

2.4.3 Plant Species

2.4.3.1 Regulatory Setting

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has regulatory responsibility for the protection of federally listed special-status plant species. Special-status species are selected for protection because they are rare and/or subject to population and habitat declines. *Special-status* is a general term for species that are provided varying levels of regulatory protection. The highest level of protection is given to threatened and endangered species; these are species that are formally listed or proposed for listing as endangered or threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. At the state level, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife has regulatory responsibility for special-status plant species protected by the California Endangered Species Act. Please see Section 2.4.5, *Threatened and Endangered Species*, for detailed information about these species.

This section discusses all other special-status plant species, including U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service candidate species, California Department of Fish and Wildlife species of special concern, and California Native Plant Society (CNPS) rare plants.

2.4.3.2 Affected Environment

This section is based on the Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts) prepared for the Project (Caltrans 2025). Based on literature review and habitat assessment (Figure 2.4.3-1), the Biological Study Area (BSA) contains suitable habitat for the special-status plant species listed in Table 2.4.3-1 and discussed thereafter. None of these species was observed during the January 11, 2024, biological survey. A formal rare plant survey was not conducted for this Project because potential habitat for special-status plant species occurs only within the 500-foot buffer of the BSA, in areas where no impacts are anticipated.

- **Paniculate Tarplant (*Deinandra paniculata*):** Paniculate tarplant, also known as San Diego tarplant, is a rare native annual herb that grows in Southern and Central California, primarily in the South Coast and Peninsular Range regions. It tends to grow in dry foothills and mesas. This species has a California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) of 4.2. CRPR 4 refers to plants that are on a watch list, with limited distribution or infrequent occurrences throughout a broader area in California; the .2 designation refers to plants that are moderately threatened in California (20 to 80 percent of occurrences threatened) (CNPS 2026).
- **Western Dichondra (*Dichondra occidentalis*):** Western dichondra is a rare native perennial herb that grows in Southern and Central California, primarily in the South Coast and Channel Islands regions, within coastal sage scrub and chaparral communities. This species has a CRPR rank of 4.2.

- **Southern California Black Walnut (*Juglans californica*):** The Southern California black walnut is a large shrub or small tree and endemic to California. It is generally found in the southern half of the state. It has thick bark and is deeply channeled or furrowed at maturity. It has large compound leaves. This species has a CRPR rank of 4.2.
- **Coulter's Matilija Poppy (*Romneya coulteri*):** Coulter's Matilija poppy is one of the largest and showiest California poppies. Large white petals with a crinkled texture surround yellow stamens. It can grow in disturbed coastal sage scrub near drainages. This species has a CRPR rank of 4.2.
- **Robinson's Peppergrass (*Lepidium virginicum* var. *robinsonii*):** Robinson's peppergrass is an herb that is often found along roadsides, at streambanks, and in sagebrush communities. This species has a CRPR rank of 4.3, with 4 referring to the same code as above and .3 referring to plants that are not very threatened in California (less than 20 percent of occurrences threatened).

2.4.3.3 Environmental Consequences

Temporary Impacts

Build Alternatives

Build Alternative 1

The Project would not result in temporary direct or indirect impacts on special-status plant species. Potential habitat for special-status plant species occurs only within the 500-foot buffer of the BSA, in areas where no impacts are anticipated.

Although no temporary impacts on natural communities are anticipated, Project Feature **PF-BIO-1**, as described in Section 2.4.1, *Natural Communities*, includes measures to prevent the introduction or spread of invasive species that could affect native plant communities during construction.

Design Variation: Build Alternative 1a

The design variation considered under Build Alternative 1a is substantively similar to Build Alternative 1 and would not result in additional impacts on special-status plant species. Direct and indirect impacts on special-status plant species under Build Alternative 1a would be the same as described for Build Alternative 1.

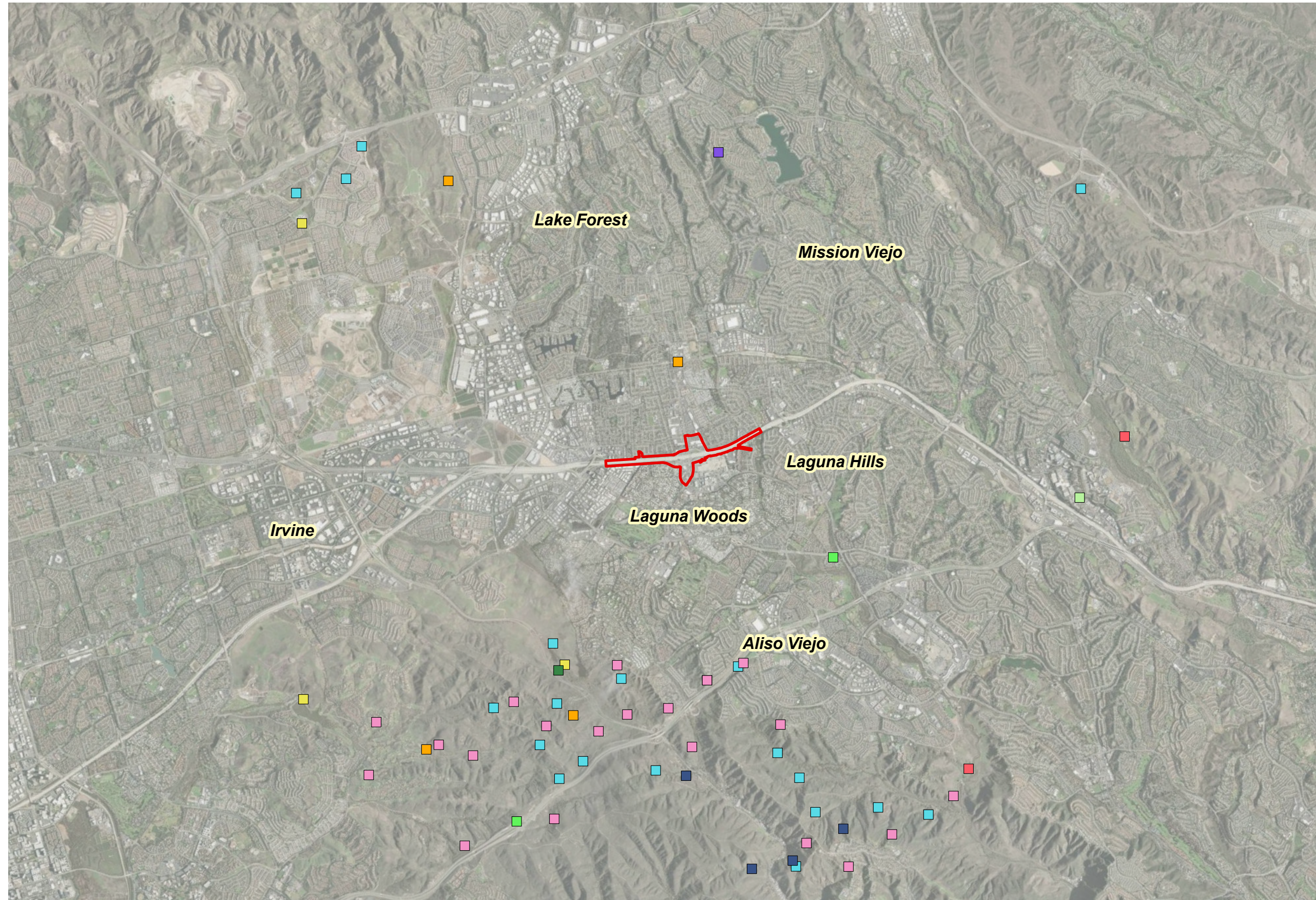
Build Alternative 3

Build Alternative 3 would not result in any ground disturbance or other activities that would affect special-status plant species. As such, there would be no Project-related temporary impacts on special-status plant species.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, Interstate (I-) 5 would remain in its current condition and no improvements would be implemented. Therefore, there would be no Project-related temporary impacts on special-status plant species.

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- Legend**
- Environmental Study Limit
 - CNDDDB Plant Occurrences**
 - Allen's pentachaeta
 - chaparral nolina
 - Coulter's saltbush
 - intermediate mariposa-lily
 - Laguna Beach dudleya
 - many-stemmed dudleya
 - mud nama
 - southern tarplant
 - thread-leaved brodiaea
 - white rabbit-tobacco

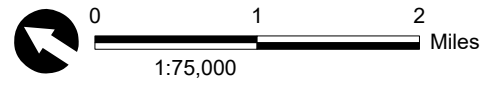


Figure 2.4.3-1
I-5 El Toro Road Interchange Project
CNDDDB Plant Occurrences
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Table 2.4.3-1. Listed and Proposed Plant Species Potentially Occurring or Known to Occur in the Project Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status^a	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent^{a,b}	Rationale
Braunton's milk-vetch	<i>Astragalus brauntii</i>	FE; CRPR: 1B.1	Perennial herb endemic to carbonate soils (limestone outcrops) in the foothills of the Southern California mountains. It commonly occurs in disturbed chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and closed-cone forests. Elevation: 6–640 meters (CNPS); < 650 meters (Jepson Manual) Blooming period: January–August (CNPS); March–July (Jepson Manual)	A	Absent. A small patch of coastal sage scrub habitat occurs within the 500-foot buffer of the BSA. The habitat does not contain limestone outcrops, and the site is not within or near foothills. No effect.
Coulter's saltbush	<i>Atriplex coulteri</i>	CRPR: 1B.2	Native to coastal Southern California and northern Baja California where it is quite rare. It grows in areas of saline and alkaline or clay soils, such as ocean bluffs, open sites, scrub, and coastal bluff scrub. Elevation: 3–460 meters (CNPS); < 500 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: March–October (Jepson eFlora)	A	Absent. The BSA does not contain bluffs or coastal bluff scrub. No effect.
Nevin's barberry	<i>Berberis nevinii</i>	FE	Perennial evergreen shrub occurring within chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, and riparian scrub. Elevation: 70–825 meters (CNPS) Blooming period: February–June (CNPS)	A	Absent. A small patch of coastal sage scrub habitat occurs within the 500-foot buffer of the BSA, but the developed nature of the site makes the potential for occurrence low. No nearby occurrences. No effect.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status ^a	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent ^{a,b}	Rationale
Thread-leaved brodiaea	<i>Brodiaea filifolia</i>	FT; CRPR: 1B.2	Perennial bulbiferous herb. Found in floodplains in semi-alkaline mudflats, vernal pools, mesic grassland, mixed native-nonnative grassland, alkali grassland, and alluvial fan sage scrub plant communities. Requires very heavy clay soils. The range of this species extends from the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains at Glendora in Los Angeles County, east to Arrowhead Hot Springs in the western foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains in San Bernardino County, and south through eastern Orange and western Riverside Counties to the city of San Diego. Elevation: 25–860 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: March–June (CNPS)	A	Absent. The BSA does not contain mesic grasslands, floodplains, vernal pools, mudflats, or alluvial fan sage scrub. No effect.
Catalina mariposa lily	<i>Calochortus catalinae</i>	CRPR: 4.2	The bulb is endemic to Southern California. It is native along the coastline in grasslands and open chaparral and woodlands habitats, especially on the Channel Islands and in the Santa Monica Mountains. Elevation: 15–700 meters (CNPS); < 700 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: (February) March–June (CNPS); March–May (Jepson eFlora)	A	Absent. The BSA is not along the coastline and does not contain grasslands, open chaparral, or woodland habitats. No effect.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status ^a	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent ^{a,b}	Rationale
Plummer's mariposa-lily	<i>Calochortus plummerae</i>	CRPR: 4.2	Perennial bulbiferous herb endemic to California. Habitat includes granitic, rocky soils within chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, lower montane coniferous forest, and valley and foothill grassland. Threatened by development, fire suppression, foot traffic, mining, powerline construction, and recreational activities. Less common at higher elevations. Elevation: < 1,700 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: May–July (Jepson eFlora)	A	Absent. A small patch of coastal sage scrub habitat occurs within the 500-foot buffer of the BSA, but the site lacks granitic rocky soils. No nearby occurrences. No effect.
Intermediate mariposa-lily	<i>Calochortus weedii</i> var. <i>intermedius</i>	CRPR: 1B.2	Dry, rocky open slopes within chaparral, sage scrub, or grasslands. Elevation: 105–855 meters (CNPS); < 680 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: May–July (CNPS); June–July (Jepson eFlora)	A	Absent. A small patch of coastal sage scrub habitat occurs within the 500-foot buffer of the BSA, but the developed nature of the site makes the potential for occurrence low. No nearby occurrences. OCTA NCCP/HCP covered species. No effect.
Orcutt's pincushion	<i>Chaenactis glabriuscula</i> var. <i>orcuttiana</i>	CRPR: 1B.1	Annual herb occurring in coastal bluff scrub (sandy) and coastal dunes. It is presumed extirpated in Orange County (Roberts 2008). Elevation: < 100 meters (CNPS) Blooming period: January–August (CNPS); April–July (Jepson eFlora)	A	Absent. The BSA is not on or near coastal dunes and does not contain coastal bluff scrub. No effect.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status ^a	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent ^{a,b}	Rationale
Summer holly	<i>Comarostaphylis diversifolia</i> ssp. <i>diversifolia</i>	CRPR: 1B.2	Large evergreen shrub found on somewhat mesic slopes and occasionally sandstone ridges in chaparral, foothill, and coastal areas. Range extends from San Diego County to northern Baja California below 2,100 feet. Elevation: 30–790 meters (CNPS); 100–550 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: April–June (CNPS); May–June (Jepson eFlora)	A	Absent. Habitat is not present in the BSA. No nearby occurrences. No effect.
Small-flowered morning-glory	<i>Convolvulus simulans</i>	CRPR: 4.2	Annual herb native to California and Baja California. Found in clay substrates (occasionally serpentine) in chaparral, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grassland. Rare in Southern California. Threatened by development and vehicles. Elevation: 30–740 meters (CNPS); 30–875 (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: March–July (CNPS); April–June (Jepson eFlora)	A	Not expected to occur. The developed nature of the BSA is not expected to provide suitable habitat for this species. No effect.
Paniculate tarplant	<i>Deinandra paniculata</i>	CRPR: 4.2	Occurs as a dominant or co-dominant plant in the herbaceous layer of grasslands, forblands, dry foothills, mesas, openings of coastal sage scrub, and oak woodland. Often in sandy soils. Elevation: < 1,320 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: (March) April–November (December) (CNPS); May–November (Jepson eFlora)	HP	Not expected to occur. The habitat around Aliso Creek within the BSA could provide suitable habitat. The potential habitat is outside of the construction footprint. No effect.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status ^a	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent ^{a,b}	Rationale
Western dichondra	<i>Dichondra occidentalis</i>	CRPR: 4.2	Perennial rhizomatous herb found in understory of chaparral, coastal sage scrub, other shaded areas below 1,800 feet, and rock outcroppings, often after fire. Elevation: < 520 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: (January) March–July (CNPS); March–June (Jepson eFlora)	HP	Not expected to occur. A small patch of coastal sage scrub habitat occurs within the 500-foot buffer of the BSA, but the developed nature of the surrounding area reduces the potential to occur. This area is outside of the construction footprint. No effect.
Cleveland's bush monkeyflower	<i>Diplacus clevelandii</i>	CRPR: 4.2	Habitat includes gabbroic, often in disturbed rocky areas. Occurs in chaparral, cismontane woodland, and lower montane coniferous forests. Elevation: 915–1,465 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: April–June (Jepson eFlora)	A	Absent. No suitable habitat in the BSA. No effect.
Santa Monica Mountains dudleya	<i>Dudleya cymosa</i> ssp. <i>Ovatifolia</i>	FT, CRPR:1B.1	Perennial herb that occurs on shaded rocky outcrops and slopes. Known from Santa Monica Mountains of the southern and western Transverse Ranges and the Santa Ana Mountains of the Peninsular Ranges. Elevation: 150–1,675 meters (CNPS); 150–500 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: March–June (CNPS)	A	Absent. The BSA is not in or near the Santa Monica Mountains, and the coastal sage scrub habitat on-site is not considered suitable habitat for this species. No effect.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status ^a	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent ^{a,b}	Rationale
Many-stemmed dudleya	<i>Dudleya multicaulis</i>	CRPR: 1B.2	Many-stemmed dudleya is often associated with clay soils in barrens, rocky places, and ridgelines as well as thinly vegetated openings in chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and southern needlegrass grasslands on clay soils. Elevation: 15–790 meters (CNPS); < 600 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: April–July (CNPS); May–June (Jepson eFlora)	A	Absent. The coastal sage scrub in the BSA does not contain suitable soil or rocky habitat. OCTA NCCP/HCP covered species. No effect.
Laguna Beach dudleya	<i>Dudleya stolonifera</i>	CRPR: 1B.1	Occurs on north-facing cliffs and outcrops. Endemic to the San Joaquin Hills of the central South Coast (Roberts 2008). Elevation: 10–260 meters (CNPS); < 250 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: May–July (CNPS)	A	Absent. The coastal sage scrub in the BSA does not contain suitable soil or rocky habitat. In addition, no cliffs or outcrops are present. No effect.
Cliff spurge	<i>Euphorbia misera</i>	CRPR: 2B.2	Perennial shrub occupying rocky slopes and coastal bluffs. Known from the South Coast, southern Channel Islands, and western Sonoran Desert to Baja California. Elevation: 10–500 meters (CNPS); < 500 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: December–August (October) (CNPS); January–August (Jepson eFlora)	A	Absent. No suitable habitat in the BSA. No effect.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status ^a	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent ^{a,b}	Rationale
Palmer's grapplinghook	<i>Harpagonella palmeri</i>	CRPR: 4.2	Palmer's grapplinghook is associated with clay and cobbly clay soils in chaparral, coastal sage scrub, valley and foothill grasslands, and scrub oak woodland. Elevation: 20–955 meters (CNPS); < 1,000 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: March to May (CNPS); March–April (Jepson eFlora)	A	Absent. The coastal sage scrub present in the BSA does not contain the suitable soils for this species. No effect.
Vernal barley	<i>Hordeum intercedens</i>	CRPR: 3.2	Annual herb native to California and Baja California. Habitat includes vernal pools; mesic grasslands; dry, saline streambeds; and alkaline flats. Known from the San Joaquin Valley, the outer South Coast Ranges, the South Coast, the Channel Islands, the Peninsular Ranges, and northwest Baja California. In Riverside County, vernal barley is found in the Domino, Willows, and Traver soils series and associated with alkali flats and floodplains within the alkali vernal plains community. Within this community, vernal barley is associated primarily with alkali annual grasslands and vernal pools and, to a lesser extent, alkali scrub and alkali playa. Elevation: 5–1,000 meters (CNPS), < 500 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: March–June (CNPS)	A	Absent. No suitable soils and no vernal pools or alkaline flats in the BSA. No effect.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status ^a	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent ^{a,b}	Rationale
Southern California black walnut	<i>Juglans californica</i>	CRPR: 4.2	Perennial deciduous tree endemic to California. Habitat includes alluvial substrates, chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, and riparian woodland. Threatened by urbanization, grazing, nonnative plants, and possibly a lack of natural reproduction. Elevation: 50–900 meters (CNPS) Blooming period: March–August (CNPS); March–May (Jepson eFlora)	HP	Low potential to occur. May occur in the riparian habitat in Aliso Creek within the 500-foot buffer of the BSA. No effect.
Robinson's pepper-grass	<i>Lepidium virginicum</i> var. <i>robinsonii</i>	CRPR: 4.3	Annual herb that occurs in dry, sandy, or thin soils in coastal sage scrub and chaparral. Elevation: 1–885 meters (CNPS); < 2,800 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: January–July (CNPS); March–June (Jepson eFlora)	HP	Low potential to occur. May occur within the coastal sage scrub habitat within the 500-foot buffer of the BSA. No effect..
California box-thorn	<i>Lycium californicum</i>	CRPR: 4.2	Perennial shrub that occurs in coastal bluff scrub and coastal scrub habitats along ocean bluffs, mesas, and estuaries. Elevation: 5–150 meters (CNPS) Blooming period: (December) March, June, July, August (CNPS)	A	Absent. The BSA is not located along the coast. The coastal sage scrub habitat in the BSA is not expected to provide suitable habitat for this species and is outside of the impact area. No effect.
Cliff aster	<i>Malacothrix saxatilis</i> var. <i>saxatilis</i>	CRPR: 4.2	Perennial herb endemic to California. This species grows in the central and southern coastal hills and mountain ranges. Typically found in sand dunes and open spaces with fast-draining soils. Elevation: < 330 meters (CNPS) Blooming period: April–August (Jepson eFlora)	A	Absent. No suitable habitat in the BSA. No effect.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status ^a	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent ^{a,b}	Rationale
Intermediate monardella	<i>Monardella hypoleuca</i> ssp. <i>intermedia</i>	CRPR: 1B.3	Occurs in wetlands in another region but occurs almost always under natural conditions in non-wetlands in California. Typically occurs in chaparral, oak woodland, occasionally conifer forest, and on dry slopes. Elevation: 200–1,250 meters (Jepson eFlora); 400–1,250 meters (CNPS) Blooming period: April–September (CNPS); June–September (Jepson eFlora)	A	Absent. No suitable habitat in the BSA. No effect.
Mud nama	<i>Nama stenocarpa</i>	CRPR: 2B.2	Annual/perennial herb that occurs in marsh and swamp habitat of lake margins and riverbanks. Elevation: < 810 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: January–July (CNPS); March–October (Jepson eFlora)	A	Absent. No suitable habitat in the BSA. No effect.
Chaparral nolina	<i>Nolina cismontana</i>	CRPR: 1B.2	Occurs in coastal mountain ranges in dry chaparral and coastal sage scrub habitat on rocky sandstone and gabbro substrates. Elevation: 140–1,275 meters (CNPS); 22–1,300 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: (March) May–July (CNPS)	A	Absent. No suitable habitat in the BSA. BSA is not within coastal mountain ranges. No effect.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status ^a	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent ^{a,b}	Rationale
Allen's pentachaeta	<i>Pentachaeta aurea</i> <i>ssp. allenii</i>	CRPR: 1B.2	Annual herb that occurs on dry slopes and flats of valley grassland and southern oak woodland. This species is low-water tolerant. Elevation < 500 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: March–June (Jepson eFlora)	A	Absent. No suitable habitat in the BSA. No effect.
Hubby's phacelia	<i>Phacelia hubbyi</i>	CRPR: 4.2	Chaparral, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grassland in undisturbed areas. Elevation: 0–1,000 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: April–July (Jepson eFlora)	HP	Not expected to occur. Although coastal sage scrub is present in the BSA, the developed nature of the surrounding area decreases the potential of occurrence.
White rabbit-tobacco	<i>Pseudognaphalium leucocephalum</i>	CRPR: 2B.2	Sandy or gravelly benches, dry stream bottoms, and canyon bottoms. Elevation: < 500 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: (July) August–November (December) (CNPS)	A	Absent. No suitable habitat in the BSA. No effect.
Nuttall's scrub oak	<i>Quercus dumosa</i>	CRPR: 1B.1	Typically occurs in closed-cone coniferous forest, chaparral, and coastal scrub. Occurs generally on sandy soils near the coast, sometimes on clay loam. Elevation: 15–400 meters (CNPS); < 200 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: February–April (May–August) (CNPS); March–May (Jepson eFlora)	A	Absent. No suitable habitat in the BSA. No effect.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status ^a	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent ^{a,b}	Rationale
Fish's milkwort	<i>Rhinotropis cornuta</i> var. <i>fishiae</i>	CRPR: 4.3	Perennial deciduous shrub native to California and Baja California. Habitat includes chaparral, cismontane woodland, and riparian woodland. Elevation: 90–1,270 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: May–August (Jepson eFlora)	A	Absent. No suitable habitat in the BSA. No effect.
Coulter's Matilija poppy	<i>Romneya coulteri</i>	CRPR: 4.2	This poppy is native to Southern California and Baja California where it grows in dry washes and canyons in open, mildly disturbed sage scrub and chaparral and along rocky drainages, sometimes in recently burned areas. It is a popular ornamental plant, kept for its large, showy flowers. Elevation: <1,200 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: March–July (August) (CNPS)	HP	Low potential to occur. The coastal sage scrub habitat in the BSA could provide suitable habitat, but it is outside of the impact area.
Chaparral ragwort	<i>Senecio aphanactis</i>	CRPR: 2B.2	It occurs in dry coastal areas, particularly alkali flats. Known from central western California and the South Coast to Baja California. Elevation: 15–800 meters (CNPS); 10–550 meters (Jepson eFlora) Blooming period: January–April (May) (CNPS); February–May (Jepson eFlora)	A	Absent. No suitable habitat in the BSA. No effect.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status ^a	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent ^{a,b}	Rationale
Big-leaved crownbeard	<i>Verbesina dissita</i>	CRPR: 1B.1, ST	Perennial herb found on shrubby coastal slopes. Known in California only near southern Laguna Beach. Associated with southern maritime chaparral plant species. Elevation: 45–205 meters (CNPS) Blooming period: (March) April–July (CNPS)	A	Absent. The BSA is not near Laguna Beach and does not contain southern maritime chaparral. No effect.
San Diego County viguiera	<i>Viguiera laciniata</i>	CRPR: 4.3	Perennial shrub native to the dry mesas, canyons, and mountain slopes as part of chaparral and coastal sage scrub. Elevation: 60–750 meters (CNPS) Blooming period: February–June (August) (CNPS); February–August (October–December) (Jepson eFlora)	A	Absent. The BSA does not contain dry mesas, canyons, or mountain slopes. No effect.
Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest	N/A	G4; S4	Open to locally dense riparian woodland dominated by coast live oak. It occurs in valley bottoms and outer floodplains along larger streams, in sandy soils, or in alluvium.	A	Absent. Riparian habitat in the BSA does not contain coast live oak trees and is outside of the construction footprint. No effect.
Southern Cottonwood Willow Riparian Forest	N/A	G3; S3.2	<i>Populus</i> sp. is dominant or co-dominant in the tree canopy. Occurs on floodplains or along low-gradient rivers, perennial or seasonally intermittent streams, and springs; in lower canyons in desert mountains; in alluvial fans; and in valleys with a water supply that varies during the year.	A	Absent. Riparian habitat in the BSA does not contain cottonwood trees and is outside of the construction footprint. No effect.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status ^a	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/Absent ^{a,b}	Rationale
Southern Riparian Scrub	N/A	G3; S3.2	Riparian scrub is dominated by young willow trees and shrubs, typically representing an early successional stage of riparian woodland.	A	Absent. Riparian habitat in the BSA does not contain the shrubs and young willows that constitute this habitat type. Riparian habitat is outside of the construction footprint. No effect.
Southern Sycamore Alder Riparian Woodland	N/A	G4; S4	Western sycamore and/or coast live oak dominant or co-dominant in the tree canopy of riparian habitats. Occurs in intermittent streams, springs, seeps, stream banks, and terraces adjacent to floodplains that are subject to high-intensity flooding.	A	Absent. Riparian habitat in the BSA does not contain sycamore or coast live oak trees and is outside of the construction footprint. No effect.

Sources: California Native Plant Society 2026; Jepson Flora Project 2026; Moore 2013; Roberts 2008

^a. Federal Endangered (FE); Federal Threatened (FT); State Threatened (ST); California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR); Global Conservation Status Rank (G); Subnational Conservation Status Rank (S)

^b. Absent (A) – no habitat present and no further work needed. Habitat Present (HP) – habitat is, or may be, present.

CNPS = California Native Plant Society; OCTA NCCP/HCP = Orange County Transportation Authority Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan

Permanent Impacts

Build Alternatives

Build Alternative 1

The Project would not result in permanent direct or indirect impacts on special-status plant species. Potential habitat for special-status plant species occurs only within the 500-foot buffer of the BSA, in areas where no impacts are anticipated.

Design Variation: Build Alternative 1a

The design variation considered under Build Alternative 1a is substantively similar to Build Alternative 1 and would not result in additional impacts on special-status plant species. Direct and indirect impacts on special-status plant species under Build Alternative 1a would be the same as described for Build Alternative 1.

Build Alternative 3

Build Alternative 3 would not result in any ground disturbance or other activities that would affect special-status plant species. As such, there would be no Project-related permanent impacts on special-status plant species.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, I-5 would remain in its current condition and no improvements would be implemented. Therefore, there would be no Project-related permanent impacts on special-status plant species.

2.4.3.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Although no impacts on special-status plant species are anticipated, the following avoidance and minimization measures would be implemented:

- BIO-1 Delineation of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs):** As described in Section 2.4.1, *Natural Communities*, this measure would protect ESAs (riparian habitat and coastal sage scrub associated with Aliso Creek) from construction activities.
- BIO-2 On-site Training:** As described in Section 2.4.1, *Natural Communities*, this measure would include training on the importance of protecting special-status plants and their habitat.