# DETERMINATION OF BIOLOGICALLY EQUIVALENT OR SUPERIOR PRESERVATION (DBESP) ANALYSIS

# FOR IMPACTS TO MSHCP RIPARIAN/RIVERINE AREAS

# THE FIRST MARCH LOGTISTICS PROJECT LOCATED IN THE CITY OF PERRIS, RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides an analysis in support of a Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation (DBESP) for the First March Logistics Project (the Project) located in the City of Perris in Riverside County, California, in regard to the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) requirements for *Protection of Species Associated with Riparian/Riverine Areas and Vernal Pools (MSHCP Volume I, Section 6.1.2).* 

This document has been prepared following the MSHCP DBESP Report Template created by the Regional Conservation Authority (RCA), to demonstrate that with the appropriate mitigation, the Project will represent a "biologically equivalent or superior alternative". This document summarizes the findings of general biological surveys and habitat assessments, and vegetation mapping, as it relates to riparian and vernal pool resources. A more detailed reporting of biological resources, including results of species-specific focused surveys, are contained within the Project's Biological Technical Report [Glenn Lukos Associates Inc. (GLA), 2020].

This DBESP is being prepared to describe compensatory mitigation for impacts to Riparian/Riverine habitat which is expected to be considered equivalent or superior mitigation for the Project, as compared to avoidance of such resources on site.

### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 <u>Project Area</u>

The Project site comprises approximately 27.50 acres in the City of Perris, Riverside County, California [Exhibit 1 – Regional Map] and is located within Section 25, Township 3 South, Range 4 West of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5" quadrangle map Steele Peak (dated 1967 and photorevised in 1973) [Exhibit 2 – Vicinity Map]. The Project site is comprised of the following Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs): 294-180-013, 294-180-028, 294-180-029, 294-180-030, 294-180-032, 295-300-005, and 295-300-007.

The Project site is bounded by undeveloped land to the north, commercial/industrial development and Natwar lane to the east and south, and Interstate 215 (I-215) to the west.

### 2.2 <u>Project Description</u>

The Project consists of two industrial buildings, for a total of 559,005 square feet. Building 1 consists of 419,034 square foot industrial building with 411,034 square feet of warehouse and 8,000 square feet of office while Building 2 consists of 139,971 square foot industrial building with 131,971 square feet of warehouse and 8,000 square feet of office [Exhibit 3 – Proposed Site Plan].

Vehicular access to the Project would be provided from one driveway off of Western Way and three driveways off of Natwar Lane, which under existing conditions is shared by JR Pipeline Inc and Greenrock Materials Inc (south of the site). A future east-west roadway (Van Buren)

connecting to MARB will be constructed adjacent to the northern boundary of the Project site; the roadway would not be developed as part of the Project.

The Project would include the installation of on-site storm drain, water quality, water, sewer, electric, natural gas, and telecommunications infrastructure systems to serve the proposed warehouse uses. The on-site utility infrastructure would connect to existing utilities in the vicinity of the Project site or new utility lines that would be installed in the roadways adjacent to the Project site.

For this report, the term Project site is defined as the entire subject property totaling 27.50 acres. The proposed Project will result in permanent impacts to approximately 26.37 acres; no temporary or offsite impacts are proposed [Exhibit 4 – Aerial Map].

### 2.3 Existing Conditions

The Project site consists of regularly maintained undeveloped land, much of which is comprised of previously graded and highly compacted soils. The Project site is relatively flat and occurs at an elevation ranging from approximately 1,511 to 1,521 feet above mean sea level (amsl). A billboard is present near the northwestern Project boundary. A single blue-line drainage (herein referred to as "Drainage A") enters the Project site via a culvert under I-215, flows west to east for approximately 743 linear feet within the Project site, and exits the Projects site via a pipe underneath Natwar Lane.

The National Cooperative Soil Survey has mapped the following soil types as occurring in association with the Project site: Greenfield sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent; Hanford fine sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes; and Monserate sandy loam, 0 to 5 percent slopes [Exhibit 5 – Soils Map].

The Project site contains the following vegetation/land use types: disturbed/developed, disturbed/ruderal, and mulefat scrub. Table 2-1 provides a summary of the vegetation/land use types and their corresponding acreages. Descriptions of each vegetation/land use type follow the table. A Vegetation/Land Use Map is attached as Exhibit 6. Photographs depicting the Project site are shown in Exhibit 7.

Vegetation/Land Use Type	Project Site (acres)
Disturbed/Developed	0.39
Disturbed/Ruderal	26.96
Mulefat Scrub	0.15
Total	27.50

### 2.3.1 Disturbed/Developed

The Project site contains approximately 0.39 acre of disturbed/developed lands consisting of an unvegetated vehicular access area adjacent to Natwar Lane and the above-referenced billboard [Exhibit 7, Photograph 1].

### 2.3.2 Disturbed/Ruderal

The Project site contains approximately 26.96 acres of disturbed/ruderal lands, 0.03 acre of which occurs in association with Drainage A. These areas consist of previously disked and graded sandy soils that are vegetated with mostly weedy disturbance-tolerant herbaceous species and which comprise the majority of the Project site. Dominant native species include doveweed (*Croton setiger*) and vinegarweed (*Trichostema lanceolatum*). Dominant non-native species include stinknet (*Oncosiphon piluliferum*), and several species of non-native grasses. Note that a small patch of California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) occurs along the western boundary of the Project site adjacent to I-215, but it is not substantial enough to warrant its own vegetation category [Exhibit 7, Photographs 2 and 3].

### 2.3.3 Mulefat Scrub

The Project site contains approximately 0.15 acre of mulefat scrub which occurs in three distinct patches wholly in association with Drainage A. Mulefat scrub on the Project site is comprised mostly of mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), as well as four black willow saplings (*Salix gooddingii*), doveweed (*Croton setiger*), and various non-native upland grasses [Exhibit 7, Photograph 4].

### 3.0 **RIPARIAN/RIVERINE MITIGATION (SECTION 6.1.2)**

### 3.1 <u>Methods</u>

The MSHCP defines riparian areas as *lands which contain Habitat dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergent mosses and lichens, which occur close to or which depend upon soils moisture from a nearby fresh water source.* In the absence of riparian habitat, the MSHCP defines riverine areas as *areas with fresh water flow during all or a portion of the year.* 

The MSHCP defines vernal pools as *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 wetland indictors of hydrology and/or vegetation during the drier portion of the growing season.* 

With the exception of wetlands created for the purpose of providing wetlands 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.

The MSHCP requires habitat assessments/focused surveys for certain species identified under Section 6.1.2, including riparian birds and fairy shrimp. Bird species requiring assessments include least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), and western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*). Fairy shrimp species requiring assessments include listed species such as Riverside fairy shrimp (*Streptocephalus woottoni*), Santa Rosa Plataeu fairy shrimp (*Linderiella santarosae*), and vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*). Although not directly referenced by Section 6.1.2, assessments also should consider the San Diego fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta sandiegonensis*) where appropriate. For fairy shrimp, habitat assessments should consider all non-vernal pool features that could sufficiently hold water including stock ponds, ephemeral pools, road ruts, and other human-made depressions.

GLA biologists reviewed the Project site to document MSHCP Riparian/Riverine resources on November 8, 2019 and June 14, 2021. Prior to beginning the field assessments, a color aerial photograph, a topographic base map of the property, and the previously cited USGS topographic map were examined to determine the locations of potential Riparian/Riverine areas. Suspected resources were field checked for the presence of definable channels and/or riparian vegetation. While in the field, the limits of Riparian/Riverine resources were recorded onto a color aerial photograph using visible landmarks and/or sub-meter accuracy global positioning system devices.

To assess the Project site for vernal/seasonal pools (including fairy shrimp habitat), GLA biologists evaluated the topography of the site, including whether the site contained depressional features/topography with the potential to become inundated; whether the site contained soils associated with vernal/seasonal pools; and whether the site supported plants that suggested areas of localized ponding.

### 3.2 <u>Results/Impacts</u>

#### 3.2.1 Results

The Project site contains approximately 0.18 acre of MSHCP Riparian/Riverine areas associated with Drainage A (743 linear feet of ephemeral streambed), 0.15 acre of which includes riparian habitat [Exhibit 8 – MSHCP Riparian/Riverine Map]. Therefore, riparian areas on-site total 0.15 acre (505 linear feet) and riverine areas onsite total 0.03 acre (238 linear feet). The riparian community is described above in Section 2.3.3.

No vernal pools or other non-vernal pool seasonally ponded depressions were observed at the Project site during the field studies, including tire ruts, stock ponds and other artificially created features, and no ponding was observed within the Project site. The Project site lacks the suitable topography (including localized depressions) to support prolonged inundation necessary to support fairy shrimp. In addition, the site is mapped as containing sandy loam soils which are generally not associated with vernal pools. Observations of the soils at the site showed a lack of clay soil components. Lastly, no plants were observed at the site that are associated with vernal pools and similar habitats that experience prolonged inundation.

The Project site does not support suitable potential habitat for riparian-associated birds including least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, and western yellow-billed cuckoo. Additionally, there is no suitable habitat for listed fairy shrimp species.

### 3.2.2 Impacts

Pursuant to Volume I, Section 6.1.2 of the MSHCP, projects must consider alternatives providing for 100% percent avoidance of Riparian/Riverine areas. If avoidance is infeasible, then the impacts must be mitigated and a DBESP is required.

As noted above, MSHCP Riparian/Riverine areas within the Project site are limited to Drainage A. The Project will result in permanent impacts to all 0.18 acre of MSHCP Riparian/Riverine areas, 0.15 acre of which supports MSHCP riparian habitat and 0.03 acre of which is riverine streambed.

### 3.3 Mitigation/Equivalency

To mitigate impacts to 0.03 acre of riverine areas and 0.15 acre of riparian habitat (0.18 acres total for MSHCP riparian/riverine area), the following is proposed:

• The purchase of 0.36 acre of rehabilitation, re-establishment, and/or establishment mitigation credits at an approved mitigation bank or in-lieu fee program within the San Jacinto River and/or Santa Ana River Watershed, such as the Riverpark Mitigation Bank. If enhancement or preservation credits are pursued due to the lack of availability of rehabilitation, re-establishment, and/or establishment mitigation credits, the ratio may be higher as determined on a case by case basis by the wildlife agencies.

## 3.3.1 Direct Effects/Infeasibility of Avoidance

*Direct effects* are those effects that can be expected from direct removal of and disturbances to the land and resources. For this report, the term *permanent impact* is defined as that portion of the resource that will be permanently developed/removed.

Direct effects and permanent impacts to Drainage A will occur as a result of the proposed Project, totaling 0.18 acre (743 linear feet). Drainage A occurs at the location of the proposed industrial building, specifically in the lower one-third portion of the proposed industrial building and extends the entire width of the building and Project site. As the Project consists of the construction of a single large industrial building including its associated parking spaces, fire lanes, and roadway improvements (resulting in impacts to approximately 26.37 acres of the 27.50 acre Project site), it will be infeasible to avoid the onsite ephemeral drainage. Avoidance of Drainage A would require a reduction of approximately one-third of the building or bisection of it, resulting in a large reduction of square footage, in addition to reconfiguration of the attendant features (parking spaces and fire lanes for public safety), and is deemed infeasible from a logistics standpoint. Since the Project consists of the full build-out of the site, there is no other location within the site to relocate the warehouse building. Additionally, it should be noted that the Project site has been disturbed and routinely maintained for decades, and that Drainage A supports only marginal riparian habitat. As a result, the above-referenced MSHCP Riparian/Riverine resources on site exhibit low function and values as compared to the provision of compensatory mitigation at a local mitigation bank or in-lieu fee program as described below.

The purchase of compensatory mitigation credits from an approved mitigation bank or in-lieu fee program for the rehabilitation, re-establishment, and/or establishment of MSHCP Riverine/Riparian areas at a 2:1 mitigation-to-impact ratio will be considered superior mitigation as compared to the preservation of 0.18 acre of potential drainage features that are highly disturbed and which do not provide suitable habitat for MSHCP riparian species.

The Project team's mitigation proposal consists of the following:

• The purchase of 0.36 acre of rehabilitation, re-establishment, and/or establishment mitigation credits at an approved mitigation bank or in-lieu fee program within the San Jacinto River and/or Santa Ana River Watershed, such as the Riverpark Mitigation Bank. If enhancement or preservation credits are pursued due to the lack of availability of rehabilitation, re-establishment, and/or establishment mitigation credits, the ratio may be higher as determined on a case by case basis by the wildlife agencies.

With the completion of this mitigation purchase, the Project's compensatory mitigation will offset impacts to Riparian/Riverine resources and reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

### **3.3.2 Indirect Effects**

*Indirect effects* are those effects that give rise to delayed, secondary effects. Examples of indirect effects include fragmentation, increased levels of environmental toxins, plant and wildlife dispersal interruption, increased risk of fire, construction noise, and invasion of nonnative animals and plants, which stresses or alters competition among natives. Indirect effects are those that can be assumed to increase mortality, reduce productivity, and/or reduce the functions and values of natural open space for native species.

The Project site and its surrounding environs have been routinely disturbed and maintained for decades, and do not comprise a wildlife movement corridor; rather, the area is already fragmented by existing industrial development, the I-215 Freeway, and March Air Reserve Base. The development of an industrial building and its associated improvements will not result in further fragmentation than what already exists and will not result in lower functions and values of natural open space for native species or other effects associated with such natural open space.

Finally, the Project site is not located adjacent to the MSHCP Conservation Area; therefore, it is not subject to the Urban/Wildland Interface Guidelines. The Project will not result in adverse indirect effects to special-status resources.

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#### 5.0 CERTIFICATION

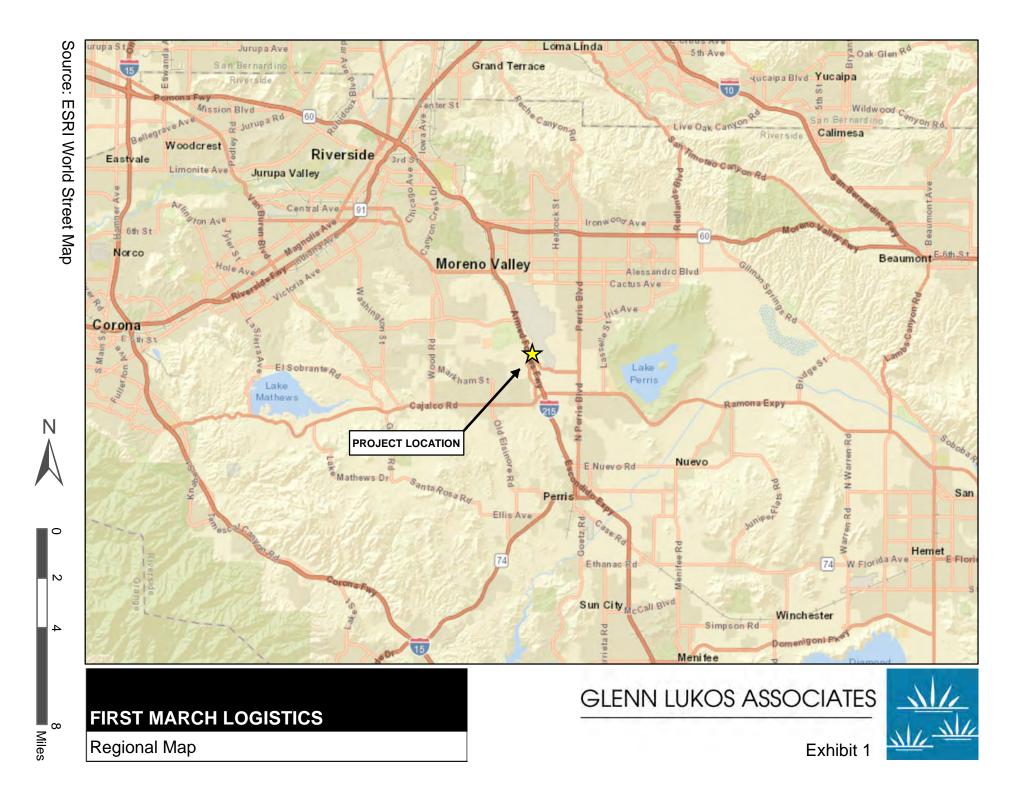
I hereby certify that the statements furnished above and in the attached exhibits present data and information required for this biological evaluation, and that the facts, statements, and information presented are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

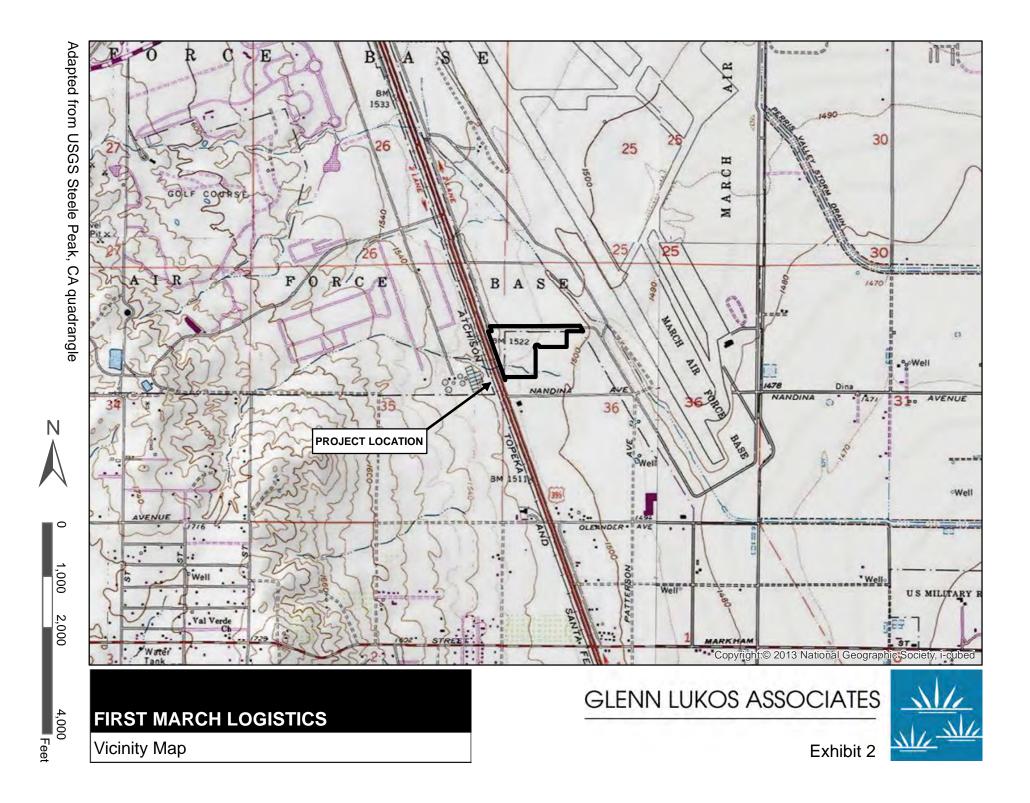
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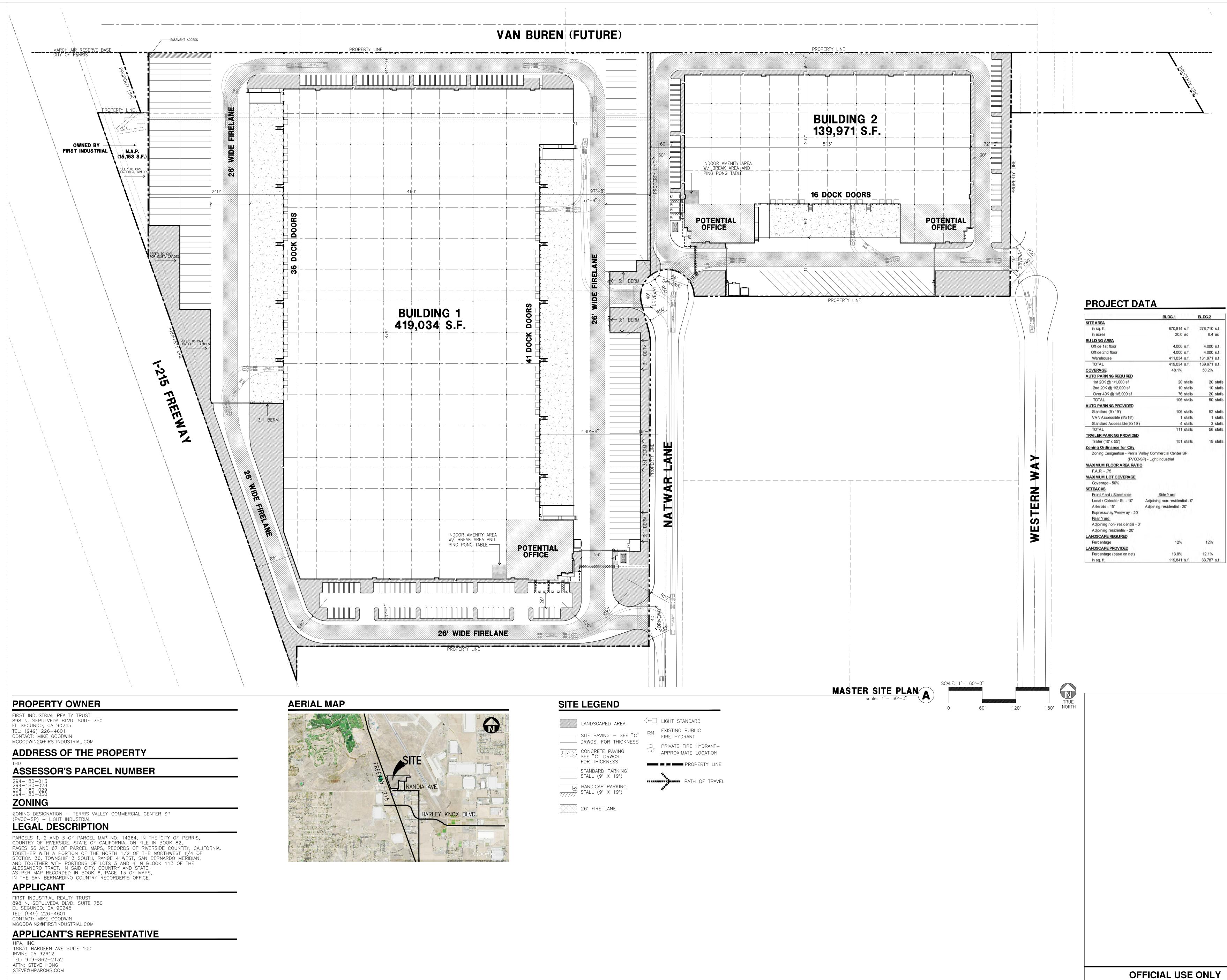
Date: January 13, 2022

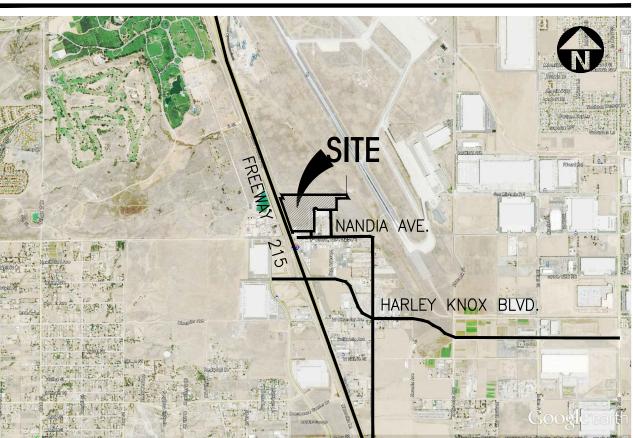
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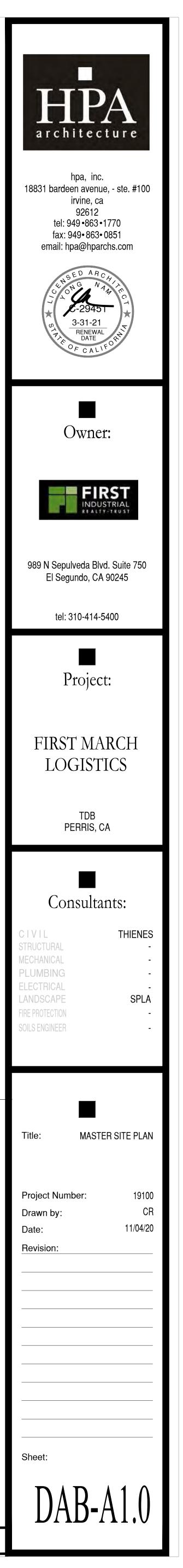


LANDSCAPED AREA
SITE PAVING – SEE "C" DRWGS. FOR THICKNESS
CONCRETE PAVING SEE "C" DRWGS. FOR THICKNESS
STANDARD PARKING



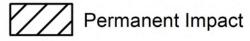














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1 inch = 171 feet

Coordinate System: State Plane 6 NAD 83 Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic Datum: NAD83 Map Prepared by: K. Kartunen, GLA Date Prepared: August 11, 2021



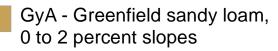
Aerial Map



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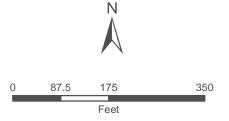






HgA - Hanford fine sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes

MmB - Monserate sandy loam, 0 to 5 percent slopes



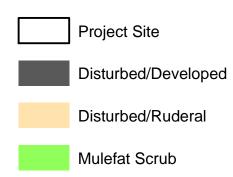
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Coordinate System: State Plane 6 NAD 83 Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic Datum: NAD83 Map Prepared by: K. Kartunen, GLA Date Prepared: August 6, 2021



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Feet 1 inch = 171 feet

Coordinate System: State Plane 6 NAD 83 Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic Datum: NAD83 Map Prepared by: K. Kartunen, GLA Date Prepared: August 6, 2021



Vegetation Map

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Photograph 1: View of Project site facing approximately northwest depicting disturbed/developed conditions in the foreground. The onsite billboard is visible in the background (latitude 33.868308°, longitude -117.259290°).



Photograph 3: View of Project site facing approximately southeast depicting disturbed/ruderal conditions characteristic of the property. Drainage A and its associated mulefat scrub are visible in the background (latitude 33.868495°, longitude -117.261806°).



Photograph 2: View of Project site facing approximately northeast depicting disturbed/ruderal conditions characteristic of the property (latitude 33.868162°, longitude -117.261215°).



Photograph 4: View of Project site facing approximately southwest depicting Drainage A and its associated mulefat scrub with disturbed/ruderal conditions visible in the foreground (latitude 33.867893°, longitude -117.259318°).



GLENN LUKOS ASSOCIATES Exhibit 7





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