

**WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY MULTIPLE
SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN
CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS AND BIOLOGY REPORT**

MEAD VALLEY WELLNESS VILLAGE PROJECT

RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

MSHCP PERMITTEE:

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

LSA

August 2023

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COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pacific Medical Buildings LLC (PMB) retained LSA to conduct a Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) consistency analysis and general biological study of the approximately 19.41-acre Mead Valley Wellness Villages Project (project) in unincorporated Riverside County, within Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 317-260-034-0. The site is bounded by Placentia Avenue followed by commercial uses to the northwest, north, and northeast; Harvill Avenue followed by vacant land to the east; and Water Street followed by commercial development to the southeast and undeveloped land to the south, commercial development to the southwest, and undeveloped land and a single-family residence to the west. The proposed project is located in unincorporated Riverside County, near the City of Perris. LSA conducted the study to address compliance with the MSHCP and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and for the identification of potential jurisdictional waters. Results of the MSHCP consistency analysis and general biological study are summarized below:

- The project site is within an MSHCP-designated Criteria Area, Criteria Cell #2529; however, conservation of the project parcel is not warranted.
- No aquatic resources subject to the jurisdiction of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) or California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) were found within the project site. No riparian habitat was found within the project site.
- The project site is not within an MSHCP-designated Criteria Area Species Survey Area (CASSA).
- The site does not contain riverine/riparian areas as defined in the MSHCP. The site does not contain fairy shrimp habitat or potential vernal pools; therefore, focused surveys will not be required for sensitive riparian bird or fairy shrimp species.
- The project site is within the MSHCP survey area for burrowing owl (BUOW) (*Athene cunicularia*); therefore, focused BUOW breeding season surveys (March 1–August 31) were conducted. No suitable BUOW burrows were observed, and no burrowing owl or their sign were observed during the focused BUOW survey. A pre-construction survey is required due to the presence of suitable habitat in the form of sparse, ruderal vegetation.
- The project site is not within an MSHCP Narrow Endemic Plant Species Survey Area (NEPSSA).
- The project site is not within an MSHCP-designated survey area for any other species and does not contain Delhi series soils. Therefore, no surveys for other species will be required.
- The project will not be subject to MSHCP Urban/Wildlands interface requirements because the site is not within or adjacent to an identified Conservation Area.
- The project site is within the MSHCP area and within the Stephens' kangaroo rat (SKR) Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) fee area but not within an SKR Reserve. Therefore, focused surveys for

SKR will not be required for this project and payment of the fee associated with the SKR HCP is required. The project site is not subject to any other adopted HCPs.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APN	Assessor's Parcel Number
ARL	additional reserve lands
BUOW	burrowing owl
CASSA	Criteria Area Species Survey Area
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CNDDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
County	County of Riverside
DBESP	Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation
FESA	Federal Endangered Species Act
GPS	global positioning system
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
I-215	Interstate 215
MSHCP	Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan
NEPSSA	Narrow Endemic Plant Species Survey Area
NRCS	National Resources Conservation Service
PMB	Pacific Medical Buildings LLC
project	Mead Valley Wellness Village Project
RCTLMA	Riverside County Transportation and Land Management Agency
SKR	Stephens' kangaroo rat
SR-74	State Route 74
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Pacific Medical Buildings LLC (PMB) retained LSA to conduct a Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) consistency analysis and general biological study for the Mead Valley Wellness Village Project (project). LSA conducted the study to address compliance with the MSHCP and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and to determine if there are any potential jurisdictional waters. The study included a site visit on August 4, 2023, by LSA biologist Denise Woodard.

1.1 PROJECT AREA

The project site is located within Section 13 of Township 4 South, Range 4 West, at the southwest corner of Placentia Avenue and Harvill Avenue in Perris, Riverside County, as depicted on the United States Geological Survey (USGS) *Perris, California* topographic quadrangle map (Figure 1; all figures are provided in Appendix A). The approximately 19.41-acre project area consists of Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 317-260-034-0. The project site is currently undeveloped. The site elevation ranges from 1,509 feet to 1,542 feet above mean sea level. Two soil types were identified within the project site: Gorgonio loamy sand, deep, 2 to 8 percent slopes; and Greenfield sandy loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes, eroded (NRCS 2019; Figure 2). Soil observed throughout the site appears to be consistent with this designation. However, undocumented artificial fill was noted as being present within the project site.

1.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project proposes to develop several buildings that would support a variety of behavioral health services. These facilities include a residential substance use treatment building, a building to provide services such as outpatient care, primary care, and adult mental health urgent care, a supportive housing building, a mental health rehabilitation center and crisis recovery treatment facility, a recovery residence, and a children's mental health urgent care/respice facility. The proposed project would also include outdoor areas and surface parking spaces.

1.3 GENERAL SETTING

The project site is bounded by Placentia Avenue followed by commercial uses to the northwest, north, and northeast; Harvill Avenue followed by vacant land to the east; and Water Street followed by commercial development to the southeast and undeveloped land to the south, commercial development to the southwest, and undeveloped land and a single-family residence to the west. The project site is located approximately 0.25 mile west of Interstate 215 (I-215) and approximately 2.6 miles north of State Route 74 (SR-74).

2.0 RESERVE ASSEMBLY ANALYSIS

2.1 CELL AND CRITERIA ANALYSIS

The MSHCP provides for the assembly of a Conservation Area consisting of Core Areas and Linkages for the conservation of covered species. The Conservation Area is to be assembled from portions of the MSHCP Criteria Area, which consist of quarter-section (i.e., approximately 160-acre) Criteria Cells, each with specific criteria for the species conservation within that cell.

The project site is within MSHCP Criteria Area #2529; therefore, a cell or criteria analysis is required and provided below (Figure 3). The following is a description of the conservation requirement for Criteria Cell #2529:

- Conservation within this Cell will contribute to assembly of Proposed Noncontiguous Habitat Block 4. Conservation within this Cell will focus on assembly of coastal sage scrub habitat. Areas conserved within this Cell will be connected to coastal sage scrub habitat proposed for conservation in Cell Group B to the west. Conservation within this Cell will range from 5%-15% of the Cell, focusing efforts in the western portion of the Cell.

Because the proposed project is located entirely within the eastern portion of Criteria Cell #2529, it will not reduce the conservation requirements of 5 to 15 percent conservation in the western portion of the cell; therefore, conservation of the project parcel is not warranted.

2.2 PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC LANDS ANALYSIS

The MSHCP reserve consists of 347,000 acres of public/quasi-public lands that are already conserved. These lands are made up of national forest, state parks, county parks, nature reserves, and BLM Lands.

The project site is not within or adjacent to public/quasi-public lands; therefore, no additional public/quasi-public land analysis is required. The project site is not located within or adjacent to MSHCP additional reserve lands (ARL) or non-MSHCP conservation easements.

3.0 VEGETATION

The project site is highly disturbed due to on-going discing and is within a rural setting. Based on historical aerial imagery, the project site was regularly mowed and/or disced from at least the late 1950s through the present.

As a result of regular discing, the vegetation on the project site consists of nonnative grassland and is described in detail below. A complete list of plant species observed on the site is included in Appendix B. Figure 3 shows vegetation communities/land cover and photograph locations. Site photographs are provided on Figure 4. Two native California fan palm (*Washingtonia filifera*) trees were present within the project site. Additionally, several nonnative trees were observed within the project site (e.g., Peruvian pepper tree [*Schinus molle*], olive [*Olea europaea*], and Chinese elm [*Ulmus parvifolia*]). Dominant plant species include Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), common Mediterranean grass (*Schismus barbatus*), riggut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), and London rocket (*Sisymbrium irio*).

4.0 PROTECTION OF SPECIES ASSOCIATED WITH RIPARIAN/RIVERINE AREAS AND VERNAL POOLS (MSHCP SECTION 6.1.2)

Section 6.1.2 of the MSHCP requires assessment of impacts to riparian habitats, riverine areas, and vernal pools, including focused surveys for sensitive riparian bird and fairy shrimp species when suitable habitat is present. The intent of the assessment requirement is to provide for the protection of resources used by MSHCP-covered species, as well as existing and future downstream conservation areas. Riverine/riparian areas and vernal pools are defined in Section 6.1.2 of the MSHCP as follows:

Riparian/Riverine Areas are lands which contain Habitat dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, or emergent mosses and lichens, which occur close to or which depend upon soil moisture from a nearby fresh water source; or areas with fresh water flow during all or a portion of the year.

Vernal pools are seasonal wetlands that occur in depression areas that have wetlands indicators of all three parameters (soils, vegetation and hydrology) during the wetter portion of the growing season but normally lack wetlands indicators of hydrology and/or vegetation during the drier portion of the growing season. Obligate hydrophytes and facultative wetlands plant species are normally dominant during the wetter portion of the growing season, while upland species (annuals) may be dominant during the drier portion of the growing season. The determination that an area exhibits vernal pool characteristics, and the definition of the watershed supporting vernal pool hydrology, must be made on a case-by-case basis. Such determinations should consider the length of the time the area exhibits upland and wetland characteristics and the manner in which the area fits into the overall ecological system as a wetland. Evidence concerning the persistence of an area's wetness can be obtained from its history, vegetation, soils, and drainage characteristics, uses to which it has been subjected, and weather and hydrologic records.

Fairy Shrimp. For Riverside, vernal pool, and Santa Rosa fairy shrimp, mapping of stock ponds, ephemeral pools and other features shall also be undertaken as determined appropriate by a qualified biologist.

With the exception of wetlands created for the purpose of providing wetland habitat or resulting from human actions to create open waters or from the alteration of natural stream courses, areas demonstrating characteristics as described above which are artificially created are not included in these definitions.

4.1 RIPARIAN/RIVERINE AREAS

4.1.1 Methods

The project site was assessed for riparian/riverine areas at the time of the August 4, 2023, site visit. The assessment included identification and mapping of plant communities on the site as well as any drainage features. The assessment also included a review of seasonally appropriate aerial photographs from Google Earth. (The photos covered these dates: May 1994, May 2002, June 2002, October 2003, November 2003, December 2003, January 2004, October 2005, December 2005, January 2006, August 2006, June 2009, November 2009, March 2011, June 2012, November 2012,

November 2013, April 2014, February 2016, October 2016, February 2018, August 2018, December 2018, August 2019, June 2020, August 2021, January 2023, and May 2023.)

4.1.2 Existing Conditions and Results

There are no drainage features or riparian vegetation on the project site; therefore, there are no areas that would meet the MSHCP definition of riparian/riverine areas.

4.2 VERNAL POOLS

4.2.1 Methods

The project site was assessed for the presence of potential vernal pools at the time of the August 4, 2023, site visit. The assessment included a search for depressions that may provide sufficient ponding of water to sustain hydrophytic vegetation and create hydric soil conditions during the growing season. The assessment also included a review of seasonally appropriate aerial photographs from Google Earth. The photos covered these dates: May 1994, May 2002, June 2002, October 2003, November 2003, December 2003, January 2004, October 2005, December 2005, January 2006, August 2006, June 2009, November 2009, March 2011, June 2012, November 2012, November 2013, April 2014, February 2016, October 2016, February 2018, August 2018, December 2018, August 2019, June 2020, August 2021, January 2023, and May 2023.

4.2.2 Existing Conditions and Results

No vernal pools were observed on the site. Low-lying areas that occur on site did not show signs of ponding or surface water and lacked hydrophytic vegetation. The soil mapped and observed on the site is sandy loam, which is unlikely to support ponding sufficient for vernal pool formation. No areas containing surface water were observed on historical aerial imagery.

4.3 FAIRY SHRIMP

4.3.1 Methods

The project site was assessed for fairy shrimp habitat at the same time and using the same methods as the assessment for vernal pools. The MSHCP calls for habitat assessments for three sensitive species of fairy shrimp: Santa Rosa Plateau fairy shrimp (*Linderiella santarosae*), Riverside fairy shrimp (*Streptocephalus woottoni*), and vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*). The Santa Rosa Plateau fairy shrimp occurs only on the Santa Rosa Plateau of extreme southwestern Riverside County. A fourth sensitive species of Southern California, the San Diego fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta sandiegonensis*), is found primarily in coastal areas of Orange and San Diego Counties. It has been found as far inland as the Wildomar area of southwest Riverside County but is not expected in the project area. These sensitive fairy shrimp species inhabit vernal pools as well as stock ponds, large road ruts, or other similar habitats that pond water long enough to allow growth and reproduction. To provide fairy shrimp habitat, a feature must regularly pond water for at least 18 days for vernal pool fairy shrimp (Eriksen and Belk 1999) and two months for Riverside fairy shrimp (USFWS 2012).

4.3.2 Existing Conditions and Results

As noted above, there are no vernal pools or low-lying areas that may function as vernal pools or depressions that hold water long enough to eliminate upland vegetation on the project site. No inundation on the site was seen in seasonally appropriate aerial photographs, and the sandy loam soil is porous and unsuitable for ponding of sufficient duration to provide habitat suitable for sensitive fairy shrimp species. Given these factors, the site does not have habitat suitable for sensitive fairy shrimp species, and no surveys are required.

4.4 RIPARIAN BIRDS

4.4.1 Methods

Habitat suitability for riparian birds, including the least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), and yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), was assessed in conjunction with the assessment for riverine/riparian areas.

4.4.2 Existing Conditions and Results

Riparian/riverine and/or any habitat suitable for riparian bird habitat is absent from the project site. Therefore, no surveys for riparian birds will be required.

5.0 PROTECTION OF NARROW ENDEMIC PLANT SPECIES (MSHCP SECTION 6.1.3)

Section 6.1.3 of the MSHCP requires focused surveys for specified sensitive plant species if the project is within a Narrow Endemic Plant Species Survey Area (NEPSSA) and suitable habitat is present.

The project site is not within an NEPSSA.

6.0 ADDITIONAL SURVEY NEEDS AND PROCEDURES (MSHCP SECTION 6.3.2)

MSHCP Section 6.3.2 requires surveys for additional plants, amphibians, small mammals, and burrowing owl (BUOW) for projects within mapped survey areas.

6.1 CRITERIA AREA PLANT SPECIES

The project is not within a mapped survey area for Criteria Area plant species; therefore, no surveys for Criteria Area plant species are required.

6.2 AMPHIBIANS

The project is not within a mapped survey area for amphibian species.

6.3 BURROWING OWL

BUOW is found in open, dry grasslands, agricultural and range lands, and desert habitats often associated with burrowing animals. It can also inhabit grass, forb, and shrub stages of pinyon and ponderosa pine habitats. It nests in abandoned burrows of ground squirrels or other animals, in pipes, under piles of rock or debris, and in other similar features.

The project site is located within the MSHCP BUOW survey area.

6.3.1 Methods

Habitat suitability for BUOW was assessed during the August 4, 2023, site visit. The assessment included an evaluation of soil texture, vegetative cover, topography, and the presence of mammal burrows, rock piles, or other areas suitable for nest construction. Due to the presence of suitable habitat within an MSHCP BUOW survey area, focused surveys were conducted.

The surveys were conducted by LSA biologists Denise Woodard, Stan Spencer, and Carla Cervantes in accordance with the *Burrowing Owl Survey Instructions for the Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Area County of Riverside Guidelines for Burrowing Owl Surveys* (revised March 29, 2006) (County of Riverside 2006). A total of four surveys were conducted from July 12 to August 4, 2023. Surveys were conducted during weather conducive to observing owls outside their burrows and to detecting burrowing owl sign. No rain had occurred within 5 days prior to the site visits. The surveys were conducted by walking approximately 30-meter transects, where feasible, throughout areas of suitable habitat to look for burrowing owls, potential burrows (i.e., burrows greater than 11 centimeters in diameter and 150 centimeters deep), and burrowing owl sign. Potential burrows encountered during the survey were mapped using a handheld global positioning system (GPS) unit and examined for owl sign (e.g., feathers, pellets, whitewash, and prey remnants). Privately owned parcels located outside the project site and off-site work areas were surveyed using binoculars from public rights-of-way and advantageous viewpoints.

Table 6.A provides names of LSA biologists conducting the surveys, dates, times, and weather conditions of the site visits.

Table 6.A: Focused Survey Dates, Times, and Weather Conditions

Survey	Personnel	Date (2022)	Time (24-Hour) (Start/Finish)	Temp. (°F) (Start/Finish)	Wind (mph)	Sky
Burrow Survey, Burrowing Owl Survey 1	Carla Cervantes	July 12	0515/0700	69/75	1	5% cloud cover
Burrowing Owl Survey 2	Stan Spencer	July 19	0552/0752	73/79	1	0% cloud cover
Burrowing Owl Survey 3	Denise Woodard	July 28	0545/0740	69/76	1-3	2% cloud cover
Burrowing Owl Survey 4	Denise Woodard	August 4	0600/0800	60/67	1-3	0% cloud cover

Source: Compiled by LSA (2023).

*F = degrees Fahrenheit

mph = miles per hour

6.3.2 Existing Conditions and Results

The site consists of low-growing ruderal vegetation, is mostly devoid of trees, and contains suitable substrate for ground squirrel burrows. No burrowing owls or burrowing owl sign were found to be present within the survey area. One ground squirrel burrow was observed within the survey area but was deemed unsuitable due to the diameter and presence of overgrown vegetation. Additionally, there was no signs of burrowing owl use.

There is marginally suitable habitat for burrowing owl adjacent to the east, south, and west of the project site because these areas are undeveloped and consist of ruderal vegetation similar to the project site. However, based on historic aerial imagery, vegetation within those areas appears to be regularly disced/mowed since at least the late 1950s and these activities are currently on-going. No burrowing owls, their signs, or suitable burrows were observed within the 500-foot buffer.

Since the project site is suitable for burrowing owl and burrowing owl could occupy the site prior to construction, a pre-construction burrowing owl survey will be required within 30 days prior to ground disturbance. The project proponent will need to inform the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) immediately if burrowing owl is found during the pre-construction survey. The burrowing owl survey report is included as Appendix C.

6.3.3 Impacts and Mitigation

Since suitable habitat is present, a pre-construction survey for burrowing owl will be required within 30 days prior to any ground-disturbing activities to avoid take of burrowing owls and occupied burrowing owl nests (MSHCP Species Specific Objective 6). If survey results are negative for burrowing owls during the 30 day pre-construction survey, project activities can proceed.

If survey results are positive and burrowing owl is found within the project site, the project proponent will need to inform the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) immediately. An experienced biologist will need to verify if any burrowing owls within the project site are breeding or wintering and a non-disturbance buffer no less than 500 feet will be implemented and centered on burrow(s) utilized. Burrowing owls should be allowed to leave the project site on their own accord if possible. Additional avoidance and minimization measures are not anticipated to be required by the wildlife resources agencies if non-

disturbance buffers are maintained and burrowing owl are allowed to leave on their own accord. If burrowing owls cannot be avoided, a determination of biologically equivalent or superior preservation (DBESP) will need to be prepared and submitted to the CDFW and USFWS for approval prior to ground-disturbing activities. Additionally, a Burrowing Owl Protection and Relocation Plan will need to be prepared detailing passive (use of one way doors and collapse of burrows) and/or active (capturing owls, relocating to a new site, and collapse of burrows) relocation methods. The Burrowing Owl Protection and Relocation Plan will need to be submitted to the CDFW and USFW for approval prior to initiating ground disturbance within the project site. Take of active burrowing owl nests shall be avoided during the nesting season (March 1-August 31). If burrowing owls are observed within the project site at any time during project activities, the wildlife agencies shall be notified immediately. Additional avoidance and minimization measures could be required by the wildlife resource agencies during the notification/document review process (e.g., exclusionary buffers, monitoring, or implementation of appropriate mitigation strategy).

6.4 MAMMALS

The project is not within a mapped survey area for mammals.

7.0 INFORMATION ON OTHER SPECIES

7.1 DELHI SANDS FLOWER-LOVING FLY

The MSHCP requires surveys for the Delhi sands flower-loving fly (*Rhaphiomidas terminatus abdominalis*) in most areas of mapped Delhi series soils where suitable habitat exists (MSHCP Section 9).

The project site is not within an area of mapped Delhi soils, and the soil mapped and observed throughout the site is sandy loam, which is inconsistent with Delhi soils; therefore, no survey or additional analysis is required for this species.

7.2 SPECIES NOT ADEQUATELY CONSERVED

Some species that will eventually have full coverage under the MSHCP are not considered adequately conserved until the requirements indicated in Table 9-3 of MSHCP Section 9 are met.

7.2.1 Methods

A literature review was conducted to investigate the potential occurrence of special-status species on the project site or in the vicinity. California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) records for the USGS *Lakeview*, *San Jacinto*, *Winchester*, and *Hemet, California* quadrangles, which encompass an area with a radius of at least 3 miles around the project site, were searched on August 2, 2023, using RareFind 5 (CDFW 2023).

7.2.2 Existing Results

None of the species listed in MSHCP Table 9-3, which lists species that have not met the MSHCP definition of a covered species, have been reported within 3 miles of the project site. Additionally, none of the MSHCP Table 9-3 species was observed during the site visit.

8.0 GUIDELINES PERTAINING TO THE URBAN/WILDLANDS INTERFACE (MSHCP SECTION 6.1.4)

To preserve the integrity of areas described as existing or future MSHCP Conservation Areas, the guidelines contained in MSHCP Section 6.1.4 (Urban Wildlands Interface Guidelines) are to be implemented for projects adjacent to either existing conservation or land described for conservation in the MSHCP Criteria Area.

The project site is not adjacent to conserved lands or lands in a Criteria Area described for conservation. Therefore, the Urban Wildlands Interface Guidelines do not apply to this project.

9.0 POTENTIAL JURISDICTIONAL WATERS AND STREAMBEDS

No drainage features, ponded areas, or riparian habitat potentially subject to jurisdiction by the CDFW or United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) were found within the project site.

The findings and conclusions presented in this report, including the location and extent of wetlands and other waters subject to regulatory jurisdiction, represent the professional opinion of LSA. These findings and conclusions should be considered preliminary until verified by the USACE and the CDFW.

10.0 NESTING BIRDS

During the bird breeding season (typically February 1 through August 31), electrical distribution poles and large trees on or adjacent to the project site may be used by hawks, ravens, or other large birds for nesting. Trees, shrubs, and other vegetation may provide nest sites for smaller birds, and burrowing owls may nest in ground squirrel burrows, pipes, or similar features. Most birds and their active nests are protected from “take” (meaning destruction, pursuit, possession, etc.) under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and/or Sections 3503 through 3801 of the California Fish and Game Code. Activities that cause destruction of active nests, or that cause nest abandonment and subsequent death of eggs or young, may constitute violations of one or both of these laws.

Project activities should be avoided during the nesting bird season (February 1 through August 31), if possible. If unable, a pre-construction nesting bird survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than 3 days prior to any construction activities and vegetation removal. Should nesting birds be found, an exclusionary buffer will be established by the qualified biologist. The buffer will be clearly marked in the field by construction personnel under guidance of the qualified biologist. No construction activities will be allowed within this zone until the qualified biologist determines that the young have fledged or the nest is no longer active.

11.0 CEQA COMPLIANCE

11.1 ADOPTED HABITAT CONSERVATION PLANS

Section 10(a)(2)(A) of the 1973 Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) requires the preparation of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for incidental take of threatened or endangered species when there is no federal agency involvement in a project. Continuing land development may cause incidental take of listed species; therefore, HCPs have been prepared for areas within western Riverside County. The MSHCP and the Stephens' kangaroo rat (SKR) HCP are the principal habitat conservation plans in western Riverside County. The USFWS regional office maintains a current list of HCPs for the Southern California region.

The project site is within the MSHCP area and within the SKR HCP fee area but not within an SKR Reserve. Therefore, focused surveys for SKR will not be required for this project and a fee associated with the SKR HCP is required. Additionally, payment of the MSHCP Local Development Mitigation Fee is required. The project site is not subject to any other adopted HCPs.

11.2 THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

The USFWS and the CDFW may list species as threatened or endangered under the FESA and California Endangered Species Acts (CESA). The USFWS can designate critical habitat that identifies specific areas, either occupied or unoccupied, that are essential to the conservation of a listed species. Critical habitat areas may require special management considerations or protections. The USFWS and the CDFW have issued permits for the take of most threatened and endangered species within the MSHCP area. The MSHCP covers impacts to these species. However, if a project has the involvement of a federal agency, that agency is required to address impacts to listed species and critical habitat by consulting with the USFWS. The USFWS has indicated in the permit issued for the MSHCP that, in such cases, the consultation will be expedited and no restrictions will be imposed on the project beyond those specified in the MSHCP.

No critical habitat occurs on the project site. Three federal and/or State-listed species have been reported within 3 miles of the project site according to CNDDDB records: Crotch bumblebee (*Bombus crotchii*), coastal California gnatcatcher (*Poliioptila californica*), and Stephens' kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys stephensi*). Table 11.A describes the habitat requirements for three species, along with an assessment of habitat and the likelihood of the species occurring on the site.

11.3 OTHER SPECIAL-STATUS SPECIES

Other special-status species may occur on the project site. The CDFW, USFWS, and other State, federal, and local agencies maintain lists of species they consider to be in need of monitoring. Legal protection for special-status species varies widely.

Table 11.A: Threatened and Endangered Species

Species	Status	MSHCP Habitat	Blooming Period/Activity Period	Occurrence Probability
Invertebrates				
<i>Bombus crotchii</i> Crotch bumblebee	US: - CA: SCE MSHCP: NC	Nectars on <i>Antirrhinum</i> , <i>Phacelia</i> , <i>Clarkia</i> , <i>Dendromecon</i> , <i>Eschscholzia</i> , and <i>Eriogonum</i> in coastal California east to the Sierra-Cascade crest and south into Mexico.	Spring and summer	Not Expected. None of the preferred nectar species were documented within the project site. Additionally, the high level of disturbance (discing and invasive species competition) precludes these nectar species.
Birds				
<i>Poliioptila californica</i> Coastal California gnatcatcher	US: FT CA: SSC MSHCP: C	Inhabits coastal sage scrub in low-lying foothills and valleys up to about 500 meters (1,640 feet) in elevation in cismontane southwestern California and Baja California.	Year-round	Low. Suitable habitat (riversidian sage scrub) is not present within the project site. However, high-value habitat desired by this species occurs approximately 0.15 mile west of the project site.
Mammals				
<i>Dipodomys stephensi</i> Stephens' kangaroo rat	US: FE CA: ST MSHCP: C	Found in plant communities transitional between grassland and coastal sage scrub, with perennial vegetation cover of less than 50%. Most commonly associated with <i>Artemisia tridentata</i> , <i>Eriogonum fasciculatum</i> , and <i>Erodium</i> . Requires well-drained soils with compaction characteristics suitable for burrow construction (neither sandy nor too hard). Not found in soils that are highly rocky or sandy, less than 20 inches deep, or heavily alkaline or clay, or in areas exceeding 25% slope. Occurs only in western Riverside County, northern San Diego County, and extreme southern San Bernardino County, below 915 meters (3,000 feet) in elevation. In northwestern Riverside County, known only from east of Interstate 15. Reaches its northwest limit in south Norco, southeastern Riverside, and in the Reche Canyon area of Riverside and extreme southern San Bernardino Counties.	Year-round, nocturnal	Not Expected. None of the occurrences documented within 3 miles of the project site (CNDDDB), have been recorded within the last 20 years. Additionally, the site is unsuitable because of its high level of disturbance.

Sources: California Natural Diversity Database (CDFW 2023)

US: Federal Classifications

- FT = Listed as threatened
- FE = Listed as endangered

CA: State Classifications

- SSC = Species of Special Concern. Refers to animals with vulnerable or seriously declining populations.
- ST = Listed as threatened
- SCE = State Candidate for Endangered

Western Riverside County MSHCP Status

- NC = Species is not covered under the MSHCP.
- C = Species is covered and adequately conserved under the MSHCP.

CA = California

CNDDDB = California Natural Diversity Database

MSHCP = Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan

US = United States

Eight special-status species have been reported as occurring within 3 miles of the project site but are adequately conserved under the MSHCP; therefore, the likelihood of the species occurring on the site is not analyzed in this report. Those species adequately conserved under the MSHCP include red-diamond rattlesnake (*Crotalus ruber*), orange-throated whiptail (*Aspidoscelis hyperythra*), western spadefoot (*Spea hammondi*), coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), California horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris actia*), southern California rufous-crowned sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps*), smooth t11-3arplant (*Centromadia pungens* ssp. *laevis*), and long-spined spineflower (*Chorizanthe polygonoides* var. *longispina*).

No species that are not covered under the MSHCP were documented within 3 miles of the project site.

11.4 WILDLIFE MOVEMENT, CORRIDORS, AND NURSERY SITES

Wildlife movement includes seasonal migration along corridors and daily movements for foraging. Migration corridors may include areas of unobstructed movement of deer, riparian corridors providing cover for migrating birds, routes between breeding waters and upland habitat for amphibians, and areas between roosting and feeding areas for birds.

The project site does not contain any essential connectivity areas, natural landscape blocks, natural areas small or potential riparian connections, as documented in the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project report (Spencer et al. 2010). Therefore, the study area is not considered a wildlife movement corridor under the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project. No SC Wildlands linkages or MSHCP linkages are defined within the project site boundaries (RCTLMA 2003, SC Wildlands 2021).

The project site is bordered by existing paved roads and development within adjoining properties that restrict wildlife movement in the project vicinity. Although there is additional undeveloped land to the south of the property that is smaller in size than the project site, it also is bordered by existing development on all sides except for that which it shares with the project site. Wildlife movement within the project site is anticipated to be limited to wildlife present on site or within the nonnative grasslands to the adjoining south and east of the project site. Neither the site nor the adjacent properties to the south or east connect with larger contiguous segments of land that could offer opportunities for wildlife movement or act as a corridor. The proposed project would not substantially limit wildlife movement.

11.5 NATURAL COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST

Riparian habitats, oak woodlands, and vernal pools are among the natural communities of interest to the CDFW.

Plant communities and land covers present on site are limited to ruderal vegetation, which are not considered natural communities of interest. Therefore, impacts to natural communities of interest will not occur on site.

11.6 WETLANDS

Wetland areas are not present on site.

11.7 LOCAL POLICIES AND ORDINANCES PROTECTING BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The Riverside County General Plan and development ordinances includes policies governing biological resources. Riverside County's Oak Tree Management Guidelines, County Ordinance No. 559, and General Plan Policies Open Space (OS) 9.3 and 9.4 regulate tree removal.

As noted above, the project contains two native California fan palm trees. The project will not conflict with local policies or ordinances applicable to biological resources because the two trees are not superior examples of native trees as they are isolated from other trees and occur among ruderal vegetation. Furthermore, the two trees are ornamental in the landscape they occur in and are also not native to the habitat type they exist in.

11.8 INDIRECT EFFECTS

Indirect impacts to surrounding areas as a result of the project may include, but are not limited to, increased dust, noise, lighting, traffic, and stormwater runoff. Because of the projects location within a landscape that is already highly disturbed or developed, substantial indirect impacts to sensitive biological resources are not anticipated.

11.9 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Project construction will contribute to the incremental loss of nonnative grassland in the region, including potential habitat for some special-status species (e.g., burrowing owl). The MSHCP provides a comprehensive approach to the regional conservation of these habitats and, as a regional plan, serves to provide mitigation for cumulative impacts to covered species. Project compliance and consistency with the MSHCP ensure that any cumulative impacts to covered species are effectively mitigated. Special-status species that are not covered by the MSHCP also benefit from the surveys, conservation, and other measures of the MSHCP because they occupy many of the same habitats.

12.0 REFERENCES

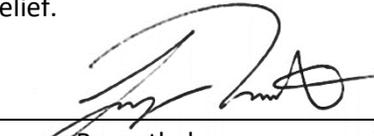
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13.0 CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that the statements furnished in this report present the data and information required for this biological evaluation and that the facts, statements, and information presented are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date: August 21, 2023

Signature: _____

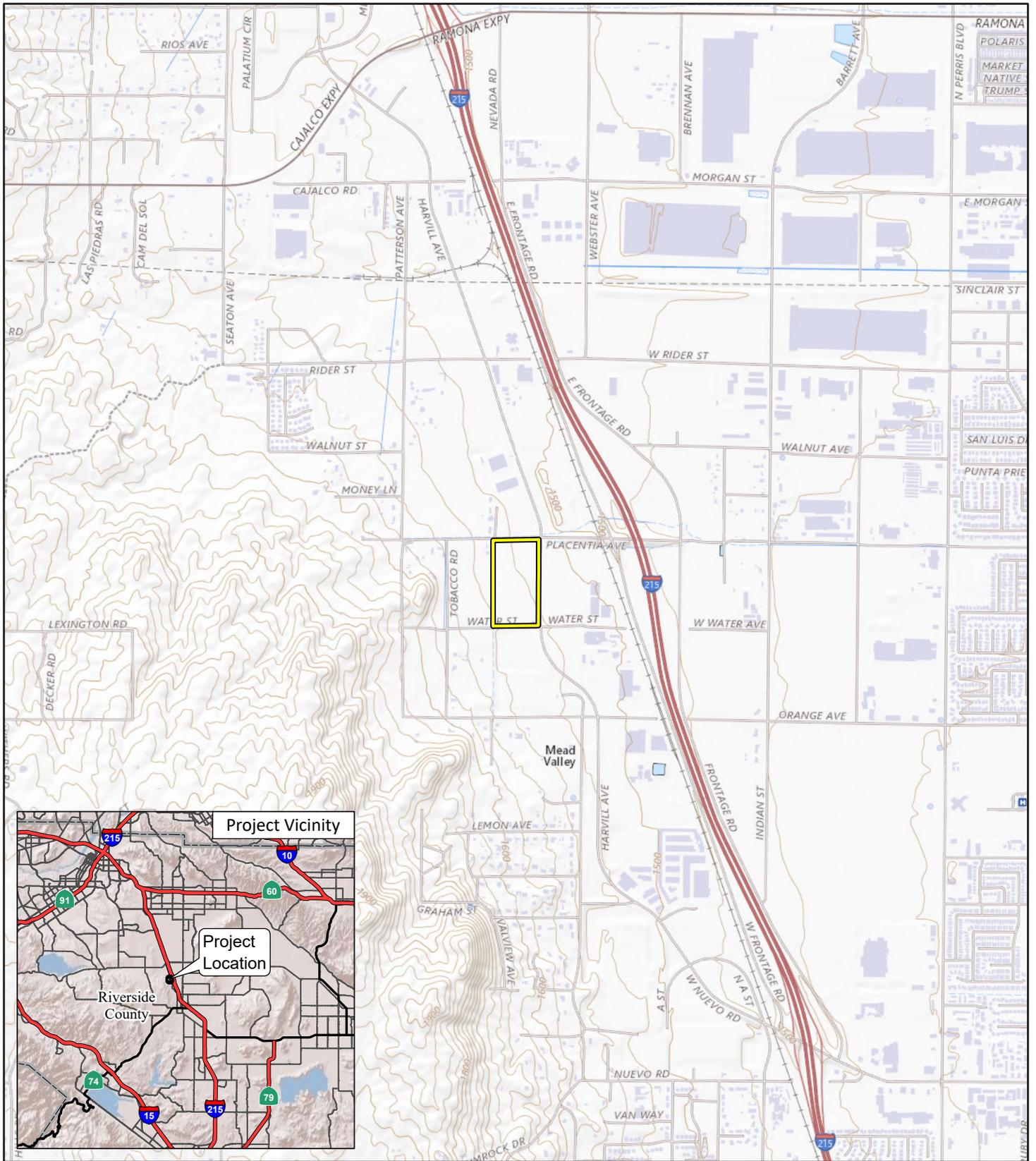


Jeremy Rosenthal
Biologist

APPENDIX A

FIGURES 1–4

- Figure 1: Regional and Project Location
- Figure 2: Soils
- Figure 3: Vegetation and Photo Locations
- Figure 4: Representative Site Photos



 Project Location

FIGURE 1

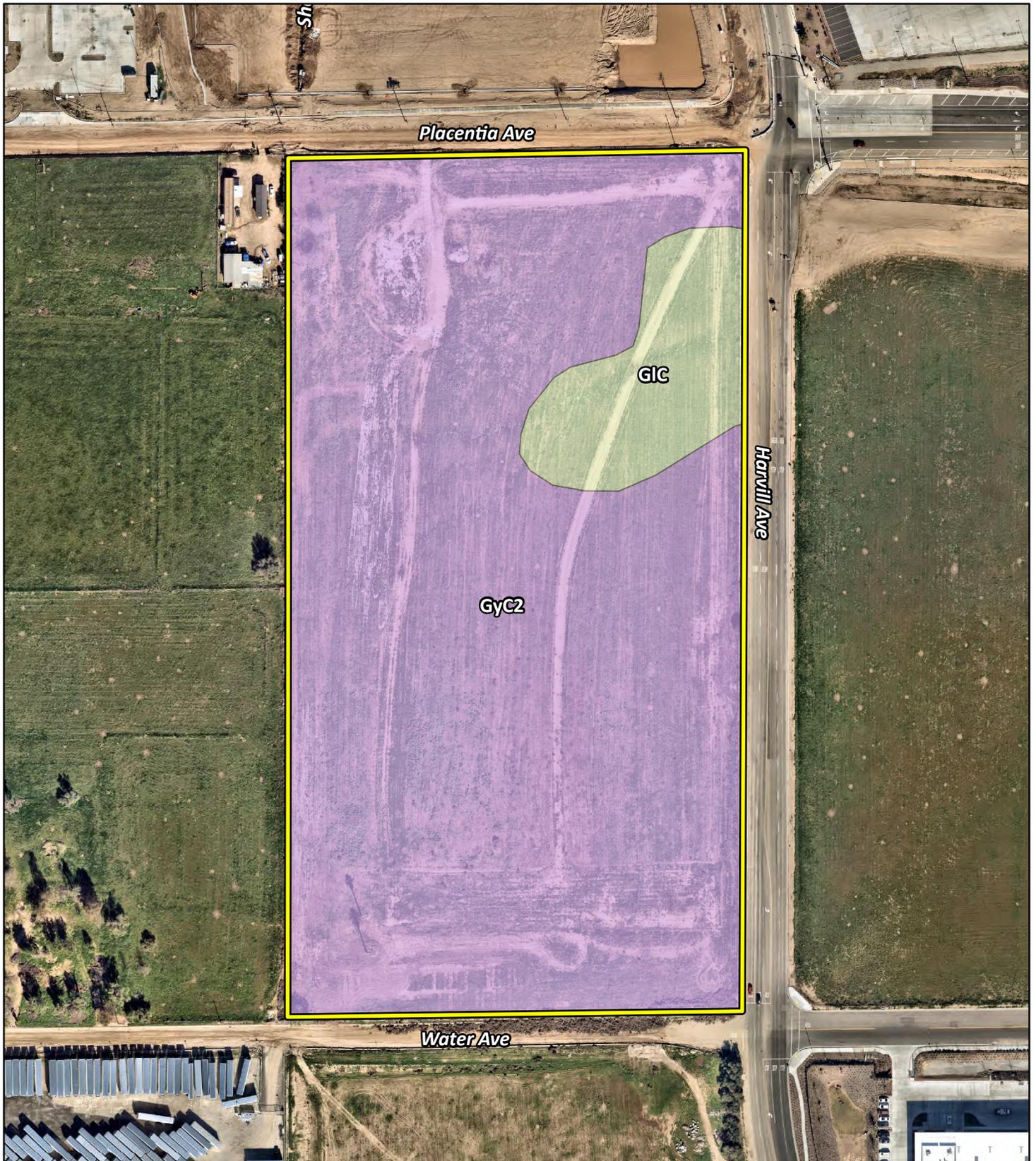
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SOURCE: USGS The National Map (2023)

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Mead Valley Wellness Village
Regional and Project Location



LSA

 Project Location

Soils

 GIC - Gorgonio loamy sand, deep, 2 to 8 percent slopes

 GyC2 - Greenfield sandy loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes, eroded

FIGURE 2

Mead Valley Wellness Village
Soils

SOURCE: Google Imagery (2022), USDA NRCS (2023)

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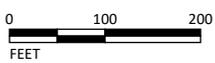
LSA

Project Location

Vegetation

Ruderal

Photo Point



SOURCE: Nearmap (2023)

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FIGURE 3

Mead Valley Wellness Village
Vegetation and Photo Locations



Photo 1: Looking southwest from the northeast corner of the project site. August 4, 2023.



Photo 2: Looking northwest from the southeast corner of the project site. August 4, 2023.



Photo 3: Looking northeast from the southwest corner of the project site. August 4, 2023.



Photo 4: Looking southeast from the northwest corner of the project site. August 4, 2023.

APPENDIX B

PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES OBSERVED

LSA biologists observed the following species in the specified study area.

* Introduced species that are not native to California

EUDICOTS

Asteraceae

Ambrosia acanthicarpa
Erigeron canadensis
*Lactuca serriola**
*Oncosiphon piluliferum**
*Pseudognaphalium luteoalbum**
*Sonchus oleraceus**

Brassicaceae

*Hirschfeldia incana**
*Sisymbrium irio**

Chenopodiaceae

*Salsola tragus**

Euphorbiaceae

Croton setiger
*Ricinus communis**

Geraniaceae

*Erodium sp.**

Lamiaceae

Trichostema lanceolatum

Oleaceae

*Olea europaea**

Solanaceae

*Nicotiana glauca**

Ulmaceae

*Ulmus parvifolia**

Sunflower Family

Annual bur-sage
Canadian horseweed
Prickly lettuce
Stinknet
Jersey cudweed
Common sow thistle

Mustard Family

Shortpod mustard
London rocket

Saltbush Family

Russian thistle

Spurge Family

Dove weed
Castor bean

Geranium Family

Stork's bill

Mint Family

Vinegar weed

Olive Family

Olive

Nightshade Family

Tree tobacco

Elm Family

Chinese elm

MONOCOTS

Arecaceae

Washingtonia filifera

Poaceae

*Avena sp.**

*Bromus diandrus**

*Bromus rubens**

*Hordeum murinum**

*Schismus barbatus**

Palm Family

California fan palm

Grass Family

Oat

Ripgut brome

Red brome

Mouse barley

Common Mediterranean grass

BIRDS

Anatidae

Branta canadensis

Columbidae

Zenaida macroura

Accipitridae

Buteo jamaicensis

Pyrocephalus rubinus

Tyrannus vociferans

Tyrannus verticalis

Corvidae

Corvus corax

Alaudidae

Eremophila alpestris actia

Hirundinidae

Stelgidopteryx serripennis

Hirundo rustica

Aegithalidae

Psaltriparus minimus

Sturnidae

*Sturnus vulgaris**

Alaudidae

Eremophila alpestris actia

Passeridae

*Passer domesticus**

Fringillidae

Haemorhous mexicanus

Spinus psaltria

Swans, Geese, and Ducks

Canada goose

Pigeons and Doves

Mourning dove

Kites, Hawks, and Eagles

Red-tailed hawk

Vermilion flycatcher

Cassin's kingbird

Western kingbird

Crows and Ravens

Common raven

Larks

California horned lark

Swallows

Northern rough-winged swallow

Barn swallow

Bushtits

Bushtit

Starlings

European starling

Larks

California horned lark

Old World Sparrows

House sparrow

Finches

House finch

Lesser goldfinch

Passerellidae

Melospiza crissalis

Icteridae

Icterus cucullatus

MAMMALS

Sciuridae

Spermophilus beecheyi

Geomyidae

Thomomys bottae

Leporidae

Lepus californicus deserticola

Sylvilagus audubonii

New World Sparrows

California towhee

Blackbirds, Orioles, and Allies

Hooded oriole

Squirrels

California ground squirrel

Pocket gopher

Botta's pocket gopher

Rabbits and Hares

Black-tailed jackrabbit

Desert cottontail

APPENDIX C

BURROWING OWL SURVEY REPORT



CARLSBAD
CLOVIS
IRVINE
LOS ANGELES
PALM SPRINGS
POINT RICHMOND
RIVERSIDE
ROSEVILLE
SAN LUIS OBISPO

August 21, 2023

Ben Rosenfeld
Pacific Medical Buildings LLC
3394 Carmel Mountain Road, Suite 200
San Diego, CA 92121

Subject: Results of a Burrowing Owl Survey for the Mead Valley Wellness Village Project in Perris, Riverside County, California (LSA Project No. PMB2201)

Dear Mr. Rosenfeld:

This report documents the results of a burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) survey for the Mead Valley Wellness Village Project (project). The approximately 20-acre project is located at the southwestern corner of Harvill Avenue and Placentia Avenue in an unincorporated community within Riverside County, California (Figure 1; all figures attached).

The survey results were negative for burrowing owl because no owls, their sign, or suitable burrows were observed during the survey.

BACKGROUND

Burrowing owls are found in open, dry grasslands; agricultural and range lands; desert habitats; and grass, forb, and shrub stages of pinyon and ponderosa pine habitats. They nest in abandoned burrows of ground squirrels or other animals, in pipes, rock and debris piles, and in other similar features.

Burrowing owls and their nests and eggs are protected from “take” under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3800 of the California Fish and Game Code. Activities that cause destruction of active nests, or that cause nest abandonment and subsequent death of eggs or young, may constitute violations of these laws.

Burrowing owl is a Species of Special Concern as designated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and is a covered species under the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). In addition, the MSHCP has established survey areas for burrowing owl where focused surveys are required if suitable habitat is determined to be present.

SURVEY AREA

The area surveyed with transects (Figure 2) is approximately 20 acres and includes the entire project site, which is potentially suitable for burrowing owl. The entire project site is within the MSHCP burrowing owl survey area. The topography of this area is relatively flat with slight topographic changes. The site elevation ranges from 1,509 to 1,542 feet above mean sea level. Vegetation within the project site is undeveloped and highly disturbed due to ongoing discing of the project site. The site is bordered by Placentia Avenue followed by commercial development to the north, Harvill

Avenue followed by undeveloped areas to the east, and Water Street followed by undeveloped areas to the south and a single-family residential home along with undeveloped areas to the west.

Vegetation and land cover on the site are primarily dense and ruderal in nature (Figure 2). There are only two native trees present within the project site, both of which were California fan palm (*Washingtonia filifera*). Additionally, several nonnative trees were observed within the project site, such as Peruvian pepper tree (*Schinus molle*), olive (*Olea europaea*), and Chinese elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*). Dominant plant species within ruderal vegetation include Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), common Mediterranean grass (*Schismus barbatus*), ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), and London rocket (*Sisymbrium irio*). There are no other plant communities on the site. Areas mapped as developed consist of areas containing man-made structures, paved roads, and well-traveled dirt roads that do not allow for the establishment of vegetation. Figure 3 shows recent photographs of on-site conditions.

METHODS

The surveys were conducted by LSA biologists according to the *County of Riverside Guidelines for Burrowing Owl Surveys* (revised March 29, 2006). Four surveys were conducted from July 12 to August 4, 2023. The surveys were conducted by walking approximately 30-meter-wide transects throughout areas of suitable habitat to look for burrowing owls, potential burrows (burrows greater than 11 centimeters in diameter and 150 centimeters deep), and burrowing owl sign. Burrows encountered during the survey were examined for owl sign (e.g., feathers, pellets, whitewash, and prey remnants). Burrows with presence of burrowing owl sign and/or burrowing owls were to be recorded using a handheld global positioning system (GPS) unit and mapped onto an aerial photograph. Potential habitat within 500 feet of the site was surveyed using binoculars.

Table A provides the names of the LSA biologists who conducted the surveys as well as the dates, times, and weather conditions of the site visits. Surveys were conducted during weather conducive to observing owls outside their burrows and to detecting burrowing owl sign. No rain had occurred within 5 days prior to the site visits.

Table A: Focused Survey Dates, Times, and Weather Conditions

Survey	Personnel	Date (2023)	Time (24-Hour) (Start/Finish)	Temperature (°F) (Start/Finish)	Wind (mph)	Sky
Burrow Survey, Burrowing Owl Survey 1	Carla Cervantes	July 12	0515/0700	69/75	1	5% cloud cover
Burrowing Owl Survey 2	Stan Spencer	July 19	0552/0752	73/79	1	0% cloud cover
Burrowing Owl Survey 3	Denise Woodard	July 28	0545/0740	69/76	1-3	2% cloud cover
Burrowing Owl Survey 4	Denise Woodard	August 4	0600/0800	60/67	1-3	0% cloud cover

Source: Compiled by LSA (2023).
 °F = degrees Fahrenheit
 mph = miles per hour

RESULTS

Wildlife species detected during the survey included Canada goose (*Branta canadensis*), mourning dove (*Zenaidura macroura*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), vermilion flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus obscurus*), Cassin's kingbird (*Tyrannus vociferans*), western kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*), California horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris actia*), northern rough-winged swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*), barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), bushtit (*Psaltriparus minimus*), northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), lesser goldfinch (*Spinus psaltria*), California towhee (*Melospiza crissalis*), hooded oriole (*Icterus cucullatus*), California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*), Botta's pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*), black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus deserticola*), and desert cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*).

No burrowing owls, burrowing owl sign, or burrows or similar features suitable for burrowing owl occupation were found to be present within the survey area.

DISCUSSION

Since suitable habitat is present, a pre-construction survey for burrowing owl will be required within 30 days prior to any ground-disturbing activities to avoid take of burrowing owls and occupied burrowing owl nests (MSHCP Species Specific Objective 6). If survey results are negative for burrowing owls during the 30 day pre-construction survey, project activities can proceed.

If survey results are positive and burrowing owl is found within the project site, the project proponent will need to inform the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) immediately. An experienced biologist will need to verify if any burrowing owls within the project site are breeding or wintering and a non-disturbance buffer no less than 500 feet will be implemented and centered on burrow(s) utilized. Burrowing owls should be allowed to leave the project site on their own accord if possible. Additional avoidance and minimization measures are not anticipated to be required by the wildlife resources agencies if non-disturbance buffers are maintained and burrowing owl are allowed to leave on their own accord. If burrowing owls cannot be avoided, a determination of biologically equivalent or superior preservation (DBESP) will need to be prepared and submitted to the CDFW and USFWS for approval prior to ground-disturbing activities. Additionally, a Burrowing Owl Protection and Relocation Plan will need to be prepared detailing passive (use of one way doors and collapse of burrows) and/or active (capturing owls, relocating to a new site, and collapse of burrows) relocation methods. The Burrowing Owl Protection and Relocation Plan will need to be submitted to the CDFW and USFW for approval prior to initiating ground disturbance within the project site. Take of active burrowing owl nests shall be avoided during the nesting season (March 1-August 31). If burrowing owls are observed within the project site at any time during project activities, the wildlife agencies shall be notified immediately. Additional avoidance and minimization measures could be required by the wildlife resource agencies during the notification/document review process (e.g., exclusionary buffers, monitoring, or implementation of appropriate mitigation strategy).

If you have any questions concerning the report, I can be contacted at (909) 678-1357 or carla.cervantes@lsa.net.

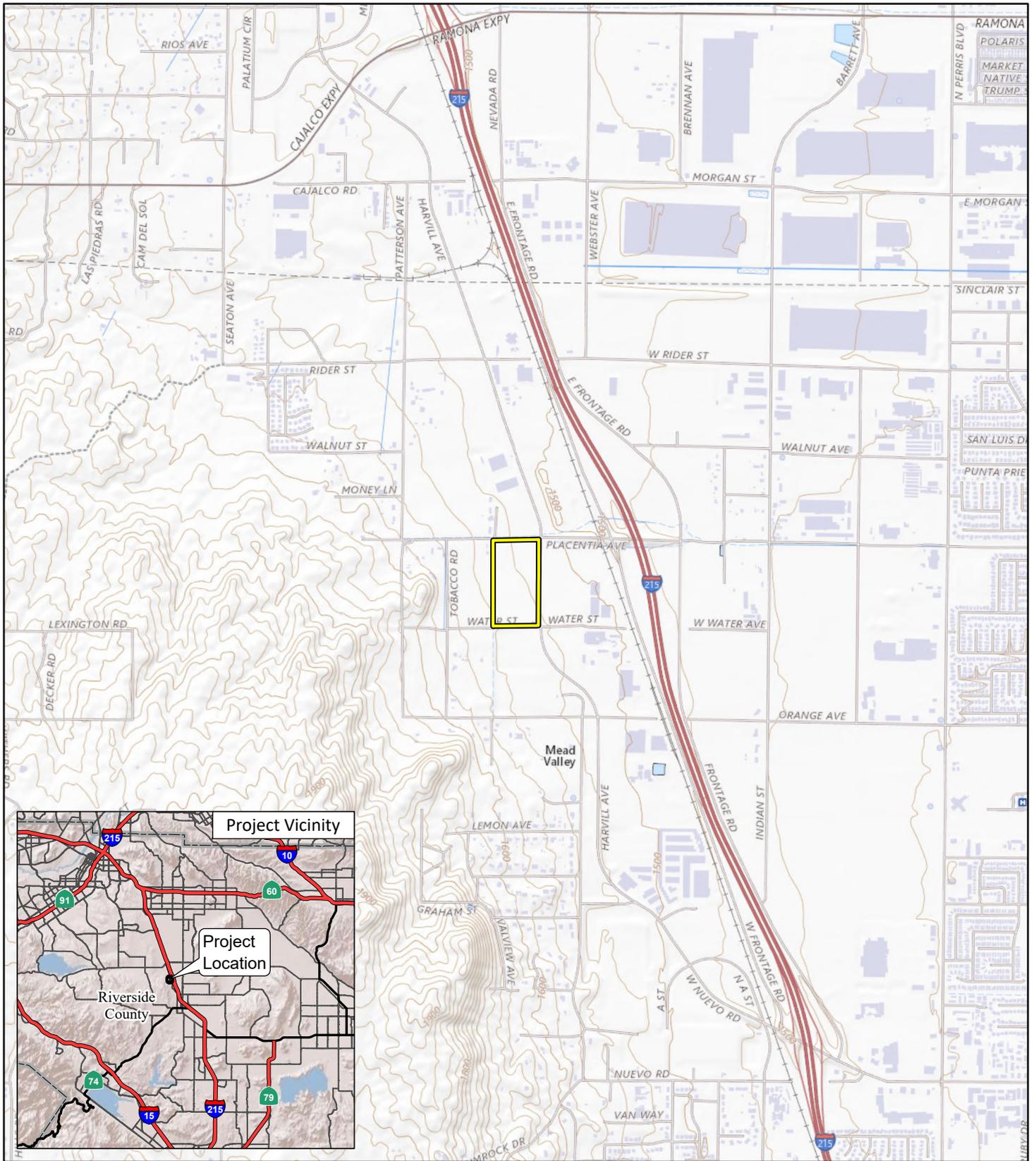
Sincerely,

LSA Associates, Inc.



Carla Cervantes
Assistant Biologist

Attachments: Figure 1: Regional and Project Location
Figure 2: Survey Results and Vegetation Map
Figure 3: Site Photographs



 Project Location

FIGURE 1

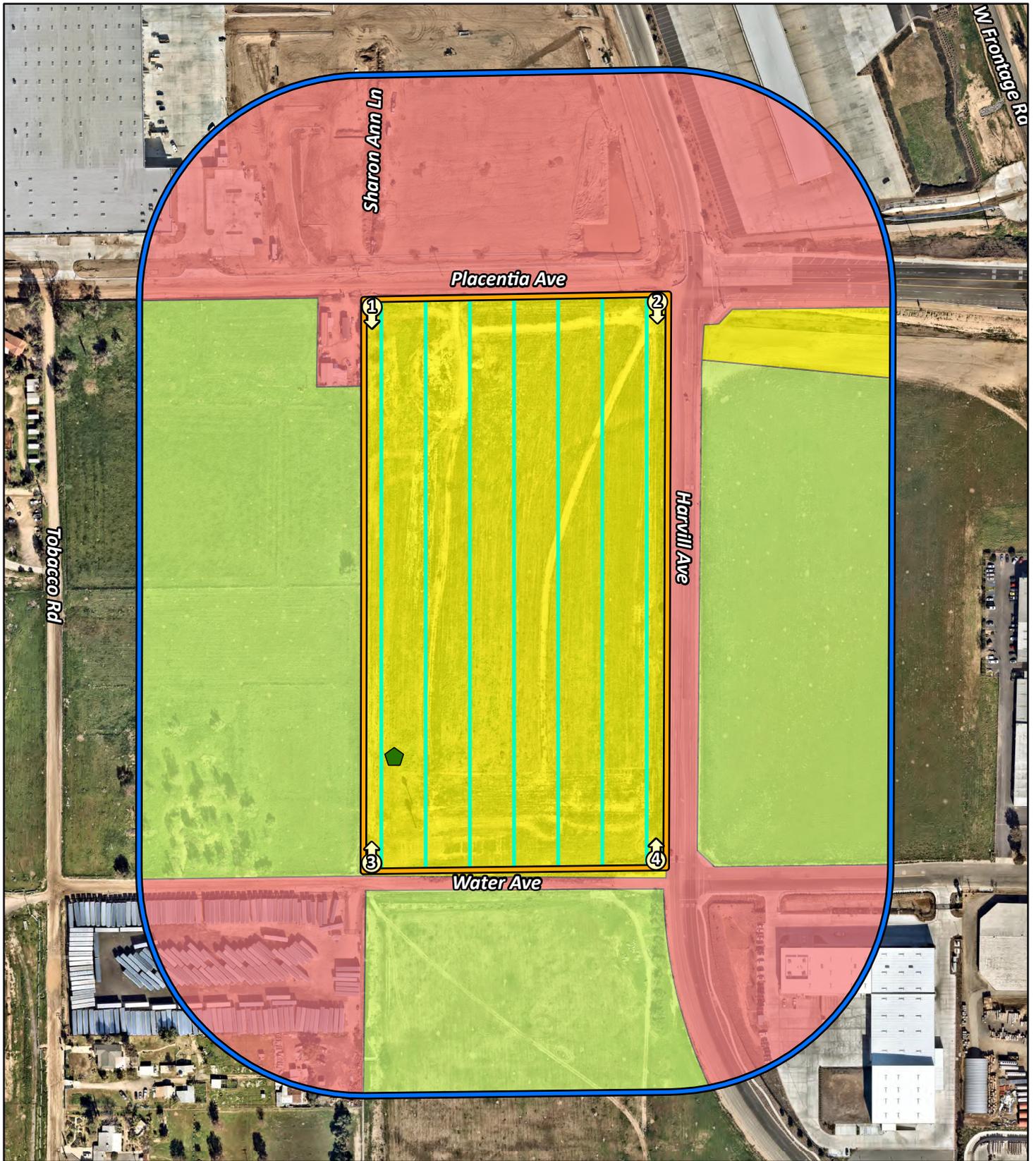
LSA



SOURCE: USGS The National Map (2023)

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Mead Valley Wellness Village
Regional and Project Location



LSA

-  Project Location
-  500-ft Buffer of Project Location
-  30-m Transect
-  Photo Point
-  Potential Burrowing Owl Burrow

- Vegetation
-  Developed
 -  Ruderal
 -  Ruderal/Non-native Grassland

FIGURE 2



0 150 300
FEET

SOURCE: Nearmap (2023)

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Mead Valley Wellness Village
Survey Results and Vegetation



Photo 1. View of ruderal habitat and Chinese elm in the northwestern portion of the project site, facing south.



Photo 2. View of ruderal habitat and Harvill Avenue in the northeastern portion of the project site, facing south.



Photo 3. View of ruderal habitat in the southwestern portion of the project site, facing north.



Photo 4. View of ruderal habitat in the southeastern portion of the project site, facing north.