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City of Santa Barbara

Community Development Department
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CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
 PLANNING DIVISION

October 20, 2009

Re: Foothill Centre Project – Biological Survey & Assessment

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this letter report is to describe the methods and results of a biological survey we performed on October 8, 2009 at the 4-acre Foothill Centr Project site located in the southwest corner of the intersection of Foothill Road and Cieneguitas Road. The City of Santa Barbara has requested that the applicant (The Towbes Group) retain the services of a qualified biologist to survey the site, determine whether any sensitive (i.e., State of Federally listed rare, candidates for listing, threatened, or endangered) species, and/or their habitats exist on the site, for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental review purposes. This site has been the subject of two previous Environmental Impact Reports (EIR) prepared by the City of Santa Barbara 1) *The Foothill Triangle Partners Shopping Center EIR* in 1983, and 2) *The Draft Annexation Policy Update Draft Program EIR* in 1999. This letter report is intended to provide an update to these previous studies.

SURVEY METHODS

Watershed Environmental, Inc. biologist Mark de la Garza and analyst/cartographer Melodee Hickman performed a field survey of the property on October 8, 2009 between the hours of 2:30 and 4:30 p.m. Surveys were performed on foot and consisted of walking through the 4-acre project site. Plant community/habitat types were mapped on a 1-in. = 50-ft.-scale field map depicting topography from the City of Santa Barbara Digital Topographic Map (Sheet 27) that was overlaid on a 2009 Google Earth color aerial photograph.

During the course of our surveys, field notes were used to record direct observations of botanical and wildlife resources. A steel forester's measuring tape was used to measure the diameter at breast height (DBH) of native trees. Photographs of the project site were taken to document existing conditions at the time of the surveys. Botanical surveys were performed following the California Native Plant Society's recommended survey guidelines (CNPS 2001) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service's *Guidelines for Conducting and Reporting Botanical Inventories for Federally Listed, Proposed, and Candidate Plants* (USFWS 2001). Wildlife surveys followed standard professional practices and the Santa Barbara County *Biological Survey Guidelines* (SBCO 1995; contained in SBCO's *Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual*, updated 2002).

Background biological information was obtained from the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CDFG 2008), the County of Santa Barbara designated and mapped Environmentally Sensitive Habitat GIS database (SBCO 2007), and the two previous EIR's pertaining to this property, prepared in 1983 and 1999 by the City of Santa Barbara.

SURVEY RESULTS

Plant Community and Land Cover Types

The project site is undeveloped, except for an abandoned gas station in the northwest corner which occupies approximately 0.5 of an acre and is paved with a mixture of asphalt and gravel. Within this 0.5 area, there is the gas station building, an awning, a storage unit, and assorted ornamental landscape plantings. The remaining 3.5 acres is an undeveloped vacant lot that contains a number of monitoring and extraction wells installed as part of the remediation of leaking underground storage tanks that were present at the gas station and have since been removed. A list of land cover and vegetation community types observed is provided in Table 1. Figure one depicts their location on the property. A description of the vegetation communities is provided below.

Table 1. Existing Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types

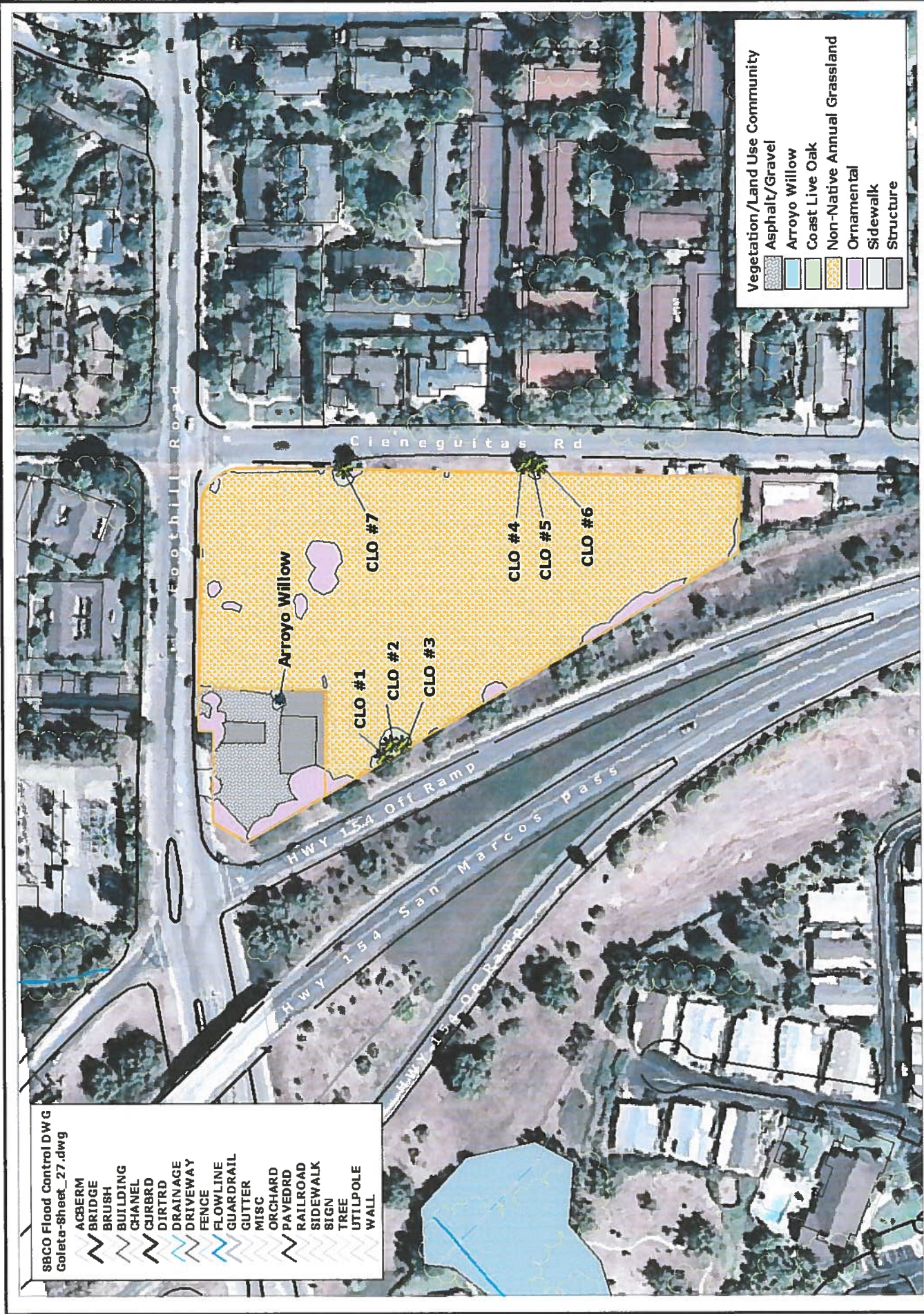
| Vegetation Community/Land Cover Type | Area | |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| | (Sq. Ft.) | (Acres) |
| <i>Vegetation Communities</i> | | |
| Arroyo Willow Tree | 319 | 0.007 |
| Coast Live Oak Tree | 1,616 | 0.037 |
| Non-Native Annual Grassland | 148,034 | 3.398 |
| Ornamental Trees and Shrubs | 10,792 | 0.248 |
| Subtotal Vegetation Communities | 160,761 | 3.691 |
| <i>Land Cover Types</i> | | |
| Asphalt/Gravel | 10,258 | 0.235 |
| Sidewalk | 415 | 0.010 |
| Structure | 6,169 | 0.142 |
| Subtotal Land Cover Types | 16,842 | 0.387 |
| Grand Total Vegetation and Land Cover | 177,602 | 4.077 |

Arroyo Willow Tree there is one native arroyo willow tree growing in a planter on the east side of gas station building. This tree appears to be a volunteer and is about 18 ft. tall and has several trunks that range in size of 4-8 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH).

Coast Live Oak Tree there are seven native coast live oak trees on the property scattered in three locations. These trees also appear to be volunteers and have trunk diameters ranging in size from 20 to 7 inches measured at breast height. A list of the coast live oak trees and their trunk sizes is provided in Table 2.

Reserve Page

Figure 1. Existing Vegetation Communities and Land Cover



- SBCO Flood Control DWG
Goleta-Sheet_27.dwg
- ACBERM
 - BRIDGE
 - BRUSH
 - BUILDING
 - CHANNEL
 - CURBRD
 - DIRTRD
 - DRAINAGE
 - DRIVEWAY
 - FENCE
 - FLOWLINE
 - GUARDRAIL
 - GUTTER
 - MISC
 - ORCHARD
 - PAVEDRD
 - RAILROAD
 - SIDEWALK
 - SIGN
 - TREE
 - UTLIPOLE
 - WALL

- Vegetation / Land Use Community
- Asphalt/Gravel
 - Arroyo Willow
 - Coast Live Oak
 - Non-Native Annual Grassland
 - Ornamental
 - Sidewalk
 - Structure

Figure 1. Existing /Vegetation Communities and Land Cover



- * Coast Live Oak (Id)
- * Arroyo Willow (4 trunk)
- Parcel Boundary (APN:059-160-017 & -023)
- SBCO Environmentally Sensitive Habitat

Table 2. Coast Live Oak Trees On the Property

| ID No. | Species | Trunk Size (DBH) in inches |
|-----------|---|--------------------------------|
| CLO No. 1 | coast live oak (<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>) | 20 single trunk |
| CLO No. 2 | coast live oak (<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>) | 7 single trunk |
| CLO No. 3 | coast live oak (<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>) | 8 single trunk |
| CLO No. 4 | coast live oak (<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>) | 6, 5.5, 4.5 multiple trunks |
| CLO No. 5 | coast live oak (<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>) | 8.7 single trunk |
| CLO No. 6 | coast live oak (<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>) | 7, 7 multiple trunks |
| CLO No. 7 | coast live oak (<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>) | 10 single trunk |

Non-Native Annual Grassland covers most of the property. This community lacks any trees and has only a few scattered woody shrubs and is dominated by non-native annual grasses with a few non-native annual herbaceous plants commonly referred to as weeds. The dominant species within this community are: wild oat (*Avena fatua*), ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), rattail fescue (*Vulpia myuros* var. *myuros*), Italian rye (*Lolium multiflorum*), Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), telegraph weed (*Heterotheca grandiflora*), English plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), redstem filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*) and cudweed (*Gnaphalium luteo-album*).

Ornamental Trees and Shrubs primarily occur near the abandoned gas station and along the western property line which borders the Highway 154/Foothill Road off ramp. Ornamental trees and shrubs include: Mexican fan palm (*Washingtonia robusta*), blue gum eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*), Italian stone pine (*Pinus pinea*), olive tree (*Olea europaea*), bottle brush (*Callistemon rigidus*), juniper bush (*Juniperus* sp.), hawthorn bush (*Rhaphiolepis indica*), yucca (*Yucca elephantipes*), Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), Peruvian pepper (*Schinus molle*), and jade plant (*Crassula ovata*).

Vegetation

The majority (83 percent) of the plant species observed on the property are non-native (Table 3). This is to be expected given the fact that the site has been previously disturbed and is surrounded by development.

Table 3. Vegetation Species Observed

| Scientific Name | Common Name | Native (N) Introduced (I) |
|---|---------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Ambrosia psilostachya</i> | western ragweed | N |
| <i>Atriplex semibaccata</i> | Australian saltbush | I |
| <i>Avena fatua</i> | wild oat | I |
| <i>Baccharis pilularis</i> var. <i>consanguinea</i> | coyote brush | N |
| <i>Brassica nigra</i> | black mustard | I |
| <i>Bromus diandrus</i> | ripgut brome | I |

| Scientific Name | Common Name | Native (N) Introduced (I) |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Bromus hordeaceus</i> | soft chess | I |
| <i>Callistemon rigidus</i> | bottle brush | I |
| <i>Carduus pycnocephalus</i> | Italian thistle | I |
| <i>Carpobrotus edulis</i> | ice plant | I |
| <i>Chenopodium album</i> | lamb's quarters | I |
| <i>Conyza canadensis</i> | horseweed | N |
| <i>Crassula ovata</i> | jade plant | I |
| <i>Cynodon dactylon</i> | Bermuda grass | I |
| <i>Datura wrightii</i> | toloache | N |
| <i>Erodium cicutarium</i> | redstem filaree | I |
| <i>Eucalyptus globulus</i> | blue gum | I |
| <i>Euphorbia peplus</i> | petty spurge | I |
| <i>Foeniculum vulgare</i> | fennel | I |
| <i>Gnaphalium luteo-album</i> | cudweed | I |
| <i>Heterotheca grandiflora</i> | telegraph weed | N |
| <i>Hordeum murinum</i> | foxtail | I |
| <i>Juniperus sp.</i> | juniper bush | I |
| <i>Lactuca serriola</i> | prickly lettuce | I |
| <i>Lolium multiflorum</i> | Italian rye | I |
| <i>Malva parviflora</i> | cheese weed | I |
| <i>Nicotiana glauca</i> | tree tobacco | I |
| <i>Olea europaea</i> | olive tree | I |
| <i>Oxalis pes-caprae</i> | sourgrass | I |
| <i>Pennisetum setaceum</i> | fountain grass | I |
| <i>Phalaris aquatic</i> | Harding grass | I |
| <i>Pinus pinea</i> | Italian stone pine | I |
| <i>Piptatherum miliaceum</i> | smilo/rice grass | I |
| <i>Plantago lanceolata</i> | English plantain | I |
| <i>Quercus agrifolia</i> | coast live oak | N |
| <i>Raphanus sativus</i> | wild radish | I |
| <i>Rhamnus californicus</i> | coffee berry | N |
| <i>Rhaphiolepis indica</i> | hawthorn bush | I |
| <i>Rumex crispus</i> | curly dock | I |
| <i>Salix lasiolepis</i> | arroyo willow | N |
| <i>Salsola tragus</i> | Russian thistle | I |
| <i>Schinus molle</i> | Peruvian pepper | I |
| <i>Schinus terebinthifolius</i> | Brazilian pepper | I |
| <i>Vulpia myuros var. myuros</i> | rattail fescue | I |
| <i>Washingtonia robusta</i> | Mexican fan palm | I |
| <i>Yucca elephantipes</i> | yucca | I |

Wildlife

Very few wildlife species were seen or detected during the performance of the survey. This is primarily due to the fact that the site is surrounded by development on all sides, and the site does not offer wildlife much in the way of food, shelter, or breeding habitat. The following birds were seen: rock pigeon, mourning dove, American crow, acorn woodpecker, western scrub-jay, California towhee, black phoebe, Say's phoebe, Anna's hummingbird, turkey vulture, northern mockingbird, red-shouldered hawk, and European starling. The only mammal seen was a pocket gopher. The only amphibian or reptile seen was a western fence lizard. The number

of wildlife species observed was relatively low, but many other birds mammal, amphibian, and reptile species are expected to occur and/or have the potential to periodically occur on the property. The list of wildlife species provided in Table 4 is not intended to be a complete inventory of all species potentially present in the 4-acre project site. Other wildlife species that were not included in the list may periodically use and/or visit the site. It should also be recognized that wildlife movement and habitat use is dynamic and subject to change in response to natural and manmade conditions.

Table 4. Wildlife Expected to Occur in Project Area

| Scientific Name | Common Name | Seasonal Status |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Amphibians and Reptiles | | |
| <i>Batrachoseps nigriventris</i> | black-bellied slender salamander | RB |
| <i>Bufo boreas</i> | western toad | RB |
| <i>Elgaria multicarinata</i> | southern alligator lizard | RB |
| <i>Hyla regilla</i> | Pacific tree frog | RB |
| <i>Lampropeltis getulus</i> | common kingsnake | RB |
| <i>Pituophis catenifer</i> | gopher snake | RB |
| <i>Sceloporus occidentalis</i> | western fence lizard | RB |
| Birds | | |
| <i>Aphelocoma californica</i> | western scrub jay | RB |
| <i>Bacalophus ridgwayi</i> | oak titmouse | RB |
| <i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i> | cedar waxwing | WV |
| <i>Bubo virginianus</i> | great horned owl | RB |
| <i>Buteo jamaicensis</i> | red-tailed hawk | RB |
| <i>Buteo lineatus</i> | red-shouldered hawk | RB |
| <i>Buteo regalis</i> | ferruginous hawk | WV |
| <i>Callipepla californica</i> | California quail | RB |
| <i>Calypte anna</i> | Anna's hummingbird | RB |
| <i>Carduelis lawrencei</i> | Lawrence's goldfinch | M |
| <i>Carduelis psaltria</i> | lesser goldfinch | RB |
| <i>Carduelis tristis</i> | American goldfinch | WV |
| <i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i> | house finch | RB |
| <i>Cathartes aura</i> | turkey vulture | V |
| <i>Chondestes grammacus</i> | lark sparrow | SB |
| <i>Circus cyaneus</i> | northern harrier | V |
| <i>Colaptes auratus</i> | northern flicker | RB |
| <i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i> | American crow | RB |
| <i>Dendroica coronata</i> | yellow-rumped warbler | WV |
| <i>Elanus leucurus</i> | white-tailed kite | V |
| <i>Empidonax difficilis</i> | Pacific-slope flycatcher | SB |
| <i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i> | Brewer's blackbird | RB |
| <i>Falco sparverius</i> | American kestrel | RB |
| <i>Geothlypis trichas</i> | common yellowthroat | RB |
| <i>Hirundo pyrrhonota</i> | cliff swallow | SB |
| <i>Hirundo rustica</i> | barn swallow | SB |
| <i>Icteria virens</i> | yellow-breasted chat | RB |
| <i>Icterus bullockii</i> | northern oriole | SB |
| <i>Junco hyemalis</i> | dark-eyed junco | WV |
| <i>Lanius ludovicianus</i> | loggerhead shrike | WV |

Foothill Centre Project
Biological Survey & Assessment

| Scientific Name | Common Name | Seasonal Status |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i> | acorn woodpecker | RB |
| <i>Melospiza melodia</i> | song sparrow | RB |
| <i>Mimus polyglottos</i> | northern mockingbird | RB |
| <i>Molothrus ater</i> | brown-headed cowbird | SB |
| <i>Passer domesticus</i> | house sparrow | I |
| <i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i> | savannah sparrow | WV |
| <i>Passerina amoena</i> | lazuli bunting | SB |
| <i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i> | black-headed grosbeak | SB |
| <i>Picoides nuttallii</i> | Nuttall's woodpecker | RB |
| <i>Pipilo crissalis</i> | California towhee | RB |
| <i>Pipilo maculatus</i> | spotted towhee | RB |
| <i>Polioptila caerulea</i> | blue-gray gnatcatcher | M |
| <i>Psaltriparus minimus</i> | bushtit | RB |
| <i>Regulus calendula</i> | ruby-crowned kinglet | WV |
| <i>Sayornia saya</i> | Say's phoebe | WV |
| <i>Sayornis nigricans</i> | black phoebe | RB |
| <i>Selasphorus sasin</i> | Allen's hummingbird | M |
| <i>Sialia mexicana</i> | western bluebird | RB |
| <i>Sphyrapicus ruber</i> | red-breasted sapsucker | WV |
| <i>Sturnella neglecta</i> | western meadowlark | RB |
| <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> | European starling | I |
| <i>Thryomanes bewickii</i> | Bewick's wren | RB |
| <i>Troglodytes aedon</i> | house wren | RB |
| <i>Turdus migratorius</i> | American robin | WV |
| <i>Tyrannus verticalis</i> | western kingbird | SB |
| <i>Tyto alba</i> | barn owl | RB |
| <i>Vermivora celata</i> | orange-crowned warbler | SB |
| <i>Vermivora petechia</i> | yellow warbler | M |
| <i>Vireo gilvus</i> | warbling vireo | SB |
| <i>Vireo huttoni</i> | Hutton's vireo | M |
| <i>Wilsonia pusilla</i> | Wilson's warbler | SB |
| <i>Zenaida macroura</i> | mourning dove | SB |
| <i>Zonotrichia atricapilla</i> | golden-crowned sparrow | WV |
| <i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i> | white-crowned sparrow | WV |
| Mammals | | |
| <i>Antrozous pallidus</i> | pallid bat | SB |
| <i>Canis familiaris</i> | domestic dog | I |
| <i>Canis latrans</i> | coyote | V |
| <i>Didelphis virginiana</i> | Virginia opossum | I |
| <i>Eptesicus fuscus</i> | big brown bat | SB |
| <i>Felis catus</i> | house cat | RB |
| <i>Mephitis mephitis</i> | striped skunk | V |
| <i>Microtus californicus</i> | California vole | RB |
| <i>Myotis californicus</i> | California myotis | SB |
| <i>Peromyscus maniculatus</i> | deer mouse | RB |
| <i>Procyon lotor</i> | raccoon | V |
| <i>Reithrodontomys megalotis</i> | western harvest mouse | RB |
| <i>Scapanus latimanus</i> | broad-footed mole | RB |
| <i>Sorex ornatus</i> | ornate shrew | RB |

| Scientific Name | Common Name | Seasonal Status |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Spermophilus beecheyi</i> | California ground squirrel | RB |
| <i>Sylvilagus bachmani</i> | brush rabbit | RB |
| <i>Tadarida brasiliensis</i> | Mexican free-tailed bat | SB |
| <i>Thomomys bottae</i> | Botta's pocket gopher | RB |

Seasonal Status Codes: RB = Resident Breeder; SB = Summer Breeder; M = Migrant; V = Visitor; WV = Winter Visitor; and I = Introduced Species.

SENSITIVE SPECIES AND HABITATS

Sensitive species considered in this assessment are those protected by the federal Endangered Species Act and/or the California Endangered Species Act and those species meeting the California Environmental Quality Act definition of "rare." This includes all endangered or threatened species, candidates for listing, or Species of Special Concern listed by the federal and state governments and plants listed by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) as List 1 or List 2, as well as plants listed by the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden (2007) as locally sensitive. Sensitive habitats are habitats that are listed as a "rare natural community" by the California Department of Fish and Game, Natural Diversity Data Base and "critical habitat" designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or National Marine Fisheries Service for federally endangered and threatened species.

During the biological field surveys performed by Watershed Environmental on October 8, 2009, no species of sensitive plants or wildlife were found. As part of our survey preparation, we reviewed the sensitive species occurrence records mapped by the CDFG's California Natural Diversity Database (CDFG 2008). The following plant species all of which are considered rare in California and elsewhere (CNPS list 1B) have occurrence records within two miles of the Foothill Centre Project site: Santa Barbara Honeysuckle (*Lonicera subspicata* var. *subspicata*), black-flowered figwort (*Scrophularia atrata*), mesa horkelia (*Horkelia cuneata* ssp. *puberula*) and umbrella larkspur (*Delphinium umbraculorum*). These plants are all perennial species that are typically found in undisturbed coastal sage scrub, and oak woodland habitats, and were not seen during the performance of the survey and would not be expected to occur on the project site given the site history and level of disturbance. The only sensitive wildlife species occurrence record within two miles of the project site is for a monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) aggregation site. Monarch butterflies select dense groves of eucalyptus trees as their winter aggregation sites, there are no groves of eucalypts on the property and thus no potential for a monarch aggregation site on the property.

The project site does not contain any plant community types that are considered to be a "rare natural community" by the California Department of Fish and Game. The project site is also not within any U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or National Marine Fisheries Service formally designated critical habitat for any federally threatened or endangered species.

CONCLUSIONS

The biological conditions on the 4-acre Foothill Centre Project site have not significantly changed since the site conditions were last assessed in the 1983 and 1999 Environmental Impact Reports prepared by the City of Santa Barbara. During the performance of our surveys, we did not find any sensitive (i.e., State of Federally listed rare, candidates for listing, threatened, or endangered) wildlife or plant species. The only change of any note is that seven native coast live oak trees and a

**Foothill Centre Project
Biological Survey & Assessment**

single arroyo willow tree have grown/been allowed to grow on the property. These native trees are approximately 5-20 years old and were most likely planted by birds that inadvertently dropped seeds they were intending to eat on the property.

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