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## **NOTICE OF PREPARATION**

**Date:** September 10, 2015

**To:** Responsible, Trustee, and Interested Agencies, Organizations, and Individuals

**Subject:** Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Assessment and Notice of a Public Scoping Meeting for the 2015 Greenway Master Plan and Flood Hazard Reduction Project in Yreka

**Lead Agency:** City of Yreka

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The City of Yreka is proposing to prepare a joint Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Environmental Assessment (EA) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the **2015 Greenway Master Plan and Flood Hazard Reduction Project** (proposed project). The City is requesting input from the public and your agency on environmental issues associated with development of the proposed project as described in this Notice of Preparation (NOP). As a responsible or trustee agency, your agency may need to use the EIR/EA when considering issuance of a permit or other discretionary approval for the proposed project. Comments received during the public comment period will be used to focus the environmental analysis in the EIR/EA.

### **2015 GREENWAY MASTER PLAN AND FLOOD HAZARD REDUCTION PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The proposed project is located in Yreka in Siskiyou County, California. Yreka is located approximately 21 miles south of the California-Oregon border. Interstate 5, State Route 3, and State Route 263 pass through and provide regional access to the city (see **Figure 1**, Regional Vicinity, and **Figure 2**, Project Location).

The proposed project includes two components: (1) the 2015 Greenway Master Plan, and (2) three specific projects within the Master Plan. Because of the two different project components, the EIR/EA will analyze the project's environmental impacts using two different analysis methods:

1. The overall 2015 Greenway Master Plan is analyzed as a program EIR using a broader spectrum based on requirements outlined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15168.
2. A project-level analysis for the three proposed projects of the Master Plan—Central Reach, North Reach, and South Reach—using a project-specific analysis based on the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15161.

## COMMENT PERIOD

The NOP comment period commences on **September 16, 2015**, and ends on **October 23, 2015**. When submitting comments, please be specific in describing your environmental concerns. In particular, if there are changes to the project you believe the City should make that would reduce the environmental impact of the project or address issues of concern, please include them in your response to this NOP. Please also include contact information so that the City can follow up with questions regarding your comments if necessary. Comments must be sent to:

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## SCOPING MEETING

Two scoping meetings will be conducted, one beginning at **3:30 pm** and another at **6:30 pm** on **Wednesday, September 23, 2015**, at the City Council Chambers, 701 Fourth Street, in Yreka to provide public agencies and other interested parties with the opportunity to learn more about the proposed project and to discuss environmental issues. The scoping meetings will include a presentation of the proposed project and a summary of the environmental issues anticipated to be analyzed in the EIR/EA. Comments provided during the scoping meeting will assist the City in identifying other potential environmental effects of the project that should be addressed by the EIR/EA.

## 2015 GREENWAY MASTER PLAN AND FLOOD HAZARD REDUCTION PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### PROJECT COMPONENTS

The proposed project includes two components: (1) the 2015 Greenway Master Plan, and (2) three specific projects within the Master Plan.

### 2015 GREENWAY MASTER PLAN

The first Yreka Creek Greenway Master Plan was completed in 1989. It focused on establishing primitive trail access and a narrow buffer along approximately 4 miles of Yreka Creek, enhancing fish habitat, and providing educational opportunities. Shortly thereafter, a short trail segment was constructed at the Visitor Center portion of the Greenway on portions of the Klamath National Forest Yreka Service Center and adjacent Siskiyou County Museum properties. Facilities include recreational trails along both sides of about 0.25 mile of Yreka Creek, a permanent and break-away bridge over the creek, picnic/group gathering areas, instream structures to improve fish habitat, and interpretive panels and murals.

The Greenway Master Plan was updated in 2005 in order to add portions of tributary creeks, define trail routes and connections to neighborhoods and other facilities, provide cost estimates for Greenway recreational facilities. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mapping of Yreka indicates that much of the Greenway corridor and downtown areas are within the 100-year flood zone, and reduction of flood hazard was identified in the Master Plan update, but the focus was on using the Greenway as a buffer to adjacent development rather than physically enlarging the floodplain. There were subsequent

discussions, however, on identifying wide areas along the Greenway where “flood storage” could be achieved that might help reduce flooding.

The 2005 Master Plan update, and flood-related damages experienced in December 2005/January 2006 (estimated to be a 25-year flood event), led to the City obtaining grant funding to acquire key properties along Yreka Creek north of Oberlin Road. One of these properties was wide enough for flood storage, and when the City obtained a subsequent grant for various forms of stormwater attenuation to resolve existing flooding problems throughout the city, a portion of this grant was made available for what would become the first floodplain widening project along Yreka Creek.

Restoration of floodplain function in a highly constrained urban setting requires widening at the level of an existing downcut stream channel rather than raising the stream channel to re-access its historic floodplain. This approach generates considerable excess dirt, and nearby locations for disposal of these spoils need to be identified to minimize hauling costs. At the Oberlin Road site, an adjacent private landowner was willing to accept most of the spoils to raise his commercially zoned property out of the 100-year floodplain, and the hydrologic analysis for the project showed that this could be achieved while also reducing overall 100-year flood height in the vicinity. Remaining spoils were used to create screening berms along the freeway and next to an adjacent industrial site. Various Greenway features such as trail and road prisms, bridge approaches, and a trailhead and parking area were incorporated into the project design. Also incorporated were various ways to mitigate urban stormwater runoff, including vegetated drainage swales (bioswales), small vegetated retention basins, and gravel-lined overflow channels, all of which help filter and slow down runoff, increase infiltration, reduce peak flows, and increase base flows.

The 2015 Greenway Master Plan expands the scope of the Master Plan, addressing a reduction in flood hazards throughout the city by more effective management of stormwater runoff and containing high water events within Greenway corridors to the greatest extent feasible. **Figure 3** illustrates the proposed extent of the 2015 Greenway Master Plan. Additional benefits to flood hazard reduction, and secondarily water quality, are the restoration of large areas of the city’s creeks and drainages to a more natural state and the provision of areas for recreational trails, non-motorized transportation, and open space.

The 2015 Master Plan includes numerous watershed areas called “reaches.” These reaches are defined as stream or other drainage areas, many with proposed improvements.

#### FLOOD HAZARD REDUCTION PROJECT

In an effort to reduce the flood hazards in Yreka, the City applied for and was awarded a Flood Hazard Reduction grant from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). The \$5 million grant was for the completion of the following tasks:

- Comprehensively update the Yreka Creek Greenway Master Plan to integrate the floodway opportunities with the Greenway plan.
- Acquire properties from willing property owners in support of flood hazard reduction in the community.
- Prepare plans and specifications to implement the Flood Hazard Reduction project, and provide construction inspection and related supervision of the specific areas of construction.

- Prepare an Environmental Impact Report, including necessary supporting studies, for the planned and future creek improvement projects.
- Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in coordination with the US Forest Service (USFS) for the potential relocation/removal of USFS structures in the Yreka Creek floodplain.
- Establish a maintenance fund of approximately \$191,000.

This grant included three specific projects to reduce the flood potential of Yreka Creek and provide beneficial habitat improvements for fish and wildlife. Additionally, these projects are designed to provide expanded recreational opportunities along Yreka Creek. The main improvements associated with all three projects include the following:

- Widen the Yreka Creek channel and associated floodplain.
- Excavate the existing area directly adjacent to the creek to lower the ground level and allow for better flood control.
- Provide overflow channels.
- Place the removed soils (spoils) to raise adjacent areas out of the floodway.
- Provide an expanded trail system.
- Provide expanded greenways and enhanced riparian corridor.

In addition to the improvements listed above, the three individual projects of the Flood Hazard Reduction Project—Center Reach, North Reach, and South Reach—all have specific project components. These are discussed in detail below.

## **Central Reach**

### Location and Improvements

The Central Reach project has the highest priority of the three floodway improvement projects for the Yreka Creek Greenway Master Plan. The Central Reach portion of the Yreka Creek Flood Hazard Reduction Project includes the area of the creek adjacent to the Klamath National Forest (KNF) Yreka Service Center and the Siskiyou County Museum. The Central Reach connects to the improvements of the Oberlin-Young Reach on the south and the County Offices Reach on the north, where some improvements were completed in May 2015. Improvements to the Central Reach area of Yreka Creek will occur on both sides of the creek and requires the removal/relocation of several KNF buildings adjacent to the creek to accommodate the creek channel widening. The Central Reach project area covers approximately 16 acres. The proposed improvements in this area would reduce the 100-year flood height by an estimated 2.9 feet on average. See **Figure 4**, Central Reach, for proposed improvements to this area. The Central Reach is an area affecting 0.2 mile of Yreka Creek. This project will include 4 acres of greenway, adding 1,134 feet of main trails. The Central Reach project would also include the construction of 379 feet of new roadway. Additionally, six KNF buildings will be demolished or relocated to the west side of Yreka Creek within the existing KNF Service Center. These improvements are anticipated to be completed by the end of 2018.

The improvements to the floodway for the Central Reach would be accomplished through the widening of the creek channel and the lowering of the existing area adjacent to the creek, and by providing

overflow channels. Earthwork is anticipated to result in 4 acres of excavated soil. The excavated soil (spoils) would be moved to areas now occupied by KNF buildings in order to raise this area out of the floodplain. Once excavation is complete, the area will be replanted.

## **North Reach**

### Location and Improvements

The North Reach project is approximately 0.5 mile in length. It starts at the E. Lennox Street Bridge and runs north to the southern border of the City Maintenance Facility at the firefighter training area. The North Reach connects to the Miner-Lennox Reach on the south and the North Yreka Creek Reach on the north. The North Reach project area is approximately 25 acres in size (see **Figure 5**). The North Reach of the Flood Hazard Reduction Project involves the creation of 0.3 mile of major drainage swales, 15 acres of greenway, 2,702 feet of main trails, 428 feet of secondary trails, and 560 feet of tertiary trails. The North Reach project would also include the construction of 1,197 feet of new roadway. The 100-year flood width is reduced by 50 percent just downstream from the mouth of Little Humbug Creek. The 100-year flood height would be reduced by approximately 3.1 feet on average.

As with the Central Reach, the improvements to the floodway for the North Reach would be accomplished through the widening of the creek channel and the lowering of the existing area adjacent to the creek, and by providing overflow channels.

## **South Reach**

### Location and Improvements

The South Reach project is approximately 0.6 mile in length. It starts on Sharps Road and follows the creek north to Oberlin Road where it connects to the Oberlin-Young Reach. The South Reach project area is the largest of the three projects and is approximately 70 acres in size. Improvements in the South Reach would result in a 100-year flood height reduction of approximately 3.4 feet on average, with the 100-year flood width reduced by 50 to 80 percent. Additional benefits on the South Reach will be achieved in the future by increasing flood flow and road crossing capacity at Sharps and Oberlin roads (see **Figure 6**). The South Reach project involves the creation of 31 acres of greenway, 3,653 feet of main trails, and 627 feet of secondary trails.

Improvements necessary to decrease the flood hazards for the South Reach would be accomplished through widening the creek channel and the lowering of the existing area adjacent to the creek, and by providing overflow channels. The excavated soil (spoils) would be moved to areas currently within the flood zone in order to elevate these areas out of the flood zone. Once excavation is complete, the area will be replanted and trails will be constructed.

## **PROJECT ACTIONS**

The proposed project will include the following actions by the City of Yreka:

1. Certification of the Environmental Impact Report
2. Adoption of the revisions to the 2015 Greenway Master Plan
3. Acquisition of affected adjacent parcels by the City

The proposed project will include the following actions by the Klamath National Forest:

1. Demolition/removal of affected adjacent buildings
2. Relocation of some affected adjacent buildings
3. Issuance of special use permits granting permission for construction and maintenance of the Greenway

### **Anticipated Significant Environmental Impacts**

The City has determined that the proposed project will require preparation of an EIR/EA. As permitted by CEQA Section 15060(d), the City will not prepare an Initial Study. For the three projects (Central, North and South Reaches), the City will prepare a project EIR/EA as defined in Section 15161 of the CEQA Guidelines.

The City anticipates the following significant environmental impacts:

**Aesthetics:** The development of the proposed Greenway Master Plan and Flood Hazard Reduction Project would result in an alteration of the existing Yreka Creek watershed and potential impacts to scenic resources. The EIR/EA will evaluate the aesthetics impacts associated with the proposed project.

**Air Quality:** Development of the Flood Hazard Reduction Project will result in land disturbance from construction vehicles during construction, as well as vehicles traveling to the Greenway once completed. The EIR/EA will evaluate the air quality impacts associated with the proposed project.

**Biological Resources:** Development of the proposed project may result in impacts to special-status species and other biological resources. The EIR/EA will evaluate the potential impacts to biological resources as a result of project development.

**Cultural Resources:** Known and unknown historical, archeological, and paleontological resources may be uncovered during project development. As such, the project site will be surveyed for cultural resources and the EIR/EA will analyze the potential for impacts to cultural resources.

A portion of the Central Reach, identified as the KNF Service Center, was surveyed for cultural resources in June of 2015. No cultural resources were found during this survey. However, because the majority of the survey area is covered with either asphalt or gravel, archaeological monitoring during ground disturbance was recommended (KNF 2015).

**Geology, Seismicity, and Soils:** Future development related to the 2015 Greenway Master Plan and the Flood Hazard Reduction Project may result in potential impacts related to geology, seismicity, and soils. As such, the EIR/EA will provide an analysis of these impact areas.

**Greenhouse Gases:** It is likely that the proposed project may contribute to cumulative increases in greenhouse gases. Measures contained in the California Building Standards Code, as well as project-specific mitigation, may reduce the proposed project's impacts related to greenhouse gases. The EIR/EA will estimate the proposed project's potential to generate greenhouse gases.

**Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** The Greenway Master Plan, in and of itself, would not result in the use of hazardous materials. However, the use and storage of hazardous materials used during

construction and operation of the proposed Flood Hazard Reduction Project may occur. As such, the EIR/EA will evaluate the hazards and hazardous materials impacts associated with the proposed project.

### **Effects Found Not to Be Significant**

In the course of evaluating the proposed project, the following effects were determined to have either no impact or a less than significant impact on the environment and therefore will not be discussed in the EIR/EA:

**Agricultural and Forest Resources:** The entirety of the proposed project is not located in any areas identified as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance by the California Department of Conservation (DOC) (2015a). The DOC also shows that the project site and all surrounding adjacent lands are not under Williamson Act contracts (DOC 2015b).

Additionally, development of the proposed project would not result in the conversion of farmland to a non-farmland use. The conversion of farmland is generally attributed to the development of residential units next to an operating farm, which may result in conflicts between the residential uses and agricultural uses. The project does not propose any residential uses or the extension of any utilities that might result in the conversion of agricultural or forest lands. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact any agricultural resources in the area. No impacts would occur.

**Land Use:** The 2015 Greenway Master Plan does not result in development that would be inconsistent with the City's General Plan or Zoning Ordinance or any habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans. The Flood Hazard Reduction Project does not result in any construction not allowed in the floodway area. There would be no impact to land use.

**Mineral Resources:** The Yreka General Plan indicates that no mineral resources zones are designated within the boundaries of the Yreka Planning Area (Yreka 2003, p. 1-5). The State Mining and Geology Board has the responsibility to inventory and classify mineral resources and could designate such mineral resources as having a statewide or regional significance. If this designation occurs, the local agency must adopt a management plan for such identified resources. At this time, there are no plans to assess local mineral resources for the project area or Siskiyou County. Therefore, no impacts would occur to mineral resources.

**Noise:** Development of the Flood Hazard Reduction Project will result in short-term construction noise. However, Policy 9 of the City of Yreka General Plan Noise Element exempts construction activities from City noise standards because construction is temporary. In addition, Noise Element Policy 10 limits construction activities to the hours between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. For these reasons, short-term noise levels related to construction of the proposed project would be less than significant.

Once completed, noise levels from the Greenway Master Plan area is not expected to increase beyond existing conditions because it is a continuation of an existing use. Therefore, noise impacts associated with construction and operation of the proposed project would be less than significant.

**Population and Housing:** Development of the proposed project would not result in the removal of houses although a few may need to be relocated. The Flood Hazard Reduction Project may increase employment opportunities in the city; however, this employment will be for a relatively short time period during construction and is not expected to result in an increase in the city's population. Therefore, the project would have a less than significant impact on population and housing.

**Public Services:** The 2015 Greenway Master Plan and the development of the Flood Hazard Reduction Project would not require the expansion or new construction of fire, police, parks and recreation, or school facilities.

Public services include fire protection, police protection, parks and recreation, and schools. Generally, impacts in these areas are related to an increase in population from a residential development. Levels of service are generally based on a service to population ratio, except for fire protection, which is usually based on response time.

The Greenway Master Plan does not increase the need for additional public services facilities, as it does not provide any actual development projects. A master plan may increase the potential for development, which as a result increases the need for additional public services. In this case, however, the Greenway Master Plan does not result in additional commercial, residential, or industrial development that would then need to be served by public services.

Development of the Flood Hazard Reduction Project would also not result in any new residential, commercial, or industrial development. Development of the three individual projects proposed as a part of the Flood Hazard Reduction Project would not result in a need for additional police or fire services to the area because this area is currently served by the City's police and fire departments and no expanded or new police or fire facilities would be required to service the project. Also, the Flood Hazard Reduction Project would not result in the need for additional parks and recreation facilities or school facilities because development of this project would not result in an increase in residents or students.

Therefore, the Greenway Master Plan and the Flood Hazard Reduction Project would have no impact to police, fire, parks and recreation, or school facilities.

**Transportation and Circulation:** The Greenway Master Plan does not impact transportation and circulation in the city, as it does not generate any traffic. Development of the Flood Hazard Reduction Project may have temporary traffic impacts during construction due to construction vehicles, street closures, and construction adjacent to the street resulting in traffic rerouting. However, these traffic impacts are considered short term and would not result in a long-term decrease in the level of service on the surrounding streets. All projects are required to follow City regulations for street encroachments. Once completed, the proposed project would have no impacts on traffic and transportation. Additionally, the project improves non-motorized transportation options by providing walking and bicycle paths within the Yreka Creek corridor.

**Other Utilities:** The proposed project may result in temporary impacts to public utilities such as moving electrical lines, water lines, etc. However, these impacts are only temporary and would not result in new or expanded facilities beyond the area of construction. No additional demand for water, sewer, storm drainage, or electrical service would be required with completion of the Flood Hazard Reduction Project. Additionally, the project would not result in the reduction of groundwater or a reduction in groundwater recharge area. In fact, completion of the project may increase groundwater recharge as it will remove impervious areas such as the buildings in the KNF area of the Central Reach, as well as provide for biofiltration of urban contaminants.

Development of the Flood Hazard Reduction Project may add additional construction waste to the solid waste stream in the city. Solid waste from the project site will be transported to the transfer station south of Yreka off Oberlin Road and subsequently disposed of at the Anderson Solid Waste Landfill in

Shasta County consistent with the solid waste disposal process for the whole of the city. Under existing state permits, the landfill may accept 1,850 tons of solid waste per day until the year 2055.

Some solid waste may be produced during construction, however trails and open space are generally not known to be large producers of solid waste. All construction waste is required to comply with the California Building Standards Code requirements diverting a minimum of 50 percent of waste from the landfill.

The addition of solid waste to the landfill resulting from development of the project would not increase the tonnage beyond the landfill's permitted amount or result in the closure of the landfill prior to the anticipated 2055 date. As a result, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact to solid waste disposal.

## References

- DOC (California Department of Conservation). 2015a. Important Farmland Finder. Accessed March 26. <http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Index.aspx>.
- . 2015b. *Siskiyou County Williamson Act FY 2012/2013*. Accessed March 26. <ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/wa/>.
- KNF (Klamath National Forest) 2015. *Archeological Survey Report FY 2015 Klamath National Forest*. ASR Report Number R2015-05-2211-0.
- Yreka, City of. 2003. *General Plan 2002–2022*. Adopted December 18, 2003.

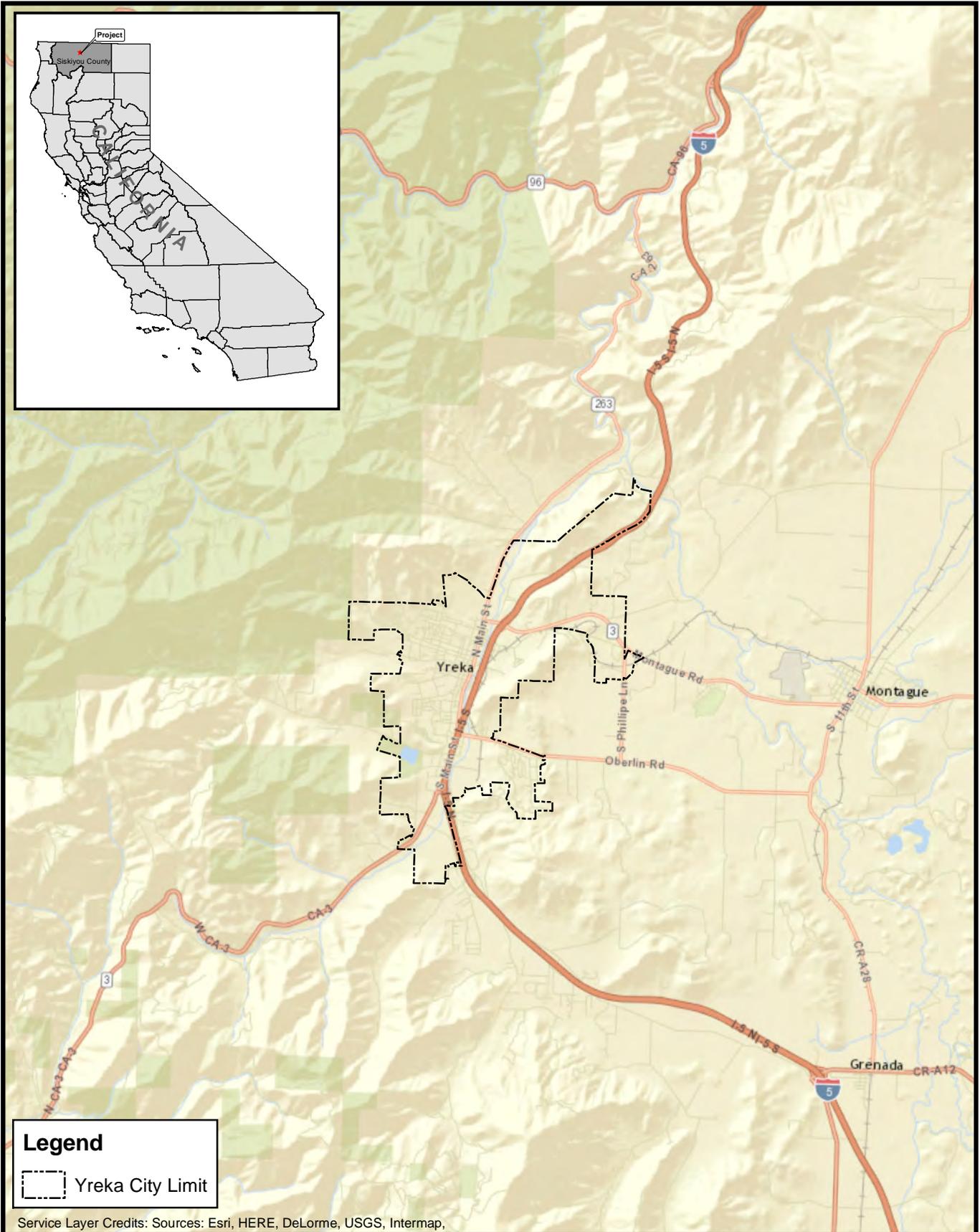


Figure 1  
Project Vicinity  
**Michael Baker**  
INTERNATIONAL



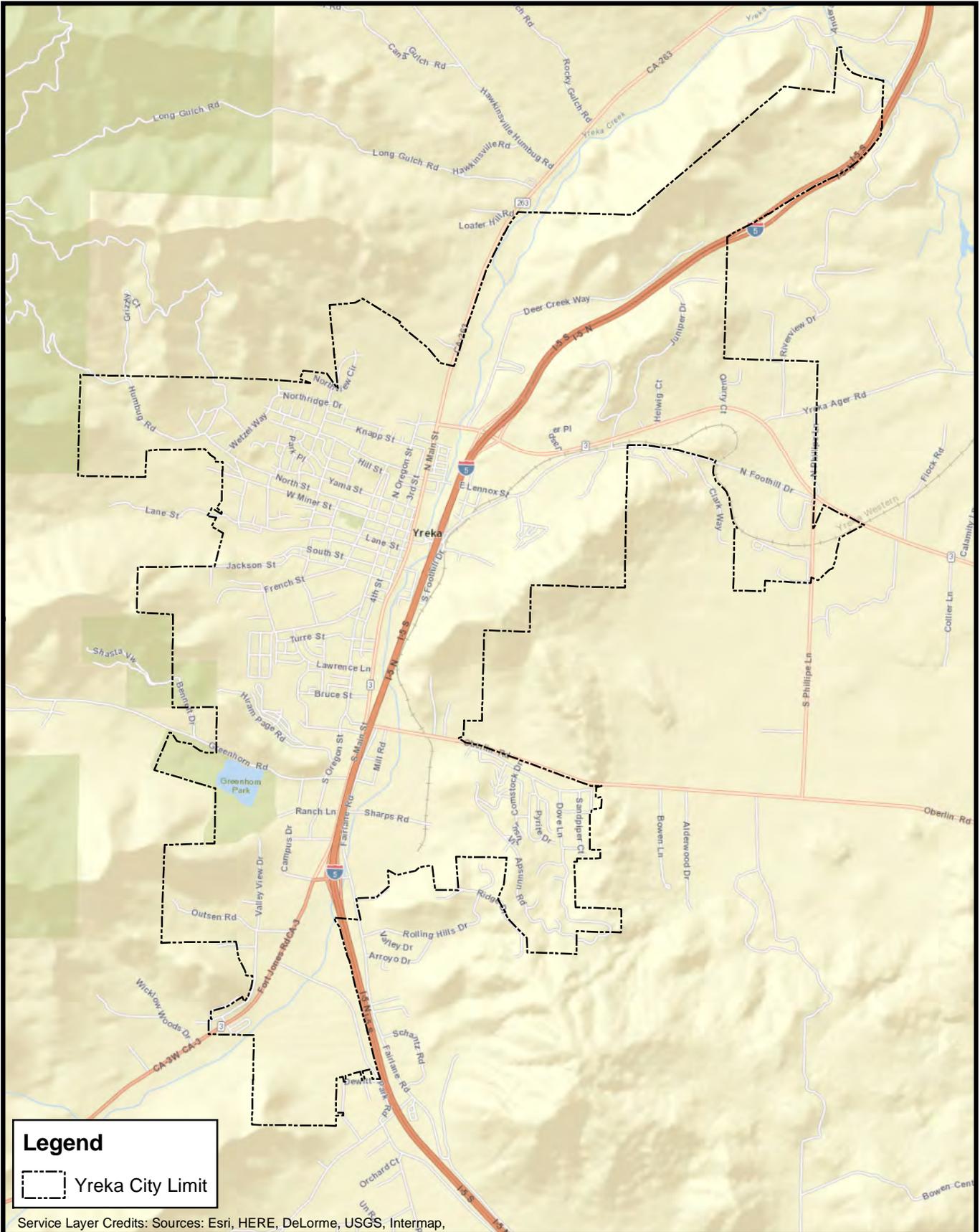


Figure 2  
Project Location



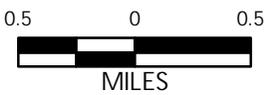
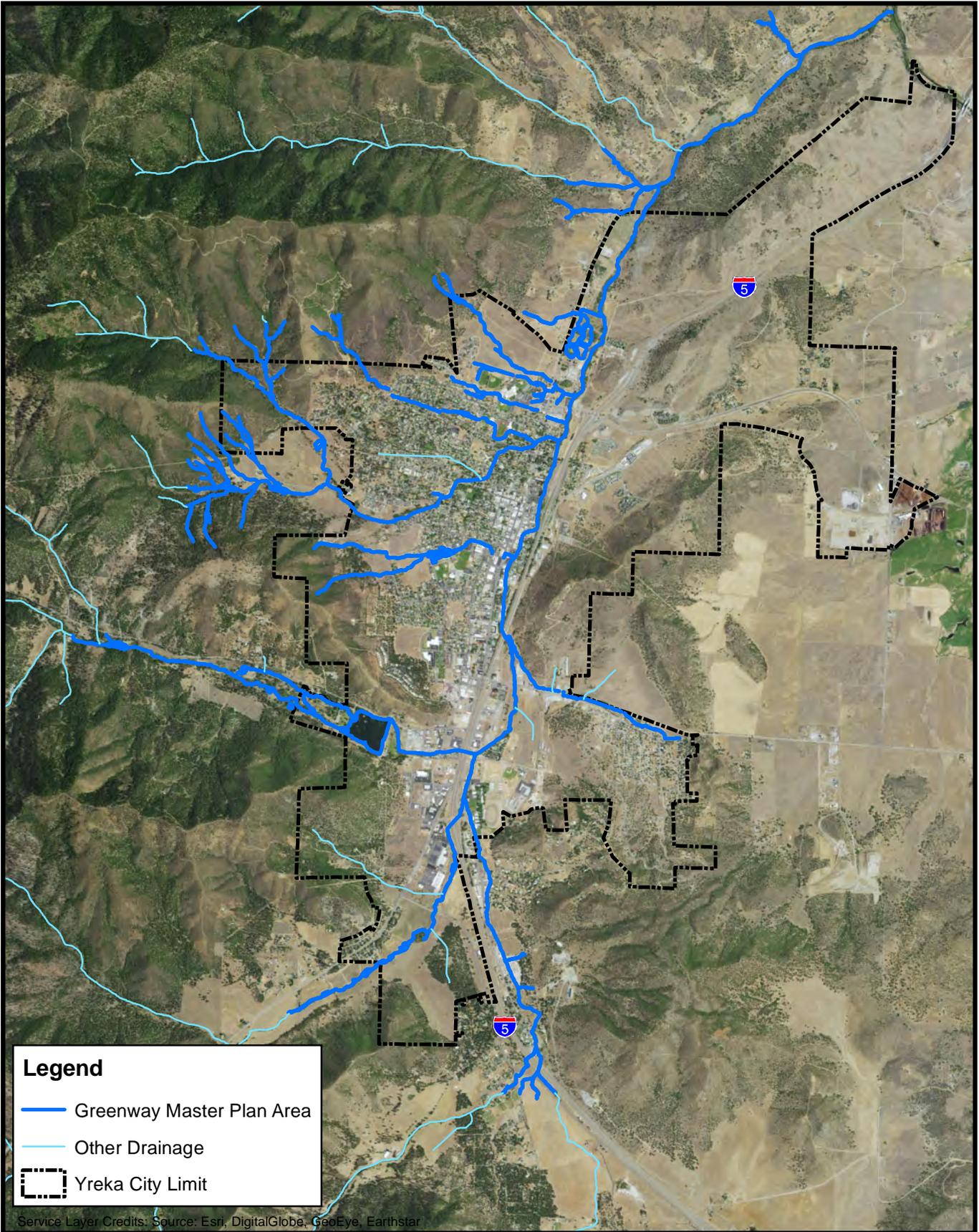
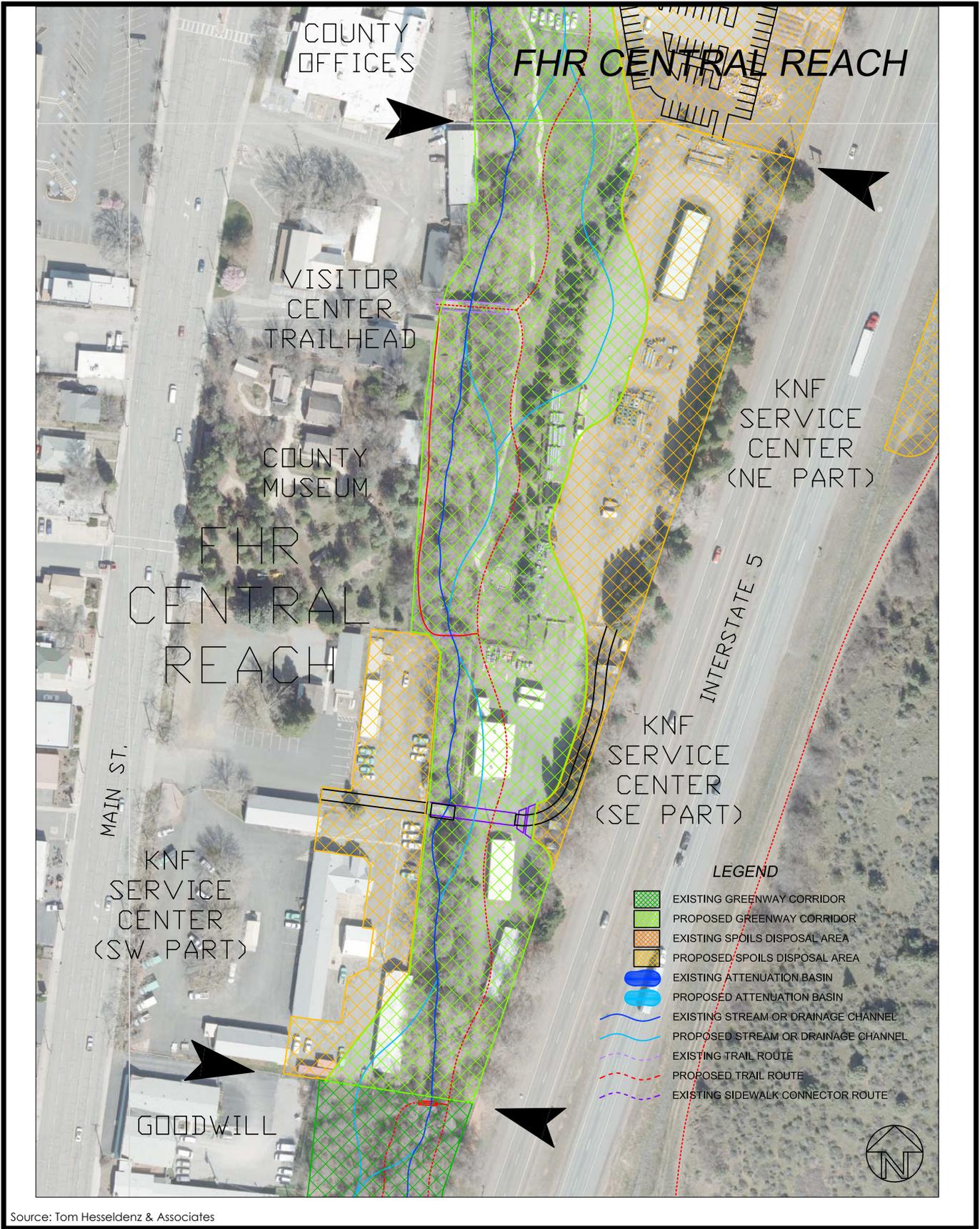


Figure 3  
Greenway Master Plan Area

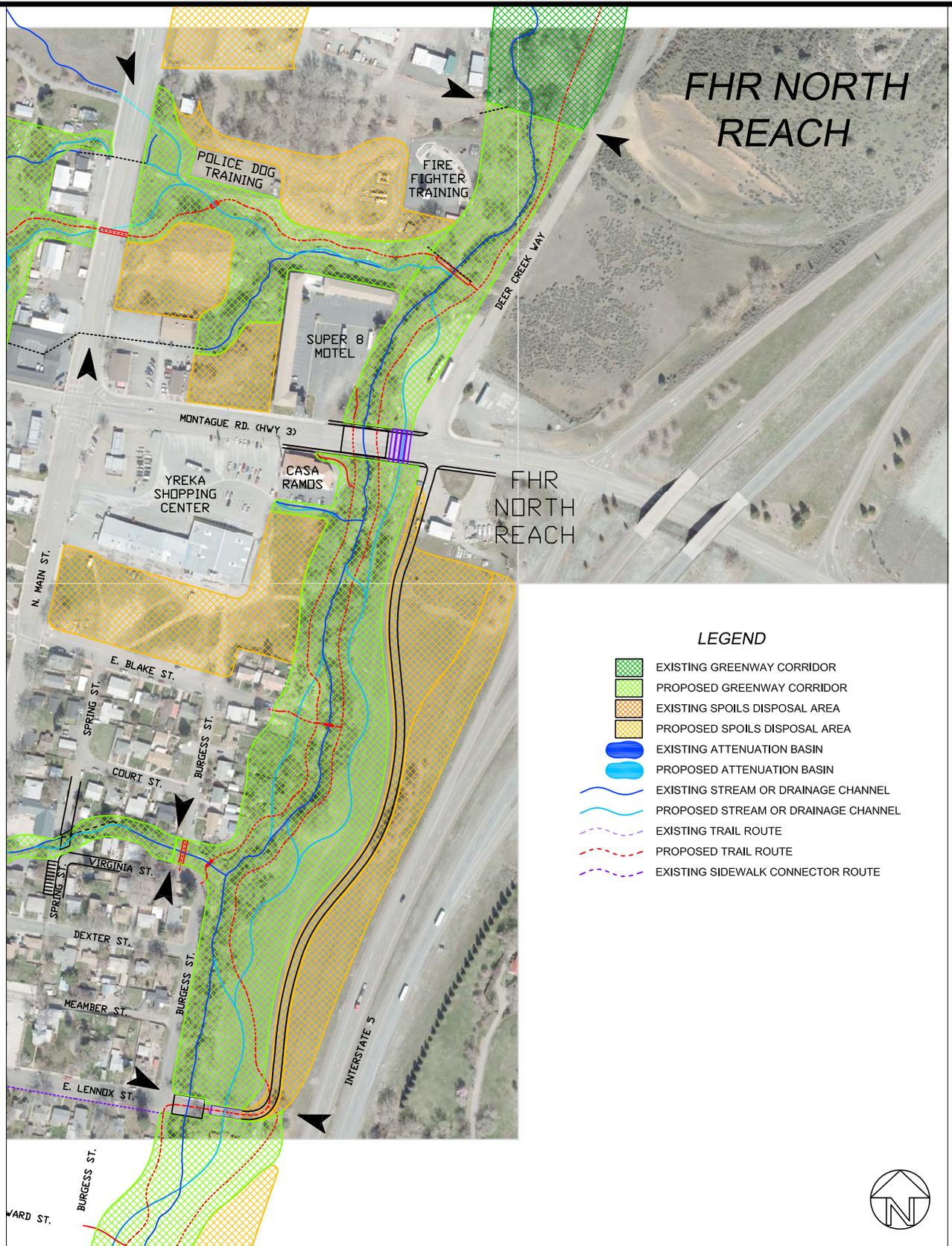




**Figure 4**  
Central Reach - Preliminary  
July 8, 2015

Not to scale





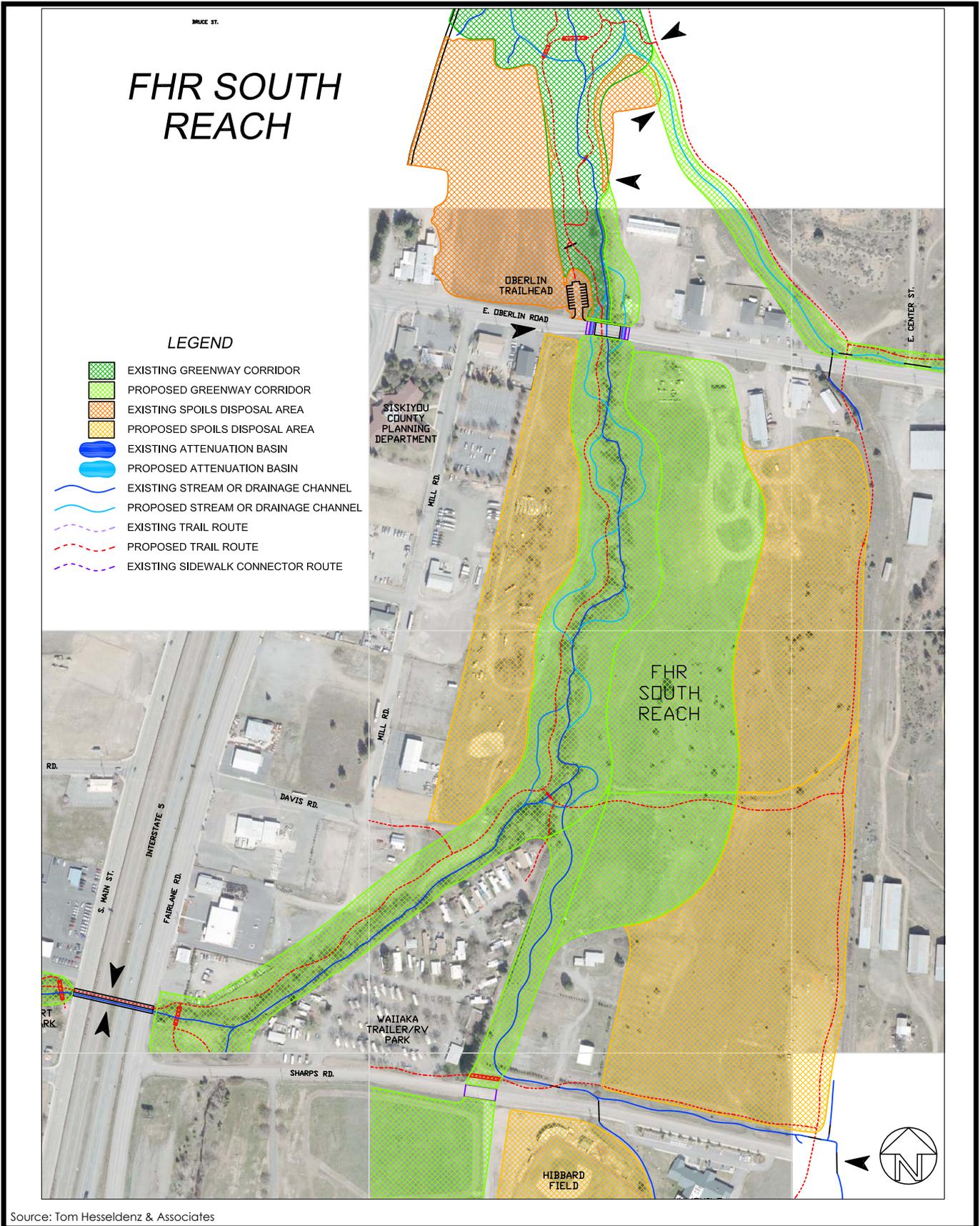
Source: Tom Hesseldenz & Associates



Not to scale

**Figure 5**  
North Reach - Preliminary  
July 8, 2015





Source: Tom Hesseldenz & Associates

Not to scale

**Figure 6**  
South Reach - Preliminary  
July 8, 2015

