

# **CULTURAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT**

**TENTATIVE TRACT MAP 20088**

**CITY OF VICTORVILLE**

**SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

**LSA**

January 2018

# CULTURAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

**TENTATIVE TRACT MAP 20088  
CITY OF VICTORVILLE  
SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

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LSA Project No. ALP1701

**National Archaeological Data Base Information:**

*Type of Study:* Assessment (Records Search and Pedestrian Survey)

*USGS Quadrangle:* Adelanto, California

*Acreage:* 20



January 2018

## MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

LSA conducted a cultural resource assessment for Tentative Tract Map 20088 located in the City of Victorville (City), San Bernardino County, California. The assessment included a records search, archival research, field survey, and this report. The proposed project consists of vacant property east of State Route 395 between Seneca Road and Villa Street. The subject property is approximately 20 acres. The project would develop a residential subdivision, designated as single-family residences. The City, as Lead Agency for the project, required this study as part of the environmental review process to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The purpose of the study is to provide the City with the necessary information and analysis to determine, as mandated by CEQA, whether the proposed project would cause substantial adverse changes to any historical/archaeological resources that may exist in the project area. In order to identify and evaluate such resources, LSA conducted a historical/archaeological resources records search, conducted historical background research, and carried out an intensive-level field survey.

Through the various avenues of research, this study did not encounter any “historical resources,” as defined by CEQA, within the project area, and there is no evidence that cultural resources may be encountered during project construction. Therefore, LSA recommends to the City a finding of *No Impact* regarding cultural resources. No further cultural resources investigation and no mitigation measures are recommended for the project unless development plans undergo such changes as to include areas not covered by this study.

If buried cultural materials are encountered during earthmoving operations associated with the project, all work in that area shall be halted or diverted until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature of the find(s) and provide recommendations for treatment.

In the event human remains are encountered, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to State Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. The County Coroner must be notified of the find immediately. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the County Coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), which will determine and notify a Most Likely Descendant (MLD). With the permission of the landowner or his/her authorized representative, the MLD may inspect the site of the discovery. The MLD shall complete the inspection and make recommendations or preferences for treatment within 48 hours of being granted access to the site. The MLD recommendations may include scientific removal and nondestructive analysis of human remains and items associated with Native American burials, preservation of Native American human remains and associated items in place, relinquishment of Native American human remains and associated items to the descendants for treatment, or any other culturally appropriate treatment.

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## INTRODUCTION

In September 2017, at the request of the ALTEC Engineering, Inc., LSA completed a cultural resources assessment of approximately 20 acres of land located in Victorville, San Bernardino County, California (Figures 1 and 2). The subject property of the study, Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 3135-261-05 and 3135-261-06, is depicted on the United States Geological Survey (USGS) *Adelanto, California* 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map in Township 5 North, Range 5 West, Section 15, San Bernardino Baseline and Meridian. The study is part of the environmental review process for a proposed residential development. The City of Victorville (City), as Lead Agency for the project, required the study in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; Public Resources Code § 21000, et seq.).

LSA completed the present study to provide the City with the necessary information and analysis, as mandated by CEQA, to determine whether the proposed project would cause substantial adverse changes to any historical/archaeological resources that may exist in the project area. In order to identify and evaluate such resources, LSA conducted a historical/archaeological resources records search and historical background research, as well as carried out an intensive-level field survey. This report is a complete account of the methods, results, and final conclusion of the study.

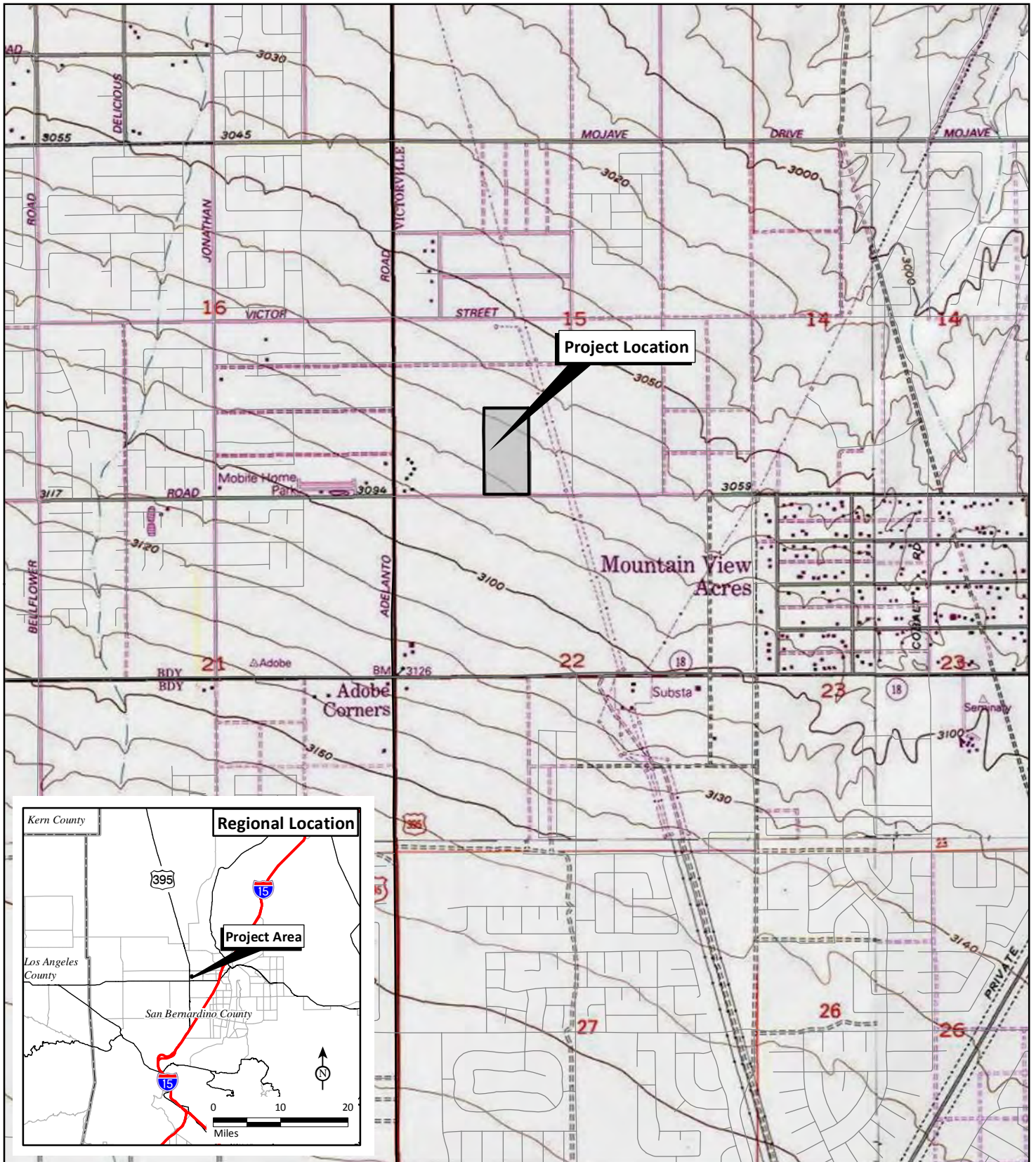
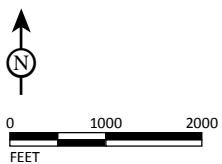


FIGURE 1

LSA



Victorville 20 Acre  
Regional and Project Location

SOURCE: USGS 7.5' Quads: Adelanto & Victorville, 1993, Baldy Mesa, 1988, Hesperia, 1980, CA; ESRI Streetmap, 2013.

M:\PROPOSAL\CULTURAL\Victorville\Victorville 20 acre\G\fig1\_RegLoc.mxd (9/15/2017)



FIGURE 2

LSA

LEGEND

 Project Boundary



0 85 170  
FEET

SOURCE: GoogleEarth, 2017

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Victorville 20 Acre  
Project Site



## SETTING

### CURRENT NATURAL SETTING

#### Hydrology

The project area is located approximately 6 miles west of the Mojave River, in the southwestern Mojave Desert, north of the San Bernardino Mountains. The natural character of the project area has been altered by previous ground-disturbing activity. The project region is characterized by an arid climate, with dry, hot summers and moderate winters (Jaeger and Smith 1971). Precipitation comes in late winter and spring, with occasional warm monsoonal showers in late summer.

#### Biology

At an altitude of approximately 3,330 feet above mean sea level (amsl), the project area falls into the Upper Sonoran life zone of California (Jaeger and Smith 1971), ranging from approximately 500 to 4,500 feet amsl. It is represented in cismontane valleys and low mountain slopes covered with mixed Joshua tree–creosote scrub. The biotic character and natural setting of the Victorville area have remained largely intact in undeveloped areas. Common native plants include Joshua tree, California juniper, creosote, cacti, rabbit bush, interior golden bush, species of sage, and various grasses. Common native animals include coyotes, cottontail and jack rabbits, rats, mice, reptiles, roadrunners, raptors, and other bird species (Jaeger and Smith 1971). Vegetation present at the time of the survey included Joshua trees, creosote, and xeric grasses.

### CULTURAL SETTING

#### Prehistory

The description of various prehistoric stages or chronologies identifying cultural evolution in the Southern California area has been attempted numerous times. Several of these chronologies are reviewed in Moratto (1984). No single description is universally accepted. The various chronologies are based primarily on material developments identified by researchers familiar with sites in a region, and variation exists essentially due to the differences in those items found at the sites. Small differences occur over time and space, which combine to form patterns that are variously interpreted.

Currently, two primary regional culture chronology syntheses are commonly referenced in the archaeological literature. The first, Wallace (1955), describes four cultural horizons or time periods: Early Man (9000–6500 BC), Milling Stone Assemblages (6500–2000 BC), Intermediate Cultures (2000 BC–AD 200), and Late Prehistoric Cultures (AD 200–historic contact). This chronology was refined (Wallace 1978) using absolute chronological dates unavailable in 1955.

The second cultural chronology (Warren 1968) is based broadly on Southern California prehistoric cultures, and was also revised (Warren 1984; Warren and Crabtree 1986). Warren's chronology includes five periods in prehistory: Lake Mojave (7000–5000 BC), Pinto (4000–3000 BC), Gypsum (1000 BC–AD 1), Saratoga Springs (AD 500–1000), and Protohistoric (AD 1500–historic contact). Changes in settlement pattern and subsistence focus are viewed as cultural adaptations to a

changing environment, which begins with gradual environmental warming in the late Pleistocene, continues with the desiccation of the desert lakes, followed by a brief return to pluvial conditions, and concludes with a general warming and drying trend, with periodic reversals that continue to the present (Warren 1986).

## Ethnography

The project area is within the traditional cultural territory of the Serrano (Bean and Smith 1978). Like other Native American groups in Southern California, the Serrano were semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers who subsisted by exploitation of seasonably available plant and animal resources and were first encountered by the Spanish missionaries in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The first written accounts of the Serrano are attributed to mission fathers; later documentation was by Benedict (1924), Strong (1972), Bright (1975), and others.

Ethnohistorically, the Serrano Indians lived in the area occupying much of present-day San Bernardino County and northeastern Los Angeles County. The term *Serrano* is Spanish for “mountaineer, highlander” (Bean and Smith 1978) and is derived from *sierra*, meaning “mountain range” (Bean and Smith 1978). This term was given to people who inhabited the areas of the San Bernardino Mountains that had no associated mission. The Serrano spoke a language that falls into the Uto-Aztecan family (Warren 1984). The Serrano culture group actually incorporates two divisions, a mountain division (referred to as the Mountain Serrano) and a desert division, referred to as the Desert Serrano (Sutton and Earle 2017).

The lifeway of the Serrano who lived along the Mojave River was based on desert subsistence adaptation of resources available along the Mojave River (Sutton and Earle 2017). The Serrano lived in small villages near water, which also included perennial seeps, streams, and small lakes. The availability of water largely determined the nature, duration, and distribution of Serrano settlements (Benedict 1924 in Bean and Smith 1978). Family dwellings were circular, domed, willow-framed structures covered with tule thatching (Bean and Smith 1978). Dwellings contained a central fire pit and were used primarily for sleeping and storage. Most activities occurred outdoors or under a *ramada*, which was a thatched willow pole roof supported by four or more vertical posts (Benedict 1924 and Drucker 1937 in Bean and Smith 1978).

Other village structures included granaries, sweat houses, and large ceremonial houses in which the ceremonial leader resided. Sweat houses were usually constructed near streams. They were typically large, circular, and semi-subterranean. Sweat houses were covered with earth, supported by willow poles, thatched with tule, and usually contained just one door. Families gathered in the sweat house to cleanse themselves by sweating. After sweating, they would dip in the nearby water (Bean and Smith 1978).

The Serrano were hunter-gatherers who relied on the women to do much of the collecting while the men hunted various animals. The primary flora that they exploited depended on the area they inhabited, but, generally speaking, they collected acorns, pinion nuts, honey, mesquite, yucca, and cactus fruits, in addition to various seeds, bulbs, and roots. The men hunted antelope, deer, mountain sheep, rabbits, and rodents (Bean and Smith 1978).

The most common hunting implements were the bow and arrow, throwing stick, traps, snares, and deadfalls. The bow and arrow were used for hunting large game, while the other items were used for smaller game and birds (Bean and Smith 1978). Meat was prepared in earth ovens, by boiling in watertight baskets, or by parching. Plants were consumed both raw and cooked. Food processing involved the use of manos, metates, mortars, and pestles. Flint knives, stone and bone scrapers, ceramic trays and bowls, baskets, and horn and bone spoons and stirrers were also used (Bean and Smith 1978).

During the Late Prehistoric period, the Serrano practiced cremation of the dead. Most of a deceased individual's personal possessions were burned with the body. One month after death, other possessions were burned. A seven-day mourning ceremony was held annually. At this time, gifts and shell money were distributed (Strong 1972).

With the Spanish intrusion came a drastic change in lifestyle for the natives of Southern California. Incorporation of the indigenous populations into the mission system led to the disruption of native cultures and changes in subsistence and land use practices. Mission San Gabriel, established in 1771, probably had a limited effect on the Serrano population until the *asistencia* was established near Redlands, perhaps as early as 1819 (Harley 1988). Within a short time, the missions controlled many ranchos where Indians lived and worked.

After 1820, most of the Serrano in the San Bernardino Valley were moved to Mission San Gabriel. Land near ancestral villages was cleared for farming and water was diverted for irrigation and stock. The mission's expansion drastically affected native plants and animals, and human populations were decimated by European introduced diseases, conflicts, and forced labor. Further declines in local population occurred as the Native Americans retreated to isolated sanctuaries in the mountains (Bean and Smith 1978).

## History

In California, the historic era is generally divided into three periods: The Spanish or Mission Period (1769–1821), the Mexican or Rancho Period (1821–1848), and the American Period (1848–present).

### *Spanish Period*

The first European to pass through the Victorville area is thought to have been Alta California Governor Pedro Fages who briefly explored the western Mojave region in 1772. Searching for San Diego Presidio deserters, Fages traveled north through Riverside to San Bernardino, crossed over the mountains into the Mojave Desert, and then journeyed northward to the San Joaquin Valley (Beck and Haase 1974). Fages was followed by a Spaniard called Father Francisco Garces. Having become familiar with the area, Garces acted as a guide to Juan Bautista de Anza, who had been commissioned to lead a group across the desert from a Spanish outpost in Arizona to set up quarters at the Mission San Gabriel near, what today is Pasadena, California in 1776 (Beck and Haase 1974). This is the first recorded group crossing of the Mojave Desert, and according to Father Garces' journal, the group rested at the headwaters of the Mojave River, one night less than a day's march from the mountains.

### *Mexican Period*

In 1821, Mexico overthrew Spanish rule and the missions began to decline. By 1833, the Mexican government passed the Secularization Act and the missions, reorganized as parish churches, lost their vast land holdings, and released their neophytes.

Due to the inhospitable nature of the region, early European settlement of the Mojave region of San Bernardino County was slow and sporadic. Few changes occurred in Alta California until the missions were fully secularized in 1836. The Secularization Act effectively halted the desert expansion of mission grazing lands. Most mission lands became private ranchos, while the Mojave Desert territories went unclaimed.

### *American Period*

The American Period, 1848–Present, began with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In 1850, California was accepted into the Union of the United States primarily due to the population increase created by the Gold Rush of 1849. The cattle industry reached its greatest prosperity during the first years of the American Period. Mexican Period land grants had created large pastoral estates in California, and demand for beef during the Gold Rush led to a cattle boom that lasted from 1849–1855. However, beginning about 1855, the demand for beef began to decline due to imports of sheep from New Mexico and cattle from the Mississippi and Missouri Valleys. When the beef market collapsed, many California ranchers lost their ranchos through foreclosure. A series of disastrous floods in 1861–1862, followed by two years of extreme drought, which continued to some extent until 1876, altered ranching forever in the southern California area (Beattie and Beattie 1974; Cleland 1941).

**Victorville.** The community of Victor was established in 1885 as a railroad station one mile northwest of the narrows of the Mojave River. The town was named for Jacob Nash Victor, a construction supervisor for the California Southern Railroad (Santa Fe Railroad). The town site grid was laid out the following year. Following the arrival of the railroad, agriculture was the economic base of the community; however, the discovery of large deposits of limestone and granite resulted in the cement-manufacturing industry becoming the economic cornerstone. In 1901, the name of the town was changed to ‘Victorville’ (City of Victorville 2002).

In the mid-1920s, U.S. Highway 66, a main artery of the national highway system, was completed through Victorville. Also instrumental in the growth and development of the area was the Victorville Army Airfield, which was established in 1934; the field was later named George Air Force Base. The base was deactivated in 1992 and annexed by Victorville the following year (Pike 2002).

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## METHODS

### RESEARCH

#### Records Search

On September 18, 2017, LSA conducted a records search at the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) located at California State University, Fullerton. This included a review of all recorded historic and prehistoric archaeological sites, as well as a review of known cultural resource surveys and excavation reports generated from projects located within 0.5 mile of the project area. In addition, LSA reviewed the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) and documents and inventories from the California Office of Historic Preservation including the lists of California Historical Landmarks, California Points of Historical Interest, Listing of National Register Properties, and the Inventory of Historic Structures.

#### Additional Research

On September 18, 2017, LSA archaeologist Gini Austerman reviewed historic aerial photographs of the project area for evidence of historic use.

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SURVEY

On October 8 and December 19, 2017, LSA archaeologists Gini Austerman and Riordan Goodwin conducted an intensive pedestrian field survey of the project for cultural resources. The survey was conducted using the block transect method with transects spaced at 15-meter (45-foot) intervals throughout the entirety of the rectangular-shaped project area. Rodent back dirt was checked for historic artifacts as well as prehistoric items such as flaked and ground stone items, ceramics, and bone.

## RESULTS

### RECORDS SEARCH

#### Resources

Table A lists the cultural resources within a one-mile radius of the project area that are mapped, documented on Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms, and on file at the SCCIC. A more detailed discussion of these resources is provided following the table.

**Table A: Cultural Resources Listed within One Mile of the Project**

Primary No.	Site Description
36-004019	Historic refuse deposit
36-006353	Historic refuse deposit
36-006533	Historic refuse deposit
36-007746	Historic cistern and isolated shard of sun-colored amethyst glass
36-010317	Historic Barstow to Victorville 34.5 kV transmission line
36-014219	Historic refuse deposit
36-014985	Historic refuse deposit
36-021291	Historic refuse deposit
36-023282	Isolated historic can
36-026161	Historic refuse deposit
36-026162	Historic refuse deposit
36-026208	Isolated historic can
36-029050	Isolated prehistoric jasper projectile point
36-029461	Historic refuse deposit
36-029462	Historic refuse deposit

Data from the SCCIC noted 15 cultural resources within the one-mile radius of the project; 14 are historic-period and 1 is prehistoric. None of the resources is located within the project parcel. The historic resources consist of 10 refuse scatters, 1 transmission line, 1 water cistern and sun-colored amethyst glass shard, and 2 isolated cans. The prehistoric resource is a complete jasper projectile point (36-029050). The nearest sites to the project are a large historic refuse deposit located within 500 feet to the northeast (36-004019) and a second refuse deposit (36-006533) located approximately 1,000 feet to the southeast. The prehistoric isolated projectile point was noted approximately 2,300 feet southwest of the project.

#### Reports

Data from the SCCIC indicate that there have been 25 previous cultural resource studies conducted in the records search area, two of which (SB-2128 and SB-3020) include the project. These studies are discussed below.

### **SB-2128**

This study was conducted in 1990 by Robert Parr as the *Archaeological Inventory, Testing, and Evaluation for the Southern California Edison Kramer-Victor 220 kV Transmission Line Project, San Bernardino County, California*. This study resulted in the identification of several cultural resources, none of which is within the project area (Parr et al. 1990).

### **SB-3020**

The 33-mile-long *Adelanto-Lugo Transmission Project Cultural Resources Assessment* was conducted in 1993 by LSA and resulted in the identification of 44 cultural resources, none of which is within the project area (Sturm, et al. 1993).

### **Additional Research**

Historic aerial photographs and topographic maps ranging from 1901 through the 2012 were reviewed. The 1952, 1968, 1994, 2005, and 2010 aerial photographs indicate that the parcel has remained undeveloped until the present time (Nationwide Environmental Title Research 1952, 1968, 1994, 2005, and 2010 available on [www.historicaerials.com](http://www.historicaerials.com)).

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SURVEY**

The entire property is undeveloped, vacant, and covered with natural vegetation. Ground surface visibility was good at 75 percent with several Joshua trees, numerous creosote bushes, and a sparse cover of dried xeric grasses. Several off-road vehicular dirt tracks wound through the project; an abundance of modern trash was noted alongside the tracks. No cultural resources were noted as a result of the surveys.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the various avenues of research for this assessment, no “historical resources,” as defined by CEQA, were encountered within the project area, and there is no evidence that cultural resources may be encountered during project construction. Therefore, LSA recommends to the City a finding of *No Impact* regarding cultural resources. No further cultural resources investigation and no mitigation measures (e.g., monitoring) are recommended for the project unless development plans undergo such changes as to include areas not covered by this study.

If buried cultural materials are encountered during earthmoving operations associated with the project, all work in that area shall be halted or diverted until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the finds.

In the event human remains are encountered, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to State Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. The County Coroner must be notified of the find immediately. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the County Coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), which will determine and notify a Most Likely Descendant (MLD). With the permission of the landowner or his/her authorized representative, the MLD may inspect the site of the discovery. The MLD shall complete the inspection and make recommendations or preferences for treatment within 48 hours of being granted access to the site. The recommendations may include scientific removal and nondestructive analysis of human remains and items associated with Native American burials, preservation of Native American human remains and associated items in place, relinquishment of Native American human remains and associated items to the descendants for treatment, or any other culturally appropriate treatment.



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