

Appendix D-2

Desert Native Plant Survey Results

December 2, 2019

12122

Chris Borchert, Principal Planner
City of Hesperia
Planning Department
9700 Seventh Avenue
Hesperia, California 92345

Subject: *Desert Native Plant Survey Results for the Hesperia Commerce Center II Project, City of Hesperia, San Bernardino County, California*

Dear Mr. Borchert:

This report describes the methodology and results of a desert native plant survey for the Hesperia Commerce Center II Project (project). According to the Biological Resource Assessment prepared by LSA Associates Inc., implementation of the project would result in the loss of 196 acres of Joshua tree woodland supporting Joshua trees (*Yucca brevifolia*), cacti, and, other desert plants (LSA 2019). Therefore, Dudek conducted a focused desert native plant survey within the approximate 195-acre project site in accordance with the California Desert Native Plants Act and the Hesperia Municipal Code, Chapter 16.24 (City of Hesperia 1997). This effort did not include a survey or inventory for on-site Joshua trees.

This report is intended to describe the methodology and results of the desert native plant survey on the project site.

1 Project Location and Description

The approximately 194.8-acre project site is located in the western part of the City of Hesperia (City), which is found within the Victor Valley region of San Bernardino County (see Figure 1, Project Location; figures are included in Attachment A). The project site is located on the northwest quadrant of Highway 395 and Phelan Road/Main Street, and is bound by Yucca Terrace Drive to the north, Highway 395 to the east, Phelan Road to the south, and Los Angeles Bureau of Power and Light utility corridor to the west. The project site consists of Assessor's Parcel Numbers 306435103, 306436101, 306439101, and 306440102. Specifically, the project site is located in Section 16, Township 4 North, Range 5 West, as depicted on the U.S. Geological Survey Baldy Mesa, California 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map. Regional access to the project site includes Highway 395, immediately adjacent to the east, and Interstate 15, located approximately 1 mile east.

The proposed project includes construction of three industrial/warehouse buildings on an approximately 194.8-acre project site generally located on the northwest corner of Phelan Road and Highway 395 in the City. Building 1 (the northwestern most building) would be 1,561,582 square feet; Building 2 (the southernmost building) would be 2,068,100 square feet, which would potentially be divided between two spaces within the same building; and Building 3 (the easternmost building) would be 112,908 square feet. In total, the project would provide 3,742,590 square feet of industrial/warehouse space and associated improvements, including loading docks, truck and vehicle parking, and landscape areas.

2 Site Description

According to the Biological Resource Assessment prepared by LSA Associates Inc., the project site is comprised of vacant land and ranges in elevation from approximately 3,565 feet to 3,610 feet above mean sea level (LSA 2019). Soils consist of Cajon Sand, 0% to 2% slopes and 9% to 15% slopes. Vegetation within the project site includes Joshua tree woodland that supports Joshua trees, cacti, and other desert plants.

3 Methods

3.1 Desert Native Plant Survey

On November 22, 2019, Dudek biologists Britney Strittmater, Anna Cassady, Tracy Park, and Eileen Salas visited the project site to conduct a desert native plant survey in accordance with the California Desert Native Plants Act and the Hesperia Municipal Code, Chapter 16.24. The survey was conducted from 7:25 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. under suitable weather conditions (39°F–56°F, 1–5 mph winds, and 0% cloud cover). The survey was conducted by walking transects spaced 20 meters apart in order to obtain 100% visual coverage (Figure 2, Focused Desert Native Plant Survey Area). The desert native plant survey conformed to California Natural Plants Society's Botanical Survey Guidelines (CNPS 2001); the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Populations and Sensitive Natural Communities (CDFW 2018); and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's General Rare Plant Survey Guidelines (Cypher 2002).

Dudek used geographic information system (GIS) software to map biological resources and provide figures.

3.2 Survey Limitations

Due to the timing of the survey, spring and summer blooming annuals and cryptic perennials may not have been detectable; however, all of the desert native plant target species are conspicuous shrubs that would have been identifiable during the survey. The survey was conducted during daylight hours under weather conditions that did not preclude observation of desert native plant species (e.g., surveys were not conducted during heavy fog or rain).

The current survey effort provides an accurate representation of the desert native plant species that occur in the project area. The survey conducted was thorough and comprehensive, and the results contained herein provide a reasonable, accurate assessment of desert native plant species within the project site.

4 Results

One desert native plant species was recorded within the project site—Wiggins' cholla (*Cylindropuntia echinocarpa*)—of which 66 individuals were mapped within the project site (Figure 3, Results). Additionally, 6 dead Wiggins' cholla were documented within the project site; these are not included on Figure 3.

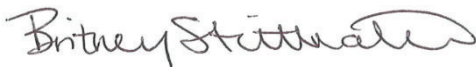
5 Recommendations/Conclusions

The focused desert native plant survey was positive for Wiggins' cholla; therefore, further action is required prior to ground disturbance. In accordance with the California Desert Native Plants Act and the Hesperia Municipal Code, Chapter 16.24.040, a native plant removal permit must be obtained from the City of Hesperia prior to the removal of Wiggins' cholla.

This report acknowledges that 66 individuals of Wiggins' cholla would be removed because of project implementation. The applicant must submit native plant removal permit application to the City of Hesperia requesting the removal of the 66 individuals. No further mitigation is required; however, permit conditions may require salvage or that these species be incorporated into the landscape plan of the project. Any approved land use application and/or development permit shall be the permit for the removal of Wiggins' cholla once the City approves it.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please feel free to contact me at bstrittmater@dudek.com or by phone at 760.601.3416.

Sincerely,



Britney Strittmater
Biologist

Att.: Attachment A – Figures
cc: Collin Ramsey, Dudek

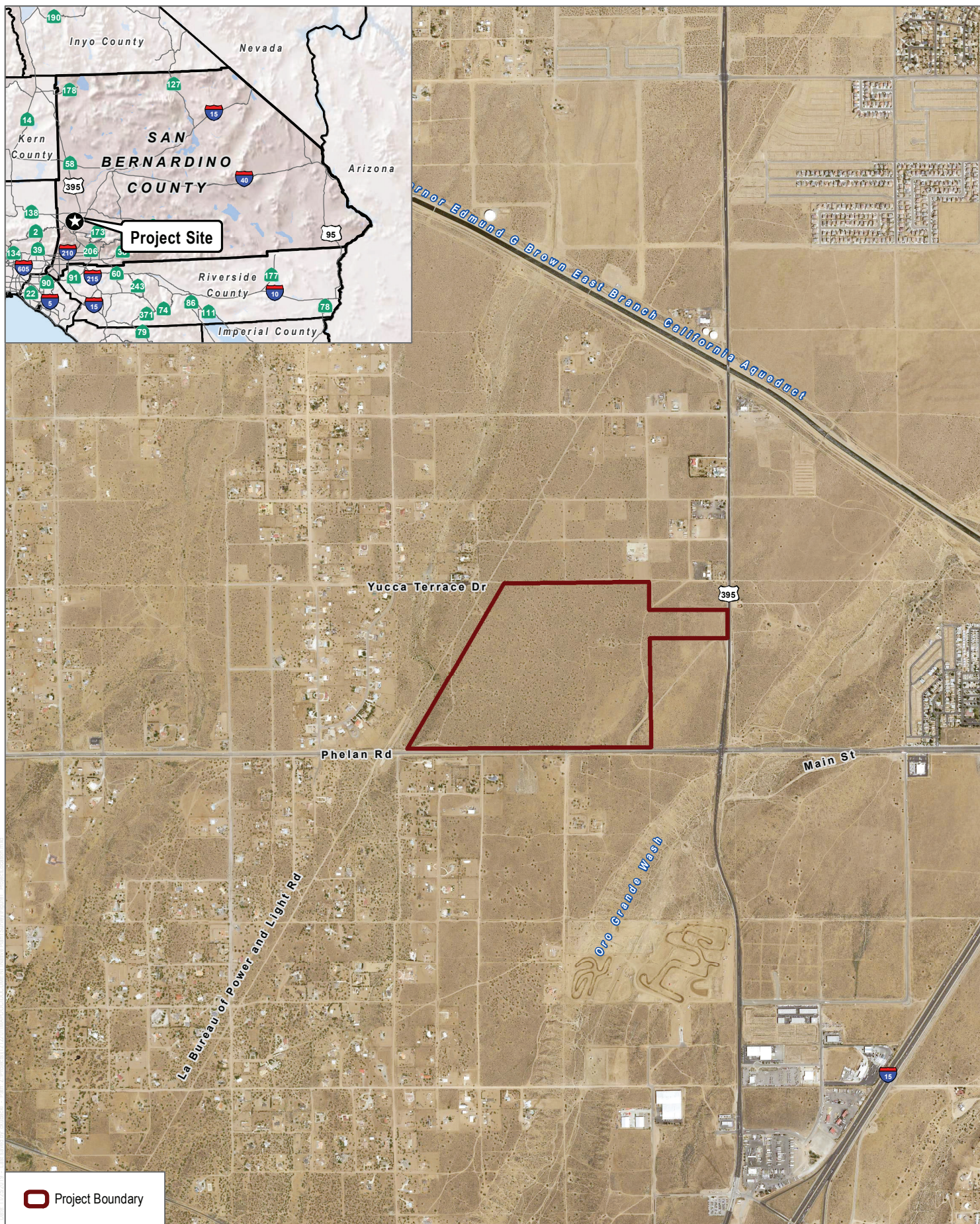
6 References Cited

- CDFW (California Department of Fish and Wildlife). 2018. "Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Populations and Sensitive Natural Communities." March 20, 2018.
- City of Hesperia. 1997. Hesperia Municipal Code, Title 16, Chapter 16.24: Protected Plants. Accessed November 2019. https://library.municode.com/ca/hesperia/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT16DECO_CH16.24PRPL.
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- Cypher, E.A. 2002. "General Rare Plant Survey Guidelines." Bakersfield, California: California State University, Stanislaus, Endangered Species Recovery Program. Revised July 2002. Accessed May 2012. http://www.fws.gov/sacramento/ES/Survey-Protocols-Guidelines/Documents/rare_plant_protocol.pdf.
- LSA (LSA Associates Inc.). 2019. *Biological Resources Assessment for the Hesperia Commerce Center II Project, City of Hesperia, San Bernardino County, California*. June 2019.



Attachment A

Figures



SOURCE: USDA 2016

DUDEK

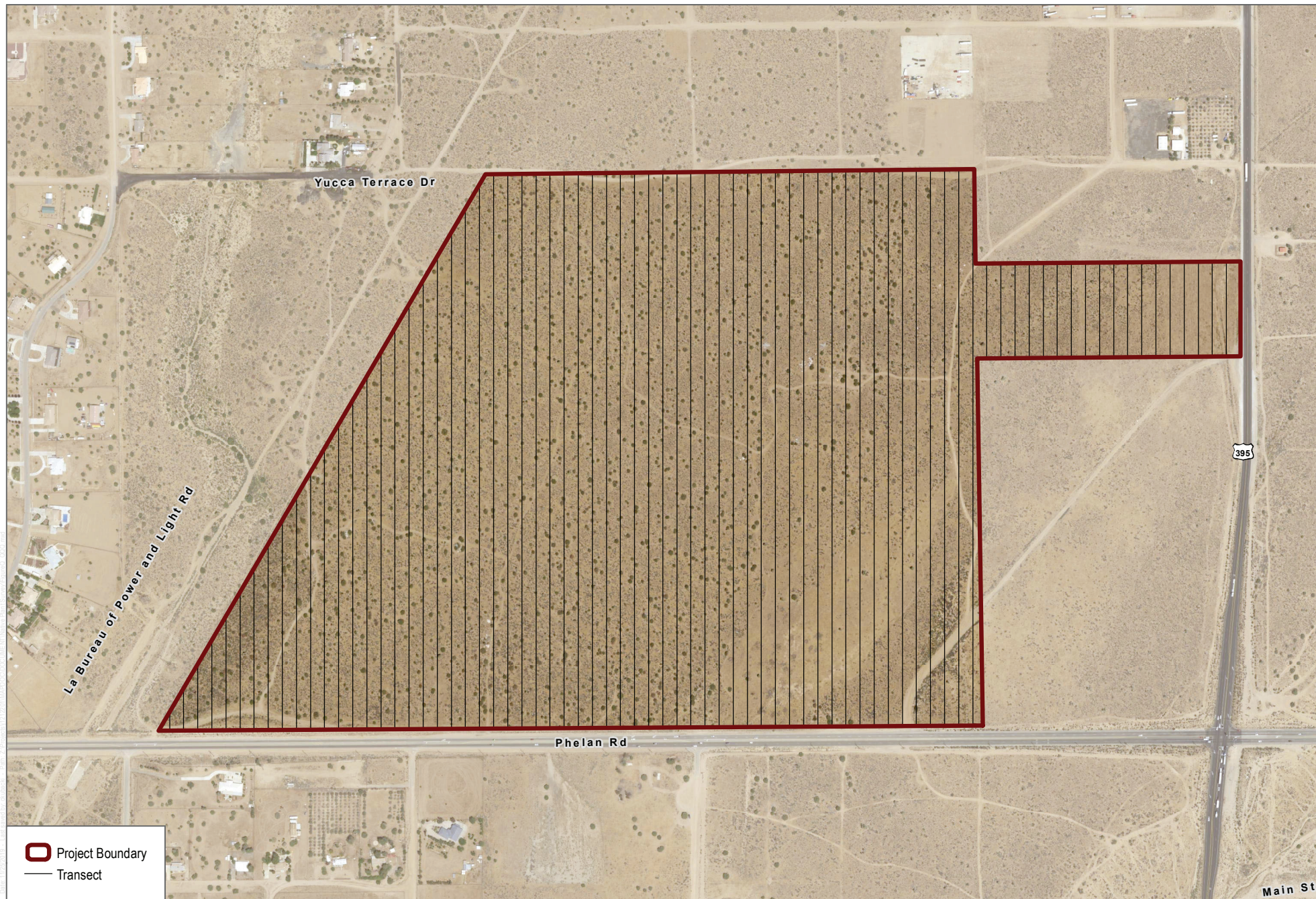


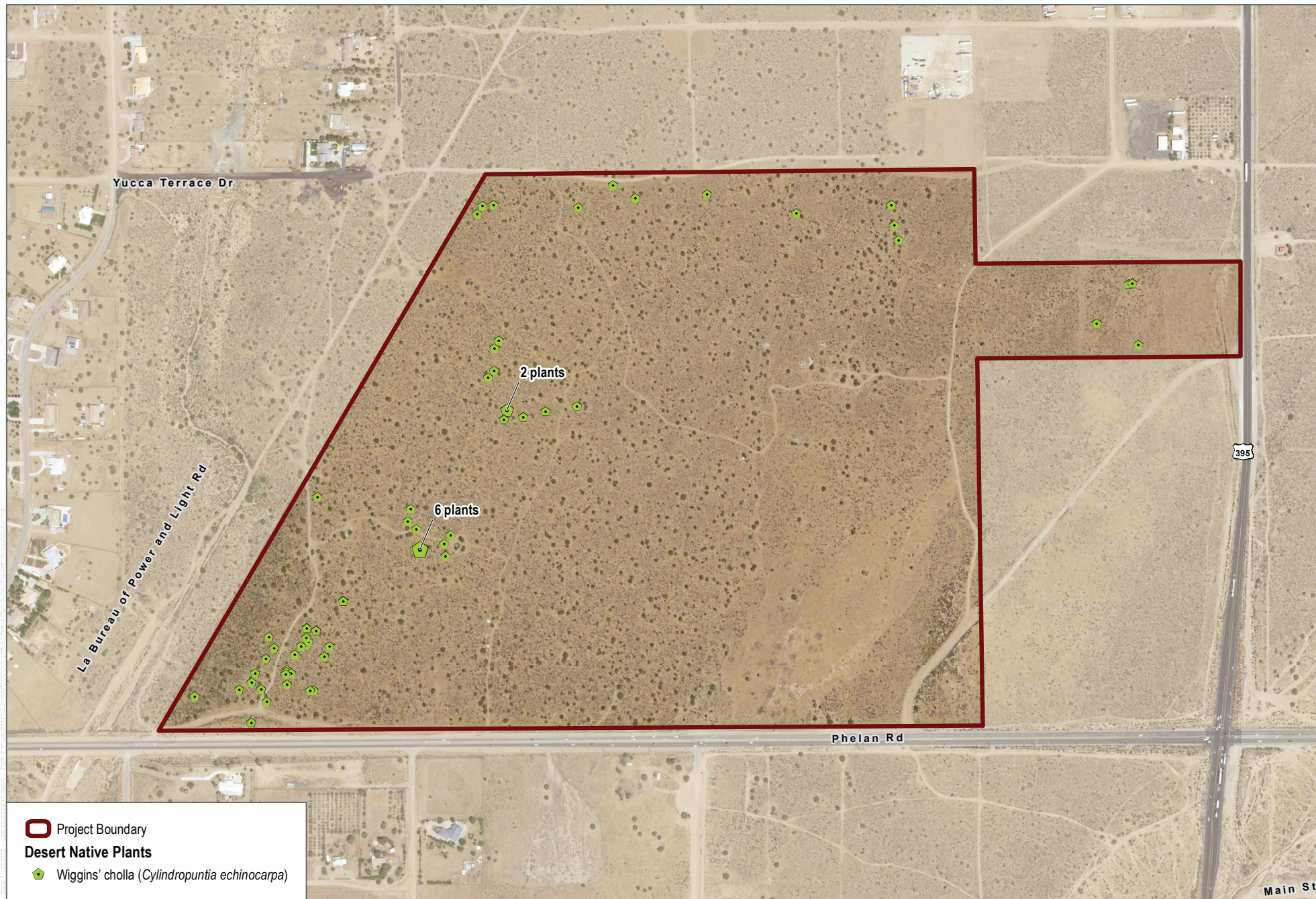
0 1,000 2,000 Feet

Figure 1

Project Location

Desert Native Plant Survey Results for the Hesperia Commerce Center II Project





SOURCE: USDA 2016

FIGURE 3
Results

Desert Native Plant Survey Results for the Hesperia Commerce Center II Project

