



PUBLIC NOTICE

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT**

BUILDING STRONG®

APPLICATION FOR PERMIT La Media Road Improvement Project

Public Notice/Application No.: SPL-2021-00315-DSG

Project: La Media Road Improvement Project

Comment Period: January 19, 2022 through February 19, 2022

Project Manager: Max Roseman

Phone: 760-602-4832

Email: Max.E.Roseman@usace.army.mil

Applicant

Stephanie Bracci
City of San Diego
Engineering and Capital Projects
525 B Street, Suite 750
San Diego, CA 92101

Contact

Andrew Smisek
RECON Environmental, Inc.
3001 Camino del Rio North Ste 600
San Diego, California 92108

Location

The proposed project is located immediately south of Otay Mesa Freeway and along La Media Road, within the city of San Diego, San Diego County, CA 92154 (32.5605, -116.9624).

Activity

The proposed project would widen the existing roadway to a six-lane primary arterial roadway from State Route (SR)- 905 to Airway road and reduce to a five-lane roadway between Airway Road and Siempre Viva Road with three southbound lanes and two northbound lanes. Additionally, the existing culvert system would be increased to improve stormwater flow through the project vicinity to prevent flooding that occurs on Airway Road.

Submittal of Public Comments

Interested parties are hereby notified an application has been received for a Department of the Army permit for the activity described herein and shown on the attached drawing(s). We invite you to review today's public notice and provide views on the proposed work. By providing substantive, site-specific comments to the Corps Regulatory Division, you provide information that supports the Corps' decision-making process. All comments received during the comment period become part of the record and will be considered in the decision. This permit will be issued, issued with special conditions, or denied under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Please do not mail hard copy documents, including comments to any Regulatory staff. Instead, your comments should be submitted electronically to:

Max.E.Roseman@usace.army.mil. Should you have any questions or concerns about the

Corps' proposed action or our comment period, you may contact Max Roseman directly at 760-602-4832.

The mission of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Program is to protect the Nation's aquatic resources, while allowing reasonable development through fair, flexible and balanced permit decisions. The Corps evaluates permit applications for essentially all construction activities that occur in the Nation's waters, including wetlands. The Regulatory Program in the Los Angeles District is executed to protect aquatic resources by developing and implementing short- and long-term initiatives to improve regulatory products, processes, program transparency, and customer feedback considering current staffing levels and historical funding trends.

Corps permits are necessary for any work, including construction and dredging, in the Nation's navigable water and their tributary waters. The Corps balances the reasonably foreseeable benefits and detriments of proposed projects and makes permit decisions that recognize the essential values of the Nation's aquatic ecosystems to the general public, as well as the property rights of private citizens who want to use their land. The Corps strives to make its permit decisions in a timely manner that minimizes impacts to the regulated public.

During the permit process, the Corps considers the views of other Federal, state and local agencies, interest groups, and the general public. The results of this careful public interest review are fair and equitable decisions that allow reasonable use of private property, infrastructure development, and growth of the economy, while offsetting the authorized impacts to the waters of the United States. The permit review process serves to first avoid and then minimize adverse effects of projects on aquatic resources to the maximum practicable extent. Any remaining unavoidable adverse impacts to the aquatic environment are offset by compensatory mitigation requirements, which may include restoration, enhancement, establishment, and/or preservation of aquatic ecosystem system functions and services.

Evaluation Factors

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Factors that will be considered include conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food production and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. In addition, if the proposal would discharge dredged or fill material, the evaluation of the activity will include application of the EPA Guidelines (40 CFR Part 230) as required by Section 404 (b)(1) of the Clean Water Act.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact

Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Preliminary Review of Selected Factors

EIS Determination- A preliminary determination has been made an environmental impact statement is not required for the proposed work.

Water Quality- The applicant is required to obtain water quality certification, under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board. Section 401 requires any applicant for an individual Section 404 permit provide proof of water quality certification to the Corps of Engineers prior to permit issuance.

Coastal Zone Management- This project is located outside the coastal zone and preliminary review indicates it would not affect coastal zone resources. After a review of the comments received on this public notice and in consultation with the California Coastal Commission, the Corps will make a final determination of whether this project affects coastal zone resources after review of the comments received on this Public Notice.

Essential Fish Habitat- No Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), as defined by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, occurs within the project area and no EFH is affected by the proposed project.

Cultural Resources- The Corps preliminary determination indicates that the proposed project would have no effect on historic properties. Therefore, the Corps will initiate consultation with the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). Additionally, the Corps will coordinate with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) to determine the presence of sacred lands and receive a list of tribal contacts which will be consulted with.

Endangered Species- The Corps preliminary determinations indicates the proposed action may affect federally-listed endangered or threatened species, or their critical habitat. Therefore, the Corps will initiate consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

Public Hearing- Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearing shall state with particularity the reasons for holding a public hearing.

Proposed Activity for Which a Permit is Required

Basic Project Purpose- The basic project purpose comprises the fundamental, essential, or irreducible purpose of the proposed project, and is used by the Corps to determine whether the applicant's project is water dependent (i.e., requires access or proximity to or siting within the special aquatic site to fulfill its basic purpose). Establishment of the basic project purpose is necessary only when the proposed activity would discharge dredged or fill material into a special aquatic site (e.g., wetlands, pool and riffle complex, mudflats, coral reefs). Because no fills are proposed within special aquatic sites, identification of the basic project purpose is not necessary. The basic project purpose for the proposed project is to **improve transportation and water quality**. The project is **not** water dependent.

Overall Project Purpose- The overall project purpose serves as the basis for the Corps' 404(b)(1) alternatives analysis and is determined by further defining the basic project purpose in a manner that more specifically describes the applicant's goals for the project, and which allows a reasonable range of alternatives to be analyzed. The applicant's stated project purpose is to widen the existing roadway to relieve traffic congestion and to improve stormwater flow through the project vicinity.

Additional Project Information

Baseline information- The project site consists primarily of existing roadways, with commercial developments on the parcels southeast of the intersection of La Media Road and Airway Road intersection, with areas of undeveloped land occurring outside portions of the roadways. The project site is largely flat, with the exception of a series of manufactured drainage ditches. Nine vegetation communities or land cover types were mapped in the project survey area: vernal pool, freshwater marsh, emergent wetland, mule fat scrub, southern willow scrub, Diegan coastal sage scrub, nonnative grassland, disturbed land, and urban/developed land. The areas containing wetland vegetation communities, including vernal pool, freshwater marsh, emergent wetland, mule fat scrub, and southern willow scrub,

Project description- The proposed project would consist of widening La Media Road to a six-lane primary arterial roadway from SR-905 to Airway Road, then reduced to a five-lane major roadway between Airway Road and Siempre Viva Road with three southbound lanes and two northbound lanes. Additionally, the project would upgrade the existing culvert system to improve storm water flow through the project vicinity and prevent substantial flooding that frequently occurs on Airway Road. Project related impacts would result in permanent impacts to a total of 1.53- acres of wetland waters of the U.S., consisting of impacts to 0.15-acres of vernal pools, 0.64-acres of freshwater marsh, 0.53-acres of emergent wetland, and 0.21-acres of southern willow scrub. In addition, the proposed project would also result in temporary impacts to a total of 0.24- acres of wetlands waters of the U.S., consisting of impacts to 0.05-acres of freshwater marsh, 0.08-acre of emergent wetland, and 0.07-acres of southern willow scrub.

To widen the existing roadways, grading would occur in undeveloped areas adjacent to the east and west sides of La Media Road and the north and south sides of Airway Road. Grading would include the removal of existing soil and replacement of fill soils as road base and the installation of additional asphalt within the graded areas, which will serve as the widened roadways. Portions of the asphalt of the existing roadways would also be removed and replaced after subsurface storm drain and pipeline work is complete. Further additional work would include grading within the emergent marsh wetland area within the adjacent wetland mitigation area to ensure hydrologic connectivity for the wetland creation areas.

The project would include improvements and additions to the storm water system. The existing set of box culverts which outlet on the east side of La Media Road, in the northern portion of the project site, would be realigned and extended under La Media Road in order to outlet further south onto the western side of the road. Further, additional concrete box culverts would be installed to convey any storm water flows from the northeast corner to the southwest corner of the La Media Road/Airway Road intersection. Another set of concrete box culverts would be installed across Airway Road, immediately west of the intersection. In addition, construction of concrete box culverts to convey flows from the existing detention facility located at the northeast corner of the La Media Road/Siempre Viva Road intersection, westerly to an existing conveyance channel. Further, a new sewer and water mains would be constructed in La Media Road and Airway Road to replace existing mains and new accessible pedestrian signal systems would be installed at the SR-905 eastbound ramps.

Project construction will include the use of various equipment, including dozers, tractors, loaders, backhoes, scrapers, compacters, water trucks, semi-trucks, cement and mortar mixers, rollers, cold planers, backhoes, excavators, cranes, asphalt mixers, trenchers, and generators. Construction is expected to occur over a period of 24 months.

Proposed Mitigation– The proposed mitigation may change as a result of comments received in response to this public notice, the applicant's response to those comments, and/or the need for the project to comply with the 404(b)(1) Guidelines. In consideration of the above, the proposed mitigation sequence (avoidance/minimization/compensation), as applied to the proposed project is summarized below:

Avoidance: Impacts to waters were avoided to the maximum extent practicable. The proposed design is the minimum necessary in order to achieve the overall project purpose.

Minimization: During construction impacts to waters would be minimized using best management practices (BMP's). In addition, all temporary impacts to waters would be restored to their pre-project conditions per the proposed projects Revegetation Plan.

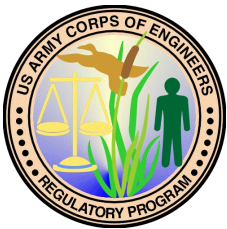
Compensation: The proposed project would require compensatory mitigation for project related losses of waters of the United states (1.53-acres) via on-site and offsite-permittee responsible wetland and vernal pool mitigation.

Proposed Special Conditions

The following list is comprised of proposed Permit Special Conditions, which are required of similar types of projects:

No mandatory special conditions are proposed at this time.

For additional information please call Max Roseman of my staff at 760-602-4832 or via e-mail at Max.E.Roseman@usace.army.mil. This public notice is issued by the Chief, Regulatory Division.



Regulatory Program Goals:

- To provide strong protection of the nation's aquatic environment, including wetlands.
- To ensure the Corps provides the regulated public with fair and reasonable decisions.
- To enhance the efficiency of the Corps' administration of its regulatory program.

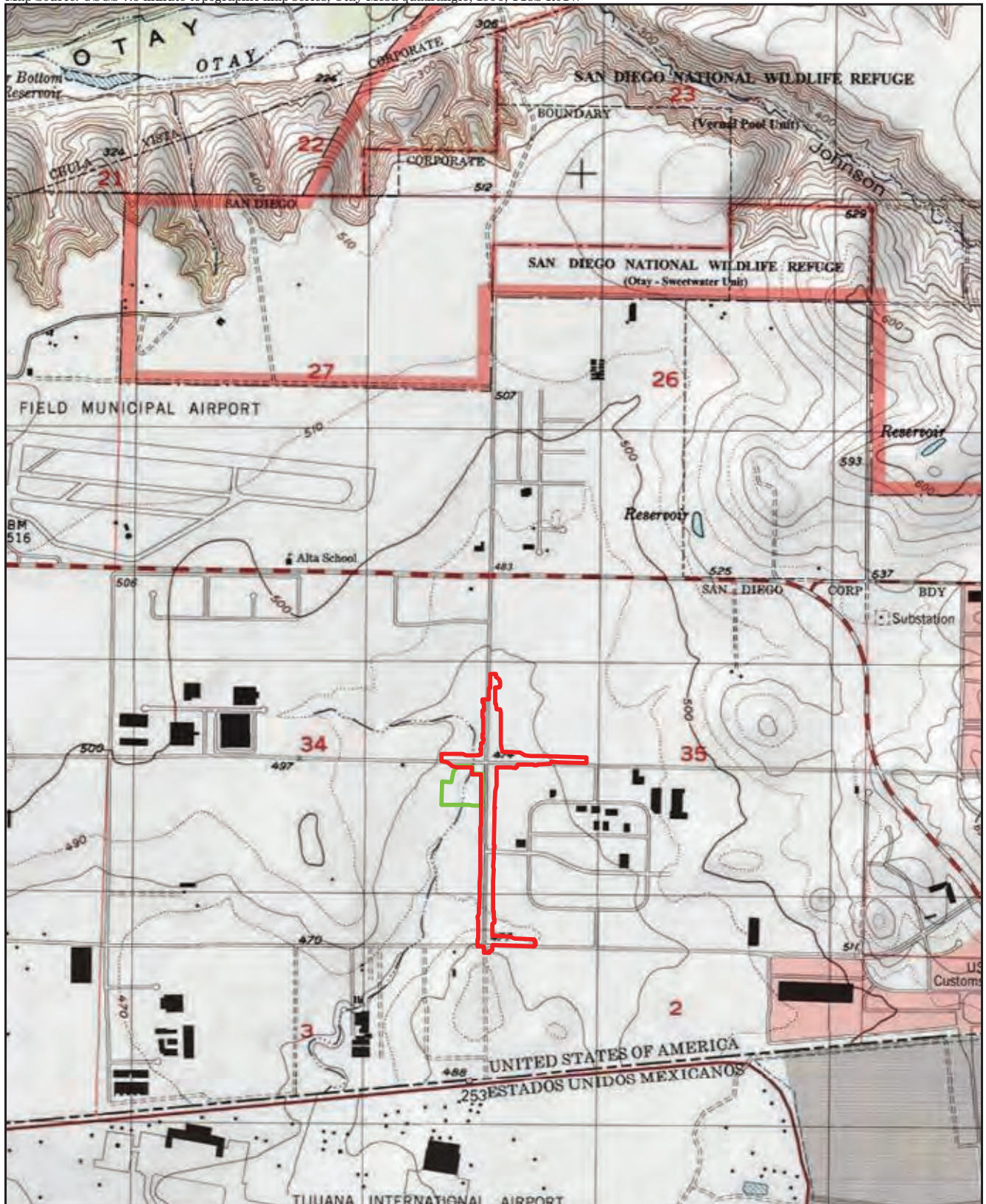
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
WWW.SPL.USACE.ARMY.MIL/MISSIONS/REGULATORY





✱ Project Location

FIGURE 1

Regional Location
La Media Road Widening Project



-  Project Boundary
-  Mitigation Site Boundary

0 Feet 2,000



FIGURE 2

Project Location on USGS Map
La Media Road Widening Project



Project Boundary

Mitigation Site Boundary

Review Area

Sample Point

0

Feet

400

- Vegetation Community**

Vernal Pool

Potential Vernal Pool

Emergent Wetland

Freshwater Marsh

Mule Fat Scrub

Southern Willow Scrub

Native Grassland

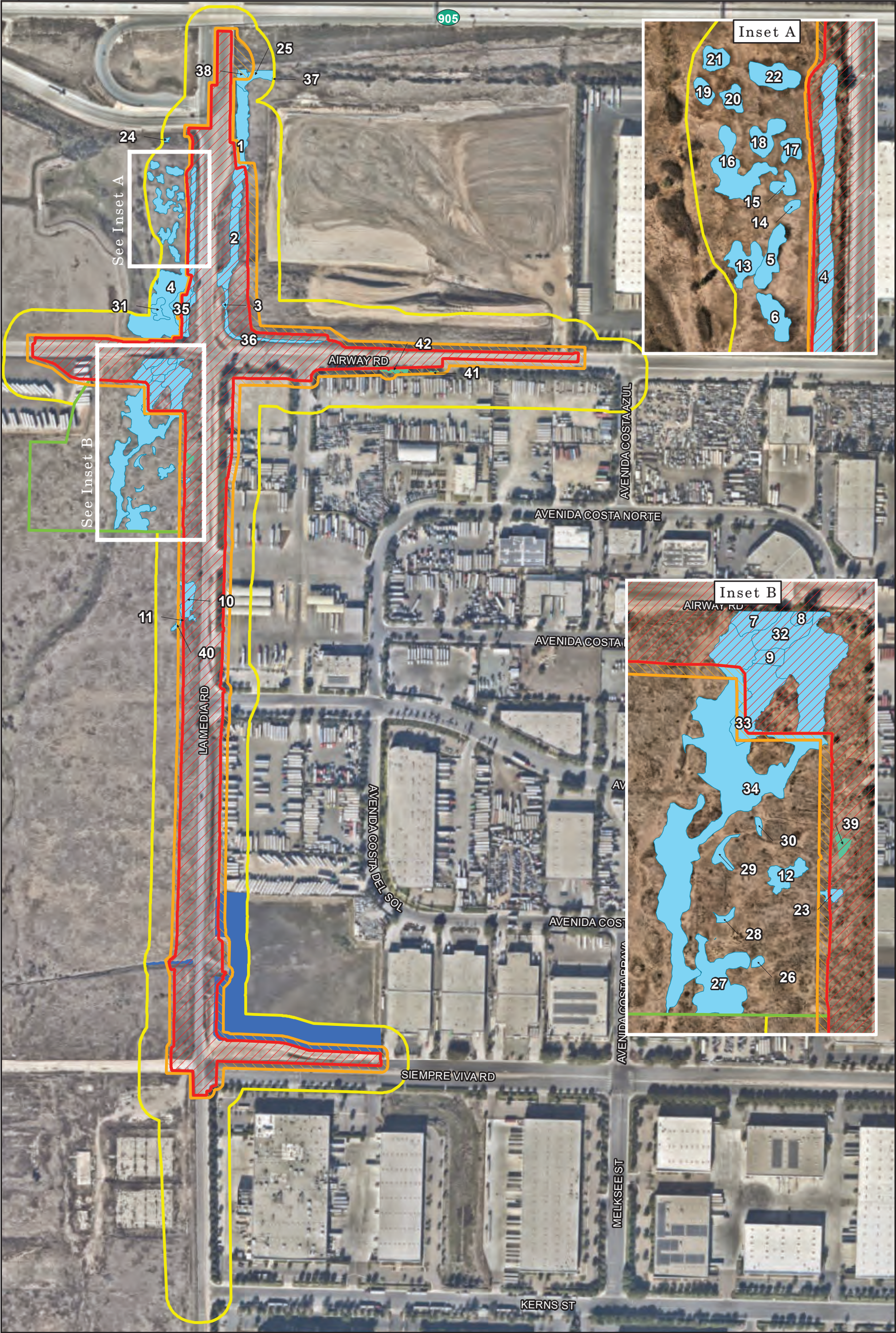
Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub

Disturbed Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub
- Non-native Grassland

Disturbed Land

Urban/Developed

FIGURE 6
Vegetation Communities within the
Review Area and Mitigation Site
La Media Road Widening Project



Potential USACE Wetland Waters of the U.S., RWQCB, CDFW Wetland Waters of the State and City of San Diego Wetlands

Potential Non-jurisdictional Aquatic Features (lack connectivity)

Detention Basin and Drainage Ditch (Non-jurisdictional)

Aquatic Resource Identification Number

Permanent Impact

Temporary Impact

Mitigation Site Boundary

Survey Area

0

Feet

350

RECON

M:\JOBS\519227\common_gis\JurisdictionalResource_impact031121.mxd 3/12/2021 bma

Impacts to Potentially Jurisdictional Resources
La Media Road Widening Project