

April 16, 2021

George Cardenas
Phelan Piñon Hills Community Services District
4176 Warbler Road
Phelan, CA 92329

Subject: Cultural and Paleontological Resources Assessment for the Proposed Civic Center and Phelan Park Expansion Project, Phelan, San Bernardino County, California (Project Number C-0352)

Dear Mr. Cardenas:

At the request of the Phelan Pinon Hills Community Services District (CLIENT), Duke Cultural Resources Management, LLC (DUKE CRM) has prepared a cultural and paleontological resources assessment for the Proposed Civic Center and Phelan Park Expansion Project (Project), located in the unincorporated community of Phelan, San Bernardino County, California. The Project is approximately 20 acres in size. San Bernardino County (County) is the lead agency for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the County Land Use Service Department has required this study to comply with the CEQA. There is no federal jurisdiction on this Project.

The Project is a new development consisting of a Civic Center, a Community Center, and a native garden with accompanying fountains on five acres within APN: 3066-251-14. Additionally, a maintenance building and yard, an informal multi-purpose field or event lawn area, a multi-purpose field, an overlook area and garden, a shared multi-purpose softball field, a native garden and nature play area, a children's playground, a dog park, an equestrian arena with an accompanying parking lot, a pump-track and skate park area, and three parking lots will be developed on 15 acres within APNs: 3066-251-14 and 3066-261-08.

The Project is located in the unincorporated community of Phelan, California in San Bernardino County northeast of the intersection of Sheep Creek Road and Warbler Road approximately 0.2 miles south of the town center. The Project is located in the northwest quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 24, Township 4 North, Range 7 West, as shown on the United States Geological Survey (USGS) *Phelan, Calif.* 7.5 quadrangle map (see Attachment A for Project Maps). The Project area is a vacant 20-acre property with a general commercial zoning land designation. Elevations range from 4,170 feet above mean sea level (amsl) in the southwest corner to 4,135 feet amsl in the northeast corner. The Project is comprised of APNs: 3066-251-14, 3066-261-08, and 3066-261-10.

On March 8, 2021 DUKE CRM received the results of a cultural resources records search conducted by the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC). The SCCIC, located at the California State University, Fullerton, is the regional office of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) covering San Bernardino County. The records search included a

review of all recorded cultural resources within a ½-mile radius of the Project, as well as a review of known cultural resource survey and excavation reports within the same search radius.

No cultural resources are recorded within the Project; however, two are located within ½-mile of the Project (Table 1). According to the SCCIC, one cultural resource report (SB-03991) covered portions of the Project; however, the report was unavailable to the SCCIC staff due to COVID-19 closures. The other five cultural resource reports within the ½ mile search radius, but outside the Project area, consist of two small (0 -10 acre) surveys, two wireless telecommunication studies, and one thesis/ dissertation.

Resource No.	Resource Type	Description	Eligibility	Distance and Direction
CA-SBR-004415H	Historic	Tejon Road	Unknown	0.25 miles south
CA-SBR-008082H	Historic	Phelan Road	Unknown	0.25 miles north

In addition to the records search at the SCCIC, Edgar Alvarez, B.A., Archaeologist at DUKE CRM conducted a review of on-line historical aerial photographs and historic USGS quad maps utilizing the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) FrameFinder portal, historicaerials.com, and USGS Historical Topographic Map Explorer. Review of aerial photographs from 1952 (UCSB FrameFinder) illustrate Sheep Creek Road and Phelan Road established as paved roads, Warbler Road as dirt, and vegetation surrounding the western portion of the Project area with no discernable structures within. The *Phelan* 1956 7.5' map illustrates Sheep Creek Road and Phelan Road as paved secondary highways, Nielson Road as a light duty dirt road, Warbler Road as not extant, a drainage south of the Project, and one structure within the Project area. By 1959, the historic aerial shows the single structure within the Project area with the long side of the structure in a north-south orientation

By 1988, more structures appear along Phelan and Nielson roads, and an additional structure is shown within the Project area to the east of the previously identified structure. Warbler Road is not shown on either of the historic topographic maps. The next available aerial imagery is from 1994 (historicaerials.com). The original structure depicted in the 1950s is still present and one new structure to the east is visible. Structures are present on adjacent parcels including the Phelan Elementary School to the north and the Phelan Piñon Hills Community Services District building to the south. By 2012, both structures within the Project area are no longer extant.

On March 25, 2021, DUKE CRM received the results of a paleontological resource records search conducted by the San Bernardino County Museum (SBCM), Division of Earth Science. Review of geologic mapping of the region done by Dibblee and Minch (2002) indicates the proposed project is located on Quaternary alluvial gravel and canyon flood plains of Holocene age (*Qa*). Due to their young age (<11,700 years old) these sediments are considered low sensitivity for containing paleontological resources but have the potential to overlie high sensitivity deposits of Pleistocene age (2.5 million years ago to 11,700 years ago). Older Pleistocene deposits in the area have been found to be highly fossiliferous yielding the remains of ground sloths, bison, and horse. The nearest fossil locality is approximately 2.25 miles south, where localities SBCM 1.103.179, 1.103.180, and 1.103.181, yielded fossil remains of *Scincidae* (skink), *Sylvilagus* (cottontail rabbit), and *Leporidae* (rabbits and hares). In addition to the records search at the SBCM, Benjamin Scherzer, M.S., Paleontologist at DUKE CRM conducted a review of on-line and published literature on documented fossils localities in southern California. These searches did not produce any additional fossil localities within 3 miles of the Project.

DUKE CRM conducted an intensive cultural and paleontological resources pedestrian survey of the entire 20-acre Project area on April 6, 2021 with transects spaced no greater than 15 meters apart (see Attachment A, Aerial Map). Soil within the Project area is a 10YR 5/2 grayish brown, coarse sandy loam, with about 40 percent gravel density. The surface visibility was moderate (50 - 70 percent) with the ground surface sparsely obfuscated with indigenous desert vegetation such as Joshua tree, white bursage, Juniper, Mormon tea, California buckwheat, and teddy bear cholla. The cleared area in the western portion of the project provided excellent ground visibility; however, the eastern portion was moderate (see Attachment B, Project Photographs). No remains of the structures observed in the historic aerial photographs and historic topographic maps were found. There were no cultural or paleontological resources observed during the field survey.

DUKE CRM evaluated the proposed Project area for impacts to cultural and paleontological resources in compliance with CEQA. The Project is considered to have a low potential to impact prehistoric and historic cultural resources due to the fact that there are no known habitation or other sites within ½ mile and there are no permanent sources of water near the Project. Additionally, the Project has a low potential to impact paleontological resources given the young age of the surface sediments (Holocene) and the lack of fossils discovered near the Project. Therefore, it is not likely that any cultural or paleontological resources will be impacted by the Project. DUKE CRM does not recommend any additional work regarding cultural or paleontological resources.

If previously unidentified cultural or paleontological materials are un-earthed during Project development, work shall be halted in that area until a qualified archaeologist or paleontologist can assess the significance of the find. If human remains are encountered, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. The County Coroner must be notified of the find immediately. If the remains are determined to be prehistoric, the Coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), which will determine and notify a Most Likely Descendant (MLD). With the permission of the landowner or his/her authorized representative, the MLD may inspect the site of the discovery. The MLD shall complete the inspection within 48 hours of notification by the NAHC. The MLD may recommend scientific removal and nondestructive analysis of human remains and items associated with Native American burials.

Thank you for contacting DUKE CRM on this Project. If you have any questions or comments, you can contact me at (949) 356-6660, or by e-mail at curt@dukecrm.com.

Sincerely,

DUKE CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT, LLC



Curt Duke, M.A., RPA
President/Principal Archaeologist

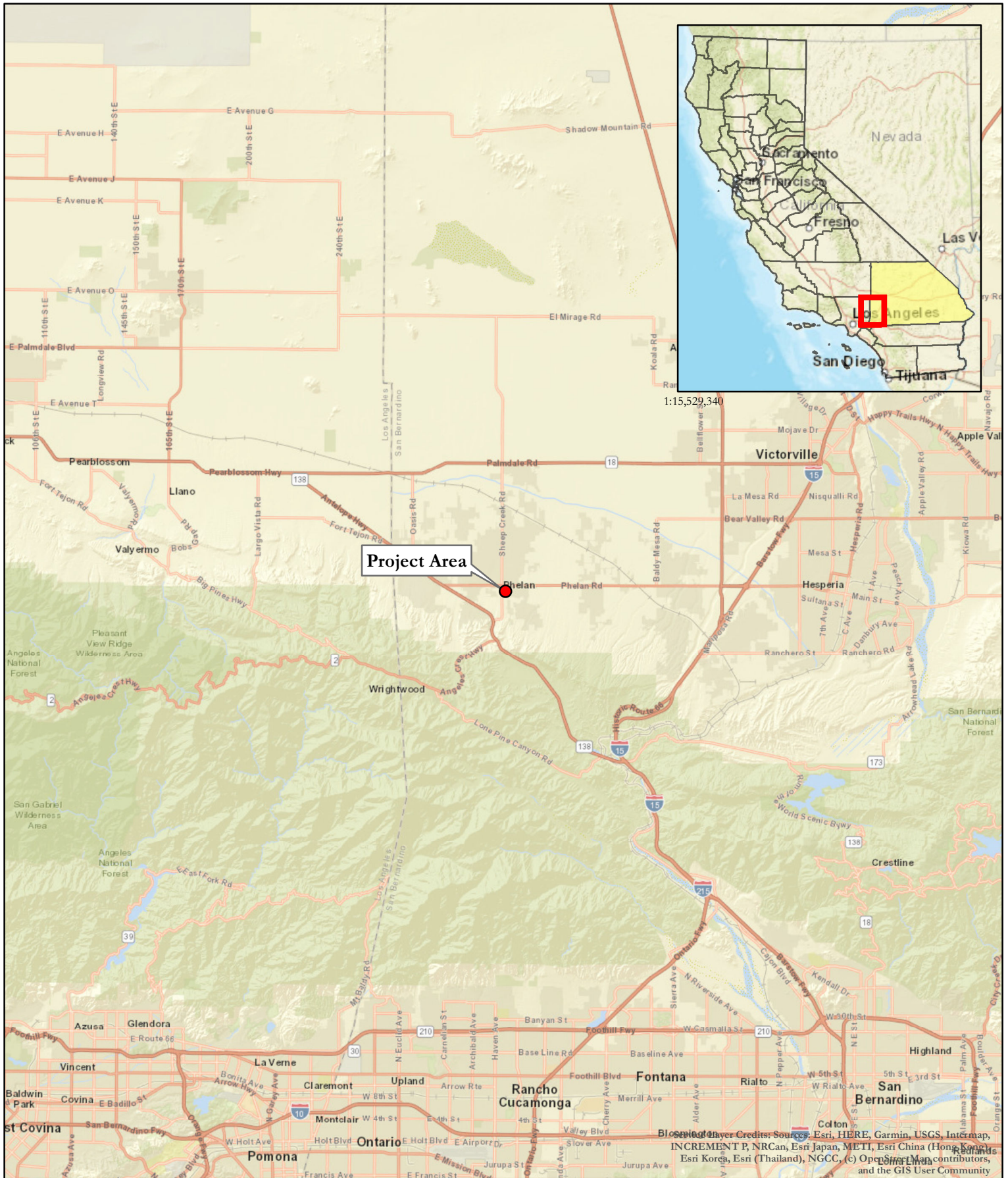
Attachments

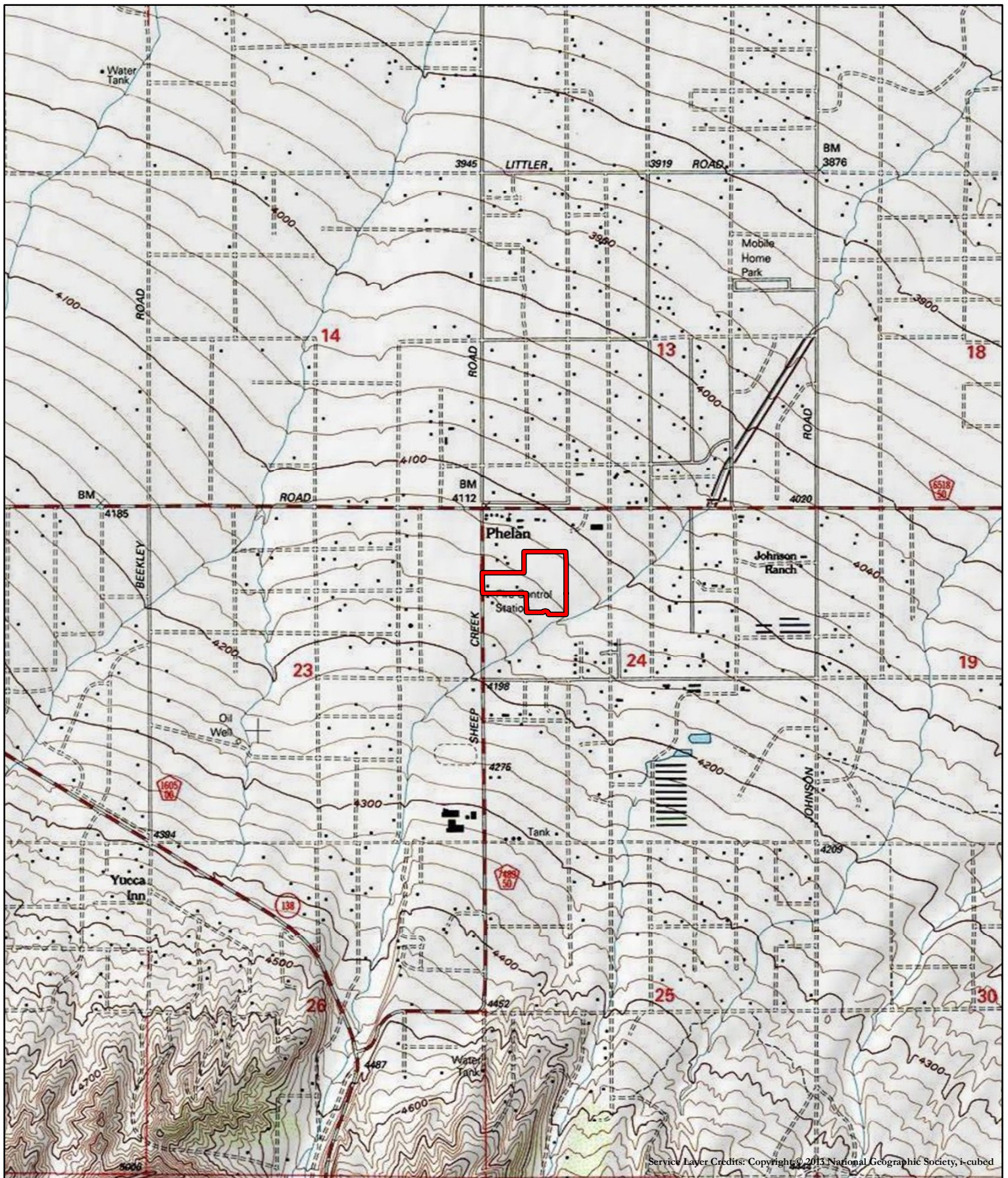
A: Project Maps

B: Project Photographs

ATTACHMENT A

PROJECT MAPS





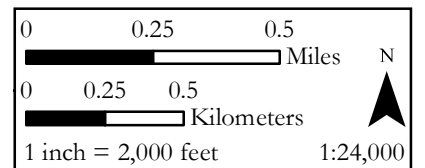
Map 2 - Project Location
Civic Center Development, Phelan, C-0352

Phelan, Calif USGS 7.5-Minute Quadrangle

Date of Map: 1956 - Revised 1996

T4N R7W Section 24

 Project Area



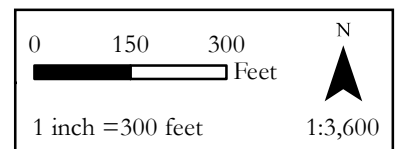
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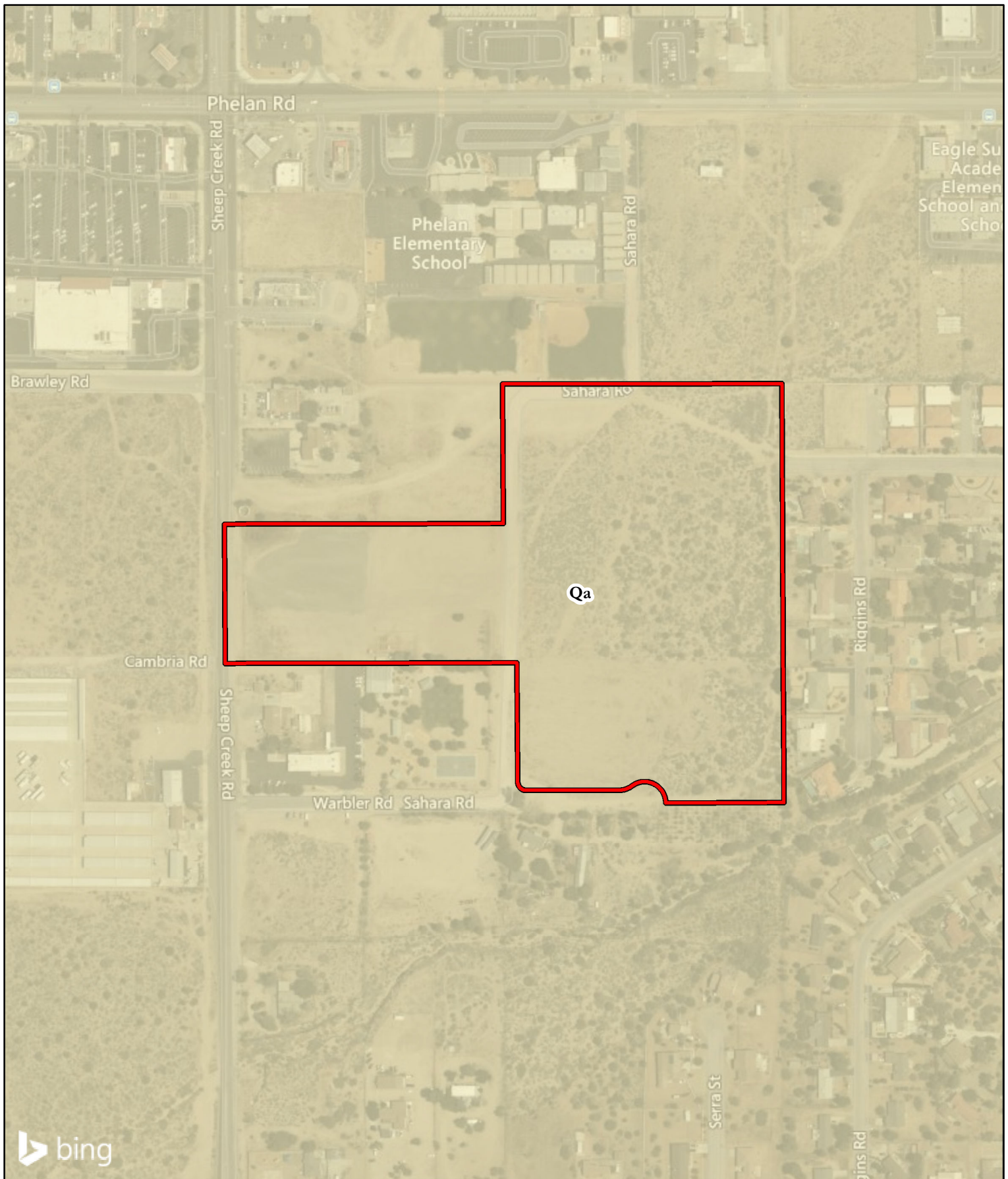


Map 3 - Project Aerial
Civic Center Development, Phelan, C-0352



 Project Area





Map 4 - Project Geology

Civic Center Development, Phelan, C-0352

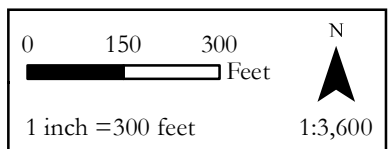


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Geology from Dibblee and Minch (2002):

Qa: Quaternary alluvial gravel and canyon flood plains, Holocene

 Project Area



ATTACHMENT B

PROJECT PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 1: Overview of Project from southwest corner. View to northeast.



Figure 2: Overview of Project from western edge, view to east .



Figure 3: Overview of Project from northwest corner, view to southeast.



Figure 4: Overview of Project from northern edge, view to south.



Figure 5: Overview of Project from southern edge, view to north.



Figure 6: Overview of Project from northeast corner, view to southwest.



Figure 7: Overview of Project from eastern edge, view to west.



Figure 8: Overview of Project from southeast corner, view to northwest.