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**Subject** Rady Children’s Hospital–San Diego Intensive Care Unit/Emergency Service Pavilion Project Biological Resources Evaluation

**Attention** Martha Blake, City of San Diego Development Services Department

**From** Ava Edens, Carl Rykaczewski, Jacobs Project Management Co.

**Date** July 20, 2022

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## 1 Introduction

Jacobs Project Management Co. (Jacobs) prepared this biological resources evaluation for the Rady Children’s Hospital–San Diego Intensive Care Unit and Emergency Services Pavilion Project (Project) in San Diego, California. The Project site is located on the Rady Children’s Hospital–San Diego (RCHSD) campus and is generally bounded by Frost Street on the north, Children’s Way on the east, Birmingham Way on the south, and the Sharp Memorial Hospital campus to the west (Figure 1). The Project comprises approximately 27.47 acres within the City of San Diego, south of the Interstate (I-) 805 and State Route (SR-) 163 interchange (Figure 2).

The Project consists of the construction and operation of the new Intensive Care Unit and Emergency Services Pavilion (ICU/ESP), a new Central Utilities Plant (CUP), and a new Connector Building on the RCHSD main campus. The new inpatient building would be built to address the current capacity issues in the RCHSD Emergency Department and the projected need for additional ICU beds in the next four years. The Project would address these needs by expanding the Emergency Department and ICU. It would be consistent with RCHSD policy that prioritizes the location of the most intensive services on the main campus, moving less intensive services off campus, and demolishing some of the older areas of the hospital. The Project would also help RCHSD comply with hospital facilities’ seismic safety requirements in Senate Bill (SB) 1953 by removing older hospital facilities and by replacing aging utility plant functions. The Project also includes infrastructure improvements that would ensure that RCHSD can continue to operate after a major seismic event.

### 1.1 San Diego Gas and Electric Scope

San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) provides gas and electric utility services to customers throughout the greater San Diego County and South Orange County areas, including to RCHSD and is regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). RCHSD has submitted a request to SDG&E to relocate some of its gas and electric facilities in order to comply with the State of California’s mandate to meet seismic safety requirements for all medical facilities by its 2030 deadline. SDG&E would remove some underground electrical and gas lines on the RCHSD campus and install new underground lines within portions of Frost Street and Children’s Way and also remove an overhead electrical line along Frost Street and relocate it underground in the roadway (Figure 3).

This memorandum discusses the potential biological resource issues related to the proposed Project.

## 2 Methods

Jacobs' biologist Ava Edens visited the site on August 16, 2021, from approximately 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Weather conditions were partly cloudy with temperatures around 85 degrees Fahrenheit with light winds (1 to 5 miles per hour). The site walk focused on areas adjacent to potential habitat for special status species. Habitat areas adjacent to the Project site but not publicly accessible were surveyed with binoculars.

The special status species with potential to occur within the Project area were reviewed through a search of California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW's) Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB) Rarefind 5 application (CDFW 2021) for sensitive species within 1 mile of RCHSD.

## 3 Conditions

The Project is located entirely within an existing developed commercial-office area, and vegetation within the Project boundary primarily consists of landscape plantings that are maintained as part of the hospital campus. The Project area does not contain significant native habitat for special status species; however, the buildings and plantings may provide nesting areas for migratory birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).

Native vegetation is located to the south and east of the Project area. The vegetated area south of Birmingham Way generally consists of disturbed Diegan coastal sage scrub. Native vegetation is interspersed with non-native vegetation and footpaths. In addition, an area west of the hospital's existing generator building has been revegetated (Helix 2014). A native coastal sage scrub seed mix and container stock were installed in 2011 and 2012, and the revegetation was successfully completed in 2014 (Helix 2014).

A City of San Diego Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) is located south of Birmingham Way and south of the existing generator building and associated revegetation area (Figure 1). Several special status species have the potential to occur in the MHPA area, including the federally listed threatened coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*). Two special status plant species, Nuttall's scrub oak (*Quercus dumosa*), California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) 1B.1, and coast barrel cacti (*Ferocactus viridescens* var. *viridescens*), CRPR 2B.1, have been identified in the canyon area of the MHPA (AECOM 2018; CDFW 2021). CRPR 1B includes rare, threatened, or endangered species in California or elsewhere; and CRPR 2B plants are considered rare, threatened, or endangered in California but are more common elsewhere.

Native plant species observed south of Birmingham Way during the site visit included coastal prickly pear (*Opuntia littoralis*), California encelia (*Encelia californica*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*), and coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*). Non-native plants, both ornamental and invasive, were also observed, including pampas grass (*Cortaderia* sp.), black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), castor bean (*Ricinus communis*), jacaranda (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*), eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* sp.), and tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*).

The vegetated area east of Children's Way between the North and South Parking Garages generally consists of larger trees and shrubs. The terrain is steep with a mix of dense native and non-native vegetation. Native plant species observed east of Children's Way during the site visit included beavertail cactus (*Opuntia* sp.), fan palm (*Washingtonia* sp.), yucca (*Yucca* sp.), California buckwheat, laurel sumac, and coyote brush. Non-native plants observed included pampas grass, black mustard, castor bean, eucalyptus, and tree tobacco.

Special status species known to occur within 1 mile of the Project are provided in Attachment A. No special status species were observed during the visit, although further surveys would be needed to determine their presence or absence.

## 4 Considerations

The following sections discuss potential considerations regarding the proposed Project and the associated biological resources.

### 4.1 Multi-Habitat Planning Area

The nearby City of San Diego MHPA is preserved in perpetuity and managed under the City's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP). Although no proposed Project activities would occur within or directly adjacent to the MHPA, compliance with the City of San Diego Land Use Adjacency Guidelines would be required. The MSCP requires land uses adjacent to the MHPA to be managed to ensure minimal impacts to the MHPA. The MSCP may have requirements to minimize impacts to maintain the function of the MHPA.

#### 4.1.1 SDG&E Activities

No portion of the SDG&E activities would occur within, adjacent to, or within 500 feet of the MHPA; therefore no MSCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines would apply.

### 4.2 Vegetation

Diegan coastal sage scrub occurs in the Project vicinity and is considered sensitive by the County of San Diego. In addition, sensitive plant species are known to occur in the vicinity. In 2017, a Nuttall's scrub oak and several dozen coast barrel cacti were observed south of Birmingham Way. Nuttall's scrub oak is a CRPR 1B.1 species, and coast barrel cactus is a CRPR 2B.1 species (AECOM 2018). Additional botanical surveys conducted during the growing season may be required if Project activities encroach on native habitat. MHPA land use adjacency guidelines would be implemented as applicable during construction activities that occur within 500 feet of the MHPA. Impacts to special status plant species in the MHPA should be avoidable.

#### 4.2.1 SDG&E Activities

No portion of the SDG&E activities would occur within 500 feet of the MHPA. Proposed SDG&E activities would occur on the RCHSD campus and in adjacent roadbeds and would not affect any areas of native vegetation.

### 4.3 Wildlife

Sensitive wildlife is known to occur in the vicinity, including the federally listed threatened coastal California gnatcatcher (CNDDDB 2021). Further surveys would be needed to determine the presence or absence of listed species. The natural area provides nesting and foraging habitat for wildlife, including birds protected under the MBTA. MBTA protected birds may be impacted by construction activities; therefore, work outside the general nesting period (approximately February through September) and/or pre-construction surveys and a biological monitor may be required. MHPA land use adjacency guidelines would be implemented as applicable to avoid potential noise impacts to coastal California gnatcatcher during construction activities that occur within 500 feet of the MHPA. Impacts to special status animals in the MHPA should be avoidable.

#### 4.3.1 SDG&E Activities

No portion of the SDG&E activities would occur within 500 feet of the MHPA. Proposed SDG&E activities would occur on the RCHSD campus and in adjacent roadbeds and would not affect any areas of habitat containing sensitive wildlife species.

### 4.4 Noise

Ambient noise already exists in the Project area from the operation of the existing facilities, I-805, and surrounding land use. Additional noise due to construction could impact sensitive wildlife, especially during

the nesting season for birds. Depending on the noise impacts, engineering controls (e.g., walls) and/or mitigation may be required during construction to reduce impacts.

#### 4.4.1 SDG&E Activities

Considerations for noise from SDG&E utilities removal and installation work would be the same as discussed in Section 4.4 above.

### 4.5 Lighting

Although lighting exists in the surrounding developed areas, additional lighting should be directed away from the MHPA and/or screened, as it may interfere with wildlife behaviors and use. Shielding from permanent night lighting may be required. Construction hours may be limited if temporary lighting adjacent to the MHPA area is required.

#### 4.5.1 SDG&E Activities

The SDG&E activities would not include lighting.

### 4.6 Drainage

Native vegetation is located to the south and east of the Project area slopes away from the Project area. Implementation of best management practices (BMPs) will be needed to avoid runoff and erosion in these areas.

#### 4.6.1 SDG&E Activities

The SDG&E activities would not result in changes to drainage.

## 5 Conclusion

The proposed Project site contains little to no significant native habitat for sensitive species. No proposed Project activities would occur within or directly adjacent to the City's MHPA. All Project construction would occur to the north of Birmingham Way, which separates the campus from the MHPA area. Most Project construction activities are planned to occur on the northern portion of the campus away from the MHPA. Construction of portions of the Project that entail installation of underground utilities on the southern portion of the RCHSD Campus would occur within 500 feet of the MHPA. The MSCP requires land uses adjacent to the MHPA to be managed to ensure minimal impacts to the MHPA. MHPA land use adjacency guidelines would be implemented as applicable to avoid potential impacts to coastal California gnatcatcher during construction activities that occur within 500 feet of the MHPA. Impacts to special status animal or plant species in the MHPA should be avoidable.

### 5.1 SDG&E Activities

No SDG&E activities would occur within, adjacent to, or within 500 feet of the MHPA. No impacts to the MHPA or special status animal or plant species in the MHPA would occur.

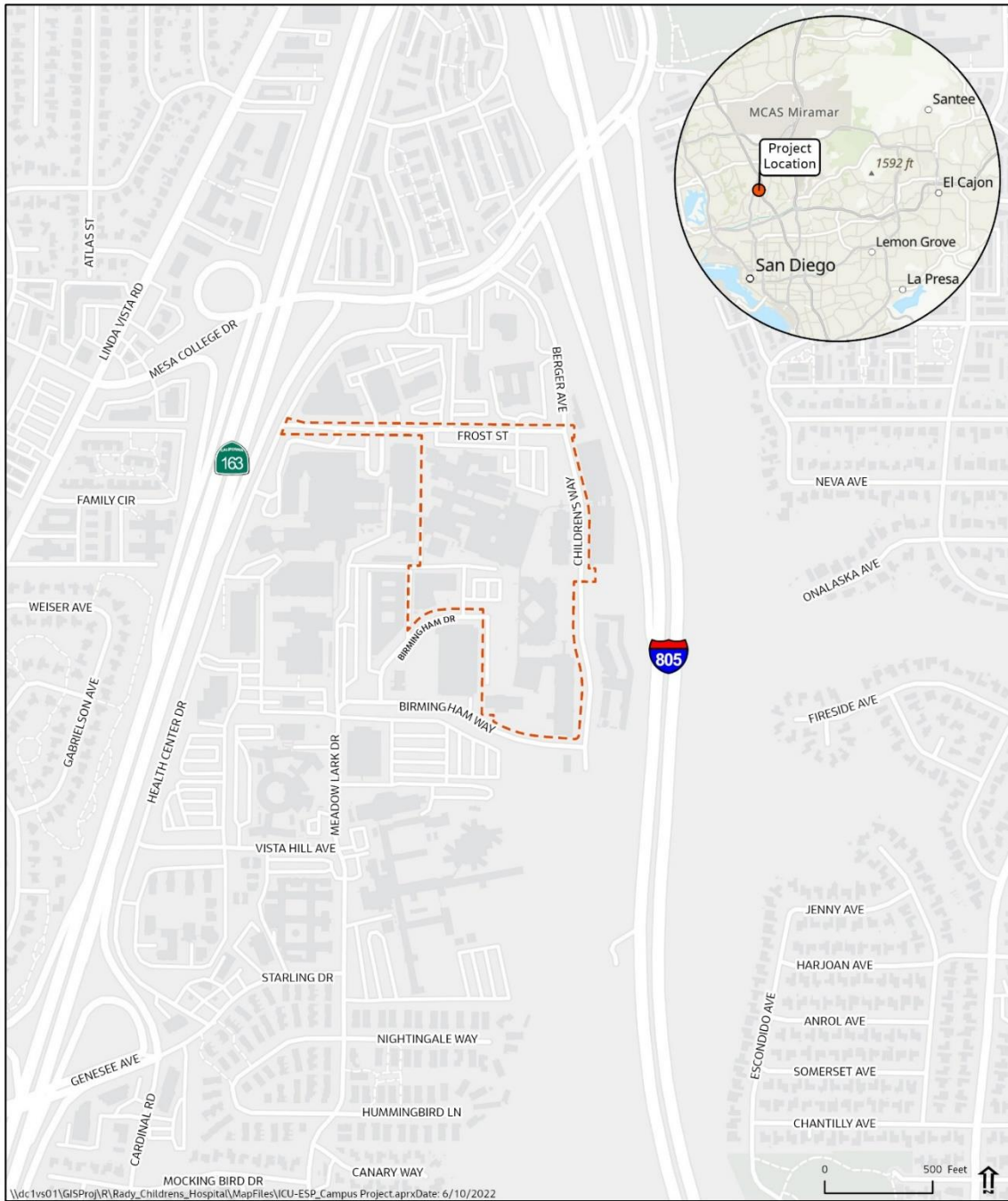
## 6 References

AECOM. 2018. Final Initial Study: Juvenile Justice Campus Redevelopment Project. August 2018.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). 2021. California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) – Commercial version September 2021. Retrieved from <https://map.dfg.ca.gov/rarefind/view/RareFind.aspx#>.

Helix Environmental Planning Inc. (Helix). 2014. Children's Hospital Emergency Generator Revegetation Site (MND # 84971; WO No. 427640, 34491-D, PTS 126829) Final Monitoring Report. August 12, 2014.

Figure 1. Regional Map

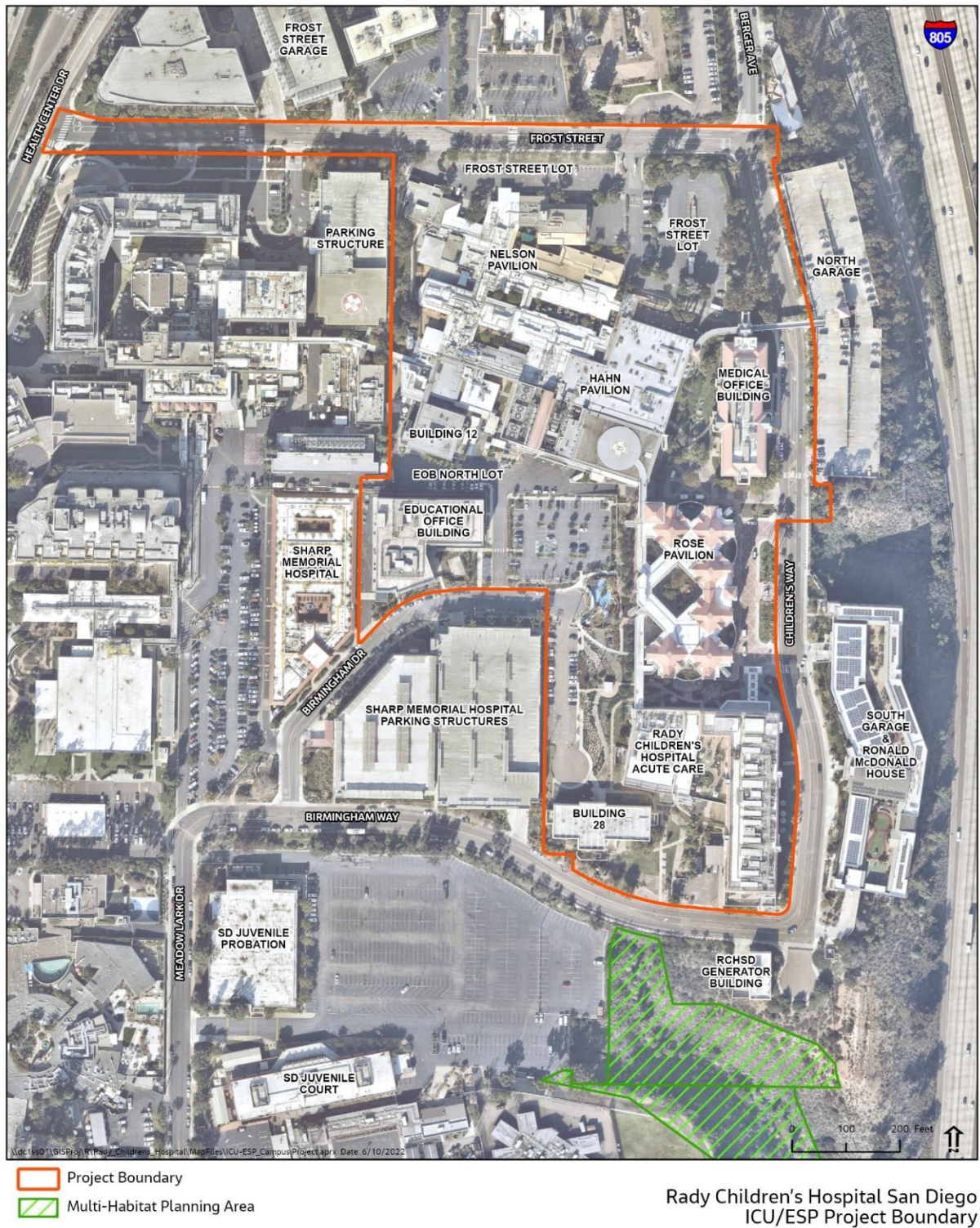


 Project Boundary

Figure 1  
Rady Children's Hospital San Diego  
Regional Map



Figure 2. Project Boundary



Rady Children's Hospital San Diego  
ICU/ESP Project Boundary

Imagery Source:  
San Diego Association Of Governments (Sandag) 2020







## 7 Site Photographs



Photograph of the Revegetation Area (foreground) and MHPA (background)  
Photograph taken facing west from the generator facility on August 16, 2021



Photograph of the MHPA south of Birmingham Way with I-805  
Photograph taken facing south from the generator facility on August 16, 2021





Photograph of the vegetated area east of the Project Area  
Photograph taken facing southeast from Children's Way on August 16, 2021



Photograph of the vegetated area east of the Project Area with I-805  
Photograph taken facing southeast from Children's Way on August 16, 2021

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# Attachment A

## California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) Search Results for within a mile of Rady Children's Hospital San Diego

Common Name	Species Name	Taxonomic Group	Presence	Federal Listing	State Listing	CNPS Status <sup>1</sup>	CDFW Status <sup>2</sup>
western spadefoot	<i>Spea hammondi</i>	Amphibians	Possibly Extirpated				SSC
coastal California gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila californica californica</i>	Birds	Presumed Extant	Threatened			SSC
San Diego fairy shrimp	<i>Branchinecta sandiegonensis</i>	Crustaceans	Possibly Extirpated	Endangered			
pocketed free-tailed bat	<i>Nyctinomops femorosaccus</i>	Mammals	Presumed Extant				SSC
Southern California legless lizard	<i>Anniella stebbinsi</i>	Reptiles	Possibly Extirpated				SSC
orange-throated whiptail	<i>Aspidoscelis hyperythra</i>	Reptiles	Presumed Extant				WL
California glossy snake	<i>Arizona elegans occidentalis</i>	Reptiles	Presumed Extant				SSC
decumbent goldenbush	<i>Isocoma menziesii var. decumbens</i>	Dicots	Presumed Extant			1B.2	
oil neststraw	<i>Stylocline citroleum</i>	Dicots	Presumed Extant			1B.1	
San Diego barrel cactus	<i>Ferocactus viridescens</i>	Dicots	Presumed Extant			2B.1	
San Diego barrel cactus	<i>Ferocactus viridescens</i>	Dicots	Presumed Extant			2B.1	
Coulter's saltbush	<i>Atriplex coulteri</i>	Dicots	Presumed Extant			1B.2	
Nuttall's scrub oak	<i>Quercus dumosa</i>	Dicots	Presumed Extant			1B.1	
San Diego mesa mint	<i>Pogogyne abramsii</i>	Dicots	Extirpated	Endangered	Endangered	1B.1	
wart-stemmed ceanothus	<i>Ceanothus verrucosus</i>	Dicots	Presumed Extant			2B.2	

Common Name	Species Name	Taxonomic Group	Presence	Federal Listing	State Listing	CNPS Status <sup>1</sup>	CDFW Status <sup>2</sup>
Orcutt's brodiaea	<i>Brodiaea orcuttii</i>	Monocots	Possibly Extirpated			1B.1	
San Diego goldenstar	<i>Bloomeria clevelandii</i>	Monocots	Presumed Extant			1B.1	
Southern Riparian Scrub	<i>Southern Riparian Scrub</i>	Riparian	Presumed Extant				

Source: California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) for within a mile of Rady Children's Hospital (July 2021)

**Notes:**

1 California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Status:

1B - Rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere

2B - Rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere

.1 - Seriously threatened in California (more than 80% of occurrences threatened / high degree and immediacy of threat)

.2 - Fairly threatened in California (20 to 80% occurrences threatened / moderate degree and immediacy of threat)

2 California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Status:

State Species of Special Concern (SSC)

Watch List (WL)