

## IV. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

### C. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Aquatic Consulting Services, Inc. conducted field surveys at the Project Site in 2007 and 2008. The purpose of these surveys was to identify biological resources at the site, including a survey of squirrels and birds found at the Project Site, and determine the potential for significant impacts to biological resources. The findings of those surveys is provided in "*Results of Biological Surveys Performed on the Studio City Golf Course Property, City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California*," dated December 23, 2008, and provided in *Appendix C: Biological Resources Report* of this Draft EIR. Due to the fully developed and urban environment surrounding the Project Site, it is reasonable to conclude that the biological conditions have not changed in any substantial way since 2008 and that the findings of the survey continue to accurately reflect biological conditions at the Project Site

TREES, Etc. also conducted a field survey of trees located on the Project Site in 2001 and 2002, and updated the survey for the Project Site in 2011. The resultant tree report, "*Horticultural Tree Report, Valleyheart Senior Community Housing*," dated December 6, 2011 and provided in *Appendix J: Tree Report* of this Draft EIR, was prepared in accordance with Ordinance No. 177,404, effective April 23, 2006 (Subdivision 12, Section 5, R.4a.) of the City of Los Angeles Municipal Code relating to the "*Tree Preservation Guidelines*."

#### 2. ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

##### a. Physical Setting

###### (1) *Existing Biological Character*

The approximately 16.1-acre Weddington Golf & Tennis Club Project Site is located west of Whitsett Avenue and north of the Los Angeles River. The Project Site is developed with a 9-hole pitch-and-putt golf course, driving range, clubhouse, putting green, 16 tennis courts, small tennis house, small maintenance buildings, maintenance yard, and surface parking lot. City of Los Angeles Fire Station No. 78, located adjacent to the southeast corner of the Project Site, is not part of the Project.

The golf course portion of the Project Site is vegetated by turf grass and ornamental trees and shrubs. Although dominated by exotics, the vegetation onsite does provide suitable nesting and foraging habitat for native bird species. Similarly, the presence of vegetative cover and lack of paved surfaces within the golf course provides suitable habitat for squirrels.

The tennis court portion of the Project Site is primarily paved with walkways and tennis court facilities. Vegetation is limited to shrubs along the perimeter of the court areas. Due to the lack of vegetation on the tennis court portion of the Project Site, as well as the high intensity of

human activity in this area, the potential for animal species in this area is considered low. As such, the tennis court area was not part of the official biological survey.

Two common squirrel species and a variety of bird species, including exotic parakeets, were observed onsite. *Table IV.C-1: Vertebrate Species Identified on the Weddington Golf Course*, is a composite list of animal species encountered during the 2007 and 2008 survey series performed on the golf course portion of the Project Site.

**TABLE IV.C-1**  
**VERTEBRATE SPECIES IDENTIFIED ON THE WEDDINGTON GOLF COURSE<sup>1</sup>**

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
<b>REPTILIA<sup>2</sup></b>	
<b>Iguanid Lizards</b>	<b>Iguanidae</b>
Western fence lizard	<i>Sceloporus occidentalis</i>
<b>MAMMALIA<sup>3</sup></b>	
<b>Squirrels</b>	<b>Scillridae</b>
California ground squirrel	<i>Spermophilus beecheyi</i>
Fox Squirrel	<i>Sciurus niger</i>
<b>AVES<sup>4</sup></b>	
<b>Hawks</b>	<b>Accipitridae</b>
Hawk, Cooper's	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>
Hawk, Red-shouldered	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>
Hawk, Red-tailed	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>
<b>Pigeons and Doves</b>	<b>Columbidae</b>
Dove, Mourning	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>
<b>Parrots and allies</b>	<b>Psittacidae</b>
Red-masked parakeet	<i>Aratinga erythrogenys</i>
<b>Swifts</b>	<b>Apodidae</b>
White throated swift	<i>Aeronautes saxatalis</i>
<b>Hummingbirds</b>	<b>Trochilidae</b>
Hummingbird, Allen's	<i>Salasphorus sasin</i>
Hummingbird, Anna's	<i>Calypte anna</i>
Hummingbird, black-chinned	<i>Archilochus alexandri</i>
Hummingbird, Rufous	<i>Selasphorus sasin</i>
<b>Woodpeckers</b>	<b>Picidae</b>
Nuttal's woodpecker	<i>Picoides nuttallii</i>
<b>Tyrant Flycatchers</b>	<b>Tyrannidae</b>
Phoebe, black	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>
<b>Swallows</b>	<b>Hirundinidae</b>
Swallow, barn	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Swallow, cliff	<i>Hirundo pyrrhonota</i>
<b>Bushtits</b>	<b>Aegithalidae</b>
Bushtit	<i>Psaltriparus minimus</i>
<b>Wrens</b>	<b>Troglodytidae</b>
Wren, Bewick's	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>
<b>Kinglets, Gnatcatchers, Thrushes and Babblers</b>	<b>Muscicapidae</b>
Ruby-crowned kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>
<b>Starlings and Mynas</b>	<b>Sturnidae</b>
European starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>

**TABLE IV.C-1 (CONTINUED)**  
**VERTEBRATE SPECIES IDENTIFIED ON THE WEDDINGTON GOLF COURSE<sup>1</sup>**

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
<b>AVES<sup>4</sup> (CONTINUED)</b>	
<b>Warblers</b>	<b>Parulidae</b>
Black and white warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>
Hermit warbler	<i>Dendroica occidentalis</i>
Townend's warbler	<i>Dendroica townsendi</i>
Yellow-rumped warbler	<i>Dendroica coronata</i>
<b>Emberizids</b>	<b>Emberizidae</b>
White-crowned sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>
<b>Blackbirds</b>	<b>Icteridae</b>
Bullock's oriole	<i>Icterus bullockii</i>
Hooded oriole	<i>Icterus cucullatus</i>
<b>Finches</b>	<b>Fringillidae</b>
Finch, House	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>
Lesser goldfinch	<i>Carduelis psaltria</i>
<b>Old World Sparrows</b>	<b>Passeridae</b>
Sparrow, House	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
<sup>1</sup> Source: Aquatic Consulting Services, Inc., <i>Results of Biological Surveys Performed on the Studio City Golf Course Property, City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California</i> , December 2008. <sup>2</sup> Nomenclature from: Western Reptiles and Amphibians, Stebbins 1985. <sup>3</sup> Nomenclature from: The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mammals, Whitaker Jr. 1980. <sup>4</sup> Nomenclature from: Sibley Guide to Birds (2003), National Audubon Society.	

Twenty-two (22) bird species were observed at the Project Site, including possible nesting activity for two observed species (bushtit, *Psaltriparlls minimlls*; and house finch, *Carpodaclls mexicanlls*).

Of the species listed in *Table IV.C-1*, five (Allen's hummingbird, rufous hummingbird, Cooper's hawk, Nuttall's woodpecker, and hermit warbler) are listed on the California Department of Fish and Game's California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) Special Animals List (California Department of Fish and Game, February 2008). "Special Animals" is a broad term used to refer to all fauna the CNDDDB is interested in tracking, regardless of their legal or protection status. These species generally fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Officially listed or proposed for listing under the State and/or Federal Endangered Species Acts;
- State or federal candidate for possible listing;
- Species which meet the criteria for listing, even if not currently included on any list, as described in Section 15380 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines;
- Species considered by the California Department of Fish and Game to be a Species of Special Concern;
- Species that are biologically rare, very restricted in distribution, declining throughout their range, or have a critical, vulnerable stage in their life cycle that warrants monitoring;
- Population(s) in California that may be peripheral of a species' range, but are threatened with extirpation in California;

- Species closely associated with a habitat that is declining in California at an alarming rate (e.g., wetlands, riparian, old growth forests, desert aquatic systems, native grasslands, vernal pools, etc.); or
- Species designated as a special-status, sensitive, or declining species by other State or federal agencies, or non-governmental organization.

Table IV.C-2: *Special-Status Animals Occurring on the Weddington Golf Course* lists the current regulatory status of animal species that occur onsite.

**TABLE IV.C-2**  
**SPECIAL-STATUS ANIMALS OCCURRING ON THE WEDDINGTON GOLF COURSE<sup>1</sup>**

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	STATUS <sup>2</sup>	COMMENTS
<b>BIRDS</b>			
Allen's hummingbird	<i>Salasphorus sasin</i>	AUDUBON-WL, IUCN-LC, USBC-WL	Of interest only when nesting
Cooper's hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	DFG – WL, IUCN-LC	Of interest only when nesting
Hermit warbler	<i>Dendroica occidentalis</i>	ABC – GL, AUDUBON-WL, IUCN-LC	Of interest only when nesting
Nuttall's woodpecker	<i>Picoides nuttallii</i>	ABC – GL, AUDUBON-WL, IUCN-LC, USBC-WL	Of interest only when nesting
Rufous hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus rufous</i>	ABC – GL, AUDUBON-WL, IUCN-LC, USBC-WL	Of interest only when nesting

<sup>1</sup> Source: Aquatic Consultants, Inc. 2008.

<sup>2</sup> **Status Key:**

ABC-GL = American Bird Conservancy Green List

AUDUBON-WL = Audubon Watch List

DFG-WL = California Department of Fish and Game - Watch List

IUCN-LC = International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) - Least Concern

USBC-WL = United States Bird Conservation Watch List

**(2) Special-Status Species**

The following provides specific life history information for the special-status species observed on the Project Site.

**Allen's hummingbird (*Salasphorus sasin*).** Allen's hummingbird is a common summer resident (January to July) and migrant along most of the California coast. Breeders are most common in coastal scrub, valley foothill hardwood, and valley foothill riparian habitats, but also are common in closed-cone pine-cypress, urban, and redwood habitats. Sprinklers, birdbaths, and other human water sources are used for bathing and possibly drinking, but water is also obtained from nectar and dew. Breeding occurs in sparse and open woodlands, coastal redwoods, and sparse to dense scrub habitats from mid-February to early August with peak activity in April. The Special Animals List indicates that monitoring organizations are only interested in tracking

nesting locations. Nesting was not confirmed on the Project Site; however, this species has the potential to be a resident on or near the Project Site due to the presence of large, mature trees within the golf course and within the surrounding offsite residential neighborhoods that could provide suitable nesting habitat.

**Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*).** Cooper's hawk is frequently found in patchy woodlands, with dense stands of live oak, riparian deciduous or other forest habitats occurring near water. Cooper's hawk is a breeding resident throughout most of the wooded portion of the state, with nesting occurring in dense stands containing moderate crown-depth. Small birds, especially young birds during nesting season, and small mammals, are the primary prey; however, reptiles and amphibians are also taken. Hunting occurs in broken woodland and habitat edges; prey is caught in the air, on the ground, and in vegetation. Vegetative cover is required to hide, attack, and approach prey. This common winter migrant and occasional summer resident in Southern California breeds in oak woodland habitats and southern cottonwood-willow riparian woodland. The Watch List designation for this species refers to actively nesting individuals only. Nesting was not confirmed on the Project Site; however, this species has the potential to be a resident on or near the Project Site due to the presence of large, mature trees within the golf course and within the surrounding offsite residential neighborhoods that could provide suitable nesting habitat.

**Hermit warbler (*Dendroica occidentalis*).** Hermit warbler is a fairly common to common summer visitor and migrant throughout California. Spring migration occurs through April and May; fall migration occurs through August and early September. They are common spring and fall migrants in the mountains, and also occur in valley foothill hardwood habitat and in stands of planted pines during migration and in winter. Breeding occurs in mature ponderosa pine, montane hardwood-conifer, mixed conifer, Douglas fir, redwood, red fir, and Jeffery pine habitats within major mountain ranges from San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains northward, excluding coastal ranges south of Santa Cruz County. The Special Animals List indicates that monitoring organizations are only interested in tracking nesting locations. The observations of this species on the Project Site were limited to two survey days in April of 2007. Because the observations occurred during the spring migration period, and were limited to two survey days, hermit warbler is not expected to breed at the golf course, or be a resident onsite.

**Nuttall's woodpecker (*Picoides nuttallii*).** Nuttall's woodpecker occurs in the Central Valley, Transverse and Peninsular Ranges, Coast Ranges north to Sonoma County and rarely to Humboldt County, lower portions of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada Ranges, and as a vagrant in the Owens Valley. Nuttall's woodpecker is a common, permanent resident of low-elevation riparian deciduous and oak habitats, and forages mostly within oak and riparian habitats; insects are gleaned from foliage, and sap is acquired by pecking, probing, or drilling into trunks and branches. Nuttall's woodpecker was observed onsite during the 2007 and 2008 surveys. The Special Animals List indicates that monitoring organizations are only interested in tracking nesting locations. Nesting was not confirmed on the Project Site; however, this species has the potential to be a resident on or near the Project Site due to the presence of large, mature trees within the golf course and within the surrounding offsite residential neighborhoods that could provide suitable nesting habitat in spite of the lack of preferred native riparian and oak habitats.

**Rufous hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufous*).** Rufous hummingbird is a common migrant and uncommon summer resident of California in general, and a rare, but likely regular winter resident in Southern California. Rufous hummingbird is found in a wide variety of habitats that provide nectar-producing flowers. Trees and shrubs in many habitats provide cover. The Special Animals List indicates that monitoring organizations are only interested in tracking nesting locations. Nesting was not confirmed on the Project Site; however, suitable habitat is present, and both male and female Rufous hummingbirds were observed together during the 2007 surveys, indicating the potential for nesting to occur onsite.

### (3) *Exotic Parakeets*

Bird surveys conducted in 2008 identified red-masked parakeet (*Aratinga erythrogenys*) at the Project Site. The parakeet is not a special-status species; however, members of the community expressed concern for these species during the public scoping period. As such, a discussion of this species is included.

The parakeets occurring on the Project Site have been identified as the red-masked parakeet; however, per conversations with Kimball Garrett of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County,<sup>1</sup> both the red-masked and mitred parakeets (*Aratinga mitrata*) (which may form mixed flocks with red-masked parakeets), also occur in the vicinity of the Project Site. Both the red-masked parakeet and the mitred parakeet are native to South America; however, escaped individuals previously kept as pets have become naturalized in residential, urban, and suburban areas primarily within coastal Southern California. Scattered observations and smaller naturalized populations occur elsewhere in California, including the San Francisco Bay Area. In their native range, red-masked parakeet occurs in a range of habitats including humid forests, deciduous forest, dry Acacia scrub, open sparsely vegetated desert, and intensely farmed areas and towns. Mitred parakeet is found primarily in small forest patches, arid mountain slopes and valleys, steep hills and rock faces, and legume-dominated cloud forest. In North America, the nesting season for both species generally extends between spring and summer. Nesting typically occurs within cavities; older trees are preferred, but non-traditional cavities (drain pipes, abandoned cavity nests used by other species, etc.) are also used. Based on Forshaw (2006), the female has one clutch per year. Eggs incubate for 23 days, and the young typically fledge within 50 days. Food items vary from nectar to seeds and berries.

Although not included in the Special Animals List, and not afforded regulatory protection in California or the United States due to their presence as an introduced exotic species, both red-masked parakeet and mitred parakeet have been evaluated for population status by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) within their natural range. The red-masked parakeet has been assigned a status of Near Threatened (IUCN-NT), indicating that this species nearly qualifies for listing as threatened within its range. Mitred parakeet has been assigned a status of Least Concern (IUCN-LC), indicating that it does not approach the threshold for the population decline criterion used by the IUCN (i.e., declining more than 30% in ten years or three generations).

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<sup>1</sup> Personal communication with Mr. Kimball Garrett (Collections Manager, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County) on October 6, 2008 discussing wild parakeet populations located within the Studio City area.

(4) *Squirrels*

The squirrel is not a special-status species; however, members of the community expressed concern for these species during the public scoping period. As such, a discussion of this species is included.

**California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*).** California ground squirrels are found within open areas, including rocky outcrops, fields, pastures, and sparsely wooded hillsides from southern central Washington, western Oregon, most of California, and west central Nevada. California ground squirrels form loose colonies of multiple individuals that occupy a single burrow that is accessed individually through used and maintained entrances. California ground squirrels may climb into brush or trees to bask, but otherwise remain on the ground. Plant materials are the primary food source, but insects and small vertebrates may be eaten. Hibernation occurs from November through February; however, first-year individuals may remain above ground. California ground squirrels are residents within the Project Site.

**Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus niger*).** Fox squirrel, the largest of the North American tree squirrels, is native to the eastern United States, and inhabits woods, mixed forests, cypress and mangrove swamps, and areas containing pine trees. The fox squirrels present on the Project Site are not native to California, but likely represent a small population that has become established and locally naturalized within the Project Site and the portions of the surrounding neighborhoods that contain suitable tree cover. Fox squirrels are active all year, and feed on nuts, seeds, berries, some fungi, and corn in areas of agricultural production. Summer nests are located in tree branches and formed of leaves; winter nests may be in a tree cavity and occupied with several other squirrels. These squirrels are somewhat larger than the Eastern gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*). Their coat is more colorful and has a brownish tinge to the tail and rusty-gray under parts with a rusty-yellow or orange belly.

(5) *Trees*

A full tree survey was conducted for the Project Site in 2001 and 2002, and updated for the Project Site in 2011. It should be noted that the 2011 update only re-surveyed the Development Site (which includes the tennis court complex, as well as all adjacent areas to the Development Site that may undergo physical change for the Project), where the Studio City Senior Living Center is proposed to be located. As the remainder of the Project Site (including the golf course and driving range areas that are not adjacent to the Development Site), will not be altered or touched by the Project development, the 2011 updated tree survey did not include these areas. The tree surveys identified over 400 “landscape” trees on the Project Site overall. The 2011 survey identified eight species of trees at the Development Site; however, none of the trees were found to be indigenous trees, native to California, including oaks, walnuts, sycamores, or laurel trees. The 2011 survey of the Development Site found 47 trees that met the criteria “of size”<sup>2</sup> as defined by the City of Los Angeles. Trees identified on the Development Site are summarized in *Table IV.C-3: Trees Located on the Development Site*.

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<sup>2</sup> “Of-size” trees are ornamental trees that measure at least 8 inches or more in cumulative diameter(s) at 40 inches above existing grade. (City of Los Angeles “*Tree Preservation Guidelines*”)

**TABLE IV.C-3**  
**TREES LOCATED ON THE DEVELOPMENT SITE<sup>1</sup>**

QUANTITY	TAG/MAP NUMBER <sup>2</sup>	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME
1	441	Orange	<i>Citrus species</i>
14	11, 12, 23-33, 131	Blue Gum	<i>Eucalyptus globulus</i>
1	440	Benjamin Fig	<i>Ficus benjamina</i>
1	41	Montebello Ash	<i>Fraxinus velutina coriacea</i>
3	36, 38, 442	American Sweet Gum	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>
2	39,40	Aleppo Pine	<i>Pinus halepensis</i>
1	439	Queensland Umbrella Tree	<i>Schefflera adinophylla</i>
24	7, 9, 10, 42-60, 106, 437	Mexican Fan Palm	<i>Washingtonia robusta</i>

<sup>1</sup> Source: TREES, etc., *Horticultural Tree Report Studio City Senior Living Center*, December 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Tag/Map Numbers are keyed to the Tree Map, enclosed as part of the Tree Report in *Appendix J: Tree Report* of this Draft EIR.

**b. Regulatory and Policy Setting**

**(1) Special-Status Species**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW) and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) are the regulatory agencies charged with oversight of plant and animal resources and implementation of regulations protecting such resources. Guidelines and lists published by each agency establish the required protocol for surveys, including the identification of species that may be listed as “special-status” (i.e., rare, threatened or endangered). When special-status species are encountered or anticipated to be affected by a proposed project, then these agencies may become a Responsible Agency with permitting review authority. Because no special-status species were observed on the Project Site, coordination with USFW or CDFG is not required.

**(2) Trees**

**Los Angeles Tree Preservation Guidelines.** Ordinance 177,404, effective April 23, 2006 (Subdivision 12, Section 5, R.4a.) of the City of Los Angeles' Municipal Code, establishes "Tree Preservation Guidelines." It is the policy of the City of Los Angeles to require the preservation of indigenous, native to California, trees, which measure 4 inches or more in cumulative diameter at 40 inches above natural grade. Indigenous trees to be preserved include oak (*Quercus* species), except for scrub oak (*Quercus dumosa*), Southern California black walnut (*Juglans californica*), Western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), and California bay laurel (*Umbellularia californica*), unless compelling reasons justify the removal of such trees. The above noted trees shall not include any tree grown or held for sale by a licensed nursery, or trees planted or grown as a part of a tree-planting program.

### 3. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

#### a. Methodology

Biological surveys were performed on the Weddington Golf & Tennis Club Project Site by Aquatic Consulting Services, Inc. (ACS) to evaluate the potential affect to squirrels and exotic parakeets known to occur in the vicinity of the Project Site. Field reconnaissance was initially completed in 2007 with additional field surveys completed on June 25, July 1, 9, 16, 25, 31, and August 8, 2008.

Survey efforts for both the 2007 and 2008 surveys focused within the golf course of the Project Site due to the lack of suitable habitat for squirrels and nesting birds within the Development Site ( i.e., tennis courts). The surveys provided baseline biological information regarding the animal species residing in and around the Project Site. Both the 2007 and 2008 survey series were performed between 7:00 A.M. and 10:30 A.M. in weather conditions that were conducive to bird and mammal surveying. Survey areas were walked and visually surveyed. Squirrels were identified by direct observation, and birds were identified by direct observation and/or call.

In accordance with Ordinance 177.404, effective April 23, 2006 (Subdivision 12, Section 5, R.4a.) of the City of Los Angeles Municipal Code relating to the "Tree Preservation Guidelines," the tree survey considered the presence of indigenous, native to California, trees measuring 4 inches or more in cumulative diameter at 40 inches above natural grade, as well as "of-sized" ornamental trees that measure at least 8 inches or more in cumulative diameter at 40 inches above natural grade. The tree report documented the condition, attributes, and health of each surveyed tree. The tree survey field sheets are provided in *Appendix J: Tree Report* of this Draft EIR.

The trees were inventoried as to their species, health, and aesthetic consideration, and reviewed in accordance with presently accepted industry procedures, which are of macro-visual observations only. No extensive microbiological, soil-root excavations, upper crown examination, nor internal tree investigations were conducted.

#### b. Thresholds of Significance

In accordance with Appendix G to the State CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have significant biological impact if it would cause any of the following conditions to occur:<sup>3</sup>

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on 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 Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;

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<sup>3</sup> State of California, *California Environmental Quality Act: Guidelines*, [http://ceres.ca.gov/topic/env\\_law/ceqa/guidelines](http://ceres.ca.gov/topic/env_law/ceqa/guidelines) (March 2012).

- b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service;
- c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means;
- d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites;
- e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance; or
- f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan.

Furthermore, as set forth in the City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide, the determination of significance shall be made on a case-by-case basis. A project would normally have a significant impact on biological resources if it would result in:

- 1) The loss of individuals, or the reduction of existing habitat, of a State or federal listed endangered, threatened, rare, protected, candidate, or sensitive species or a Species of Special Concern;
- 2) The loss of individuals or the reduction of existing habitat of a locally designated species or a reduction in a locally designated natural habitat or plant community;
- 3) Interference with wildlife movement/migration corridors that may diminish the chances for long-term survival of a sensitive species;
- 4) The alteration of an existing wetland habitat; or
- 5) Interference with habitat such that normal species behaviors are disturbed (e.g., from the introduction of noise, light) to a degree that may diminish the chances for long-term survival of a sensitive species.

**c. Project Impacts**

*(1) Animal Species*

Based on biological surveys conducted in 2007 and 2008, the Project Site, and the golf course in particular, contains a variety of wildlife (reptiles, birds, and mammals) and suitable mature trees, brush, and vegetable cover used by existing wildlife species that have adapted to normal golf

course operations. However, the Development Site, which primarily contains the existing tennis court facilities, has no specific habitat area that would be impacted by the proposed senior housing development. The proposed Project will not remove any stands of large mature trees, brush, or vegetable cover that would contain potential bird nesting habitat, squirrel nesting areas, or other wildlife species areas, and as such, these habitats will remain intact, resulting in a less-than-significant impact. However, since the development footprint would be removing certain trees on the Project Site, resident bird species, especially, may need to be protected during construction through the below Mitigation Measure in the following section.

(2) *Exotic Parakeets*

The exotic parakeets observed on the Project Site are not protected by State or federal regulations, but are of interest to the general public in the area. As most of the proposed construction is planned to occur within the existing footprint of the tennis court complex and immediately adjacent area (comprising the Development Site), which generally lacks suitable nesting and foraging habitat for the bird species observed onsite, it is likely that proposed construction activities within the Development Site will have negligible impacts to birds generally occurring within the golf course.

Although the analysis in this EIR is not required to address any impacts to the species, in acknowledgement of the public interest in the parakeets, the Applicant shall apply the avoidance/protection measures to the exotic parakeets that are typically extended only to native bird species. This includes biological monitoring of Project construction activities so that the construction activities are performed during the regular nesting season or conducted outside the nesting season. The Mitigation Measures presented below will ensure that impacts to the birds during the construction phase of the Project remain at less-than-significant levels.

(3) *Squirrels*

Neither fox squirrels nor the California ground squirrels occurring onsite are Special-Status Species, and are not provided any special State or federal regulatory protection. As most of the proposed construction is planned to occur within the Development Site, which generally lacks suitable burrowing, nesting, and foraging habitat for the squirrel species observed on the Project Site, it is anticipated that the proposed construction and operations will have negligible impacts to squirrels occurring on the Project Site. In addition, it should be noted that fox squirrels are exotic to California (native to the eastern portion of the United States), and the ground squirrel population occurring on the Project Site is presently managed by golf course landscape and maintenance personnel in order to minimize damage caused by these burrowing mammals to the golf course fairway and green areas. Since most of the large mature stands of trees exist on the golf course, which will be left intact—not the Development Site—any fox squirrel nests will be left intact during construction. Therefore, impacts are less-than-significant and no specific recommendations for protecting these animals are required.

(4) *Trees*

It is the intention of the proposed Project to preserve the majority of the trees on the Project Site. However, some trees on the Development Site, which include those trees around the perimeter of the tennis court complex will be removed when the tennis courts are demolished and surrounding area cleared to accommodate construction of the proposed SCSLC.

Of the total 47 trees surveyed within the Development Site, 38 trees will be retained and nine trees removed for the Project. *Table IV.C-4: Tree Disposition Due to the Project*, summarizes the status of trees to remain and to be removed due to the proposed Project.

**TABLE IV.C-4  
 TREE DISPOSITION DUE TO THE PROJECT<sup>1</sup>**

TREE NO(S). <sup>2</sup>	PROPOSED DISPOSITION	REQUESTED ENCROACHMENT
7, 9-12, 23-26	Save	This portion of the site has been acquired by the City of Los Angeles for a Fire Station, which has been completed. These trees are not affected by the Project (3 [#7, #9, #10] Mexican Fan Palms & 6 [#11, #12, #23 to #26] Blue Gums).
27-33	Save	It is the Project's intention to save these 7 Blue Gums.
36 & 38	Save	It is the Project's intention to save these 2 "off-property" American Sweet Gums.
39-43	Remove	These 5 trees (2 [#39, #40] Aleppo Pines, 1 [#41] Montebello Ash & 2 [#42, #43] Mexican Fan Palms) will require removal for the Project's proposed construction.
44-60	Save	It is the Project's intention to save these 17 Mexican Fan Palms.
106	Remove	This Mexican Fan Palm will require removal for the Project's construction.
131	Save	This portion of the site has been acquired by the City of Los Angeles for a Fire Station, which has been completed. This Blue Gum is no longer affected by the Project.
437	Save	It is the Project's intention to save this Mexican Fan Palm.
439-441	Remove	These 3 trees (1 [#439] Queensland Umbrella Tree, 1 [#440] Benjamin Fig & 1 [#441] Orange) will require removal for this Project's proposed construction.
442	Save	It is the Project's intention to save this American Gum.

<sup>1</sup> Source: TREES, etc., *Horticultural Tree Report Studio City Senior Living Center*, December 2011.  
<sup>2</sup> Trees are identified by "tree number" on the Tree Location Map, included in the Tree Report, provided in *Appendix J: Tree Report* of this Draft EIR.

Due to the fact that the Development Site and Project Site do not support any indigenous, native to California (California native bay, oak, sycamore, and/or walnut), trees, there are no anticipated impacts to native trees. However, the nine trees to be removed to accommodate the Project (as indicated in *Table IV.C-4*) meet the definition of "of size" trees per the City's Tree Protection Guidelines. The preservation of healthy, mature trees is an objective for the City and the Applicant should make all attempts to recycle and replant any trees that remain healthy after removal, although this is not always possible. However, the removal of the nine trees compared to an overall total (approximately) 430 trees on the Project Site, represents a potential loss of approximately 2 percent of the total trees onsite. Further, this represents about 19 percent removal of the total "of size" trees at the Development Site. These percentages do not represent a significant amount of tree removals from the Project Site, resulting in a less-than-significant impact due to the Project.

Additionally, the City of Los Angeles Tree Protection Guidelines and landscape requirements will require that new landscaping, including trees, be integrated into the new construction area,

and would require at a minimum a 1:1 replacement for any tree removed. The Compliance Measures for the Project are listed below and are consistent with the objectives of the tree guidelines.

**d. Cumulative Impacts**

A significant impact to biological resources is typically based on consideration of the Project's impact on known sensitive species and/or the loss of valued habitat. Due to the fact that the proposed Project would not affect any rare, threatened, or endangered species, nor result in the removal of any special or native habitats or trees, or any significant amount of existing trees, the resultant cumulative impact is also considered-less than-significant.

**4. COMPLIANCE MEASURES, PDFS, AND MITIGATION PROGRAM**

**a. Compliance Measures**

The following Compliance Measures are reasonably anticipated standard conditions that are based on local, State, and federal regulations or laws that serve to offset or prevent specific biological impacts. These Compliance Measures are applicable to the proposed Project and shall be incorporated to ensure that the Project has minimal impacts to surrounding uses:

- Any work on non-removed (e.g., saved) trees shall be in accordance with the City of Los Angeles' preservation tree policies.
- The Project landscape plan shall include provision for 15-gallon, 24" box, or 36" box specimen trees, to replace any "of size" trees removed. Such replacement shall be on a 1:1 ratio basis.
- The City of Los Angeles Tree Protection Guidelines and landscape requirements require that new landscaping, including trees, be integrated into the new construction area, and shall require at a minimum a 1:1 replacement for any tree removed. The Applicant shall be required to submit a Landscape Plan for City review and approval. Such review shall ensure that the Project conforms to the City's policies and guidelines for tree protection and replacement.

**b. Project Design Features (PDFs)**

There are no PDFs included with respect to biological resources.

**c. Mitigation Measures**

The Project will result in less-than-significant operational biological impacts. To ensure that the biological impacts are less-than-significant during the construction phase of the Project and that non-invasive new trees are planted in the landscaped areas of the Project, the following Mitigation Measures shall be implemented:

- MM BIO-1: Biological monitoring of all construction activities shall be performed during the regular nesting season (February 1 through September 1). If birds begin to nest during construction, these nest areas shall be marked and a 50-foot buffer/avoidance zone shall be established to protect nesting/fledgling birds. Any nesting birds within this zone shall be avoided until such time that all young have fledged and the nest is no longer active, or until the nest is observed to have been abandoned for a sufficient period of time to preclude egg viability. Heavy equipment (dozer, backhoe, trucks, excavator, and pile driver) used for Project construction shall avoid working within this 50-foot buffer area. Alternatively, excavation, grading, fill, pile driving or any other construction activity requiring the use of heavy equipment shall be conducted outside the typical nesting season.
- MM BIO-2: If additional trees, beyond those proposed in the EIR, are removed as a necessity for grading and construction operations, especially those trees which form a part of a large, established stand or canopy, or trees which appear visually unique, then the Project Applicant or developer shall preserve the trees, if healthy, for re-planting elsewhere onsite, to the extent possible.
- MM BIO-3: New trees integrated into the Project should be selected to minimize the potential for impacts and incompatibility with other existing, remaining trees, to reflect native and indigenous species, and to reflect the transitioning character or the Los Angeles River interface. As such, the proposed Project tree program shall incorporate the following:
- As recommended by Cal-IPC (California Invasive Plant Council-[www.caHpc.org](http://www.caHpc.org)), the following trees should be avoided: Tree-of-Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), Single Seed Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Russian Olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*), Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*), Myoporum (*Myoporum laetum*), Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), Chinese Tallow Tree (*Sapium sebiferum*), Brazilian Pepper Tree (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), Scarlet Wisteria (*Sesbania punicea*) & Sa It Cedar (*Tamarix* sp.).
  - As recommended by Cal-IPC, the following trees are discouraged to be planted in California: Acacia (*Acacia dealbata*, *A. decurrens*, & *A. melanoxylon*), Edible Fig (*Ficus carica*), Mayten (*Maytenus boaria*), Olive (*Olea europaea*), Canary Island Date Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*), California Pepper Tree (*Schinus californica*) & Mexican Fan Palm (*Washington robusta*).
  - As recommended by Cal-IPC, the following trees are encouraged: Strawberry Tree (*Arbutus* sp.), Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), Chinese Fringe Tree (*Chionanthus retusus*), Japanese Blueberry Tree (*Elaeocarpus decipiens*), Bronze Loquat (*Eriobotrya deflexa*), Nichol's Willow-Leafed Peppermint (*Eucalyptus nicholii*), Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia* sp.), Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), Dawn Redwood

*(Metasequoia glyptostroboides)*, Sweet Michelia (*Michelia doltsopa*), Tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*), Burr Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*), Southern live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*), Japanese Snowdrop Tree (*Styraxjaponicus*), Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) & Water Gum (*Tristania laurina*).

## 5. LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

Project impacts during operations, with regard to the biological life on the Project Site, are less-than-significant, primarily because the Development Site is largely void of suitable habitat for wildlife species. Further, with implementation of the Compliance Measures as required and the Mitigation Measures identified above, all potential and short-term construction impacts related to biological resources would be reduced to less-than-significant levels.