



# Memorandum

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Date: June 7, 2019  
To: Rowland Development  
From: Juan J. Hernandez, Principal Biologist  
Subject: Burrowing Owl Survey Report for Assessor Parcel Numbers 439-030-009 and 439-030-010 located in Riverside County, California

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This memorandum provides the methods and results of a Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) (BUOW) survey for the proposed construction of the S2A Modular Manufacturing Plant including associated offices, parking and walkways. The project area consists of approximately 26.22 acres located in the city of Hemet, in Riverside County, California.

## **Project Location**

The project area is located at the northwest corner of North State Street and Crows Nest Place at 1321 and 1255 North State Street in the city of Hemet, Riverside County, California. The project area consists of Riverside County APNs 439-030-009 and 439-030-010. Specifically, the project area is located within the San Jacinto Viejo Land Grant of the San Jacinto United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5' topographic quadrangle. The center point latitude and longitude for the project area are 33°46'09.70" North and 116°58'28.04" West (Figures 1 and 2).

The study area included the entire approximately 26.22-acre project area and a 150-meter (500-foot) buffer around the site (Figure 3), where accessible.

### **Project Contact Information**

Owner/Applicant:	John Rowland Rowland Development 23811 Washington Avenue, #110 Murrieta, CA 92662
Principal Investigator:	Juan J. Hernandez Hernandez Environmental Services 17037 Lakeshore Drive Lake Elsinore, CA 92530 (909) 772-9009

### **Field Survey Methods**

HES implemented the three steps as described in the Burrowing Owl Survey Instructions for the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Area (Attachment A). The “General Biological Assessment Report” prepared for the project, determined that focused surveys for BUOW would be required due to recorded historic observations on the site and the presence of suitable habitat documented during the March 20, 2019 habitat assessment.

In accordance with the *MSHCP Burrowing Owl Survey Instructions*, focused burrow and focused BUOW surveys (Part A and Part B, respectively) were conducted on four separate days during the breeding season: March 20, March 28, April 17 and April 24, 2019 Survey times, weather, and applicable sunrise/sunset information is described in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Survey Information**

<b>Survey</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Survey Start Time</b>	<b>Sunrise/Sunset</b>	<b>Weather</b>
1	March 20, 2019	0700 hours	0624 hours	51 degrees Fahrenheit, clear, calm winds 0 miles per hour.
2	March 28, 2019	0700 hours	0617 hours	56 degrees Fahrenheit, partly cloudy, calm winds 0 miles per hour
3	April 17, 2019	0700 hours	0614 hours	65 degrees Fahrenheit, partly cloudy, winds 0-3 miles per hour from the west
4	April 24, 2019	0700 hours	0611 hours	57 degrees Fahrenheit, partly cloudy, winds 0-3 miles per hour from the west.

Surveys were conducted from one hour before sunrise to two hours after sunrise or two hours before sunset to one hour after sunset and during weather that was conducive to observing owls outside their burrows and detecting BUOW sign. The surveys were not conducted during rain, high winds (> 20 miles per hour), dense fog, or temperatures above 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Surveys involved walking through potentially suitable habitat within the survey area. The pedestrian survey transects were spaced approximately 30 to 50 feet apart to allow 100 percent visual coverage of the ground surface. Special attention was paid to those habitat areas that appeared to provide suitable habitat for BUOW. Where permission to access the buffer areas could not be obtained, the biologist visually inspect adjacent habitats with binoculars.

All encountered burrows or structure entrances were checked for the presence of BUOW, molted feathers, cast pellets, prey remains, eggshell fragments, tracks, or excrement. Natural or man-made structures and debris piles that could support BUOW were also surveyed. The locations of all suitable BUOW habitat, potential burrows, BUOW sign, and any BUOW observed was recorded and mapped with a handheld Global Positioning System (GPS) unit.

All wildlife species encountered visually or audibly during the field survey were identified and recorded in field notes. Binoculars were used to aid in the identification of observed wildlife. Photographs were taken to document existing conditions within the survey area.

## Results

The project area is undeveloped, relatively flat, and disturbed. Surrounding land uses include commercial developments and the San Jacinto Park to the north, undeveloped land to the east, commercial and residential developments to the south, and residential developments to the west. Elevations on the project area range from 1,536 feet above mean sea-level (AMSL) to 1,556 AMSL.

Six soil classes are identified to occur within the project area by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) including:

- Chino silt loam (Cf), drained, saline-alkali;
- Grangeville fine sandy loam (GtA), drained, 0 to 2 percent slopes;
- Metz loamy fine sand (MhB), sandy loam substratum, 0 to 5 percent slopes;
- San Emigdio fine sandy loam (SeA), 0 to 2 percent slopes, occasional frost;
- San Emigdio fine sandy loam (SeD2), 8 to 15 percent slopes, eroded; and
- San Emigdio fine sandy loam (SfA), deep, 0 to 2 percent slopes.

The project area contains approximately 26.22 acres of ruderal/disturbed habitat. The ruderal areas on the area are dominated by non-native plant species. Dominant vegetation observed in this habitat type includes ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), foxtail chess (*Bromus madritensis*),

black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), London rocket (*Sisymbrium irio*), and filaree (*Erodium sp.*).

Based on the results of the focused burrow survey conducted on March 20, 2019, it was determined that the survey area provides suitable burrows/nesting opportunities for BUOW. A total of eight suitable burrows measuring four inches or greater in diameter were checked and recorded (Figure 4). The suitable burrows identified occurred in a cement pipe located in the central portion of the project area. No suitable burrows were identified within the 150-meter buffer area surrounding the project area.

Evidence of ground squirrels and ground squirrel activities were observed within the study area. Although the project area supports fossorial mammal burrows and non-natural substrates capable of supporting BUOW, the focused BUOW surveys found that no BUOW or BUOW sign occur within the study area.

Despite systematic searches of the study area, no BUOW or evidence (i.e., including scat, pellets, feathers, tracks, and prey remains) were found which suggest recent or historic use of the study area by BUOW. Therefore, it can be concluded that would BUOW are not currently present within the study area.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that an MSHCP preconstruction survey be conducted within 30 days prior to the start of any ground disturbing activities to avoid potential impacts to BUOW or other nesting birds, and to ensure that no BUOW have moved onto the project site.

### Certification

I hereby certify that the statements furnished above and in the attached exhibits present 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: June 7, 2019



Juan J. Hernandez  
Principal Biologist

### Enclosures:

- Figure 1: Location Map
- Figure 2: Vicinity Map
- Figure 3: Survey Area Map
- Figure 4: Survey Results Map

### Appendix A: Site Photographs

## **FIGURES**



**Figure 1**

Location Map  
APNs 439-030-009 and 439-030-010  
Riverside County, California

**Legend**



Project Site Boundary



Hernandez  
Environmental  
Services



**Figure 2**

Vicinity Map  
APNs 439-030-009 and 439-030-010  
Riverside County, California

**Legend**

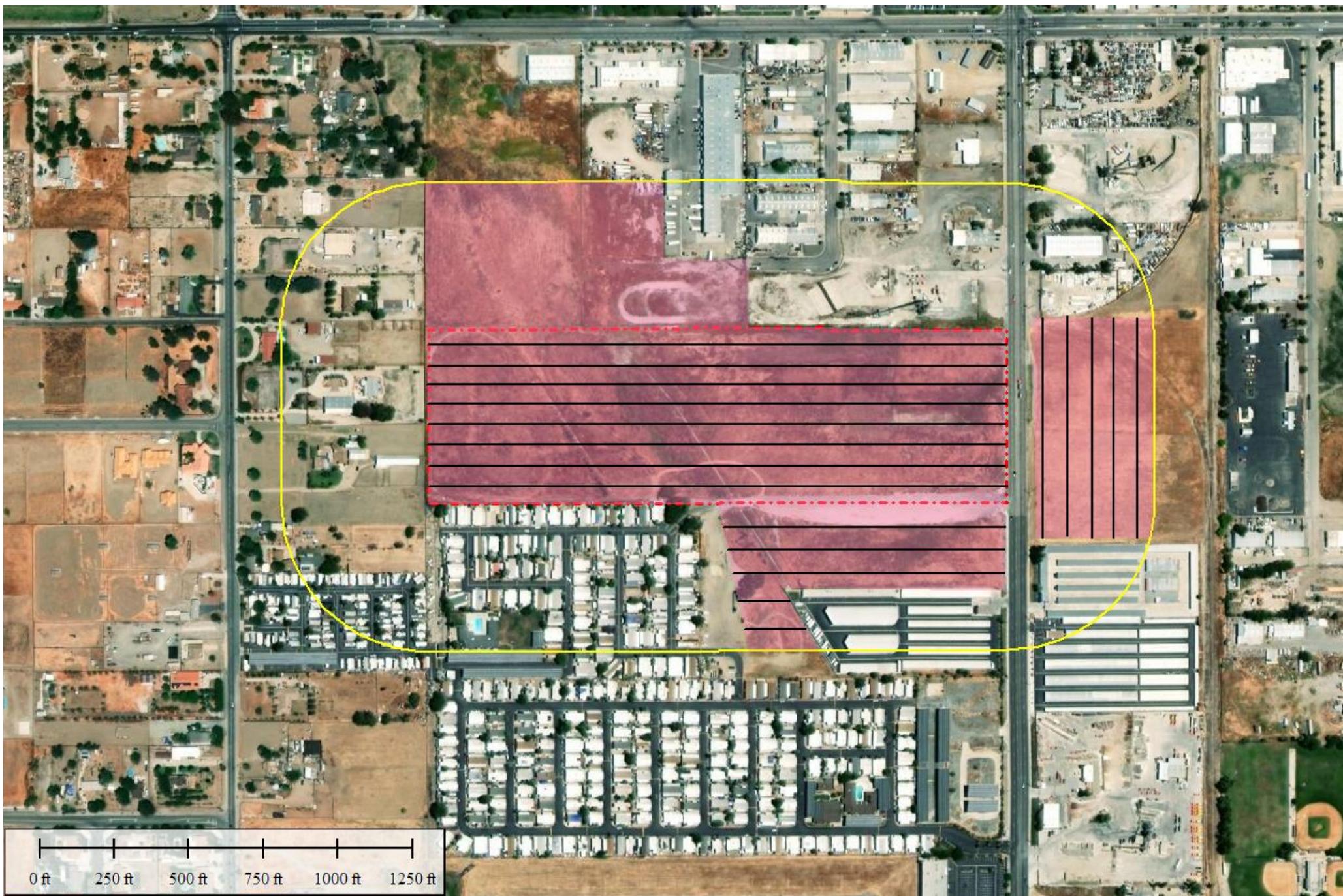


Project Site Boundary



Hernandez  
Environmental  
Services





**Figure 3**

Survey Area Map  
APNs 439-030-009 and 439-030-010  
Riverside County, California

**Legend**



Project Site Boundary



Project Site 150m buffer



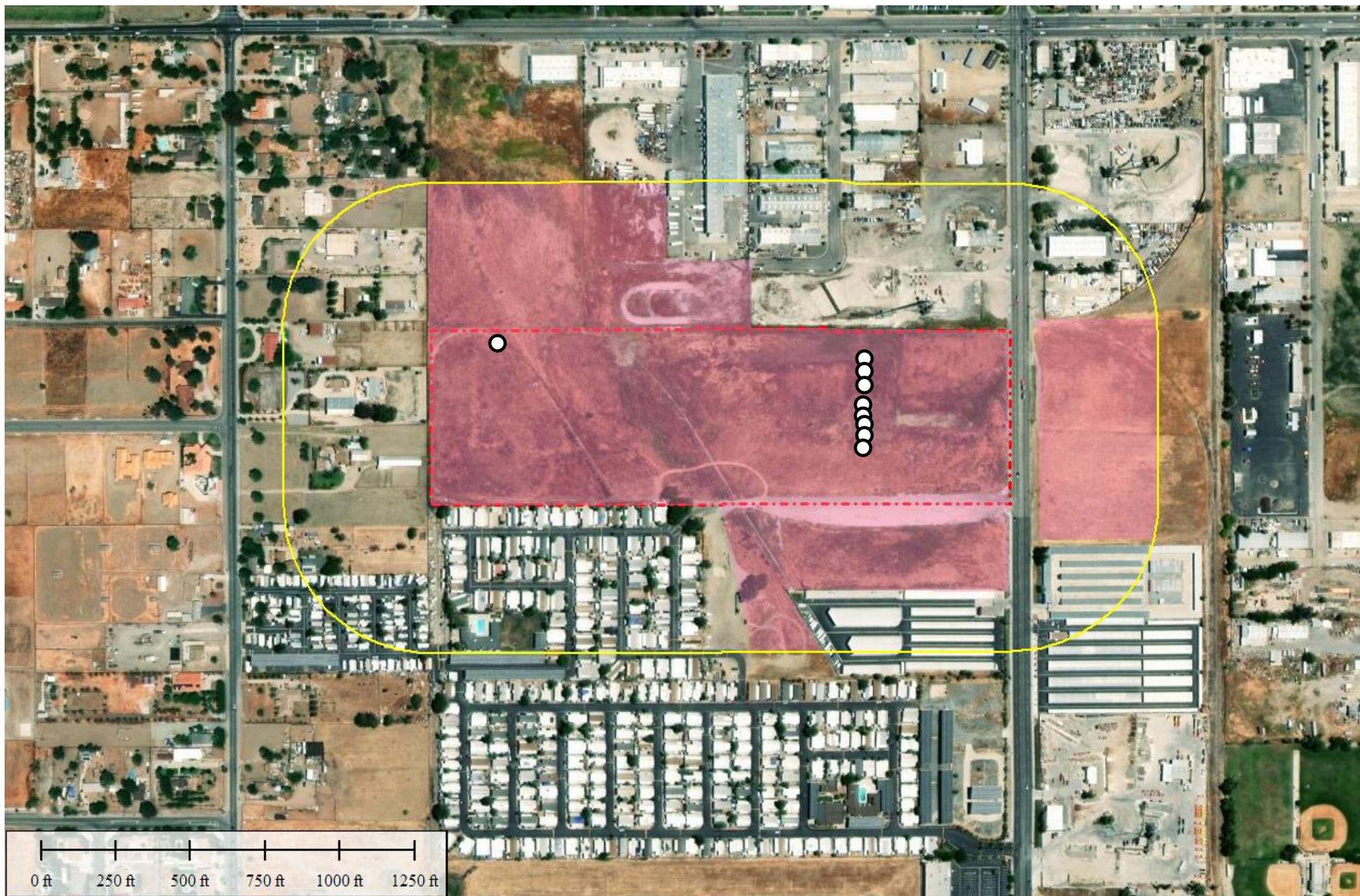
Transect Line



Suitable Habitat



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**Figure 4**

Survey Results Map  
APNs 439-030-009 and 439-030-010  
Riverside County, California

**Legend**



Project Site Boundary



Project Site 150m buffer



Burrow Location



Suitable Habitat



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## **APPENDIX A**



Disturbed habitat on the project site, suitable for burrowing owls.



Potentially suitable burrow, no sign.



Drainage pipe located in the central portion of the property.