

July 29, 2022

Ms. Eliza Laws
Albert A. Webb Associates
3788 McCray Street
Riverside, CA 92506
Transmitted via email to eliza.laws@webbassociates.com

RE: Paleontological Technical Memorandum for the Duke Warehouse at
Patterson Avenue and Nance Street, City of Perris, Riverside County, California

Dear Ms. Laws,

At the request of Albert A. Webb Associates, Applied EarthWorks, Inc. (Æ) is providing this paleontological technical memorandum (memo) for the Duke Warehouse at Patterson Avenue and Nance Street in the City of Perris, Riverside County, California (Project). The Project will be constructed on 37.5 acres of mostly unimproved and vacant land on Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN) 314-153-015 through -040, -042, -044, -046, and -048, and 314-160-005 through -012, and -033.

Æ's scope of work included desktop review of geologic maps and paleontological literature, the geotechnical report for the Project, museum records searches, and preparation of this technical memo to summarize our findings. This memo was written by staff who satisfy the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) by meeting mitigation paleontology industrywide standards (Murphey et al., 2019) as well as qualifications standards of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, 2010). The City of Perris (City) is the lead agency for CEQA compliance.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

The Project area is 0.1 miles southwest of the March Air Reserve Base/Inland Port Airport and 0.2 miles east of Interstate 215 (Figure 1-1). The Project area is located within the northwest portion of the PVCCSP planning area, which encompasses more than five square miles and over 3,500 acres that is located in the northern end of the City. Specifically, the Project area is mapped within the northeast quadrant of Section 1, Township 4 South, Range 4 West, as shown on the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Steele Peak and Perris, California, 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle maps (Figure 1-2).

The proposed Project involves the construction and operation of a 769,668-square-foot building on the approximate 37.5-acre site. The building is proposed to accommodate 749,668 square feet of high-cube non-refrigerated warehouse distribution uses and 20,000 square feet for supporting office uses. Additionally, the Project will include approximately 168,406 square feet of landscaping, 366 automobile parking stalls, pedestrian sidewalks adjacent to Patterson Avenue and Nevada Avenue along the Project site's frontage, and infrastructural improvements within Patterson and Nevada Avenue rights of way.

On- and Off-site Infrastructure

- A new storm drain facility is proposed within Patterson Avenue right-of-way along the Project site's frontage and continuing north to a connection point beneath Harley Knox Boulevard.



- A new storm drain facility is proposed within Nevada Avenue right-of-way along the Project site's frontage from California Avenue and continuing to a connection point beneath Harley Knox Boulevard;
- A new storm drain extension is proposed to connect an existing facility in Patterson Avenue to the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (RCFCWCD) Lateral B-Stage 4 facility that was previously evaluated in the 1991 Perris Valley Master Drainage Plan Initial Study and Negative Declaration (State Clearinghouse No. 91042072). Therefore, potential paleontological resource impacts resulting from the proposed facility was evaluated under separate cover.
- A new recycled water line that will serve the Project site is proposed within Patterson Avenue between the existing line just north of Markham Street north to Nance Street and is the responsibility of another developer under City Case No. DPR 22-00003. Therefore, potential paleontological resource impacts resulting from the proposed recycled water line will be evaluated by their developer constructing this segment of the line.
- Patterson Avenue will be improved with curb, gutter, and sidewalk along the Project site frontage;
- Nevada Street along the Project site's frontage will be improved with curb, gutter, and sidewalk and paved with 38-feet of asphalt;
- A new sewer line is proposed within Nevada Avenue from the Project site to Harley Knox Boulevard.
- Repaving portions of Patterson Avenue from the Project site frontage to Harley Knox Boulevard is assumed as well as new pavement in Nevada Avenue between the Project site and Harley Knox Boulevard.

The Project also proposes a specific plan amendment to amend the PVCCSP Circulation Plan to reflect the vacation of two planned streets: California Avenue and Nance Street between Patterson Avenue and Nevada Avenue and a tentative parcel map to merge all parcels into one and vacate the two planned streets within the Project site. Most of the net 35.7-acre Project area is generally flat and vacant and dominated by fallow croplands. However, approximately 2.7 acres in the northwest corner of the Project (APNs 314-153-019 through -021) are currently utilized for semi-truck trailer storage. Grading and other earthwork are anticipated throughout the Project area. Specifically, the depths of proposed excavations are:

- 4 feet below ground surface (bgs) for building pads;
- 12 feet bgs for underground water quality chambers;
- 11–13 feet bgs for various storm drains and/or sewer line

REGULATORY CONTEXT

This Project is subject to both state laws and local goals and policies. The following section provides an overview of the relevant laws and regulations.



State

At the state level, paleontological resources are protected under CEQA, which requires detailed studies that analyze the environmental effects of a proposed project. If a project is determined to have a potential significant environmental effect, the act requires that alternative plans and mitigation measures be considered. Specifically, Section VII(f) of Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Environmental Checklist Form, poses the question, “Will the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?” If paleontological resources are identified as being within the proposed project area, the sponsoring agency must take those resources into consideration when evaluating project effects. The level of consideration may vary with the importance of the resource.

Local

The *City of Perris General Plan, Conservation Element* includes Policy IV.A and associated Implementation Measure IV.A.4, which address the protection of paleontological resources (City of Perris, 2008:47):

- **IV.A.4:** In Area 1 and Area 2 shown on the Paleontological Sensitivity Map, paleontologic [sic] monitoring of all projects requiring subsurface excavations will be required once any excavation begins. In Areas 4 and 5, paleontologic [sic] monitoring will be required once subsurface excavations reach five feet in depth, with monitoring levels reduced if appropriate, at the discretion of a certified Project Paleontologist.

The Project area falls within the City’s *Perris Valley Commerce Center Specific Plan*. According to the *Final Environmental Impact Report* (PVCCSP FEIR) for this specific plan, Mitigation Measure (MM) Cultural 5 details procedures for mitigation of paleontological resources (City of Perris, 2011:11.0-10–11.0-11):

- **MM Cultural 5:** Prior to grading for projects requiring subsurface excavation that exceeds five (5) feet in depth, proponents of the subject implementing development projects shall retain a professional paleontologist to verify implementation of the mitigation measures identified in the approved Phase I Cultural Resources Study and to monitor the subsurface excavation that exceed five (5) feet in depth. Selection of the paleontologist shall be subject to the approval of the City of Perris Planning Manager and no grading activities shall occur at the site until the paleontologist has been approved by the City.

Monitoring should be restricted to undisturbed subsurface areas of older alluvium, which might be present below the surface. The paleontologist shall be prepared to quickly salvage fossils as they are unearthed to avoid construction delays. The paleontologist shall also remove samples of sediments which are likely to contain the remains of small fossil invertebrates and vertebrates. The paleontologist shall have the power to temporarily halt or divert grading equipment to allow for removal of abundant or large specimens.

Collected samples of sediments shall be washed to recover small invertebrate and vertebrate fossils. Recovered specimens shall be prepared so that they can be identified and permanently preserved. Specimens shall be identified and curated and placed into an accredited repository (such as the Western Science Center or the Riverside Metropolitan Museum) with permanent curation and retrievable storage.



A report of findings, including an itemized inventory of recovered specimens, shall be prepared upon completion of the steps outlined above. The report shall include a discussion of the significance of all recovered specimens. The report and inventory, when submitted to the City of Perris Planning Division, will signify completion of the program to mitigate impacts to paleontological resources.

PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCE POTENTIAL

Most professional paleontologists in California adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (2010) to determine the course of paleontological mitigation for a given project unless specific city, county, state, or federal guidelines are available. The City has developed its own paleontological sensitivity map, which divides the City of Perris and its immediate vicinity into five areas based on the geologic units exposed at or near the surface (City of Perris, 2008). Locations within Areas #1 and #2 are ranked High Sensitivity because of Pleistocene-age older valley or older fan deposits, respectively. Igneous rocks, such as California batholith granitics and tonalites, comprise Low Sensitivity Area #3. Areas #4 and #5 are ranked Low to High Sensitivity as the geologic units therein are low potential younger alluvium overlying higher potential older valley alluvium or older fan alluvium, respectively, at depth. In these areas, the potential for impacts to fossil resources increases with depth from low to high potential as an excavation reaches and exceeds 5 feet below ground surface (City of Perris, 2008).

METHODOLOGY

To assess the paleontological sensitivity of geologic units mapped at the ground surface and those likely to occur in the subsurface of the Project area, Æ completed a desktop study. Sources consulted were published geologic maps and paleontological literature, the geotechnical report for the Project, and museum records searches. For the records searches, Æ retained the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (NHMLAC) and the Western Science Center (WSC) in Hemet, California, to conduct a search of fossil localities recorded in their collections (Bell, 2021; Radford, 2021a).

To augment these results, Æ also conducted searches of the online Paleobiology Database (PBDB) and the University of California Museum of Paleontology (UCMP). The PBDB lists a large collection of museum records and publications of fossil material, while the UCMP is the largest repository of fossils on the West Coast of the United States with an older history of collection than several other regional natural history museums.

RESOURCE CONTEXT

The Project area is within the northern portion of the Peninsular Ranges Geomorphic Province, which extends 125 miles south from the Transverse Ranges through the Los Angeles Basin to Baja California. A geomorphic province is a region of unique topography and geology that is distinguished from other regions based on its landforms and tectonic history (American Geological Institute, 1976). The Peninsular Ranges comprise a series of mountain ranges separated by northwest-trending valleys formed from faults branching from the San Andreas Fault (Norris and Webb, 1976; California Geological Survey, 2002). The mountain ranges are bounded to the east by the Colorado Desert and range in width from 30 to 100 miles (Norris and Webb, 1976). The Project area is located within the central part of the



Perris Block, a relatively stable rectangular structural unit positioned between the Elsinore and San Jacinto fault zones (Morton et al., 2003; Morton et al., 2006a).

The basement rocks in this region are part of a large assemblage known as the Peninsular Ranges Assemblage. Rocks of the assemblage date from the Paleozoic Era¹ to the present, with most associated with the Mesozoic-age² Peninsular Ranges batholith, as well as prebatholithic metasedimentary and metavolcanic rocks into which the batholith was emplaced (Jahns, 1954; Morton et al., 2006b). Cenozoic-age³ sedimentary rocks and deposits, mostly dating to the Quaternary Period, form thick deposits that rest unconformably above the basement rocks in the vicinity of the Project area (Morton et al., 2006a).

The surficial geology of the Project area is mapped entirely as early to middle Pleistocene-age very old alluvial fan deposits (Qvof_a, subscript “a” denotes “arenaceous,” which refers to “very coarse sand through very fine sand or sand-bearing”) that are part of the alluvial fan complexes that originate on the south flanks of the San Gabriel and San Bernardino mountains and dominate the Perris Valley (Morton et al., 2003; Morton et al., 2006a). The Qvof_a deposits include moderately consolidated to well-consolidated silt, sand, gravel, and conglomerate with subunits divided on the basis of soil profile development. The arenaceous Qvof deposits typically consist of medium to dark reddish-brown lithic arkose (feldspar-rich) (Morton et al., 2006b).

The geotechnical investigations for the Project confirm the presence of older alluvial deposits in the Project area (Frias and Trazo, 2021). Specifically, a total of 10 hollow-stem auger borings were conducted to depths of approximately 10–30 feet bgs throughout the Project area. The investigations encountered old alluvial deposits in all borings; however, one boring at the southeast corner indicated the presence of artificial fill to a depth of approximately 4.5 feet bgs and another boring at the northwest corner indicated the presence of possible fill to a depth of approximately 6.5 feet bgs. The older alluvial deposits were observed immediately below the fill and possible fill at these locations. These deposits include medium dense to dense silty fine sands, medium dense to very dense fine to medium sands, and very dense silty fine to coarse sands consistent with the descriptions of unit Qvof by Morton et al. (2003) and Morton et al. (2006b).

While fill does not preserve intact and significant fossils, Pleistocene-age alluvial deposits such as those mapped and encountered in geotechnical borings within the Project area have proven to be highly fossiliferous elsewhere in inland valleys of Riverside and San Bernardino counties (Reynolds and Reynolds, 1991) and have yielded a wide variety of Pleistocene megafauna, such as mammoths, ground sloths, dire wolves, saber-toothed cats, horses, camels, and bison as well as numerous invertebrate and plant taxa (Scott, 2007; Springer et al., 2009).

RECORDS SEARCH RESULTS

¹ Paleozoic Era: Approximately 541 to 252 million years ago (Cohen et al., 2021).

² Mesozoic Era: Approximately 252 to 66 million years ago (Cohen et al., 2021).

³ Cenozoic Era (formerly Tertiary): 66 million years ago to present, including the Quaternary Period (2.6 million years ago to present). The Quaternary Period is subdivided into the Pleistocene and Holocene epochs; Pleistocene Epoch, or last Ice Age, lasted from approximately 2.6 million to 11,700 years ago when the Holocene Epoch began (Cohen et al., 2021).



Records search results from NHMLAC, WSC, and other institutions are detailed in Table 1. Bell (2021) reports no fossil localities from the NHMLAC collections within the Project area. However, she lists a few nearby localities from unknown depths likely within Pleistocene-age alluvial deposits similar to those mapped either at the surface or likely at depth in the Project area.

The closest locality to the Project area is LACM VP 6059 south-southwest of the Project area in the overflow area just east-southeast of Lake Elsinore, which yielded an unspecified camel specimen (Camelidae). The next-closest is LACM VP 1207 northwest of the Project area, on the east side of a sewage disposal plant approximately 1 mile north-northwest of the city of Corona. This locality yielded a specimen from the cattle family (Bovidae). Following that, LACM VP 7261 is slightly farther from the Project area to the southeast at Skinner Reservoir in Auld Valley, which yielded a specimen of the elephant order (Proboscidea) and an unspecified ungulate. Locality LACM VP 7456 is still farther south-southeast from the Project area near Highway 79 and Butterfield Stage Road in the city of Temecula. This locality yielded specimens of garter snake (*Thamnophis*), pocket gopher (*Thomomys*), deer mouse (*Peromyscus*), and various snails (Gastropoda). The depths of these finds are unknown, although they likely came from subsurface contexts since they were encountered during earth-moving construction activities. The farthest localities from the Project area are LACM VP 7268, 7271, and LACM VP 7508. The first two of these three localities is northwest of the Project area near the Sundance Condominiums in Chino Hills, which yielded a specimen of horse (*Equus*). LACM VP 7508, also northwest of the Project area in Chino Hills, near the intersection of Vellano Club Drive and Palmero Drive, yielded specimens of ground sloth (*Nothrotheriops*), horse (*Equus*), and a member of the elephant order (Proboscidea).

Radford (2021a) also reports no fossil localities from the WSC collections within the Project area or within a 1-mile-wide radius. However, she notes that Pleistocene-age alluvial deposits in Southern California are well documented and known to contain abundant fossils, including megafauna, such as Columbian mammoth (*Mammuthus columbi*), Pacific mastodon (*Mammut pacificus*), saber-toothed cat (*Smilodon fatalis*), and ancient horse (*Equus*), as well as microfauna. A WSC search for another recent project in nearby San Jacinto listed hundreds of fossils localities from the Eastside Pipeline portion of the Diamond Valley Lake Project approximately 17 miles southeast of the Project area (Radford, 2021b). These localities yielded numerous specimens of megafauna, including camel (*Camelops*) and horse (*Equus*), as well as many microfauna specimens.

Table 1
Fossil Localities Reported Near the Project Area

Locality No.	Geologic Unit (Date)	Taxa	Depth	Approx. Distance from Project Area
PBDB ¹ —Lakeview localities	Alluvial deposits (Pleistocene)	<i>Mammuthus</i> (mammoth) <i>Smilodon</i> (saber-toothed cat) <i>Equus</i> (horse) <i>Bison</i> sp. cf. <i>B. antiquus</i> (bison) Numerous other vertebrates, invertebrates, and plants	Unknown	8 miles
LACM ² VP 6059	Unknown formation (Pleistocene)	Camelidae (camel)	Unknown	12 miles



Table 1
Fossil Localities Reported Near the Project Area

Locality No.	Geologic Unit (Date)	Taxa	Depth	Approx. Distance from Project Area
UCMP ³ —Lake Elsinore localities	Alluvial deposits (Pleistocene)	<i>Pinus</i> (pine) <i>Salix</i> (willow) <i>Acer</i> (maple) <i>Eriogonum</i> (buckwheat) <i>Ambrosia</i> (ragweed) Numerous other plants	Unknown	12 miles
WSC ⁴ —Eastside Pipeline of Diamond Valley Lake Project, hundreds of localities	Alluvial deposits (Pleistocene)	<i>Camelops</i> (camel) <i>Equus</i> (horse) Numerous other megafauna and microfauna	Unknown	17 miles
LACM ² VP 1207	Unknown formation (Pleistocene)	Bovidae (bovid)	Unknown	18 miles
LACM ² VP 7261	Unknown formation, arenaceous silt (Pleistocene)	Proboscidea (elephant order) Ungulate, unspecified	Unknown	20 miles
LACM ² VP 7456	Alluvium—interbedded silty clay, sandy silt, and silty to coarse-grained sand (likely Pleistocene)	<i>Thamnophis</i> (garter snake) <i>Thomomys</i> (pocket gopher) <i>Peromyscus</i> (deer mouse) Gastropoda (snails)	Unknown, but collected during earth-moving activities for building construction	22 miles
LACM ² VP 7268, 7271	Unknown formation (Pleistocene)	<i>Equus</i> (horse)	Unknown	23 miles
LACM ² VP 7508	Unknown formation (Pleistocene)	<i>Nothrotheriops</i> (ground sloth) <i>Equus</i> (horse) Proboscidea (elephant order)	Unknown	23 miles

Sources: ¹PBDB, ²Bell (2021), ³UCMP, ⁴Radford (2021b).

The PBDB online database does not list any fossil localities from Pleistocene-age alluvial deposits within the Project area but shows numerous localities approximately 8 miles to the east near the community of Lakeview. These localities, documented in Reynolds and Reynolds (1991), yielded mammoth (*Mammuthus*), saber-toothed cat (*Smilodon*), horse (*Equus*), bison (*Bison* sp. cf. *B. antiquus*), and numerous small mammals, reptiles, invertebrates, and plants. The database does not provide any information on the depths at which these fossils were recovered. The PBDB also lists the extensive Diamond Valley Lake localities reported by the WSC, which are documented in Springer et al. (2009).

The UCMP's online database does not list any fossil localities from Pleistocene-age alluvial deposits within the Project area but shows numerous localities approximately 12 miles to the southwest near Lake Elsinore. These localities yielded over 450 pollen and seed specimens representing dozens of gymnosperm and angiosperm taxa including pine (*Pinus*), willow (*Salix*), maple (*Acer*), buckwheat (*Eriogonum*), ragweed (*Ambrosia*), and many others. The database does not provide any information on the depths at which these fossils were recovered.



FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Æ used the City's (2008) sensitivity criteria to determine the paleontological potential of the Project area. When placed over the City's (2008) paleontological sensitivity map, the Project area is mapped in Area #1 (High Sensitivity). Æ's desktop efforts and the museum and online records searches support this assignment, since early to middle Pleistocene-age old alluvial fan deposits are mapped across the entire ground surface. The findings from the geotechnical investigations also confirm the presence of these deposits either exposed at the ground surface or below fill at a depth of 6.5 feet bgs in the Project area. As documented in the previous section, such deposits are well-known to preserve scientifically significant fossils. Based on the proposed depths of Project-related ground-disturbing activities, there is a high likelihood that all activities could potentially impact the old alluvial fan deposits and any fossil resources preserved within them, if present. All activities other than excavation of grading pads will occur at depths greater than 6.5 feet bgs; however, excavation of grading pads in subareas without fill would still impact the old alluvial-fan deposits at 4 feet bgs.

In accordance with the City's (2008) Implementation Measure IV.A.4, Æ recommends paleontological monitoring during all ground disturbance in the Project area. Æ also recommends Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training for construction workers prior to ground disturbance in accordance with industrywide best practices. The WEAP training is a low-cost, proven tool to augment the number of on-site monitors while helping to ensure that nonrenewable paleontological resources are identified and treated properly during construction.

It has been a pleasure assisting you with this Project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (626) 578-0119 x403.

Sincerely,

Chris Shi, M.A.
Senior Paleontologist
Applied EarthWorks, Inc.

Edited and Approved By:

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