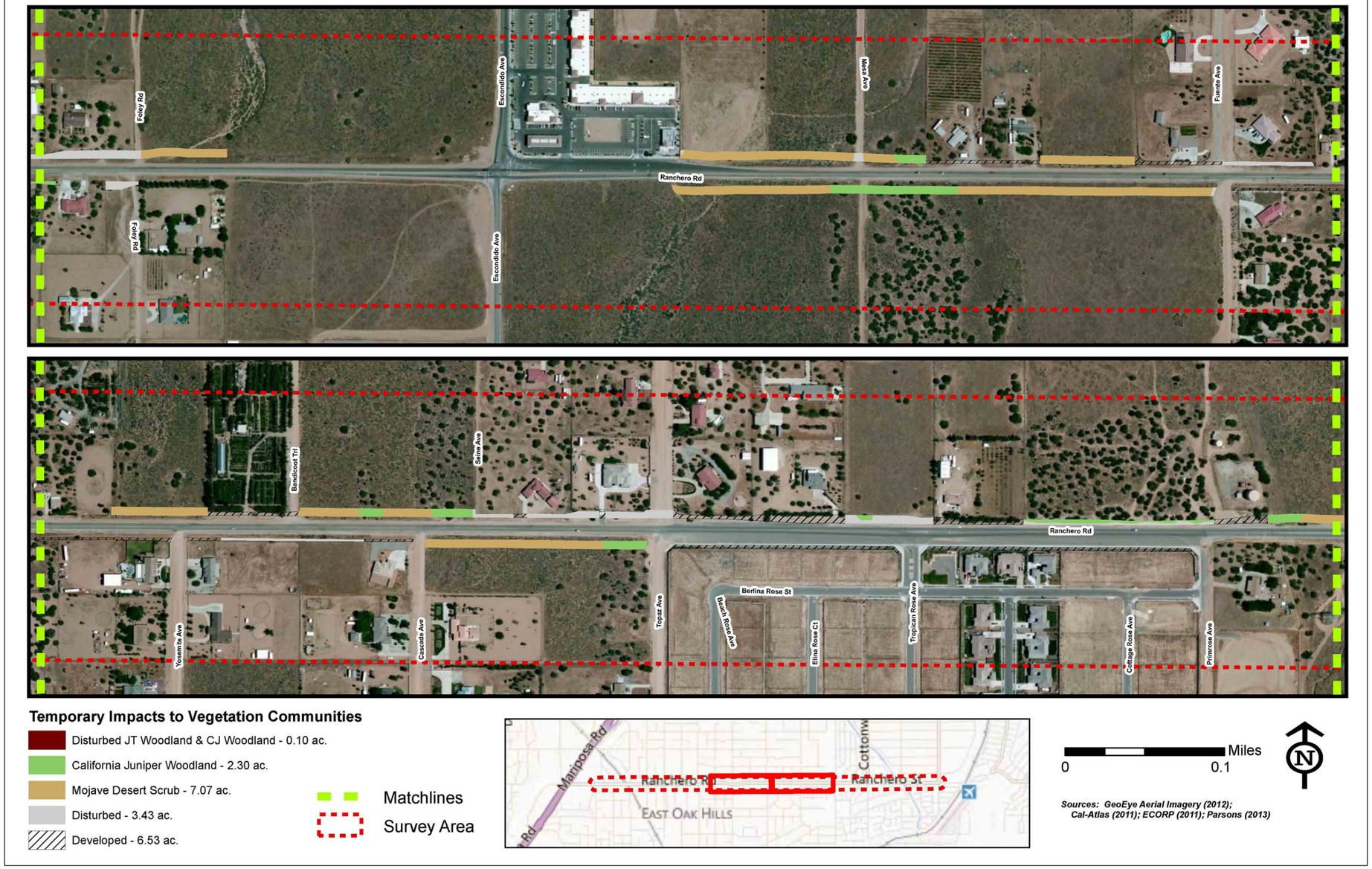

Figure 2.4-2 Map of Temporary Impacts to Vegetation Communities (page 2 of 3)

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Figure 2.4-2 Map of Temporary Impacts to Vegetation Communities (page 3 of 3)

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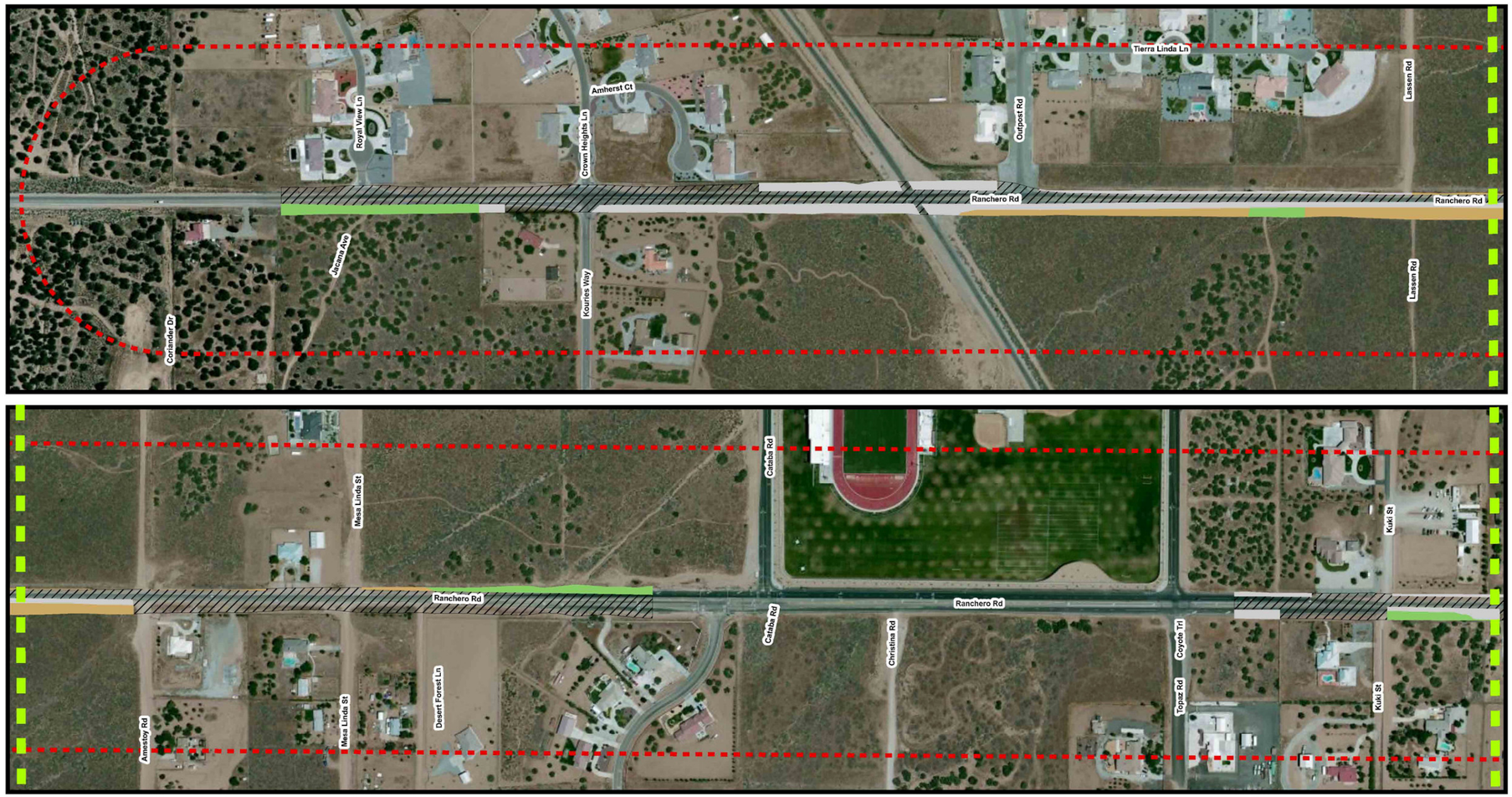

Figure 2.4-3 Map of Permanent Impacts to Vegetation Communities (page 1 of 3)

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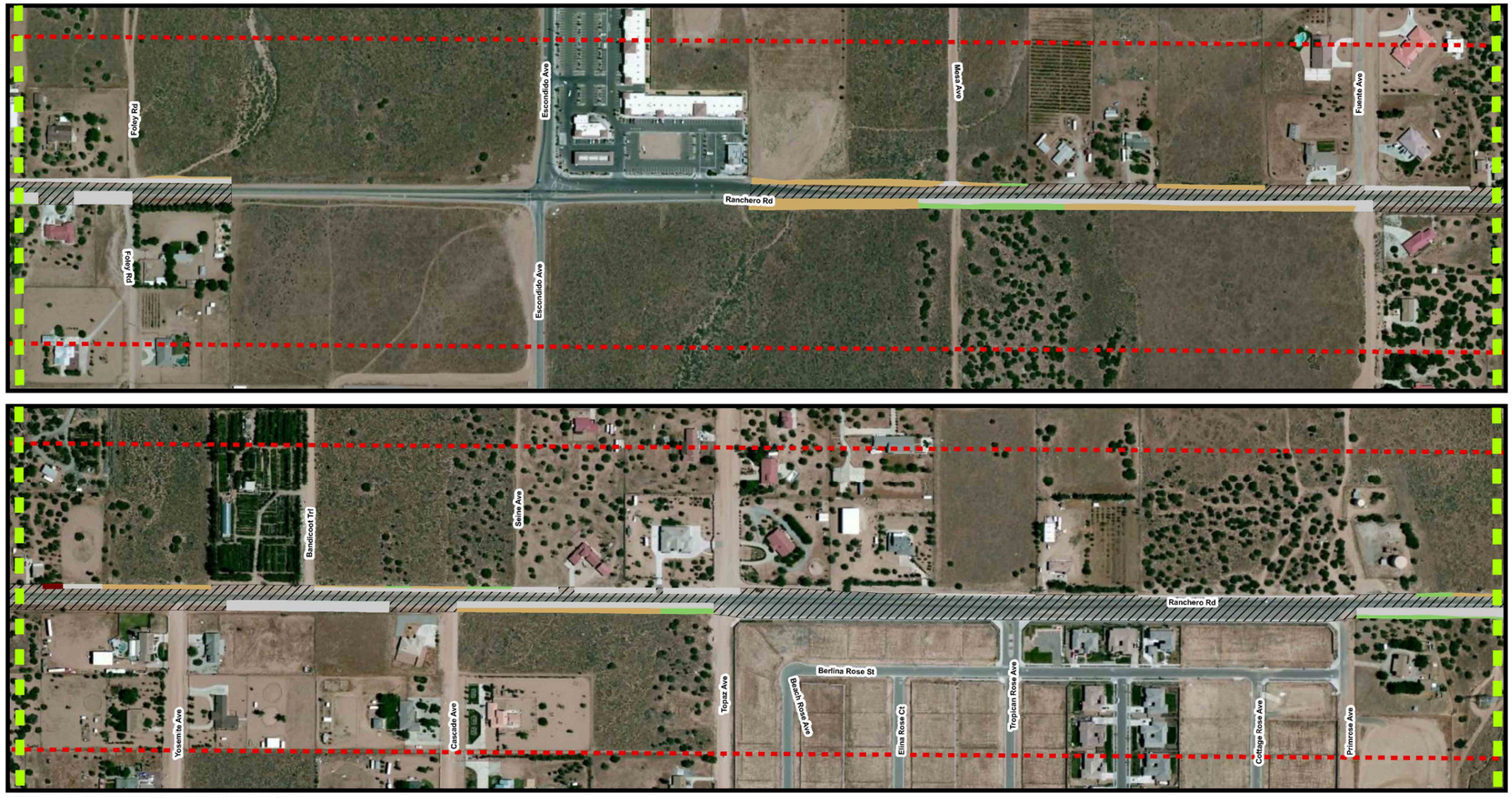

Figure 2.4-3 Map of Permanent Impacts to Vegetation Communities (page 2 of 3)

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Figure 2.4-3 Map of Permanent Impacts to Vegetation Communities (page 3 of 3)

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Candidate, Sensitive, and Special-Status Species

Sensitive Plant Species

Only one special-status species was observed in the project area during the project's focused rare plant survey; however, there is suitable habitat for seven sensitive plant species. These species are discussed individually below.

Sagebrush loeflingia (*Loeflingia squarrosa* var. *artemisiarum*) has suitable habitat in the project area and was observed in three separate locations along the project corridor during focused rare plant surveys. This species has a moderate potential to occur, with a record occurrence 6.3 miles north of the project's western terminus (CNDDB, 2009).

Sagebrush loeflingia was observed during the field survey in three separate locations along the project corridor; however, it is not classified as rare, threatened, or endangered by state law according to the most recent State and Federally Listed Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Plants of California list (CDFW, 2013). Therefore, based on these studies, the City and County do not anticipate impacts to any plant species that would require further analysis, permitting, or mitigation.

Mojave milkweed (*Asclepias nyctaginifolia*) has limited suitable habitat within the project area. This species has a moderate potential to occur, with the closest record occurring 4 miles southwest of the project (CNDDB, 2009). No impacts to this species are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

Booth's evening primrose (*Camissonia boothii* ssp. *boothii*) has suitable habitat in the project area. This species has a high potential to occur, and a record exists 3 miles northeast of the project (CNDDB, 2009). Through implementation of avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures, less than significant impacts to this species are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

Pygmy poppy (*Canbya candida*) has suitable habitat in the project area. This species has a high potential to occur, and a record exists 1-mile south of the project area (CNDDB, 2009). Less than significant impacts to this species are anticipated as a result of the proposed project through implementation of avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

White-bracted spineflower (*Chorizanthe xanti* var. *leucotheca*) has suitable habitat in the project area. This species has a low potential to occur, with the closest record 9.9

miles southwest of the project's western terminus (CNDDB, 2009). No impacts to this species are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

Short-joint beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris* var. *brachyclada*) has suitable habitat in the project area. This species has a high potential to occur, and a record exists 1-mile southeast of the project's eastern terminus (CNDDB, 2009). The species would likely have been observed during the field visit if present because it is a shrub species. Through implementation of avoidance and minimization measures, the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts to this species.

Golden violet (*Viola aurea*) has limited suitable habitat within the project area. This species has a moderate potential to occur, and a record exists 4 miles southwest of the project's western terminus in the Cajon Pass region (CNDDB, 2009). No impacts to this species are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

Sensitive Animal Species

Of the 21 species documented by the CNDDB, suitable habitat is present for only 9 sensitive animal species, which are discussed individually below.

Reptiles

Desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) habitat in the project area is relatively small and marginal, with several disturbances, including urban developments, foot traffic, trash dumping, and vehicle traffic. Even though there is natural habitat present within the project area, the surrounding area is developed with residential and commercial properties with little remaining undisturbed desert vegetation. The project area is effectively within an island of habitat that has very tenuous connectivity to any large open space areas with high-quality habitat. No desert tortoises or desert tortoise sign were observed during the habitat assessment, and the species is presumed to be extirpated from the project area. No records of desert tortoise were found in Hesperia in the CNDDB, and the nearest record was in northern Adelanto, more than 13 miles northwest of the project area. For these reasons, no impacts to Desert tortoises are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

San Diego coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillei*) has suitable habitat within the project area, with the closest known record located 3.5 miles southwest of the western terminus of the project area (CNDDB, 2009). This species has a high potential to occur. Less than significant impacts are expected as a result of the proposed project.

Coastal western whiptail (*Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri*) has suitable habitat within the project area, with the closest known record located 8 miles southwest of the western terminus of the project area (CNDDB, 2009). This species has a moderate potential to occur. Less than significant impacts are expected as a result of the proposed project.

Birds

Cooper's hawk *(Accipiter cooperii)* has no suitable nesting habitat within the project area, and the closest known record is located 2 miles north of the project area (CNDDB, 2009). This species may hunt for prey within habitats found within the project area; however, this species has a low potential to occur. No impact to this species is anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

Burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) has suitable open scrub habitats and grassland within the project area. No burrowing owls or burrowing owl burrows were observed during the habitat suitability assessment; however, there are multiple occurrences of burrowing owl within 10 miles of the project area, and several locations within 5 miles of the project area. The nearest recorded concentrations of owls are located 6 to 7 miles northwest of the project area (CNDDB, 2009). Although no burrowing owls seem to be currently present within the project area, the area supports suitable habitat and potential burrow locations for this species; therefore, the burrowing owl has a high potential to occur.

However, although the site does support suitable habitat for burrowing owl, its isolation and high level of disturbance lead to the conclusion that this species is not likely to occur within the project area. The impact areas are within existing City/County ROW and private property. Because the impact area is adjacent to an urban arterial roadway, much of the proposed project area is currently being utilized as a shoulder by vehicles and commercial trucks. For these reasons, it is unlikely that any listed species, including burrowing owl, occupy vegetation within the project impact area. This species is not expected to be present within the project area; however, preconstruction surveys will be conducted to confirm absence of burrowing owl as detailed below.

As specified in BIO-6, a preconstruction survey for burrowing owl shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than thirty (30) days prior to ground-disturbing activities to determine the presence or absence of burrowing owls on the site. If there are resident owls found during the preconstruction survey, then the City of Hesperia

will develop a Burrowing Owl Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (BOMMP) and work with CDFW to determine and implement measures to minimize impacts.

Should occupied burrowing owl burrows be directly impacted, less than significant impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed project through implementation of avoidance and minimization measures as detailed in measure BIO-6.

Le Conte's thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*) has suitable habitat within the project area. The closest known record is located 3.25 miles northeast of the eastern terminus of the project area (CNDDB, 2009); therefore, this species has a high potential to occur. Through implementation of Measure BIO-4, less than significant impacts to this species are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

Gray vireo (*Vireo vicinior*) has suitable habitat within the project area. The closest known record is located 1.25 miles east of the eastern terminus of the project area (CNDDB, 2009); therefore, this species has a high potential to occur. Through implementation of Measure BIO-4, less than significant impacts to this species are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

Mammals

Mohave ground squirrel *(Spermophilus mohavensis)* has only marginal habitat present within the project area, with very limited connectivity to other fragmented habitat within urban portions of Hesperia and Apple Valley. Nearly all of the historic sightings of Mohave ground squirrel date back more than 30 years. The one most recent sighting is separated from the project area by large tracts of developed residential properties. Although the site does support natural desert habitat, its isolation, lack of constituent habitat elements for the Mohave ground squirrel, and lack of nearby recent sightings lead to the conclusion that the squirrel would not occur within the project area. No impact to this species is anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

American badger *(Taxidea taxus)* has suitable habitat within the project area, but no observations of this species have been documented in the nearby vicinity. Additionally, the surrounding region is fragmented into smaller pieces that are not suitable to the badger's needs; therefore, this species has a low potential to occur. No impacts to this species are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

Wetlands and Riparian Habitat

Impacts to wetlands and riparian habitat are consider less than significant with incorporated mitigation, as described in Section 2.4.6.

The biological resources survey report concluded that Mojave desert scrub is the predominant natural habitat within the project area. This habitat, as well as others identified during the biology study, does not have special status with USFWS or CDFW. Based on these findings, the project will not impact any special-status habitats.

As discussed above, several potential drainages are present in the area. A jurisdictional delineation was completed for potential wetlands, waters of the U.S., and CDFW jurisdictional streambeds. Based on the jurisdictional delineation, there are potentially 0.232-acre of waters of the U.S. and waters of the State, and 0.723-acre of CDFW jurisdictional streambed within the project study area. The results of the jurisdictional delineation conducted for the project is preliminary until coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers occurs during the final design phase of the project to concur with the identified jurisdictional waters within the project area and issue a Jurisdictional Determination.

One riparian vegetation community was detected (southern willow scrub); although willows are an indicator of wetland hydrology, the presence of willows does not constitute a sole indicator of the presence of a wetland based on the features and criteria to be considered a wetland as defined by USACE. No wetlands were observed in the project area. The proposed project, as currently designed, would result in the impacts summarized in Table 2.4-4 and depicted in Figures 2.4-4 through 2.4-6.

Table 2.4-4 Impacts to Jurisdictional Waters

Jurisdiction	Total Acreage within Project Area	Acres Impacted	Linear Feet Impacted
USACE (CWA 404)	0.232	0.025	264
RWQCB (CWA 401)	0.232	0.025	264
CDFW (1600)	0.723	0.080	N/A

Preliminary analysis indicates that impacts to waters of the U.S. consist of 0.019-acre, waters of the State consist of 0.169-acre, and RWQCB jurisdictional areas consist of 0.019-acre. As indicated in Table 2.4-4 and Figures 2.4-4 through 2.4-6, the project may potentially impact jurisdictional waters if proper measures are not incorporated into the project. Mitigation measures to minimize these impacts are described later in this section. The City would be required to obtain Section 404, 401, and 1602 permits

from USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW, respectively, prior to construction within jurisdictional areas. Coordination would occur with the appropriate resource agencies to ensure their concurrence of the proposed mitigation measures for the project.

Wildlife Crossings

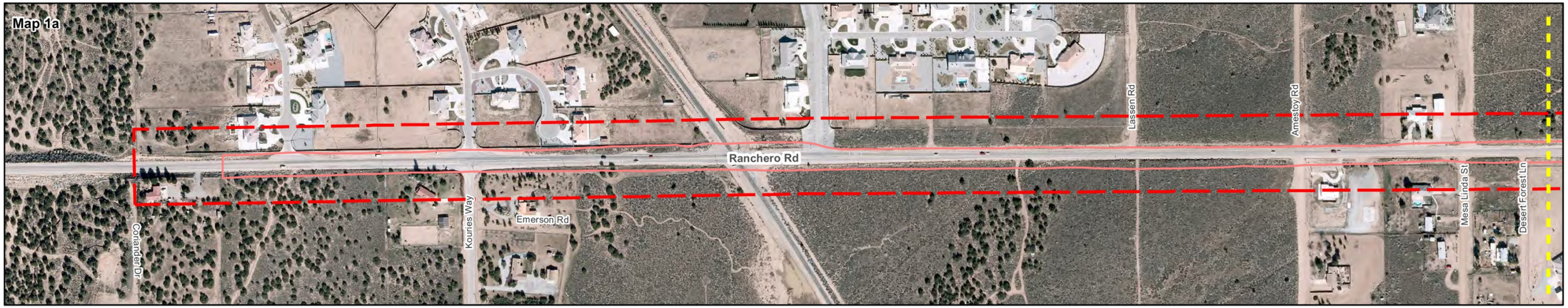
The wildlife crossings in the project area would consist of three primary drainages. Due to the size and vegetation located within these drainages, the crossings onsite are expected to be suitable for small- to medium-sized mammals, such as coyotes, striped skunks, and opossums. The drainage would serve as a crossing from habitat patches to the Mojave River. As described in the Biological Resources Survey, wildlife likely cross Ranchero Road at many different locations along its length, with no preference being clear. The project occurs along an existing roadway; therefore, it is not expected to interfere with existing wildlife movement and would have a less than significant impact on this resource.

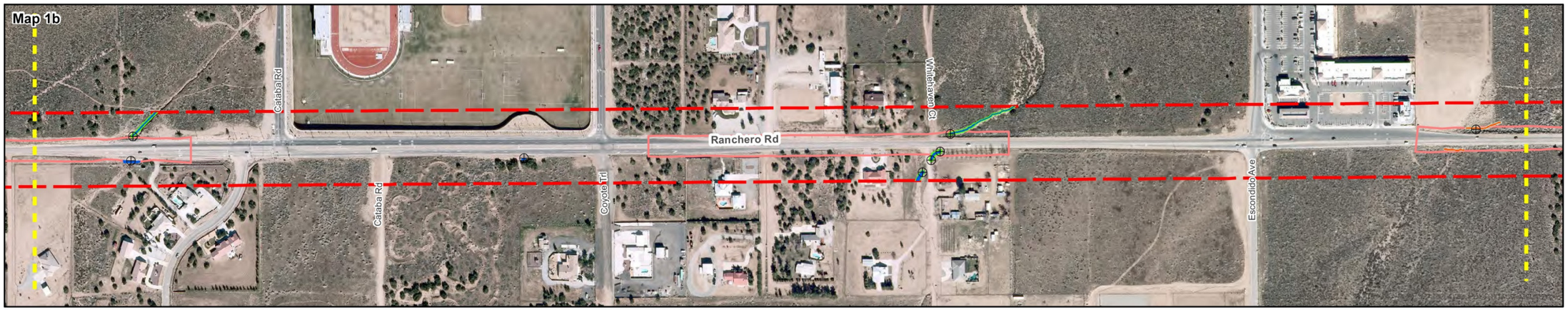
Conformity with Biological Resource Policies and Ordinances

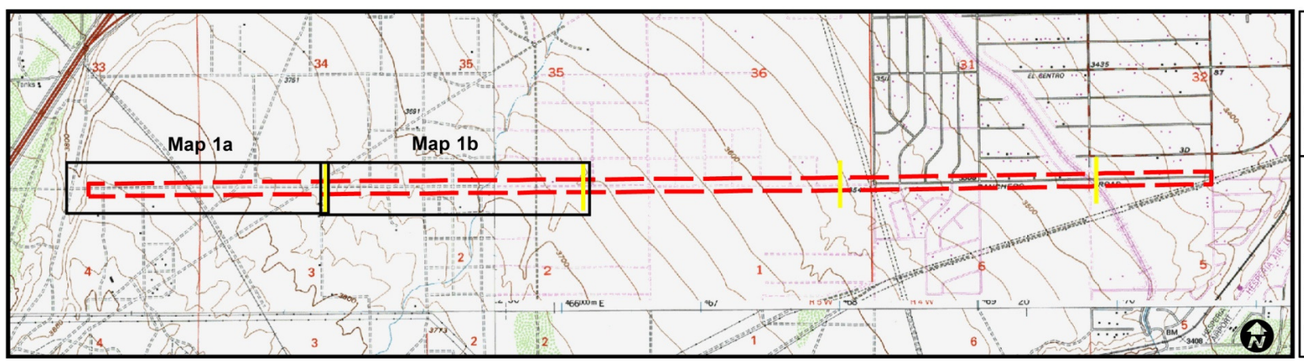
The property contains California juniper and Joshua trees, which are protected under the City of Hesperia Municipal Code. Title 16 Development Code, Chapter 16.24 Protected Plants requires that: "land use applications, building permits, and all other development permits (e.g., grading, mobile home set downs), shall consider and include a review of any proposed native tree or plant removal" (City of Hesperia, 1997). Trees that must be inventoried include any desert native trees and/or plants with stems 2 inches or greater in diameter or a height of 6 ft or greater, including the aforementioned species. All plants protected by the State Desert Native Plants Act and all riparian vegetation (within 200 ft of a stream) must also be inventoried (City of Hesperia, 2007). The proposed project will also conform to the County of San Bernardino's goals as identified in the County's General Plan (2007) under *Desert Region Goals and Policies of the Conservation Element*.

Conformity with Habitat Conservation Plans

The City, along with the BLM, County of San Bernardino, City of Victorville, and other local jurisdictions, have been involved in the process of approving a Section 10 Habitat Conservation Plan for the Western Mojave Desert, also known as the West Mojave Plan. The Plan would provide protection of various plant and wildlife species and set aside conservation areas within the Mojave Desert. To date (August 2012), the Plan has not been approved. However, the proposed project is consistent with the West Mojave Plan as currently drafted. No other biological plans exist in the vicinity. The project would result in no impacts to approved habitat conservation plans, nor the proposed West Mojave Plan.







FEATURE SUMMARY [1]

CLASSIFICATION	EXISTING ACREAGE	EXISTING LINEAR FT	IMPACTED ACREAGE	IMPACTED LINEAR FT
ACoE Waters of the U.S.:				
Ephemeral Stream	0.211	1988	0.025	264
Erosional Feature	0.021	231	0.016	174
TOTAL [2]	0.232	2219	0.041	438

CLASSIFICATION	EXISTING ACREAGE	EXISTING LINEAR FT	IMPACTED ACREAGE	IMPACTED LINEAR FT
CDFW Habitat:				
Detention Basin	0.056	Linear Feet Not Applicable	0.031	Linear Feet Not Applicable
Disturbed Wetland	0.018		0.009	
Man-made Ditch	0.138		0.000	
Southern Willow Scrub	0.002		0.000	
Streambed	0.376		0.040	
TOTAL [2]	0.590		0.080	

Other Features

- Soil Point
- Corrugated Steel Pipe
- Matchlines
- Grading Limits
- Survey Area

[1] All mapped features have been clipped to survey area boundary and represent "Existing Acreage". Areas within grading limits represent "Impacted Acreage".

[2] ACoE and CDFW wetland areas may overlap. Acreage summaries must be evaluated independently or topological errors may occur.

Scale in Feet
0 200 400

1 inch = 400 feet
1 inch = 0.08 miles
1 centimeter = 48 meters

Figure 2.4-4 Impacts to Jurisdictional Waters

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