence of this species at the project site.

Salt Spring checkerbloom (*Sidalcea neomexicana*)

Status: CNPS List 2

This species is generally associated with alkali playas, brackish marshes, chaparral, coastal scrub, lower montane coniferous forest, and Mojavean desert scrub. Salt spring checkerbloom is usually found in alkali springs and marshes. The only source of information for this species is an undated collection from Santa Monica. There is a moderate potential for occurrence of this species to occur at the project site, given the presence of coastal scrub habitat at Baldwin Hills.

San Fernando valley spineflower (*Chorizanthe parryi* var. *Fernandina*)

Status: Federal Candidate, State Endangered, CNPS List 1B

This species is generally associated with coastal scrub habitats and found in sandy soils. One collection of this species is known from 1901, detected in the vicinity of the mouth of Ballona Creek and Marina Del Rey. Much of the suitable habitat in this area has been developed. There is a moderate potential for occurrence of this species at the project site, given the presence of coastal scrub habitat at Baldwin Hills.

Spreading navarettia (*Navarettia fossalis*)

Status: Federal Threatened, CNPS List 1B

This species is generally associated with vernal pools, chenopod scrub, marshes, swamps and playas, usually found in San Diego hardpan and San Diego vernal pools; often surrounded by other habitat types. Spreading navarettia has been predominantly documented in the Riverside County. One collection is known from the Inglewood area, dated 1906. Much of this area is now developed and this species is believed extirpated in this area. There are also no vernal pools within Baldwin Hills. Therefore, there is a very limited potential for occurrence of this species at the project site.

Prostrate navarettia (*Navarettia prostrata*)

Status: Federal Species of Concern, CNPS List 1B

This species is generally associated with coastal scrub, valley and foothill grasslands and vernal pools. This species is usually found in alkaline soils in grasslands or in vernal pools. There are three historical occurrences (undated) known for this species in the Los Angeles Basin and all three areas are now developed. This species is believed extirpated in these areas. The Baldwin Hills does not support suitable habitat in the form of vernal pools or grasslands with alkaline soils. Therefore, there is very limited potential for occurrence of this species at the project site.

Salt marsh bird's-beak (*Cordylanthus maritimus* ssp. *maritimus*)

Status: Federal Endangered, State Endangered, CNPS List 1B

This species is generally associated with coastal salt marsh and coastal dune habitats, usually found in the higher zones of salt marshes. There was one undated historical collection of this species in the general vicinity of Santa Monica, now believed extirpated. There are no suitable habitats for this species within Baldwin Hills. Therefore, there is very limited potential for occurrence of this species at the project site.

Plummer's mariposa lily (*Calochortus plummerae*)

Status: CNPS List 1B

This species is generally associated with coastal scrub, chaparral, valley and foothill grassland, cismontane woodland, and lower montane coniferous forest habitats. This species usually occurs on rocky and sandy sites, usually of granitic or alluvial material and is very common after fire. There are two known occurrence of this species, one from 1929 in the Mandeville Canyon of the Santa Monica Mountains and the other from 1901 in the vicinity of West Hollywood. There is a moderate potential for occurrence for this species within the project site, given the presence of coastal scrub and grassland habitats at Baldwin Hills.

California orcutt grass (*Orcuttia californica*)

Status: Federal Endangered, State Endangered, CNPS List 1B

This species is generally associated with vernal pools. This species is also found in dry ditches that simulate vernal pool hydrology and is often associated with African pricklegrass (*Crypsis aculeata* [= *vaginiflora*]). This species was detected in 1946 in dry ditches around an old municipal airport, at the junction of Western Avenue on Rosecrans Avenue, in Los Angeles. This species was not seen in 1976 at this location. As it is believed to be extirpated, there is a very limited potential for occurrence of this species at the project site.

Wildlife

Reptiles and Amphibians

During a survey of the Baldwin Hills conducted in 2000 (Community Conservancy International, 2001), five species of reptiles were identified, including: the southern alligator lizard (*Elgaria multicarinata*), western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*), gopher snake (*Pituophis catenifer*), and the red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*), which is non-native to California. Other herpetofauna that were previously detected in a 1975 survey or with a potential to occur at the Baldwin Hills include the following (Community Conservancy International, 2001): black-bellied salamander (*Batrachoseps nigriventris*), garden slender salamander (*Batrachoseps pacificus major*), western toad (*Bufo boreas*), pacific treefrog (*Hyla regilla*), southern alligator lizard (*Elgaria multicarinata*), coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum*), coastal western whiptail (*Cnemidophorus tigris stejnegeri*), ringneck snake (*Diadophis punctatus*), night snake (*Hypsiglena torquata*), common kingsnake (*Lampropeltis getula*), coachwhip or red racer (*Masticophis flagellum*), California whipsnake or striped racer (*Masticophis lateralis*), western blind snake (*Leptotyphlops humilis*), western rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*), and bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*). The bullfrog is not native to California. The garden slender salamander, southern alligator lizard, western fence lizard, side-blotched lizard and the gopher snake have all been detected during both the 1975 and 2000 surveys. There were no listed amphibian or reptile

species (species recognized as threatened or endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), or by the State of California. However, based on literature review and CNDDDB analysis, the following species accounts of sensitive species are provided, which identifies the potential for these species to occur within the project area, based on occurrence data and presence of suitable habitat.

Coast (San Diego) Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillei*)

Status: CDFG Species of Concern (CS)

This species is generally associated with coastal sage scrub, alluvial scrub, chaparral, riparian and oak woodland habitats in arid and semi-arid environments. The horned lizard is usually found in extensive open areas with friable sandy or gravelly soils with abundant ant colonies. The horned lizard was not found during the 1975 and 2000 surveys. The project site falls within the range of the San Diego horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillei*), a subspecies of the horned lizard. The CNDDDB records indicate three historical occurrences for this species (1953, 1980, and one undated) for the Los Angeles County. There is a moderate potential for occurrence of this species within the project site, due to the presence of coastal sage scrub and grassland habitats at Baldwin Hills.

Coastal western whiptail (*Cnemidophorus tigris stejnegeri*)

Status: CDFG Species of Special Concern

This species is generally associated with a variety of habitats, but is commonly found utilizing open rocky areas of coastal sage scrub, chaparral, oak woodland and grassland habitats. The coastal western whiptail was not found during the 1975 and 200 surveys. There are also no historical CNDDDB records of this species within the vicinity for the project site. However, due to the presence of coastal sage scrub and grassland habitats at Baldwin Hills, there is a moderate potential for occurrence of this species at the project site.

Silvery (=California) legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra pulchra*)

Status: Federal Species of Concern, CDFG Species of Special Concern

This species is generally associated with several habitats but found predominantly in coastal dune, valley-foothill, chaparral, and coastal scrub and desert scrub habitat types. They are usually found in sandy or loose loamy soils. They also show a preference for substrates with a higher soil moisture content. The legless lizard was not found during the 1975 or 2000 survey of the Baldwin Hills. There are also no historical CNDDDB records of this species within the vicinity of the project site. However, their range extends into the project site and due to the presence of coastal sage scrub and grassland habitats at Baldwin Hills, there is a moderate potential for occurrence of this species within the project site.

Two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondi*)

Status: CDFG Species of Special Concern

This species is highly aquatic and is generally associated with perennial and intermittent streams. This species is often found in streams with rocky beds bordered by willow thickets or other dense riparian vegetation. It also inhabits stock ponds and other artificially created aquatic habitats. This species was not found during the 1975 or 2000 survey of the Baldwin Hills. There are also no historical CNDDDB records of this species within the vicinity of the project site. However, their range extends into the project site and due to the presence of ponds and riparian areas at Baldwin Hills, there are a moderate potential for occurrence of this species within the project site.

South Coast Garter Snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis ssp.*)

Status: CDFG Species of Special Concern

This species is generally restricted to marsh and upland habitats such as grasslands and woodlands. They prefer habitats close to permanent water with dense strips of riparian vegetation. Although there are no known CNDDDB records for this species within the project vicinity, it is presumed that this species historically occurred

in the marshes of Ballona Creek and Playa Del Rey (Habitat Conservation Planning Branch, CDFG). This species was not found during the 1975 or 2000 survey of the Baldwin Hills. However, their range extends into the project site and due to the presence of riparian and grassland habitats at Baldwin Hills, there is a moderate potential for occurrence of this species at the project site.

Coast Patch-nosed snake (*Salvadora hexalepis virgulata*)

Status: CDFG Species of Special Concern

This species is generally associated with brushy or shrubby vegetation such as, chaparral, coastal scrub and desert scrub. The link to shrubby habitat may be due to the fact that its prey, the whiptail lizard prefers such habitat. Coast patch-nosed snakes are also presumed to take refuge and perhaps over winter in burrows of small mammals. Although there are no CNDDDB records for this species within the project vicinity, the species range is thought to extend from San Luis Obispo County southward into Baja California and therefore includes the project site. The coastal sage scrub habitat at Baldwin hills provides a moderate potential for this species to occur within the project site.

Southwestern pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata pallida*)

Status: Federal Species of Concern, CDFG Species of Special Concern

This species inhabits permanent or nearly permanent bodies of water in many habitat types. It prefers basking sites such as partially submerged logs, vegetation mats or open mud banks. It lays eggs in adjacent upland areas. There was one historical occurrence in the vicinity of Marina Del Rey. Due to the sensitivity of the information, specific information about date and location of this species in this area has been suppressed by the CDFG in the CNDDDB database. Because of the lack of permanent water bodies at the Baldwin Hills site there is a very limited potential for occurrence of this species within the project site.

Birds

A focused avian survey of the Baldwin Hills was conducted in 2000 (Community Conservancy International, 2001), during which 41 species of birds were detected nesting or breeding at the site. Out of this, 36 species were native species. Some 18 additional species were recognized as breeding occasionally or were formerly breeding at the site. Three of the breeding species detected during the survey, California quail (*Callipepla californica*), Bewick's wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*), and spotted towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*) are "coastal scrub obligate" species. Five other species whose distribution in and around the Los Angeles Basin is largely dependent upon coastal scrub and similar habitats found at Baldwin Hills or with a potential to occur, include the following: greater road runner (*Geococcyx californicus*), cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*), California Gnatcatcher, (*Polioptila californica*), California thrasher (*Toxostoma redivivum*), and rufous-crowned sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps*) (Community Conservancy International, 2001). There were no listed species (State or Federally recognized as threatened or endangered) observed during the focused avian survey conducted in 2000. However, based on literature review and CNDDDB analysis, the following species accounts of sensitive species are provided, which identifies the potential for these species to occur within the project area, based on occurrence data and presence of suitable habitat:

Coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica*)

Status: Federal Threatened, CDFG: Species of Concern

This species is an obligate, permanent (non-migratory) resident of coastal sage scrub, generally found below 2,500 feet in southern California. It is usually found in low, coastal sage scrub habitats in arid washes, on mesas and slopes. There is one documented sighting of an individual (1-3 pairs estimated) from 1980, at Baldwin Hills, in the vicinity of Culver City, just west of La Brea in the Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area. Currently, the nearest known sites occupied by these species are in the Palos Verdes Peninsula (approximately 16 miles away) and Montebello Hills east of downtown Los Angeles (approximately 14 miles away). Due to

the limited historic occurrence of this species in the project area and poor quality of the coastal sage scrub habitat at Baldwin Hills, there is a very limited potential for occurrence of this species within the project site.

Cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus couesi*)

Status: CDFG Species of Special Concern

This species is an obligate, permanent resident of the coastal sage scrub habitat. It is closely associated with three species of cacti and occurs almost exclusively in thickets of cholla (*Opuntia prolifera*) and prickly pear (*Opuntia littoralis* and *O. oricola*), dominated by stands of coastal sage scrub. This species has been documented at the Baldwin Hills during the Los Angeles Christmas Bird Count in 1952 (Community Conservancy International, 2001). The cactus wren has also been sighted at the Baldwin Hills between 1975 and 1996 (Community Conservancy International, 2001). There are no CNDDDB records for this species within the project vicinity. Due to the presence of *Opuntia* cactus and coastal sage scrub, there is a moderate potential for this species to occur at the project site.

California black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus*)

Status: Federal Species of Concern, State Threatened

This species mainly inhabits salt-marshes bordering larger bays and usually found in tidal marshes supporting dense stands of pickleweed. The species may also be found in fresh-water and brackish marshes at low elevations. There has been one documentation from 1974 of a dead California black rail near Playa Del Rey, approximately 4 miles from the project site. There is no suitable habitat for this species within Baldwin Hills. Therefore, there is a very limited potential for these species to occur within the project site.

Western snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrius nivosus*)

Status: Federal Threatened, CDFG Species of Concern

The federal listing applies only to the Pacific coastal population. This species prefers sandy beaches, salt pond levees and shores of alkali lakes and species needs sandy, gravelly or friable soils for nesting. Between 1894-1904 and in 1914, egg sets of this species have been collected at Playa Del Rey and Ballona Beach (Dockweiler State Beach). The Baldwin Hills does not support suitable nesting or foraging habitat for this species. Therefore, there is a very limited potential for occurrence of this species within the project site.

California least tern (*Sterna antillarum browni*)

Status: Federal Endangered, State Endangered

The nesting habitat of this species ranges from San Francisco Bay south to Baja California. This species is a colonial breeder and usually nests on bare or sparsely vegetated, flat substrates, including sand beaches, alkali flats, land fills or paved areas. The southern end of Venice Beach, North of Ballona Creek, which is part of Dockweiler beach has been occupied by a population of this species since 1898. The last record of California least tern at this location was in 1996 with 271 pairs. Other colonies historically recorded in the area near Beethoven street at Ballona Creek and Playa Del Rey marsh are believed to be extirpated. Although there is no suitable nesting habitat at Baldwin Hills, there is a moderate potential for this species to occur within the project site, in the flat terrains or paved surfaces of Baldwin Hills.

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*)

Status: Federal Species of Concern, CDFG Species of Special Concern

The nesting (burrow) habitat for this species includes open, dry or perennial grasslands, deserts and scrublands characterized by low-growing vegetation. The burrowing owl is a subterranean nester and often occupies burrows dug by other mammals, most notably the California ground squirrel. This species is also known to occupy man-made structures such as culverts and drainage pipes. Historically, the occurrence of this species has been documented in 1981 in the vicinity of Playa Del Rey and agricultural lands near junction of Culver and Jefferson Boulevards, in Los Angeles. Although Baldwin Hills does not support suitable habitat, this species

has a moderate potential for occurrence at the project site, due to man-made structures at Baldwin Hills, including oil rigs and drainage structures.

White-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*)

Status: CDFG Fully Protected Species

This species generally nests in stands of oaks, willows, sycamores, and other trees, and forages in low elevation open grasslands, agricultural areas and wetlands. There are no CNDDDB records for this species in the project area. However, individuals have been observed in 1947, 1998 and 2000 within the project area (Community Conservancy International, 2001). A pair was observed in 1997, in the southern portion of Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area (KHSRA) in the Baldwin Hills. This species has also been documented at Ballona Wetlands (Community Conservancy International, 2001). Although there is no suitable nesting habitat for this species at Baldwin Hills, the site does provide suitable foraging habitat in the form of grasslands. Therefore, there is a moderate potential for this species to occur within the project site.

Other Raptor Species

In addition to the white-tailed kite, there is a moderate potential for the following raptor species to occur as transients over the Baldwin Hills, due to the foraging habitat in the form of grasslands. There are no CNDDDB occurrence records for any of these species at Baldwin Hills. Their potential for utilization of the Baldwin Hills as a foraging habitat is a common element and therefore these species are collectively identified here as a guild, along with their individual status account:

- Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*); Status: CDFG Species of Special Concern.
- Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*); Status: CDFG Species of Special Concern.
- Sharp-shinned hawk (*Accipiter striatus*); Status: CDFG Species of Special Concern.
- American Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*); Status: State Endangered, Federal Endangered (1970), delisted (1999).

Mammals

Focused mammal surveys were conducted at the Baldwin Hills from March through June of 2000. The surveys were restricted to the KHSRA (Community Conservancy International, 2001) within Baldwin Hills. Twenty-eight mammal species were either observed or signs (such as scats, tracks, etc.) of mammals were detected or these species have a potential to occur at the Baldwin Hills, based on their historical presence and available habitat at the site. Some of the common mammal species detected or signs of such species detected include Virginia possum (*Didelphis virginiana*), Coyote (*Canis latrans*), Gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), domestic cat (*Felis silvestris*), striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), desert cotton tail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) and Botta's pocket gopher (*Tomomys bottae*) (Community Conservancy International, 2001). There were no federally or state listed threatened or endangered mammal species encountered during the survey. The following species accounts of sensitive species are discussed further.

Pacific pocket mouse (*Perognathus longimembris pacificus*) Status: Federal endangered, CDFG Species of Concern

This species is generally associated with narrow coastal plains from the Mexican border north to El Segundo, Los Angeles County. The Pacific pocket mouse prefers soils of fine alluvial sands near the ocean but little is known about its microhabitat requirements. This species was not found during the survey conducted in 2000. CNDDDB records indicate collection of specimens between 1918 and 1938 from Playa Del Rey and El Segundo area. Due to the lack of suitable habitat at Baldwin Hills, there is very limited potential for occurrence of this species within the project site.

San Diego desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida intermedia*)

Status: CDFG Species of Special Concern

This species is generally associated with moderate to dense canopy chaparral, Riversidian sage scrub, woodlands, rocky outcrops, and rocky slopes and is often found in areas with prickly pear cactus. This species occurs in arid regions up to 8,500 feet above sea levels, from San Luis Obispo County to northwest Baja California. This species was the most common mammal detected during the survey (Community Conservancy International, 2001). There have also been historic collections of these species from 1930s to the 1970s for Baldwin Hills. Due to these reasons, there is a high potential for this species to occur within the project site.

Pallid Bat (*Antrozous pallidus*)

Status: CDFG Species of Special Concern

This species is generally associated with open, dry habitats from grasslands, open scrub, shrublands, woodlands and forests. Day roosts are typically in caves, crevices, mines, buildings and hollow trees. The Pallid bat is a year long resident throughout lower elevations of California. There are no CNDDDB records for this species and this species for the project vicinity and these species were not detected during the surveys conducted at Baldwin Hills. Therefore there is a very limited potential for this species to occur within the project site.

Western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*)

Status: Federal Species of Concern and CDFG Species of Special Concern

This species is an uncommon resident of interior and coastal regions of central and southern California, occurring in a variety of open, arid habitats. The species generally roosts in cliff faces, high building tees, and tunnels. There are no CNDDDB records for this species and this species for the project vicinity and these species were not detected during the surveys conducted at Baldwin Hills. Therefore there is a very limited potential for this species to occur within the project site.

Insects

A survey for arthropod fauna was conducted at the Baldwin Hills during June and July of 2000 (Community Conservancy International, 2001). The survey revealed that exotic arthropods such as Argentine ants (*Linepithema humile*), the Pill Bug (*Armadillidium vulgare*) and European Earwig (*Forficula auricularia*) were the most abundant species at Baldwin Hills. There were not federally or state listed endangered or threatened species detected during the survey. The following species accounts of sensitive species are discussed further.

El Segundo blue butterfly (*Euphilotes battoides allyni*)

Status: Federal Endangered

This species is generally restricted to remnant coastal dune habitat in southern California. The hostplant is sea cliff buckwheat (*Eriogonum parrifolium*). The larvae feed exclusively on the flowers and seeds and the plants are major source of nectar for the adults. This species was not detected during the survey conducted at Baldwin Hills, however, there are two CNDDDB occurrence records for this species, both at the El Segundo dunes, which is well outside the project vicinity. There are no suitable habitat for this species at Baldwin Hills in the form of the host plants. Therefore, there is a very limited potential for occurrence of this species within the project site.

Palos Verdes blue butterfly (*Galucopsyche lygdamus palosverdesensis*)

Status: Federal Endangered

This species exclusively depends on its host plant, the Ocean milk-vetch (*Astragalus trichopodus* var. *lonchus*) for its survival. This species was believed to be extinct until in 1994 it was rediscovered in a naval property on the Palos Verdes Peninsula. This species was not detected during the survey conducted at Baldwin Hills and there are no CNDDDB occurrence records for this species for the project vicinity. The Baldwin Hills does not support the host plants of this species. Due to these reasons, there is a very limited potential for this species to occur within the project site.

Quino checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas editha quino*)

Status: Federal Endangered

This species once ranged throughout the coastal sage scrub habitats of southern California. Currently this species is known from only a few populations in Riverside and San Diego Counties. The butterfly depends on dwarf plantain (*Plantago erecta*) and paintbrush (*Castilleja exserta*) for its food. This species was not detected during the survey conducted at Baldwin Hills and there are no CNDDDB occurrence records for this species for the project vicinity. The Baldwin Hills does not support the host plants of this species. Due to these reasons, there is a very limited potential for this species to occur within the project site.

Sandy beach tiger beetle (*Cicindela hirticollis gravida*)

Status: Federal Species of Concern

This species generally inhabits areas adjacent to non-brackish water along the coast of California from San Francisco Bay to Northern Mexico and prefers clean, dry, light-colored sand in the upper zone. Subterranean larvae prefer moist sand not affected by wave action. This species was not detected during the survey conducted at Baldwin Hills, however, there is one CNDDDB occurrence record for this species in the Playa Del Rey area, believed to be extirpated. There is no suitable habitat for this species within Baldwin Hills. Due to these reasons, there is a very limited potential for occurrence of this species within the project site.

Globose dune beetle (*Coelus globosus*)

Status: Federal Species of Concern

This species generally inhabits coastal dune habitat, from Bodega Head in Sonoma County, south to Ensenada, Mexico. This species prefers foredunes and sand hummocks and burrows beneath the sand surface and commonly found beneath dune vegetation. This species was not detected during the survey, however, there is one CNDDDB occurrence record for this species from 1981 in the foredunes bordering the Dockweiler State Beach. There is no suitable habitat for this species within Baldwin Hills. Due to these reasons, there is a very limited potential for occurrence of this species within the project site.

Wildlife Dispersion Corridors

A wildlife corridor is an area of open space including one or more types of habitat connecting two or more larger areas of open space. It is essentially free of physical barriers such as fences and developed areas and allows for ease of wildlife dispersion between habitat patches. Canyon bottoms, streams, rivers, riparian corridors and some ridges with well-developed tree canopy often serve as wildlife corridors and offer food, shelter, and water, as well as ease of movement. Generally, because most birds, (except non-migratory species and those with limited habitat preferences) can fly between habitat patches fragmented by development, wildlife corridors are generally discussed in terms of their ability to allow dispersion of mammals and some reptiles.

As described earlier, the WLAC is surrounded on the northeast, southeast and southern sides by highly developed and urbanized settings, consisting of a mix of residential and light industrial areas. The only natural, open space area is towards the north, west and southwest of the campus, which consists of the Baldwin Hills site, with the Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area (KHSRA) west of La Cienega Boulevard, which bisects the Baldwin hills north-south through the center. The Ballona Creek extends north south on the eastern portion of the Baldwin Hills. This creek historically formed a wildlife corridor link between the Baldwin Hills and wetlands at the mouth of the Ballona Creek. However, this connection has been essentially severed due to the channelization of the creek. In addition, large-scale urbanization surrounding the Baldwin Hills and the campus has also effectively isolated the project site from other natural areas in the region, including the Santa Monica Mountains to the north.

Thresholds of Significance

In accordance with Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, the proposed project would have a significant impact on the biological resources if it would:

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

Project Impacts

In evaluating the impacts of the proposed developments at the WLAC and the off-site second access routes through the Baldwin Hills, two types of impacts may be considered: direct and indirect impacts. Direct impacts can result from such activities as construction, grading, and filling of habitats. Other direct impacts may include the loss of individual species from habitat clearing or construction-related mortality; loss of foraging, nesting or burrowing habitat for wildlife species, or alteration of substrates, which prevents re-establishment of native vegetation.

Indirect impacts occur when project-related activities affect biological resources in a less overt manner. Such impacts include elevated noise and light levels, erosion of hillsides and/or sedimentation and siltation of aquatic habitats, and production of fugitive dust emissions.

Both direct and indirect impacts can be identified as either temporary or permanent, depending upon the duration of impacts. Temporary impacts are impacts that may be considered to have reversible effects on biological resources. Example of temporary impacts includes noise and light generated from construction activities, production of fugitive dust emissions during construction and construction traffic. Permanent impacts are those impacts resulting in the irreversible removal, disturbance, or destruction of biological resources. The proposed project implementation will result in both direct and indirect impacts to biological resources that may be either permanent or temporary in nature.

In determining if these potential impacts are significant to plant and wildlife species, the actual and potential occurrence of sensitive species in the project area is correlated with the thresholds of significance defined earlier.

Potential Impacts to Vegetation Communities or Habitat

Campus

As stated earlier, no native vegetation communities exist on the campus. Almost all of the proposed construction footprint will occur in developed areas devoid of natural habitats. In general, the vegetation that may be removed during construction of the new facilities would primarily include a few individual horticultural trees and shrubs and therefore this would not be considered a significant impact. However, the potential removal or destruction of one or more active nests of birds listed under the MBTA and CDFG Code, whether nest damage was due to tree removal or to other construction activities would be considered a violation of the MBTA and therefore a significant impact. Mitigation Measures for potential impacts to nesting birds are

proposed under Potential Impacts to General Wildlife Species, which is expected to reduce the impacts to a level below significance.

Baldwin Hills

Impacts to vegetation communities from the construction and operation of any of the three proposed second access routes across Baldwin Hills, are dependent upon the finalization of the alignment, final design specifications and footprint of the alignment disturbance. In general, except for a small area of native coastal sage scrub vegetation occurring along the southern portion of the proposed Route C, the majority of the area where the three routes are proposed do not support native vegetation. This area is predominantly disturbed with greater than 90% consisting of non-native, ruderal vegetation. However, such non-native communities do provide nesting, foraging, roosting and denning opportunities for many wildlife species. The potential loss or degradation of coastal sage scrub and non-native vegetation communities, even though potentially minimal, is anticipated to be significant. However, construction mitigation measures are proposed, which would reduce impacts to vegetation a level below significance.

Potential Impacts to General Wildlife Species

Campus

Due to the predominantly developed nature of the campus and heavy occupation by humans, there is very limited potential for even common wildlife species to occur on the campus, however small mammals, reptiles, amphibians and other fauna of slow mobility, which may be expected to occur on campus, would be subject to mortality or displacement from the proposed project implementation. More mobile wildlife species and noise-sensitive species currently using these habitats would be expected to avoid the immediate construction zone and neighboring areas, with the initiation of construction activities and over the life of the project. However, as stated earlier the potential removal or destruction of one or more active nests of birds listed under the MBTA and CDFG Code, whether nest damage was due to tree removal or to other construction activities would be considered a violation of the MBTA and therefore a significant impact. Mitigation Measures for potential impacts to nesting birds are proposed, which is expected to reduce the impacts to a level below significance.

Baldwin Hills

The scenario described above may also be expected relative to the proposed construction and operation of the second access route in the Baldwin Hills. Common wildlife species, which inhabit, move through or forage in the disturbed habitats would be subject to mortality or displacement and more mobile species would avoid the area with the initiation of construction activities. The minimal loss of common wildlife species would not reduce the populations of common wildlife species at Baldwin Hills or in the region, below self-sustaining numbers. Therefore, the impacts would be considered less than significant. However, as stated earlier the potential removal or destruction of one or more active nests of birds listed under the MBTA and CDFG Code, whether nest damage was due to tree removal or to other construction activities would be considered a violation of the MBTA and therefore a significant impact. Mitigation Measures for potential impacts to nesting birds are proposed, which is expected to reduce the impacts to a level below significance.

Potential Impacts to Special-status Plant Species

Campus

Due to the predominantly developed nature of the campus and footprint of the proposed construction activities, no impacts to any special status plant species from proposed construction activities on campus are anticipated. The survey conducted on campus did not reveal any individual special-status plant species or habitats to support such species. No mitigation measures are necessary.

Baldwin Hills

There are a number of federal and state listed plant species and CNPS Category 1B and 2 species that could potentially occur at Baldwin Hills, as described earlier in the species accounts. Focused surveys conducted at Baldwin Hills did not detect these species and database analysis indicates limited distribution of these species at this site. However, there is a limited potential for occurrence of these sensitive species, based on the presence of habitat, including coastal sage scrub, riparian areas and grassland. If individual federal or state listed species or if sizeable populations of CNPS Category 1 or 2 plant species are present within the impact zone of the proposed second route alignments, these species may be lost through project implementation, including construction-related impacts from grading and filling activities. This would represent a potential significant impact. Mitigation measures for impacts to special-status plant species are proposed, which are expected to reduce the impacts to less than significant levels. Mitigation measures for impacts to special-status plant species are proposed, which are expected to reduce the impacts to less than significant levels.

Potential Impacts to Special-status Wildlife Species

Campus

Due to the predominantly developed nature of the campus and footprint of the proposed construction activities, no impacts to any special status wildlife species from proposed construction activities on campus are anticipated. The survey conducted on campus did not reveal any individual special-status wildlife species or habitats to support such species. However, the potential removal or destruction of one or more active nests of birds listed under the MBTA and CDFG Code due to tree removal or to other construction activities would be considered a violation of the MBTA and therefore a significant impact. Mitigation Measure for potential impact to nesting birds are proposed, which is expected to reduce the impacts to a level below significance.

Baldwin Hills

There are a number of federal and state listed wildlife species and CDFG Species of Concern and Species of Special Concern that could potentially occur at Baldwin Hills, as described earlier in the species accounts. Focused surveys conducted at Baldwin Hills did not detect these species and database analysis indicates limited distribution of these species at this site. The potential impacts from construction and operation of the second access route are discussed further for these special-status species. Some of these species are grouped as “guilds”, due to their common general ecological requirements and characteristics.

Reptiles

Southwestern Pond Turtle, Two-striped Garter Snake, South Coast Garter snake

There is no suitable aquatic habitat in the form of permanent water bodies, streams or dense riparian vegetation for these species. Although there are some seasonal ponds at Baldwin Hills, these ponds are not within the proposed alignment routes. Therefore, no impacts to these species are anticipated. No Mitigation measures are necessary.

Coastal Western Whiptail, Silvery Legless Lizard, Coast Patch-nosed Snake

At Baldwin Hills, these species are likely to be associated with grassland and coastal scrub habitats. Direct permanent loss of these habitats would occur from grading and filling and could result in direct mortality or injury to these species. These potential impacts are considered to be adverse but less than significant as these populations occur in other areas of their geographical range and impacts from construction of the second access route are not likely to substantially lower the regional populations of these species below a viable level. With the initiation of construction activities, these species are expected to move into adjacent areas. In addition, given the relatively small acreage of impacts anticipated to grassland and coastal sage scrub, potential impacts are considered less than significant. Therefore, no mitigation measures are necessary.

San Diego Horned Lizard

This species may be found in the coastal scrub and in the riparian habitat at Baldwin Hills. Although focused surveys at Baldwin Hills did not identify any individuals, there are ant colonies present, which provide forage for this species. This species may have gone undetected during the surveys. Heavy vehicle traffic and associated construction activities could result in direct mortality or injury to this species. These potential impacts are considered to be adverse but less than significant as the population of this species occurs in other areas of their geographical range and impacts from construction of the second access route are not likely to substantially lower the regional populations of these species below a viable level. In addition, given the relatively small acreage of impacts anticipated, potential impacts are considered less than significant. Therefore, no mitigation measures are necessary.

Birds

Coastal California Gnatcatcher, Cactus wren

These species are obligate coastal sage scrub species. Within the proposed alignments of the second access routes, there is only marginal coastal sage scrub nesting habitat and no *Opuntia* cactus occurring, which are preferred foraging habitat of the cactus wren. In addition, only a very minimal area of coastal sage scrub could be impacted if one of the proposed routes, Route C, is implemented. There are no recent records of observance of this species documented for the project area and as such, the species is presumed absent. In addition, with the implementation of Pre-construction Vegetation Impact Avoidance Measures, the project is not expected to have any impacts on the species. No mitigation measures necessary.

Burrowing Owl

The grassland habitat at Baldwin Hills and man-made structures, including drainage pipes could potential provide a limited quality breeding and foraging habitat. However, there are no records of occurrence for this species at Baldwin Hills. If individuals of this species or burrows are present within the proposed route alignments, the heavy vehicle traffic and associated construction activities could result in loss of occupied burrows and/or result in mortality or injury to individuals. Subsequent use of the routes could also result in loss of burrow or individuals. This impact is considered significant and therefore mitigation measures are proposed to reduce the level below significance.

Foraging Transient Raptors – White-tailed Kite, Northern Harrier, Cooper’s Hawk, Sharp-skinned Hawk, Peregrine Falcon

The white-tailed kite, northern harrier, Cooper’s hawk, sharp-skinned hawk and peregrine falcon could all occur over the Baldwin Hills as transients due to potential foraging habitat in the form of grasslands. Loss of grassland forage sites for these species has been occurring throughout Los Angeles County and the species may be regionally declining for this reason. Depending upon the final selection of the route and design, this loss of grassland habitat could be significant. Therefore, mitigation measure is proposed, to reduce the impacts to a level below significance.

Mammals

San Diego Desert Woodrat

This species was the most common species detected during the focused survey at Baldwin Hills, which is likely to be associated with coastal sage scrub and areas where *Opuntia* cactus are prevalent, which does not occur within the proposed second route alignments. Grading and filling activities from route construction could result in some mortality to individuals. However, this species being very mobile, is expected to avoid the area with the initiation of construction activity. The loss of individual woodrats would represent adverse but less than significant impacts, given the lack of suitable habitat within the proposed alignment routes. Any loss of individuals is not

expected to substantially reduce local populations below self-sustaining numbers. Therefore, impacts are considered to be less than significant. No mitigation measures are necessary.

Pallid Bat, Western Mastiff Bat

Suitable roosting sites for these species such as caves, crevices, mines, cliff faces, tunnels, etc., are not present at the project site and indeed within the proposed alignments of the second access routes at Baldwin hills. In addition, there are no historic records of occurrence of these species at this site. The focused surveys also did not detect these species. Therefore, the construction and operation of second access route is not expected to have any impacts on these species. No mitigation measures are necessary.

Insects

El Segundo Blue Butterfly, Palos Verdes Blue Butterfly, Quino Checkerspot Butterfly

The adults and larvae of these species depend exclusively on specific host plants for their foraging. As identified in their species accounts, these host plants do not occur within Baldwin Hills. There are also very limited historic records of occurrence of these species in the project area. Focused surveys did not detect these species. Therefore, the construction of the proposed second access routes are not expected to have any impacts on these species. No mitigation measures are necessary.

Cumulative Impacts

The Environmental Setting Section (Section IV) provides a list of related projects that are planned or are under construction in the Project area. None of the related projects fall near localities in which sensitive biological resources have been recorded. Therefore, the potential that any of these projects would result in disturbance of potentially suitable habitats that support special-status plant or wildlife species is unlikely. In addition, each project will be subject to CEQA review and will incorporate mitigation measures as appropriate if necessary. The proposed project, with the incorporation of mitigation measures proposed, would not contribute to any potentially significant impacts to biological resources in the project area.

Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures are proposed, to reduce the level of significant impacts to particular plant or wildlife species to a level below significance.

Pre-construction Measures to Avoid Impacts to Vegetation

To minimize loss of natural vegetation communities during construction, the following pre-construction measures will be implemented:

- BR-1** Prior to initiation of construction activities for any second access route, a qualified biologist will conduct a vegetation survey of the proposed alignment route. If coastal sage scrub habitat is found within the impact zone of the construction footprint, then design changes shall be considered to avoid or minimize impacts to coastal sage scrub.
If avoidance to coastal sage scrub habitat is infeasible, then mitigation to offset permanent impacts to coastal sage scrub will be implemented. Revegetation of coastal sage scrub at a suitable on-site or off-site area shall be implemented. Mitigation shall be implemented at a 1:1 or 2:1 ratio, depending upon habitat quality. All aspects of the revegetation shall be coordinated with the USFWS and/or CDFG.
- BR-2** The boundaries of the final construction area and construction access routes along the final access route alignment (at Baldwin Hills) shall be marked with stakes and flags. No construction activities, vehicular access, equipment storage, stockpiling, or significant human intrusion shall occur outside of this designated construction zone.

- BR-3** The Applicant shall utilize only EPA approved pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, dust suppressants, or other potentially harmful substances shall be applied within the construction area, in accordance with relevant state and federal regulations.

Mitigation Measures for Potential Impacts to Special-status Plant Species

The following mitigation measures shall be implemented for minimization of potential impacts to special-status plant species, which includes state and federally recognized threatened and endangered species, CNPS Category 1B and Category 2 species:

- BR-4** Preconstruction surveys by a qualified botanist shall be conducted for special-status plant species prior to ground-disturbing activities for construction of a second access road. The survey shall be conducted during the appropriate growing season (generally during the flowering period), the first season prior to ground-disturbing activities. Surveys shall follow the protocols identified in “*Rare Plants Surveys: Techniques for Impact Assessment*”, James R. Nelson.
- If any special-status plants are found within the secondary access route construction footprint, then if feasible, route alignment changes shall be implemented to avoid impacts and left undisturbed. To ensure this, populations of plants would be protected by installation of an orange plastic fencing around them. No construction activity shall be allowed within these protected areas.
- If avoidance is infeasible, then potential salvaging of topsoil and storage of the seedbank for later spreading at a suitable location off-site or on-site shall be conducted. Or actual relocation of plants at a suitable location off-site by a qualified botanist shall be conducted. These operations shall be coordinated with the appropriate resource agencies, such as the USFWS or CDFG.

Mitigation Measures for Potential Impacts for Potential Impacts to Burrowing Owl

The following mitigation measures shall be implemented for mitigation of potential impacts to burrowing owls:

- BR-5** A preconstruction survey of burrowing owls and occupied burrows shall be conducted in accordance with guidelines provided in the California Burrowing Owl consortium (1997) prior to any ground disturbing activities for construction of a second access road.
- If burrowing owls or occupied burrows are found within 500 feet of proposed construction of the access route, then active burrows shall be flagged and impacts avoided, if feasible, through alignment design changes.
- If avoidance is not feasible, then unoccupied burrows may be collapsed or, individuals may be trapped and relocated to other suitable habitats. These operations shall be coordinated with USFWS and CDFG.

Mitigation Measures for Potential Impacts to Grasslands (Raptor Foraging Habitat)

The following mitigation measures shall be implemented for mitigation of potential impacts to grasslands:

- BR-6** To offset permanent impacts to grassland raptor foraging habitat in the construction footprint of the second access road, the Applicant shall provide revegetation of a suitable on-site or off-site area. Mitigation shall be implemented at a 1:1 or 2:1 ratio, depending upon habitat quality. The ‘revegetated raptor foraging grassland habitat’ would be set aside. Only native grass species shall be used in the Revegetation. Enhancement of existing grassland by removal of non-native species may also be evaluated as an option to restoration. The ratio of grassland area to be enhanced will be determined in consultation with USFWS and CDFG. The grassland restoration shall also be coordinated with these agencies.

Mitigation of Impacts to Migratory Nesting Birds (MBTA and Fish and Game Code 3503)

The following mitigation measures shall be implemented for mitigation of potential impacts to migratory nesting birds:

- BR-7** In order to avoid violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and Fish and Game Code 3503 due to potential impacts to nesting birds from removal of trees on the campus and along the second access road, an attempt shall be made to limit grubbing and removal of trees during the bird breeding season (generally between March 1 to September 1, and as early as February 1 for raptors). If the bird-breeding season cannot be avoided, then a qualified biologist shall be retained to initiate surveys for nesting birds within the construction zones, 30 days prior to initiation of construction activities and weekly thereafter, with the last survey not more than 3 days prior to the initiation of construction, to minimize the potential for nesting following the survey and prior to construction. If the ornithologist detects any occupied nest or nests of native birds within the construction footprint, then, the area(s) supporting the bird nests shall be flagged off and a minimum buffer of 300 feet and limits of construction shall be provided. This buffer shall be 500 feet for raptors. In addition, the construction crew will be instructed to avoid any activities in this buffer zone, until the bird nests are vacated, per a subsequent survey by a qualified biologist.

Significant Project Impacts After Mitigation

With the inclusion of the identified mitigation measures, the proposed project would not result in a significant unavoidable impact on biological resources.