

LDC24-00015

NV Energy Utility Corridor - Appeal

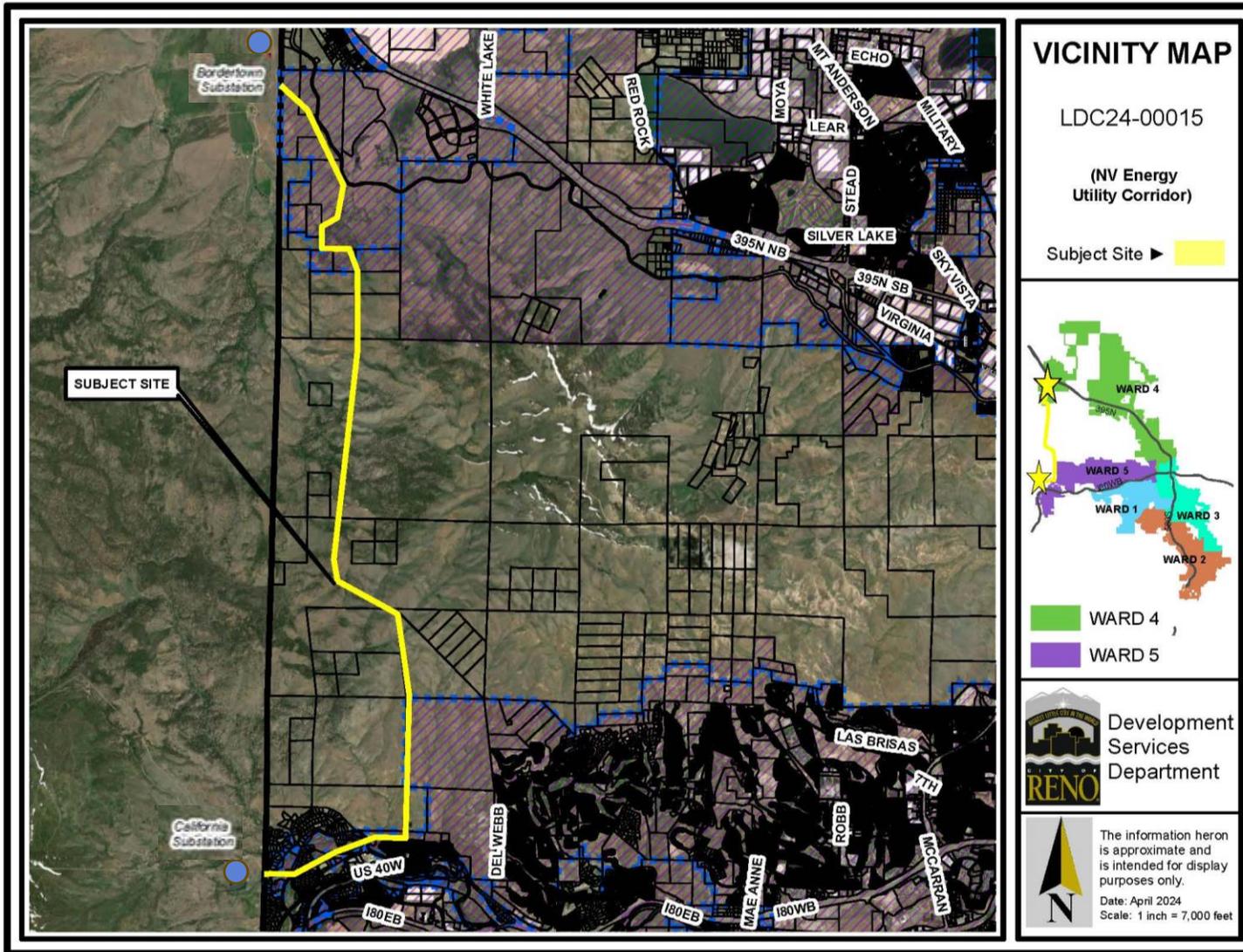
Reno City Council

August 28, 2024



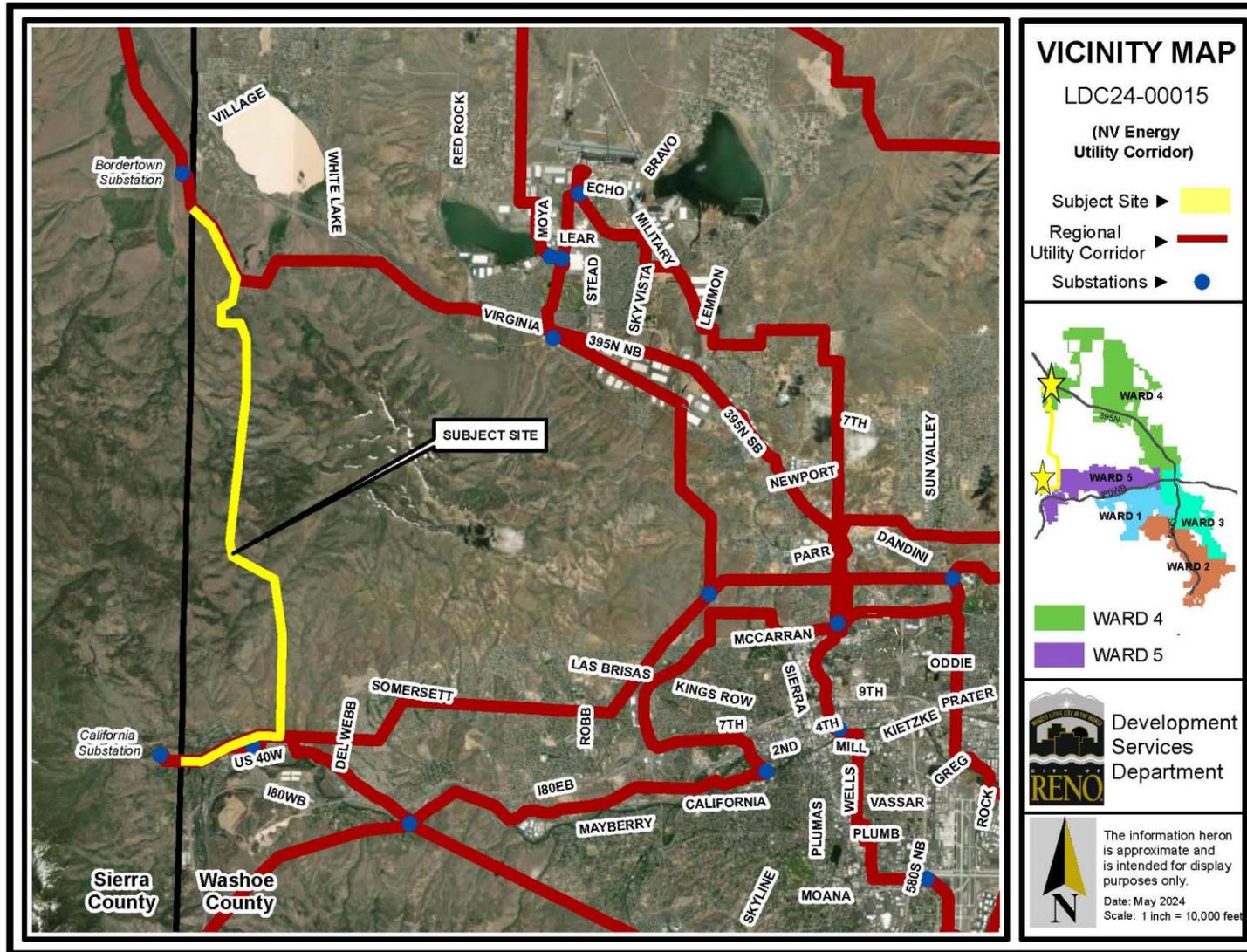
C I T Y O F
RENO

Project Information



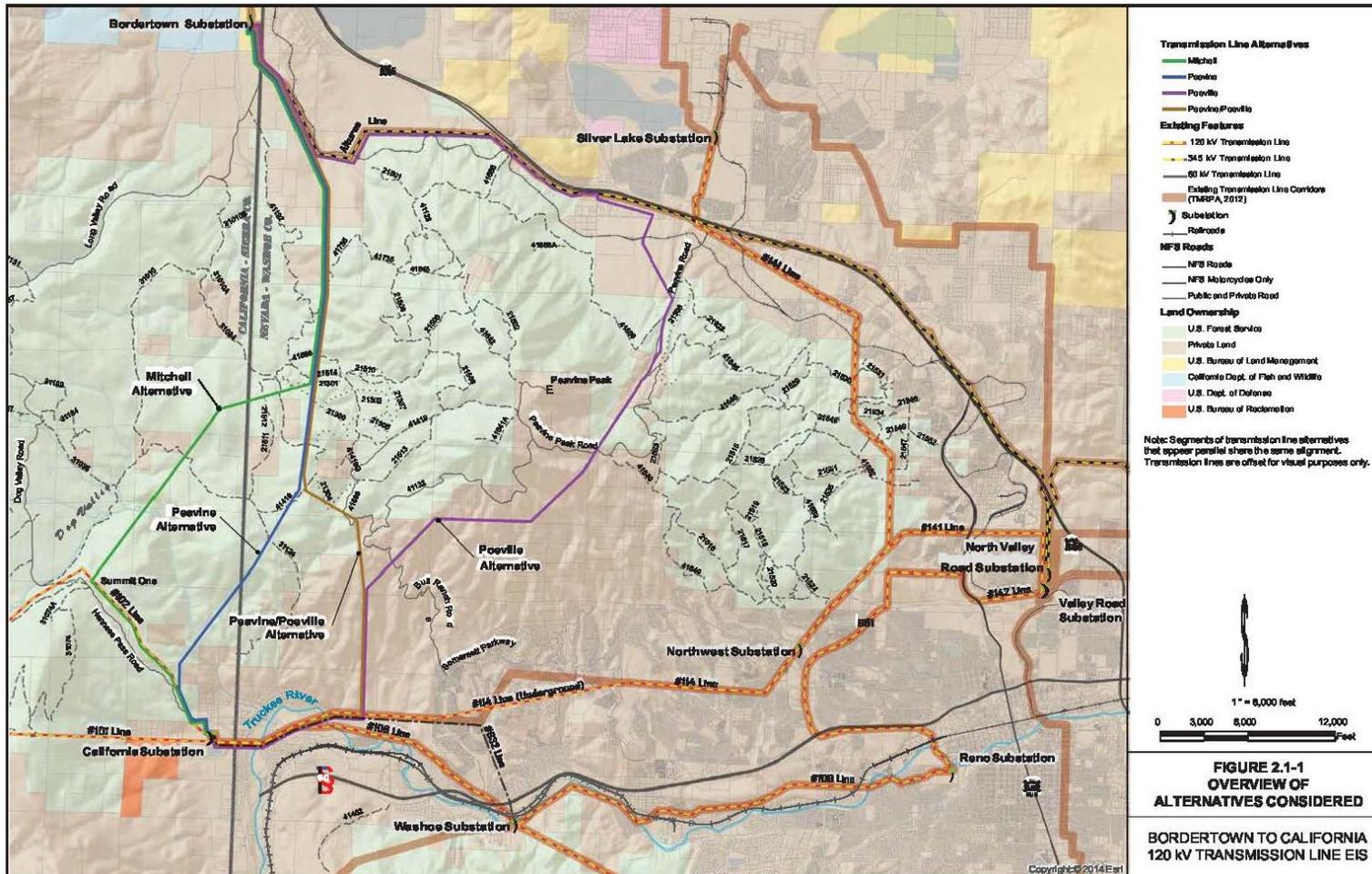
- **Conditional Use Permit**
To construct a 120kV overhead electrical transmission line (major utility) and allow for hillside development
- **Site Length:**
±12-mile line
±10.9-miles in Nevada
±4.1-mile section in City of Reno
- **PRS & Regional Plan Amendment**

Project Information



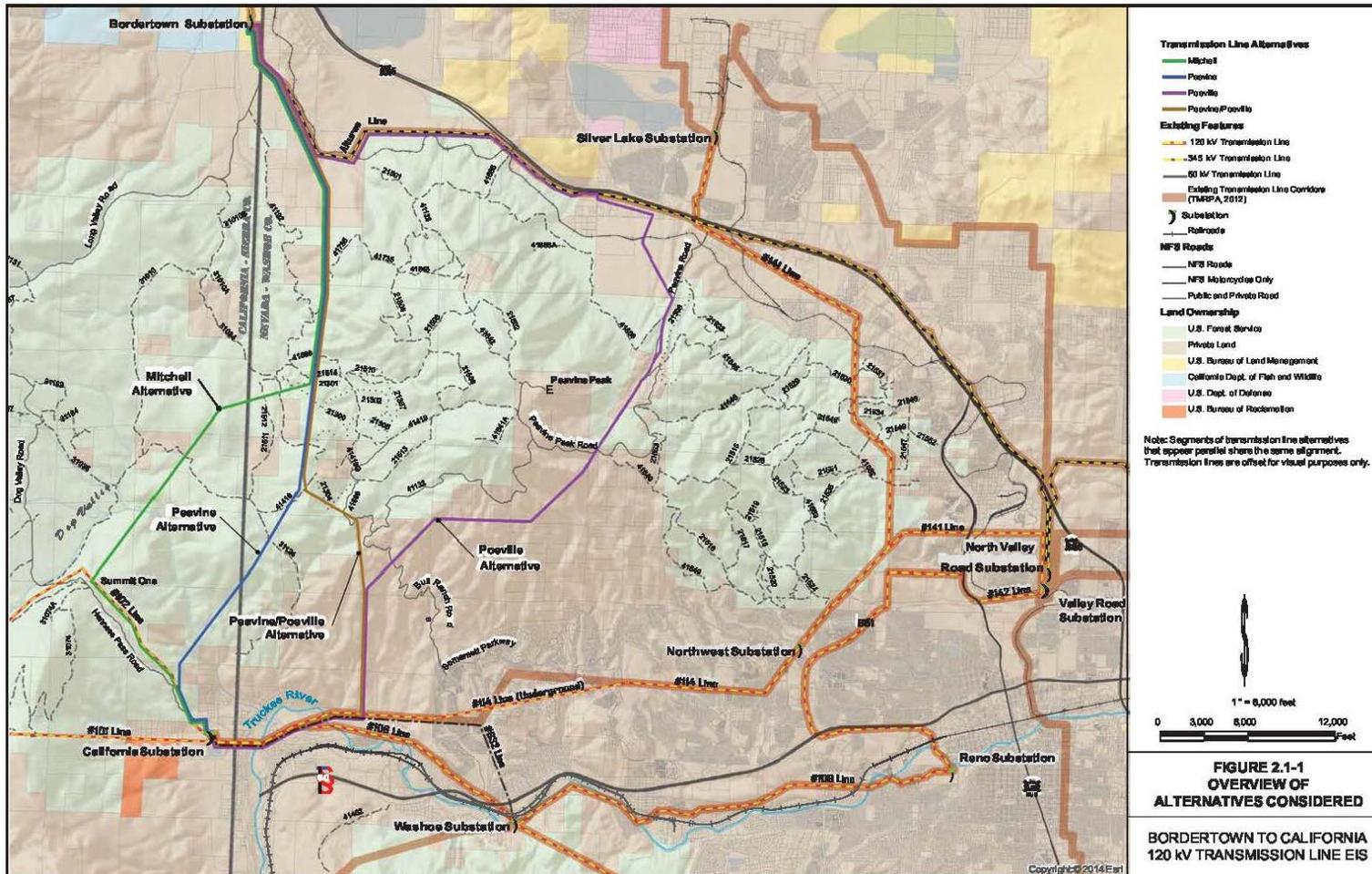
- **Purpose**
To increase reliability of power service in west Reno. Avoid system wide failures.
- **North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC)**
Federally authorized standards agency. Requiring an additional line for grid resiliency.

Project Information



- **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**
2011 – 2018 (7 years)
- USFS Lead Agency
- **EIS Evaluated Five Alternatives Including No Action**
Peavine/Poeville alignment selected with significant mitigations

Project Information



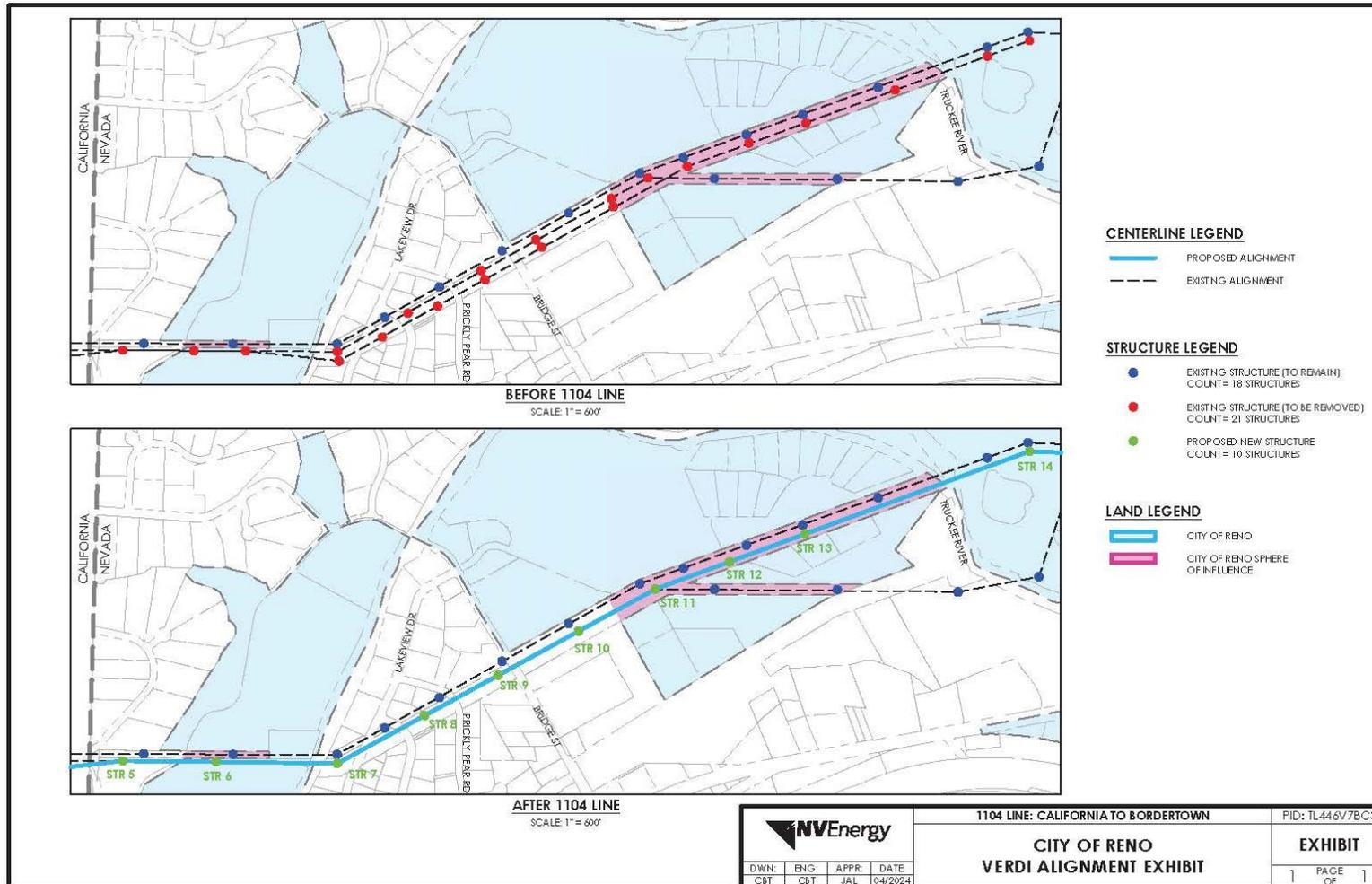
- Preferred Alternative Analysis of:
 - Cultural resources
 - Wildlife habitat
 - Private property
 - Visual resources
- Public comments on draft
- Public safety &
- Use of existing regional utility corridors

- Final ROD issued 2019
- Applicable to federal properties – Regionwide Analysis

Project Scope

- 120 kV above ground transmission line – 111 poles – 60 within City jurisdiction
- Pole heights range from 70' to 105' tall in various locations
- Span distance between poles averages 800 feet but can range 200 – 2,000 feet depending on terrain or obstructions
- Major utilities allowed in all zoning districts with approved CUP
- Hillside Development N/A – Minimal grading required for pole structures

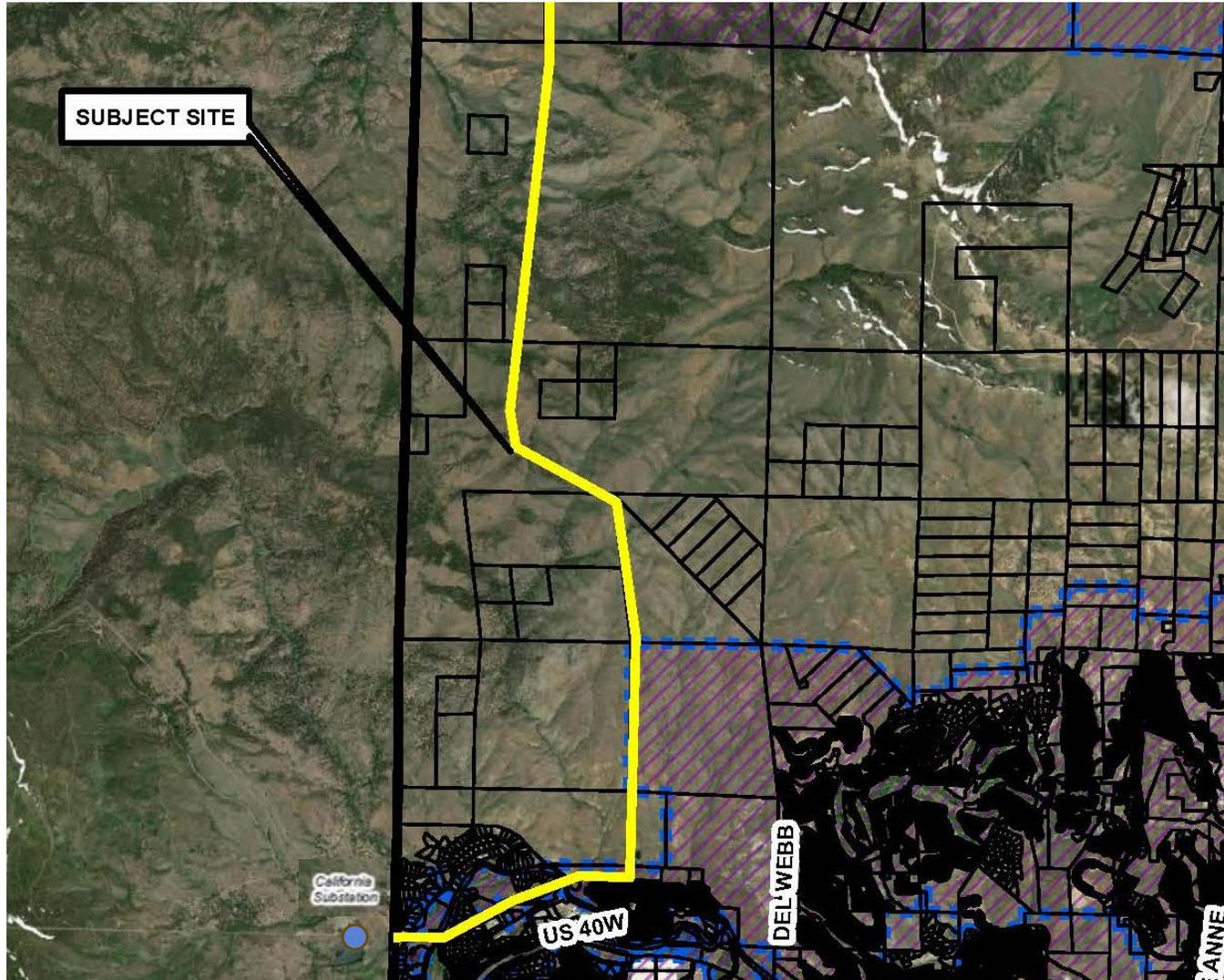
Project Scope



Verdi Area

- Utilizes existing regional utility corridor
- Net Pole Reduction:**
18 poles remain, 21 poles removed, and ten added
Net loss of 11 poles

Project Scope

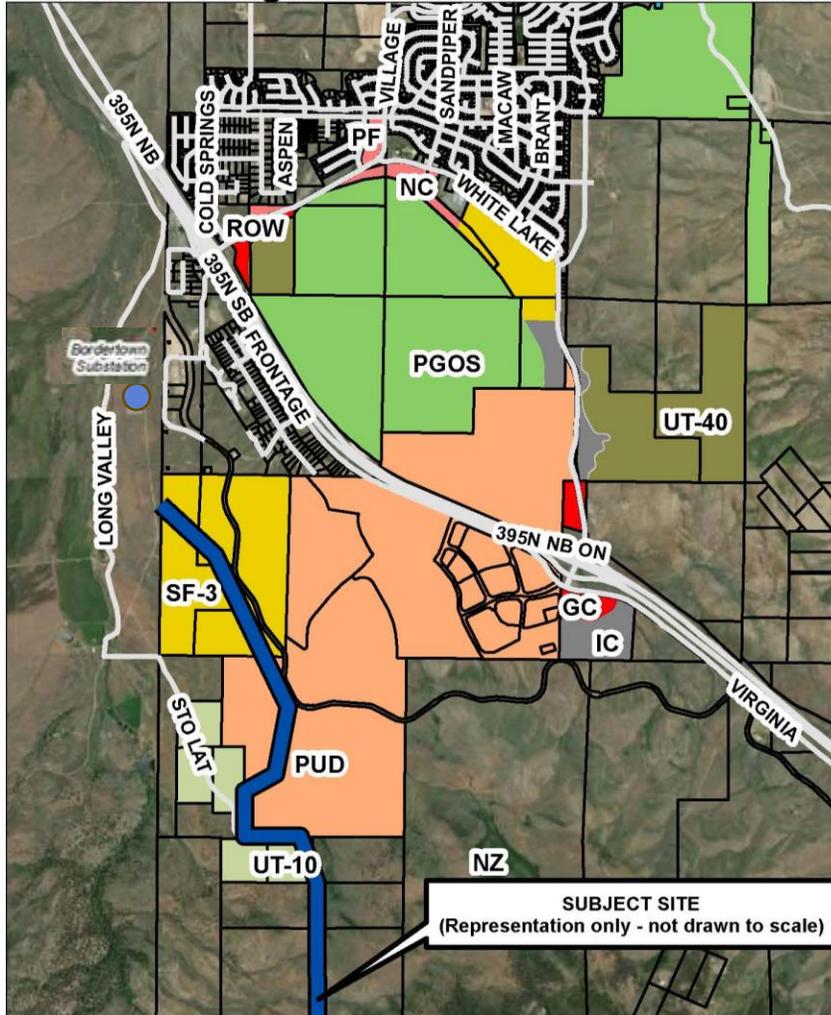


Verdi Area

- West Meadows Estates
– Existing utility corridor
- North through County jurisdiction into Open Space portion of Stan Lucas parcel

Project Scope

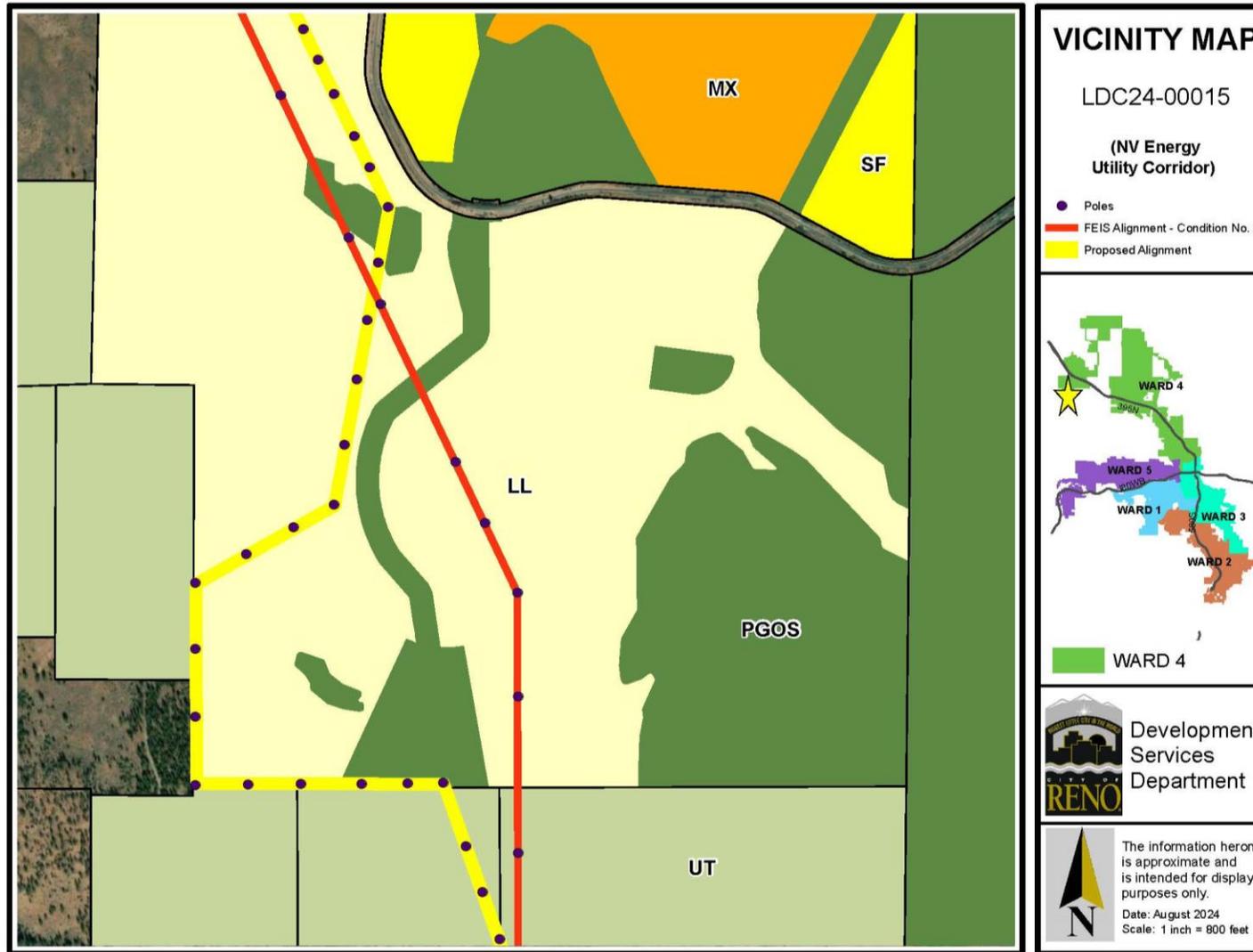
Ward 4 Zoning



Cold Springs

- Runs through undeveloped land in Stonegate PUD and Lifestyle Homes parcels
- **Proposed Variation from FEIS Alignment**

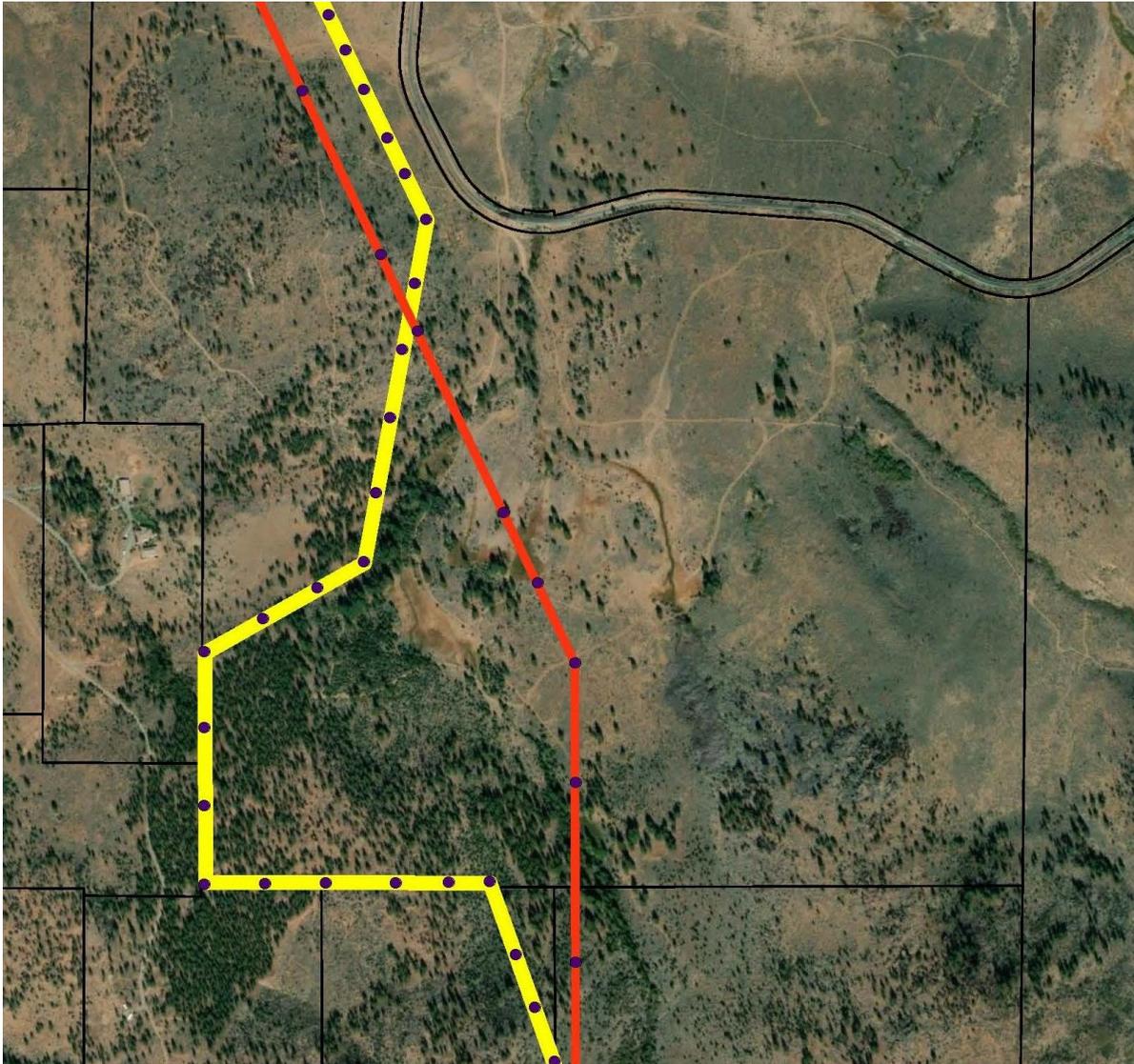
Project Scope



Original FEIS Alignment

- ± 0.4 miles east of FEIS alignment
- Stonegate PUD adopted after FEIS
- Zoning was LLR-1 and remains LLR-1
- PUD identifies the area as environmentally sensitive
 - Tree preservation
 - Wildlife plan

Project Scope



Proposed Deviation

- Straddles four existing private parcels (one developed) 40' easement
- \pm 60 feet higher in elevation, forested

COA 9 – Maintain FEIS Alignment

CC can deviate from FEIS alignment on private property

FEIS incorporated rigorous public/agency comment to minimize environmental impacts

Regional Plan Policies

PF.14: Priority Hierarchy for Placement of New Transmission Infrastructure

Local government master plans must use the following priority hierarchy for the placement of new above ground and underground electrical transmission infrastructure:

1. Locate new above ground or underground transmission infrastructure in an existing corridor that already contains above ground transmission infrastructure, without expanding the corridor width;
2. Locate new above ground or underground transmission infrastructure in either a federally designated corridor (i.e. BLM corridor) or an easement that has an approved preliminary or final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS);
3. Locate new above ground or underground transmission infrastructure in an existing corridor that already contains above ground transmission infrastructure, but with an expanded corridor width;
4. Request the relocation of an existing corridor and associated transmission infrastructure;
5. Request the creation of a new corridor based on the route of an existing above ground distribution line;
6. Locate new above ground transmission infrastructure within an existing corridor that already contains underground transmission infrastructure, without expanding the corridor width;
7. Locate new above ground transmission infrastructure within an existing corridor that already contains underground transmission infrastructure, but with an expanded corridor width; or,
8. Request the creation of a new corridor for the placement of new transmission infrastructure where no utility infrastructure currently exists.

Key Recommended Conditions of Approval

COA 5:

Approval contingent upon all required Regional approvals

COA 7:

Construction and maintenance activity subject to the COM plan

- Detailed operations plan to mitigate wildlife, vegetation/sensitive plants, general practices, fire safety, ongoing maintenance responsibilities, etc.

COA 9:

Corridor to match general alignment as presented in FEIS.

Regional Planning

Washoe County Planning Commission:

- Approved special use permit for unincorporated portion – May 7, 2024

Regional Planning Commission:

- Project of Regional Significance – Construction of a transmission line greater than 60kV
- Sponsorship of Regional Plan Mapping Amendment

Regional Planning Governing Board:

- Regional Plan Amendment – Establish a new utility corridor

Appeals – Concerns & Discussion

CONCERN	Discussion
<p>Establishing a public utility easement prior to obtaining required entitlements grants grounds for approval of the CUP</p>	<p>By obtaining private easements before necessary entitlements, appellants “put the cart before the horse.”</p> <p>Establishment of appropriate utility corridors is subject to local and regional approvals, without which, utility easements do not entitle development approval.</p>
<p>FEIS Alignment would affect future Heinz Ranch (Stonegate) development and impact their property rights</p>	<p>Stonegate PUD adopted after the FEIS report. FEIS Corridor ran through LLR-1 zoning then and runs through equivalent LLR-1 in Stonegate PUD now.</p> <p>Heinz Ranch has application to remove Stonegate PUD and upzone the site. Application has not had any public hearing to date.</p>

General Review Criteria Recommendation

Findings	Staff Review and Analysis – With Conditions	
Consistent with the Reno Master Plan – Shall weigh competing goals	With Condition 9, meets MP Policy 2.4H for Electrical Transmission Infrastructure	✓ Yes
Compliance with Title 18	Meets or exceeds RMC	✓ Yes
Mitigates Traffic	N/A	✓ Yes
Safe Environment for Pedestrians and Cyclists	N/A	✓ Yes
Rationale Phasing Plan	18 Month entitlement	✓ Yes

Conditional Use Permit Findings Recommendation

Findings	Staff Review and Analysis – With Conditions	
Location of use consistent with zoning districts	Major utilities allowed in all zoning districts with CUP	✓ Yes
Land use is compatible with surrounding development	FEIS analyzed preferred alignment	✓ Yes
Consistent with development standards	Meets or exceeds RMC	✓ Yes
Public services and utilities are available	Adequate services available	✓ Yes
Physical land characteristics are compatible	FEIS preferred alignment	✓ Yes
Not detrimental to health, safety, and welfare	FEIS analyzed risk assessment	✓ Yes

Planning Commission Decision

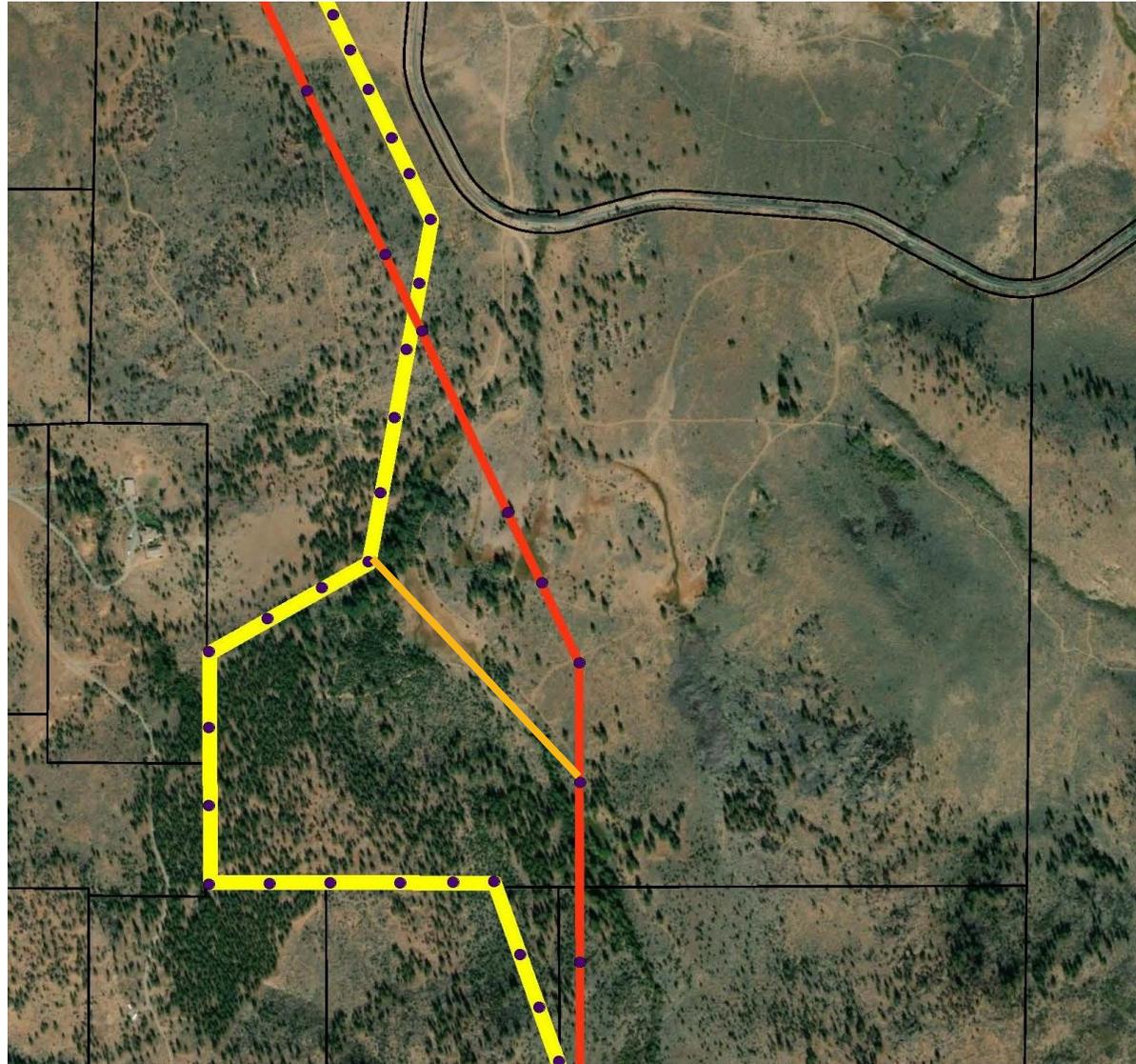
June 6, 2024 – Planning Commission unanimously approved the CUP with all recommended conditions of approval.

I move to AFFIRM approval of the conditional use permit with conditions by the Planning Commission and DENY the appeals.





Potential Alternative

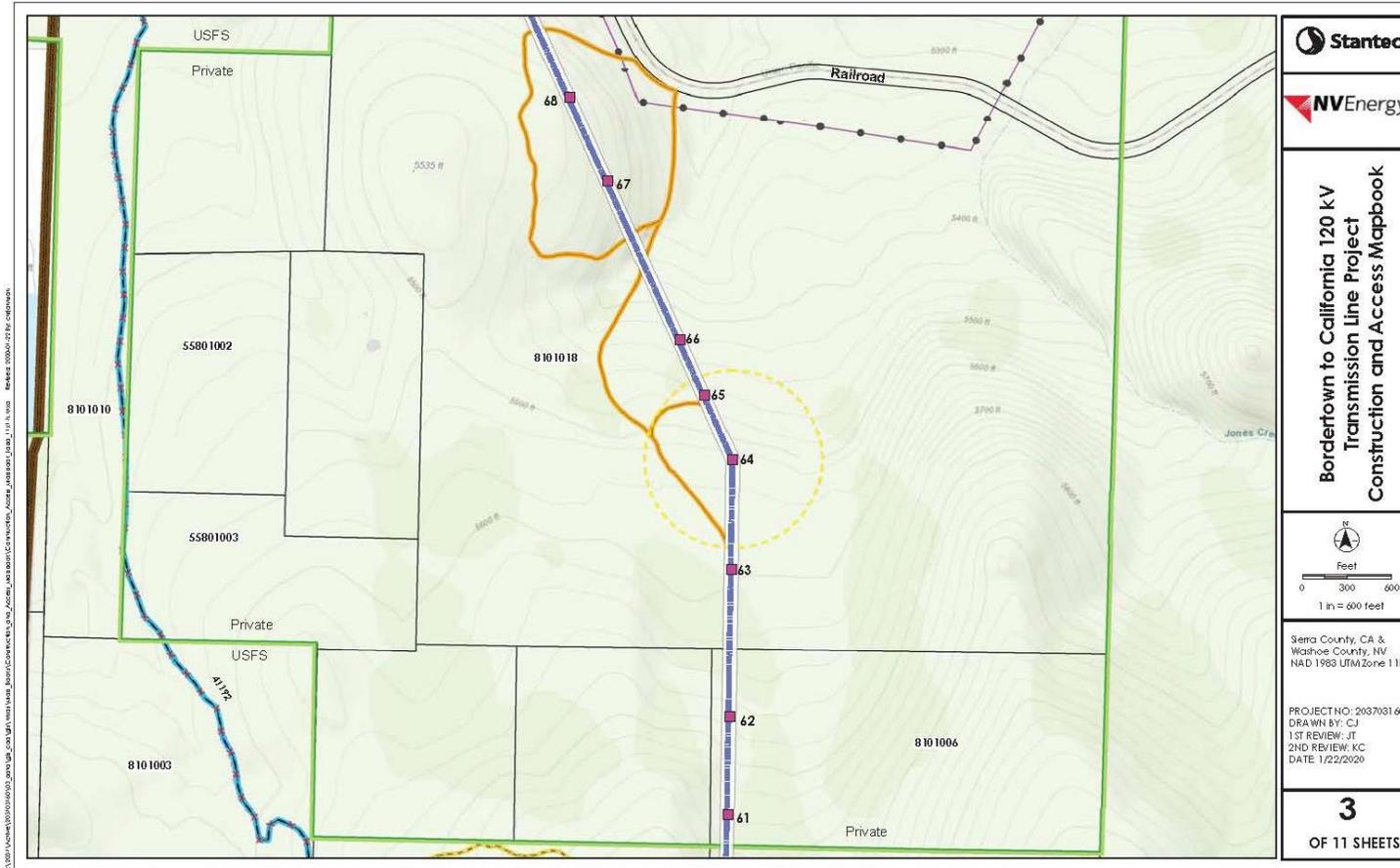


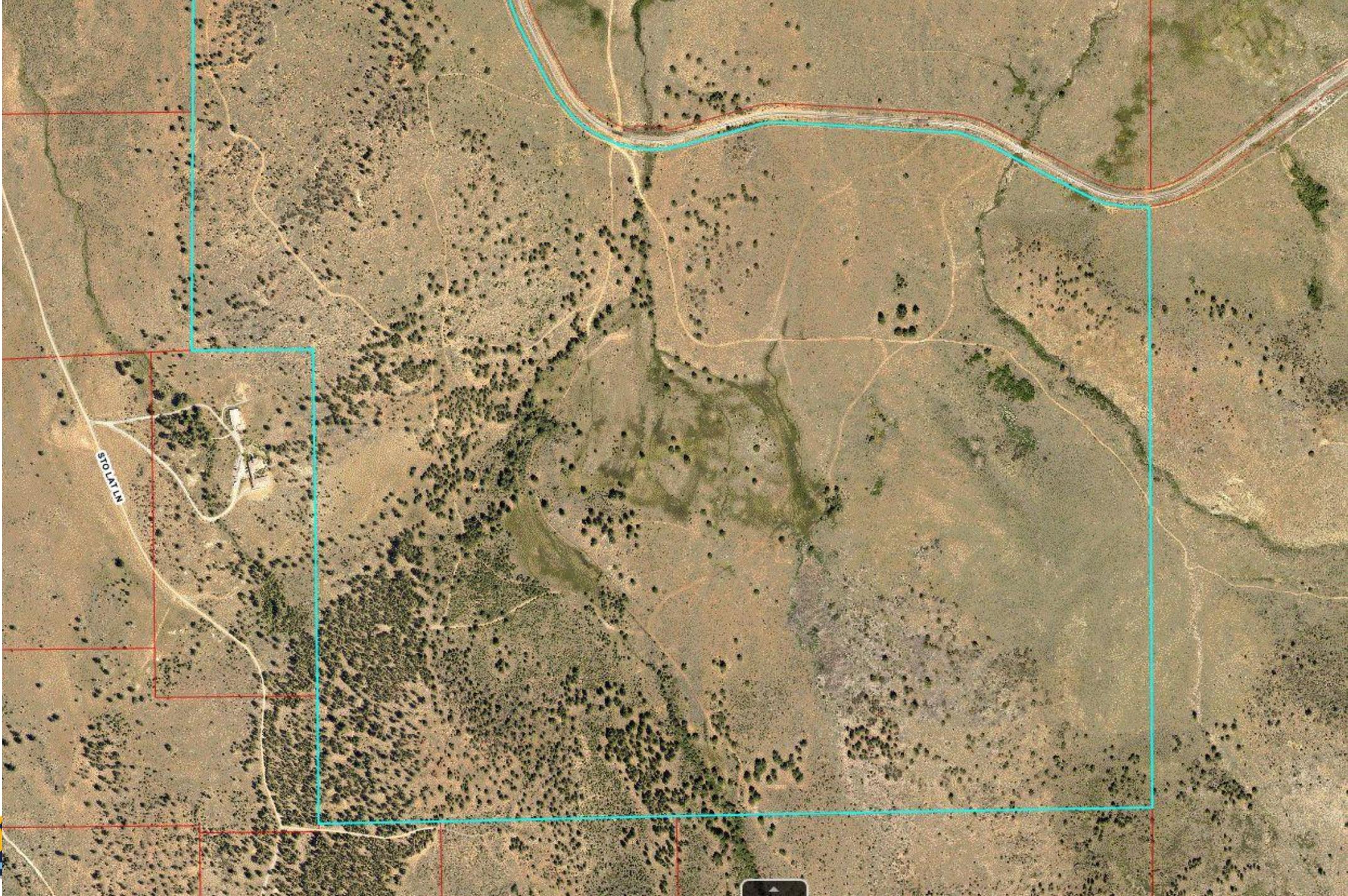
Project Scope

Consistent with FEIS Alignment

Original FEIS Alignment

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- Stonegate PUD adopted after FEIS
- Zoning was LLR-1 and remains LLR-1





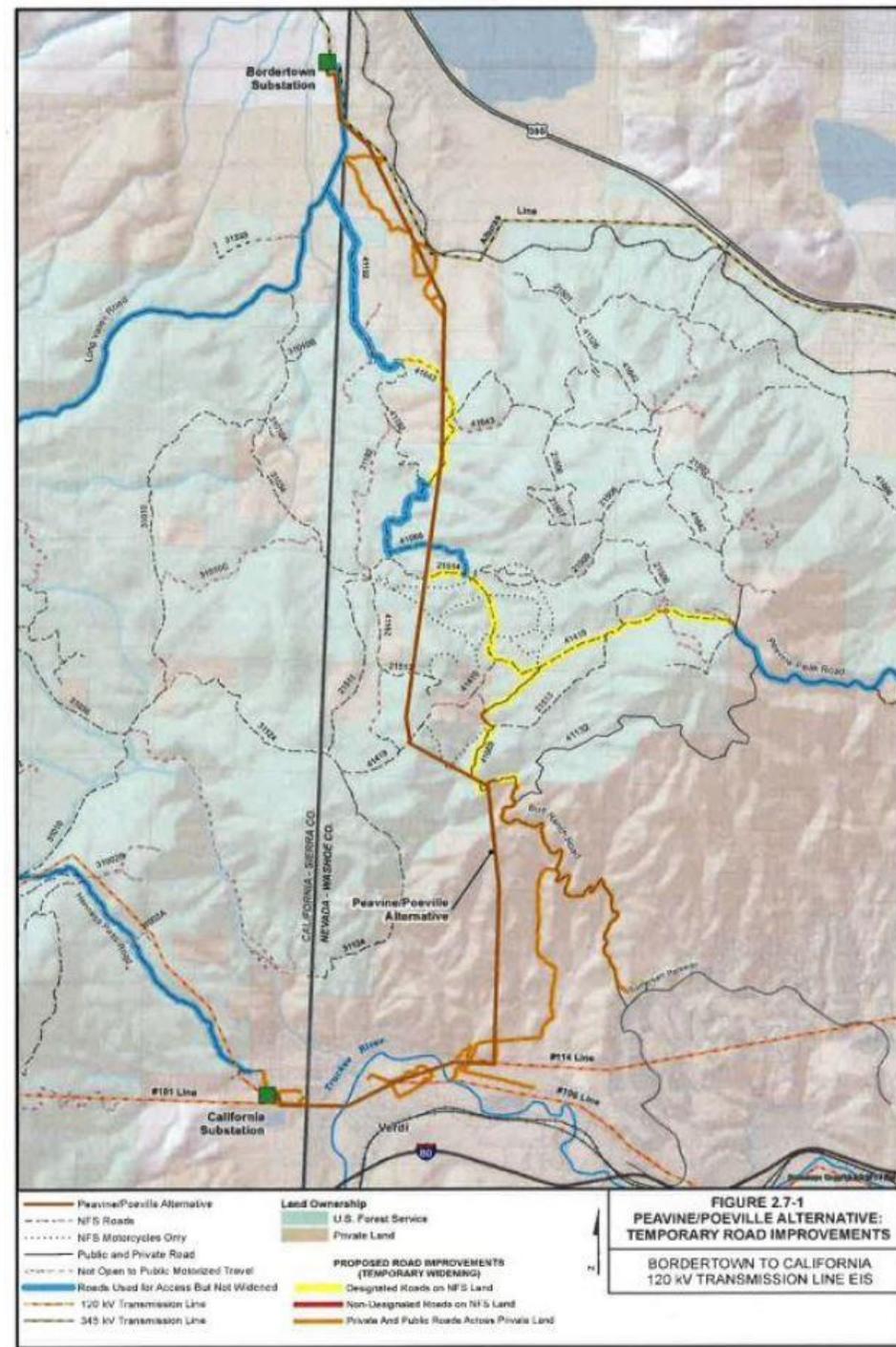
FEIS Undergrounding Consideration

2.11.15 Undergrounding

This alternative would place the proposed transmission line underground to avoid visual impacts.

Undergrounding involves placing the transmission line beneath the ground in a concrete encased conduit system and requires far more ground disturbance than overhead construction. Undergrounding is 7 to 10 times the cost of overhead construction (BLM 2013). In the event of a failure, the repair of an underground transmission line is slower due to the difficulty in accessing the line and the need to find specialized repair expertise. This alternative was dismissed from further evaluation because it is not technically practical to bury transmission lines for long distances in very steep terrain, which is a common condition along every alternative.

- Washoe County approval for above ground transmission.
- Past PUC decisions have allocated the additional costs of undergrounding to the jurisdiction that conditions.



**FIGURE 2.7-1
PEAVINE/POEVILLE ALTERNATIVE:
TEMPORARY ROAD IMPROVEMENTS**
BORDERTOWN TO CALIFORNIA
120 kV TRANSMISSION LINE EIS

Hillside Development Findings Recommendation

Findings	Analysis	Staff Review
Mitigates environmental degradation	COM Plan adequately addresses impacts	✓ Yes
Grading practices minimize scarring	Minimal grading required in hillside areas	✓ Yes
Provides open space based on hillside constraints	Not applicable for this request	✓ Yes
Adheres to hillside design standards and policies	Adheres to standards and policies	✓ Yes
Grading mitigates visual impacts near ridgelines	Minimal grading required in hillside areas	✓ Yes