BURROWING OWL SURVEY REPORT
FOR THE
BARKER BUSINESS PARK PROJECT

Prepared for:
APPLIED PLANNING, Inc.
11762 De Palma Road, 1-C 310
Corona, CA 92883

Prepared by:

HARMSWORTH ASSOCIATES
31964 Silk Vine Drive
Winchester, CA 92596
(951) 223-3073

June 2024

BARKER BUSINESS PARK PROJECT

Burrowing owl survey

APN – 305-050-0055, 305-050-0051

An approximately 26-Acre Property,
Total Area Surveyed: 87 acres (including adjacent buffer area)

PROJECT SITE LOCATION
U.S.G.S. 7.5-minute Perris topographic quandrangle in SECTION 18 of TOWNSHIP 4 SOUTH, RANGE 3 WEST

Prepared for:
Applied Planning, Inc.
11762 De Palma Road, 1-C 310
Corona, CA 92883

Prepared by:
Harmsworth Associates
31964 Silk Vine Drive
Winchester, CA 92596
(951) 223-3073

Principal Investigator
Paul Galvin, M.S.

Surveys conducted by:
Paul Galvin
Surveys conducted on:
22 and 29 March, 27 April and 17 May 2024

Report date: 5 June 2024

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the statements furnished in the attached exhibits 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.

HARMSWORTH ASSOCIATES
Paul Galvin, M.S.
Vice President

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Barker Business Park Project site is located within the city of Perris, Riverside County, California (Figure 1). The entire project area is within the western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) area and therefore requires compliance with the plan.

This report summarizes the results of focused surveys for burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) conducted in spring 2024 at the project site, as per Section 6.3.2 of the Western Riverside County MSHCP.

1.1 Proposed Project

The proposed Barker Business Park Project (Project) proposes the development of a currently vacant site with two separate complementary uses providing rental, lease, sale, and maintenance of heavy equipment and commercial trailers. Access to the Project would be provided by driveways onto E Frontage Road, which bisects the site. The Project would also construct all site-adjacent roadway improvements as required by the Specific Plan, and/or the City of Perris. As part of the Project, E Frontage Road would be upgraded and improved from a Collector to an Arterial. Parking would be provided pursuant to City parking requirements.

The proposed project consists of the development of approximately the entire 25.6-acre site. There are no proposed off-site development areas.

All areas to be developed by the Project or otherwise disturbed by Project development activities were surveyed in spring 2024, and are the subject of this report.

1.2 Site Description

The Barker Business Park Project site is located in Riverside County, California (Figure 1). The site is west of the I-215, north of west Placentia Avenue, south of Walnut Avenue and is bisected by the I-215 freeway East Frontage Road (Figures 2 and 3). The site is within Section 18 of Township 4 South and Range 3 West of the Perris, California, United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle (Figure 1).

The entire Barker Business Park Project site consists of approximately 25.6 acres of undeveloped land, located within the city limits. The project site has been significantly impacted due to years of disturbance, trash, off-road trails and footpaths. The site slopes gently from northwest to southeast and topography varies from an elevation of approximately 1,489 feet above msl along the northwestern boundary to 1,468 feet above

msl along the southeastern boundary of the site (Figure 3). The I-215 freeway East Frontage Road bisected the site.

The site has a Mediterranean type climate, with hot dry summers, relatively cool winters and sparse rains. Annual precipitation for the region averages 11.5 inches, and average annual temperature ranges from 48^0 to 78^0 F. Rainfall during the 2023/2024 season was above normal throughout southern California.

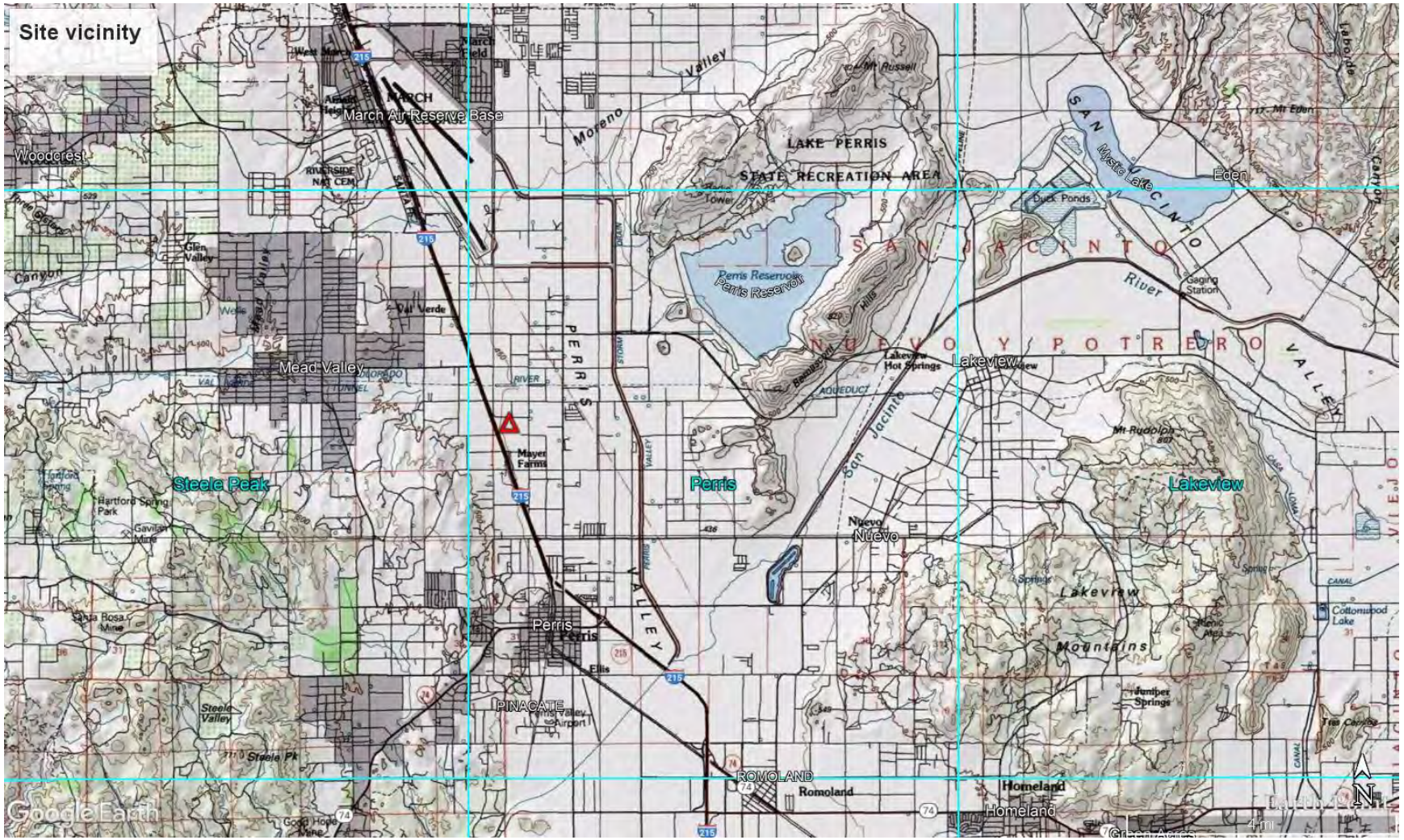


Figure 1: Location of the Barker Business Park Project site in Riverside County, California. Source: USGS Topographical quadrant: Riverside West.

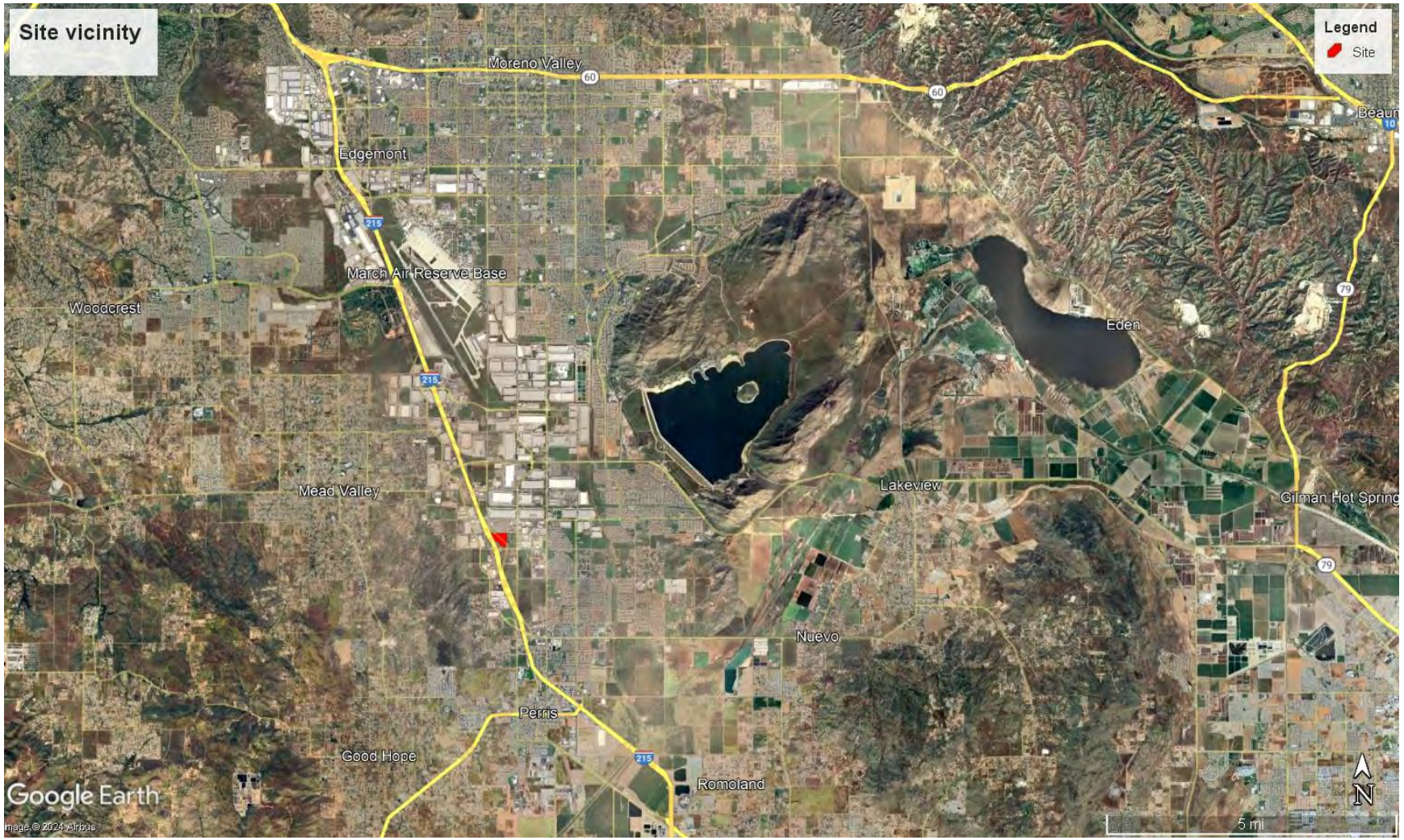


Figure 2: Location of the Barker Business Park Project site (in red). Source: Google Earth, Inc.

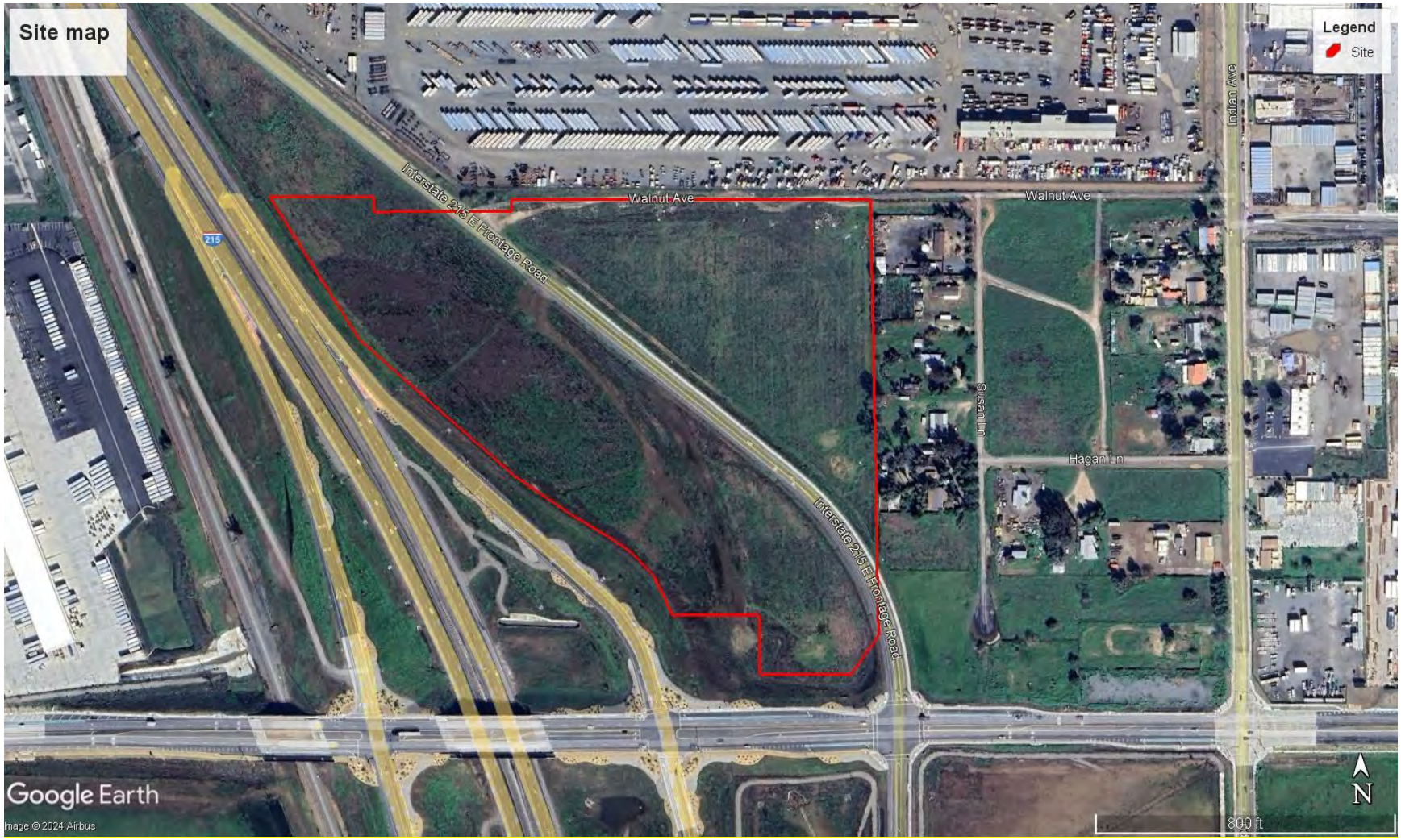


Figure 3: Barker Business Park Project site (in red). Source: Google Earth, Inc.

2.0 METHODS

Burrowing owls occur in shortgrass prairies, grasslands, lowland scrub, agricultural lands (particularly rangelands), prairies, coastal dunes, desert floors, and some artificial, open areas as a yearlong resident. They require large open expanses of sparsely vegetated areas on gently rolling or level terrain with an abundance of active small mammal burrows. As a critical habitat feature, they require the use of rodent or other burrows for roosting and nesting cover. They can also use pipes, culverts, and nest boxes (USFWS 2003, Haug *et al.* 1993, Zeiner *et al.* 1990).

Prior to conducting fieldwork previous results of wildlife surveys and habitat assessments in the project area were reviewed. Potential burrowing owl habitat occurs throughout the entire site and all areas of the site were included in the survey.

Focused burrowing owl surveys at the project site were conducted following the MSHCP burrowing owl survey instructions (County of Riverside 2006). The survey area consisted of the project site and a buffer area of 150 meters outside the entire extent of the site boundary, where possible. Adjacent areas in residential yards or inaccessible due to freeway right-of-way were surveyed via binoculars only. All these areas were surveyed a total of 4 times. Focused burrowing owl surveys were conducted on 22 and 29 March, 27 April and 17 May 2024 by Paul Galvin (Table 1, Figure 4).

Surveys were conducted during the morning hours (approximately from 1 hour before sunrise to 3 hours after sunrise). All surveys were conducted during good weather conditions (not too hot and no or only light winds).

The survey methods consisted of scanning all open areas and suitable habitat with binoculars prior to walking through that area. The biologist then conducted pedestrian walking surveys through all areas (except inaccessible areas in the Riverside Municipal Airport). The walking transects were spaced to ensure 100% visual coverage of the ground surface. The exact distance between transect lines varied depending on topography and vegetation but was generally no more than 75 feet. All open areas, banks, rodent burrows and any other area likely to support owl burrows were checked.

Table 1: **Survey conditions during burrowing owl surveys.**

Date	Biologist	Time	%Cloud cover	Temp (^{0}F)	Wind speed (mph)	Area surveyed	BUOW
3/22/24	PG	6.30-9.30	10-0	52-70	1-2	Project site and 150m buffer area	None
3/29/24	PG	6.30-9.00	80-40	52-60	1-4	Project site and 150m buffer area	None
4/27/24	PG	5.00-9.00	0-0	55-75	2-4	Project site and 150m buffer area	None
5/17/24	PG	5.00-9.00	100-80	56-78	0-2	Project site and 150m buffer area	None

PG = Paul Galvin

Figure 4: Burrowing owl survey area (yellow and shading) at the Barker Business Park Project site (in red), including buffer survey area. Approximate survey routes consisted of walking transects spaced approximately 75 feet apart. Source: Google Earth, Inc.

3.0 RESULTS

No burrowing owls or their sign were detected during the surveys and there was no evidence that any burrowing owls occur onsite. In addition, this species has not been recorded from the project site in the past (CNDDB 2024, Dudek and Associates 2003).

All areas of the site could be considered as burrowing owl habitat (Figure 4) since it is undeveloped. However, vegetation in 2024 (due to high rainfall) was very dense, consisting of tall weeds and grasses, with few open or unvegetated areas. These types of habitats are not ideal for burrowing owl. The site was disked in early May, 2024.

Burrowing owls are presumed absent from the site.

A few California ground squirrels (*Otospermophilus* beecheyi) were present onsite and created a small number of burrows. Burrows large enough to potentially support burrowing owls were mapped (Figure 5). Mapped locations typically represent multiple burrows or one burrow with multiple entrances. None of these burrows within the project site showed any evidence of owl occupancy. One old pipe was present near the ground squirrel burrows but it was not occupied by burrowing owl.

Figure 5: Potential owl burrows at the Barker Business Park Project site (in red). Source: Google Earth, Inc.

4.0 REFERENCES

California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB) 2024. Riverside West USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle.

County of Riverside 2006. Burrowing owl survey instructions for the Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Area. 29 March 2006.

Dudek and Associates 2003. Species accounts. *In*: Understanding the plants and animals of the Western Riverside County MSHCP. http://ecoregion.ucr.edu//list_head.asp

Haug, E. A., B. A. Millsap, and M. S. Martell. 1993. Burrowing Owl (*Speotyto cunicularia*). In The Birds of North America, No. 130 (A. Poole and F. Gill, Eds.). Philadelphia: The Academy of Natural Sciences; Washington, D.C.: The American Ornithologists' Union.

Riverside County Integrated Project 2003. Western Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) http://www.rcip.org/draft_mshcp_2_toc.htm

USFWS 2003. Status assessment and conservation plan for the western burrowing owl in the United States. Biological Technical Publication. BTP-R6001-2003.

Zeiner, D. C., W., F. Laudenslayer, Jr., K. E. Mayer, M. White. Editors. 1990. California's Wildlife. Volume 2. Birds. State of California, Department of Fish and Game. Sacramento, California. 731 pp.

5.0 APPENDICES

5.1 Appendix A: Wildlife species detected at the Barker Business Park Project site.

FAMILY/SPECIES NAME	COMMON NAME
AVES	**BIRDS**
COLUMBIDAE	**PIGEONS AND DOVES**
Columba livia	Rock Pigeon
Streptopelia decaocto	Eurasian Collared-Dove
Zenaida macroura	Mourning Dove
TROCHILIDAE	**HUMMINGBIRDS**
Calypte anna	Anna's Hummingbird
ACCIPITRIDAE	**HAWKS, KITES, EAGLES, AND ALLIES**
Buteo jamaicensis	Red-tailed Hawk
FALCONIDAE	**CARACARAS AND FALCONS**
Falco sparverius	American Kestrel
TYRANNIDAE	**TYRANT FLYCATCHERS**
Tyrannus vociferans	Cassin's Kingbird
Tyrannus verticalis	Western Kingbird
Sayornis nigricans	Black Phoebe
Sayornis saya	Say's Phoebe
CORVIDAE	**JAYS AND CROWS**
Corvus corax	Common Raven
HIRUNDINIDAE	**SWALLOWS**
Stelgidopteryx serripennis	Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Hirundo rustica	Barn Swallow
MIMIDAE	**MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS**
Mimus polyglottos	Northern Mockingbird
STURNIDAE	**STARLINGS**
Sturnus vulgaris	European Starling
PASSERIDAE	**OLD WORLD SPARROWS**
Passer domesticus	House Sparrow
FRINGILLIDAE	**FRINGILLINE AND CARDUELINE FINCHES AND ALLIES**
Haemorhous mexicanus	House Finch
PASSERELLIDAE	**TOWHEES AND SPARROWS**
Zonotrichia leucophrys	White-crowned Sparrow
Passerculus sandwichensis	Savannah Sparrow
Melospiza melodia	Song Sparrow

ICTERIDAE	**BLACKBIRDS**
Sturnella neglecta	Western Meadowlark
Agelaius phoeniceus	Red-winged Blackbird
PARULIDAE	**WOOD-WARBLERS**
Geothlypis trichas	Common Yellowthroat
MAMMALIA	**MAMMALS**
LEPORIDAE	**RABBITS & HARES**
Sylvilagus audubonii	Desert Cottontail
CANIDAE	**FOXES, WOLVES & RELATIVES**
Canis latrans	Coyote
FELIDAE	**CATS**
*Felis catus**	Feral Cat
SCIURIDAE	**SQUIRRELS, CHIPMUNKS & MARMOTS**
Otospermophilus beecheyi	California Ground Squirrel

Sources:

Invertebrates: Powell and Hogue (1979) and Hogue 1993.

Butterflies: NatureServe, http://www.natureserve.org/explorer/

Fish: NatureServe, http://www.natureserve.org/explorer/

Reptiles and amphibians: North American Herpetology (NAH) nomenclature updates: http://www.naherpetology.org/nameslist

Birds: American Ornithologists' Union Checklist of North American Birds - 7th Edition (2017): http://www.aou.org/checklist/index.php3

Mammals: Baker, R. J., L. C. Bradley, R. D. Bradley, J. W. Dragoo, M. D. Engstrom, R. S. Hoffmann, C. A. Jones, F. Reid, D. W. Rice, and C. Jones. 2003. Revised Checklist of North American Mammals North of Mexico. Museum of Texas Tech University. OP-229. http://www.nsrl.ttu.edu/pubs/opapers.htm

Common names: Grenfell, W. E., M. D. Parisi, and D. McGriff. 2003. Complete List of Amphibians, Reptiles, Birds and Mammals in California. California Department of Fish and Game & California Interagency Wildlife Task Group. http://www.dfg.ca.gov/whdab/pdfs/species_list.pdf; and Perrins, C. M, and A. L. A. Middleton (Eds.). 1983. The Encyclopedia of Birds. Andromeda Oxford Limited. 463pp.

Special Status Designations + : California Department of Fish and Game, California Natural Diversity Database (August 2023): http://www.dfg.ca.gov/whdab/html/cnddb.html

5.2 Appendix B: Barker Business Park Project site photographs 2024.

Photograph 1: Northwestern corner of site looking south, January 2024.

Photograph 2: Southwestern area of site looking north, January 2024.

Photograph 3: Southern boundary of site looking north, January 2024.

Photograph 4: Southeastern corner of site looking north, January 2024.

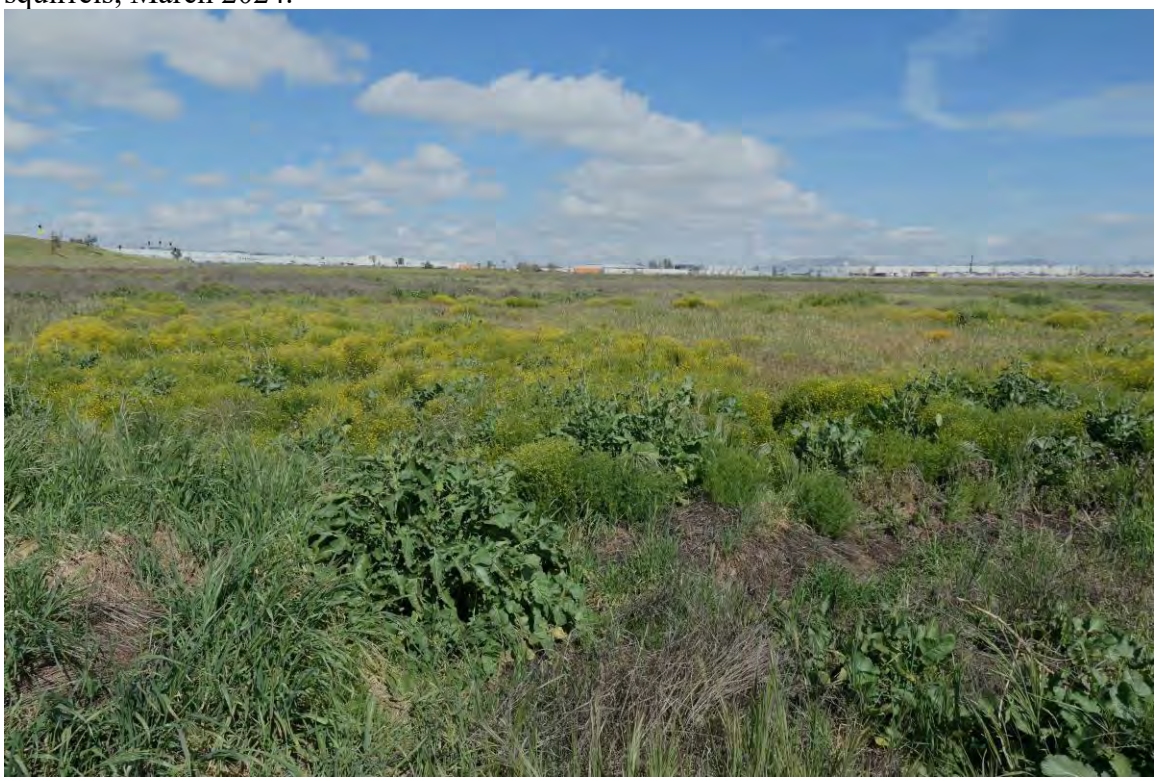
Photograph 5: Northeastern corner of site looking south, January 2024.

Photograph 6: Northeastern corner of site looking west, January 2024.

Photograph 7: One of the potential owl burrows, March 2024.

Photograph 8: One of the potential owl burrows, March 2024.

Photograph 9: One of the potential owl burrows and old pipe both occupied by ground squirrels, March 2024.



Photograph 10: Site looking north showing dense, tall weeds and grasses present in March, March 2024.