

**Redding Avenue/69th Street Bicycle  
and Pedestrian Improvements Project**      *NES (MI)*

**Natural Environment Study**

**(Minimal Impacts)**

Sacramento County, California

03-Sac-0-Redding Avenue

Federal Project No. CML-5002 (117)

**January 2008**

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# 1. Summary

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The City of Sacramento (City) proposes to construct improvements along Redding Avenue and 69th Street in the City of Sacramento for enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The proposed improvements include bike lanes, curb and gutter, separated sidewalks, decorative lighting, and landscaped planters.

Construction is scheduled to begin in May 2010 and will be completed in November 2010.

The Biological Study Area (BSA) is predominantly developed with scattered areas of disturbed/ruderal vegetation. No natural plant communities occur in the BSA.

The BSA includes a total of 0.089 acre of potential jurisdictional waters located in a roadside ditch, and consisting of both wetland and nonwetland waters. The proposed project will result in permanent impacts to 0.042 acre of wetlands and 0.047 acre of nonwetland waters. No temporary impacts are anticipated.

The project could affect special status (and other) bird species that may nest in the BSA. The project will not affect any other special status wildlife species or any special status plant species.

Avoidance and mitigation measures include preconstruction surveys for burrowing owls and (other) nesting birds.

# 2. Introduction

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The City proposes to construct roadway improvements along Redding Avenue and 69th Street in Sacramento. Redding Avenue is in an industrial area located close to California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) and the 65th Street light rail station. The project is located within the City of Sacramento's 65th Street Area Plan. The City's Area Plan envisions the project area evolving from an industrial use area to a mixed-use, transit-oriented region with student housing. This proposed redevelopment is likely to increase pedestrian traffic in the project corridor. Redding Avenue and 69th Street will provide an important bicycle and pedestrian link between new residential areas, the light rail station, and Sacramento State University.

The City will serve as Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act in conjunction with Caltrans and FHWA. FHWA will be the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act.

### **2.1. Project Location**

The project is in southeast Sacramento directly south of the intersection of Elvas Avenue and Folsom Boulevard, and north of San Joaquin Street. The project area begins on Redding Avenue, approximately 0.3 mile south of Interstate 50, and extends north to Q Street. At Q Street, the project transitions onto 69th Street for a distance of 650 feet ultimately ending at Folsom Boulevard. (Figures 1 and 2).

### **2.2. Project Description**

The proposed project will enhance 0.45 miles of the Redding Avenue Corridor for pedestrian and bicycle use and improve air quality. The Redding Avenue project will provide a regional bicycle connection from the south area of Sacramento to the 65th Street light rail station, CSUS, and the American River Bike Trail. The improved corridor will also provide for pedestrian traffic between new residential areas south of Interstate 50 and the light rail station, and CSUS. The project will construct improvements on both Redding Avenue and 69th Street (see Design Plans in Appendix A).

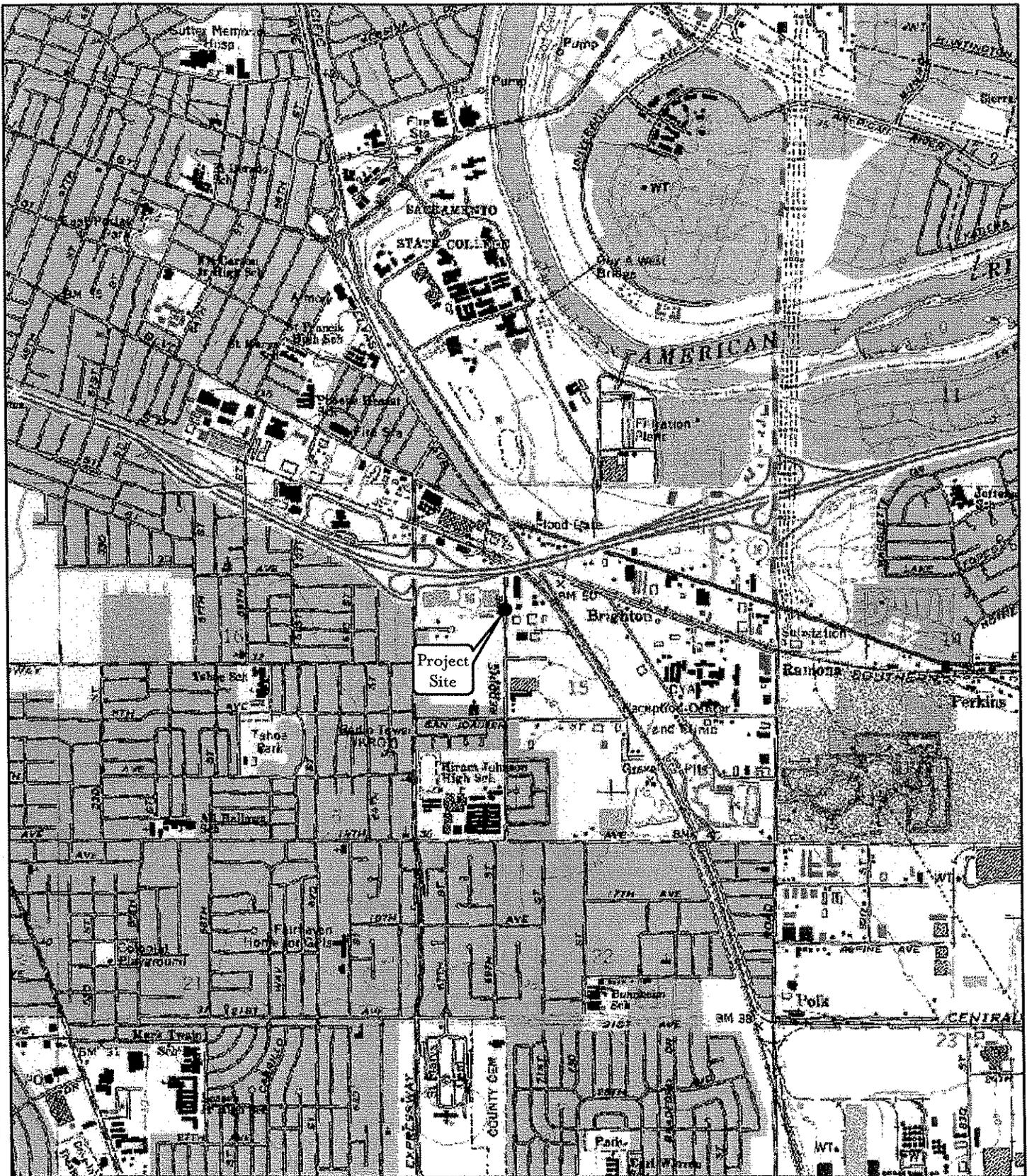
Currently, Redding Avenue is a narrow, two-lane roadway with shoulders of varying width and a roadside ditch along the east side of the street. The proposed project will widen the roadway to provide 11-foot wide travel lanes, six-foot wide bicycle lanes, seven-foot wide parking lanes (where necessary), vertical curb and gutter, a 6.5-foot wide landscape planter, and six foot wide separated sidewalks.

The project will also upgrade the existing storm drainage facilities and replace the existing roadside ditch with underground storm drain facilities. The overhead utilities may be relocated to underground utilities and coordinated with the roadway improvements. Existing municipal water, sewer, and gas facilities in the project limits will be modified if necessary.

Additional right of way will be needed to accommodate the proposed improvements. Staging and equipment storage will be accomplished using existing paved areas in the project limits.

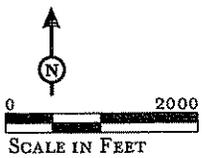
Construction is scheduled to begin in May 2010 and be completed November 2010. It is estimated project construction will take about six months.





LSA

FIGURE 2



Redding Avenue Bikeway  
Project Vicinity

### 3. Study Methods

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Prior to conducting any field studies, the limits of the Biological Study Area (BSA) were established, as shown in Figure 3. The BSA totals approximately 6.76 acres and consists of the project footprint, including cut/fill slopes, access and staging areas, etc. The BSA also includes lands beyond the footprint that could potentially be affected by project construction and/or were determined necessary to inventory in order to perform an adequate analysis of project impacts.

A list of sensitive wildlife and plant species potentially occurring within the project area was compiled to evaluate potential impacts resulting from project construction. Sources used to compile the list include the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB 2007), the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Online Edition (2007), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) online list (2007). Due to the developed nature of the BSA, only one quadrangle, Sacramento East, was referenced to complete the species lists. The individual lists are included in Appendix B. The special status species lists obtained from the CNDDDB, CNPS, and USFWS, were reviewed to determine which species could potentially occur on the project site. Those species that could potentially occur on the project site are discussed in greater detail in Section 4.2.

LSA biologist Mike Trueblood surveyed the BSA on December 4, 2007.

Vegetation in the BSA was characterized in accordance with A Manual of California Vegetation Sawyer and Keeler-Wolf, 1995, as appropriate. The descriptions of plant communities are modified to be consistent with the plant species composition observed during the survey. The names of the plant species are consistent with Hickman (1993). A comprehensive list of plant species observed is included in Appendix C.

Potential waters of the U.S. in the BSA were delineated in accordance with the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual (1987), Arid West Region Interim Regional Supplement (2006). Wetland data sheets are included in Appendix D.

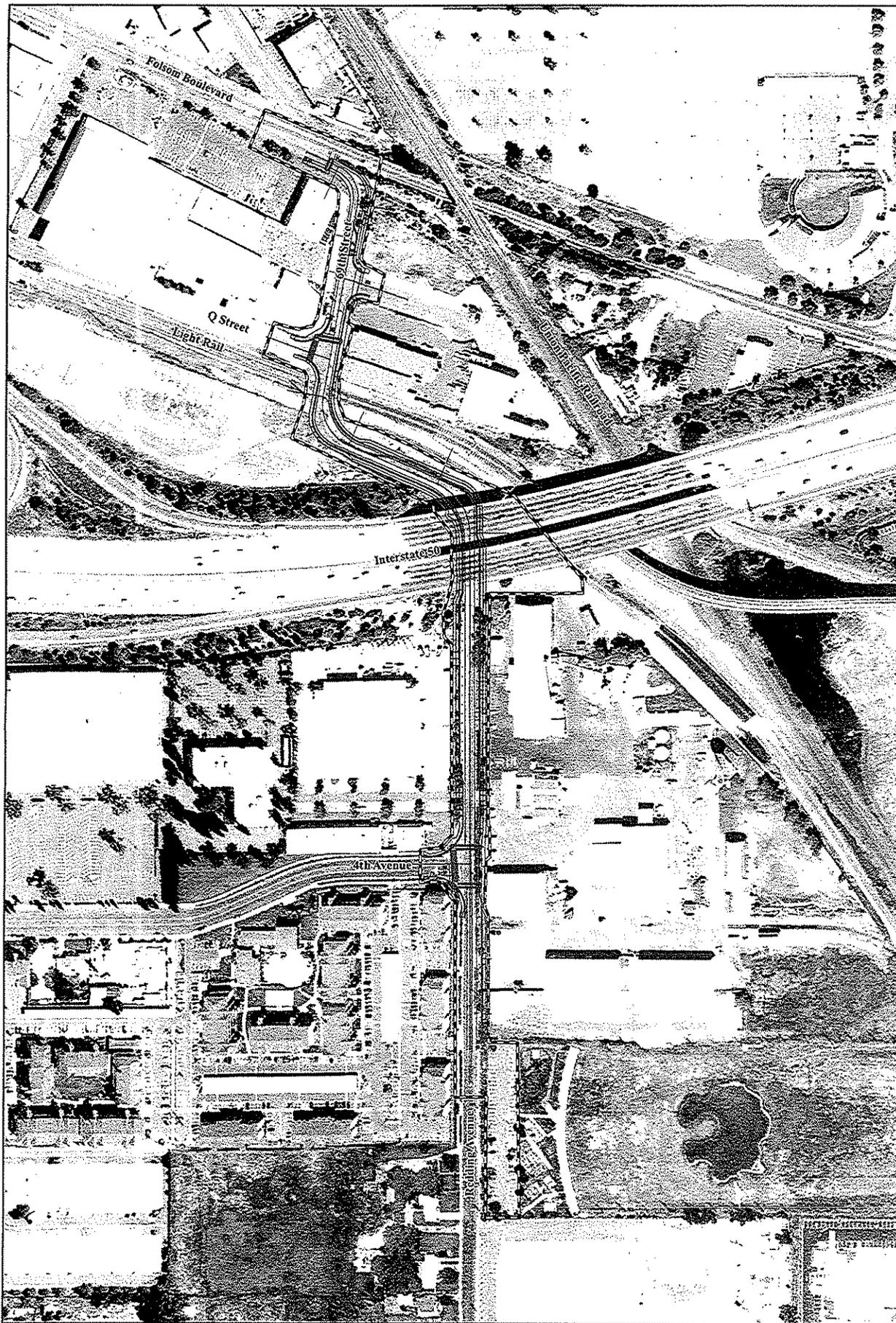
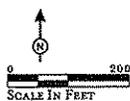


FIGURE 3

LSA



**Legend**

-  Biological Study Area
-  Proposed Project

SOURCE: BASEMAP - AIRPHOTO USA (5/2006); MAPPING - LSA ASSOCIATES, INC. (2007)  
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## 4. Environmental Setting

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The project is located in an urban section of the City Sacramento in Sacramento County. Sacramento is located on the east side of the Sacramento Valley at the base of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and about 100 miles east of San Francisco. The project area is located on the Sacramento East quadrangle in Sections 10 and 15 of Township 8 North and Range 5 East.

Land use in the project vicinity is primarily residential, characterized by older established neighborhoods with tree lined streets and parks. Business and industry areas however also occur. The project area is in an industrial area that includes Interstate 50, railroad lines and businesses. Three apartment complexes are located on Redding Avenue; however the majority of residences occur to the south and north of the project corridor.

### 4.1. Description of the Existing Biological and Physical Conditions

The area within the BSA is developed and highly disturbed due to its proximity to Interstate 50, high traffic streets such as Folsom Boulevard, light rail lines, and businesses. Undeveloped lands in the BSA consist of vacant roadside lots of ruderal, landscaped vegetation, and unpaved areas adjacent to Redding Avenue. One roadside ditch occurs in the BSA.

### 4.2. Regional Species and Habitats of Concern

The amount of potential habitat in the BSA is minimal and of low quality, especially as it pertains to wildlife usage. The high level of disturbance and lack of native plant communities in the project area excludes the majority of the special status plants and animals known to occur in the vicinity of the project. Consequently, most of the special status animals and plants identified in Appendix C are not expected to occur in the BSA. However, three special status species that may inhabit urbanized areas and could potentially occur in the BSA are the burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), purple martin (*Progne subis*), and Sanford's arrowhead (*Sagittaria sanfordii*).

**Burrowing Owl.** The western burrowing owl is a State species of special concern, and a Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Nongame Birds of Management Concern. Burrowing owls occur in the warmer valleys associated with agriculture and urban areas that support populations of California ground squirrels. Burrowing owls nest in ground squirrel burrows and feed on insects and small mammals. The preferred habitat consists of mounds in open fields with low vegetation. The CNDDDB contains seven records for burrowing owl within the

project vicinity. The closest known occurrence is about 1.5 miles north of the BSA, along the railroad corridor north of CSUS.

Potential nesting and foraging habitat for burrowing owls in the BSA is located in the vacant lot adjacent to 69th Street and Folsom Boulevard (Figure 4). Burrows that have the potential to support burrowing owls (with openings greater than 4 inches wide) were observed during the field survey. However, the potential habitat for burrowing owl is low quality due to the amount of disturbance and proximity to human activities. As a result, there is a low probability for burrowing owl to occur in the BSA.

**Purple Martin.** The purple martin is a California Species of Special Concern that generally inhabits woodlands and low elevation forests. Purple martins are known to nest in old woodpecker cavities in tall snags, and also in human structures. The CNDDDB contains records for purple martins nesting in numerous highway, street, and railroad overpasses in the vicinity of the project. One CNDDDB record from 2003 identifies purple martins nesting in the weep holes of the Interstate 50 bridge structure at Redding Avenue.

**Sanford's Arrowhead.** Sanford's arrowhead is a perennial herbaceous plant that grows in freshwater marshes and assorted shallow emergent wetlands that have standing or slow moving water. Sanford's arrowhead is a CNPS List 1 B plant. The CNDDDB contains four records for Sanford's arrowhead in the vicinity of the project. Three of the four sites are along the American River, and one site is located in a small channel in the southern end of the CSUS campus.

Potential habitat for Sanford's arrowhead was identified in the roadside ditch on the east side of Redding Avenue beginning at 4th Avenue and continuing north about 500 feet. Plants growing in the roadside drainage include water plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*), nut grass (*Cyperus eragrostis*), Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), filaree (*Erodium botrys*), English plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) and cranesbill (*Geranium dissectum*). The ditch receives water as a result of road and surface runoff.

Surveys for Sanford's arrowhead were conducted along the ditch in the BSA, and no Sanford's arrowhead was observed. The survey was not conducted during the normal blooming period for Sanford's arrowhead (May – October), but this species is a perennial plant and identification using vegetative features (leaves, recurved pedicels) is possible. The survey was conducted in early December and the large leaves of Sanford's arrowhead would have been identifiable, if present.

Due to the highly disturbed nature of the BSA, the lack of suitable habitat, and the absence of any vegetation similar to Sanford's arrowhead, Sanford's arrowhead is considered absent from the BSA and will not be affected by the project.

#### **4.3. Vegetation**

Disturbed/ruderal vegetation is the only plant community in the BSA (Figure 4). The vegetation along Redding Avenue and 69th Street consists of nonnative grasses, ruderal forbs, and landscape plantings. Plants growing in the BSA include Bermuda grass, filaree, fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), English plantain, barley (*Hordeum murinum*), and wild oats (*Avena* sp.). Landscape trees and shrubs including oleander (*Oleander* sp.), flowering pear (*Prunus* sp.), pine (*Pinus* sp.), and pyracantha (*Pyracantha anugustifolia*) are planted sporadically along Redding Avenue. Two small (six and eight inch dbh) valley oaks (*Quercus lobata*) are located on the east side of Redding Avenue at the intersection with 4th Avenue. Disturbed /ruderal areas comprise 1.14 acres in the BSA.

Developed areas consist of all human-made structures including roads (paved and unpaved), road shoulders, parking lots, buildings and railroad rights of way. Within the BSA, developed areas comprise 5.62 acres and are primarily associated with existing paved roads.

#### **4.4. Animals**

Wildlife species occurring in the BSA are those species adapted to ruderal vegetation in an urban setting. Since the BSA is mostly developed the diversity of wildlife is low. The habitat is considered low-quality due to the high frequency of human disturbances and the dominance of non-native plants. Wildlife adapted to living in disturbed urban areas and likely to use the habitat in the BSA include animals such as ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*), western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), scrub jay (*Aphelocoma californica*), and northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*).

#### **4.5. Jurisdictional Waters**

Jurisdictional waters include wetlands and other waters that fall under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA or the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (PCWQCA), or the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) pursuant to Sections 1600-1616 of the State Fish and Game Code.