

February 6, 2020

Henry Suarez Yalla Yalla LLC 1030 Foothill Boulevard, Suite 201 La Cañada, CA, 91011

SUBJECT: BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT 2730 ONYX, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Dear Mr. Suarez,

At your request, Hamilton Biological has prepared this biological assessment that the City of Los Angeles (the City) has requested in association with planning of a proposed residential project at 2730 Onyx Drive. The property covers 3.90 acres and is located in the eastern part of Los Angeles (Figures 1, 2).



Figure 1. The 3.9-acre project site is located in the in the eastern part of the City of Los Angeles. Aerial Source: Google Earth Pro.

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Figure 2. The property is located west of North Mission Road /Huntington Drive North, and north of Commodore Street. The surrounding land uses consist of low-density hillside residential housing and light industrial. Natural open space of Ascot Hills Park lies a sixth of a mile to the east, and Abraham Lincoln Senior High School lies a quarter-mile to the southwest. Aerial Source: Google Earth Pro.

The proposed project involves grading most of the site to construct 32 single-family residences and associated infrastructure. The goals of this study were: (1) to characterize the property's vegetation; (2) to identify the plant and wildlife species observed on the property; (3) to evaluate the potential for any listed and otherwise sensitive plant or wildlife species to occur on the property; and (4) to determine whether implementation of the proposed project could entail any impacts considered significant under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This letter report describes the study's methods, reports my observations, and specifies my recommendations and conclusions.

METHODS

I reviewed all plans and materials sent to me by members of the project team, including a Protected Tree Report for the property, dated November 21, 2017, prepared by Certified Arborist Kevin Holman, and the tree replacement plan for the project, prepared by Corsini Stark Architects, LLP.

On October 12, 2019, I accessed the California Native Plant Society's Online Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants (http://rareplants.cnps.org) and the Consortium of California Herbaria web page (http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/consortium) and searched for sensitive plant species known from the project vicinity.

On October 12 and November 6, 2019, I reviewed the California Natural Diversity Data Base (2019a, 2019b, 2019c) to develop lists of sensitive plant and wildlife species recorded in the U.S. Geologic Survey's Los Angeles 7.5' topographic quadrangle.

On October 15, 2019, I conducted a field visit from 1:10 to 3:00 p.m. Temperature was 81° F, skies were clear, and winds were 2–5 miles per hour. I recorded all plant species observed on the site and all wildlife species on and adjacent to the site. I also evaluated the potential for wildlife to move through the site.

On November 3, 2019, I reviewed eBird data from the project vicinity, especially from nearby Ascot Hills Park (http://ebird.org).

On November 3, 2019, I reviewed Los Angeles County's Sensitive Bird Species (Allen et al. 2009).

On November 4, 2019, I reviewed soils information for the property on Soilweb (<u>https://casoilresource.lawr.ucdavis.edu/gmap/</u>).

On February 5, 2020, I reviewed questions from the City regarding Southern California Black Walnut (*Juglans californica*) and how impacts to this species are being addressed on this project.

RESULTS

In the following discussions, scientific names are provided only for plant species, and for and wildlife species not recorded during the surveys. Please refer to the attached species lists for the scientific names of all species recorded during the surveys.

Surrounding Land Uses, Topography, Soils

The site lies within a hillside residential neighborhood characterized by long-standing neighborhoods interspersed with limited patches of undeveloped land (see Figures 2 and 3). Approximately one-sixth of a mile to the east lies the 93-acre Ascot Hills Park.

The project site occupies an east-southeast-facing slope within the watershed of the Los Angeles River. Elevation on the property ranges from approximately 965 feet at the northeastern corner of the property to 1,160 feet at the western tip. Forest Park Drive runs roughly north/south through the western part of the property. Water runs off the site from west to east via overland flow, as the site lacks any streambeds or gullies with defined bed and bank.

Soils on the site are classified as "Counterfeit-Nacimiento, warm-Urban land association, 20 to 55 percent slopes." The main parts of this soil type are Counterfeit, characterized by "human-transported material consisting mostly of colluvium and/or residuum weathered from sedimentary rock," and Nacimiento, characterized by "colluvium and/or residuum weathered from sandstone and siltstone."

Vegetation

All plant species observed on the property are listed in Appendix A to this report. Figures 3–5, on the next page, show the existing conditions. The property shows signs of repeated disturbance, being vegetated predominantly with exotic vegetation, especially Russian Thistle (*Salsola tragus*) and Tree-of-Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*).



Figure 3. Photo taken from the southern-central part of the site, facing north. Most of the vegetation in this photo is Russian Thistle, and much of the property looks like this. October 15, 2019.

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Figure 4. Photo taken from near Forest Park Drive, at the upper (western) end of the property, facing east. A Peruvian Pepper tree is visible at right. Some of the site's native walnut trees are visible toward the bottom of the slope October 15, 2019.

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Figure 5. Photo taken from near the upper (western) end of the property, facing southeast, showing an extensive area of invasive, exotic Tree-of-Heaven seedlings. October 15, 2019.

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Numerous other exotic species occur on the site, including the Peruvian Pepper Tree (*Schinus molle*), Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*), Castor Bean (*Ricinus communis*), Tree Tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*), Short-pod Mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), Field Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), Flax-leaved Horseweed (*Erigeron bonariensis*), Cheeseweed (*Malva parviflora*), Ripgut Brome (*Bromus diandrus*), and Smilo Grass (*Stipa miliacea*).

Historically, the property likely supported a mixture of coastal sage scrub and walnut woodland, but only scattered remnants of these natural communities remain. The Protected Tree Report for the property (Holman 2017) identifies 34 Southern California Black Walnuts (*Juglans californica*) on the site, and describes them on page 8:

The physical condition of the California black walnuts is poor and all are in decline from a condition of normal health and vigor. All trees have visible damage from borers and Thousand Canker disease (TCD). TCD is a disease occurring on walnut species. It is caused by the interaction of bark beetles (*Pityophthorus juglandis*) feeding on trees and then spreading a fungus (*Geosmithia morbida*) and canker formations, creating a disease. There is currently no known treatment and the disease is ultimately fatal. Restoration of the trees through appropriate and economically reasonable preservation procedures and practices are not advisable, as at this point in time, there is no therapeutic cure.

Only a few individuals of six other native plant species were detected: Narrow-leaved Milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*), California Sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), wreath-plant (*Stephanomeria* sp.), Saw-toothed Goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*), White Sage (*Salvia apiana*), and Broad-scaled Palmer's Goldenbush (*Ericameria palmeri* var. *pachyle-pis*). The 34 walnut trees and scattered other native plants, dispersed among large areas of invasive weeds, do not currently constitute an intact natural community, but are considered a remnant of a former walnut woodland community that would have been present historically.

Wildlife

Appendix A to this report lists all wildlife species detected on the property.

Birds are the most conspicuous forms of wildlife in the area, and 16 species common in the region were detected during the field survey, including Anna's Hummingbird, Allen's Hummingbird, Nuttall's Woodpecker, American Crow, Say's Phoebe, Northern Mockingbird, House Finch, and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

Amphibians and reptiles that potentially occur on the project site mainly consist of widespread and relatively human-tolerant species, such as the Western Toad (*Bufo boreas*), Western Fence Lizard (*Sceloperus occidentalis*), and Side-blotched Lizard (*Uta stansburiana*).

A California Ground Squirrel (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*) was observed, as were the diggings of Botta's Pocket Gopher (*Thomomys bottae*). Other mammal species expected to occur on the site include Desert Cottontail (*Sylvilagus audbonii*) and Coyote (*Canis latrans*).

SENSITIVE BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Sensitive Species

Sensitive species are listed as threatened or endangered by state or federal governments, or are of current local, regional or state concern (see California Natural Diversity Database 2019a, 2019b, 2019c; Allen et al. 2009). Legal protection for sensitive species varies widely, from the relatively comprehensive protection extended to listed threatened/endangered species to no legal status at present. Species that are clearly not rare or threatened statewide or regionally, but whose local populations are sparse, rapidly dwindling or otherwise unstable, may be considered to be of "local interest."

One sensitive plant species, the Southern California Black Walnut, was observed on the site during the field visit. Other sensitive species have been recorded in the general vicinity of eastern Los Angeles. Table A provides information on special-status plants and wildlife with potential to occur on the site, or that have been recorded in the general vicinity of the site. The potential for occurrence (low, moderate, high, or known to be present) is based upon consideration of the species' habitat requirements and the distribution of previous verified or highly credible records.

Table A uses the following abbreviations:

- **E Endangered** (listed by State or Federal governments). "Take" of the species or disturbance of occupied habitat are prohibited unless specifically authorized.
- **FP Fully Protected** by the State of California. These species may not be taken or possessed at any time, although take may be authorized for necessary scientific research.

- **T Threatened** (listed by State or Federal governments). "Take" of the species or disturbance of occupied habitat are prohibited unless specifically authorized.
- SSC Species of Special Concern. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has designated certain vertebrate species as Species of Special Concern because declining population levels, limited ranges, and/or continuing threats have made them vulnerable to extinction. The goal of designating species as Species of Special Concern is to halt or reverse their decline by calling attention to their plight and addressing the issues of concern early enough to secure their long term viability. Not all Species of Special Concern have declined equally; some species may be just starting to decline, while others may have already reached the point where they meet the criteria for listing as a Threatened or Endangered species under the State and/or Federal Endangered Species Acts.
- **CNPS California Native Plant Society.** Table A includes plant species assigned the following ranks by CNPS:
 - **1A**, referring to species CNPS presumes to be extinct.
 - **1B.1**, referring to species CNPS considers to be rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere; seriously threatened in California (over 80% of occurrences threatened / high degree and immediacy of threat).
 - **1B.2**, referring to species CNPS considers to be rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere; moderately threatened in California (20-80% of occurrences threatened / moderate degree and immediacy of threat).
 - **1B.3**, referring to species CNPS considers to be rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere; not very threatened in California (less than 20% of occurrences threatened / moderate degree and immediacy of threat).
 - 2B.2, referring to species CNPS considers to be rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere; moderately threatened in California (20-80% occurrences threatened / moderate degree and immediacy of threat).
 - **4.1**, referring to species of limited distribution or infrequent throughout a broader area in California, whose status should be monitored regularly; moderately threatened in California (>80% occurrences threatened / moderate degree and immediacy of threat).
 - **4.2**, referring to species of limited distribution or infrequent throughout a broader area in California, whose status should be monitored regularly; moderately threatened in California (20-80% occurrences threatened / moderate degree and immediacy of threat).
 - **4.3**, referring to species of limited distribution or infrequent throughout a broader area in California, whose status should be monitored regularly; not very threatened in California (less than 20% of occurrences threatened / low degree and immediacy of threat or no current threats known).
- NatureServe Element Rankings. In some cases, species have not been granted special status by state or federal agencies, but they may be recognized as ecologically sensitive by the California Natural Diversity Database, which uses a ranking methodology maintained by NatureServe. Species are given a Global

rank (G-rank) that applies to the taxon's entire distribution, and a State rank (S-rank) that applies to the taxon's state distribution. Taxa with rankings of G1, G2, G3, S1, S2, or S3 may be considered "sensitive" and potentially worthy of special consideration in resource planning. NatureServe Element Rankings are identified in Table A only for taxa that have no other federal or state/CNPS special status. If no rank provided, either the taxon's rank is above G3/S3 (and is thus considered "apparently secure" or "secure" at global and state levels) or the taxon is not yet ranked.

NatureServe Ranks:

- **G1, Critically Imperiled,** referring to taxa at very high risk of extinction due to extreme rarity (often 5 or fewer populations), very steep declines, or other factors.
- **G2, Imperiled,** referring to taxa at high risk of extinction due to very restricted range, very few populations (often 20 or fewer), steep declines, or other factors.
- **G3, Vulnerable,** referring to taxa at moderate risk of extinction due to a restricted range, relatively few populations (often 80 or fewer), recent and widespread declines, or other factors.
- **S1, Critically Imperiled,** referring to taxa critically imperiled in the state because of extreme rarity (often 5 or fewer populations) or because of factor(s) such as very steep declines making it especially vulnerable to extirpation from the state.
- **S2, Imperiled,** referring to taxa imperiled in the state because of rarity due to very restricted range, very few populations (often 20 or fewer), steep declines, or other factors making it very vulnerable to extirpation from the state.
- **S3, Vulnerable,** referring to taxa vulnerable in the state due to a restricted range, relatively few populations (often 80 or fewer), recent and widespread declines, or other factors making it vulnerable to extirpation from the state.

Latin name	Common name	Fed	State	CNPS	Local and/or Regional Status	Discussion
Plants						
Atriplex serenana var. davidsonii	Davidson's Saltscale		_	1B.2	Associated with wetlands and coastal sage scrub. A few historical records from Los Angeles and surroundings.	Very low potential for oc- currence, due to extreme disturbance of property.
Calochortus catalinae	Catalina Mariposa Lily	_		4.2	Widespread in region. Historical records from project vicinity.	Very low potential for oc- currence, due to extreme disturbance of property.
Calochortus plummerae	Plummer's Mariposa Lily	_		4.2	Widespread in region. Historical records from project vicinity.	Very low potential for oc- currence, due to extreme disturbance of property.
Helianthus nuttallii ssp. parishii	Los Angeles Sunflower			1A	Associated with wetlands. Recent records from near Santa Clara River.	Does not occur. No suitable habitat on property.

Table A. Special-Status Species

Latin name	Common name	Fed	State	CNPS	Local and/or Regional Status	Discussion
Horkelia cuneata ssp. puberula	Mesa Horkelia	_	_	1B.1	Sandy openings in native communities. Scattered records across the region.	Does not occur. No suitable habitat on property.
Juglans californica	Southern California Black Walnut		_	4.2	Widespread in region.	Occurs on property; 31 trees documented in Protected Tree Report.
Lepidium virginicum var. robinsonii	Robinson's Peppergrass			4.3	Associated with coastal sage scrub. A few historical records from Los Angeles and surroundings.	Very low potential for oc- currence, due to extreme disturbance of property.
Phacelia hubbyi	Hubby's Phacelia		_	4.2	Occurs in openings in natural communities. Recent record from Lincoln Heights.	Does not occur. No suitable habitat on property.
Sidalcea neomexicana	Salt Spring Checker- bloom		_	2B.2	Associated with coastal sage scrub. A few historical records from Los Angeles and surroundings.	Very low potential for occurrence, due to extreme disturbance of property.
Symphyotrichum greatae	Greata's Aster			1B.3	Moist areas in natural communities. Historical records from Los Angeles area.	Does not occur. No suitable habitat on property.
Invertebrates						
Bombas crotchii	Crotch's Bumblebee		S1S2		Historical and recent rec- ords scattered around southern California.	Very low potential on property to occur due to lack of intact natural communities.
Helminthoglypta tudiculata	Southern California Shoulder- band Snail		S1S2	_	Numerous records from coastal slope of southern California.	Very low potential on property to occur due to lack of intact natural communities.
Reptiles						
Phrynosoma blainvillii	Coast Horned Lizard	_	SSC		Found in expansive natural areas with sandy openings and native har- vester ants.	Very low potential on property to occur due to lack of intact natural communities.
Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri	Coastal Whiptail	_	SSC		Widespread in the region, in various habitats.	Very low potential on property to occur due to lack of intact natural communities.
Anniella stebbinsi	So. Califor- nia Legless Lizard		SSC		Local in a variety of habitats with sandy soil or deep leaf-litter.	Very low potential on property to occur due to lack of intact natural communities.
Arizona elegans occidentalis	California Glossy Snake		SSC	_	Widespread, but uncom- mon, in habitats with soil loose enough for easy burrowing.	Very low potential on property to occur due to lack of intact natural communities.

Latin name	Common name	Fed	State	CNPS	Local and/or Regional Status	Discussion
Salvadora hexalepis virgultea	Coast Patch-nosed Snake	_	SSC	_	Widespread in the region, in brushy and rocky habi- tats.	Very low potential on property to occur due to lack of intact natural communities.
Birds						
Geococcyx californianus	Greater Roadrunner		G5	_	Widespread in expansive natural areas with shrub cover. Sensitive species in Los Angeles County (Allen et al. 2009).	Low potential on property to occur due to lack of in- tact natural communities. No eBird records from nearby Ascot Hills Park.
Circus hudsonius	Northern Harrier		SSC	_	Nests on the ground in expansive open space areas; more widespread during migration and winter.	Expected to occur occa- sionally during migration and possibly winter. Few eBird records from nearby Ascot Hills Park.
Elanus leucurus	White-tailed Kite		FP		Nests in trees within ex- pansive open space areas; more widespread during migration and winter. For- ages in rangelands and marshy areas.	Expected to occur occa- sionally during migration. Few eBird records from nearby Ascot Hills Park.
Buteo regalis	Ferruginous Hawk	_	G4/ S3S4	_	Winters in expansive rangelands and agricul- tural areas in the region. Sensitive species in Los Angeles County (Allen et al. 2009).	Expected to occur occa- sionally during migration and possibly winter. No eBird records from nearby Ascot Hills Park.
Athene cunicularia	Burrowing Owl		SSC	_	Winters in expansive rangelands and agricul- tural areas in the region.	Expected to occur occa- sionally during migration and possibly winter. No eBird records from nearby Ascot Hills Park.
Lanius Iudovicianus	Loggerhead Shrike		SSC	_	Winters in expansive rangelands and agricul- tural areas in the region.	Expected to occur occa- sionally during migration and possibly winter. One eBird record from nearby Ascot Hills Park.
Eremophila alpestris	Horned Lark	_			Nests and winters in ex- pansive rangelands and agricultural areas in the region. Sensitive species in Los Angeles County (Allen et al. 2009).	Expected to occur occa- sionally during migration and possibly winter. Few eBird records from nearby Ascot Hills Park.
Polioptila californica californica	Coastal California Gnatcatcher	Т	SSC	_	Uncommon resident in coastal sage scrub habitat, favoring shallow slopes and elevations below 1,500 feet.	Does not occur. No suitable habitat on property.
Sialia currucoides	Mountain Bluebird	_	_	_	Winters in expansive open areas. Sensitive spe- cies in Los Angeles County (Allen et al. 2009).	Expected to occur occa- sionally during migration and possibly winter. No eBird records from nearby Ascot Hills Park.

Latin name	Common name	Fed	State	CNPS	Local and/or Regional Status	Discussion
Pooecetes gramineus affinis	Oregon Vesper Sparrow		SSC		Winters in expansive open areas. Sensitive spe- cies in Los Angeles County (Allen et al. 2009).	Expected to occur occa- sionally during migration and possibly winter. Few eBird records from nearby Ascot Hills Park.
Ammodramus savannarum	Grasshop- per Sparrow	_	SSC		Nests in expansive grass- lands and rangelands.	Does not occur. No suitable habitat on property.
Sturnella neglecta	Western Meadow- lark				Nests rarely in the region, in expansive open space areas; widespread in mi- gration and winter. Sensi- tive species in Los Ange- les County (Allen et al. 2009).	Expected to occur occa- sionally during migration and possibly winter. Many winter eBird rec- ords from nearby Ascot Hills Park.
Agelaius tricolor	Tricolored Blackbird		T; SSC		Nests in wetlands adja- cent to expansive grass- lands and rangelands re- quired for foraging. Win- ters in rangelands and parks.	Low potential to occur occasionally during mi- gration and possibly win- ter. No eBird records from nearby Ascot Hills Park.
Mammals						
Antrozous pallidus	Pallid Bat		SSC		Widespread in chaparral and similar habitats, for- aging on the ground and in vegetation. Roosts in rock crevices and under tree bark. Maternal roosts active between March and August.	Low potential to forage on site.
Eumops perotis californicus	Western Mastiff Bat	_	SSC		Roosts in cliff crevices and in buildings.	Species may fly over the site occasionally while foraging, but suitable cliff roosting habitat absent.
Chaetodipus fallax fallax	NW San Di- ego Pocket Mouse		SSC		Scrub habitats with sandy or gravelly soils.	Not expected to occur. No suitable habitat on property.
Lepus californicus bennettii	San Diego Black-tailed Jackrabbit	_	SSC		Occurs in various open habitats, usually in expan- sive open space areas.	Not expected to occur. Suitable habitat is too lim- ited on the property.
Taxidea taxus	American Badger	_	SSC		Occurs in various habi- tats, usually in expansive open space areas.	Not expected to occur. Suitable habitat is too lim- ited on the property.

Discussion of Southern California Black Walnut

The only special-status plant known or likely to be present on the property is the Southern California Black Walnut (*Juglans californica*). The species is given Rank 4.2 by CNPS, referring to "species of limited distribution or infrequent throughout a broader area in California, whose status should be monitored regularly; moderately threatened in California." Removal of any or all of the 34 walnut trees on the property would not be expected to change the species' CNPS Rank of 4.2.

The 34 scattered Southern California Black Walnut trees on the property are all in poor, declining condition with visible damage from borers and Thousand Canker Disease (Holman 2017).

Although the walnut trees on the site are too scattered to constitute an intact natural community, they represent a remnant of a former walnut woodland community that would have been present historically. The California Natural Diversity Database (2020) identifies "*Juglans californica*/ annual herbaceous" as a sensitive plant association (<u>https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=153609&inline</u>), with a Nature-Serve rank of G3/S3, referring to associations considered "vulnerable" at global and state levels. "Vulnerable" is defined as referring to taxa "at moderate risk of extinction due to a restricted range, relatively few populations [often 80 or fewer], recent and widespread declines, or other factors."

The Southern California Black Walnut trees on the property are considered to be moderately "sensitive" under CEQA, based on the CNPS ranking of 4.2. The "*Juglans californica*/annual herbaceous" plant association is considered to be moderately "sensitive" based on the NatureServe rank of G3/S3.

Removal of some or all of these trees would not substantially affect any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) or US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

The walnut trees on the site are not part of any riparian habitat, including those identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS.

Southern California Black Walnut trees with trunk diameter greater than four inches, measured 4.5 feet above ground, are considered Protected Trees under Ordinance 177,404 of the City Municipal Code. The property supports 34 walnuts of this size.

Wildlife Movement

The project site is bordered on three sides by existing residential housing, and does not feature any drainage courses, prominent ridgelines, or other topographic features associated with the movement of wildlife across the landscape. Based upon these factors, terrestrial wildlife species are not expected to use the property as part of a habitat linkage or wildlife movement corridor. The property also lacks extensive woodlands or other habitat types known to be of particular value to migratory birds.

EVALUATION OF POTENTIAL PROJECT EFFECTS

Project Effects Considered Not Potentially Significant

The 3.9-acre property represents a relatively small area of previously disturbed, predominantly non-native habitat that does not support any intact natural communities. No wetlands, riparian habitat, or sensitive natural communities are present.

The property does not provide habitat for any plant or wildlife species listed as threatened or endangered by federal or state governments, or candidates for listing. Implementation of the proposed project would not have any potentially significant effects on listed, threatened, or candidate species.

Among non-listed/candidate species that have "special status," no wildlife species are expected to occur on the property with any regularity, or to otherwise make important use of the site. One special-status plant species, the Southern California Black Walnut, is known to occur, and proposed impacts to this species (and to the "*Juglans californica*/annual herbaceous" plant association) are analyzed subsequently. Other special-status plant species have only low potential to occur, due to the site's extensive disturbance and lack of intact natural communities. Thus, implementation of the proposed project would not have any potentially significant effects on any non-listed "special status" plant or wildlife species other than the walnut.

The property is not identified as a component of any habitat linkage/wildlife movement corridor, and implementation of the proposed project would not have any potentially significant effects on wildlife movement or habitat connectivity.

The property does not occur within a Significant Ecological Area, Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP) area, or other local or regional conservation planning area, and implementation of the proposed project would not have a significant adverse effect on local or regional planning efforts.

Project Effects Considered Potentially Significant

Impacts to Southern California Black Walnut and Walnut Woodland Community

One non-listed, special-status plant species, Southern California Black Walnut (*Juglans californica*), occurs on the property. These trees occur within the "*Juglans californica*/annual herbaceous" plant association, which CDFW identifies as a Sensitive Natural Community. Both the walnut tree and the plant association are considered to be moderately "sensitive." Removal of 31 of the 34 Southern California Black Walnuts on the property large enough to be covered under the City's Protected Tree Ordinance would represent a small contribution to cumulative impacts to this species, and to the "*Juglans californica*/annual herbaceous" plant association, in the City of Los Angeles and the wider region, associated with past and ongoing development of natural areas. Because CDFW and CNPS deem this species and this plant to be in decline, the removal of 31 Southern California Black Walnuts would be cumulatively considerable.

Impacts to Nesting Birds

Disrupting the active nest of virtually any bird species represents a potential violation of Section 3503 of the California Fish and Game Code. Thus, clearing and grading of the site during the bird nesting season (Generally February 1 to August 31) could potentially result in a significant adverse effect upon nesting birds.

RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES

Mitigation for Potentially Significant Tree Impacts

Under the City's ordinance, as amended in 2018, any Protected Native Tree removed must be replaced with another Protected Native Tree at a ratio of 4:1, and significant non-native trees must be replaced at a ratio of 1:1. Thus, the 31 walnut trees of sufficient size, which lie within the project's proposed grading limits, must be replaced with at least 124 Native Protected Trees¹. The three significant non-native trees must be replaced with three Protected Native Trees, for total replacement planting of 127 Native Protected Trees. Current plans are for 117 replacement trees to be installed on the project site, and the remaining 10 trees to be planted in an ecologically appropriate off-site location to be determined in cooperation with the City Planning Department and the Council District Office.

To mitigate the project's contribution to cumulatively considerable impacts to the Southern California Black Walnut, and to the "*Juglans californica*/annual herbaceous" plant association, mitigation plantings should include at least 31 Southern California Black Walnuts (minimum 1:1 replacement of the walnut trees to be removed).

Mitigation for Potential Nesting Birds Impacts

In order to avoid potential impacts to nesting birds, in potential violation of state and/or federal laws, it is recommended that any necessary clearing and removal of vegetation for project implementation be conducted outside of the typical nesting season for native birds in the region. This period is variable, but generally extends from February 1 to August 31. If vegetation removal must be conducted during the nesting bird season, a qualified biologist should first conduct a survey to determine whether any native birds are nesting in the area. If any active nests are found (i.e., complete nests with at least one egg), they should be avoided until after all young have fledged from the nest, or work should be monitored by a biologist to ensure against impacts to nesting birds.

¹ Under the City Municipal Code, Native Protected Trees are Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), Southern California Black Walnut (*Juglans californica*), California Sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), and California Bay Laurel (*Umbellularia californica*).

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

With implementation of the recommended mitigation measures, the biological impacts associated with implementing the proposed project would be less than significant under CEQA.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for the opportunity to work on this interesting project. Please call me at 562-477-2181 if you have questions or wish to further discuss any matters; you may send email to robb@hamiltonbiological.com.

Sincerely,

Lobert Alamitton

Robert A. Hamilton President, Hamilton Biological, Inc.

LITERATURE CITED

- Allen, L. W., and Los Angeles County Sensitive Bird Species Working Group. 2009. Los Angeles County's Sensitive Bird Species. Western Tanager 75(3):E1–E11. <u>http://planning.lacounty.gov/site/sea/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/LA-Countys-Sensitive-Bird-Species.pdf</u>
- California Natural Diversity Database. 2019a. Special Animals List. Current list of wildlife taxa considered to be rare, threatened, endangered, or otherwise "sensitive" by the State of California. List dated August 2019.
- California Natural Diversity Database. 2019b. Special Vascular Plants, Bryohphytes, and Lichens List. Current list of vegetative taxa considered to be rare, threatened, endangered, or otherwise "sensitive" by the State of California. List dated October 2019.
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- California Natural Diversity Data Base. 2020. California Sensitive Natural Communities. <u>https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=153609&inline</u>. Online resource accessed February 5, 2020.
- Holman, K. 2017. Protected Tree Report for Tract No. 72393, 2730 N. Onyx Drive, Located in the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, CA 90032. Report dated November 21, 2017, prepared for Henry Suarez.

APPENDIX A LISTS OF PLANT AND WILDLIFE SPECIES DETECTED

The following lists identifies plant and wildlife species detected on the project site during the current study. Sources:

American Ornithologists' Union. 2018. Checklist of North and Middle American Birds. Online version. <u>http://checklist.aou.org/taxa/</u>

- Campbell, K. F. 2014. *FFShort CoSoCal: Simplified List of the Vascular Flora and Vertebrate Fauna of Coastward Southern California*. Temecula, CA: Kurt F. Campbell. Version 10.0.3, dated 19 March 2014.
- Calflora: Information on California plants for education, research and conservation, with data contributed by public and private institutions and individuals, including the Consortium of California Herbaria. 2018. Berkeley, California: The Calflora Database [a non-profit organization]. <u>http://www.calflora.org/</u>
- * Denotes taxon not native to the study area.

VASCULAR PLANTS

SECTION: GYMNOSPERMS

Pinaceae - Pine Family

* Pinus torreyana, Torrey Pine

SECTION: EUDICOTS

Anacardiaceae - Sumac Family

* Schinus molle, Peruvian Pepper

Apocynaceae - Dogbane Family

Asclepias fascicularis, Narrow-leaved Milkweed

Asteraceae - Sunflower Family

- Artemisia californica, California Sagebrush
- * Baccharis sarothroides, Broom Baccharis
- * *Carduus pycnocephalus,* Italian Thistle *Ericameria palmeri ssp. pachylepis,* Broad-scaled Palmer's Goldenbush *Hazardia squarrosa,* Saw-toothed Goldenbush
- * Lactuca serriola, Prickly Lettuce
- * *Sonchus asper*, Prickly Sow Thistle *Stephanomeria* sp., wreathplant

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Brassicaceae - Mustard Family

- * *Hirschfeldia incana*, Shortpod Mustard
- * Sisymbrium orientale, Indian Hedge Mustard

Cactaceae - Cactus Family

- * Opuntia ficus-indica, Mission Fig
- * Opuntia macrocentra, Purple Prickly-pear

Chenopodiaceae - Goosefoot Family

* *Chenopodium album*, Lamb's Quarters

* Salsola tragus, Russian Thistle

Convolvulaceae – Morning-glory Family

* Convolvulus arvensis, Field Bindweed

Crassulaceae - Stonecrop Family

* Crassula ovata, Jade Plant

Geraniaceae - Geranium Family

* Erodium cicutarium, Red-stemmed Filaree

Juglandiaceae - Walnut Family

Juglans californica, Southern California Black Walnut

Lamiaceae - Mint Family

Salvia apiana, White Sage

Malvaceae - Mallow Family

* Malva parviflora, Cheeseweed

Myrtaceae - Myrtle Family

* Eucalyptus globulus, Blue Gum

Polygonaceae - Buckwheat Family

Eriogonum fasciculatum, California Buckwheat

Solanaceae - Nightshade Family

* Nicotiana glauca, Tree Tobacco

Simaroubaceae - Quassia Family

* Ailanthus altissima, Tree-of-Heaven

SECTION: MONOCOTS Agavaceae - Agave Family

* Agave americana, Century Plant

Poaceae - Grass Family

- * Avena barbata, Slender Wild Oat
- * Bromus diandrus, Ripgut Brome
- * Pennisetum setaceum, Fountain Grass
- * *Stipa miliaceum,* Smilo Grass

VERTEBRATE WILDLIFE

Columbidae - Pigeon and Dove Family

Zenaida macroura, Mourning Dove

Apopidae - Swift Family

Aeronautes saxatilis, White-throated Swift

Trochilidae - Hummingbird Family

Calypte anna, Anna's Hummingbird *Selasphorus sasin,* Allen's Hummingbird

Picidae - Woodpecker Family

Picoides nuttallii, Nuttall's Woodpecker

Tyrannidae - Tyrant Flycatcher Family

Sayornis nigricans, Black Phoebe Sayorniss saya, Say's Phoebe

Corvidae - Jay and Crow Family

Corvus brachyrhynchos, American Crow *Corvus corax,* Common Raven

<u>Aegthalidae - Bushtit Family</u> *Psaltriparus minimus,* Bushtit

Troglodytidae - Wren Family

Troglodytes aedon, House Wren

Regulidae - Kinglet Family

Regulus calendula, Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Mimidae - Thrasher, Mockingbird, and Ally Family

Mimus polyglottos, Northern Mockingbird

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Fringillidae - Finch Family

Haemorhous mexicanus, House Finch

Passerellidae - Sparrow Family

Melozone crissalis, California Towhee

Parulidae - Wood-Warbler Family

Setophaga coronata, Yellow-rumped Warbler

CLASS MAMMALIA - MAMMALS Geomyidae - Pocket Gopher Family

Thomomys bottae, Botta's Pocket Gopher (holes observed)

Sciuridae - Squirrel Family

Otospermophilus beecheyi, California Ground Squirrel