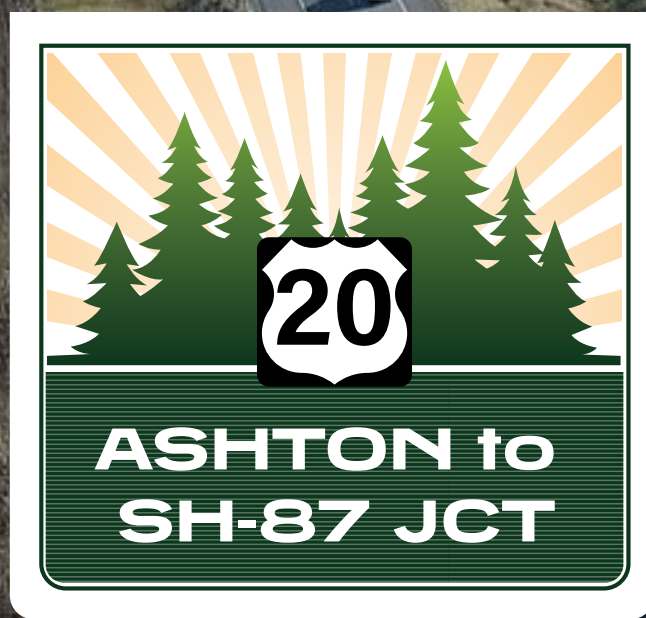


Project No. A023(229), Key No. 23229
US-20; Ashton to SH-87 Junction
Level One Alternative Screening Methodology



The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) is conducting a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study of the US-20 corridor between Ashton, Idaho, and the SH-87 Junction.

US-20; Ashton to SH-87 Junction PEL Study

The US-20 corridor from Ashton to SH-87 Junction serves as a main route to Island Park, Idaho; the West Entrance of Yellowstone National Park (Yellowstone); and southern Montana. Island Park functions as a year-round destination for recreation. The West Entrance of Yellowstone continues to be the busiest entrance into one of the nation's most popular national parks. US-20 is an important commerce route with a higher percentage of trucks than other non-interstate routes in Idaho. Additionally, areas with safety concerns have been specifically identified in this corridor.

The US-20 corridor from Ashton to SH-87 Junction presents a number of challenges that require analysis during the PEL process, including right-of-way (ROW) ownership and existing U.S. Forest Service (USFS) easements, public access, extensive aquatic resources, wildlife movement, federally listed threatened and endangered species, and accommodation of recreational vehicle traffic.

Reason for PEL Study and Desired Outcome

This Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study is the next step to developing a list of users' needs and identifying the future configuration of US-20. The PEL process, project Purpose and Need, and results are expected to be incorporated into a future National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental review. The integration of planning and environmental review will be performed in compliance with statutes that allows the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to operate corridor planning as a lead agency under 23 USC 168 and 23 USC 139(f)(4)(E). The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) adopted regulations for PEL in 23 CFR 450.212 and 450.318. Section 168 provides a process by which lead and cooperating agencies may adopt or incorporate by reference a planning product to

use during the environmental review process to the maximum extent practicable and appropriate.

Planning products may be adopted by an agency conducting an environmental review (e.g., an Environmental Assessment [EA], Environmental Impact Statement [EIS], or other documentation) to meet NEPA requirements if the legal conditions for the PEL study are met during the transportation planning product development and the planning products meet PEL authority and NEPA requirements. Section 168 defines planning products to include Purpose and Need statements, preliminary screening of alternatives, elimination of unreasonable alternatives, and other planning decisions and analyses. The desired outcomes of this PEL study are to:

- Determine the key stakeholders and their desired level of project engagement
- Define the project study area
- Determine logical termini and independent utility
- Develop the project Purpose and Need
- Screen preliminary alternatives and elimination of unreasonable alternatives
- Create a baseline environmental setting
- Advance mitigation opportunities and programmatic solutions
- Define future construction phasing and corridor segments

Project Purpose and Need

The Ashton to SH-87 Junction section of US-20 was originally built in the 1950s. The current roadway does not provide sufficient traffic flow or passing opportunities to accommodate growing traffic volumes. The roadway has exceeded its service life and requires improvements to roadway

and drainage features. Reconstruction will provide the opportunity to include design elements that reduce the severity and frequency of crashes.

Purpose

The purpose of the US-20; Ashton to SH-87 Junction project is to enhance highway safety and operations by:

- Improving capacity and level of service
- Improving access management
- Improving regional freight movement
- Decreasing severe crashes

Need

The need for improvements to the US-20 corridor is to:

- Address existing deficiencies, such as:
 - ◇ Travel time
 - ◇ Congestion
 - ◇ Delays
 - ◇ Safety
- Prepare for future growth, economic development, and tourism in the region
- Increase freight mobility

Goals

When consulting with the public and resource agencies, ITD identified additional goals to be considered as the project is developed:

- Integrate wildlife movement strategies in the corridor
- Provide traffic calming measures or separation where the US-20 alignment runs through developed areas
- Provide multiuse solutions that provide a range of options for recreational users

The purpose of the US-20; Ashton to SH-87 Junction PEL Study Level One Alternative Screening Methodology summary is to provide a high-level briefing of the decision-making framework and how well each set of alternatives meets the PEL

study's Purpose and Need and goals. Additionally, the Level One Alternative Screening Methodology documents key project milestones of how the PEL process is being followed to provide for integration of planning decisions in a future NEPA review process.

Level One Summary

Detailed documentation of the Level One Screening process is in a memorandum available upon request. A summary is provided below:

- Representatives from ITD, local communities, Idaho State Highway Patrol, state and federal agencies, and consulting agencies attended the two universe of alternatives development workshop. Exercises completed at this workshop yielded 56 alternatives in seven study areas.
- The 56 concept alternatives were categorized by their respective study areas, given a unique name, and displayed on an aerial map.
- The study's Purpose and Need, goals, sketch concept alternative maps, alternative descriptions, and evaluation criteria matrix were provided to the study team to be used for review prior to for the Level One Screening meeting.
- At the Level One Screening meeting, 38 of the 56 alternatives were recommended to advance to Level Two Analysis.
- The Level One alternatives and the results from the Level One Screening meeting will be presented to the public at an open house public meeting in spring/summer of 2022.

ITD hosted four in-person and two online public meetings in October and December 2021. The meetings were attended by more than 400 participants.

PEL
Process

2021

Public
Meeting
#1

Alternatives
Development

2022

Alternatives
Screening
#1

Alternatives
Screening
#2

Public
Meeting
#2

Alternatives
Screening
#3

Public
Meeting
#3

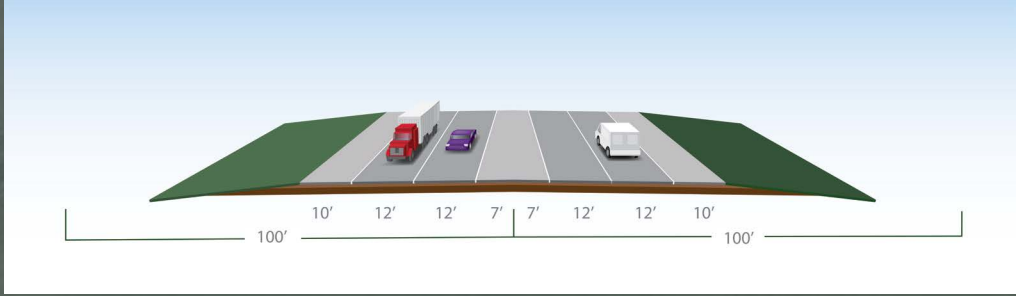
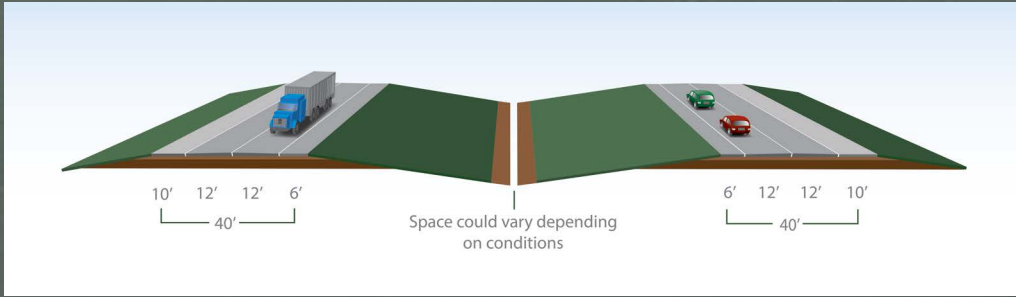
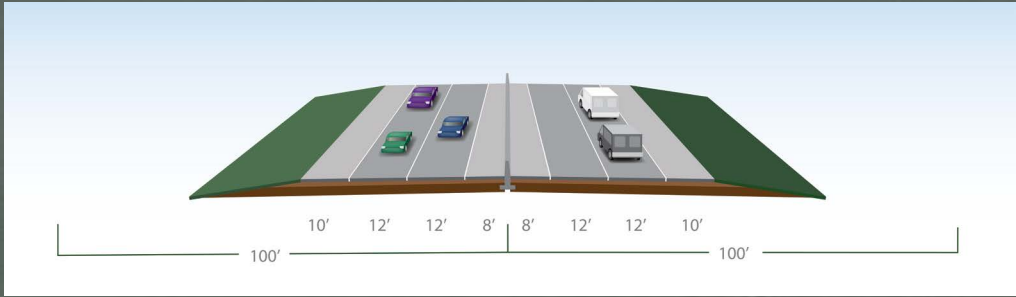
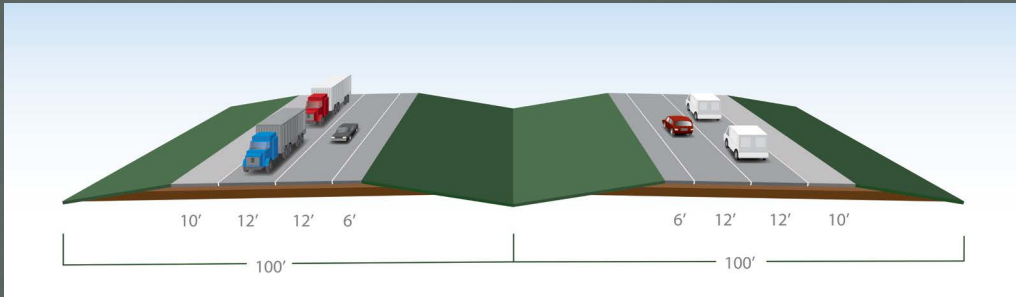
PEL
Completion

Legend:

- ❄ Winter
- ☀ Summer
- 💧 Spring
- 🍂 Fall

What US-20 Could Look Like in the Future

Much of existing US-20 currently meets the minimum standards for traffic operations. However, as traffic volumes increase, parts of US-20 will drop below these standards. In the horizon year of 2050, most segments will not meet the minimum standards for traffic operations without increasing the number of lanes. Improving the highway to a four-lane configuration will bring the traffic operations up to, or above, the recommended minimum standards for most segments. These illustrations depict what US-20 could look like in the future.



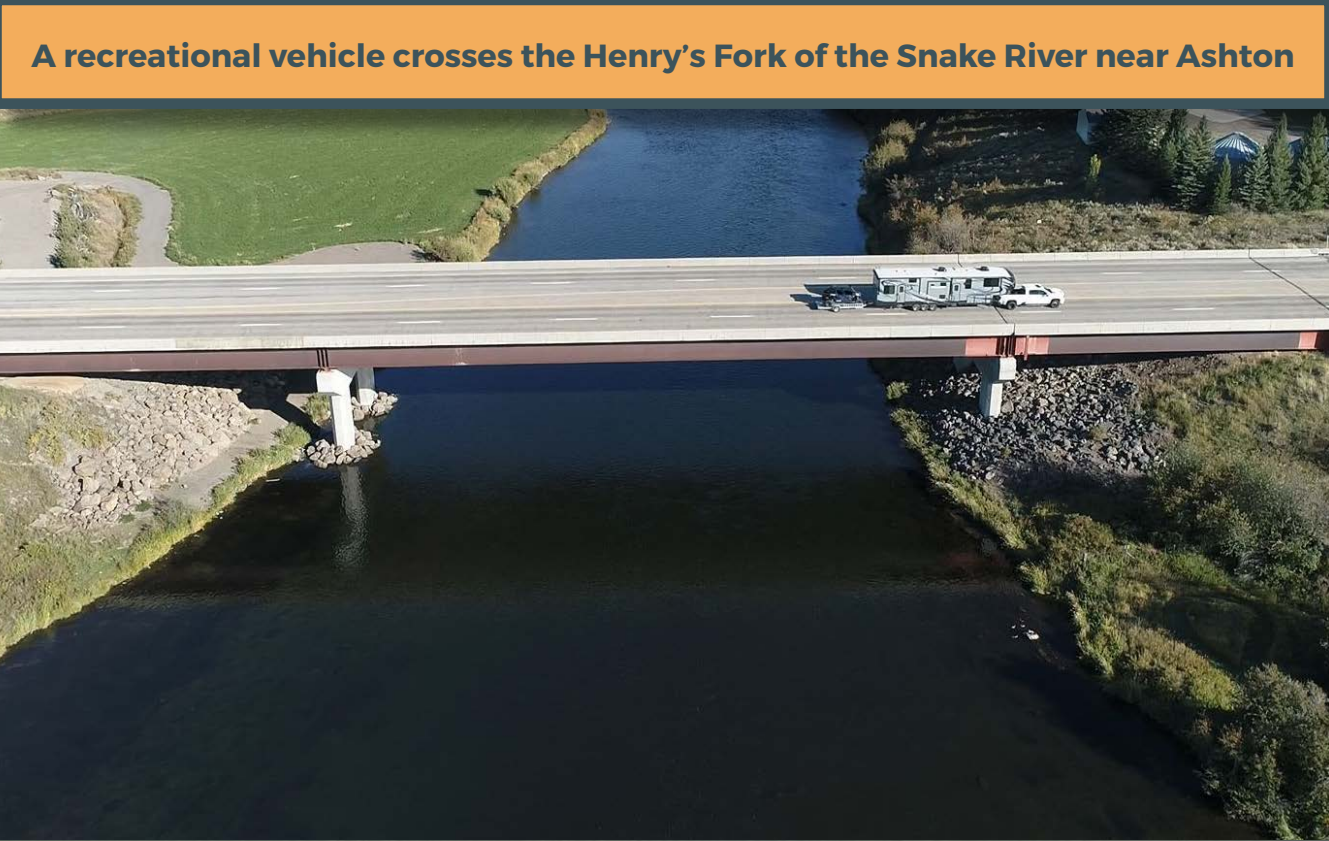
A range of alternatives are being considered as part of the US-20 Ashton to SH-87 Junction PEL. It is possible that alternatives will include routes that have potential realignment around Ashton and other features in the corridor. Stakeholders along with ITD have developed a wide range of alternatives to improve safety on US-20. Some of the alternatives include different lane configurations than what currently exists on the highway. Below are the results of the screening of the universe of alternatives and are being advanced. The included maps reference the study area (SA) and the corresponding alternative identifier. Increasingly more detailed refinement of alternatives will occur in coordination with state and Federal and stakeholder outreach in future screening steps.

Level One Alternative		General Location	Description of Alternative	Level One Screening Result	
SA1	SA1-A1	Ashton	Study area 1 on-alignment	Advances	Continues and should be paired with Chester to Ashton. (Likely, from the light to the bridge 5-lane)
	SA1-B1	Ashton	Northbound through Ashton; southbound west of Ashton; No IC west of Ashton	Does Not Advance	Does not continue, retains safety concerns with little mobility improvement. EMS safety concern.
	SA1-C1	Ashton	Realignment west of Ashton with IC at SH-87	Advances	Merits further study.
	SA1-C2	Ashton	Realignment far west of Ashton	Does Not Advance	Extensive impacts with out of direction travel.
	SA1-C3	Ashton	Realignment to the east of Ashton	Does Not Advance	Extensive impacts with out of direction travel.
	SA1-C4	Ashton	Northbound and southbound west of Ashton no IC west of Ashton; move US-20 to the east after the bridge	Advances	Merits further study.
SA2	SA2-A1	Big Bend Ridge	On existing alignment, two lanes in each direction. The existing road is in between the proposed road.	Advances	Moves forward and combine into a single alternative determined by design.
	SA2-B1	Big Bend Ridge	On existing alignment, two lanes in each direction. Southbound lanes are on the existing road and northbound lanes are shifted east.		
	SA2-C1	Big Bend Ridge	Southbound west of Ashton Hills Estate, northbound on existing alignment	Advances	Merits further study.
	SA2-C2	Big Bend Ridge	Southbound far west of existing alignment, northbound on existing alignment	Does Not Advance	Eliminated. Terrain, impacts, EMS safety, migration concerns, concerns with mobility.
	SA2-C3	Big Bend Ridge	Northbound east of existing alignment, southbound on existing alignment	Does Not Advance	Eliminated. Terrain (river), impacts, EMS safety, migration concerns, concerns with mobility, conservation easements.
	SA2-C4	Big Bend Ridge	Ashton Hills Estate access	Idea/Concept Advances	Eliminate as a standalone but idea should be combined.
SA3	SA3-A1	Big Bend Ridge	On existing alignment, two lanes in each direction. The existing road is in between the proposed road.	Advances	Merits further study. Combine into a single alternative.
	SA3-B1	Big Bend Ridge	On existing alignment, two lanes in each direction. Southbound lanes are on the existing road and northbound lanes are shifted west.		
	SA3-B2	Big Bend Ridge	On existing alignment, two lanes in each direction. Southbound lanes are on the existing road and northbound lanes are shifted east.		
SA4	SA4-A 1	Swan Lake/ Pine Haven	On alignment 2 lanes each direction; the existing road is in between the proposed road	Advances	Merits further study. Combine into a single alternative.
	SA4-B1	Swan Lake/ Pine Haven	On alignment 2 lanes each direction shifted to the east; acceleration lanes at public approaches		
	SA4-C1	Swan Lake/ Pine Haven	Reroute US-20 far west of existing US-20	Advances	Merits further study.
	SA4-C2	Swan Lake/ Pine Haven	Reroute southbound US-20 west of existing US-20 (couplet)	Does Not Advance	Eliminate the couplet idea; however, retain the alignment to possible combine with C1.

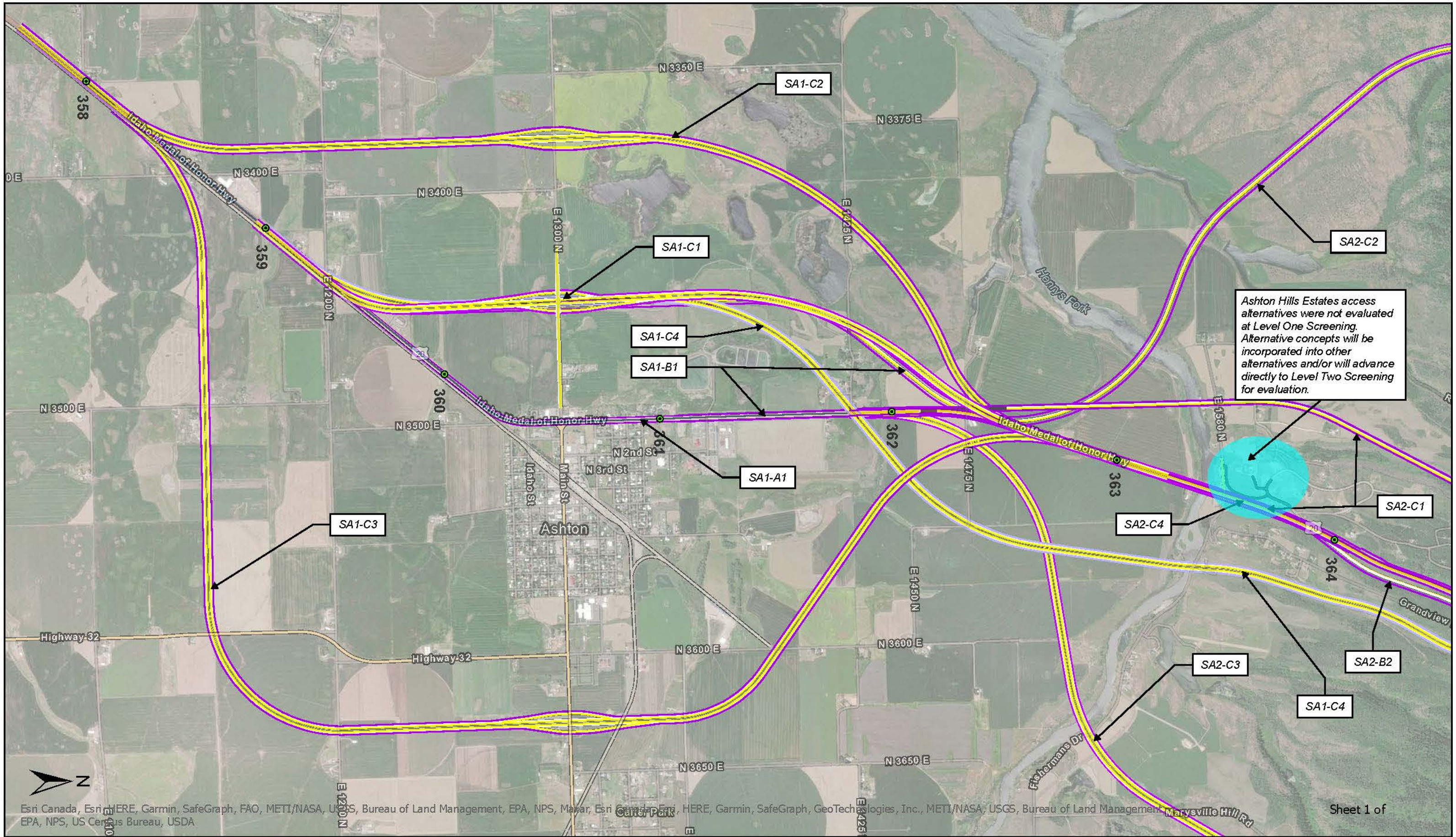
Legend: Advances Does not Advance (SA) Study Area

Level One Alternative		General Location	Description of Alternative	Level One Screening Result	
SA5	SA5-A1	Harriman State Park	On existing alignment, two lanes in each direction. The existing road is in between the proposed road.	Advances	Merits further study. Combine into a single alternative.
	SA5-B1	Harriman State Park	On existing alignment, two lanes in each direction. Northbound lanes are on the existing road and southbound lanes are shifted west.		
	SA5-B2	Harriman State Park	On existing alignment, two lanes in each direction. Southbound lanes are on the existing road and northbound lanes are shifted east.		
	SA5-B3	Harriman State Park	Roundabout at Mesa Falls Road	Does Not Advance	Eliminate. Concerns with safety, driver expectancy, maintenance
SA6	SA6-A1	Last Chance / Mack's Inn	On existing alignment, two lanes in each direction. The existing road is in between the proposed road.	Advances (AS6-A1 &SA6-B1 should be combined)	Moves forward combined as a single alternative. Intersection and turn lane configurations as shown on SA6-B1 should be disregarded for this alternative.
	SA6-B1	Last Chance / Mack's Inn	On existing alignment, two lanes in each direction. Northbound lanes are on the existing road and southbound lanes are shifted west.		
	SA6-B2	Mack's Inn	On existing alignment, two lanes in each direction. Southbound lanes are on the existing road and northbound lanes are shifted east.	Does Not Advance	Eliminated, safety, maintenance, driver expectancy.
	SA6-C1	Last Chance / Mack's Inn	Realign US-20 (northbound and southbound) east of the Existing US-20	Does Not Advance	Out of way travel, extensive impacts.
	SA6-C2	Last Chance	US-20 Shift West across the River at last chance (MP 381-386)	Advances	Merits further study, may modify alignment (should consider snow storage).
	SA6-C3	Mack's Inn / Sawtelle	New county road to connect from US-20 to S. Big Springs Loop	Idea/Concept Advances	May want to use this approach with other alternatives.
	SA6-C4	Sawtelle	New county road to connect from US-20 to N. Big Springs Loop; remove approach across from Sawtelle Peak Road	Does Not Advance	Does not meet purpose and need as a standalone alternative, may consider combining with other alternatives.
	SA6-C5	Elk Creek	New frontage road east of US-20 at Elk Creek Road; restrict access from US-20 to businesses; business access from new frontage road	Advances	Merits further study, modifications required.
	SA6-C7	Last Chance / Mack's Inn	New non-motorized recreational trail from MP 379 -401); east side of the road between MP 379-394.7, west side of the road from 394.7-401. New bridge crossings at Osborne Bridge, Buffalo River, Henry's Fork River, across US-20 at Sawtelle, and Henry's Lake outlet bridge (circles represent grade-separated crossing of US-20)	Idea/Concept Advances	Eliminate as a standalone but idea should be combined.
	SA6-C8	Elk Creek	Roundabout at Yale Kilgore Road (MP 389.2)	Does Not Advance	Eliminated, safety, maintenance, driver expectancy.
	SA6-C9	Mack's Inn	Roundabout at S. Big Springs Loop (MP 392.6)	Does Not Advance	Eliminated, safety, maintenance, driver expectancy.
	SA6-C10	Sawtelle	Roundabout at Sawtelle Peak Road (MP 394.3)	Does Not Advance	Eliminated, safety, maintenance, driver expectancy.
	SA6-C12	Mack's Inn	Interchange at MP 392.6; raise US-20 Bridge over the river; access both sides under the bridge on north and south of the river under raised bridge; add recreation bridge on the east and frontage road bridge on the west	Advances	Merits further study.
	SA6-C13	Elk Creek	Interchange at MP 389.4; reroute US-20 east of existing US-20	Advances	Merits further study, look at frontage roads on C16 to combine.
	SA6-C14	Mack's Inn	Reroute US-20 east of existing alignment with overpass at S. Big Springs Road	Advances	Merits further study, may need to be adjusted.
	SA6-C15	Last Chance	Frontage road east of US-20 with roundabout at MP 382.6 connect to old highway	Does Not Advance	Eliminated, safety, maintenance, driver expectancy
	SA6-C16	Island Park / Elk Creek	Frontage road east of US-20 between MP 387-389.4; interchange at MP 388	Idea/Concept Advances	Eliminate as a standalone but idea should be combined.
	SA6-C17	Elk Creek	Frontage road east of US-20 at Elk Creek Road with on/off ramps and bike pedestrian tunnel	Advances	Merits further study, may want to combine with C13 or C29 (mobility is a concern).
	SA6-C18	Box Canyon	Roundabout at MP 383.5	Does Not Advance	Eliminated, safety, maintenance, driver expectancy.

Level One Alternative		General Location	Description of Alternative	Level One Screening Result	
SA6 (continued)	SA6-C19	Box Canyon	Left turn lanes at MP 383.5	Idea/Concept Advances	Eliminate as a standalone but idea should be combined.
	SA6-C20	Sawtelle	Left turn lanes at MP 394.3	Idea/Concept Advances	Eliminate as a standalone but idea should be combined.
	SA6-C21	Elk Creek	Realign Yale Kilgore to line up with Phillips Loop Road and add traffic signal at intersection	Advances	Merits further study.
	SA6-C22	Mack's Inn	Traffic signal at S. Big Springs Loop Road MP 392.6	Advances	Merits further study.
	SA6-C23	Sawtelle	Traffic signal at Sawtelle Peak Road (MP 394.3)	Idea/Concept Advances	Eliminate as a standalone but idea should be combined with C28.
	SA6-C24	Elk Creek	Frontage road east of US-20 MP 393 to 394	Does Not Advance	Eliminated because of intersection control has safety concerns.
	SA6-C25	Sawtelle	Overpass at MP 394.6	Advances	Merits further study, evaluate frontage roads and combining.
	SA6-C26	Elk Creek	Change grade at Yale Kilgore; add free running right from Yale Kilgore to US-20	Does Not Advance	Eliminate with mobility and decision site distance (free running right).
	SA6-C27	Sawtelle	New intersection north of Sawtelle Peak Road	Does Not Advance	Eliminate with mobility and decision site distance (free running right).
SA7	SA6-C28	Mack's Inn - Sawtelle	Traffic signal at Sawtelle Peak Road (MP 394.3)	Advances	Merits further study, may combine with C23.
	SA6-C29	Elk Creek	Interchange at Yale Kilgore Road	Advances	Merits further study.
	SA7-A1	Henry's Lake	On existing alignment, two lanes in each direction. The existing road is in between the proposed road.	Advances	Merits further study. Combine into a single alternative.
	SA7-B1	Henry's Lake	On existing alignment, two lanes in each direction. Northbound lanes are on the existing road and southbound lanes are shifted west.		
	SA7-B2	Henry's Lake	On existing alignment, two lanes in each direction. Southbound lanes are on the existing road and northbound lanes are shifted east.		



The following maps depict the results of the alternative screening.



Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, Mayor, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc., METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA

Sheet 1 of

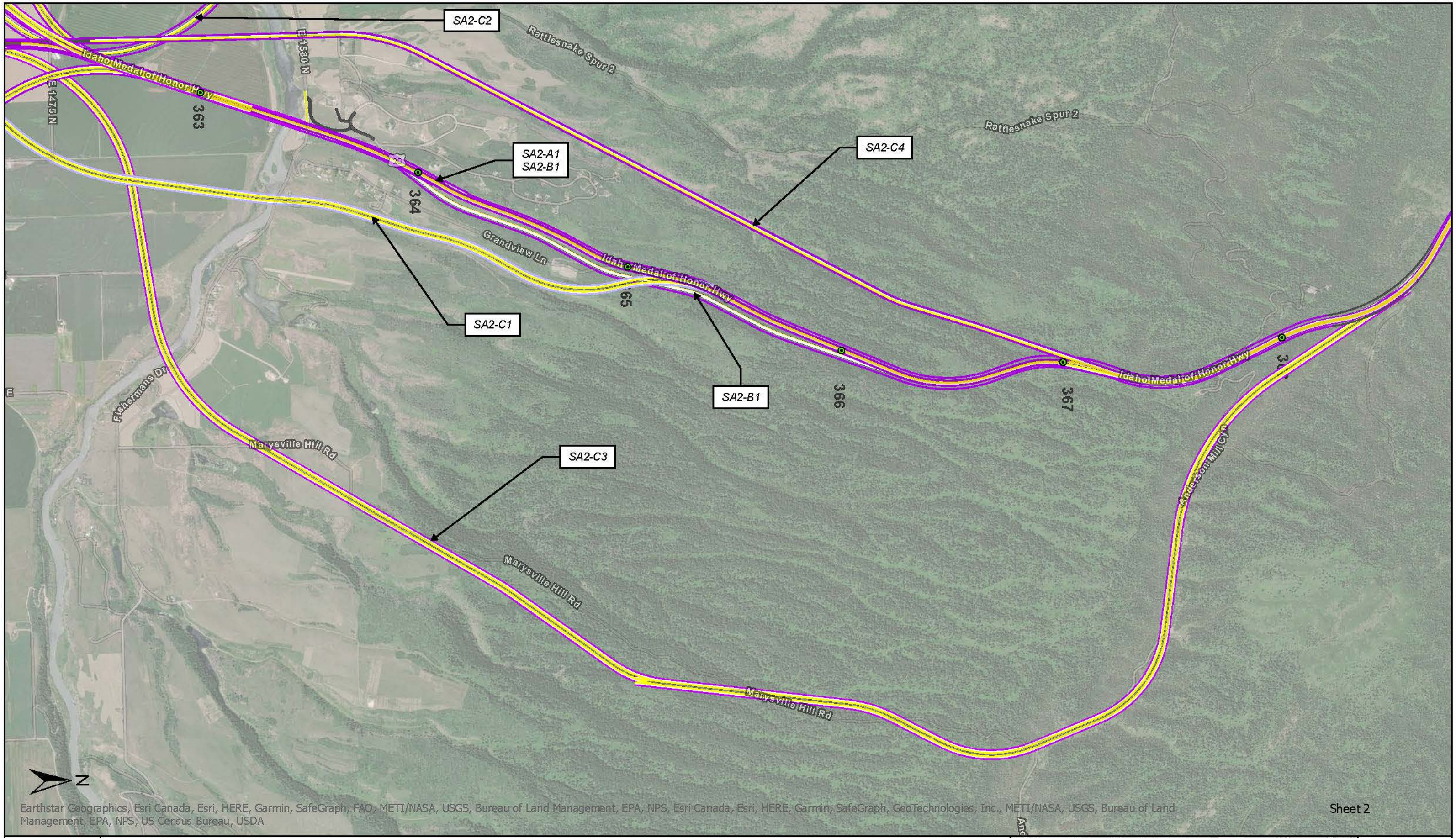


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Key 23229 Level One Screening Alternatives

● Milepost
— Proposed ROW





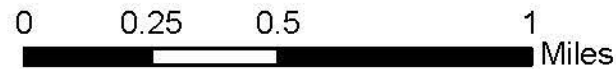
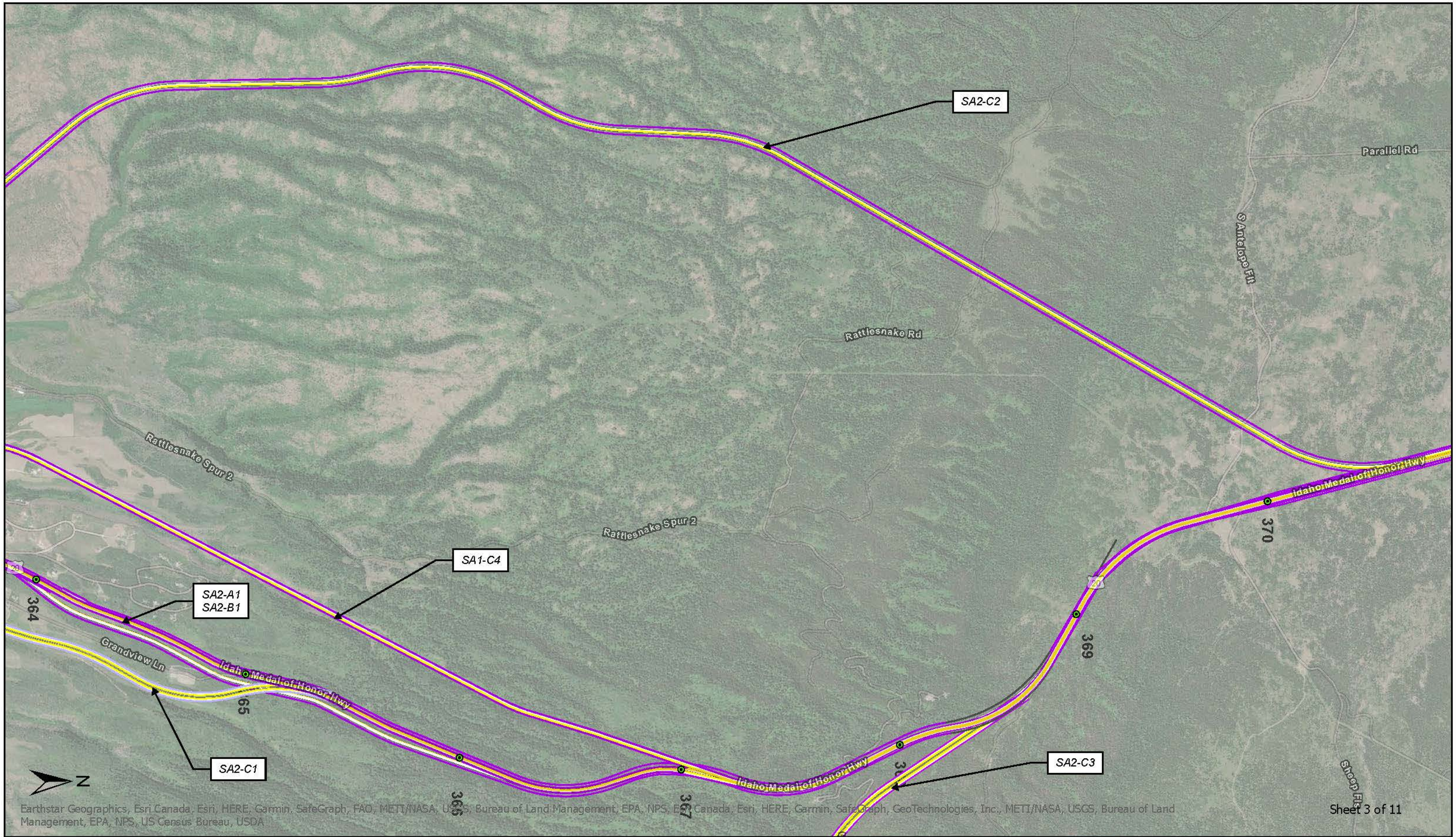
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Sheet 2

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Key 23229 Level One Screening Alternatives

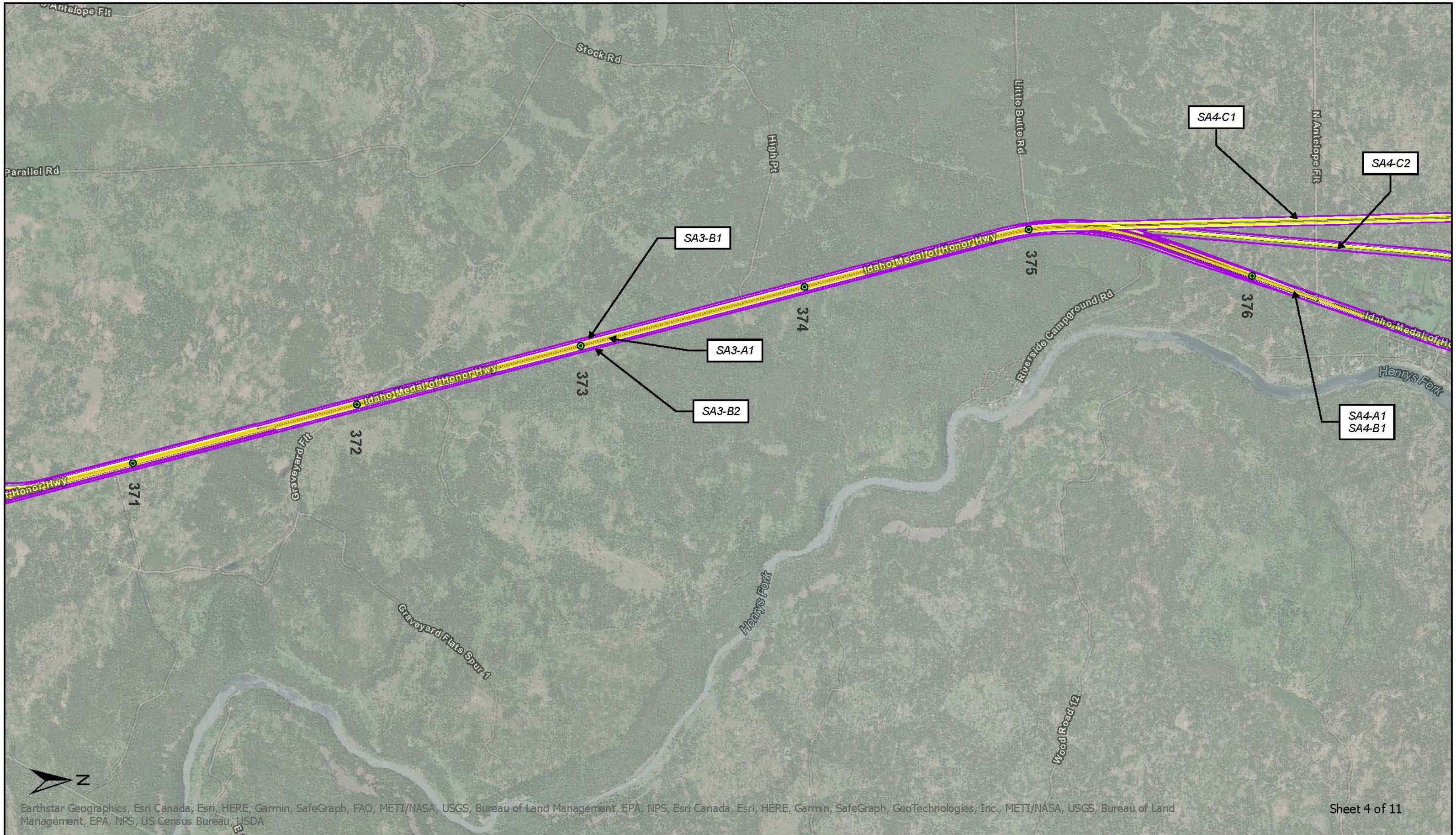
Milepost
 Proposed ROW



Key 23229 Level One Screening Alternatives

- Milepost
- Proposed ROW



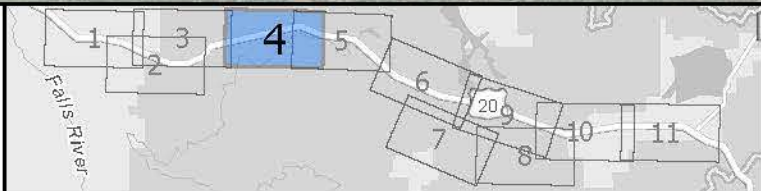


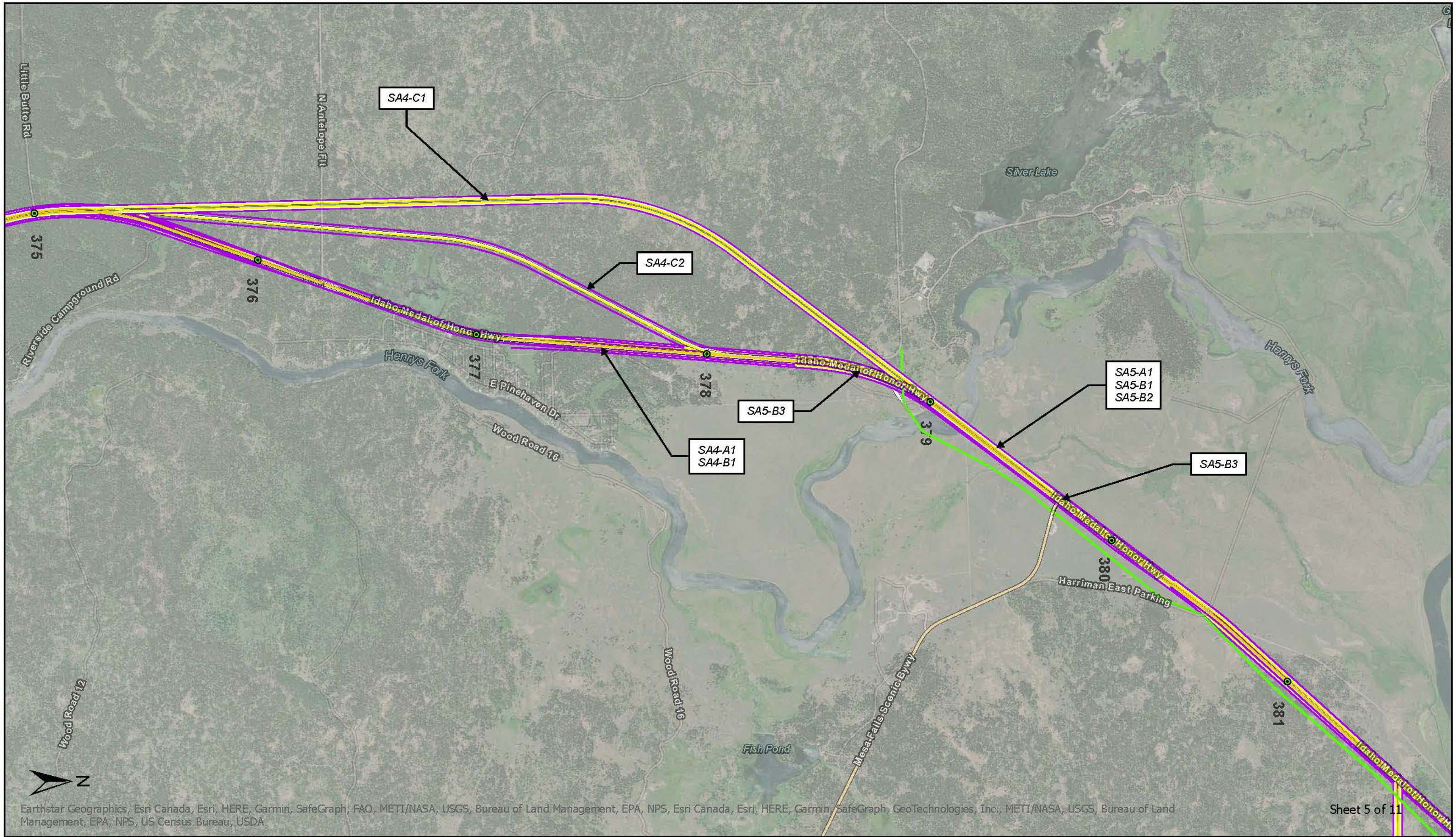
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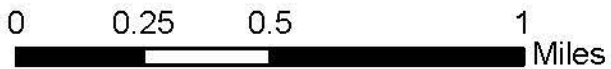
Key 23229 Level One
Screening Alternatives

Milepost
 Proposed ROW



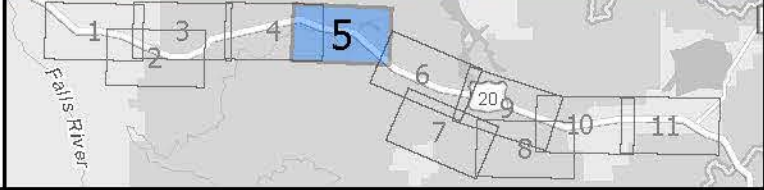


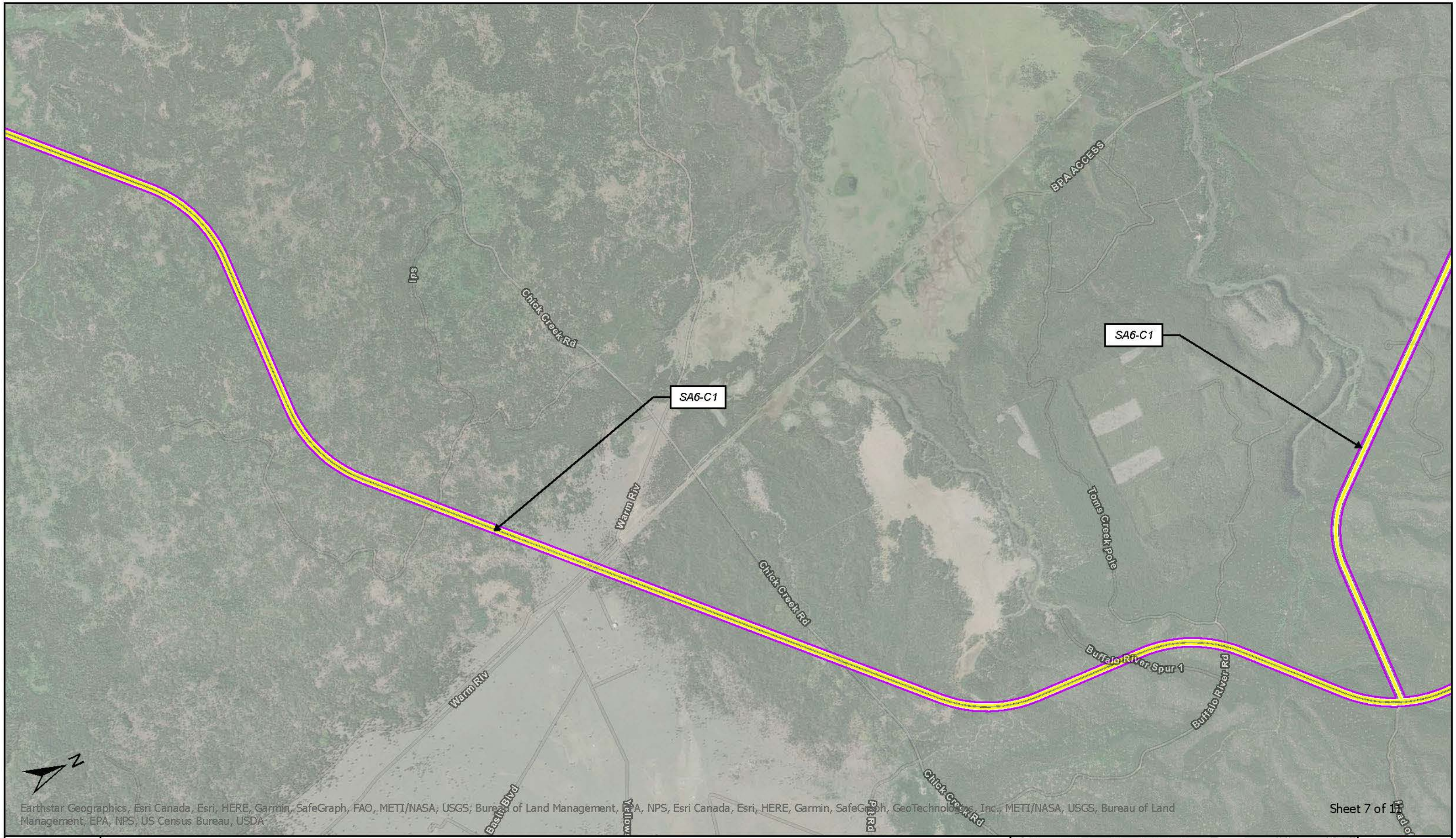
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Key 23229 Level One Screening Alternatives

- Milepost
- Proposed ROW





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Key 23229 Level One Screening Alternatives

- Milepost
- Proposed ROW





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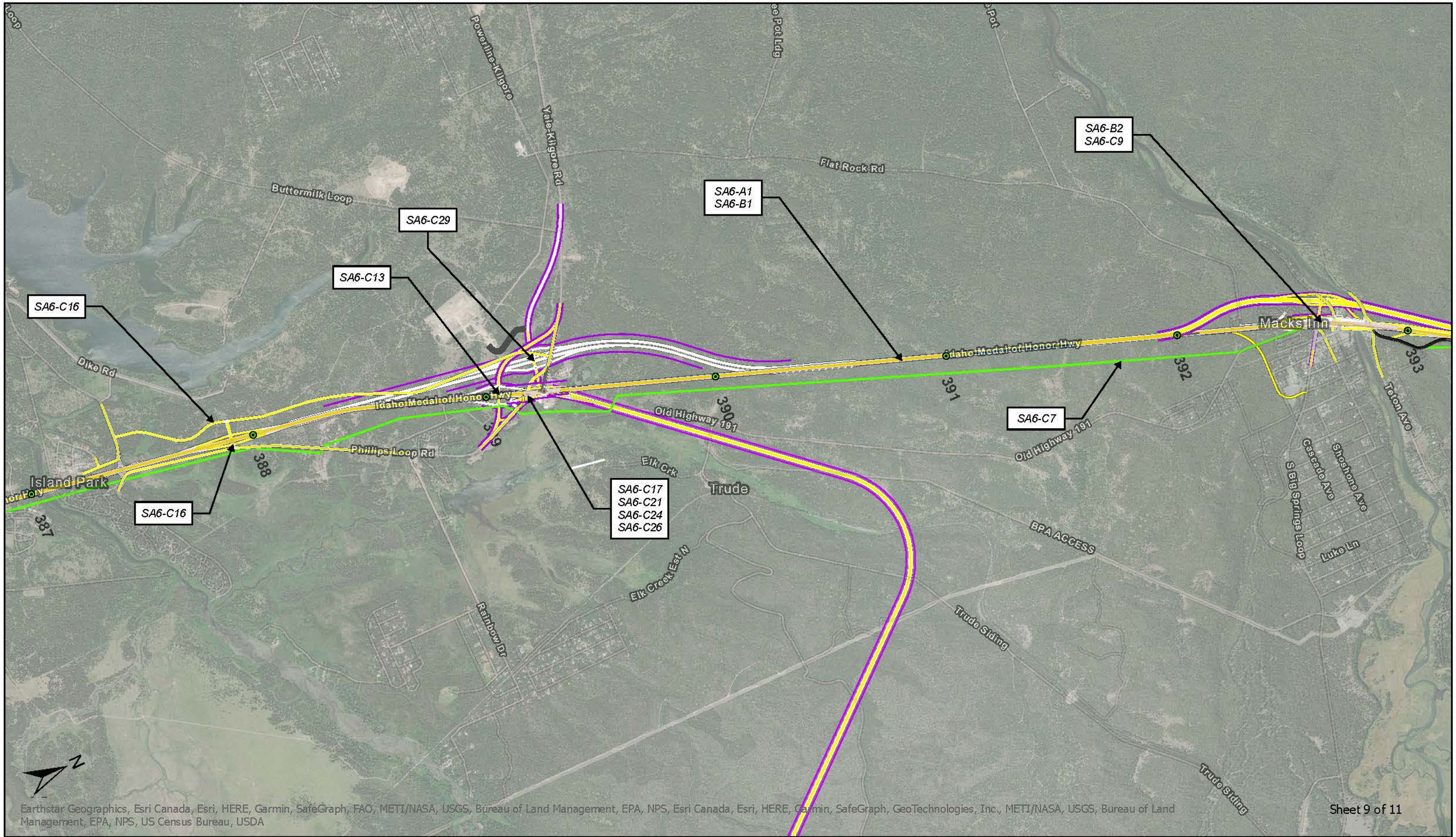
Miles

Key 23229 Level One Screening Alternatives

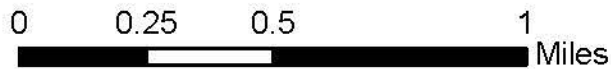
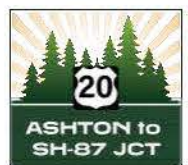
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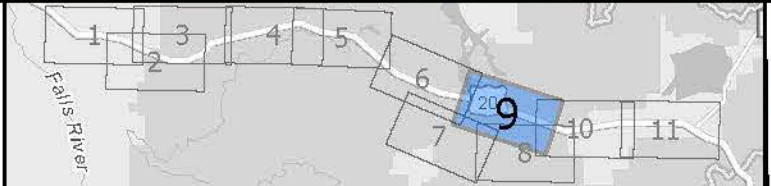


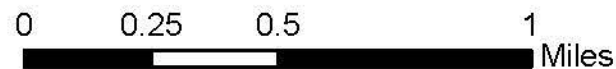
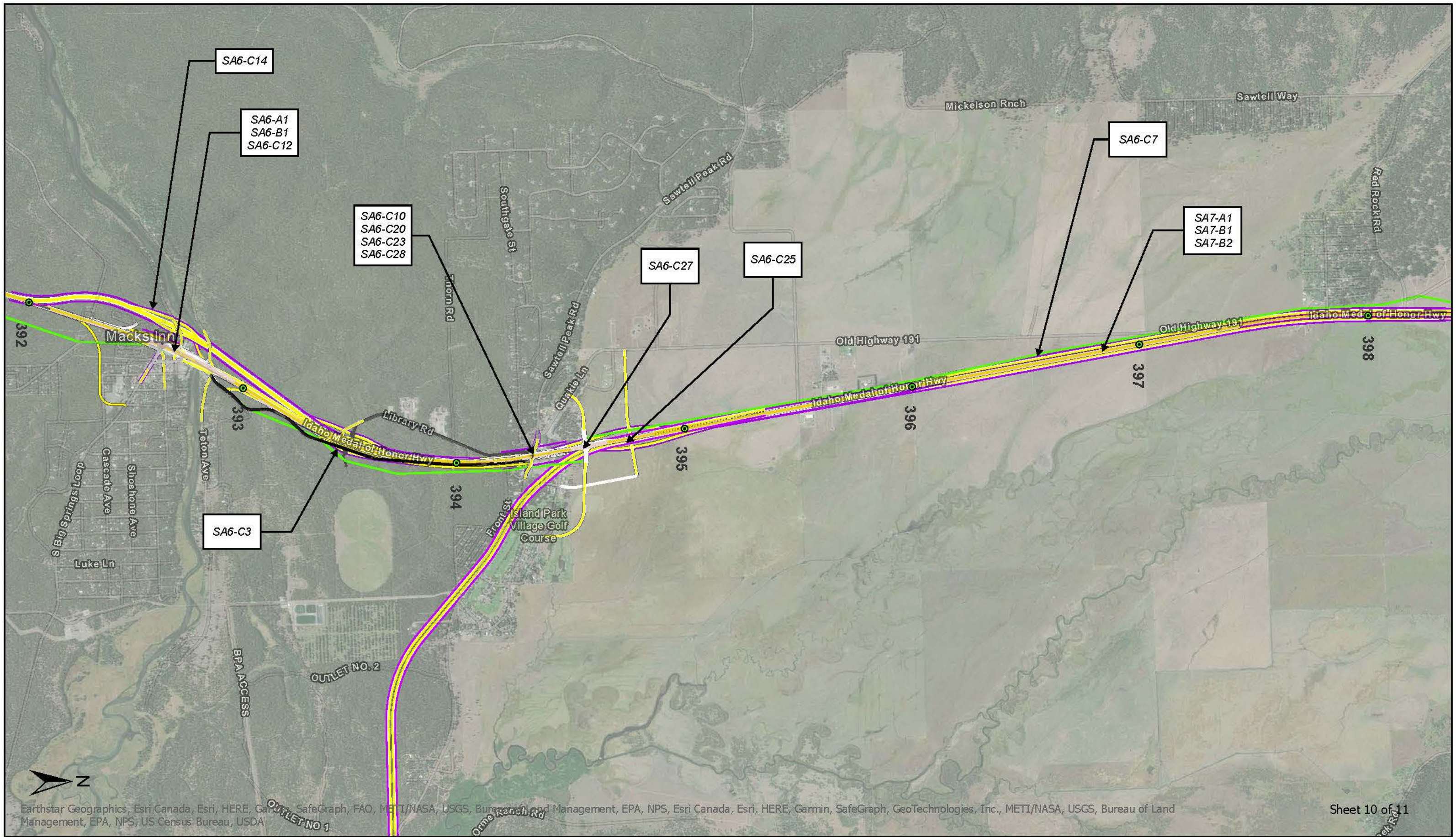
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Key 23229 Level One Screening Alternatives

● Milepost
— Proposed ROW

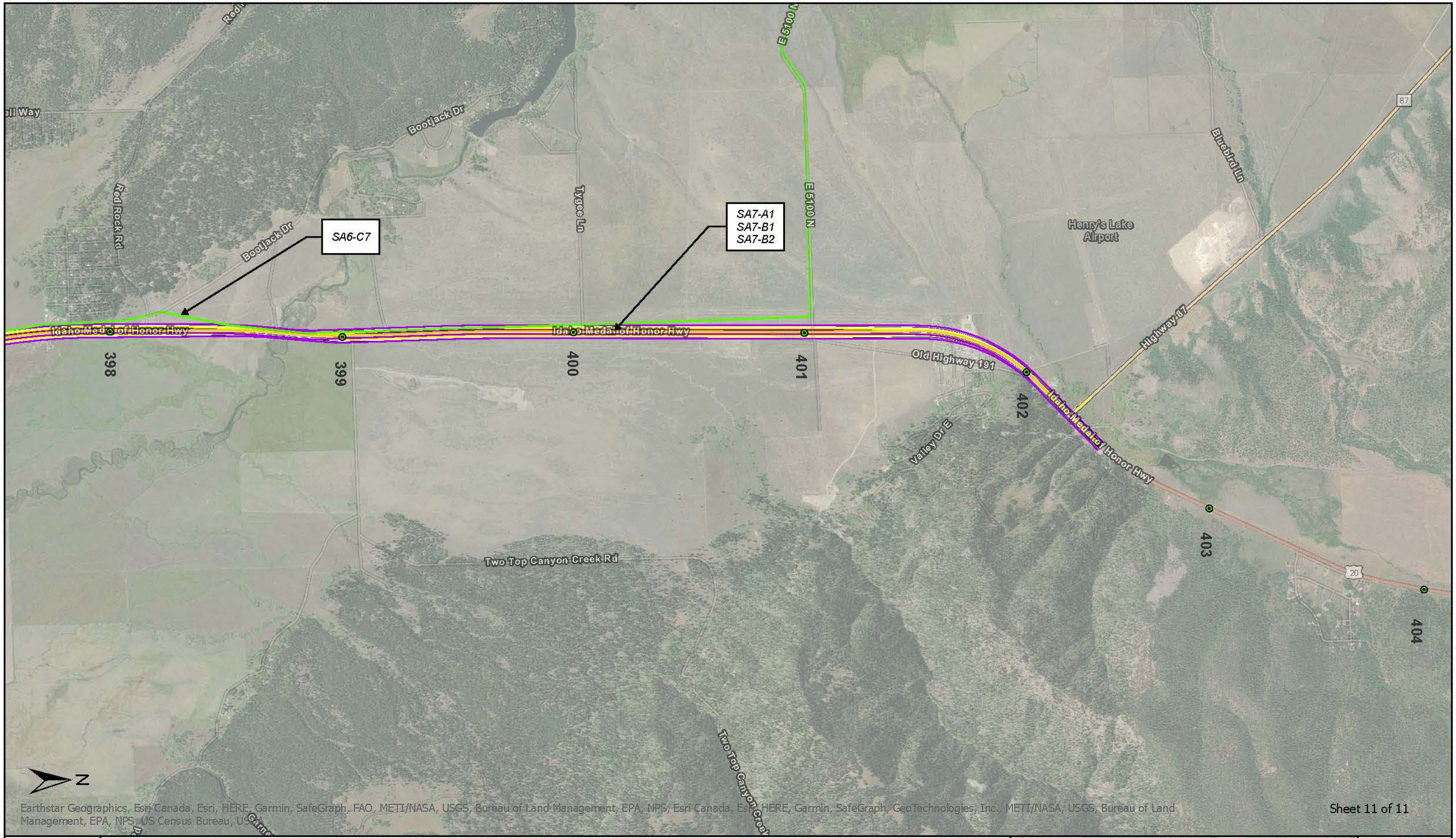




Key 23229 Level One Screening Alternatives

- Milepost
- Proposed ROW

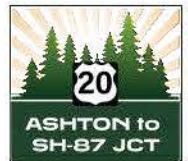
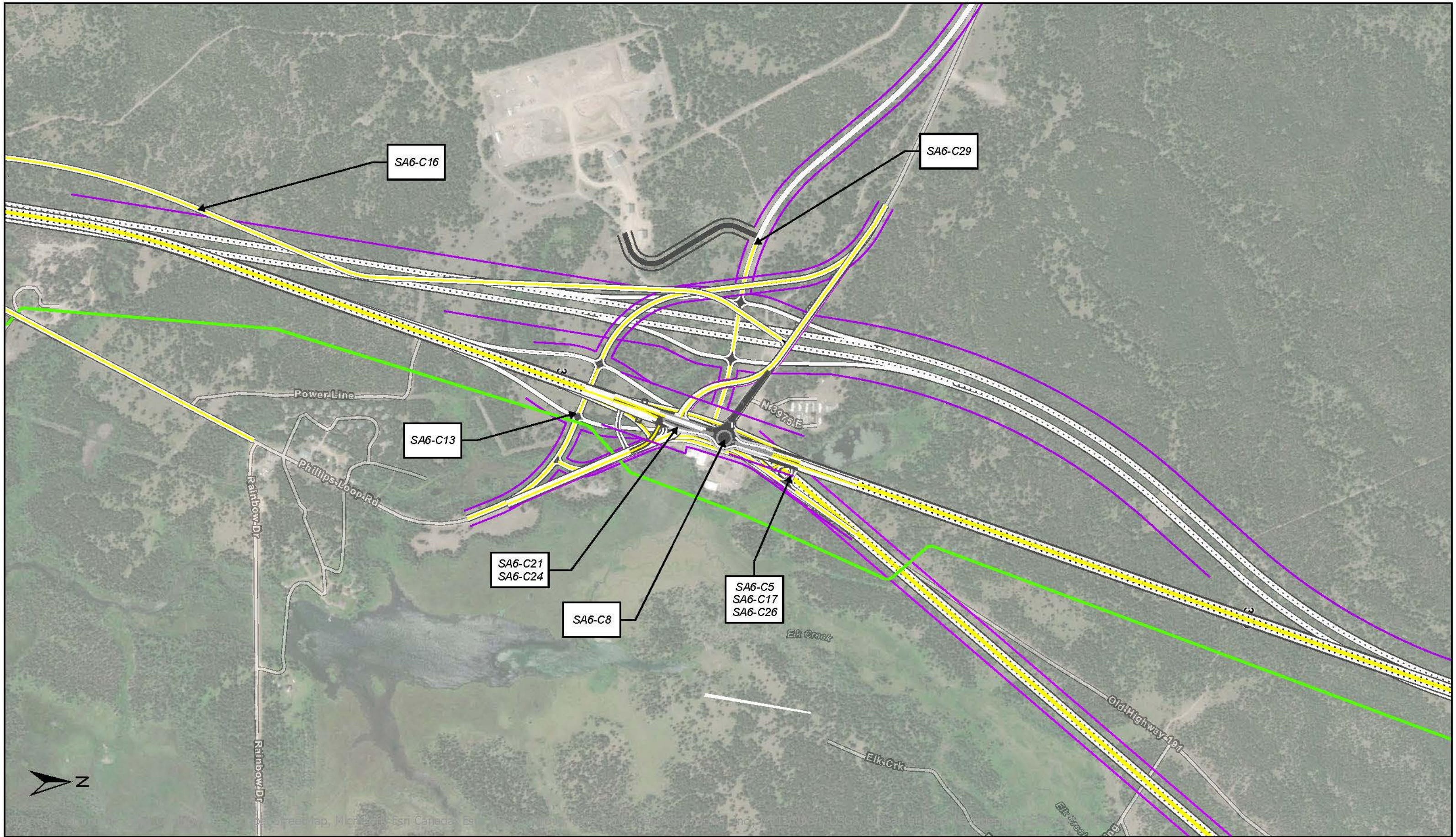




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Key 23229 Level One Screening Alternatives

- Milepost
- Proposed ROW

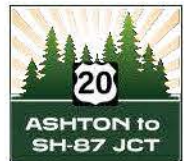
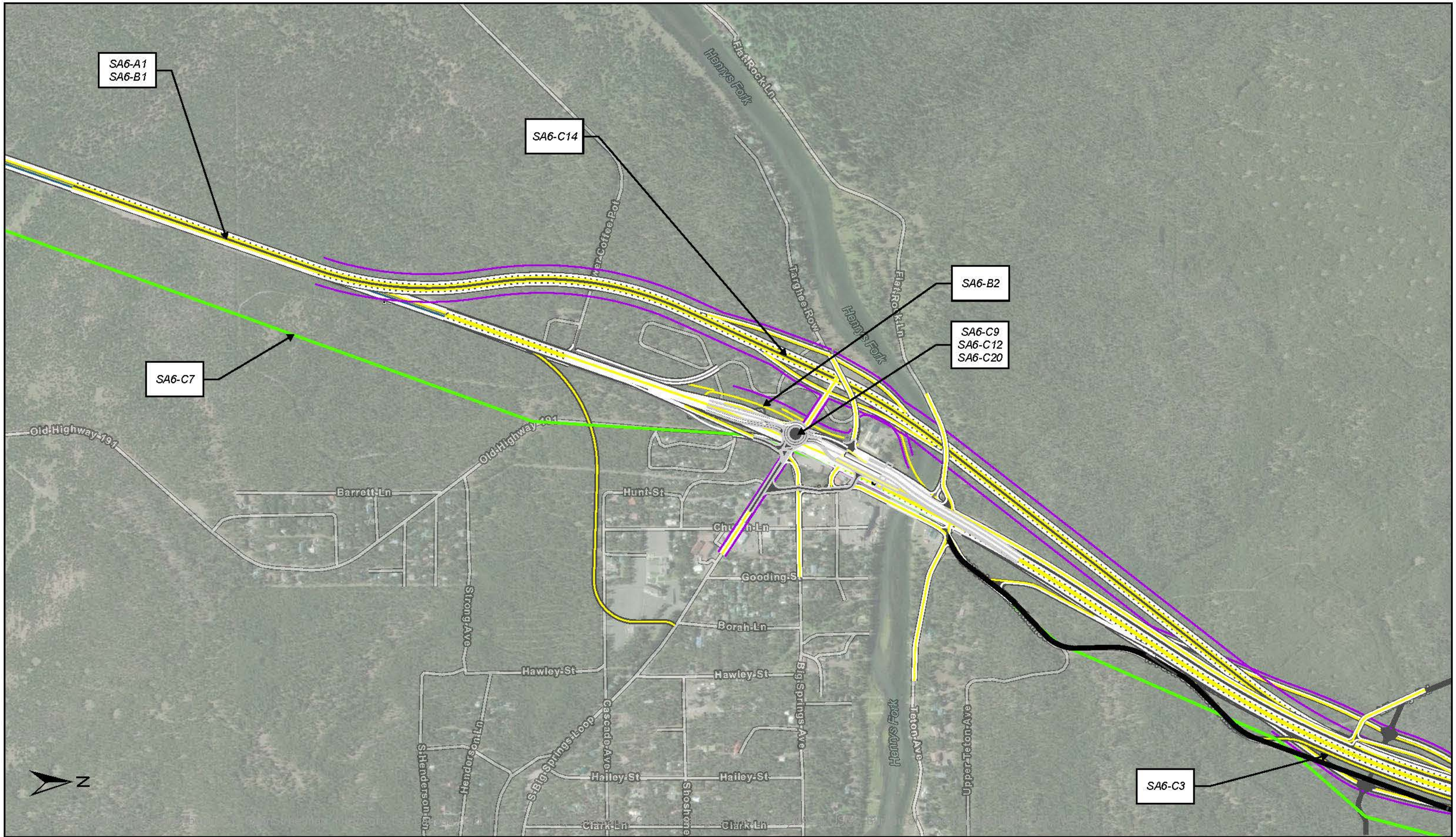


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Feet

Elk Creek - Level One Alternatives

● Milepost
— Proposed ROW — Proposed Trail



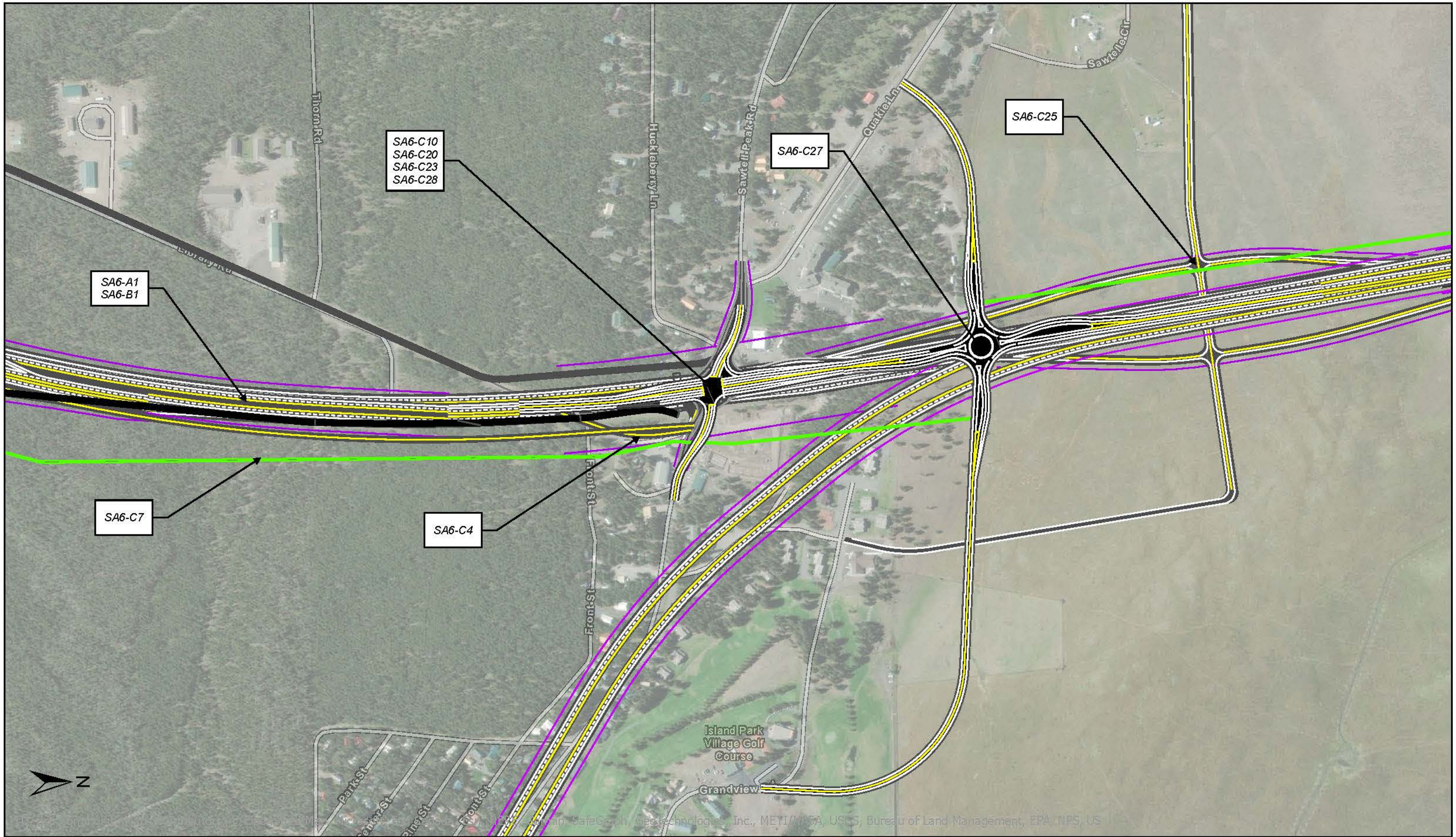


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Feet

Macks Inn - Level One Alternatives

● Milepost
— Proposed ROW — Proposed Trail





Next Step

The next step in the PEL process is to complete the Level Two Screening to further refine the remaining alternatives.

For the Level Two Screening, the study team will:

- Complete a design criteria matrix to aid in the development of geometrical layouts and refinements of each alternative.
- For each alternative, complete an impact analysis to all environmental resource categories, including aquatic resources, USFS lands and key resources, protected threatened and endangered species and habitats, known or potential eligible cultural and historic resources, and community cohesion considerations.
- Evaluate opportunities for multimodal crossings.
- Evaluate ROW needs and the potential to modify the easement(s) with the USFS and other state and federal land management agencies.
- Evaluate local access roads connections; complete a review of land use planning and freight plans.
- Review and screen the alternatives against the Level Two evaluation criteria matrix.
- Present a draft of the Level Two alternatives and Level Two Screening results to the public in the spring of 2022.

If you have any feedback that you would like ITD to consider during the PEL process, please reach out to the study's representative using the contact information below. You can also participate in the alternative refinement process by viewing additional information and leaving a comment on the study website: itdprojects.org/projects/us-20-ashton-to-sh-87-jct.

Comments and questions can be directed to:

Micah Brown, Project Manager
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