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Mr. Reynaldo Aquino
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Subject: Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration, Serrano Oaks Townhomes Project, State Clearinghouse No. 2023060303, City of Jurupa Valley, Riverside County

Dear Mr. Aquino:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) received a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) from the City of Jurupa Valley (City) for the Serrano Oaks Townhomes Project (Project) for Serrano Oak, LLC (Project Applicant/Proponent) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines[1].

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations regarding those activities involved in the Project that may affect California fish and wildlife. Likewise, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments regarding those aspects of the Project that CDFW, by law, may be required to carry out or approve through the exercise of its own regulatory authority under the Fish and Game Code.

CDFW ROLE

CDFW is California's Trustee Agency for fish and wildlife resources and holds those resources in trust by statute for all the people of the State [Fish & G. Code, §§ 711.7, subdivision (a) & 1802; Pub. Resources Code, § 21070; California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, § 15386, subdivision (a)]. CDFW, in its trustee capacity, has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species (Id., § 1802). Similarly, for purposes of CEQA, CDFW is charged by law to provide, as available, biological expertise during public agency environmental review efforts, focusing specifically on projects and related activities that have the potential to adversely affect state fish and wildlife resources.

CDFW is also submitting comments as a Responsible Agency under CEQA (Pub. Resources Code, § 21069; CEQA Guidelines, § 15381). CDFW expects that it may need to exercise regulatory authority as provided by the Fish and Game Code, including

1 CEQA is codified in the California Public Resources Code in section 21000 et seq. The "CEQA Guidelines" are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000.

lake and streambed alteration regulatory authority (Fish & G. Code, § 1600 *et seq*.). Likewise, to the extent implementation of the Project as proposed may result in "take", as defined by State law, of any species protected under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 *et seq.*), or CESA-listed rare plant pursuant to the Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA; Fish & G. Code, §1900 *et seq.*), CDFW recommends the Project proponent obtain appropriate authorization under the Fish and Game Code.

CDFW issued Natural Community Conservation Plan approval and take authorization in 2004 for the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), as per Section 2800, et seq., of the California Fish and Game Code. The MSHCP established a multiple species conservation program to minimize and mitigate habitat loss and the incidental take of covered species in association with activities covered under the permit. CDFW is providing the following comments as they relate to the Project's consistency with the MSHCP and CEQA.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND SUMMARY

Description: The City of Jurupa Valley (City; Lead Agency) and Serrano Oaks, LLC (Project Applicant) are proposing the Serrano Oaks Townhomes Project (Project). The proposed Project will consist of a Multiple Family Development consisting of 66 units (15.9 du/ac) on the 4.13-acre site, which includes thirteen residential buildings, asphalt-concrete pavement, concrete sidewalks, concrete curbs, concrete gutters, fencing, a catch basin inlet, and an underground infiltration system.

In addition, the proposed Project will include improvements to Clay Street such as widening, a raised 12-ft median, pavement width east of proposed median 32-ft and10-ft parkway including a 6-ft curb adjacent sidewalk.

Location: The Project site is located east of Clay Street, north of Linares Avenue, west of Heatherwood Drive, and south of Haven View Drive in the City of Jurupa Valley, Riverside County, California, in Township 2 South, Section 25, Range 6 West, of the U.S. Geological Survey 7.5" Riverside West, California topographic quadrangle map; Assessor's Parcel Numbers 163-400-026, 163-400-028, and 163-400-029.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the documents for review, CDFW offers the comments and recommendations below to assist the City in adequately identifying, avoiding, and/or mitigating the Project's significant, or potentially significant, direct, and indirect impacts on fish and wildlife (biological) resources. Editorial comments or other suggestions are also included to improve the environmental document. CDFW recommends the measures or revisions below be included in a science-based monitoring program that contains adaptive management strategies as part of the Project's CEQA mitigation, monitoring and reporting program (Pub. Resources Code, § 21081.6; CEQA Guidelines, § 15097).

Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan

Compliance with approved habitat plans, such as the MSHCP, is discussed in CEQA. Specifically, Section 15125(d) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that the CEQA document discuss any inconsistencies between a proposed project and applicable general plans and regional plans, including habitat conservation plans and natural community conservation plans. An assessment of the impacts to the MSHCP as a result of this Project is necessary to address CEQA requirements. The proposed Project occurs within the MSHCP area and is subject to the provisions and policies of the MSHCP.

To be considered a covered activity, Permittees need to demonstrate that proposed actions are consistent with the MSHCP, the Permits, and the Implementing Agreement. The City is the Lead Agency and is signatory to the Implementing Agreement of the MSHCP. To demonstrate consistency with the MSHCP, as part of the CEQA review, the City shall ensure the Project pays Local Development Mitigation Fees and other relevant fees as set forth in Section 8.5 of the MSHCP; and demonstrates compliance with: 1) the Protection of Species Associated with Riparian/Riverine Areas and Vernal Pools (Section 6.1.2 of the MSHCP); 2) the Urban/Wildlands Interface Guidelines (Section 6.1.4 of the MSHCP); 3) the policies set forth in Section 6.3.2; and 4) the Best Management Practices and the siting, construction, design, operation and maintenance guidelines as set forth in Section 7.0 and Appendix C of the MSHCP.

Specific Comments

Comment #1: Burrowing Owl

Issue: The Project may have a significant impact on burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia),* a Species of Special Concern (SSC).

Specific impacts: Project construction and activities may result in injury or mortality of burrowing owl, disrupt natural burrowing owl breeding behavior, and reduce reproductive capacity. Also, the Project may impact breeding, wintering, and foraging habitat for the species. Habitat loss could result in local extirpation of the species and contribute to local, regional, and State-wide declines of burrowing owl.

Why impacts would occur: The MND identifies that burrowing owl have a high potential to occur within the Project site; however, focused surveys of the Project site were not completed. No additional details (the survey dates, times, etc.) were provided regarding the burrowing owl habitat assessment survey mentioned within the MND. The "Burrowing Owl Survey Instructions for the Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Area" specify a written report must be provided detailing results of the habitat assessment with photographs and indicating whether the project site contains suitable burrowing owl habitat and burrow locations.

There is insufficient information provided to determine if the proposed avoidance and minimization measures will mitigate Project impacts below a level of significance. MM BIO-1 would require a no-work buffer around burrow nests, which would apply to occupied burrowing owl burrows, both during the nesting season and outside breeding season to be determined by the biologist. However, a no-work buffer could be an insufficient buffer from occupied burrows and adjacent foraging grounds given the types of disturbance associated with the Project. Burrowing owls could react to low level disturbances such as surveys, drive by, or minimal ground disturbance/excavation (Environment Canada 2009). The Project is proposing a buffer that may be more suitable for low level disturbances. However, the Project could generate noise and ground vibrations more consistent with medium to high level disturbances. Project construction would generate noise and ground vibrations during daytime and nighttime earthmoving activities, demolition, tunneling, spoils hauling, and operation of large machinery. Implementing a buffer from occupied burrows during these types of disturbances could still result in burrowing owls abandoning active nests, potentially causing loss of eggs or developing young, and noise could cause birds to avoid suitable nesting habitat. Finally, a buffer would not protect important foraging habitat during burrowing owl nesting season.

Implementation of a 300-foot no-work buffer may not be sufficient to avoid take of burrowing owl nests. Finally, CDFW does not issue permits for the take of nesting birds, nests, or eggs. MM BIO-1 does not provide any performance standards suitable for successfully mitigating impacts on burrowing owl habitat. The mitigation measure proposed in the MND may not satisfy the CEQA standards for mitigation that formulation of mitigation measures shall not be deferred until some future date (CEQA Guidelines, § 15126.4).

Evidence impact would be significant: Burrowing owl is an SSC, an SSC is a species, subspecies, or distinct population of an animal native to California that currently satisfies one or more of the following (not necessarily mutually exclusive) criteria:

- is extirpated from the State or, in the case of birds, is extirpated in its primary season or breeding role;

- is listed as ESA-, but not CESA-, threatened, or endangered; meets the State definition of threatened or endangered but has not formally been listed;

- is experiencing, or formerly experienced, serious (noncyclical) population declines or range retractions (not reversed) that, if continued or resumed, could qualify it for State threatened or endangered status; and/or,

- has naturally small populations exhibiting high susceptibility to risk from any factor(s), that if realized, could lead to declines that would qualify it for CESA threatened or endangered status (CDFW 2022b). CEQA provides protection not

> only for ESA and CESA-listed species, but for any species including but not limited to SSC which can be shown to meet the criteria for State listing. These SSC meet the CEQA definition of rare, threatened, or endangered species (CEQA Guidelines, § 15380). In addition, migratory nongame native bird species are protected by international treaty under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 50, § 10.13). Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibit take of all birds and their active nests including raptors and other migratory nongame birds (as listed under the Federal MBTA). It is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any raptor.

In California, burrowing owls are in decline primarily because of habitat loss, as well as disease, predation, and drought. Burrowing owls require specific soil and microhabitat conditions, occur in few locations within a broad habitat category of grassland and some forms of agricultural land, require a relatively large home range to support their life history requirements, occur in relatively low numbers, and are semi-colonial.

The Project's impact on burrowing owl has yet to be mitigated below a significant level. Accordingly, the Project continues to have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on a species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species by CDFW.

Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure(s):

Mitigation Measure #1: To avoid take of active burrowing owl burrows (nests), CDFW requests the City include the following mitigation measures in the MND per below (edits are in ~~strikethrough~~ and **bold**), and also included in Attachment 1 "Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program".

> **MM-BIO 01: To avoid project-related impacts to burrowing owls potentially occurring on or in the vicinity of the project site,** ~~A~~ **a** pre-construction presence/absence survey for burrowing owl within the Impact Site (and 500- foot survey buffer) ~~where suitable habitat is present~~ **in accordance with the March 2006 Burrowing Owl Survey Instructions for the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Area** shall be conducted by a qualified biologist within 30 days prior to the commencement of ground disturbing activities **including vegetation clearing, grubbing, tree removal, or site watering. In addition, a preconstruction survey for burrowing owl shall be conducted within 3 days prior to initiation of Project activities and reported to CDFW. Additionally, if ground-disturbing activities occur, but the site is left undisturbed for more than 30 days, a pre-construction survey shall again be necessary to minimize the possibility burrowing owl have not colonized the site since it was last disturbed. If burrowing owls are found, the same coordination described above shall be necessary.**

If no burrowing owls are observed during the survey, site preparation and construction activities may begin. If burrowing owl are present, If ~~active~~ burrowing owl ~~burrows~~ are detected ~~during the breeding season~~ **within the survey area**, **then avoidance or minimization measures shall be undertaken in consultation with the City of Jurupa Valley, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). CDFW shall be sent written notification within 48 hours of detection of burrowing owls.** ~~all work within an appropriate buffer (typically a minimum 300 feet) of any active burrow will be halted. If there is an active nest at the burrow, work will not proceed within the buffer until that nesting effort is finished. The onsite biologist will review and verify compliance with these boundaries and will verify the nesting effort has finished. Work can resume in the buffer when there are no occupied/active burrowing owl burrows found within the buffer area.~~ **If active nests are identified on an implementing project site during the pre-construction survey, the Project applicant shall not commence activities until no sign is present that the burrows are being used by adult or juvenile owls or following CDFW approval of a Burrowing Owl Plan as described below. If owl presence is difficult to determine, a qualified biologist shall monitor the burrows with motion-activated trail cameras for at least 24 hours to evaluate burrow occupancy. The onsite qualified biologist will verify the nesting effort has finished according to methods identified in the Burrowing Owl Plan.**

The qualified biologist and Project Applicant shall coordinate with the City, CDFW, and USFWS to develop a Burrowing Owl Plan to be approved by the City, CDFW, and USFWS prior to commencing Project activities. The Burrowing Owl Plan shall describe proposed avoidance, relocation, monitoring, minimization, and/or mitigation actions. The Burrowing Owl Plan shall include the number and location of occupied burrow sites and details on proposed buffers if avoiding the burrowing owls or information on the adjacent or nearby suitable habitat available to owls for relocation. If no suitable habitat is available nearby for relocation, details regarding the creation and funding of artificial burrows (numbers, location, and type of burrows) and management activities for relocated owls shall also be included in the Burrowing Owl Plan. The City will implement the Burrowing Owl Plan following CDFW and USFWS review and approval.

If active burrowing owl burrows are detected ~~outside the breeding season or during the breeding season and its determined nesting activities have not begun (or are complete), then passive and/or active relocation may be approved following consultation with the City of Jurupa Valley and CDFW~~. **within Impact Site(s) during Project implementation and construction, the Project applicant shall notify CDFW immediately in writing within 48**

hours of detection. ~~The installation of one-way doors may be installed as part of a passive relocation program. Burrowing owl burrows shall be excavated with hand tools by a qualified biologist when determined to be unoccupied, and back filled to ensure that animals do not re-enter the holes/dens. Upon completion of the survey and any follow-up construction avoidance management, a report shall be prepared and submitted to the City for mitigation monitoring compliance record keeping.~~ **A Burrowing Owl Plan will be submitted to CDFW for review and approval within two weeks of detection and no Project activity will continue within 1000 feet of the burrowing owls until CDFW approves the Burrowing Owl Plan. The City shall be responsible for implementing appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures, including burrow avoidance, passive or active relocation, or other appropriate mitigation measures as identified in the Burrowing Owl Plan.**

A final report shall be prepared by a qualified biologist documenting the results of the burrowing owl surveys and detailing avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures. The final report will be submitted to the City and CDFW within 30 days of completion of the survey and burrowing monitoring for mitigation monitoring compliance record keeping.

Comment #2: Nesting Bird

Issue: The Project may have a significant impact on nesting birds, including Species of Special Concern and fully protected species, that are subject to Fish and Game Code section 3513 and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918.

Specific impact: Project implementation could result in the loss of nesting and/or foraging habitat for passerine and raptor species from the removal of vegetation onsite.

Why impacts would occur: Project activities could result in temporary or long-term loss of suitable nesting and foraging habitats. Construction during the breeding season of nesting birds could potentially result in the incidental loss of breeding success or otherwise lead to nest abandonment. Noise from road use, generators, and heavy equipment may disrupt nesting bird mating calls or songs, which could impact reproductive success (Patricelli and Blickley 2006, Halfwerk et al. 2011). Noise has also been shown to reduce the density of nesting birds (Francis et al. 2009), and songbird abundance and density was significantly reduced in areas with high levels of noise (Bayne et al. 2008). Additionally, noise exceeding 70 dB(A) may affect feathers and body growth of young birds (Kleist et al. 2018). In addition to construction activities, residential development and increased human presence in the Project site could contribute to nesting bird impacts.

The timing of the nesting season varies greatly depending on several factors, such as the bird species, weather conditions in any given year, and long-term climate changes

(e.g., drought, warming, etc.). CDFW staff have observed that changing climate conditions may result in the nesting bird season occurring earlier and later in the year than historical nesting season dates. CDFW recommends the completion of nesting bird survey regardless of time of year to ensure compliance with all applicable laws pertaining to nesting and to avoid take of nests.

The duration of a pair to build a nest and incubate eggs varies considerably, therefore, CDFW recommends surveying for nesting behavior and/or nests and construction within three days prior to start of Project construction to ensure all nests on site are identified and to avoid take of nests. Without appropriate species-specific avoidance measures, biological construction monitoring may be ineffective for detecting nesting birds. This may result in Take of nesting birds. Project ground-disturbing activities such as grading and grubbing may result in habitat destruction, causing the death or injury of adults, juveniles, eggs, or hatchlings. In addition, the Project may remove habitat by eliminating native vegetation that may support essential foraging and breeding habitat.

Evidence impacts would be significant: It is the Project proponent's responsibility to avoid take of all nesting birds. Fish and Game Code section 3503 makes it unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by Fish and Game Code or any regulation made pursuant thereto. Fish and Game Code section 3513 makes it unlawful to take or possess any migratory nongame bird except as provided by the rules and regulations adopted by the Secretary of the Interior under provisions of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 703 et seq.). Fish and Game Code section 3503.5 makes it unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the orders Falconiformes or Strigiformes (birds-of-prey) to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird except as otherwise provided by Fish and Game Code or any regulation adopted pursuant thereto. These regulations apply anytime nests or eggs exist on the Project site.

Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure(s):

Mitigation Measure #1: To address the above issues and help the Project applicant avoid unlawful take of nesting birds, CDFW requests the City include the following mitigation measures in the MND per below (edits are in ~~strikethrough~~ and **bold**), and also included in Attachment 1 "Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program".

> **MM BIO-4: To maintain compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513,** ~~As feasible, vegetation clearing~~ **site preparation activities (such as ground disturbance, construction activities, and/or removal of trees and vegetation)** should be conducted, **to the greatest extent possible,** outside of the nesting season, which is ~~generally identified as February 1 through August 31~~. If avoidance of the nesting season is not feasible, then a qualified biologist shall conduct a nesting bird survey within three days prior to any disturbance of the site, including disking, vegetation grubbing, and grading.

The survey area will include the project impact footprint and a 500-foot buffer where legal access is granted around the disturbance footprint. Within 72 hours of the nesting bird survey, all areas surveyed by the biologist will be cleared by the Contractor or a supplemental nesting bird survey is required. The survey results shall be provided to the City's Planning Department. The Project Applicant shall adhere to the following:

1. **Applicant shall designate a biologist (Designated Biologist) experienced in: identifying local and migratory bird species of special concern; conducting bird surveys using appropriate survey methodology; nesting surveying techniques, recognizing breeding and nesting behaviors, locating nests and breeding territories, and identifying nesting stages and nest success; determining/establishing appropriate avoidance and minimization measures; and monitoring the efficacy of implemented avoidance and minimization measures.**

2. **Pre-activity field surveys shall be conducted at the appropriate time of day/night, during appropriate weather conditions, no more than 3 days prior to the initiation of Project activities. Surveys shall encompass all suitable areas including trees, shrubs, bare ground, burrows, cavities, and structures. Survey duration shall take into consideration the size of the Project site; density, and complexity of the habitat; number of survey participants; survey techniques employed; and shall be sufficient to ensure the data collected is complete and accurate.**

If no nesting birds are observed during the survey, site preparation and construction activities may begin. If active nests **or nesting birds (including nesting raptors)** are identified **during the nesting bird survey, avoidance buffers shall be implemented as determined by a qualified biologist and approved by the City of Jurupa Valley, based on their best professional judgement and experience.** ~~the biologist shall establish suitable buffers around the nests, and~~ The buffer areas shall be avoided until ~~the nests are no longer occupied and the juvenile birds can survive independently from the nests.~~ **the Project biologist determines the young have fledged and dispersed or it is confirmed that the nest has been unsuccessful or abandoned. The buffer shall be of a distance to ensure avoidance of adverse effects to the nesting bird by accounting for topography, ambient conditions, species, nest location, and activity type. All nests shall be monitored as determined by the qualified biologist until nestlings have fledged and dispersed or it is confirmed that the nest has been unsuccessful or abandoned. The Designated Biologist shall monitor the nest at the onset of project activities, and at**

the onset of any changes in such project activities (e.g., increase in number or type of equipment, change in equipment usage, etc.) to determine the efficacy of the buffer. The qualified biologist shall halt all construction activities within proximity to an active nest if it is determined that the activities are harassing the nest and may result in nest abandonment or take. The qualified biologist shall also have the authority to require implementation of avoidance measures related to noise, vibration, or light pollution if indirect impacts are resulting in harassment of the nest. Work can resume within these avoidance areas when no other active nests are found. Upon completion of the survey and nesting bird monitoring, a report shall be prepared and submitted to the City for mitigation monitoring compliance record keeping.

Comment #3: Crotch's Bumble Bee

Issue: The Project may impact Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*).

Specific Impacts: The Project may result in temporal or permanent loss of suitable nesting and foraging habitat. Project ground-disturbing activities may cause death or injury of adults, eggs, and larva; burrow collapse; nest abandonment; and reduced nest success.

Why impact would occur: According to page 20 in Section 4.4 Sensitive Wildlife Species, Crotch's bumble bee could be directly affected by damage to suitable habitat, including grassland and scrub habitats. Direct effects would also include the permanent conversion of occupied habitat to project infrastructure or changes to micro/local hydrology. Indirect effects on Crotch's bumble bee during construction would include the accumulation of fugitive dust resulting in degradation of habitat for these invertebrates. In addition, changes to local runoff would have negative effects on the health and vigor of plants that make up suitable habitat. The Project proposes MM BIO-3 to mitigate for the Project's impact. However, the Project's impact on Crotch's bumble bee has yet to be mitigated below a level of significance. MM-BIO 3 does not provide performance criteria or action(s) to meet those performance criteria to compensate for the loss of Crotch's bumble bee habitat (CEQA Guidelines, § 15126.4).

Evidence impact would be significant: The California Fish and Game Commission accepted a petition to list Crotch's bumble bee as endangered under CESA, determining the listing "may be warranted" and advancing the species to the candidacy stage of the CESA listing process. Crotch's bumble bee is granted full protection of a threatened species under CESA. Take of any endangered, threatened, candidate species that results from the Project is prohibited, except as authorized by State law (Fish & G. Code, §§ 86, 2062, 2067, 2068, 2080, 2085; Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 786.9). In addition, Crotch's bumble bee has a NatureServe State ranking of S1/S2. This means that the Crotch's bumble bee is considered critically imperiled or imperiled

and is extremely rare. Crotch's bumble bee is also listed as an invertebrate of conservation priority under the Terrestrial and Vernal Pool Invertebrates of Conservation Policy (CDFW 2017). The Project's impact on Crotch's bumble bee has yet to be mitigated. Accordingly, the Project continues to have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on a species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species by CDFW.

Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure(s):

Mitigation Measure #1: To avoid take of Crotch's bumble bee, CDFW requests the City include the following mitigation measures in the MND per below (edits are in ~~strikethrough~~ and **bold**), and also included in Attachment 1 "Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

MM-BIO 3: Prior to ~~construction~~ **ground disturbance**, a habitat assessment for Crotch's bumble bee will be conducted within the Project Site and an appropriate survey buffer by a qualified biologist with experience surveying for and observing Crotch's bumble bee. If the qualified biologist determines that suitable habitat is present, **site specific surveys for Crotch's bumble bee shall be conducted in accordance with any Crotch's bumble bee survey protocol provided by CDFW**. ~~a minimum of three surveys will be conducted to determine the presence/absence of Crotch bumble bee. The initial survey can be conducted concurrently with the habitat assessment. Surveys will consist of observing pollination sources during ideal hours of the day, as determined by the qualified biologist~~. If Crotch's bumble bee are determined to be present within the Impact Site and it is determined the species will be impacted by Project implementation, appropriate mitigation will be determined in consultation with CDFW. **In addition, the Project Applicant shall adhere to the following:**

- **Inactive small mammal burrows and thatched/bunch grasses should be avoided whenever feasible. If an inactive burrow may be disturbed by Project activities, it should be resurveyed for Crotch's bumble bee presence within seven (7) days prior to the scheduled disturbance.**

- **If Crotch's bumble bee is present, the qualified biologist should identify the location of all nests in or adjacent to the Project site. If nests are identified, 15-meter no disturbance buffer zones should be established around nests to reduce the risk of disturbance or accidental take. If Project activities may result in disturbance or potential take, the qualified biologist, in coordination with CDFW, should expand the buffer zone as necessary to prevent disturbance or take.**

- **Project does not have the authority to take a candidate species and obtain incidental take authorization from CDFW. If "take" or adverse impacts to Crotch's bumble bee cannot be avoided either during Project activities or over the life of the Project, the Project proponent should obtain appropriate take authorization from CDFW pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081 subdivision (b).**

- **Any floral resource associated with Crotch's bumble bee that will be removed or damaged by the Project should be replaced at no less than 1:1. Floral resources should be replaced as close to their original location as is feasible. If active Crotch's bumble bee nests have been identified and floral resources cannot be replaced within 200 meters of their original location, floral resources should be planted in the most centrally available location relative to identified nests. This location should be no more than 1.5 kilometers from any identified nest. Replaced floral resources may be split into multiple patches to meet distance requirements for multiple nests. These floral resources should be maintained in perpetuity and should be replanted and managed as needed to ensure the habitat is preserved.**

Comment #4: Narrow Endemic Plants

Issue: The Project may impact Narrow Endemic Plants species outlined in MSHCP Section 6.1.3.

Specific Impacts: Portions of the Project site fall within the MSHCP Section 6.1.3 survey area and have the potential to support the following Narrow Endemic Plant Species: Brand's phacelia (*Phacelia stellaris*), many-stemmed dudleya (*Dudleya multicaulis*), and San Miguel savory (*Satureja chandleri* [Clinopodium c.]).

Why impact would occur: As noted in the MND, the Project site occurs within survey areas for Narrow Endemic Plant Species, MSHCP Section 6.1.3, including Brand's phacelia (*Phacelia stellaris*), Rare plant rank [RPR] 1B.1), many-stemmed dudleya (*Dudleya multicaulis,* RPR 1B.2), and San Miguel savory (*Satureja chandleri* [Clinopodium c.], RPR 1B.2), which have the potential to occur onsite. While the MND reveals that focused surveys were conducted for narrow endemic plant species in November 2021, the results and details of the surveys were not discussed in detail.

Based on rainfall in a given year, surveys for Brand's phacelia, many-stemmed dudleya, and San Miguel savory should be typically done at peak blooming which can be from March through the end of July. The MND should include surveys for these species done within the appropriate time of year. Absent further survey details and surveys being

conducted outside of the blooming period for these species, CDFW cannot confirm presence or absence for narrow endemic plant species was properly assessed.

Evidence impact would be significant: Narrow endemic plant species are highly restricted by their habitat affinities, edaphic requirements, or other ecological factors, and for which specific conservation measures have been identified in the MSHCP if the species are present. Special surveys are required to ensure conservation of the species if present on the Project site. The MSHCP specifies that survey results shall be documented in mapped and text form and shall be presented for review by the City. Therefore, CDFW recommends that the City evaluate whether focused surveys for narrow endemic plants followed CDFW guidelines below in MM BIO-XX and include such information in detail in the final MND. If not, CDFW recommends the City adopt MM BIO-XX in the final MND to ensure avoidance, minimization and mitigation strategies are implemented for the species and to demonstrate consistency with MSHCP requirements.

Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure(s):

Mitigation Measure #1: To avoid take of narrow endemic plant species, CDFW requests the City include the following mitigation measures in the MND per below (edits are in ~~strikethrough~~ and **bold**), and also included in Attachment 1 "Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

MM BIO-XX: Prior to Project implementation, and during the appropriate season, a qualified biologist shall conduct botanical field surveys within the Project area following protocols set forth in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) 2018 Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Sensitive Natural Communities (CDFW 2018). The surveys shall be conducted by a CDFW approved botanist(s) experienced in conducting floristic botanical field surveys, knowledgeable of plant taxonomy and plant community ecology and classification, familiar with the plants of the area, including special-status and locally significant plants, and familiar with the appropriate state and federal statutes related to plants and plant collecting. The botanical field surveys shall be conducted at the appropriate time of year when plants will both be evident and identifiable (usually, during flowering or fruiting) and, in a manner, which maximizes the likelihood of locating special-status plants and sensitive natural communities that may be present. Botanical field surveys shall be conducted floristic in nature, meaning that every plant taxon that occurs in the project area is identified to the taxonomic level necessary to determine rarity and listing status. If any special-status plants are identified, the City shall avoid the plant(s), with an appropriate buffer (i.e., fencing or flagging). If complete avoidance is not feasible, the City shall mitigate the loss of the plant(s) through land

acquisition and conservation at a mitigation ratio determined by CDFW after Project analysis.

Additional Recommendations

Mitigation and Monitoring Reporting Plan

CDFW recommends updating the MND's proposed Biological Resources Mitigation Measures to include mitigation measures recommended in this letter. Mitigation measures must be fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, or other legally binding instruments [(Pub. Resources Code, § 21081.6; CEQA Guidelines, § 15126.4(a)(2)]. As such, CDFW has provided comments and recommendations to assist the City in developing mitigation measures that are (1) consistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15126.4; (2) specific; (3) detailed (i.e., responsible party, timing, specific actions, location), and (4) clear for a measure to be fully enforceable and implemented successfully via mitigation, monitoring, and/or reporting program (Pub. Resources Code, § 21081.6; CEQA Guidelines, § 15097). The City is welcome to coordinate with CDFW to further review and refine the Project's mitigation measures. Per Public Resources Code section 21081.6(a)(1), CDFW has provided the City with a summary of our suggested mitigation measures and recommendations in the form of an attached Draft Mitigation and Monitoring Reporting Plan (MMRP; Attachment 1).

ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

CEQA requires that information developed in environmental impact reports and negative declarations be incorporated into a database which may be used to make subsequent or supplemental environmental determinations. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21003, subd. (e).) Accordingly, please report any special status species and natural communities detected during Project surveys to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB). The CNNDB field survey form can be filled out and submitted online at the following link: https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDB/Submitting-Data. The types of information reported to CNDDB can be found at the following link: https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDB/Plants-and-Animals.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FILING FEES

The Project, as proposed, would have an impact on fish and/or wildlife, and assessment of environmental document filing fees is necessary. Fees are payable upon filing of the Notice of Determination by the Lead Agency and serve to help defray the cost of environmental review by CDFW. Payment of the environmental document filing fee is required in order for the underlying project approval to be operative, vested, and final. (Cal. Code Regs, tit. 14, § 753.5; Fish & G. Code, § 711.4; Pub. Resources Code, § 21089.)

CONCLUSION

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the MND for the Serrano Oaks Townhomes Project, State Clearinghouse No. 2023060303 to assist in identifying and mitigating Project impacts on biological resources. CDFW personnel are available for consultation regarding biological resources and strategies to minimize impacts. CDFW requests that the City of Jurupa Valley addresses CDFW's comments and concerns prior to adoption of the MND for the Project.

Questions regarding this letter or further coordination should be directed to Katrina Rehrer, Environmental Scientist, at katrina.rehrer@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
Eric Chan
3AF6494545AD4A4...

For

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Environmental Program Manager

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Attachment A: Draft Mitigation and Monitoring Reporting Plan

CDFW recommends the following language to be incorporated into a future environmental document for the Project. A final MMRP shall reflect results following additional plant and wildlife surveys and the Project's final on and/or off-site mitigation plans.

Biological Resources (BIO)			
Mitigation Measure (MM)		**Timing**	**Responsible Party**
Burrowing Owl	**MM-BIO 01:** To avoid project-related impacts to burrowing owls potentially occurring on or in the vicinity of the project site, a pre-construction presence/absence survey for burrowing owl within the Impact Site (and 500- foot survey buffer) in accordance with the March 2006 Burrowing Owl Survey Instructions for the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Area shall be conducted by a qualified biologist within 30 days prior to the commencement of ground disturbing activities including vegetation clearing, grubbing, tree removal, or site watering. In addition, a preconstruction survey for burrowing owl shall be conducted within 3 days prior to initiation of Project activities and reported to CDFW. Additionally, if ground-disturbing activities occur, but the site is left undisturbed for more than 30 days, a pre-construction survey shall again be necessary to minimize the possibility burrowing owl have not colonized the site since it was last disturbed. If burrowing owls are found, the same coordination described above shall be necessary.	Prior to commencing ground- or vegetation disturbing activities	Project Proponent

	If no burrowing owls are observed during the survey, site preparation and construction activities may begin. If burrowing owl are present, If burrowing owl within the survey area, then avoidance or minimization measures shall be undertaken in consultation with the City of Jurupa Valley, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). CDFW shall be sent written notification within 48 hours of detection of burrowing owls. If active nests are identified on an implementing project site during the pre-construction survey, the Project applicant shall not commence activities until no sign is present that the burrows are being used by adult or juvenile owls or following CDFW approval of a Burrowing Owl Plan as described below. If owl presence is difficult to determine, a qualified biologist shall monitor the burrows with motion-activated trail cameras for at least 24 hours to evaluate burrow occupancy. The onsite qualified biologist will verify the nesting effort has finished according to methods identified in the Burrowing Owl Plan. The qualified biologist and Project Applicant shall coordinate with the City, CDFW, and USFWS to develop a Burrowing Owl Plan to be approved by the City, CDFW, and USFWS prior to commencing Project activities. The Burrowing Owl Plan shall describe proposed avoidance, relocation, monitoring, minimization, and/or mitigation actions. The Burrowing Owl Plan shall include the number and location of occupied burrow sites and details on proposed buffers if avoiding the burrowing owls or information on the adjacent or nearby suitable habitat available to owls for relocation. If no suitable habitat is available nearby for relocation, details regarding the creation and funding of artificial burrows		

	(numbers, location, and type of burrows) and management activities for relocated owls shall also be included in the Burrowing Owl Plan. The City will implement the Burrowing Owl Plan following CDFW and USFWS review and approval. If active burrowing owl burrows are detected within Impact Site(s) during Project implementation and construction, the Project applicant shall notify CDFW immediately in writing within 48 hours of detection. A Burrowing Owl Plan will be submitted to CDFW for review and approval within two weeks of detection and no Project activity will continue within 1000 feet of the burrowing owls until CDFW approves the Burrowing Owl Plan. The City shall be responsible for implementing appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures, including burrow avoidance, passive or active relocation, or other appropriate mitigation measures as identified in the Burrowing Owl Plan. A final report shall be prepared by a qualified biologist documenting the results of the burrowing owl surveys and detailing avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures. The final report will be submitted to the City and CDFW within 30 days of completion of the survey and burrowing monitoring for mitigation monitoring compliance record keeping.		
Nesting Birds	**MM-BIO 4:** To maintain compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513, site preparation activities (such as ground disturbance, construction activities, and/or removal of trees and vegetation) should be conducted, to the greatest extent possible, outside of the nesting season. If avoidance	Prior to commencing ground- or vegetation disturbing activities	Project Proponent

	of the nesting season is not feasible, then a qualified biologist shall conduct a nesting bird survey within three days prior to any disturbance of the site, including disking, vegetation grubbing, and grading. The survey area will include the project impact footprint and a 500-foot buffer where legal access is granted around the disturbance footprint.. Within 72 hours of the nesting bird survey, all areas surveyed by the biologist will be cleared by the Contractor or a supplemental nesting bird survey is required. The survey results shall be provided to the City's Planning Department. The Project Applicant shall adhere to the following: **1.** Applicant shall designate a biologist (Designated Biologist) experienced in: identifying local and migratory bird species of special concern; conducting bird surveys using appropriate survey methodology; nesting surveying techniques, recognizing breeding and nesting behaviors, locating nests and breeding territories, and identifying nesting stages and nest success; determining/establishing appropriate avoidance and minimization measures; and monitoring the efficacy of implemented avoidance and minimization measures. **2.** Pre-activity field surveys shall be conducted at the appropriate time of day/night, during appropriate weather conditions, no more than 3 days prior to the initiation of Project activities. Surveys shall encompass all suitable areas including trees, shrubs, bare ground, burrows, cavities, and structures. Survey duration shall take into consideration the size of the Project site; density, and complexity of the habitat; number of		

	survey participants; survey techniques employed; and shall be sufficient to ensure the data collected is complete and accurate. If no nesting birds are observed during the survey,-site preparation and construction activities may begin. If active nests or nesting birds (including nesting raptors) are identified during the nesting bird survey, avoidance buffers shall be implemented as determined by a qualified biologist and approved by the City of Jurupa Valley, based on their best professional judgement and experience until the Project biologist determines the young have fledged and dispersed or it is confirmed that the nest has been unsuccessful or abandoned. The buffer shall be of a distance to ensure avoidance of adverse effects to the nesting bird by accounting for topography, ambient conditions, species, nest location, and activity type. All nests shall be monitored as determined by the qualified biologist until nestlings have fledged and dispersed or it is confirmed that the nest has been unsuccessful or abandoned. The Designated Biologist shall monitor the nest at the onset of project activities, and at the onset of any changes in such project activities (e.g., increase in number or type of equipment, change in equipment usage, etc.) to determine the efficacy of the buffer. The qualified biologist shall halt all construction activities within proximity to an active nest if it is determined that the activities are harassing the nest and may result in nest abandonment or take. The qualified biologist shall also have the authority to require implementation of avoidance measures related to noise, vibration, or light pollution if indirect impacts are resulting in harassment of the nest. Work can resume within these avoidance areas when no		

	other active nests are found. Upon completion of the survey and nesting bird monitoring, a report shall be prepared and submitted to the City for mitigation monitoring compliance record keeping.		
Crotch's Bumble Bee	**MM-BIO 3:** Prior to ground disturbance, a habitat assessment for Crotch's bumble bee will be conducted within the Project Site and an appropriate survey buffer by a qualified biologist with experience surveying for and observing Crotch's bumble bee. If the qualified biologist determines that suitable habitat is present, site specific surveys for Crotch's bumble bee shall be conducted in accordance with any Crotch's bumble bee survey protocol provided by CDFW. If Crotch's bumble bee are determined to be present within the Impact Site and it is determined the species will be impacted by Project implementation, appropriate mitigation will be determined in consultation with CDFW. In addition, the Project Applicant shall adhere to the following: • Inactive small mammal burrows and thatched/bunch grasses should be avoided whenever feasible. If an inactive burrow may be disturbed by Project activities, it should be resurveyed for Crotch's bumble bee presence within seven (7) days prior to the scheduled disturbance. • If Crotch's bumble bee is present, the qualified biologist should identify the location of all nests in or adjacent to the Project site. If nests are identified, 15-meter no disturbance buffer zones should be established around nests to reduce the risk of	Prior to commencing ground- or vegetation disturbing activities	Project Proponent

	disturbance or accidental take. If Project activities may result in disturbance or potential take, the qualified biologist, in coordination with CDFW, should expand the buffer zone as necessary to prevent disturbance or take. • Project does not have the authority to take a candidate species and obtain incidental take authorization from CDFW. If "take" or adverse impacts to Crotch's bumble bee cannot be avoided either during Project activities or over the life of the Project, the Project proponent should obtain appropriate take authorization from CDFW pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081 subdivision (b). • Any floral resource associated with Crotch's bumble bee that will be removed or damaged by the Project should be replaced at no less than 1:1. Floral resources should be replaced as close to their original location as is feasible. If active Crotch's bumble bee nests have been identified and floral resources cannot be replaced within 200 meters of their original location, floral resources should be planted in the most centrally available location relative to identified nests. This location should be no more than 1.5 kilometers from any identified nest. Replaced floral resources may be split into multiple patches to meet distance requirements for multiple nests. These floral resources should be maintained in perpetuity and should be replanted and managed as needed to ensure the habitat is preserved.		

Narrow Endemic Plants	**MM-BIO XX:** Prior to Project implementation, and during the appropriate season, a qualified biologist shall conduct botanical field surveys within the Project area following protocols set forth in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) 2018 Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Sensitive Natural Communities (CDFW 2018). The surveys shall be conducted by a CDFW approved botanist(s) experienced in conducting floristic botanical field surveys, knowledgeable of plant taxonomy and plant community ecology and classification, familiar with the plants of the area, including special-status and locally significant plants, and familiar with the appropriate state and federal statutes related to plants and plant collecting. The botanical field surveys shall be conducted at the appropriate time of year when plants will both be evident and identifiable (usually, during flowering or fruiting) and, in a manner, which maximizes the likelihood of locating special-status plants and sensitive natural communities that may be present. Botanical field surveys shall be conducted floristic in nature, meaning that every plant taxon that occurs in the project area is identified to the taxonomic level necessary to determine rarity and listing status. If any special-status plants are identified, the City shall avoid the plant(s), with an appropriate buffer (i.e., fencing or flagging). If complete avoidance is not feasible, the City shall mitigate the loss of the plant(s) through land acquisition and conservation at a mitigation ratio determined by CDFW after Project analysis.	Prior to commencing ground- or vegetation disturbing activities	Project Proponent