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MEMORANDUM

To:	Scott Bering, Project Manager, Second Street Family LP
From:	Kimberly Narel, Biologist, Dudek
Subject:	NEPA Biological Resources Technical Memorandum for the Corona Family Housing Project, Corona, CA
Date:	April 25, 2024
cc:	Tommy Molioo, Senior Biologist, Dudek Hayley Ward, Environmental Planner, Dudek Jonathan Rigg, Project Manager, Dudek
Attachment(s):	A: Figures 1-2 B: Species Compendium C: Site Photos D: USFWS IPAC Species List E: USFWS Critical Habitat Map F: USFWS NWI Wetlands Map

This Biological Resources Technical Memorandum (memorandum) documents the results of Dudek's biological reconnaissance and desktop research conducted for Second Street Family LP to identify potential federal biological resources constraints for the proposed Corona Family Housing Project (project). The project involves the construction of an affordable housing project on a vacant lot in the City of Corona, California. The project is being considered for federal funds administered by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and therefore the project is required to be reviewed for environmental impacts in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This technical memorandum documents the existing conditions at the project site and immediate vicinity, and evaluates the potential for federally protected biological resources to occur on or immediately adjacent to the project site, including any federally listed species, federally protected waters and wetlands, and applicable federal laws and policies (e.g., NEPA, Endangered Species Act, and Migratory Bird Treaty Act) that apply to the proposed project. This technical memorandum serves to support the Environmental Assessment to meet HUD's NEPA requirements prior to the release of funds.

Project Location

The approximately 3.7-acre project site is located at Buena Vista Avenue and 2nd Street in the City of Corona on a portion of Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) APN 118-270-055, which is located in western Riverside County (Attachment A: Figure 1, Project Location). The project site consists of a 3.5-acre vacant lot located on the westside of Buena Vista Avenue and a 0.2-acre developed parcel located on the east side of Buena Vista Avenue, plus a

surrounding 100-foot buffer (study area), totaling approximately 9.1-acres. The study area is located in an urban setting. The vacant lot was previously occupied by commercial development in 2016 before it was demolished, graded, and landscaped in 2018 (Google 2024)[1]. The site currently consists of gravel walking pathways with ruderal and ornamental vegetation. The study area is relatively flat, ranging in elevation from 650 feet to 655 feet above mean sea level (AMSL).

Surrounding land uses include vacant land and commercial development to the west, mixed development to the east, West 2nd Street to the north, and a school to the south. Specifically, the study area is located in Section 26, Township 3 South, Range 7 West, as depicted on the south portion of the Corona North, California, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map (USGS 2024)[2]. The study area for this biological analysis accounts for potential direct and indirect project impacts to federally protected biological resources within and immediately adjacent to the project site.

Project Description

The project involves the new construction of an affordable housing project consisting of residential units, offices, a common room, parking, outdoor gathering areas, and an open space area across Buena Vista Avenue. Social services would be provided to residents on site.

Federal Regulatory Setting

Federal Endangered Species Act

The federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) of 1973 (16 USC 1531 et seq.)[3], as amended, is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for most plant and animal species, and by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Fisheries Service for certain marine species. This legislation is intended to provide a means to conserve the ecosystems upon which endangered and threatened species depend and provide programs for the conservation of those species, thus preventing the extinction of plants and wildlife. The FESA defines an endangered species as “any species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.” A threatened species is defined as “any species that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.” Candidate species are plants and animals for which USFWS has sufficient information on their biological status and threats to propose them as endangered or threatened under the FESA, but for which development of a proposed listing regulation is precluded by other higher priority listing activities. Under the FESA, it is unlawful to “take” any listed species; “take” is defined as, “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.”

[1] Google. 2024. Googe Earth Pro. Desktop Version 7.3. Accessed January 2024.
[2] USGS (U.S. Geological Survey). 2024. U.S. Topo: Maps for America [online maps]. North Corona, California 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle. Accessed January 2024. https://www.usgs.gov/core-science-systems/national-geospatial-program/us-topo-maps-america?qt
[3] (16 USC 1531 et seq.). Endangered Species Act, as amended.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) was originally passed in 1918 as four bilateral treaties, or conventions, for the protection of a shared migratory bird resource. The primary motivation for the international negotiations was to stop the "indiscriminate slaughter" of migratory birds by market hunters and others. The MBTA protects over 800 species of birds (including their parts, eggs, and nests) from killing, hunting, pursuing, capturing, selling, and shipping unless expressly authorized or permitted. The MBTA (16 USC 703 et seq.)[4], as amended, prohibits the intentional take of any migratory bird or any part, nest, or eggs of any such bird. Additionally, Executive Order 13186, Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds, requires that any project with federal involvement address impacts of federal actions on migratory birds with the purpose of promoting conservation of migratory bird populations (66 FR 3853–3856). The Executive Order requires federal agencies to work with USFWS to develop a memorandum of understanding. USFWS reviews actions that might affect these species. Furthermore, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16. U.S.C. 668-668d)[5], enacted in 1940, and amended several times since, prohibits anyone, without a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior, from "taking" bald or golden eagles, including their parts (including feathers), nests, or eggs.

Clean Water Act

The Clean Water Act (CWA)[6] provides guidance for the restoration and maintenance of the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. Section 401 requires a project operator for a federal license or permit that allows activities resulting in a discharge to waters of the United States to obtain state certification, thereby ensuring that the discharge will comply with provisions of the CWA. The Regional Water Quality Control Board administers the certification program in California. Section 402 establishes a permitting system for the discharge of any pollutant (except dredged or fill material) into waters of the United States. Section 404 establishes a permit program administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) that regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands. USACE implementing regulations are found at 33 Code of Federal Regulations 320 and 330. Guidelines for implementation are referred to as the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines, which were developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in conjunction with USACE (40 CFR 230)[7]. The guidelines allow the discharge of dredged or fill material into the aquatic system only if there is no practicable alternative that would have less adverse impacts.

Wetlands and Other Waters of the United States

Aquatic resources, including riparian areas, wetlands, and certain aquatic vegetation communities, are considered sensitive biological resources and can fall under the jurisdiction of several regulatory agencies. USACE exerts jurisdiction over waters of the United States, including all waters that are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide; wetlands and other waters such as lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent or ephemeral streams), mudflats, sandflats, sloughs, prairie potholes, vernal pools, wet meadows, playa lakes, or natural ponds; and tributaries of the above features. The extent of waters of the United States is generally defined as that portion that falls within the limits of the ordinary high water mark (OHWM). Typically, the OHWM corresponds to the 2-year flood event.

[4] 16 USC 703 -712. Migratory Bird Treaty Act, as amended.
[5] 16 USC 668-668d. Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, as amended.
[6] 33 USC 1251. Clean Water Act, as amended. 1973.
[7] 40 USC 230. USACE and EPA Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines.

USACE defines wetlands, including swamps, bogs, seasonal wetlands, seeps, marshes, and similar areas, as "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions" (33 CFR 328.3[b]; 40 CFR 230.3[t])[8]. Indicators of three wetland parameters (i.e., hydric soils, hydrophytic vegetation, and wetlands hydrology), as determined by field investigation, must be present for a site to be classified as a wetland by USACE (USACE 1987)[9].

Methods

Prior to conducting the biological reconnaissance, Dudek reviewed USFWS species occurrence data from the USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) (USFWS 2024a)[10], USFWS critical habitat data (USFWS 2024b)[11], and National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) data (USFWS 2024c)[12] to identify any special-status species and resources that are known to occur or may potentially occur in the vicinity of the study area. Potential and/or historic drainages and aquatic features were investigated based on a review of USGS topographic maps (1:24,000-scale; USGS 2024), aerial photographs, and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service's (NRCS) Web Soil Survey (USDA 2024a)[13]. Any special-status species including flowering annual plants, shrubs and trees, and conspicuous wildlife (i.e., birds and some reptiles) considered sensitive by USFWS, if present, were digitally recorded during the biological reconnaissance.

Data regarding biological resources present within the study area was obtained through a review of pertinent literature and field reconnaissance. Federal special-status plant and wildlife species are those designated as either rare, threatened, or endangered by USFWS and are protected under the FESA (16 USC 1531 et seq.), as well as species that are candidate species being considered or proposed for listing under FESA. Special-status vegetation communities and federally designated critical habitats are those that provide habitat essential to support recovery of special-status listed species.

Field Reconnaissance and Land Cover Mapping

Dudek biologist Kimberly Narel conducted a reconnaissance-level field survey of the study area to document existing biological resources and vegetation communities on January 18, 2024, from 1045 hours to 1145 hours. The biological reconnaissance was conducted during the daytime to maximize the detection of most wildlife. Limitations of the survey include a diurnal bias, as many species of reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals are secretive in their habitats or are nocturnal and are difficult to observe during the day.

[8] 33 USC 328.3[b]; 40 CFR 230.3[t'. USACE Wetlands and Waters of the United States.
[9] USACE (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers). 1987. Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual. Online ed. Environmental Laboratory, Wetlands Research Program Technical Report Y-87-1. Vicksburg, Mississippi: U.S. Army Engineer Waterways Experiment Station. January 1987. Accessed January 2024. http://www.fedcenter.gov/Bookmarks/index.cfm?id=6403&pge_id=1606.
[10] USFWS (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). 2024a. Environmental Conservation Online System, Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) Report (online edition, v3.3). Accessed January 2024. https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/list.
[11] USFWS. 2024b. USFWS Threatened and Endangered Species Active Critical Habitat Report. Online Mapper. Accessed January 2024. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html.
[12] USFWS 2024c. "National Wetlands Inventory." U.S. Department of the Interior, USFWS. Accessed January 2024. http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/.
[13] USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture). 2024a. Web Soil Survey. USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soil Survey Staff. Accessed January 2024. http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/.

Dudek used the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Natural Communities (CDFW 2018)[14] and California Natural Community List (CDFW 2024a)[15], also referred to as the Natural Communities List, based on the *Manual of California Vegetation*, second edition (Sawyer et al. 2009)[16] to map the vegetation communities and land covers on the study area. These classification systems focus on a quantified, hierarchical approach that includes both floristic (plant species) and physiognomic (community structure and form) factors as currently observed. Vegetation communities and land covers were delineated to the vegetation alliance level and, where appropriate, the association level. Some modifications, such as the Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial natural Communities of California (Holland 1986[17]; Oberbauer et al. 2008)[18], were incorporated to accommodate the lack of conformity of the observed communities to those included in these references.

Vegetation mapping was conducted on foot to visually cover 100% of the study area. Vegetation communities were classified based on site factors, descriptions, distribution, and characteristic species present within an area. Information was recorded, including dominant species and associated cover classes, aspect, canopy height, and visible disturbance factors. Minimum mapping units were established at 0.25 acres. Dudek GIS analysts digitized the vegetation boundaries as delineated by the field biologist and created a GIS coverage for vegetation communities and land covers on the study area.

Flora

Latin and common names for plant species observed on the study area follow the Jepson Interchange List of Currently Accepted Names of Native and Naturalized Plants of California (Jepson Flora Project 2020)[19] and common names follow the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Plant Database (USDA 2024b)[20].

Fauna

All wildlife species detected during the biological reconnaissance by site, vocalizations, burrows, tracks, scat, and other signs were recorded. Latin and common names of animals follow the American Ornithological Society (AOS 2024)[21] for birds, and Wilson and Reeder (2005)[22] for mammals. Wildlife species expected to occur within the study area include

[14] CDFW (California Department of Fish and Wildlife). 2018. "Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Sensitive Natural Communities." Accessed January 2024. https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=18959.

[15] CDFW. 2024a. California Natural Community List. Updated June 1, 2023. Accessed January 2024. https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=153398&inline.

[16] Sawyer, J., T. Keeler-Wolf, and J. Evens. 2009. The Manual of California Vegetation, 2nd Edition. Sacramento, California: California Native Plant Society.

[17] Holland, R.F. 1986. Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Natural Communities of California. Nongame-Heritage Program, California Department of Fish and Game. October 1986.

[18] Oberbauer et al. 2008. Draft Vegetation Communities of San Diego County, California. March 2008. Accessed January 2024.

[19] Jepson. 2020. Jepson Flora Project. interchange List of Currently Accepted Names of Native and Naturalized Plants of California. Accessed January 2024. https://ucjeps.berkely.edu./jepsonflora

[20] USDA 2024b. PLANTS Database. USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service. Wetland Indicator Status: Arid West Region. Accessed January 2024. https://plants.usda.gov/osdname.aspx.

[21] AOS (American Ornithological Society). 2024. "Check-List of North American Birds" (online). Accessed January 2024. http://checklist.aou.org/.

[22] Wilson, D.E., and D.M. Reeder, eds. 2005. Mammal Species of the World: A Taxonomic and Geographic Reference. 3rd ed. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University.

common avian species typically observed in disturbed settings and urban environments such as mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), and American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*).

Results

Vegetation Communities and/or Land Covers

The study area consists of three vegetation communities and/or land covers: non-native grassland, disturbed habitat, and developed land (Attachment A: Figure 2, Biological Resources). No sensitive or natural vegetation communities occur on the study area. Ornamental trees are scattered throughout the non-native grassland on the study area. Plant species observed within the study area during the biological reconnaissance are provided in Attachment B, Species Compendium. Representative photos of the study area are included in Attachment C, Site Photos.

Non-Native Grassland. The vacant lot is dominated by ruderal forbs and grasses characteristic of non-native grassland. Non-native grassland is not recognized by the Natural Communities List (CDFW 2024) but is described by Oberbauer et al. (2008). The quality of non-native grassland on the project site has been negatively affected by trampling, vehicles, illegal dumping, and surface compaction from prior grading. Characteristic species observed on the project site include Mediterranean grass (*Schismus barbatus*), London rocket (*Sysimbirum irio*), southern Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), and cheeseweed mallow (*Malva parviflora*). Ornamental trees including Mediterranean cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*), pines (*Pinus sp.*), olive trees (*Olea europaea*), Mexican fan palm (*Washingtonia mexicana*), and Chinese elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*) were scattered throughout the non-native grassland vegetation community on the study area.

Disturbed Habitat. Gravel walking paths throughout the vacant lot are characterized as disturbed habitat. The Disturbed Habitat mapping unit is not recognized by the Natural Communities List (CDFW 2024a) but is described by Oberbauer et al. (2008). Disturbed habitat is described as areas that have been physically disturbed by previous human activity and are no longer recognizable as native or naturalized vegetation but continue to retain a soil substrate. Vegetation, if present, is nearly exclusively composed of non-native ornamentals or ruderal exotic species that take advantage of disturbance. Examples of disturbed land include areas that have been graded or have experienced repeated use that prevents natural revegetation (Oberbauer et al. 2008).

Urban/Developed Land. The surrounding study area buffer and 0.2-acre project site parcel consists of developed land. The Urban/Developed land cover mapping unit is not recognized by the Natural Communities List (CDFW 2024a) but is described by Holland (1986). Urban/developed land refers to areas that have been constructed upon or disturbed so severely that native vegetation is no longer supported (Holland 1986). Developed land includes areas with permanent or semi-permanent structures, pavement or hardscape, landscaped areas, and areas with a large amount of debris or other materials (Holland 1986). Developed areas are generally graded and compacted, sometimes covered with gravel road base or built, and have little to no vegetation present. These areas support limited natural ecological processes, native vegetation, or habitat for wildlife species, and thus are not considered sensitive by federal agencies.

Soils

According to the USDA NRCS Web Soil Survey, one soil type is mapped on the study area: Garretson gravelly very fine sandy loam, 2%-8% slopes (USDA 2024a). Due to the previously developed nature of the parcel and its location within an urban setting, this soil type is a remnant as it has been significantly altered from its natural condition from grading and compaction of surface soils. It is not listed as a hydric soil (USDA 2024b).

Plants

No native, rare, or special-status plants were observed during the biological reconnaissance. A total of 16 non-native plants were observed on the study area, consisting of ruderal forbs and grasses found in disturbed and urban environments. Ornamental shrubs and trees were scattered throughout the non-native grassland on the study area. Plant species observed on the study area during the biological reconnaissance are provided in Attachment B, Species Compendium.

Wildlife

A total of three native wildlife species were observed on the study area: house finch, black phoebe (*Sayornis nigra*), and Say's phoebe (*Sayornis saya).* Wildlife species observed within the study area during the biological reconnaissance are provided in Attachment B, Species Compendium. Ornamental trees and non-native grassland on the study area provide suitable foraging and nesting habitat for a number of resident native and migratory bird species protected under the MBTA.

Special-Status Species

No special status plant or wildlife species were observed within the study area during the biological reconnaissance.

According to USFWS's IPaC, four federally listed threatened or endangered wildlife species, one federal Proposed listed amphibian, and one federal Candidate listed invertebrate species, are known to occur at or within the immediate vicinity of the study area: Stephen's kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys stephensi*), coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*), least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), southwestern pond turtle (*Actinemys pallida*), Santa Ana sucker (*Catostomus santaanae*), and the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) (USFWS 2024a). In addition, three federally listed plant species is known to occur at or within the immediate vicinity of the study area: San Diego Ambrosia (*Ambrosia pumila),* slender horned spineflower (*Dodecahema leptoceras*), and thread-leaved brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*) (Attachment D, USFWS IPaC Species List). These special-status species and their potential to occur within the study area are described in further detail below.

Stephen's Kangaroo Rat. This small, nocturnal mammal is listed as threatened under the FESA and is endemic to Southern California (USFWS 2024a). It is a fossorial rodent that inhabits warm, arid environments, generally open grasslands and sparsely vegetated scrub, where it eats seeds. They construct and live in underground burrow systems used for shelter, protection from predators, food storage, and nesting, preferring gravelly soils. Breeding activity is higher in winter and spring. Populations of Stephens' kangaroo rat occur in three geographic regions of Southern California: western Riverside County, and western and central San Diego County.

Although sparsely vegetated non-native grassland occurs on the study area, no small animal burrows were observed to support Stephens' kangaroo rat. Additionally, surface soils have been compacted and graded, making it difficult for fossorial species to dig burrows. The habitat is fragmented and isolated within an urban setting, and used for refuse dumping as well as a pedestrian walking path. Finally, the nearest occurrence records depicted on the CDFW Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) for this species is over 20 years old and approximately 2 miles northeast of the project (CDFW 2024b)[23]. It is separated from the project by Interstate 15. Therefore, this species is not expected to occur on the study area.

Coastal California Gnatcatcher. The federally threatened coastal California gnatcatcher is a blue-gray songbird that inhabits several distinctive sub associations of the coastal sage scrub plant community, especially those dominated by *Artemisia californica* (Atwood 1992)[24]. It generally avoids crossing even small areas of unsuitable habitat, preferring dry coastal slopes, washes, and mesas with areas of low plant growth (about 1 meter high).

The study area is devoid of native coastal sage scrub vegetation capable of supporting the coastal California gnatcatcher. Additionally, the surrounding habitat is in an urban setting and contains no native vegetation communities. As such, the lack of suitable habitat and native vegetation communities observed at the study area eliminates the potential for this species to occur.

Least Bell's Vireo. This federally threatened songbird is endemic to California. It inhabits dense brush consisting of mesquite (*Prosopis* sp.), willow/cottonwood (*Salix/Populus*) forest, riparian areas, streamside thickets, and scrub oak (*Quercus berberidifolia*), in arid regions but often near water. It prefers open woodland and brush in winter. This species nests in shrubs or low trees, usually averaging about 1 meter above ground, often willow or other dense shrubbery such as mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) and California rose bush (*Rosa californica*).

The study area is located 1.5 miles southeast of the Santa Ana River, which contains suitable riparian habitat and CNDDB occurrence records for this species (CDFW 2024b). The Santa Ana River is designated critical habitat for the least Bell's vireo (Attachment E, USFWS Critical Habitat Map). However, the Santa Ana River is separated from the study area by urban development and the 91 freeway. Additionally, the lack of riparian habitat and wetland habitat on the study area would prevent this species from inhabiting it as a stopover or nesting site in favor of undeveloped riparian habitat to the northwest associated with Santa Ana River. As such, this species has no potential to occur on the study area.

Southwestern Pond Turtle. This amphibious freshwater turtle is endemic to southern California and proposed for listing as federally threatened by USFWS (USFWS 2024a). It inhabits ponds, marshes, rivers, streams, and irrigation ditches, usually with aquatic vegetation and sandy or muddy bottoms, below 6,000 feet AMSL. It requires basking sites and suitable upland habitat such as sandy banks or grassy open fields to lay eggs.

There is no aquatic habitat or upland basking sites capable of supporting this species on or in the vicinity of the study area. As such, this species has no potential to occur on the study area.

Santa Ana Sucker. This federally threatened freshwater fish is endemic to California, historically occupying upper watershed areas of the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains down to the Pacific Ocean (USFWS 2024a). At

[23] CDFW. 2024b. CNDDB. Biogeographic Information Observation System. Commercial Viewer. Version 6. Accessed January 2024. https://apps.wildlife.ca.gov/bios6

[24] Atwood, J.L. 1992. "A Maximum Estimate of the California Gnatcatcher's Population Size in the United States." Western Birds 23(1): 1–9.

present, the Santa Ana sucker is found in three disjunct populations that occupy portion of the San Gabriel, Los Angeles, and Santa Ana River basins in Southern California. Santa Ana suckers rely on perennial flows with suitable water quality and substrate to support breeding, feeding, and sheltering. Over different life history stages, it depends on a variety of coarse substrate types such as gravel, cobble, or mixtures of both with sand, and a variety of riverine features, predominantly in the shallow portions of rivers and streams.

The study area is devoid of aquatic habitat capable of supporting this species. However, the Santa Ana River is located approximately 1 mile northwest from the study area and is separated by urban development from the study area. As such, this species is not expected to occur at or within the immediate vicinity of the study areas.

Monarch Butterfly. The California overwintering population of the monarch butterfly is a federal Candidate wildlife species (USFWS 2024a). This herbivorous invertebrate breeds in patches of milkweed throughout the United States and overwinters in coastal California conifer or eucalyptus groves. Coastal regions are important flyways and migratory stopovers where floral nectar from wild or gardens are an important resource.

The study area contains limited suitable ornamental vegetation with floral nectar resources (ruderal forbs, ornamental trees) capable of supporting foraging for the monarch butterfly. However, it is in an inland area with no suitable overwintering habitat (wind-protected tree groves, eucalyptus trees) to support the California overwintering populating is present on the study area. In addition, no host plants (milkweed) were observed on the study area during the biological reconnaissance. Due to the lack of native vegetation, natural vegetation communities, overwintering habitat, host plants, and location within an inland urban setting, it is unlikely that the monarch butterfly will use the limited ornamental trees on the study area for overwintering or the non-native forbs for foraging and nesting.

San Diego Ambrosia. This federally endangered clonal, monoecious perennial herb is endemic to Southern California (USFWS 2024a). It flowers from May through October at elevations below 1,600 feet and generally occurs in floodplain terraces and watershed margins of vernal pools and alkali playas, as well as open grasslands and upland areas on clay slopes.

No clay, alkali, or hydric soils are mapped on the study area. In addition, no floodplains, riparian habitats, wetlands, or vernal pool habitats are present. The study areas are relatively flat and no uplands occur on or in the immediate vicinity. Although open non-native grassland is present on the study area, there are no wetlands, mesic habitats, or suitable substrates capable of supporting San Diego ambrosia on site. In addition, there are no occurrence records for this species within 5 miles of the study area (CDFW 2024b). As such, this species is not expected to occur on the study area.

Slender-Horned Spineflower. The federally endangered slender-horned spineflower is an annual plant endemic to southwestern California (USFWS 2024a). It is found in silt-rich floodplains and washes in alluvial fan sage scrub and areas prone to drought. Specifically, slender-horned spineflower occurs in the floodplains surrounding the Santa Ana and San Jacinto Rivers. It blooms from April to July.

No alluvial fans, alluvial sage scrub, or silt-rich floodplains occur on the study area to support slender-horned spineflower. There are no occurrence records within 5 miles of the study area for this species (CDFW 204). Therefore, slender-horned spineflower is not expected to occur on the study area.

Thread-Leaved Brodiaea. This federally threatened perennial herb is native and endemic to southern California. It inhabits freshwater wetlands, coastal sage scrub, chaparral openings, cismontane woodland, valley grassland, and wetland-riparian communities, as well as playas and vernal pools. It blooms from March to June at elevations between 80 to 3,600 feet AMSL, preferring clay soils (USFWS 2024a).

No wetlands, coastal sage scrub, riparian, mesic, or vernal pool habitat occurs on the study area. No clay soils are present on the study area. In addition, there are no occurrence records for this species within 5 miles of the study area (CDFW 2024b). As such, this species has no potential to occur on the study area.

Western Burrowing Owl

Although it is not a federally listed species, the western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) is a California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Species of Special Concern and is petitioned to be listed as a threatened or endangered species under the California Endangered Species Act (CDFW 2024c)[25]. It inhabits coastal prairie, coastal scrub, Great Basin grassland, Great basin scrub, Mojave desert scrub, Sonoran desert scrub, and valley and foothill grassland. This species is typically found in open and dry annual and perennial grasslands, deserts, and scrublands characterized by low-growing vegetation. It is a subterranean nester and is dependent upon burrowing mammals, most notably the California ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus beecheyi*).

Frequently maintained non-native grassland and disturbed habitat potentially capable of supporting burrowing owl are present on the project site. However, the biological reconnaissance did not detect any ground squirrel burrows or suitable burrows for burrowing owl on the study area. Furthermore, the soils onsite are heavily compacted from repeated prior historic site grading and are not conducive to fossorial species. In addition, the nearest occurrence record for this species is approximately one mile northeast, from 2007, separated from the project site by urban development and State Highway 91 (CDFW 2024b). As such, western burrowing owl is not expected to occur on the project site.

Designated Critical Habitat

Designated critical habitat is defined as specific areas within the geographical area occupied by the species at the time of listing that contain physical or biological features essential to conservation of the species and that may require special management considerations or protection (USFWS 2024b). According to the USFWS online Critical Habitat Mapper, the study area is not located within designated critical habitat for any federally listed species (USFWS 2024b) (Attachment E, USFWS Critical Habitat Map). The study area occurs in an urban setting with no native habitats capable of supporting any federally listed species. The nearest designated critical habitat is for least Bell's vireo along the Santa Ana River, located 1.3 miles northwest of the study area. It is separated from the project site by the 91 freeway and mixed developments. Project activities will not encroach into this designated critical habitat, and as such, direct and indirect impacts to designated critical habitats are not anticipated to occur due to project implementation.

[25] CDFW. 2024c. Notice of Receipt of Petition to list Western Burrowing Owl as Threatened or Endangered. California Fish and Game Commission. March 26, 2024 https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=221397&inline

National Wetlands Inventory

No surface waters, wetlands, or riparian habitats were observed during the biological reconnaissance, although a formal jurisdictional aquatic resources delineation was not conducted. Based on a review of the NWI, there are no mapped wetlands on the study area (USFWS 2024c). The nearest NWI-mapped wetland is a concrete flood control channel (R4SBC) located approximately 0.4 miles west-northwest of the study area (Attachment F, USFWS NWI Wetlands Map). It receives water from the Santa Ana River, and it is separated from the study area by South Lincoln Avenue and West 2nd Street. Furthermore, the hydrology has been artificially modified through channelization and/or excavation. The project will not encroach into any NWI-mapped features.

Impacts

The study area is located in an urban setting and lacks natural habitat to support special-status species, does not contain wetlands, and no special-status species were observed during the biological reconnaissance. Direct impacts to non-native grassland, disturbed habitat, and developed land will occur from implementation of the project. However, these habitat types are not considered sensitive and do not require mitigation. Construction and operation of the project would not encroach into any native habitats or sensitive biological areas such as the Santa Ana River to the northwest or designated critical habitat for the least Bell's vireo to the northwest. Therefore, the project would have no effect on federally listed species or federally protected waters and wetlands, would not remove any potentially suitable habitat for federally listed species, and would not affect any USFWS-designated critical habitat.

However, the project may affect native resident and migratory bird species protected by the MBTA that may nest within the ornamental vegetation on the study area, particularly if vegetation removal or construction occurs during the avian nesting season of February 1 through August 31. To reduce potential project-related effects to nesting birds, pre-construction clearance surveys are recommended below.

Recommendations

Nesting Bird Avoidance and Minimization Measures. To avoid potential indirect impacts to nesting birds protected by the MBTA, project activities should avoid the avian nesting season of February through August. If this season cannot be avoided, then a pre-construction clearance survey should be conducted within 3 days prior to vegetation removal to determine the presence/absence of any nesting bird species within 500 feet of the project site. If a nesting bird is found, an avoidance buffer will be established around the nest, based on the species' sensitivity to disturbance and proximity to impact areas. The buffer will remain in place as long as the nest is considered active, as determined by a qualified on-site biologist. No encroachment into the buffer may occur as long as a nest is still active.

Attachment A
Figures 1-2

SOURCE: ESRI Imagery 2024; Open Street Map 2019

DUDEK

0 500 1,000 Feet

FIGURE 1

Project Location

Corona Family Housing Project

SOURCE: ESRI Imagery 2024; Open Street Map 2019

DUDEK

0 75 150 Feet

FIGURE 2

Biological Resources

Corona Family Housing Project

Attachment B
Species Compendium

Plant Species

Angiosperms (Dicots)

AMARANTHACEAE – AMARANTH FAMILY

* *Chenopodium murale* – nettle-leafed goosefoot
* *Salsola tragus* – prickly Russian thistle

ANARCACEAE – SUMAC FAMLIY

* *Schinus molle*- Peruvian pepper tree

ASTERACEAE – SUNFLOWER FAMILY

* *Gazania linearis* – treasure flower

BRASSICACEAE – MUSTARD FAMILY

* *Hirschfeldia incana* – short-pod mustard
* *Sisymbrium irio* – London rocket

GERANIACEAE – GERANIUM FAMILY

* *Erodium cicutareum* – red stemmed filaree, redstem stork's bill

MALVACEAE – MALLOW FAMILY

* *Malva parviflora* – cheeseweed mallow

MORACEAE – MULBERRY FAMILY

* *Ficus carica* – common fig tree
* *Ficus elastica* – rubber tree

OLEACEAE – OLIVE FAMILY

* *Olea europaea*- olive tree

ULACEAE – ELM FAMILY

* *Ulmus parvifolia* – Chinese elm

Angiosperms (Monocots)

ARECACEAE- PALM FAMILY

* *Washingtonia robusta* – Mexican fan palm

ASPARAGACEAE – ASPARAGUS FAMILY

* *Yucca gigantea* – giant yucca

POACEAE – GRASS FAMILY

* *Schismus barbatus* – Mediterranean grass

Gymnosperms

CURPESSACEAE – CYPRESS FAMILY

* *Cupressus sempervirens* – Italian cypress, Mediterranean cypress

Wildlife Species – Vertebrates

Birds

FRINGILLIDAE – FINCHES

Carpodacus mexicanus – house finch

TYRANNIDAE – TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

Sayornis nigricans- black phoebe

Sayornis saya – Say's phoebe

* signifies introduced (non-native) species

Attachment C
Site Photos

1. View of the project site, facing east

3. View of the project site, facing west

3. View of the project site, facing north

4. View of the project site, facing southeast

Attachment D
USFWS IPAC Species List

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Carlsbad Fish And Wildlife Office
2177 Salk Avenue - Suite 250
Carlsbad, CA 92008-7385
Phone: (760) 431-9440 Fax: (760) 431-5901

In Reply Refer To:
Project Code: 2024-0039327
Project Name: corona project

January 22, 2024

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat, that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and/or may be affected by your proposed project. The species list fulfills the requirements of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

New information based on updated surveys, changes in the abundance and distribution of species, changed habitat conditions, or other factors could change this list. Please feel free to contact us if you need more current information or assistance regarding the potential impacts to federally proposed, listed, and candidate species and federally designated and proposed critical habitat. Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the accuracy of this species list should be verified after 90 days. This verification can be completed formally or informally as desired. The Service recommends that verification be completed by visiting the IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists and information. An updated list may be requested through IPaC by completing the same process used to receive the enclosed list.

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend may be conserved. Under sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 *et seq.*), Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and to determine whether projects may affect threatened and endangered species and/or designated critical habitat.

A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)). For projects other than major construction activities, the Service suggests that a biological

evaluation similar to a Biological Assessment be prepared to determine whether the project may affect listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described at 50 CFR 402.12.

If a Federal agency determines, based on the Biological Assessment or biological evaluation, that listed species and/or designated critical habitat may be affected by the proposed project, the agency is required to consult with the Service pursuant to 50 CFR 402. In addition, the Service recommends that candidate species, proposed species and proposed critical habitat be addressed within the consultation. More information on the regulations and procedures for section 7 consultation, including the role of permit or license applicants, can be found in the "Endangered Species Consultation Handbook" at: https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/endangered-species-consultation-handbook.pdf

Migratory Birds: In addition to responsibilities to protect threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), there are additional responsibilities under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) to protect native birds from project-related impacts. Any activity, intentional or unintentional, resulting in take of migratory birds, including eagles, is prohibited unless otherwise permitted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (50 C.F.R. Sec. 10.12 and 16 U.S.C. Sec. 668(a)). For more information regarding these Acts, see Migratory Bird Permit | What We Do | U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (fws.gov).

The MBTA has no provision for allowing take of migratory birds that may be unintentionally killed or injured by otherwise lawful activities. It is the responsibility of the project proponent to comply with these Acts by identifying potential impacts to migratory birds and eagles within applicable NEPA documents (when there is a federal nexus) or a Bird/Eagle Conservation Plan (when there is no federal nexus). Proponents should implement conservation measures to avoid or minimize the production of project-related stressors or minimize the exposure of birds and their resources to the project-related stressors. For more information on avian stressors and recommended conservation measures, see https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/threats-birds.

In addition to MBTA and BGEPA, Executive Order 13186: *Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds*, obligates all Federal agencies that engage in or authorize activities that might affect migratory birds, to minimize those effects and encourage conservation measures that will improve bird populations. Executive Order 13186 provides for the protection of both migratory birds and migratory bird habitat. For information regarding the implementation of Executive Order 13186, please visit https://www.fws.gov/partner/council-conservation-migratory-birds.

We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. The Service encourages Federal agencies to include conservation of threatened and endangered species into their project planning to further the purposes of the Act. Please include the Consultation Code in the header of this letter with any request for consultation or correspondence about your project that you submit to our office.

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List

OFFICIAL SPECIES LIST

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

Carlsbad Fish And Wildlife Office
2177 Salk Avenue - Suite 250
Carlsbad, CA 92008-7385
(760) 431-9440

PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Code: 2024-0039327
Project Name: corona project
Project Type: New Constr - Below Ground
Project Description: HUD housing development
Project Location:

The approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: https://www.google.com/maps/@33.880388550000006,-117.57798904940438,14z

Counties: Riverside County, California

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT SPECIES

There is a total of 9 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list.

Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species.

IPaC does not display listed species or critical habitats under the sole jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries[1], as USFWS does not have the authority to speak on behalf of NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

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1. NOAA Fisheries, also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

MAMMALS

NAME	STATUS
Stephens' Kangaroo Rat *Dipodomys stephensi (incl. D. cascus)* No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3495	Threatened

BIRDS

NAME	STATUS
Coastal California Gnatcatcher *Polioptila californica californica* There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8178	Threatened
Least Bell's Vireo *Vireo bellii pusillus* There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5945	Endangered

REPTILES

NAME	STATUS
Southwestern Pond Turtle *Actinemys pallida* No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4768	Proposed Threatened

FISHES

NAME	STATUS
Santa Ana Sucker *Catostomus santaanae*	Threatened

Population: 3 CA river basins
There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat.
Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3785

INSECTS

NAME	STATUS
Monarch Butterfly *Danaus plexippus*	Candidate

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.
Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743

FLOWERING PLANTS

NAME	STATUS
San Diego Ambrosia *Ambrosia pumila*	Endangered

There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat.
Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8287

Slender-horned Spineflower *Dodecahema leptoceras*	Endangered

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.
Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4007

Thread-leaved Brodiaea *Brodiaea filifolia*	Threatened

There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat.
Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6087

CRITICAL HABITATS

THERE ARE NO CRITICAL HABITATS WITHIN YOUR PROJECT AREA UNDER THIS OFFICE'S JURISDICTION.

YOU ARE STILL REQUIRED TO DETERMINE IF YOUR PROJECT(S) MAY HAVE EFFECTS ON ALL ABOVE LISTED SPECIES.

Attachment E
USFWS Critical Habitat Map

Critical Habitat for Threatened & Endangered Species [USFWS]

Final Polygon Features

Final Linear Features

Proposed Polygon Features

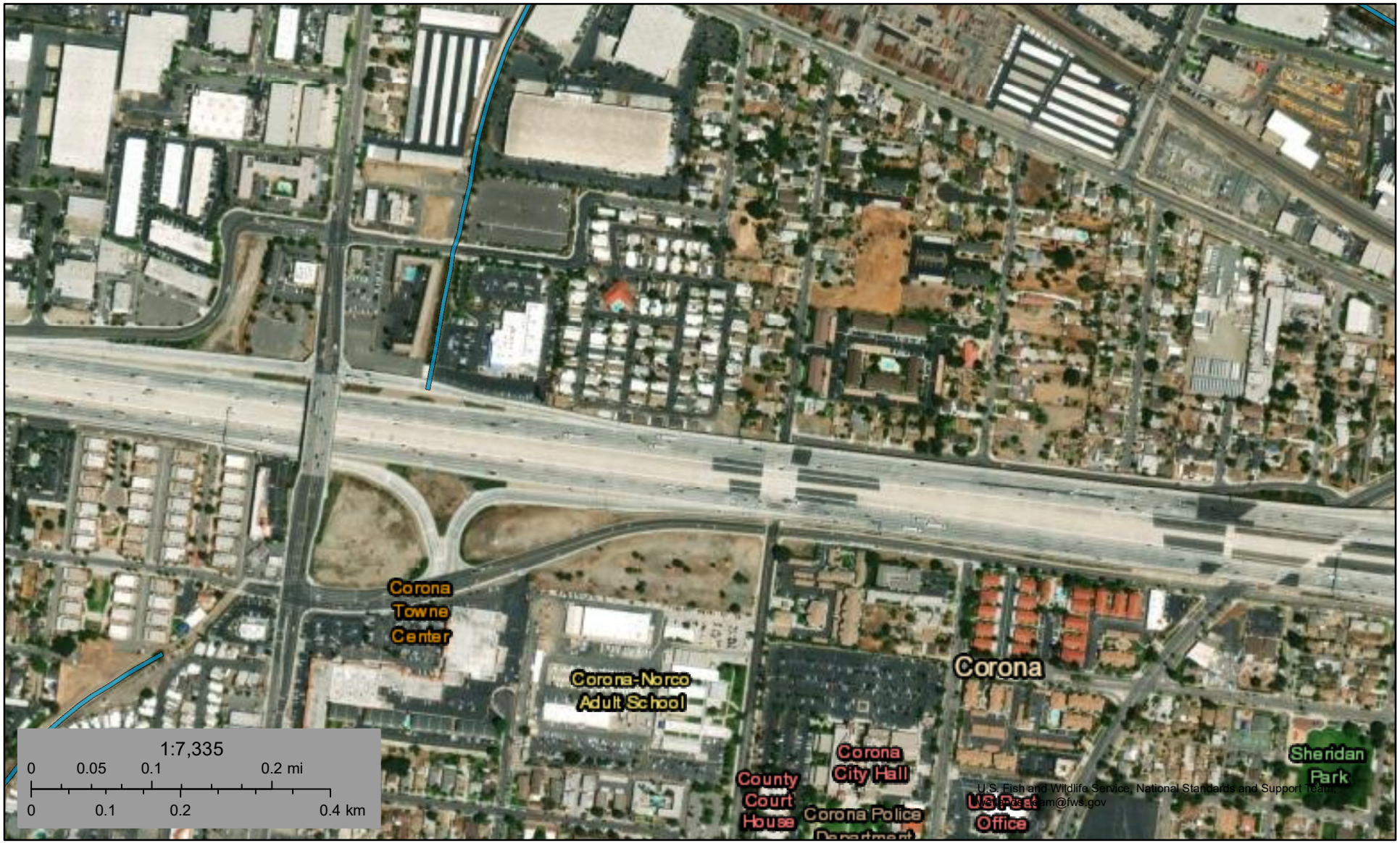
Proposed Linear Features

A specific geographic area(s) that contains features essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management and protection.

Attachment F
USFWS NWI Wetlands Map

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Wetlands Inventory

Corona project



January 19, 2024

Wetlands

- Estuarine and Marine Deepwater
- Estuarine and Marine Wetland
- Freshwater Emergent Wetland
- Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
- Freshwater Pond
- Lake
- Other
- Riverine

This map is for general reference only. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is not responsible for the accuracy or currentness of the base data shown on this map. All wetlands related data should be used in accordance with the layer metadata found on the Wetlands Mapper web site.