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# memorandum

date January 8, 2018

to Bryan Graves, srmErnst Development Partners

cc

from Leonard Liu, ES Biologist  
Chris Rogers, ESA Biological Resources Program Manager

subject North Loop 3 Project Burrowing Owl Survey Report

Environmental Science Associates (ESA) was contracted by North Loop 3, LLC to conduct a survey to determine if burrowing owls (*Athene cunicularia*) are present in the vicinity of the project site in Alameda, California.

## **Description of the Study Area**

The project site comprises 2 parcels totaling 11.77-acres separated by an existing child daycare center, located between North Loop Road and Catalina Avenue in Alameda, California. The study area includes suitable habitat within 500 feet of the project site. There is a residential development to the north of the project site, a school to the southeast, and commercial/industrial developments to the south. Habitats and plant communities within the study area are disturbed and generally classified as ruderal. Construction vehicle tracks are present in much of the site along with evidence of geotechnical borings. Some dumping appears to have occurred at the site, as large bulky trash is present in several locations.

## **Survey Methodology**

### **Burrowing Owl Survey**

A field survey of the study area was conducted on January 4, 2018, by ESA biologist Leonard Liu to determine if burrowing owls were present within the project site as well as within a 500-foot buffer around the project site, and to assess the suitability of the site for burrowing owl. The survey consisted of walking transects throughout the study area to search for potential suitable habitat and any evidence of species presence (e.g., white wash or pellets).

In accordance with the Burrowing Owl Survey Protocol and Mitigation Guidelines (The California Burrowing Owl Consortium, 1993), survey transects were spaced to allow 100 percent visual coverage of the ground surface. The distance between transect center lines was no more than 100 feet, and areas not clearly visible from the transects were observed at a closer distance.

## **Results**

During the field survey, the biologist did not observe any burrowing owls or associated signs of presence. The biologist did not observe any natural burrows or signs of fossorial animals. The soils on the project site are sandy and generally unstable, and thus the area is largely unsuitable for burrows. The biologist observed two pipes of suitable diameter for use as an owl burrow at the east end of the site, but they were no signs of burrowing owls at them. The biologist observed canid scat in one of the pipes, and also observed black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*) at the site. Bird species observed at the site included: American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), black phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*), white-crowned sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*), mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), and California towhee (*Melospiza crissalis*). Based on the field survey, it is our determination that although some foraging habitat is present, it is unlikely that burrowing owls currently inhabit the study area.