



October 2, 2015

City of Wasilla Planning Office  
290 East Herring Avenue  
Wasilla, AK 99654-7091

Attn: Tina Crawford  
City Planner

**Subject: Use Permit Application  
Land Use Application**

Dear Ms. Crawford:

After almost a year of renewed discussions with your team, the Planning Commissioners and the Wasilla community, Matanuska Electric Association, Inc. is pleased to submit a Land Use Application and Use Permit Application for the proposed Lazelle Substation to Herring Substation 115 kV Electric Transmission Line Project portion that lies within the City of Wasilla. We appreciate your consideration of this project which will serve Wasilla's growing electrical needs and decrease the vulnerability of critical loads serving homes and businesses within the city limits and beyond.

In addition to the applications you will find:

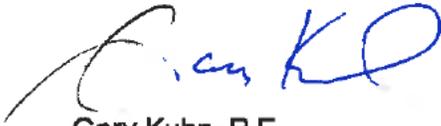
- A check in the amount of \$150.00 for the application fees,
- A corridor plan,
- A synopsis of the proposed project details,
- A separate letter formally requesting a waiver of the site plan requirement,
- A copy of a letter and synopsis for the "Neighborhood" Meeting,
- A copy of a letter and synopsis for the Open House and Public Hearing testimony with accompanying maps of the 20 highest ranked routing alternatives,
- Letter sized copies of the pertinent exhibits from the "Neighborhood" Meeting, Open House and Public Hearing, and
- A Draft Decisional Document with the process and results of the public participation process undertaken to date. This document is currently undergoing a public comment period until November 9<sup>th</sup> at which time it will be finalized once relevant public comment is incorporated.

During the work sessions with the Planning Commission, the commissioners expressed a desire to see more than one proposed alignment. In an effort to identify the best possible option for the City, MEA has provided one preferred alignment and a few additional alternatives for consideration.

Please place this application on the agenda for the November 10, 2015 meeting of the Planning Commission. Due the quantity and variety of material for the Planning Commission to consider, MEA respectfully requests the Planning Commission grant extra time for the applicant presentation at the beginning of the hearing from five minutes to twenty minutes.

If there are any questions or additional information is required, please direct your enquiries to either our consultant, Dan Beardsley at Dryden & Larue, Inc., phone 907-646-5139, or to Julie Estey, Director of Public Relations at Matanuska Electric Association, Inc., phone 907-761-9215.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Matanuska Electric Association



Gary Kuhn, P.E.  
Director of Engineering  
Matanuska Electric Association, Inc.  
(907) 761-9281

**Enclosures:**

Use Permit Application  
Land Use Application  
Check  
Corridor Plan  
Waiver Letter  
Zoning Map with Transmission Line Segments  
Preliminary Design Details  
Letter and Synopsis of Neighborhood Meeting  
Letter and Synopsis of Open House and Public Hearing testimony  
Draft Decisional Document (awaiting the results of final public comment by November 9<sup>th</sup>)



**CITY OF WASILLA PLANNING OFFICE**  
 290 E. HERNING AVE.  
 WASILLA, AK 99654-7091  
 PHONE: (907) 373-9020  
 FAX: (907) 373-9021

Date: October 2, 2015  
 TID # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Case No. A 15 - 109

**LAND USE PERMIT  
 APPLICATION**

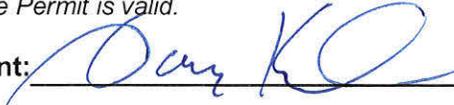
<p>Type of application (check all that apply)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Single Family Dwelling (SFD)   <input type="checkbox"/> Garage/Shed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Addition to SFD                      <input type="checkbox"/> Accessory Use</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Commercial under 10,000 sq. ft.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <u>Transmission Line</u></p> <p><b>Project Name and Description</b></p> <p><u>±1,917,500 sq. ft.</u>  <u>LaZelle Substation to Herning Substation</u>  <u>See transmittal letter &amp; attachments.</u></p> <p><u>Site plan waiver requested.</u></p> <p><b>Subdivision Name:</b></p> <p><u>N/A</u></p> <p><b>Street Address of project:</b></p> <p><u>N/A</u></p> <p><b>Zoning Designation:</b> <u>C, I, and RR</u></p>	<p><b>Property Owner:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Applicant Name:</b></p> <p><u>Matanuska Electric Association</u></p> <p><b>Mailing Address:</b></p> <p><u>P.O. Box 2929</u>  <u>Palmer, AK 99645</u></p> <p><b>Phone:</b> <u>907-761-9215</u></p> <p><b>Fax #:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Email:</b></p> <p><u>publiccomments@mea.coop</u></p>
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The following items must be shown on the Site Plan:

- All provisions of WMC 16.08.015 Site plan - As-built survey.

**Applicant Certification:**

*I certify that the information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and that I understand that any false statements made by me on this application, may be subject to revocation or denial of the Land Use Permit. I further certify that I am the property owner or that I have been designated by the property owner to act on their behalf. I understand that the City of Wasilla will not be held liable for any improvements made to this property if an appeal is filed or if other types of permits for this property are required by another agency. I further understand that no activity may be made to this property until a Land Use Permit is valid.*

Signature of Applicant: 

Date: 10-2-15

\* All activity regulated or permitted under this title must comply with applicable borough, state & federal laws & regulations. (WMC 16.04.030)



## LAND USE PERMIT APPLICATION NARRATIVE

### **Overview of MEA Route Selection Process applicable to all comments:**

In an effort to serve significant load growth in the City of Wasilla and surrounding area and ensure basic reliability standards are met to decrease vulnerability of critical load centers in the City's core commercial and residential area, MEA is seeking a permit to construct a 115kV Transmission Line from Lazelle Substation to Herning Substation. Since the Wasilla Planning Commission voted in 2013 not to allow MEA to construct along our preferred route of the Parks Highway, MEA re-engaged the community to seek a permit-able route that met the electricity needs of the community while ensuring the most public good for the least private injury. It was important to MEA to address feedback from the previous application and ensure key stakeholders felt our process was transparent and provided a meaningful opportunity for the community and other stakeholders to review and contribute to the discussion of multiple options.

MEA engaged the community to analyze four potential corridors: Theater, Gully, Fairview and Southern. Those four corridors consisted of 440 potential routes to determine potential impacts to individual property owners, existing public infrastructure and potential public improvements. From responses received in an extensive public participation process involving local government entities, community leaders, stakeholders, property owners and the general public, MEA identified the criteria for analyzing the impacts to properties crossed by the routing alternatives based on stakeholder priorities.

Criteria:

- Construction cost
- View shed impact

- Major impacts including reduction of lot size and future development impact
- Number of parcels requiring easements
- Environmental impacts
- Number of parcels passed
- Right of way costs
- Maintenance and operational issues
- Proximity to the proposed transmission centerline are the criteria derived from the public comment.

The criteria established by the public comment process were initially applied to the 440 alternative routes within the four corridors to provide an objective score for each route based on stakeholder-driven values. Results of that initial analysis resulted in selection of 20 ‘finalist’ routes along two corridors, the Theater and Gully corridors. It is important to note that when MEA removed cost from the analysis, and used only the stakeholder criteria to examine the routes, the rankings remained very similar, confirming the validity of the top 20 finalist routes.

A second level, more detailed analysis of the top 20 proposed routes once again examined every property crossed by the proposed routes to determine the impacts. Where possible, modifications to those routes were incorporated to further reduce or minimize the potential impacts of a particular alternative. In addition, the impact analysis was expanded to include the nearby properties not actually crossed by the transmission line.

From the top 20 routes, the five highest ranked potential routes along with two hybrid or modified routes were considered for a final review. Maps of these routes are attached. From those seven potential routes, MEA selected a modified route as its preferred alternative, T-24 Modified. At the Planning

Commission's request, two alternative alignments have been identified, T-17 and a modified Gully Route, to allow for additional public input on the routing options. A more in-depth discussion of the routes and their impacts can be found in the Draft Decisional Document included with this application.

This application is for the approval of a double circuit overhead transmission line route within the boundaries of the City of Wasilla. Once a route is approved MEA will enter into design of the route. Negotiations with affected property owners may result in minor revisions to the alignment for individual properties, but the final route will be substantially in compliance with the routing approved by the City of Wasilla Planning Commission. Due to the complexity of the project, the long lead time required for design, right-of-way acquisition and procurement of long lead-time items, MEA is requesting permit approval for a 2 year construction window instead of the standard 1 year permit.

**1. Neighbors. Explain how due deference has been given to the neighborhood plan; or comments and recommendations from a neighborhood with an approved neighborhood plan.**

As stated in the overview, MEA conducted an extensive public participation process that identified the criteria the participants considered important for selecting the potential route.

Those criteria are:

- Cost
- View shed impact
- Major impacts including reduction of lot size and future development impact
- Number of parcels requiring easements

- Environmental impacts
- Number of parcels passed
- Right of way costs
- Maintenance and operational issues.

None of the areas crossed by the proposed transmission alignments are within a specific neighborhood plan, therefore the Comprehensive Plan Land Use categories and the zoning types within those categories were considered. Zoning for the properties crossed along the preferred alignment for the 115 kV Transmission lines are: commercial (C), rural residential (RR), single family residential (R1) and industrial (I). As can be seen on the attached zoning map, the majority of the properties crossed by the proposed transmission lines are rural residential.

Aside from the noticed meetings, MEA accepted feedback via phone and email and took time to meet with specific neighborhood groups and individuals to walk their properties and neighborhoods and discuss potential impacts and route options first hand.

General residential land use has a wide range of housing types and densities, schools, daycare facilities, necessary public utilities and facilities. It allows for large-lot, semi-rural neighborhoods and multifamily housing. There are small scale commercial buildings such as convenience stores and small restaurants. The designation of how many housing units may be allowed on a lot is indicated by the zoning districts. In this case, the proposed transmission line crosses several properties in the RR zoning district and one in the R1 zoning district. The vast majority of the homes within the RR zoning districts are located in the “Gully Area”, in the vicinity of Glennwood Avenue, Bayview Drive, Valley Side Circle, Cotton Drive and Old Matanuska Road. Because of the smaller lot sizes and limited routing options available, MEA held a separate “neighborhood” meeting for the gully area property owners.

Invitations were sent to 232 property owners in this area with 32 attendees at the meeting. A synopsis of the results of that meeting are attached. The one R1 property actually crossed by the proposed transmission line is located just west of the Wal-Mart property. Unfortunately, it was not possible to identify a route without impacts to adjacent residential properties. The public participation process results were tabulated and analyzed by applying the publicly identified criteria in increasingly more critical evaluations, MEA chose an alignment that crosses a limited number of residentially improved properties and meets the objective to identify the route with the greatest public good and the least private injury.

Commercial property is described as a variety of office and retail uses. The design of commercial property is meant to minimize setbacks and traffic for adjoining neighborhoods. There are two larger commercially zoned areas crossed by the proposed transmission line routing, properties adjacent to the Palmer Wasilla Highway Extension and the commercial development west of Seward Meridian Parkway. A smaller commercially zoned area between the Alaska Railroad and Old Matanuska Road would be affected by the T-17 alternative route. The same criteria were analyzed (as listed on page 3) with respect to these commercial properties.

Only one industrial zoned property, the City of Wasilla Wastewater Treatment Plant, is crossed by the proposed transmission line. MEA met with the City of Wasilla mayor, deputy mayor, public works director and planner regarding possible alignments across the property. The criteria applied to this property was the same as considered for the other two zoning classifications of property.

**2. Plans. Is the proposal substantially consistent with the 1996 City Comprehensive Plan and other adopted city plans?**

Reliably, predictably priced power is a platform for economic development and community vitality. According to the 2011 Comprehensive plan, there are six key elements that are critical to the City's future growth and quality of life. Those elements are Transportation, Land Use, Downtown, Community Assets, Economic Vitality, and Intergovernmental Coordination. Except for the Transportation Element, MEA's proposed transmission line and public process to identify the route applies to at least one goal in the other five elements.

Land Use Element. Goal 2: "Encourage development opportunities that support the City's role as a regional commercial center." Reliable and affordable power is one of the key components for economic development. Wasilla has recently experience rapid commercial growth that significantly increased the demand and consumption of electricity. MEA's upgrade to the system will improve capacity of the system and add redundancy to reduce the current vulnerability of critical load centers essential to the community. By reducing the potential for transmission outages, MEA will provide reliable power to meet current and future demand within the City of Wasilla.

Downtown Element. Goal 1: "Promote and encourage development and redevelopment with the Downtown area." Again, reliable and affordable power, especially to commercial consumers that on average use eight times the power of residential users, is necessary to promote the commercial growth in order to increase the vitality of the Downtown area. Potential businesses increasingly demand infrastructure capable of supporting their business and reducing risk. Much of the power supply to the community of Wasilla is currently vulnerable.

Community Assets Element. Goal 1: “Provide essential services and facilities necessary to encourage new commercial, industrial and manufacturing development.” Along with roads, water, sewer, and gas, electricity is an essential service necessary for expansion of the commercial, industrial and manufacturing sector in Wasilla. Inadequate supply or unreliable power availability are strong deterrents to economic development. New box store commercial, industrial and manufacturing enterprises evaluate power supply, cost and reliability as part of their due diligence analysis for locating new sites.

Economic Vitality Element. Goal 1: “Continue to promote and enhance the City’s future as the region’s major center for commerce, services, visitor hospitality, culture and arts, transportation and industry.” Goal 2: “Diversify the economic base and attract new employment generators.” MEA’s improved electric system comports with both of these goals by providing power, a necessary service, essential to economic growth and development.

Intergovernmental Coordination Element. Goal 2: “Continue to promote the awareness and involvement of the residents in the planning processes for the City.” Through its public participation process, MEA has encouraged local involvement in the corridor and route selection process. The neighborhood meeting for City of Wasilla residents, the public open house, and the public hearing, as well as the notices and mailouts have engaged the public in the selection process. Affected individuals have been provided notice that this selection process includes approval of the overhead transmission line routing within the City of Wasilla, which will occur only after the public has had an additional opportunity to provide their input into the process.

The City of Wasilla’s mission statement is as follows:

“It is the mission of the City of Wasilla to provide optimum service levels to the public as cost effectively as possible to ensure a stable and thriving economy, promote a healthy community, provide a safe environment and a quality lifestyle and promote maximum citizen participation in government.”

MEA originally attempted to provide the most cost effective route with the least impact to residential neighborhoods by utilizing highway corridors with adjacent commercial uses along the Parks Highway and Palmer Wasilla Highway Extension. The City of Wasilla Planning Commission found this did not meet viewshed and quality of life goals of the City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan. The corridor was approved for the construction of an underground transmission line along that corridor. The City permit condition for undergrounding along that alignment was not financially or operationally viable for MEA and its ratepayers.

MEA has subsequently entered into an extensive routing analysis to identify an acceptable overhead alignment. During this effort, viewshed and impacts to adjacent land uses played a substantial role in the analysis and selection of the possible alternatives. Construction of the transmission line cannot avoid impacts to adjacent properties, but efforts to minimize the impacts can be made. To the extent the transmission line is located within residential neighborhoods, it does not promote the quality of life for those impacted by the transmission line alignment; however, MEA has made every effort to minimize or eliminate impacts to the residential neighborhoods. MEA has reduced the impacts by selecting routes that affect the least number of residential properties and by making design modifications to reduce viewshed impacts to adjacent property owners. This proposed routing does eliminate the City of Wasilla’s previous concerns about a decrease in visual attractiveness of the community along the main route through Wasilla, issues

with removal of landscaping from commercial properties, and potential limitations on commercial development.

As mentioned under the Intergovernmental Coordination Element, MEA sought to maximize citizen participation and used the information provided by the public to guide its analysis of the various alternatives. The preferred alternative, submitted by MEA, is the best effort to identify a cost effective route that has the least impact to the adjacent property owners and the Wasilla Community.

3. **Special Uses: If your proposed use is a Heliport, Resource Extraction in the RR or C district, Adult Business, Correctional Facility, or Planned Unit Development, please refer to Section 16.16.060 of the Code and address the additional standards listed. N/A**

N/A – Permit is for a utility facility.

4. **Reviewing Parties. Various state and local government agencies will receive copies of your application for review and comment. Copies of their comments will be sent to you. Be ready to address their comments and recommendations.**

A transmission line requires administrative approval under City code 16.20.20 within commercial and rural residential zoning districts. MEA has complied with the Matanuska Susitna Borough (MSB) Code Chapter 17.05: Essential Utilities. Permits will be required from the Alaska Railroad Corporation and the Alaska Department of Transportation. MEA has met with both those agencies and obtained their preliminary comments. Both agencies will provide formal comments once MEA provides a route design. Unless access roads in wetlands are required, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska

Division, has indicated construction of the transmission line structures and ice roads, in the same manner as was done across the Palmer Hayflats, will not require a Corps of Engineers wetlands permit. That response will be verified once a final alignment is approved. MEA will continue to analyze comments and concerns that are raised by local agencies and members of the public as a part of its final decisional document approval process.

**5. Neighborhoods. Due deference has been given to the comments and recommendations of reviewing parties.**

In meeting the public participation requirements of Matanuska-Susitna Borough Code Section 17.05, and as a result of workshop recommendations from the City of Wasilla Planning Commission, MEA embarked on a substantial public participation process that included interviewing key community representatives, various stakeholders, state and local governmental agencies, community councils, property owners and members of the public. Through those meetings, MEA has documented the comments received and used those comments to establish the criteria and weighting used to evaluate the many routes considered. The comments, letters, notices and informational mailouts to property owners and participants at the meetings are documented in MEA's Draft Decisional Document, which is made a part of this application. The Decisional Document provides a written analysis of the process used to identify and evaluate the proposed corridors and routes to select a final preferred route and two possible alternatives.

**6. Fire Safety and Emergency Access. Describe how you have provided for adequate access for emergency and police vehicles. The proposal may not pose a fire danger as determined by the State Fire Marshal or the MSB Wasilla-Lakes Fire Chief.**

N/A – Transmission line will not affect fire safety and emergency access.

- 7. Traffic. The proposed use shall not overload the street system with traffic or result in unsafe streets or dangers to pedestrians.**

N/A – Transmission line will not impact traffic.

- 8. Dimensional standards. Describe how the dimensional requirements [setbacks, density & height] of section 16.24.010 have been met.**

N/A– Transmission line will not impact development dimensional requirement standards.

- 9. Parking. Describe how your use meets the minimum parking, loading areas, lighting and snow storage requirements of 16.24.040. Parking must be adequate, safe and properly designed.**

N/A – Transmission line does not require parking.

- 10. Utilities. How do you propose to supply water, sewer, electricity, on-site water or sewer systems and other utilities to the site?**

N/A – Transmission line is an essential utility that will improve MEA's ability to serve power to City of Wasilla businesses and residents.

- 11. Frontage. What is the primary road access to the property? Non-residential large developments must be located with frontage on street(s) classified as an interstate, arterial, or as a major collector.**

Proposed access to the transmission line will be via the Fairview Loop, Seward Meridian Parkway, Old Matanuska Road, Jude Street, Cotton Drive, South Chilligan Drive, Bayview Circle, Althea Street, East Boitz Circle and the Palmer Wasilla Highway Extension.

- 12. Peak use. Describe the type of traffic your proposed use will generate. The proposed use may not create a significantly different peak use characteristic than that of surrounding uses or other uses allowed in the district. The proposed use may not overload the street system with traffic or result in unsafe streets or dangers to pedestrians.**

Construction equipment and vehicles supporting that effort will occur the length of the project during construction. Traffic control plans will be in effect where the construction is occurring within the public road rights of way. Once constructed, traffic impact generated by the line location will be minimal, confined to routine maintenance and emergency repair which should have minimal impact on the traffic in the area.

- 13. Off-site Impacts. Explain how you meet the standard that the proposed use may not significantly impact surrounding properties with excessive noise, fumes or odors, glare, smoke, light, vibration, dust, litter, or electronic interference.**

N/A – Transmission line will not produce any of the listed impacts.

- 14. Landscaping. Describe, or show on site plan, how your proposed use complies with the City of Wasilla Landscaping standards.**

MEA will construct and maintain the project in compliance with WMC 16.33.030 F and 16.33.030 I.

**15. Pedestrian Circulation. Walkways, sidewalk and bike paths may be required.**

N/A– Transmission line will not impact any of the listed items.

**16. Water, Sewage and Drainage Systems.**

N/A – Transmission will not require or generate water, sewage or alter the terrain to affect drainage. Except for the Old Matanuska Road crossing of Cottonwood Creek, which was rejected in the previous application, any other crossing of Cottonwood Creek will require clearing within the flood plain adjacent to the creek. The Cottonwood Creek floodplain is approximately 180 feet wide at the proposed crossing. With typical 600 foot spans, the structures will be located to avoid placement in the wetlands or the flood plain. A portion of the area needed for the proposed right of way is already clear of trees due to the existing distribution line crossing the creek. A waiver for clearing will be required for clearing at the proposed crossing. Once a route is approved, the approved crossing location will be designed and surveyed with danger trees identified. An application for a clearing waiver will be submitted once the design of the crossing is final.

**17. Historic resources. Is your property a historic building or historic site? The proposed use may not adversely impact any historic resource prior to the assessment of that resource by the city. N/A**

N/A – No historical uses will be impacted by the project.

**18. Appearance. Is your proposed use similar in appearance to other uses in the general area? The proposed use may be required to blend in with the general neighborhood appearance and architecture.**

Generally a transmission line is more compatible with commercial development along a major transportation corridor; however, the lack of an acceptable transportation corridor within City of Wasilla boundaries mandated an alignment predominantly within rural residential areas. Impacts to viewshed, proximity to improvements and limitations on property use are very significant concerns for residential property. MEA examined viewshed impacts to panoramic views from properties crossed by the transmission line and those nearby, as well as loss of visual screening buffers located between properties and along existing rights of way for every property on each alignment considered. MEA also evaluated the impact of proximity to the transmission line, improvements affected, and loss of usable property area to the easement for every property. Every route was first examined to identify those routes with the least overall impacts to the properties crossed by the transmission line. Only the 20 routes with the lowest impact to the properties crossed were selected for further consideration. Of the final 20 possible transmission line routes, additional modifications were made to minimize the routing impacts to both the properties crossed by the route and to those nearby properties not actually crossed by the line.

Once the five routes with the least impact were identified, along with two modified routes, a modified route with a revised design was ultimately selected to limit the impacts as much as reasonably possible. The preferred alignment was modified to lower the tower height by 20 to 25 feet in areas with panoramic views by eliminating the three phase distribution underbuild component of the transmission circuit in certain areas of the alignment. The alignment selected uses large undeveloped properties to the maximum extent

possible and places the profile of the transmission line against the backdrop of the easterly bluff of the gully so that the tops of towers are not visible above the horizon for residents along the westerly bluff of the gully. Visibility of the transmission line from the easterly side of the bluff will be minimized to the extent practicable.

- 19. The applicant may be required to dedicate land for drainage, utilities, access, open space, parks or playgrounds if the city finds such area necessary for public use or safety.**

N/A

- 20. Open Space and Facilities.**

The preferred alignment and the alternative alignments all cross the City of Wasilla Wastewater Treatment Plant. MEA and the City Public Works Director will coordinate the design of the final alignment to assure the structure locations will not interfere with the existing settlement ponds or the proposed expansion of the wastewater treatment facilities. Preliminary indications of MEA's design parameters will be able to address concerns the City may have.

- 21. Winter hassles. The proposed use shall not significantly increase the impact on the surrounding area from glaciation or drifting snow. N/A**

N/A – The transmission line will not affect snow management.

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CITY OF WASILLA PLANNING OFFICE  
 290 E. HERNING AVE.  
 WASILLA, AK 99654-7091  
 PHONE: (907) 373-9020  
 FAX: (907) 373-9021

Date: October 2, 2015

Case No. U 15-04

**USE PERMIT  
 APPLICATION**

<p>Type of application (check all that apply)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Single Family Dwelling (SFD)   <input type="checkbox"/> Garage/Shed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Addition to SFD   <input type="checkbox"/> Accessory Use</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Commercial under 10,000 sq.ft.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <u>Transmission Line</u></p> <p><b>Project Name and Description:</b>  <u>LaZelle Substation to Herning Substation</u></p> <p>See transmittal letter, attachments and site plan waiver request.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Subdivision Name:</b>  <u>N/A</u></p> <hr/> <p><b>MSB Tax Account ID#:</b>  <u>N/A</u></p> <hr/> <p><b>Street Address of project:</b>  <u>Parks &amp; PW Hwy Extension</u></p> <hr/> <p><b>Zoning Designation:</b> <u>C, I, R1 and RR</u></p>	<p><b>Property Owner:</b>  <hr/></p> <p><b>Applicant Name:</b>  <u>Matanuska Electric Association</u></p> <hr/> <p><b>Mailing Address:</b>  <u>P.O. Box 2929</u>  <u>Palmer, AK 99645</u></p> <hr/> <p><b>Phone:</b> <u>907-761-9215</u></p> <hr/> <p><b>Fax #:</b>  <hr/></p> <p><b>Email:</b> <u>publiccomments@mea.coop</u></p> <hr/>
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The following items must be shown on the Site Plan:

- Scale (for example 1 inch = 10 feet, etc.), north arrow;
- Property boundary, streets, existing and proposed public utility easements;
- Setbacks or buffering features;
- Existing and proposed improvements;
- Trash receptacles/fuel storage facilities; snow storage area;
- Street access, driveway and parking areas; lighting;
- Location of any sensitive or hazardous areas;
- Landscape plan; not required for single-family dwelling and accessory uses on a lot containing no more than one dwelling unit or all uses located within the Wasilla Municipal Airport; (WPC 16.33)
- Any other applicable requirements of the Wasilla Development Code
- Other applicable information related to the activity.

**RECEIVED**

OCT 02 2015

Planning Office  
 City of Wasilla

**Applicant Certification:**

*I certify that the information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and that I understand that any false statements made by me on this application, may be subject to revocation or denial of the Land Use Permit. I further certify that I am the property owner or that I have been designated by the property owner to act on their behalf. I understand that the City of Wasilla will not be held liable for any improvements made to this property if an appeal is filed or if other types of permits for this property are required by another agency. I further understand that no activity may be made to this property until a Land Use Permit is valid.*

**Signature of Applicant:** 

**Date:** 10-2-15

\* All activity regulated or permitted under this title must comply with applicable borough, state & federal laws & regulations. (WMC 16.04.030)



**You must attach a written narrative addressing the following Criteria –**

16.16.050

The City will consider the following items/issues in reaching a decision. Please be sure you provide information showing how your project addresses each issue.

1. Neighbors. Explain how due deference has been given to the neighborhood plan; or comments and recommendations from a neighborhood with an approved neighborhood plan;
2. Plans. Is the proposal substantially consistent with the 1996 City Comprehensive Plan and other adopted city plans?
3. Special Uses: If your proposed use is a Heliport, Resource Extraction in the RR or C district, Adult Business, Correctional Facility, or Planned Unit Development, please refer to Section 16.16.060 of the Code and address the additional standards listed.
4. Reviewing Parties. Various state and local government agencies will receive copies of your application for review and comment. Copies of their comments will be sent to you. Be ready to address their comments and recommendations.
5. Neighborhoods. Due deference has been given to the comments and recommendations of reviewing parties.
6. Fire Safety and Emergency Access. Describe how you have provided for adequate access for emergency and police vehicles. The proposal may not pose a fire danger as determined by the State Fire Marshal or the MSB Wasilla-Lakes Fire Chief.
7. Traffic. The proposed use shall not overload the street system with traffic or result in unsafe streets or dangers to pedestrians.
8. Dimensional standards. Describe how the dimensional requirements [setbacks, density & height] of section 16.24.010 have been met.
9. Parking. Describe how your use meets the minimum parking, loading areas, lighting and snow storage requirements of 16.24.040. Parking must be adequate, safe and properly designed.
10. Utilities. How do you propose to supply water, sewer, electricity, on-site water or sewer systems and other utilities to the site?
11. Frontage. What is the primary road access to the property? Non-residential large developments must be located with frontage on street(s) classified as an interstate, arterial, or as a major collector.
12. Peak use. Describe the type of traffic your proposed use will generate. The proposed use may not create a significantly different peak use characteristic than that of surrounding uses or other uses allowed in the district. The proposed use may not overload the street system with traffic or result in unsafe streets or dangers to pedestrians.
13. Off-site Impacts. Explain how you meet the standard that the proposed use may not significantly impact surrounding properties with excessive noise, fumes or odors, glare, smoke, light, vibration, dust, litter, or electronic interference.
14. Landscaping. Describe, or show on site plan, how your proposed use complies with the City of Wasilla Landscaping standards.
15. Pedestrian Circulation. Walkways, sidewalk and bike paths may be required.
16. Water, Sewage and Drainage Systems. If a proposed use is within five hundred (500) feet of an existing, adequate public water system, the developer may be required to construct a distribution system and the connection to the public system. A developer may be required to increase the size of existing public water, sewer or drainage lines or to install a distribution system within the development. The commission may require any or all parts of such installation to be oversized. The developer must submit to the engineer an acceptable plan that shows that if within ten (10) years an increase in capacity will be required to serve other areas, how

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these needs will be met by oversized facilities. When installation of oversized facilities is required, the developer shall install such facilities at their own expense. The developer shall be reimbursed the amount determined by the engineer to be the difference in cost between the installed cost of the oversized utility lines and the installed cost of the utility lines adequate to serve both the development concerned and all other land to be served by the lines which is owned or under the control of the developer, provided the developer may not be required to install facilities unless funds for such oversizing have been appropriated for the purpose by the city and there is a sufficient unencumbered balance in the balance in the appropriation. No reimbursement may be made unless the developer has entered into such agreement with the city, including conveyances of personal property including lines, lift stations and valves and conveyances of land or rights in land, as the city determines may be necessary to ensure complete control by the city of its sewer, drainage and water lines when they are extended to serve the property of the developer. Notwithstanding the requirement that the developer construct improvements to existing systems, the commission may elect to accomplish the design or construction, or both, of improvements to be made to existing public systems. In such a case, the commission may require advance payment to the city of the estimated cost of work to be accomplished by the city. The developer shall reimburse the city for all expenses of such design or construction not paid in advance. A public system is adequate if, in the judgment of the engineer, it is feasible for the developer to make improvements to the public system which will provide the increased capacity necessary to serve the existing users and the new development at the same level as is being provided to the existing users. Prior to approval of a use for which a community water system is required, the developer must submit evidence showing that there is available a satisfactory source of water. A source of water is satisfactory only if it can be shown that the proposed source will produce water sufficient in quality and quantity to supply the development. The water system and the connection between such distribution systems and the source must be sized and constructed to meet fire flow and hydrant requirements for fire protection and that the developer has obtained or can obtain a water appropriation permit or certificate for the water from the state. The system must be built to city specifications available from the engineer.

17. Historic resources. Is your property a historic building or historic site? The proposed use may not adversely impact any historic resource prior to the assessment of that resource by the city,

18. Appearance. Is your proposed use similar in appearance to other uses in the general area? The proposed use may be required to blend in with the general neighborhood appearance and architecture.

19. The applicant may be required to dedicate land for drainage, utilities, access, open space, parks or playgrounds if the city finds such area necessary for public use or safety.

20. Open Space and Facilities. The applicant may be required to dedicate land for open space drainage, utilities, access, parks or playgrounds. Any dedication required by the city must be based on a written finding that the area is necessary for public use or safety and the dedication is in compliance with adopted municipal plans and policy. The city finding shall conclude that a direct connection exists between the development and the need for the provision of the dedication. No land may be accepted by the city unless:

- a. The location, shape, size and character of the area is suitable for the planned use;
- b. The uses authorized for an area are appropriate to the scale and character of the uses considering its size, density, expected population, topography, and the number and type of dwellings and uses to be conducted;
- c. The area must be suitably improved for its intended use, but common open space containing natural features worthy of preservation may be left unimproved;
- d. If the final development plan provides for buildings, landscaping or other improvements in the dedicated area, the developer must provide a bond or other adequate assurance that such improvements will be completed. The city shall release the bond or other assurance when the buildings, structures or improvements have been completed according to the development plan;
- e. All land must be conveyed under one of the following options:
  - i. It may be conveyed to an agency that will agree to maintain in perpetuity the area and any buildings, structures, or improvements which have been placed on it.

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- ii. When no maintenance of the area is required, it may be conveyed to all new owners in undivided joint ownership.
- iii. When the land is not dedicated to a public agency and maintenance of the common space is required, an association for maintenance of the area must be established. Covenants establishing the association must be approved as to form by the city attorney, and by the commission as to whether the covenants provide for maintenance of the area in a manner which assures its continuing use for its intended purpose.
- iv. Conveyance of an area must be consistent with AS 34.07 the Horizontal Property Regime Act.

21. Winter hassles. The proposed use shall not significantly increase the impact on the surrounding area from glaciation or drifting snow.

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## USE PERMIT APPLICATION NARRATIVE

### **Overview of MEA Route Selection Process applicable to all comments:**

In an effort to serve significant load growth in the City of Wasilla and surrounding area and ensure basic reliability standards are met to decrease vulnerability of critical load centers in the City's core commercial and residential area, MEA is seeking a permit to construct a 115kV Transmission Line from Lazelle Substation to Herning Substation. Since the Wasilla Planning Commission voted in 2013 not to allow MEA to construct along our preferred route of the Parks Highway, MEA re-engaged the community to seek a permit-able route that met the electricity needs of the community while ensuring the most public good for the least private injury. It was important to MEA to address feedback from the previous application and ensure key stakeholders felt our process was transparent and provided a meaningful opportunity for the community and other stakeholders to review and contribute to the discussion of multiple options.

MEA engaged the community to analyze four potential corridors: Theater, Gully, Fairview and Southern. Those four corridors consisted of 440 potential routes to determine potential impacts to individual property owners, existing public infrastructure and potential public improvements. From responses received in an extensive public participation process involving local government entities, community leaders, stakeholders, property owners and the general public, MEA identified the criteria for analyzing the impacts to properties crossed by the routing alternatives based on stakeholder priorities.

Criteria:

- Construction cost
- View shed impact

- Major impacts including reduction of lot size and future development impact
- Number of parcels requiring easements
- Environmental impacts
- Number of parcels passed
- Right of way costs
- Maintenance and operational issues
- Proximity to the proposed transmission centerline are the criteria derived from the public comment.

The criteria established by the public comment process were initially applied to the 440 alternative routes within the four corridors to provide an objective score for each route based on stakeholder-driven values. Results of that initial analysis resulted in selection of 20 ‘finalist’ routes along two corridors, the Theater and Gully corridors. It is important to note that when MEA removed cost from the analysis, and used only the stakeholder criteria to examine the routes, the rankings remained very similar, confirming the validity of the top 20 finalist routes.

A second level, more detailed analysis of the top 20 proposed routes once again examined every property crossed by the proposed routes to determine the impacts. Where possible, modifications to those routes were incorporated to further reduce or minimize the potential impacts of a particular alternative. In addition, the impact analysis was expanded to include the nearby properties not actually crossed by the transmission line.

From the top 20 routes, the five highest ranked potential routes along with two hybrid or modified routes were considered for a final review. Maps of these routes are attached. From those seven potential routes, MEA selected a modified route as its preferred alternative, T-24 Modified. At the Planning

Commission's request, two alternative alignments have been identified, T-17 and a modified Gully Route, to allow for additional public input on the routing options. A more in-depth discussion of the routes and their impacts can be found in the Draft Decisional Document included with this application.

This application is for the approval of a double circuit overhead transmission line route within the boundaries of the City of Wasilla. Once a route is approved MEA will enter into design of the route. Negotiations with affected property owners may result in minor revisions to the alignment for individual properties, but the final route will be substantially in compliance with the routing approved by the City of Wasilla Planning Commission. Due to the complexity of the project, the long lead time required for design, right-of-way acquisition and procurement of long lead-time items, MEA is requesting permit approval for a 2 year construction window instead of the standard 1 year permit.

**1. Neighbors. Explain how due deference has been given to the neighborhood plan; or comments and recommendations from a neighborhood with an approved neighborhood plan.**

As stated in the overview, MEA conducted an extensive public participation process that identified the criteria the participants considered important for selecting the potential route.

Those criteria are:

- Cost
- View shed impact
- Major impacts including reduction of lot size and future development impact
- Number of parcels requiring easements

- Environmental impacts
- Number of parcels passed
- Right of way costs
- Maintenance and operational issues.

None of the areas crossed by the proposed transmission alignments are within a specific neighborhood plan, therefore the Comprehensive Plan Land Use categories and the zoning types within those categories were considered. Zoning for the properties crossed along the preferred alignment for the 115 kV Transmission lines are: commercial (C), rural residential (RR), single family residential (R1) and industrial (I). As can be seen on the attached zoning map, the majority of the properties crossed by the proposed transmission lines are rural residential.

Aside from the noticed meetings, MEA accepted feedback via phone and email and took time to meet with specific neighborhood groups and individuals to walk their properties and neighborhoods and discuss potential impacts and route options first hand.

General residential land use has a wide range of housing types and densities, schools, daycare facilities, necessary public utilities and facilities. It allows for large-lot, semi-rural neighborhoods and multifamily housing. There are small scale commercial buildings such as convenience stores and small restaurants. The designation of how many housing units may be allowed on a lot is indicated by the zoning districts. In this case, the proposed transmission line crosses several properties in the RR zoning district and one in the R1 zoning district. The vast majority of the homes within the RR zoning districts are located in the “Gully Area”, in the vicinity of Glennwood Avenue, Bayview Drive, Valley Side Circle, Cotton Drive and Old Matanuska Road. Because of the smaller lot sizes and limited routing options available, MEA held a separate “neighborhood” meeting for the gully area property owners.

Invitations were sent to 232 property owners in this area with 32 attendees at the meeting. A synopsis of the results of that meeting are attached. The one R1 property actually crossed by the proposed transmission line is located just west of the Wal-Mart property. Unfortunately, it was not possible to identify a route without impacts to adjacent residential properties. The public participation process results were tabulated and analyzed by applying the publicly identified criteria in increasingly more critical evaluations, MEA chose an alignment that crosses a limited number of residentially improved properties and meets the objective to identify the route with the greatest public good and the least private injury.

Commercial property is described as a variety of office and retail uses. The design of commercial property is meant to minimize setbacks and traffic for adjoining neighborhoods. There are two larger commercially zoned areas crossed by the proposed transmission line routing, properties adjacent to the Palmer Wasilla Highway Extension and the commercial development west of Seward Meridian Parkway. A smaller commercially zoned area between the Alaska Railroad and Old Matanuska Road would be affected by the T-17 alternative route. The same criteria were analyzed (as listed on page 3) with respect to these commercial properties.

Only one industrial zoned property, the City of Wasilla Wastewater Treatment Plant, is crossed by the proposed transmission line. MEA met with the City of Wasilla mayor, deputy mayor, public works director and planner regarding possible alignments across the property. The criteria applied to this property was the same as considered for the other two zoning classifications of property.

**2. Plans. Is the proposal substantially consistent with the 1996 City Comprehensive Plan and other adopted city plans?**

Reliably, predictably priced power is a platform for economic development and community vitality. According to the 2011 Comprehensive plan, there are six key elements that are critical to the City's future growth and quality of life. Those elements are Transportation, Land Use, Downtown, Community Assets, Economic Vitality, and Intergovernmental Coordination. Except for the Transportation Element, MEA's proposed transmission line and public process to identify the route applies to at least one goal in the other five elements.

Land Use Element. Goal 2: "Encourage development opportunities that support the City's role as a regional commercial center." Reliable and affordable power is one of the key components for economic development. Wasilla has recently experience rapid commercial growth that significantly increased the demand and consumption of electricity. MEA's upgrade to the system will improve capacity of the system and add redundancy to reduce the current vulnerability of critical load centers essential to the community. By reducing the potential for transmission outages, MEA will provide reliable power to meet current and future demand within the City of Wasilla.

Downtown Element. Goal 1: "Promote and encourage development and redevelopment with the Downtown area." Again, reliable and affordable power, especially to commercial consumers that on average use eight times the power of residential users, is necessary to promote the commercial growth in order to increase the vitality of the Downtown area. Potential businesses increasingly demand infrastructure capable of supporting their business and reducing risk. Much of the power supply to the community of Wasilla is currently vulnerable.

Community Assets Element. Goal 1: “Provide essential services and facilities necessary to encourage new commercial, industrial and manufacturing development.” Along with roads, water, sewer, and gas, electricity is an essential service necessary for expansion of the commercial, industrial and manufacturing sector in Wasilla. Inadequate supply or unreliable power availability are strong deterrents to economic development. New box store commercial, industrial and manufacturing enterprises evaluate power supply, cost and reliability as part of their due diligence analysis for locating new sites.

Economic Vitality Element. Goal 1: “Continue to promote and enhance the City’s future as the region’s major center for commerce, services, visitor hospitality, culture and arts, transportation and industry.” Goal 2: “Diversify the economic base and attract new employment generators.” MEA’s improved electric system comports with both of these goals by providing power, a necessary service, essential to economic growth and development.

Intergovernmental Coordination Element. Goal 2: “Continue to promote the awareness and involvement of the residents in the planning processes for the City.” Through its public participation process, MEA has encouraged local involvement in the corridor and route selection process. The neighborhood meeting for City of Wasilla residents, the public open house, and the public hearing, as well as the notices and mailouts have engaged the public in the selection process. Affected individuals have been provided notice that this selection process includes approval of the overhead transmission line routing within the City of Wasilla, which will occur only after the public has had an additional opportunity to provide their input into the process.

The City of Wasilla’s mission statement is as follows:

“It is the mission of the City of Wasilla to provide optimum service levels to the public as cost effectively as possible to ensure a stable and thriving economy, promote a healthy community, provide a safe environment and a quality lifestyle and promote maximum citizen participation in government.”

MEA originally attempted to provide the most cost effective route with the least impact to residential neighborhoods by utilizing highway corridors with adjacent commercial uses along the Parks Highway and Palmer Wasilla Highway Extension. The City of Wasilla Planning Commission found this did not meet viewshed and quality of life goals of the City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan. The corridor was approved for the construction of an underground transmission line along that corridor. The City permit condition for undergrounding along that alignment was not financially or operationally viable for MEA and its ratepayers.

MEA has subsequently entered into an extensive routing analysis to identify an acceptable overhead alignment. During this effort, viewshed and impacts to adjacent land uses played a substantial role in the analysis and selection of the possible alternatives. Construction of the transmission line cannot avoid impacts to adjacent properties, but efforts to minimize the impacts can be made. To the extent the transmission line is located within residential neighborhoods, it does not promote the quality of life for those impacted by the transmission line alignment; however, MEA has made every effort to minimize or eliminate impacts to the residential neighborhoods. MEA has reduced the impacts by selecting routes that affect the least number of residential properties and by making design modifications to reduce viewshed impacts to adjacent property owners. This proposed routing does eliminate the City of Wasilla’s previous concerns about a decrease in visual attractiveness of the community along the main route through Wasilla, issues

with removal of landscaping from commercial properties, and potential limitations on commercial development.

As mentioned under the Intergovernmental Coordination Element, MEA sought to maximize citizen participation and used the information provided by the public to guide its analysis of the various alternatives. The preferred alternative, submitted by MEA, is the best effort to identify a cost effective route that has the least impact to the adjacent property owners and the Wasilla Community.

3. **Special Uses: If your proposed use is a Heliport, Resource Extraction in the RR or C district, Adult Business, Correctional Facility, or Planned Unit Development, please refer to Section 16.16.060 of the Code and address the additional standards listed. N/A**

N/A – Permit is for a utility facility.

4. **Reviewing Parties. Various state and local government agencies will receive copies of your application for review and comment. Copies of their comments will be sent to you. Be ready to address their comments and recommendations.**

A transmission line requires administrative approval under City code 16.20.20 within commercial and rural residential zoning districts. MEA has complied with the Matanuska Susitna Borough (MSB) Code Chapter 17.05: Essential Utilities. Permits will be required from the Alaska Railroad Corporation and the Alaska Department of Transportation. MEA has met with both those agencies and obtained their preliminary comments. Both agencies will provide formal comments once MEA provides a route design. Unless access roads in wetlands are required, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska

Division, has indicated construction of the transmission line structures and ice roads, in the same manner as was done across the Palmer Hayflats, will not require a Corps of Engineers wetlands permit. That response will be verified once a final alignment is approved. MEA will continue to analyze comments and concerns that are raised by local agencies and members of the public as a part of its final decisional document approval process.

**5. Neighborhoods. Due deference has been given to the comments and recommendations of reviewing parties.**

In meeting the public participation requirements of Matanuska-Susitna Borough Code Section 17.05, and as a result of workshop recommendations from the City of Wasilla Planning Commission, MEA embarked on a substantial public participation process that included interviewing key community representatives, various stakeholders, state and local governmental agencies, community councils, property owners and members of the public. Through those meetings, MEA has documented the comments received and used those comments to establish the criteria and weighting used to evaluate the many routes considered. The comments, letters, notices and informational mailouts to property owners and participants at the meetings are documented in MEA's Draft Decisional Document, which is made a part of this application. The Decisional Document provides a written analysis of the process used to identify and evaluate the proposed corridors and routes to select a final preferred route and two possible alternatives.

**6. Fire Safety and Emergency Access. Describe how you have provided for adequate access for emergency and police vehicles. The proposal may not pose a fire danger as determined by the State Fire Marshal or the MSB Wasilla-Lakes Fire Chief.**

N/A – Transmission line will not affect fire safety and emergency access.

- 7. Traffic. The proposed use shall not overload the street system with traffic or result in unsafe streets or dangers to pedestrians.**

N/A – Transmission line will not impact traffic.

- 8. Dimensional standards. Describe how the dimensional requirements [setbacks, density & height] of section 16.24.010 have been met.**

N/A– Transmission line will not impact development dimensional requirement standards.

- 9. Parking. Describe how your use meets the minimum parking, loading areas, lighting and snow storage requirements of 16.24.040. Parking must be adequate, safe and properly designed.**

N/A – Transmission line does not require parking.

- 10. Utilities. How do you propose to supply water, sewer, electricity, on-site water or sewer systems and other utilities to the site?**

N/A – Transmission line is an essential utility that will improve MEA’s ability to serve power to City of Wasilla businesses and residents.

- 11. Frontage. What is the primary road access to the property? Non-residential large developments must be located with frontage on street(s) classified as an interstate, arterial, or as a major collector.**

Proposed access to the transmission line will be via the Fairview Loop, Seward Meridian Parkway, Old Matanuska Road, Jude Street, Cotton Drive, South Chilligan Drive, Bayview Circle, Althea Street, East Boitz Circle and the Palmer Wasilla Highway Extension.

- 12. Peak use. Describe the type of traffic your proposed use will generate. The proposed use may not create a significantly different peak use characteristic than that of surrounding uses or other uses allowed in the district. The proposed use may not overload the street system with traffic or result in unsafe streets or dangers to pedestrians.**

Construction equipment and vehicles supporting that effort will occur the length of the project during construction. Traffic control plans will be in effect where the construction is occurring within the public road rights of way. Once constructed, traffic impact generated by the line location will be minimal, confined to routine maintenance and emergency repair which should have minimal impact on the traffic in the area.

- 13. Off-site Impacts. Explain how you meet the standard that the proposed use may not significantly impact surrounding properties with excessive noise, fumes or odors, glare, smoke, light, vibration, dust, litter, or electronic interference.**

N/A – Transmission line will not produce any of the listed impacts.

- 14. Landscaping. Describe, or show on site plan, how your proposed use complies with the City of Wasilla Landscaping standards.**

MEA will construct and maintain the project in compliance with WMC 16.33.030 F and 16.33.030 I.

**15. Pedestrian Circulation. Walkways, sidewalk and bike paths may be required.**

N/A– Transmission line will not impact any of the listed items.

**16. Water, Sewage and Drainage Systems.**

N/A – Transmission will not require or generate water, sewage or alter the terrain to affect drainage. Except for the Old Matanuska Road crossing of Cottonwood Creek, which was rejected in the previous application, any other crossing of Cottonwood Creek will require clearing within the flood plain adjacent to the creek. The Cottonwood Creek floodplain is approximately 180 feet wide at the proposed crossing. With typical 600 foot spans, the structures will be located to avoid placement in the wetlands or the flood plain. A portion of the area needed for the proposed right of way is already clear of trees due to the existing distribution line crossing the creek. A waiver for clearing will be required for clearing at the proposed crossing. Once a route is approved, the approved crossing location will be designed and surveyed with danger trees identified. An application for a clearing waiver will be submitted once the design of the crossing is final.

**17. Historic resources. Is your property a historic building or historic site? The proposed use may not adversely impact any historic resource prior to the assessment of that resource by the city. N/A**

N/A – No historical uses will be impacted by the project.

**18. Appearance. Is your proposed use similar in appearance to other uses in the general area? The proposed use may be required to blend in with the general neighborhood appearance and architecture.**

Generally a transmission line is more compatible with commercial development along a major transportation corridor; however, the lack of an acceptable transportation corridor within City of Wasilla boundaries mandated an alignment predominantly within rural residential areas. Impacts to viewshed, proximity to improvements and limitations on property use are very significant concerns for residential property. MEA examined viewshed impacts to panoramic views from properties crossed by the transmission line and those nearby, as well as loss of visual screening buffers located between properties and along existing rights of way for every property on each alignment considered. MEA also evaluated the impact of proximity to the transmission line, improvements affected, and loss of usable property area to the easement for every property. Every route was first examined to identify those routes with the least overall impacts to the properties crossed by the transmission line. Only the 20 routes with the lowest impact to the properties crossed were selected for further consideration. Of the final 20 possible transmission line routes, additional modifications were made to minimize the routing impacts to both the properties crossed by the route and to those nearby properties not actually crossed by the line.

Once the five routes with the least impact were identified, along with two modified routes, a modified route with a revised design was ultimately selected to limit the impacts as much as reasonably possible. The preferred alignment was modified to lower the tower height by 20 to 25 feet in areas with panoramic views by eliminating the three phase distribution underbuild component of the transmission circuit in certain areas of the alignment. The alignment selected uses large undeveloped properties to the maximum extent

possible and places the profile of the transmission line against the backdrop of the easterly bluff of the gully so that the tops of towers are not visible above the horizon for residents along the westerly bluff of the gully. Visibility of the transmission line from the easterly side of the bluff will be minimized to the extent practicable.

- 19. The applicant may be required to dedicate land for drainage, utilities, access, open space, parks or playgrounds if the city finds such area necessary for public use or safety.**

N/A

- 20. Open Space and Facilities.**

The preferred alignment and the alternative alignments all cross the City of Wasilla Wastewater Treatment Plant. MEA and the City Public Works Director will coordinate the design of the final alignment to assure the structure locations will not interfere with the existing settlement ponds or the proposed expansion of the wastewater treatment facilities. Preliminary indications of MEA's design parameters will be able to address concerns the City may have.

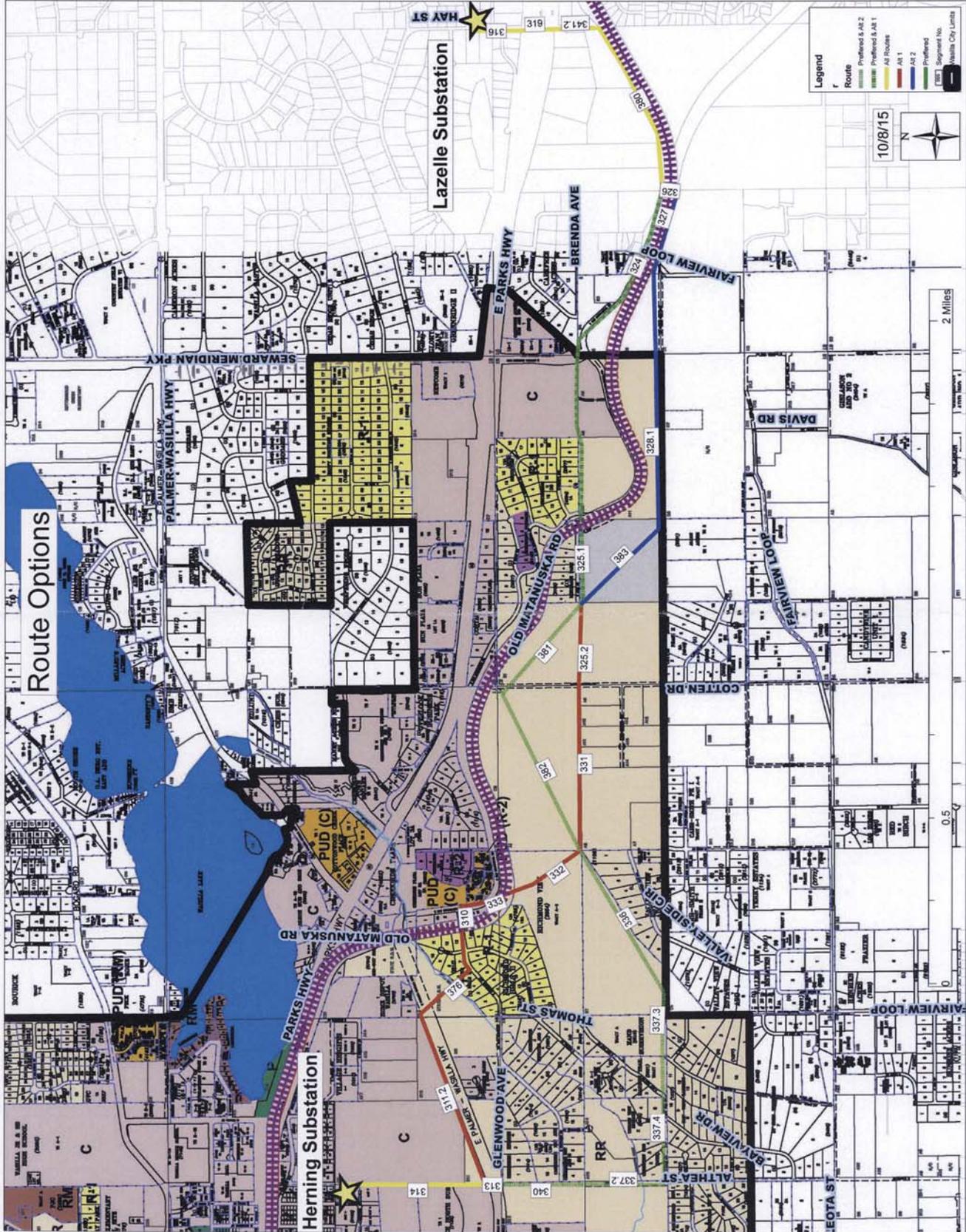
- 21. Winter hassles. The proposed use shall not significantly increase the impact on the surrounding area from glaciation or drifting snow. N/A**

N/A – The transmission line will not affect snow management.

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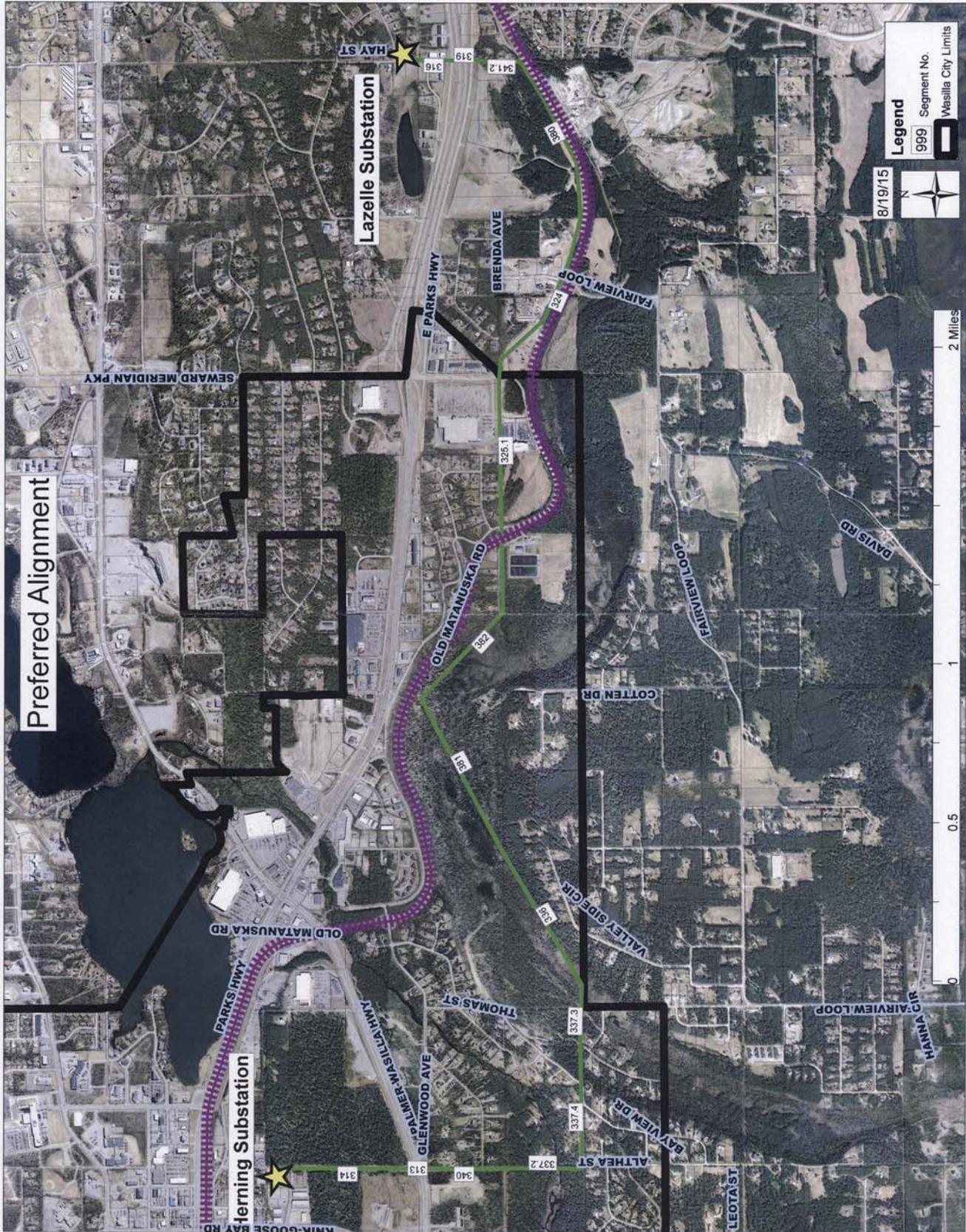
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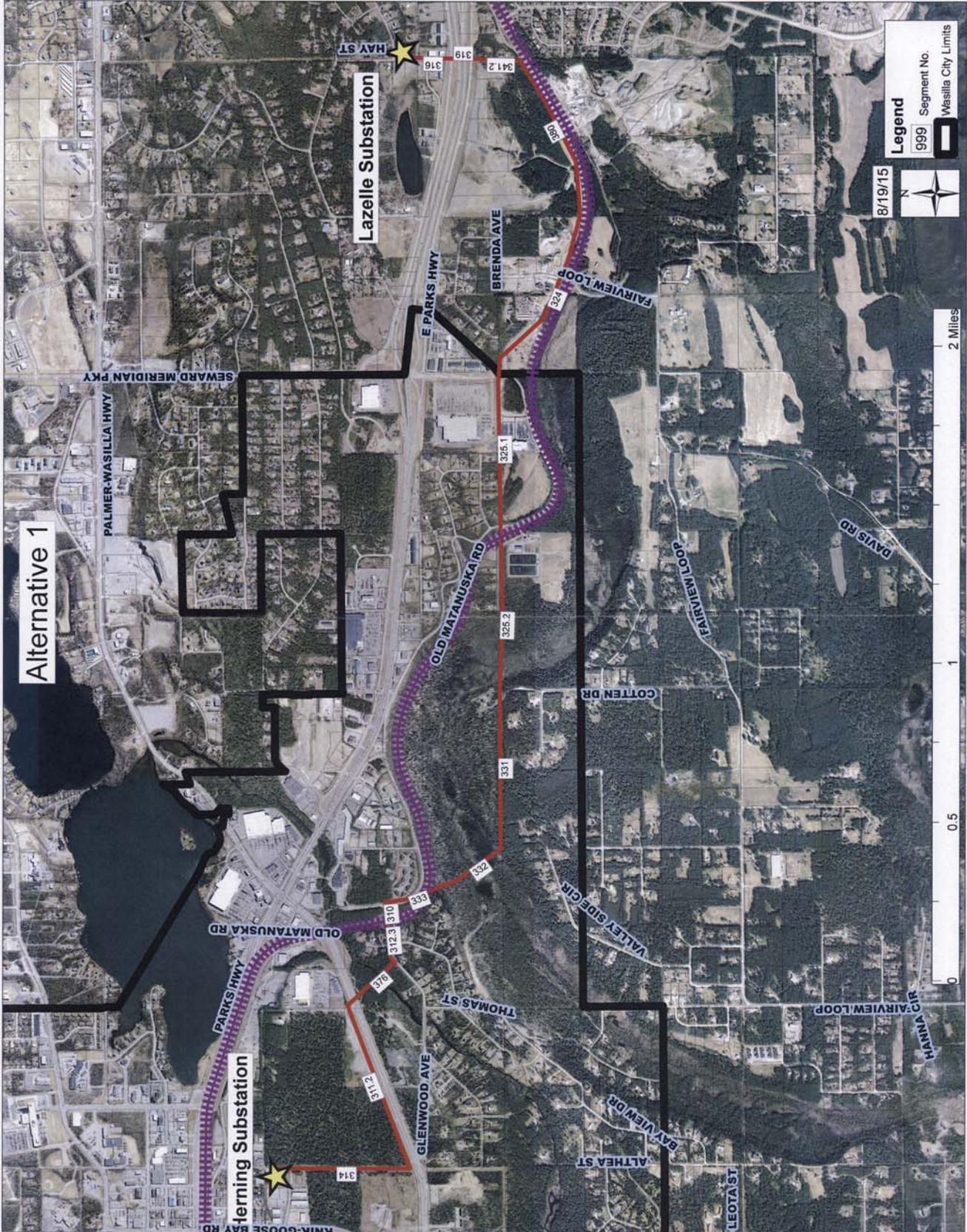
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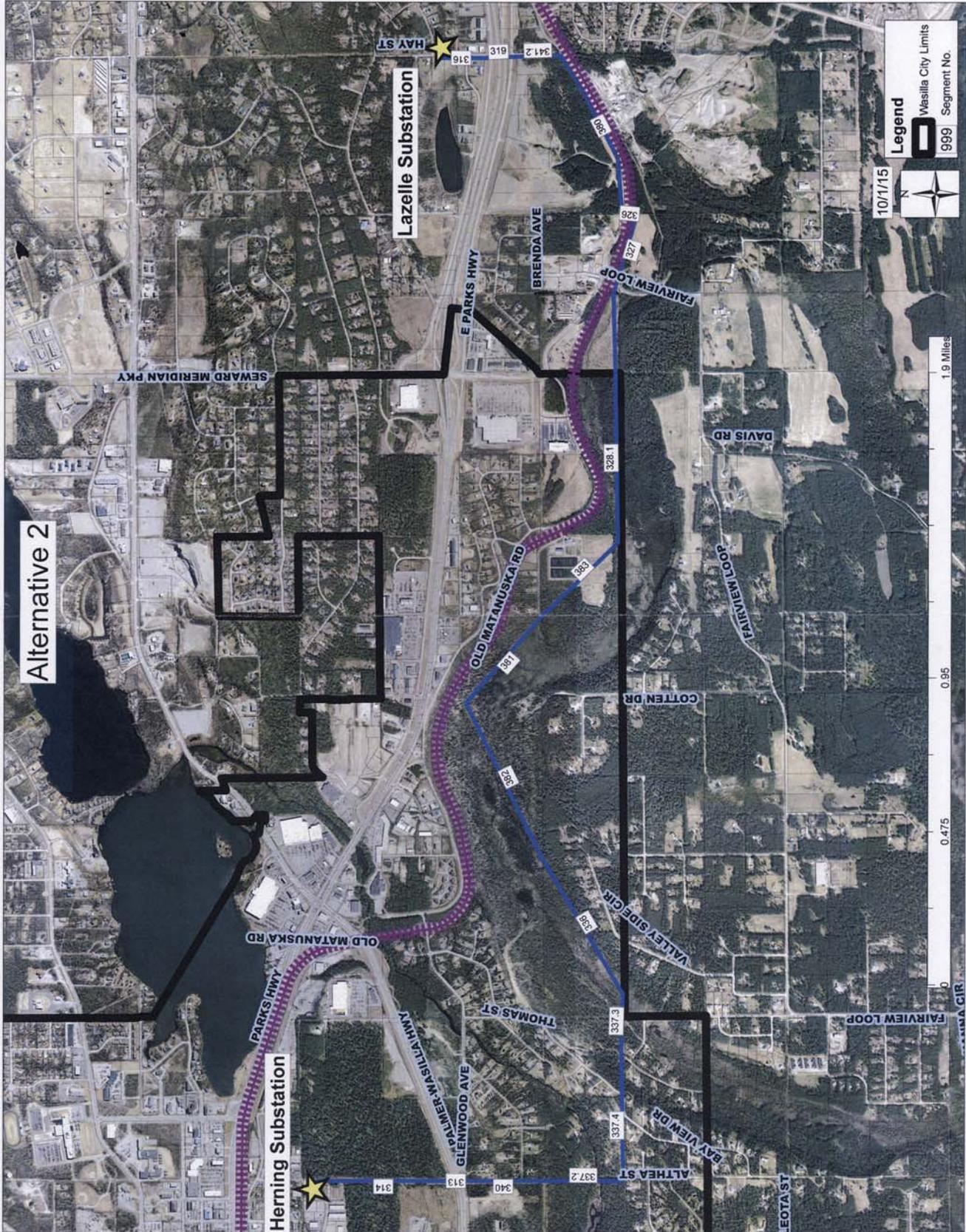
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**MATANUSKA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC.  
WASILLA TRANSMISSION LINE  
FINAL ROUTING ALTERNATIVES COMPARISONS**

<b>Line Segment</b>	<b>Preferred</b>	<b>Alternative 1</b>	<b>Alternative 2</b>
<b>ROW Cost</b>	\$1,354,945	\$1,581,401	\$921,127
<b>Construction Cost</b>	\$7,749,604	\$7,464,590	\$8,302,902
<b>Total Cost</b>	\$9,104,549	\$9,045,991	\$9,224,029
<b>Parcels</b>	44	38	35
<b>Houses</b>	31	26	26
<b>View</b>	139	157	132
<b>Proximity</b>	137	128	105
<b>Impacts</b>	86	86	82
<b>Wetlands Acres</b>	17.08	5.25	33.43
<b>Lineal Ft Wetlands</b>	7,442	2,288	14,561
<b>Clearing Acres</b>	36.93	28.22	41.59
<b>Length W/out Access</b>	0	0	200
<b># Angle Structures</b>	20	23	18
<b># Structures in Wetlands</b>	16	4	25
<b>Segment Length</b>	27,123	24,837	27,514

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Planning Office  
City of Wasilla

October 2, 2015

Tina Crawford, City Planner  
City of Wasilla Planning Office  
290 East Herning Avenue  
Wasilla, AK 99654-7091

**Subject: Waiver of Site Plan Request  
MEA Land Use Permit Application**

Dear Ms. Crawford:

As discussed in the workshops with the City of Wasilla Planning Commission, Matanuska Electric Association, Inc. (MEA) is formally requesting Waiver of the Site Plan requirement as specified in Wasilla Municipal Code Section 16.08.015 D.2. That waiver requires a recommendation from you as the City Planner and the Public Works Director to accompany the MEA permit applications to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Pursuant to Wasilla City Code Section 16.08.015 D.2. the commission may waive the requirement for a site plan "after considering the recommendations of the public works director and city planner." Our reasons for the request are set forth below:

1. Granting a waiver to the site plan requirement for a longitudinal public service right of way is sound public land use policy.

Similar to the City of Wasilla's obligations to provide public roads, water and sewer services, MEA as a public service provider is supplying a necessary service to the public that is vital to the public safety, health and economic well-being of the City of Wasilla, and the surrounding areas. MEA's obligation to provide electricity is consistent with the goals of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Provisions in the code for site plans were written contemplating the development of a single parcel of property. Most of the provisions are inapplicable to development of long, longitudinal, public rights of way, especially in the preliminary routing process needed to identify corridors for high volume transmission facilities, such as electric and gas transmission lines and sewer and water trunk lines. Requiring utilities to proceed to a design level analysis for one or more alternatives, in this case MEA examined more than 440 route alternatives, prior to identification of an approved route leads to significant expenditure of public taxpayer and consumer dollars, especially if the corridor analysis is not approved, and the same process is required multiple times before the initiation of a final design.

2. Technical standards for preparation of a site plan are impracticable for corridor selection for long right of way projects.

Literal compliance with this ordinance would require at a minimum: identification of more than 26 individual lots to establish the boundaries of the public rights of way; finding and/or resetting all property corners for those lots; computing all found lot dimensions; identification of all easements, particularly those that would be identified by a title report; the location of all existing and proposed utility facilities, on-site water and wastewater facilities and fuel facilities; location of lakes, streams and potential wetlands with 75 feet of any proposed structure; identification of all setbacks; location of all existing and proposed permanent structures; the location of existing parking spaces, trash

facilities, snow storage and lighting; identification of pedestrian and vehicular access, roadways, driving aisles, sidewalks, trails, paths, curbs and gutters, catch basins and culverts and drainage patterns; and identifying the locations and dimensions of each landscaped area with a showing of the type and quantity of landscaping along with the native vegetation retained or removed.

In this case the standards call for submittal of the site plan on 8½” by 11” or 8½” by 14” sheets at a scale of 1” = 50’. The portion of the project within the City of Wasilla is approximately 19,715 feet long which would require a minimum of 32 legal size sheets.

MEA has legal, regulatory, contractual and policy obligations to provide its members with reliable, safe and affordable power and it takes that responsibility seriously. Alternatively MEA recognizes the need for meaningful information to inform the public and review in the decision making process. To that end we have provided preliminary mapping using borough data, both aerial photo and by borough parcel mapping. Our corridor plan map shows the alignment and the anticipated areas required from adjacent properties.

We ask that you consider the attached corridor plan and recommend waiver of the site plan to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Sincerely,  
Matanuska Electric Association, Inc.



Gary Kuhn, P.E.  
Director of Engineering  
Matanuska Electric Association, Inc.  
(907) 761-9281

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City of Wasilla







## Preliminary Design Details

MEA is proposing to construct a 5.14 mile 115 kV double circuit transmission line from LaZelle Substation on South Hay Street, north of the Parks Highway, to Herning Substation, off South Denali Street in the City of Wasilla. Approximately 3.73 miles of the proposed transmission line is located within the boundaries of the City of Wasilla, crossing 26 properties. The properties crossed are one Industrial (I), nine Commercial (C), 15 Rural Residential (RR) and one Single Family Residential (R1) zoned properties, requiring MEA to submit Land Use and Use Permit applications.

Except for a segment between the City of Wasilla Wastewater Treatment Plant and Bayview Drive, the proposed transmission line will consist of two 115 kV electrical transmission circuits and an underbuild three phase distribution circuit. Structures will be corten rusting steel (brown), with an option of substituting a galvanizing finish for the rusting steel structures should the City desire this option. Structures will be between 80 and 100 feet tall depending upon design and topographic requirements. Single pole structures will be utilized along tangents, with two pole structures located at large angle points. Typical drawings of the structures used for the transmission line between Eklutna Generation Station and the Hospital Substation are attached.

Between the City of Wasilla Wastewater Treatment Plant and Bayview Drive, the underbuild three phase distribution circuit will be eliminated. This will reduce the expected structure heights to a range of 60 to 85 feet.

Typically the transmission line structures will be installed at 600 foot intervals, subject to terrain and soil conditions. They will be located in the center of a 100 foot wide easement, which is necessary for National Electric Safety Code clearances and for removal of vegetation that may pose an operational threat to the structures and conductors of the transmission line. Where possible the transmission line will be located adjacent to existing rights of way to limit the need for additional rights of way on adjacent properties.

MEA's preliminary estimates for the purpose of identifying a route indicate right of way easements may be required from properties along the route listed in the table below. These estimates are for informational purposes only. The dimensions and area required are expected to change. In a few cases the need for an easement may be eliminated during the survey, design and acquisition processes.

<u>Parcel</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Width</u>	<u>Area</u>
17	Wal-Mart Real Estate Business Trust	1,185	50	1.36 acres
18	Diana Lynne Biesanz	175	25	4,375 SF
19	John Loving Schweiger Trust	1,185	50	1.36 acres
20	Sally A. Karabelnikoff	1,280	100	2.94 acres
21	Sally A. Karabelnikoff	35	100	3,500 SF
22	City of Wasilla	1,070	100	2.46 acres
23	City of Wasilla	1,320	100	3.03 acres

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*Dryden & LaRue, Inc.*

CONSULTING ENGINEERS & RIGHT OF WAY SERVICES

3305 Arctic Blvd., Suite 201, Anchorage, Alaska 99503-4575

Phone: (907) 349-6653 • Fax: (907) 770-7749

Email: row@drydenlarue.com



August 11, 2015

Subject: Wasilla T-Line  
Preliminary Corridor and Route Analysis

Dear \*\*\*,

Matanuska Electric Association, Inc. would like to thank everyone who participated in the public information process. Using the comments received during that public information process as the basis for evaluating the corridors and routes, MEA has conducted an initial review of the four proposed Wasilla transmission line corridors (Theater, Gully, Fairview and Southern) and 440 potential routes within those corridors. As a result of that preliminary review, MEA will perform a second round of analysis of potential routing alternatives within the Theater and Gully corridors. We have enclosed a summary of the preliminary findings and route analysis, a short explanation of the ongoing process, and maps of the remaining line segments and potential routes still under consideration.

We will notify you again when the next round of review is completed. If you have any further questions, please contact me at 907-646-5139, or Julie Estey at Matanuska Electric Association, Inc. at 907-761-9215.

Sincerely,  
Dryden & LaRue, Inc.

Daniel W. Beardsley, SR/WA

Enclosures

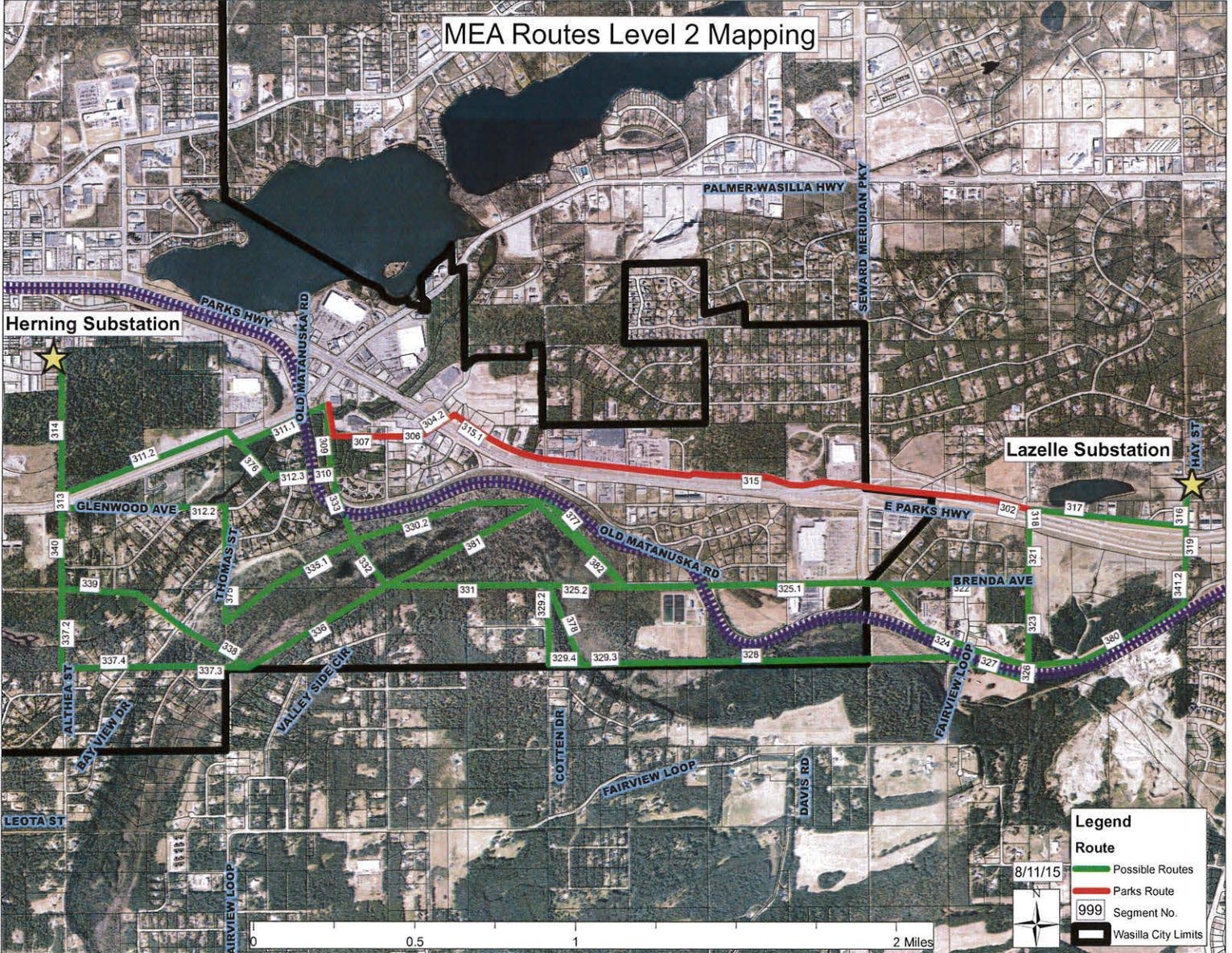
- Overall aerial map of routes under consideration
- Draft decisional document process, and preliminary route evaluation and findings summary

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# MEA Routes Level 2 Mapping



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## WASILLA TRANSMISSION LINE PRELIMINARY CORRIDOR EVALUATION AND FINDINGS SUMMARY

### **Data Analysis Process**

In an effort to ensure the voices of our members play an important role in the selection process for a transmission line corridor through Wasilla, Matanuska Electric Association, Inc. has completed its preliminary collection of member and stakeholder feedback and other data and has conducted an assessment of the impacts and cost estimation of potential routes within the Theater, Gully, Fairview and Southern corridors presented to the public. This preliminary data was collected by analyzing each property crossed by the proposed routes using Matanuska-Susitna Borough aerial photography, property data and LIDAR contour mapping as well as Google Earth maps and aerial photography. Our preliminary findings and rankings of the corridors and routes are summarized below. MEA will conduct one final review of the highest ranked routes to assess the impacts of those routes on properties outside of the proposed right-of-way. Once that review is complete, MEA will prepare a draft decisional document for public review and comment. The draft decisional document will contain one or more preferred alternatives. Comments to the draft document will be considered in the preparation of the final decision document for submittal to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and to accompany the permit application to the City of Wasilla.

### **Preliminary Route Evaluation and Findings**

A number of individuals raised comments and testified at the Public Hearing about again pursuing an alignment along the Parks Highway. During the City of Wasilla permitting process in 2013, MEA received approval of its preferred Parks Highway alignment for construction of the transmission line within the City of Wasilla; however, that approval was subject to a condition that MEA could only construct the transmission line underground. MEA unsuccessfully appealed the undergrounding condition placed on the approval. As a result of that final determination, MEA may not seek City of Wasilla administrative approval of an above ground transmission line along that route. While the Parks Highway route is still the preference of MEA, significant cost, operation and maintenance obstacles prevent MEA from exercising the undergrounding option. Therefore MEA is considering additional above-ground corridor options within four alternative corridors to the Parks Highway in an effort to find a permissible route through Wasilla. Those four proposed corridors are named the Theater, Gully, Fairview and Southern corridors based on key locations along each. In an effort to maximize transparency and discussion, each corridor included several alternate routes for consideration by the public.

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Wasilla T-Line Preliminary  
Evaluation and Findings

Page 1

## Defining the Scoring Criteria

In our effort to determine which of the four proposed corridors presented to the public had the most public good for the least private injury, MEA examined four hundred forty possible routes within those four corridors. All comments received during the public participation process were collected and categorized. The number of comments for each category were then tallied and compared against the total number of comments. Based on these tallies, criteria were developed to measure the impact of a proposed transmission line alignment affecting each property. The percentage of the comments for each category were then used to establish the weighting for the criteria. One additional criteria regarding maintenance and operation concerns was also added by MEA due to resulting cost implications for our members.

Individual property concerns accounted for 45% of the comments and received 45 of 100 total points. The four following criteria were used for evaluation of individual property concerns. Each parcel meeting the criteria were given the maximum points:

- Viewshed Considerations ( max. 12 Points)
  - Bluff properties & properties with panoramic views
  - Properties with screening buffers between the property and neighboring properties or public rights-of-way that may be reduced or otherwise impacted.
  
- Major Impacts (max 11 Points)
  - Potential transmission line easement area would affect 20% or more of the property
  - Homes, outbuildings or other improvements were located within the potential easement area
  - Airstrips perpendicular or parallel to the proposed route for each associated property
  - Properties bisected by the line (Proposed line doesn't follow property boundaries)
  
- Proximity of improvements (homes, outbuildings, other) to the transmission line (max 11 Points)
  - 100 feet or less from possible centerline
  - Between 100 and 200 feet from possible centerline

- Number of properties requiring purchase of easements (max 11 Points)

Project Costs, rate concerns and environmental effects constituted the balance of the comments with the following criteria and weights being assigned:

- Cost of construction (max 20 Points)
- Cost of right-of-way acquisition and permitting (max 15 Points)

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- Wetlands crossed by the proposed transmission line (max 5 Points)
- Acres of clearing along a potential route (max 5 Points)
- Maintenance Issues (max 5 Points)
  - Including access for maintenance, length of wetland crossings requiring special equipment, number of angle structures and number of poles located in wetlands.

Using the MSB and Google Earth information, each and every property along a specific line segment of a potential route were analyzed using the above scoring criteria. Those scores were then compiled for each potential route. Ranges for each criteria were identified with an inverse relationship so that the lowest number in the range (least impact, lowest cost) received the highest ranking, with the highest number in the range (greatest impact, highest cost) receiving the lowest ranking. These rankings for each criteria were then added to produce a point total for each particular route. Each point total was then compared to the other potential routes to achieve an overall ranking. The project with the least impacts received the highest number of points and appeared highest on the list for consideration. Those rankings were then reviewed for permitability.

### **Preliminary Findings**

Based on the point totals for each of the 440 potential routes within the four proposed corridors, the preliminary results were as follows:

- Fairview Routes Preliminary Rankings
  - Routes Evaluated: 42
  - Points Range:
    - Highest 47.39
    - Lowest 28.42
  - Ranking Range:
    - Highest 329<sup>th</sup>
    - Lowest 434<sup>th</sup>
- Gully Routes Preliminary Rankings
  - Routes Evaluated: 240
  - Points Range:
    - Highest 81.87
    - Lowest 65.18
  - Ranking Range:
    - Highest 7<sup>th</sup>
    - Lowest 328<sup>th</sup>
- Theater Routes Preliminary Rankings
  - Routes Evaluated: 88
  - Points Range:
    - Highest 83.22
    - Lowest 68.10

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- Ranking Range:
  - Highest 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Lowest 317<sup>th</sup>
- Southern Routes Preliminary Rankings
  - Routes Evaluated: 70
  - Points Range:
    - Highest 45.16
    - Lowest 23.04
  - Ranking Range:
    - Highest 334<sup>th</sup>
    - Lowest 440<sup>th</sup>

As can be seen above, the Theater Corridor had the most alternative routes having the least impact. It was closely followed by the Gully Corridor, with nearly all Theater and Gully Corridor potential routes ranking higher than the Fairview and Southern Corridor potential routes. Maps of the highest ranked potential routes within the Theater and Gully Corridors that are still under consideration are attached.

MEA will conduct one final round of reviews on these highest ranking alignments. This additional analysis will assess the impacts of those alignments on properties outside of the proposed right-of-way and consider minor routing modifications to determine if one of these routes can be modified to further decrease impacts on adjacent properties and possibly reduce costs.

MEA has also proposed a “hybrid” alternative for final consideration. This “hybrid” route alternative, attached as Route T-24 Modified, is a modification of the fifth ranked route to relocate that portion of the route between the City of Wasilla’s sewer treatment plant and Bayview Drive. This proposal shifts the alignment near the sewer treatment plant, to the north, more to the center of the gully, then follows a straight line along the base of the bluff on the south side of the gully below Valley Side Circle. Since this segment of the line has limited potential to provide distribution services, the underbuild distribution circuit will be eliminated reducing pole heights by 15 to 20 feet. Reducing the pole height will lower the proposed transmission line below the line of sight from the houses on the Valley Side Circle side of the gully and put the proposed line against the bluff closer to the tree line minimizing the visual impact for houses along Bayview Drive on the north side of the gully.

Unless there are significant changes to the ranking as a result of this round of reviews, these highest ranked alignments and the Route T-24 Modified alignment will be used to determine up to three potential routes for final consideration in the Matanuska Susitna Borough Decisional Document and for permitting by the City of Wasilla. MEA expects the decisional document to be complete early September with a submittal to the Borough and City of Wasilla for consideration in October.

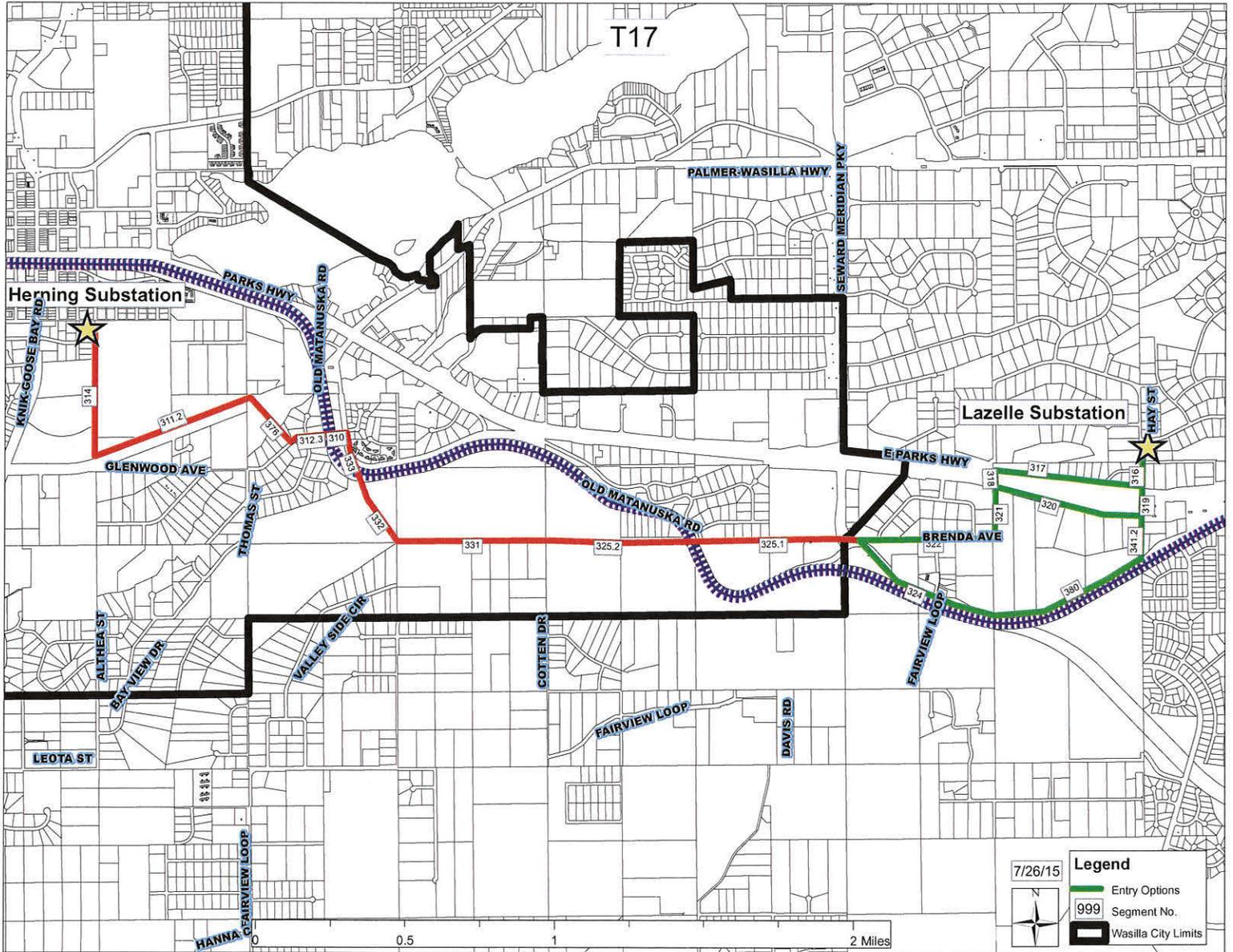
Map Attachments:

- Individual route maps in order of preliminary ranking

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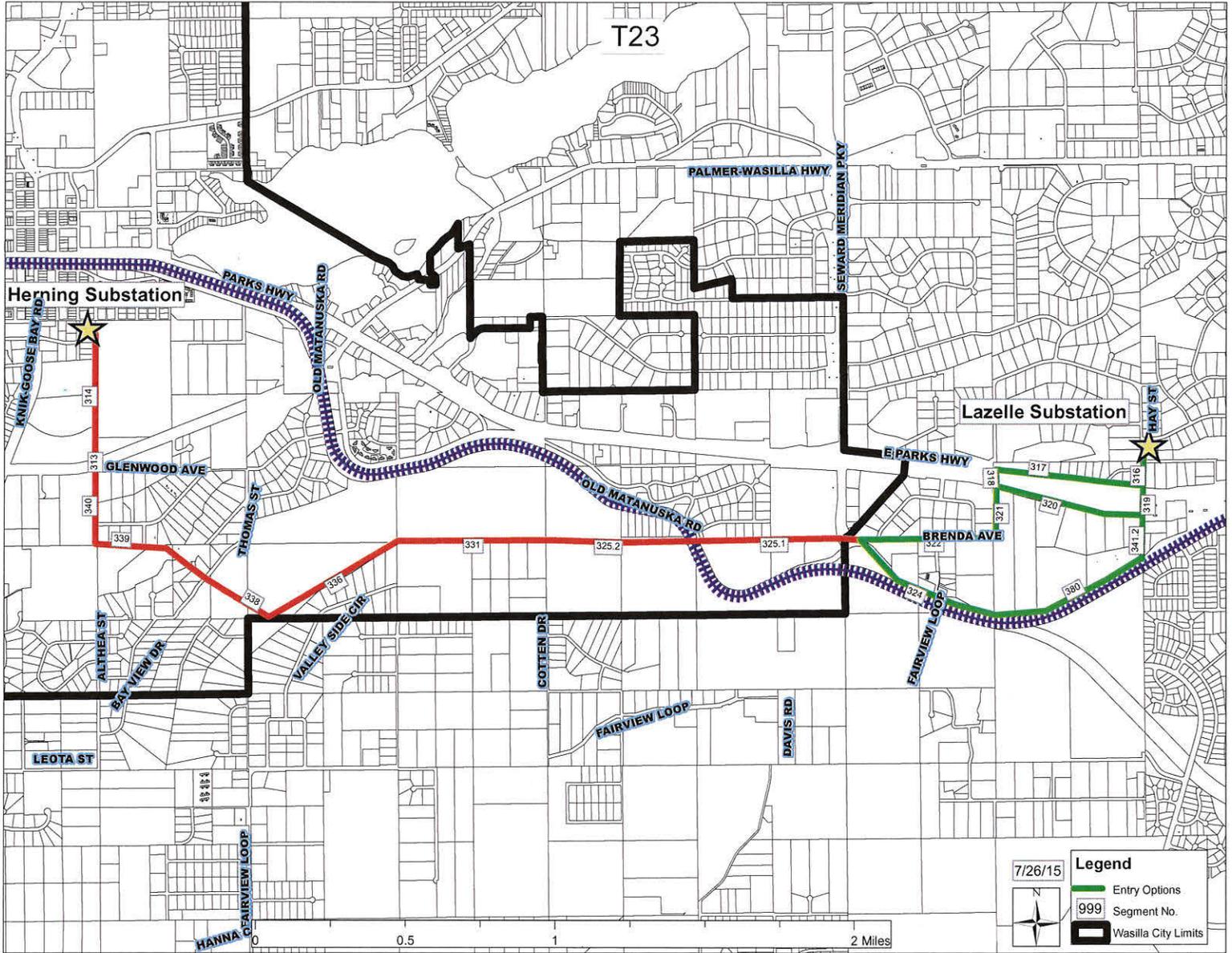
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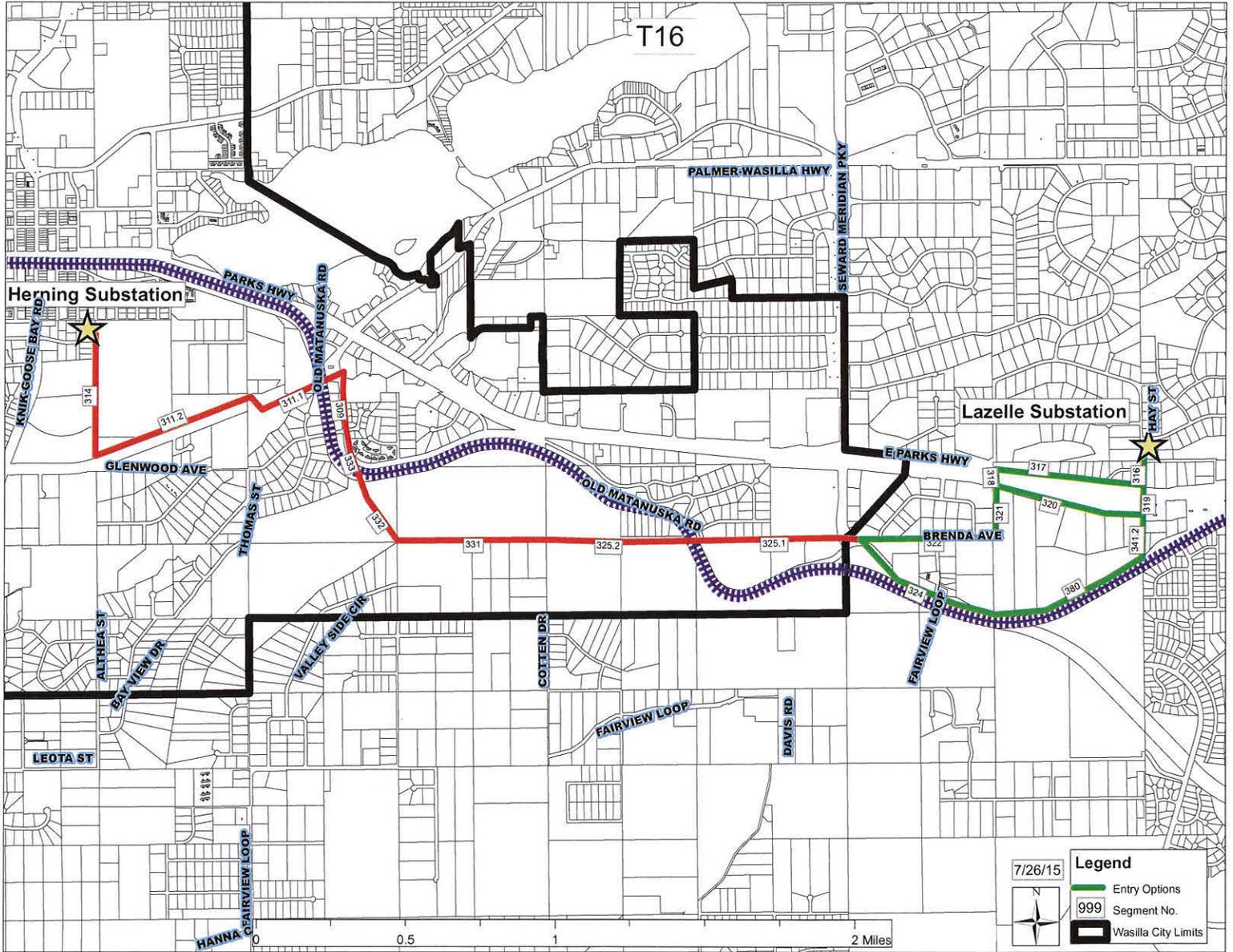
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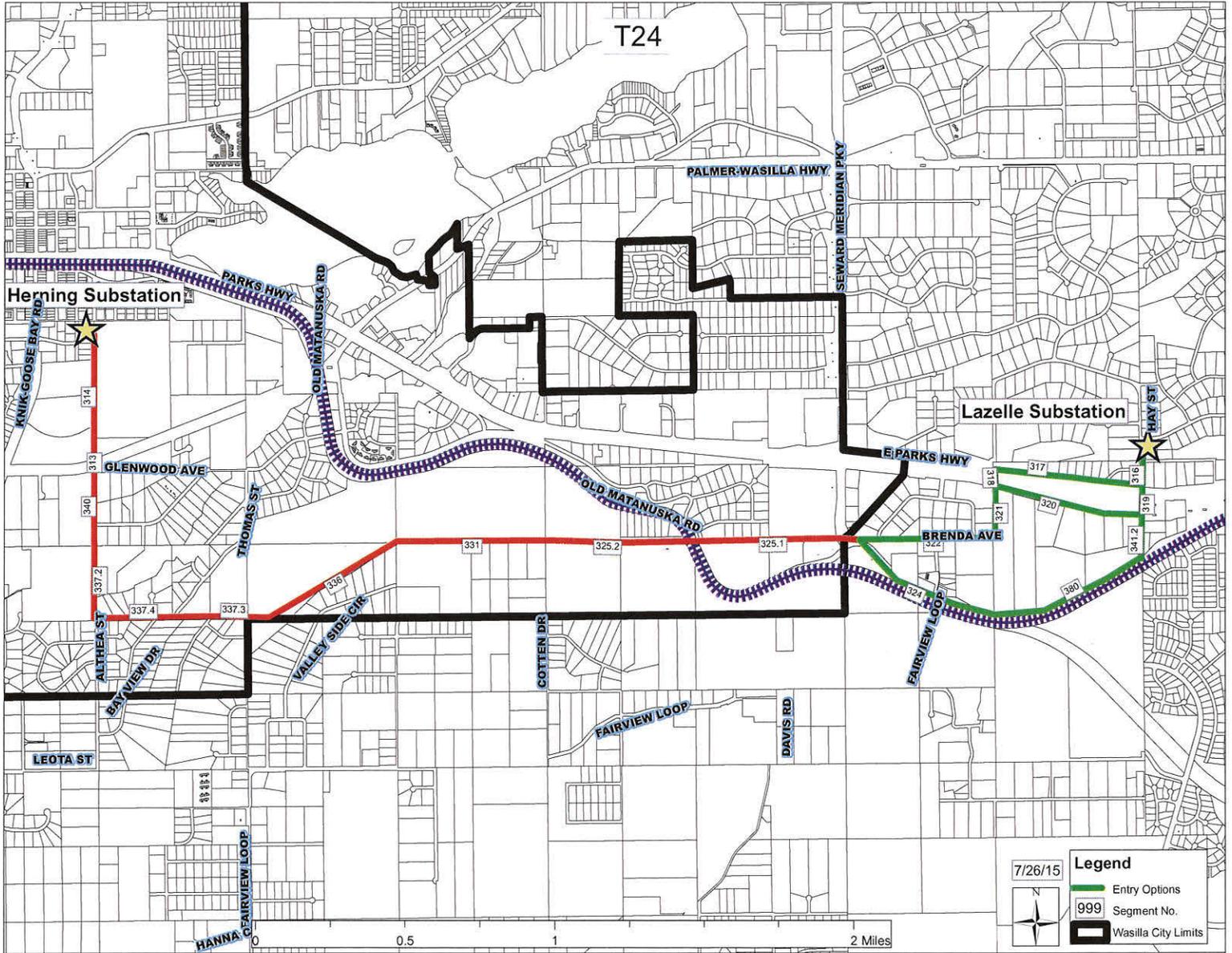
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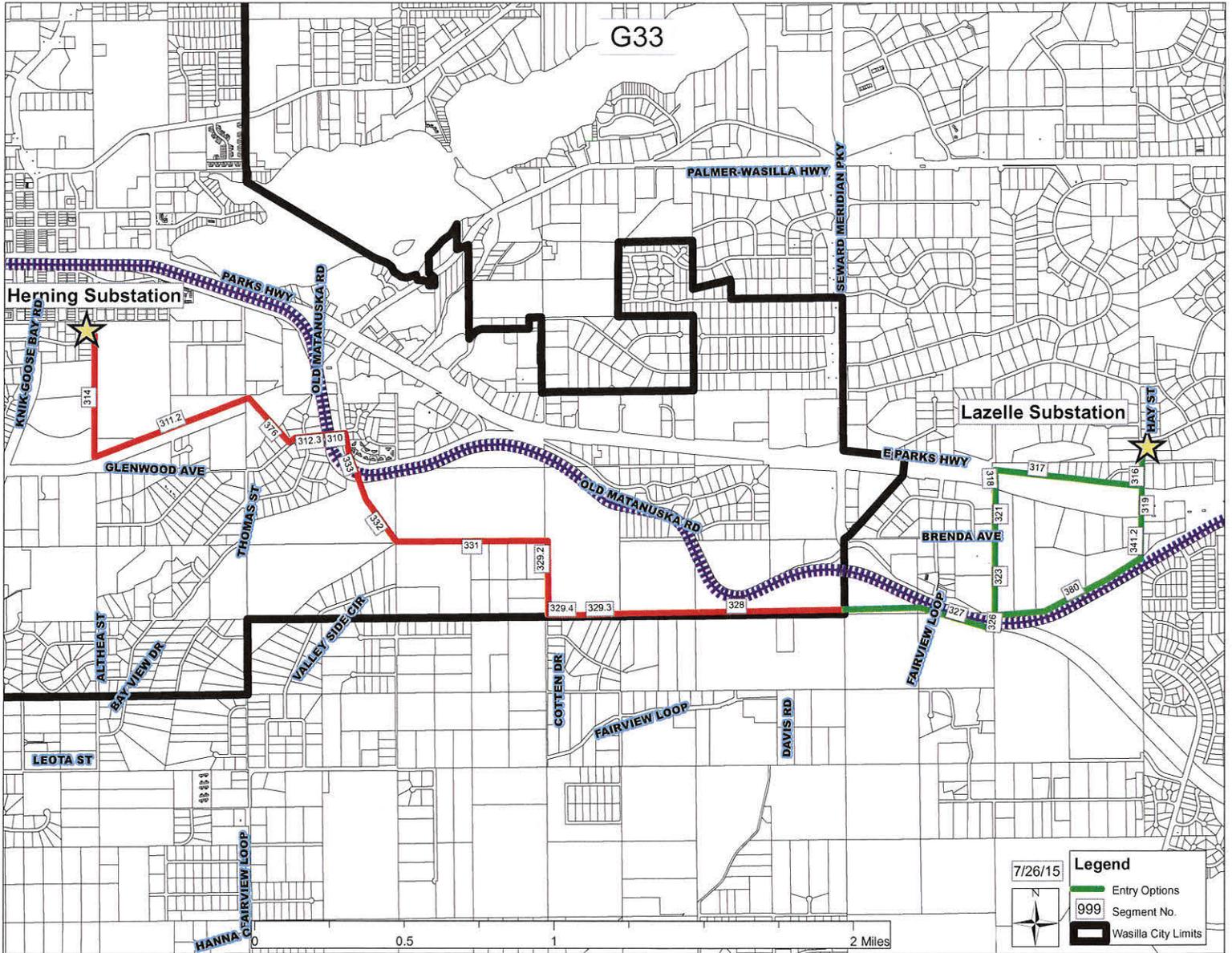
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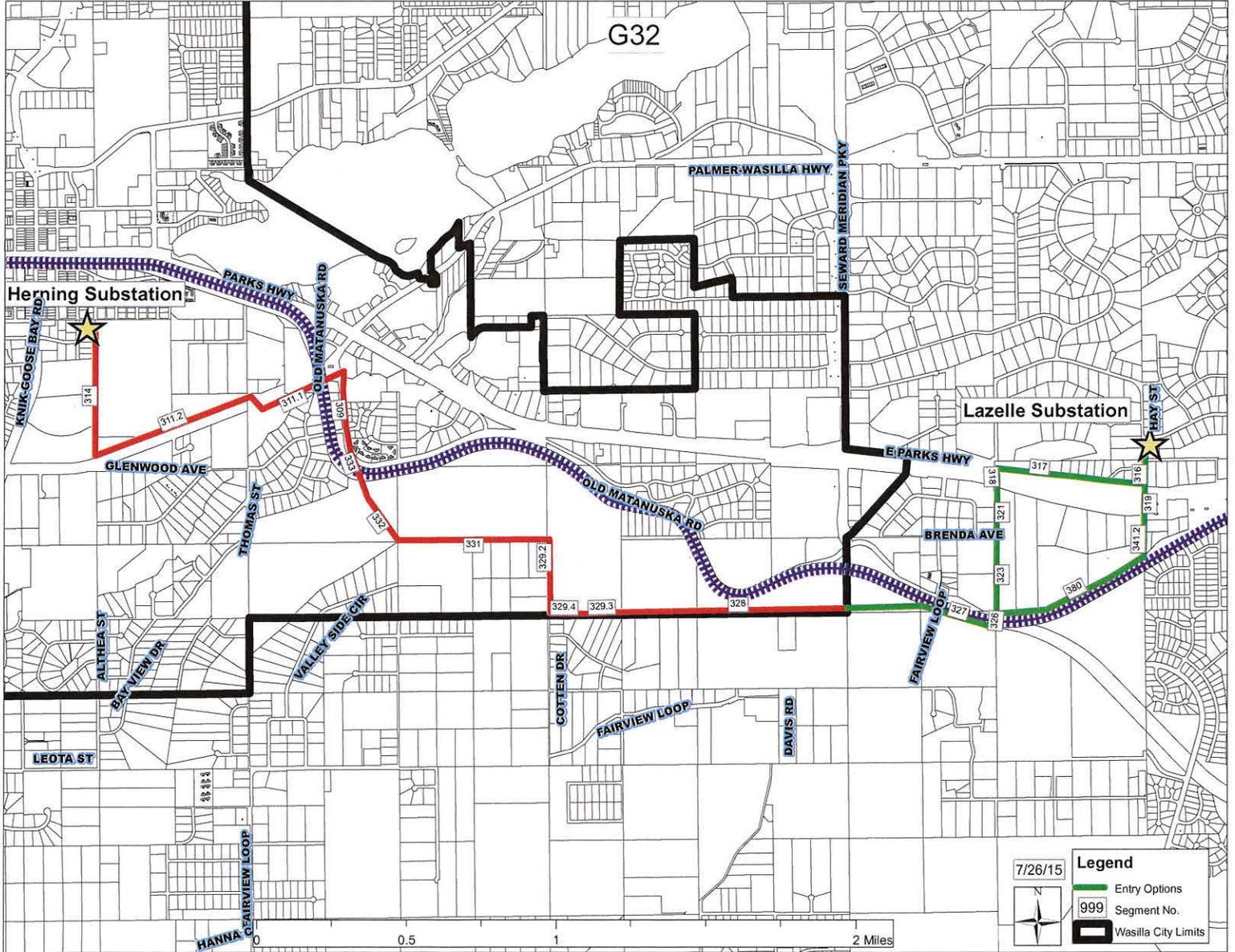
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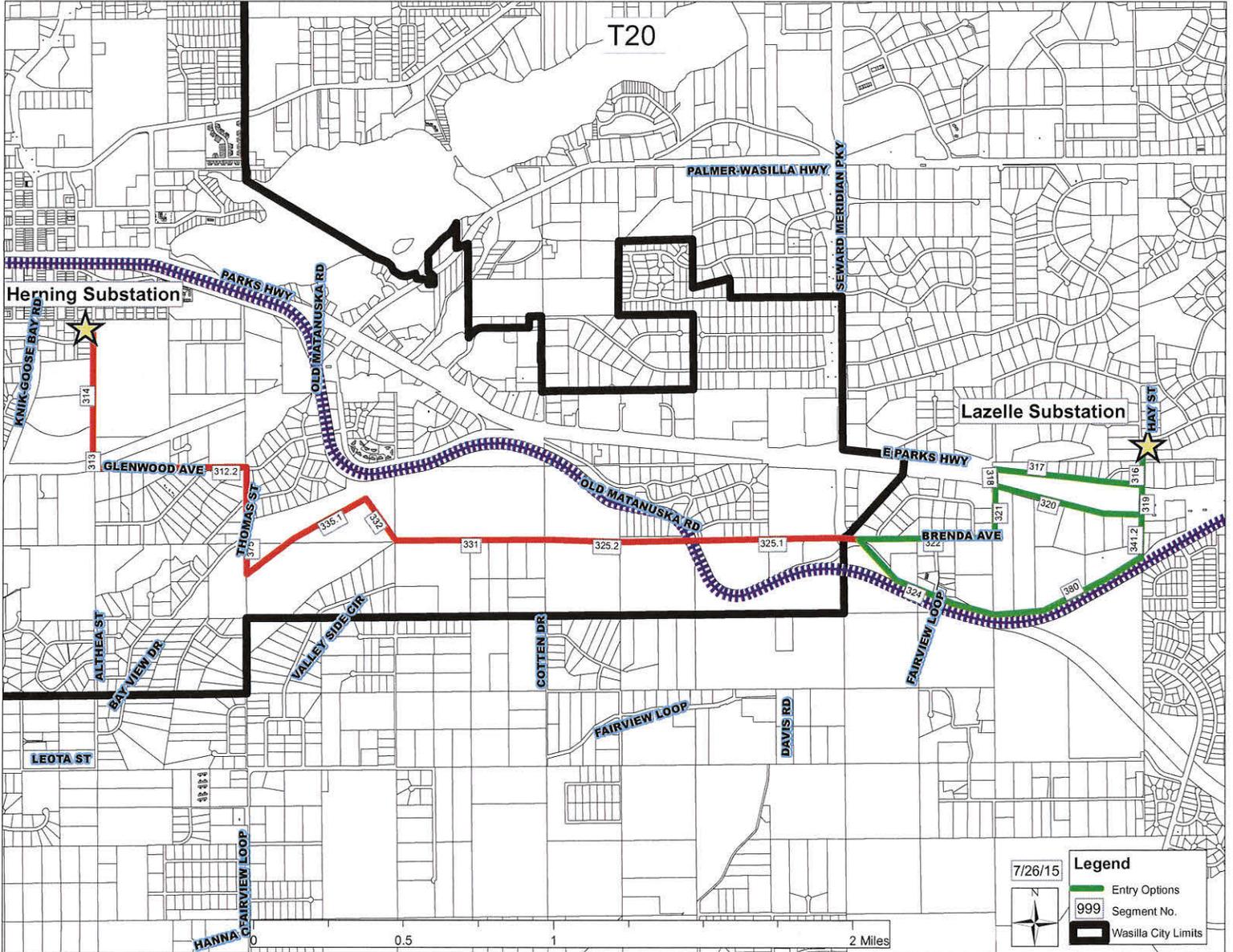
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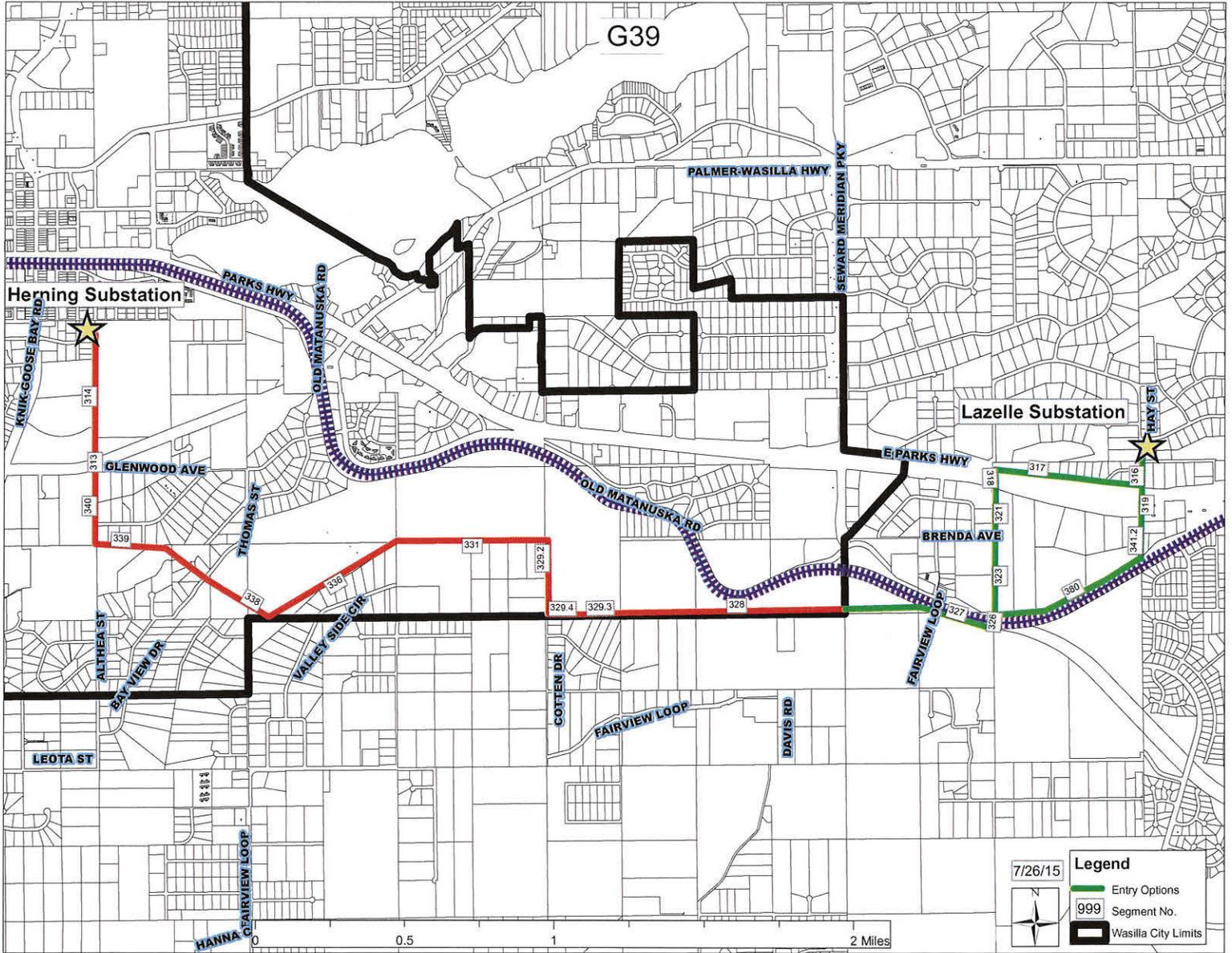
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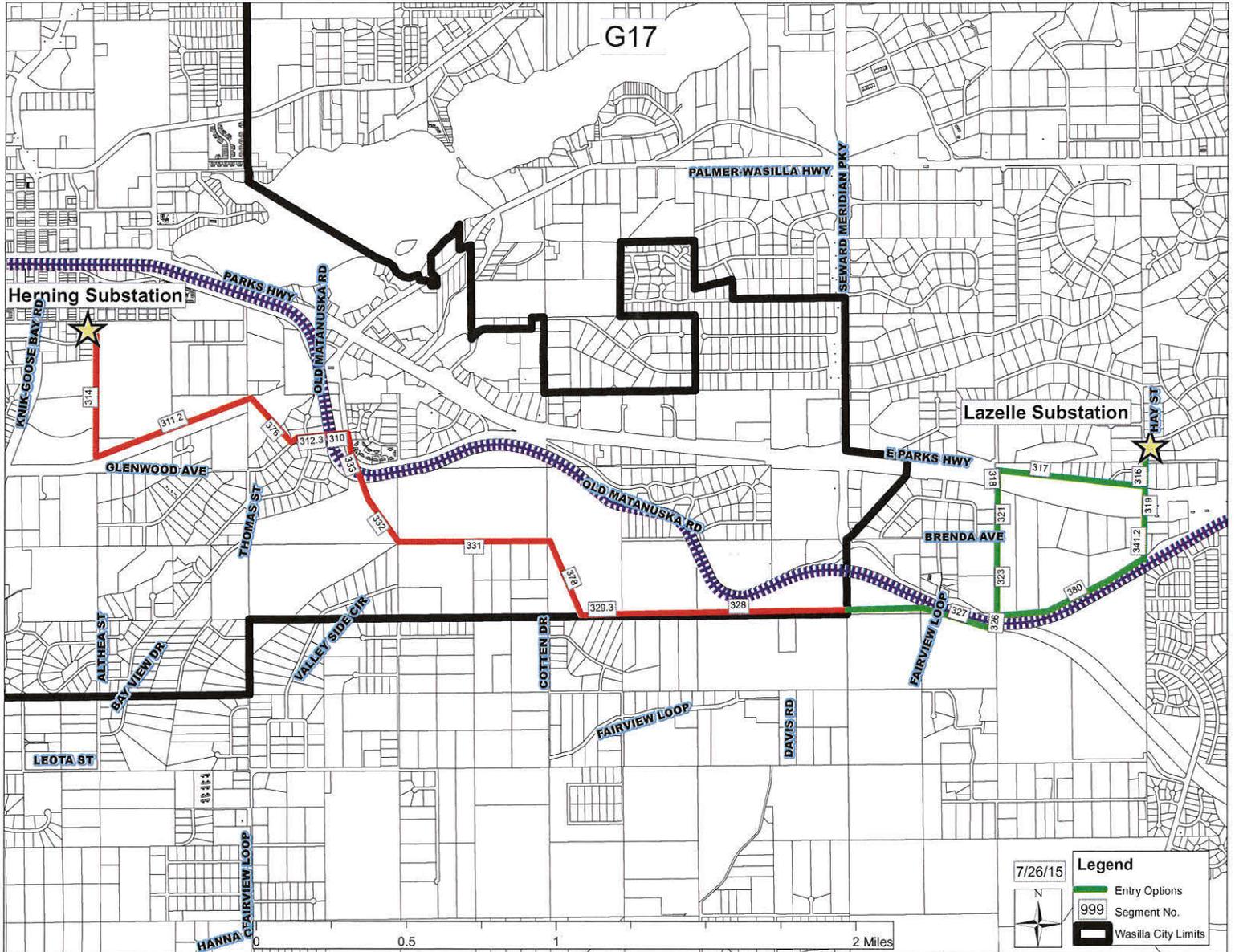
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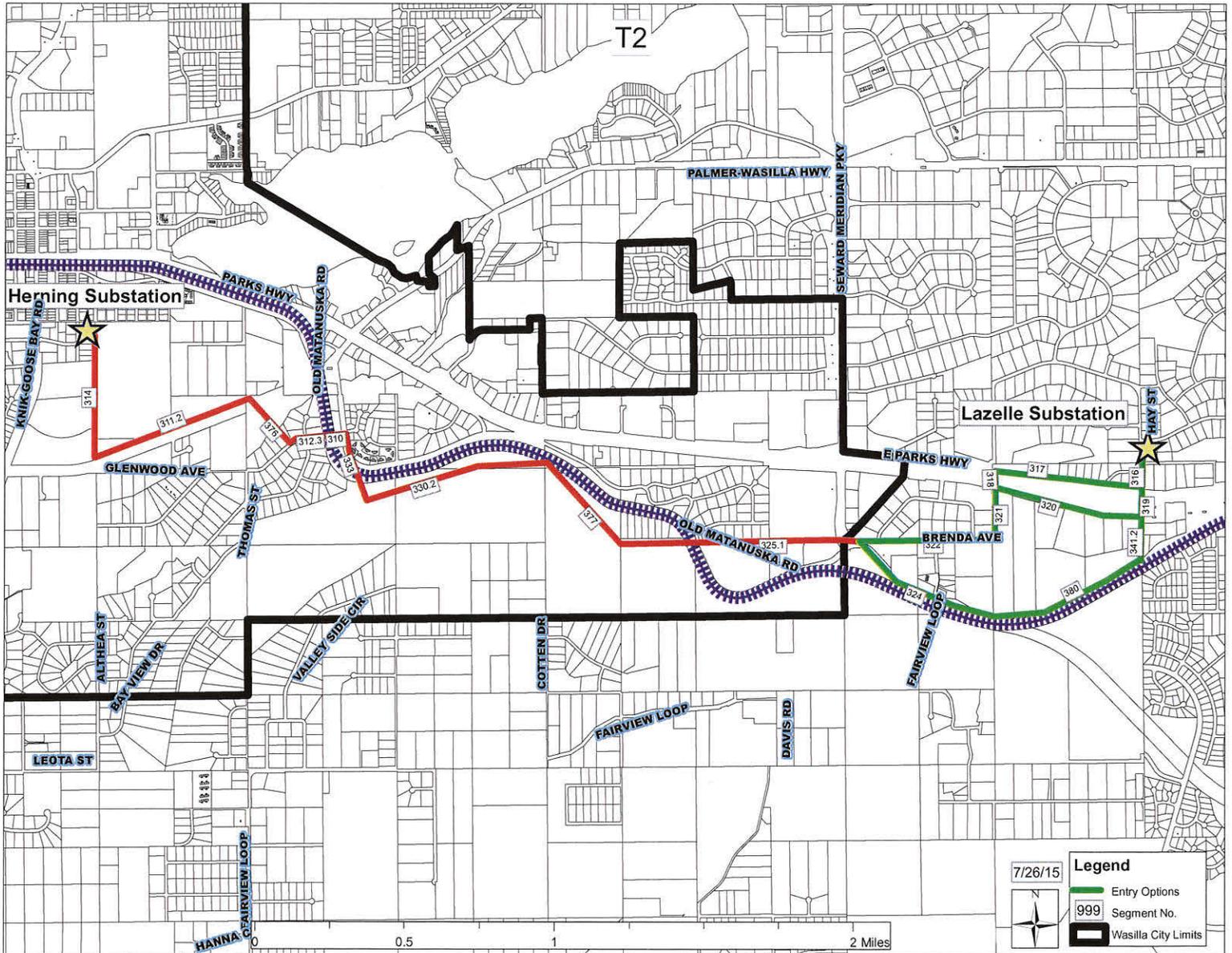
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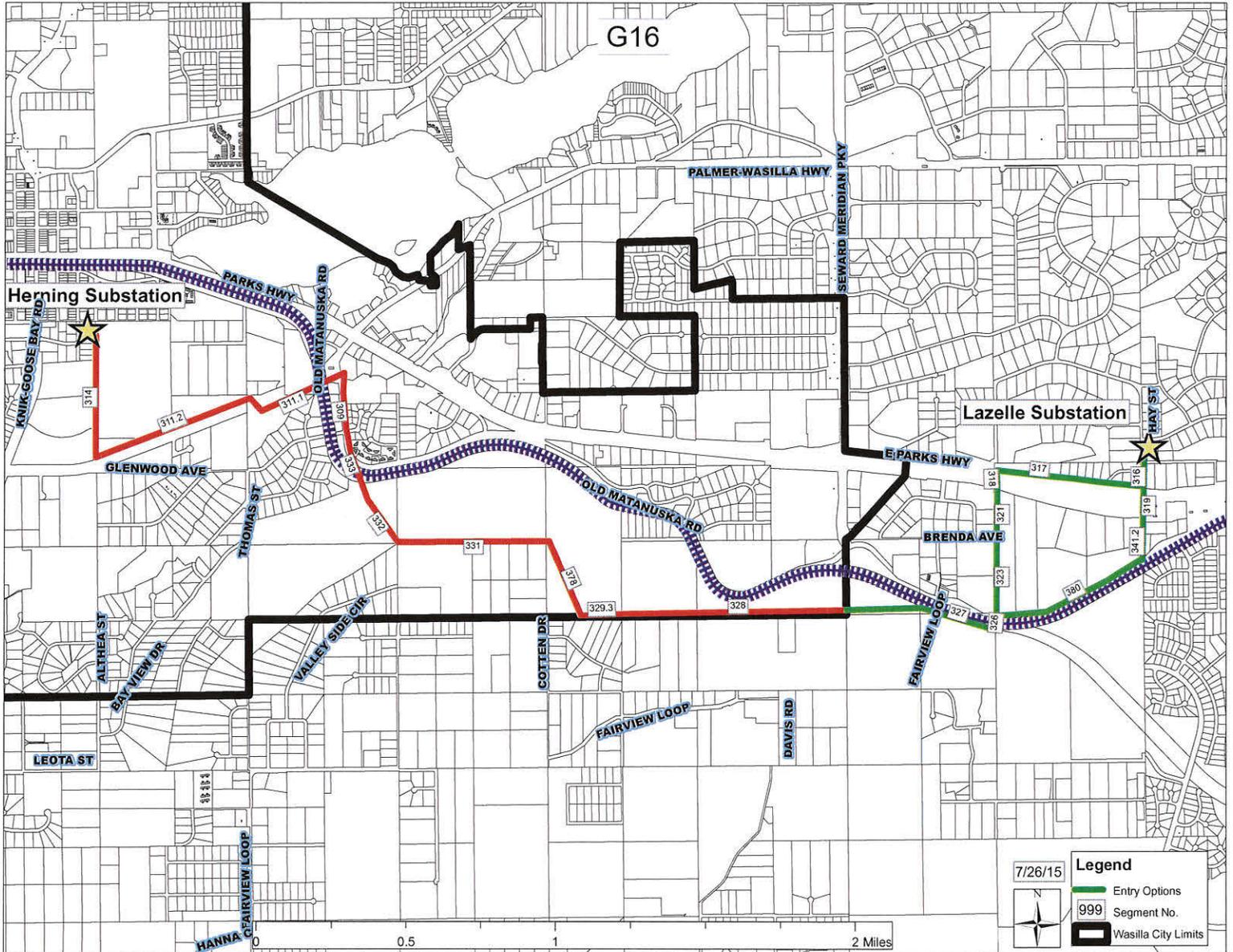
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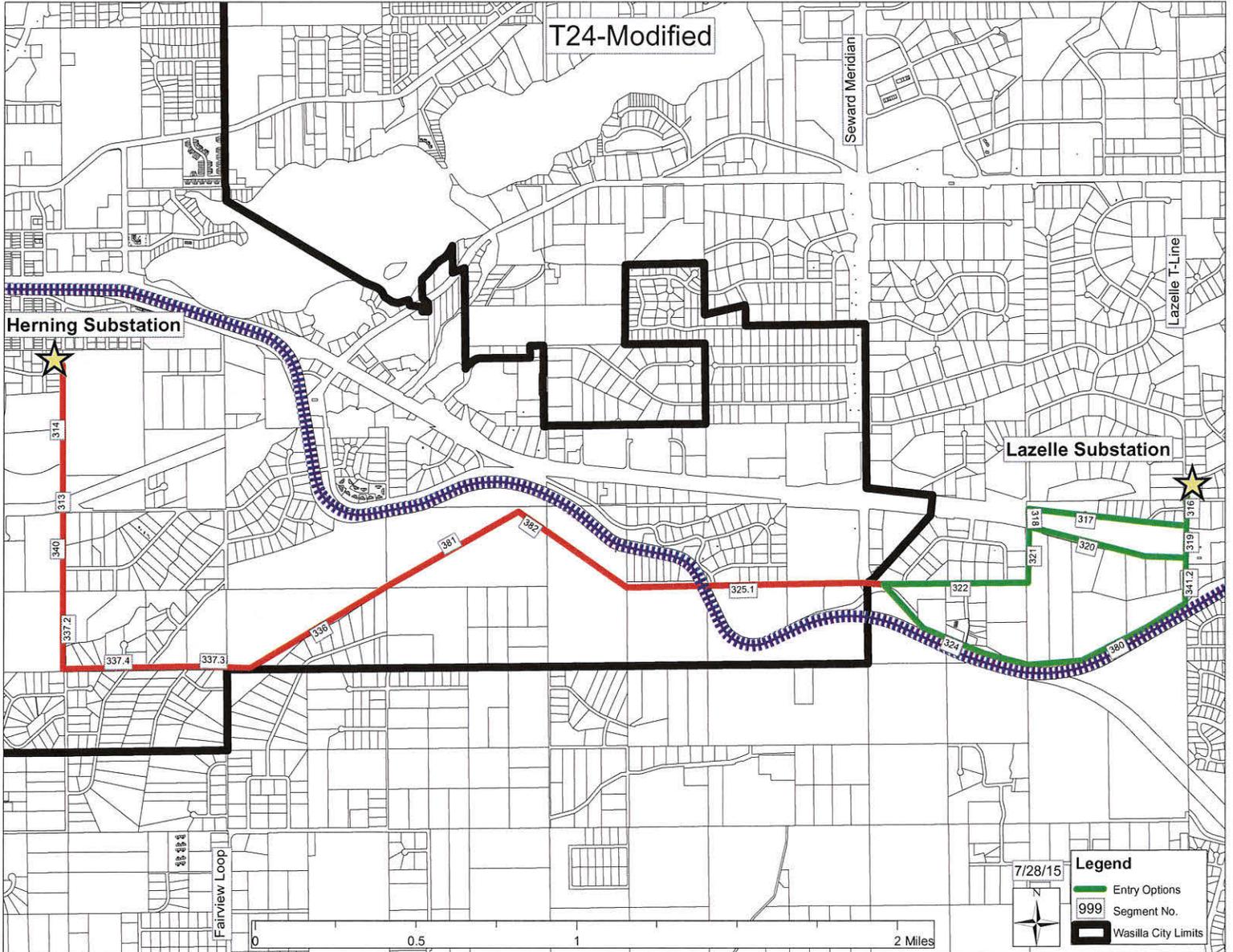
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Email: row@drydenlarue.com



May 22, 2015

Dan and Lisa Phillips  
2301 Phainopepla Circle  
Wasilla, AK 99654

Subject: Neighborhood Meeting  
Wasilla T-Line

Dear Dan and Lisa Phillips,

Thank you for taking the time to attend the MEA Neighborhood Work Session. We appreciate your feedback on the Wasilla Transmission Line. Your input is critical in the identification of a corridor and final route for the Wasilla Transmission Line project. Your comments and concerns have been documented and will be included in the decision process.

Attached to this letter is the post meeting notes collected from comment sheets, large maps, and individual maps. Feel free to review them and we hope to see you at future meetings on the project.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at 907-646-5139, or Julie Estey at Matanuska Electric Association, Inc. at 907-761-9215.

Sincerely,  
Dryden & LaRue, Inc.

Daniel W. Beardsley, SR/WA

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**MATANUSKA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC.  
WASILLA TRANSMISSION LINE  
NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING COMMENTS**

**Wasilla Middle School**

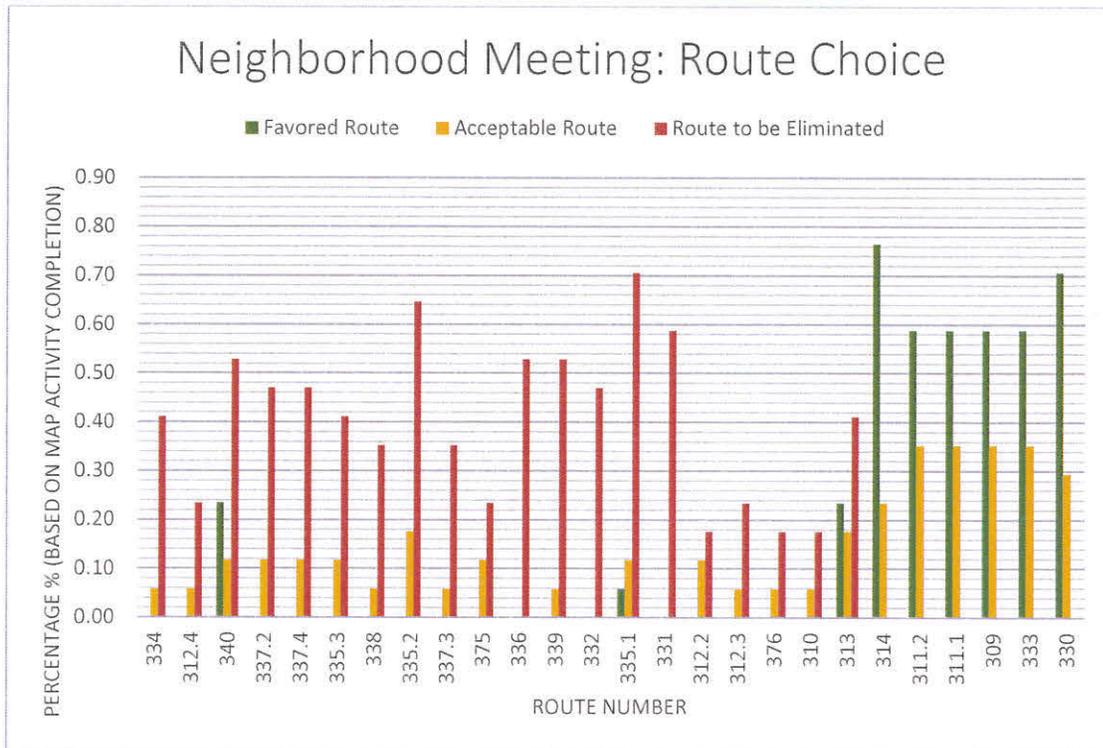
**May 13, 2015**

Number of attendees: 32  
 How Notified: 15 – Mail, 9 - Neighbor contact, 7 - City of Wasilla Planner  
 1 - Unknown

Small Maps Received: 17

**Small Map Results:**

Individuals were requested to draw three routes on small maps, denoting their favored route in green, an acceptable route in yellow, and an unacceptable route in red. The participants stressed that the green route was not a favored route, but would be more appropriately characterized as the least objectionable route.



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Segment	Favored Route		Acceptable Route		Vetoed Route	
	Votes	(%)	Votes	(%)	Votes	(%)
334	0	0.0%	1	5.9%	7	41.2%
312.4	0	0.0%	1	5.9%	4	23.5%
340	4	23.5%	2	11.8%	9	52.9%
337.2	0	0.0%	2	11.8%	8	47.1%
337.4	0	0.0%	2	11.8%	8	47.1%
335.3	0	0.0%	2	11.8%	7	41.2%
338	0	0.0%	1	5.9%	6	35.3%
335.2	0	0.0%	3	17.6%	11	64.7%
337.3	0	0.0%	1	5.9%	6	35.3%
375	0	0.0%	2	11.8%	4	23.5%
336	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	9	52.9%
339	0	0.0%	1	5.9%	9	52.9%
332	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	47.1%
335.1	1	5.9%	2	11.8%	12	70.6%
331	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	10	58.8%
312.2	0	0.0%	2	11.8%	3	17.6%
312.3	0	0.0%	1	5.9%	4	23.5%
376	0	0.0%	1	5.9%	3	17.6%
310	0	0.0%	1	5.9%	3	17.6%
313	4	23.5%	3	17.6%	7	41.2%
314	13	76.5%	4	23.5%	0	0.0%
311.2	10	58.8%	6	35.3%	0	0.0%
311.1	10	58.8%	6	35.3%	0	0.0%
309	10	58.8%	6	35.3%	0	0.0%
333	10	58.8%	6	35.3%	0	0.0%
330	12	70.6%	5	29.4%	0	0.0%

Large Map Comments:

Map 1:

- Use 314 route
- Think about creek (by 340, 357)
- Stay out of neighborhoods (in Creekside estates between 212.2, 375, 335.2, and 339).
- Use Palmer-Wasilla highway
- These are rental units on 333 Richmond hills

No Margin Notes

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Map 2:

- Circled southern orange route: primary choice among all of us.
- Orange best for all
- No electromagnetic field-our children!
- No residential by 329.2 west side.
- Yellow (329.1) line is single family homes and cannot move, stay green line
- Stay green line, commercial route
- Veto 329.1
- Growing residential area (east of 329.2) Cotten Drive, single family homes.
- veto 329.2
- This passes 3 homes, yellow
- Secondary choice (33)
- Veto 335.1
- Veto 334
- Muti family rentals, they can move if they don't like it! (east of 333)

Margin Notes:

- Upset to not to have yellow more included and missing orange!!!
- More homes affected to east of 329.1
- #1 choice is orange!! Or follow the railroad tracks!

Map 3:

- Veto 335.1
- Veto 336

Margin Notes:

- Table 2 prefers the southern route (orange)
- We object to route 335, 336 because of decrease in property value
- Concerned with snow machine, ATV trails along route 335, 336, --ROW

Map 4:

Margin Notes:

- 2 best routes:
  - Southern route
  - from Judge St. NW to 330 follow 333 N to 309, west on 311.1 to 311.2 north on 413 to Hering
- Eliminate:
  - 329.1- steep/affects multiple families
  - 325- nesting ground for birds/wetlands
  - 331-steep/ affects multiple families
  - 329.2- have to raise the line from the gully to the ridge, not cost effective/affects multiple families
- New route across B1 by 325 and 330, named it 325.1

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- Would allow a real solution to access the gully area between the sewer plant and the junction 333/335.1 by eliminating property conflicts and NOT introducing new conflicts
- Map 5:
  - New Condos (Referred to Richmond Hills Subdivision East of Railroad Tracks).

Written Comment Sheets:

In addition to the small maps routes and the comments on the large maps, seven comment sheets were received:

1. Not everybody will agree on any given alternate, but, the fact is, the City and communities need this line. That said our favored route is the southern orange route. Since you asked for a second choice, we would suggest for least impact the green southern route highlighted on the attached map. Our third choice would be the northern green highlighted route on the attached map.
 

\*\* The green southern route is: 325, 330, 335.1, 335.2, 335.3, 337.4, 337.2, 340, 313, and 314

\*\* The green northern route is: 325, 330, 333, 309, 311.1, 311.2, and 314
2. We are not supporting your route through Richmond Est., Mtn View Est., and Creekside Est. Etc. I would support the orange route or if absolutely necessary Red route 314, 311.2, 311.1, 309, 333 & 330.
3. I would prefer the southern route. My second choice would be follow the railroad to Old Matanuska-route 333 route 309 route 311.1 and 311.2 to route 314.
4. There should not be an overhead line on Glenwood, Thomas View, Bayview Drive and Linda Circle. It will de-value the property in this neighborhood tremendously. Please hear us! All the lines should have been put in years ago outside city limits and now the lines should be underground. Thank you and keep us posted. The orange route is definitely the best of all.
5. Orange route is overall preferred route. Preferred red route 314 to 311.2 to 311.1 to 309 to 333 to 330. I strongly oppose route 339 as it would put a pole right in my front yard as I also own the small triangle shaped property across the street- this would completely destroy my property value (and make me very, very sad). I veto the red route!
6. Stay off Bay View and Thomas and Glenwood Area. No Overhead poles in City limits. We are view properties. This will devalue all properties.

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7. Look at the beauty of our neighborhood, it's pristine. Please choose another route. No overhead poles in city limits. We will raise hell!!! Use the Orange Route, veto Red Route.

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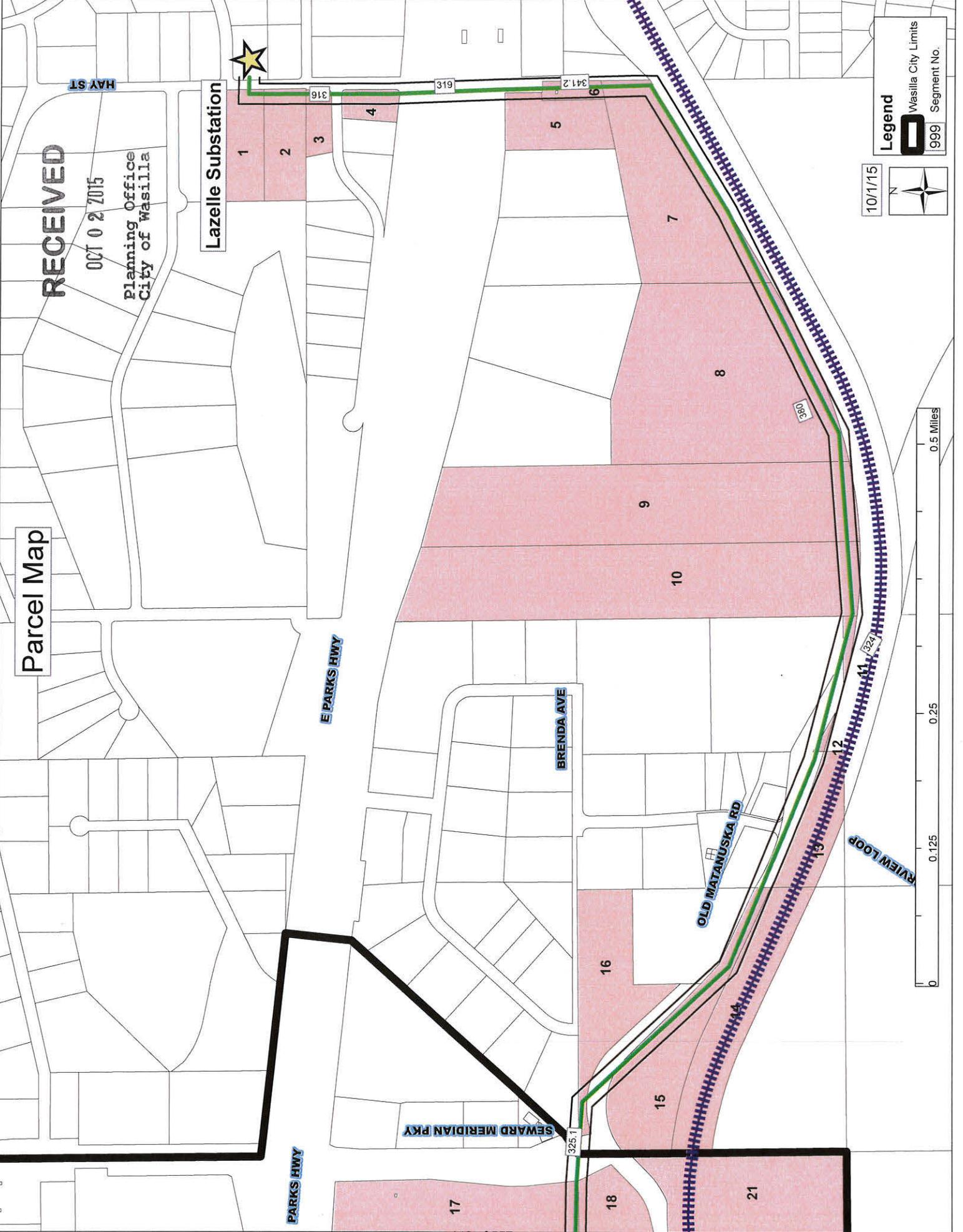
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Lazelle Substation



10/1/15



**Legend**



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999 Segment No.



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Parcel Map

PARKS HWY

E PARKS H

SEWARD MERIDIAN PKY

325-1

17

18

18

20

24

25

19

18

20

23

18

18

20

24

25

15

18

18

20

24

25

OLD MATANUSKA RD

21

GOTTEN DR

10/1/15



Legend

Wasilla City Limits

999 Segment No.

0.5 Miles

0.25

0.125

0

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Parcel Map

PARKS HWY

OLD MATANUSKA RD

25

24

26

27

28

THOMAS ST

VIEW DR

VALLEY SIDE CIR

TEN DR

10/1/15



Legend



Wasilla City Limits  
999 Segment No.

0.5 Miles

0.25

0.125

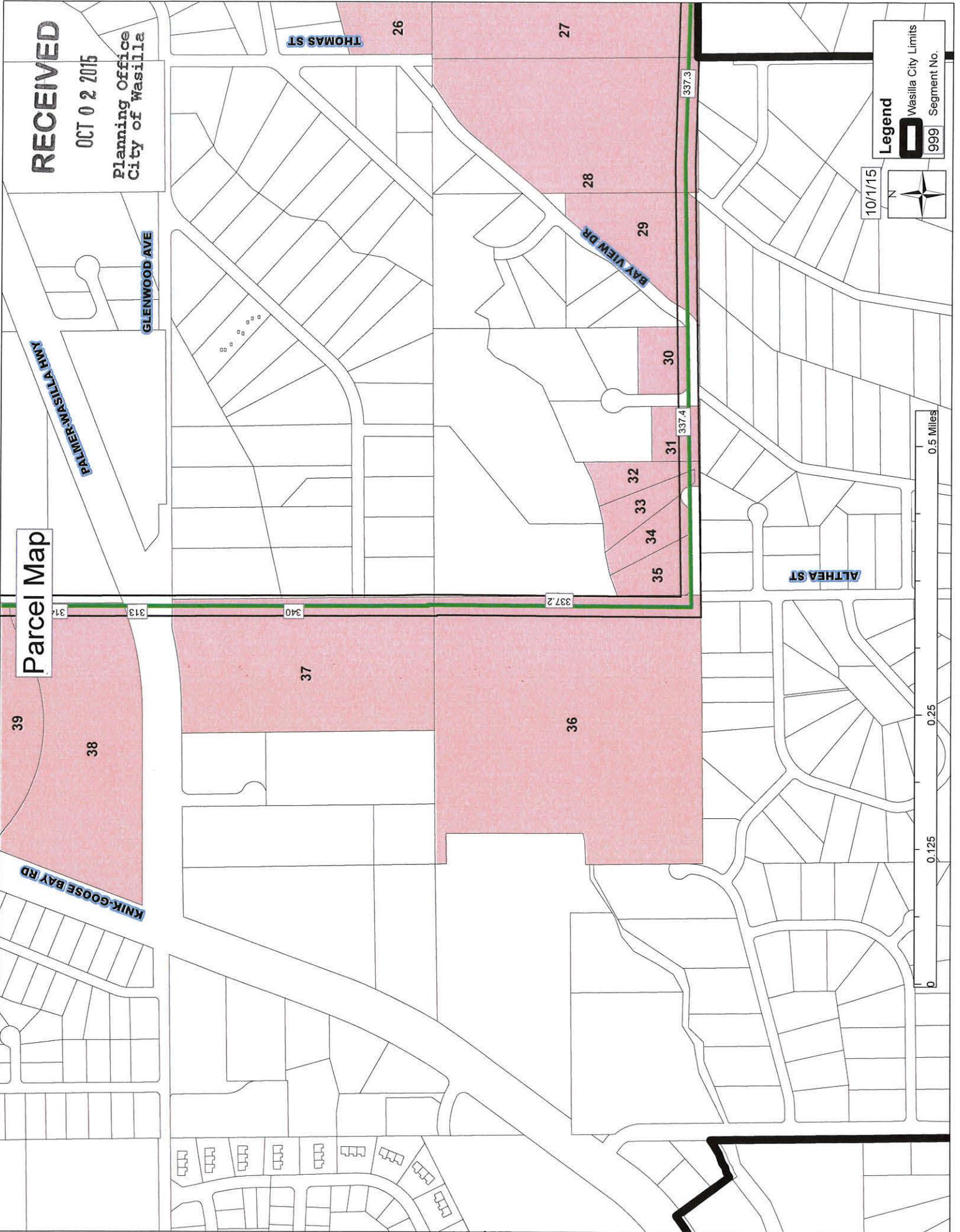
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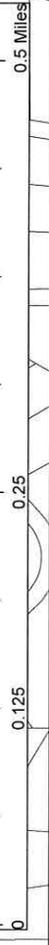
**Parcel Map**



**Legend**

Wasilla City Limits  
999 Segment No.

10/1/15



# Parcel Map

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Herring Substation

KNIK-GOOSE B



43  
42  
41

40

39

38

37

314

313

340

0.5 Miles

0.25

0.125

0

10/1/15

Legend

Wasilla City Limits  
999 Segment No.



HOMAS ST

PARKS HWY

PALMER-WASILLA HWY

GLENWOOD AVE

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Lazelle Substation

Herring Substation

**Legend**

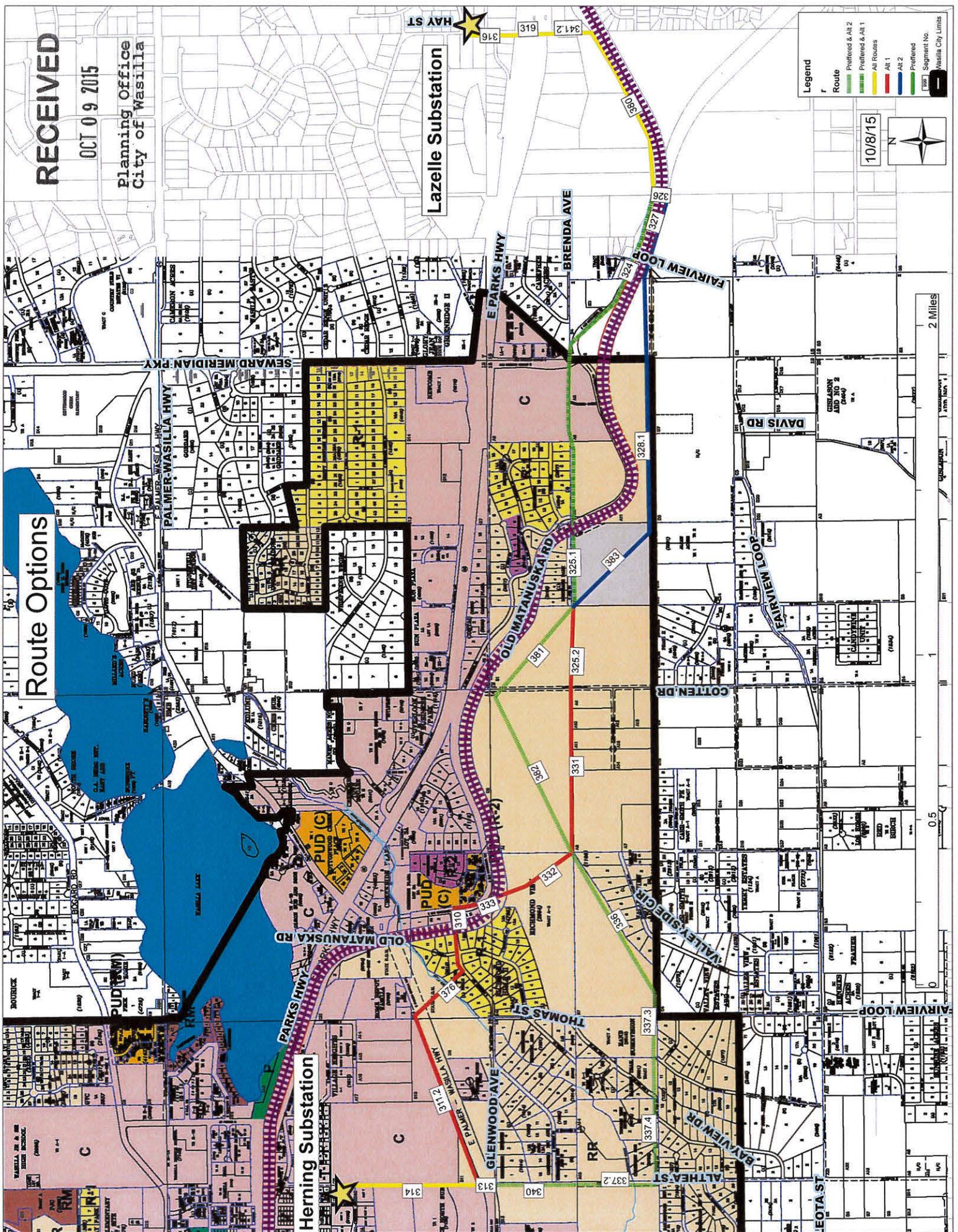
- Route
- Preferred & Alt 2
- Preferred & Alt 1
- All Routes
- Alt 1
- Alt 2
- Preferred
- Route Segment No.
- Wasilla City Limits

10/8/15



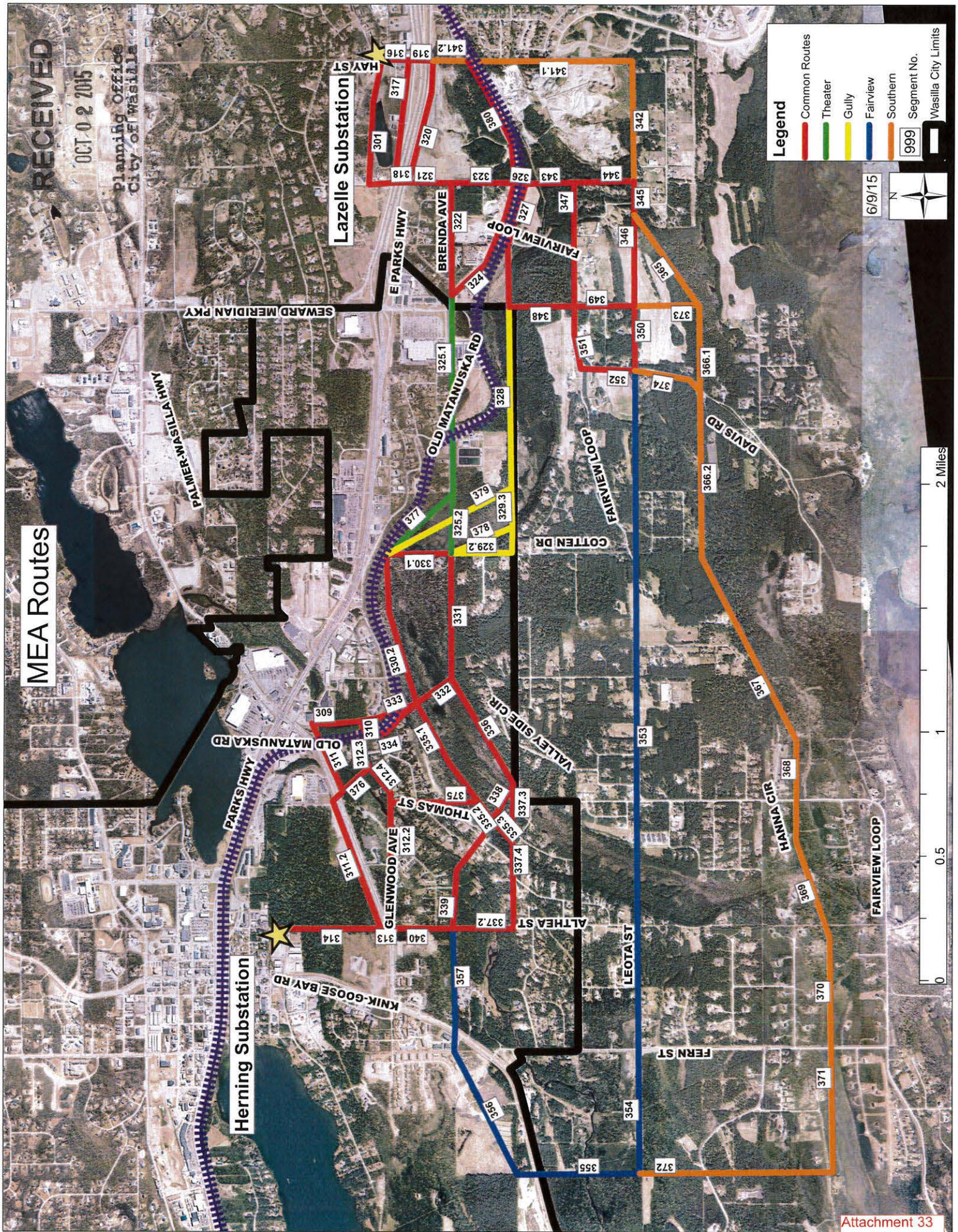
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# MEA Routes



**Legend**

- Common Routes
- Theater
- Gully
- Fairview
- Southern
- 999 Segment No.
- Wasilla City Limits

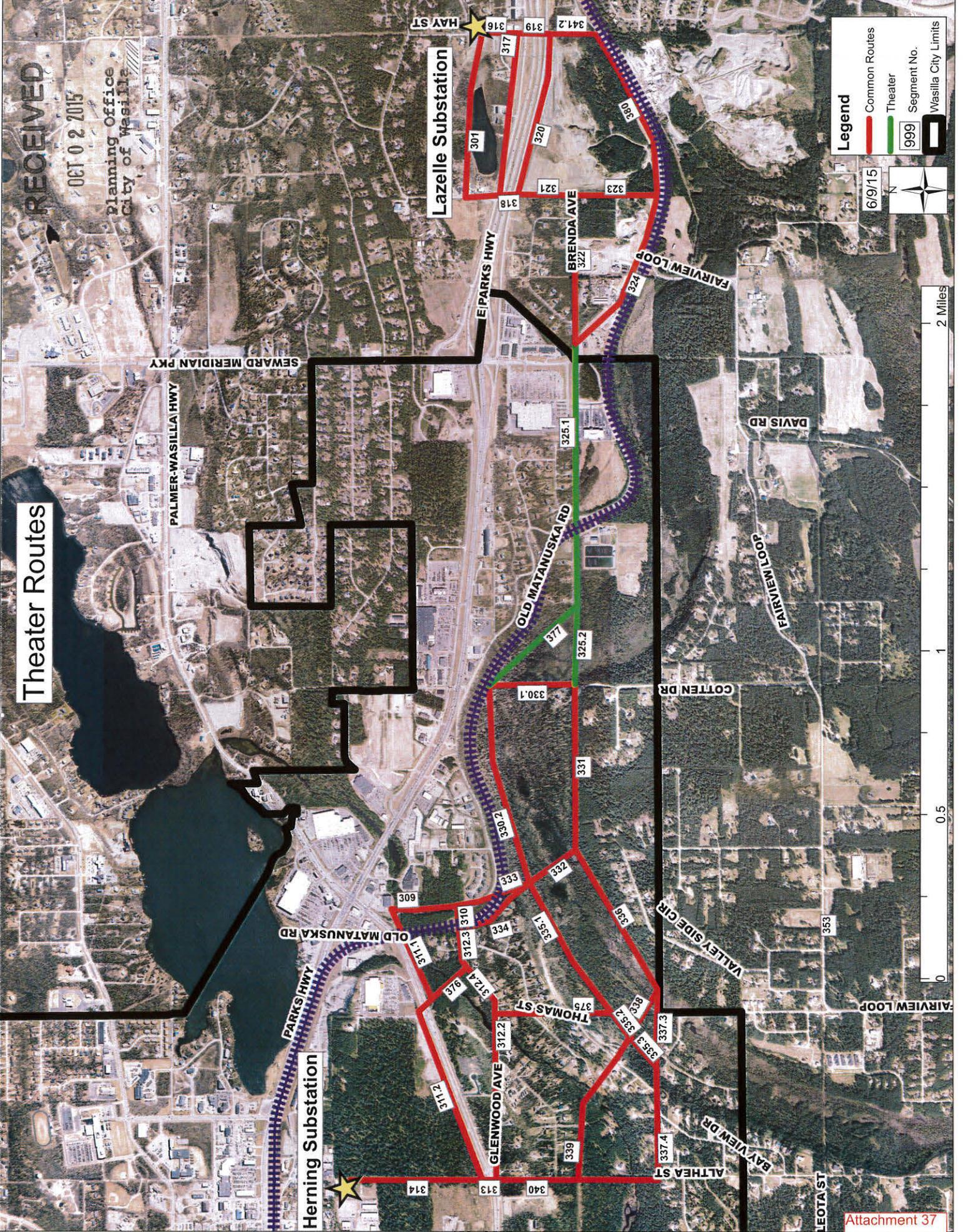
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Theater Routes



**Legend**

- Common Routes
- Theater
- 999 Segment No.
- Wasilla City Limits

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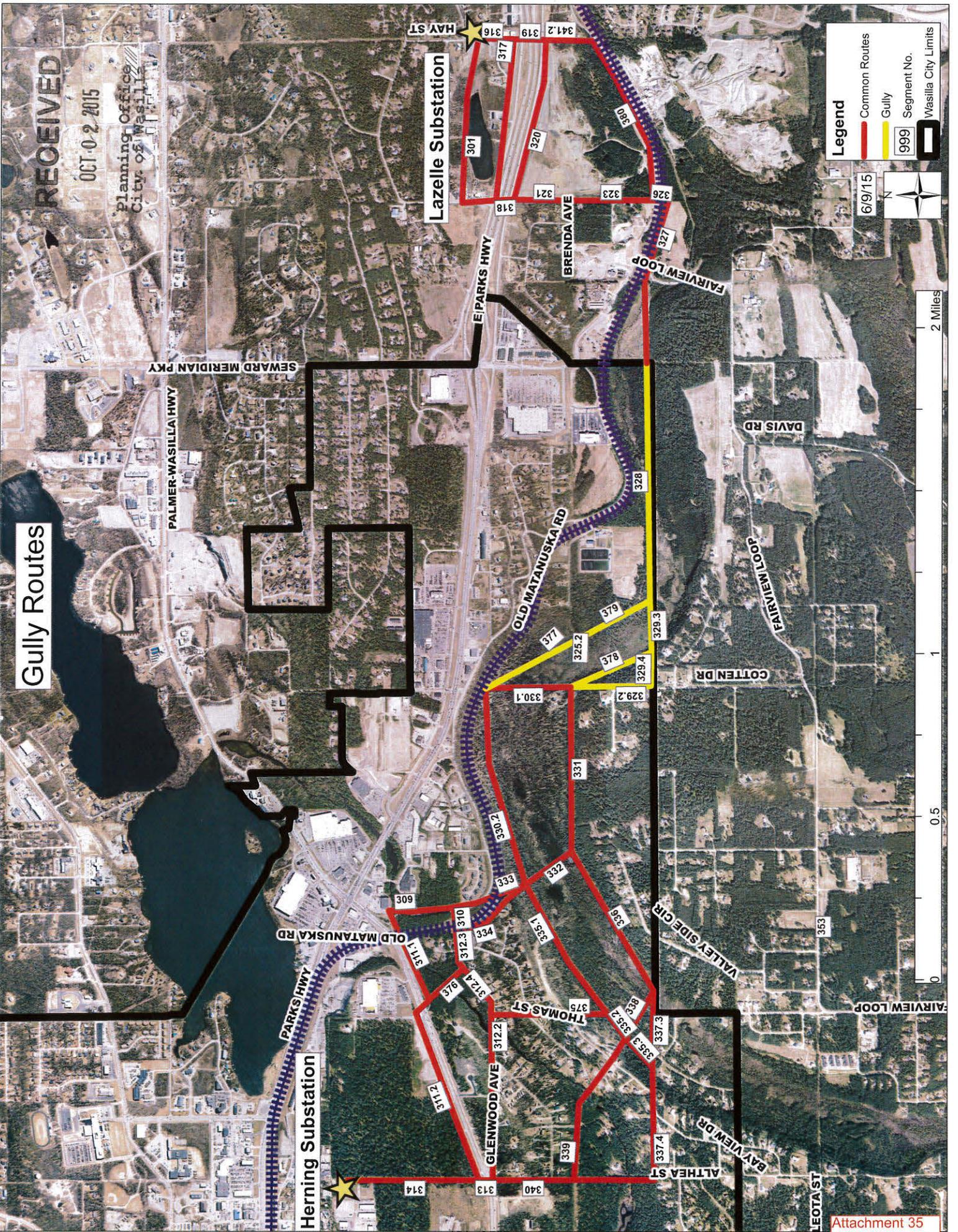


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Gully Routes

Lazelle Substation

Herning Substation

**Legend**

- Common Routes
- Gully
- 999 Segment No.
- Wasilla City Limits

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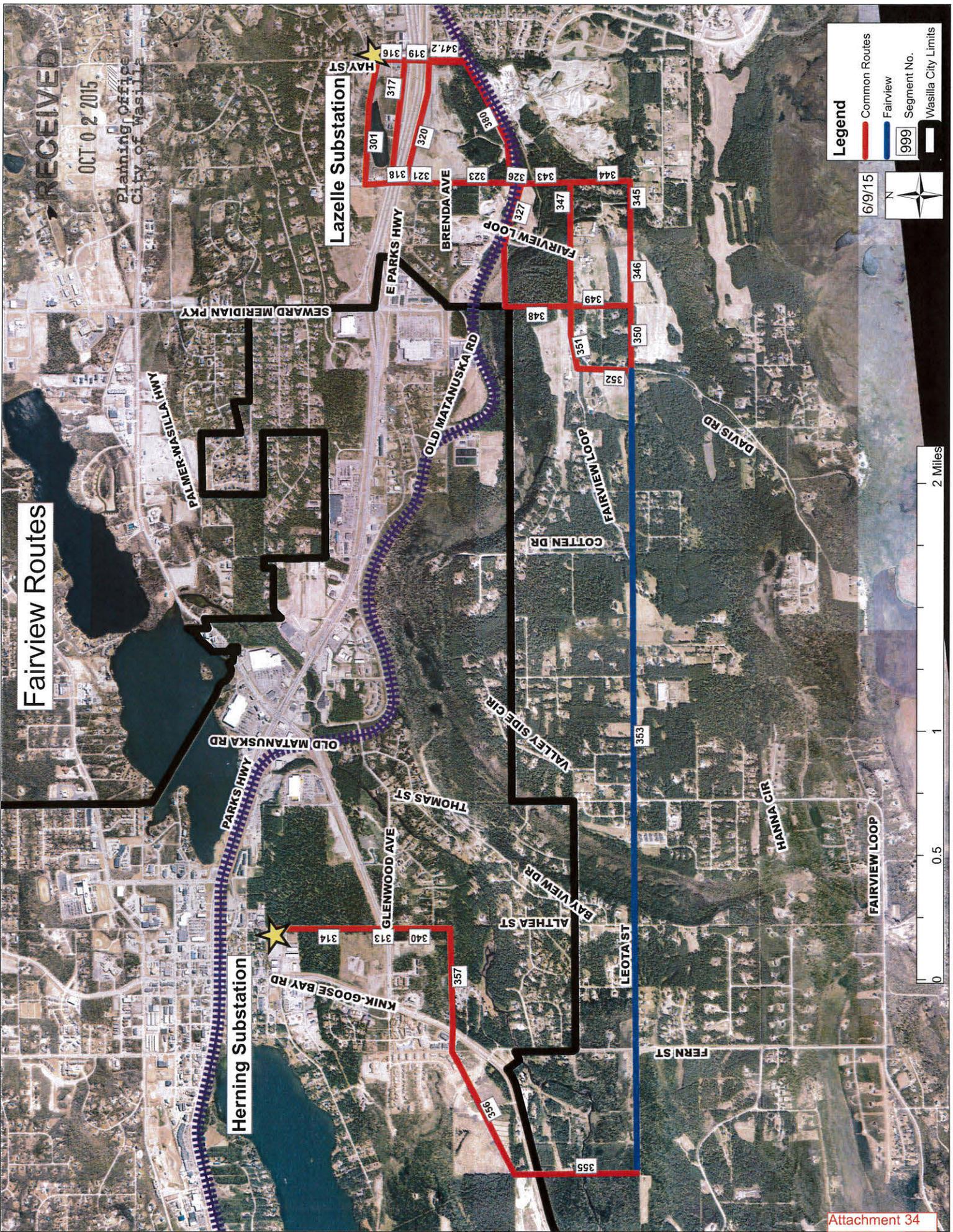
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Fairview Routes

Herning Substation

Lazelle Substation



**Legend**

- Common Routes
- Fairview
- 999 Segment No.
- Wasilla City Limits

6/9/15

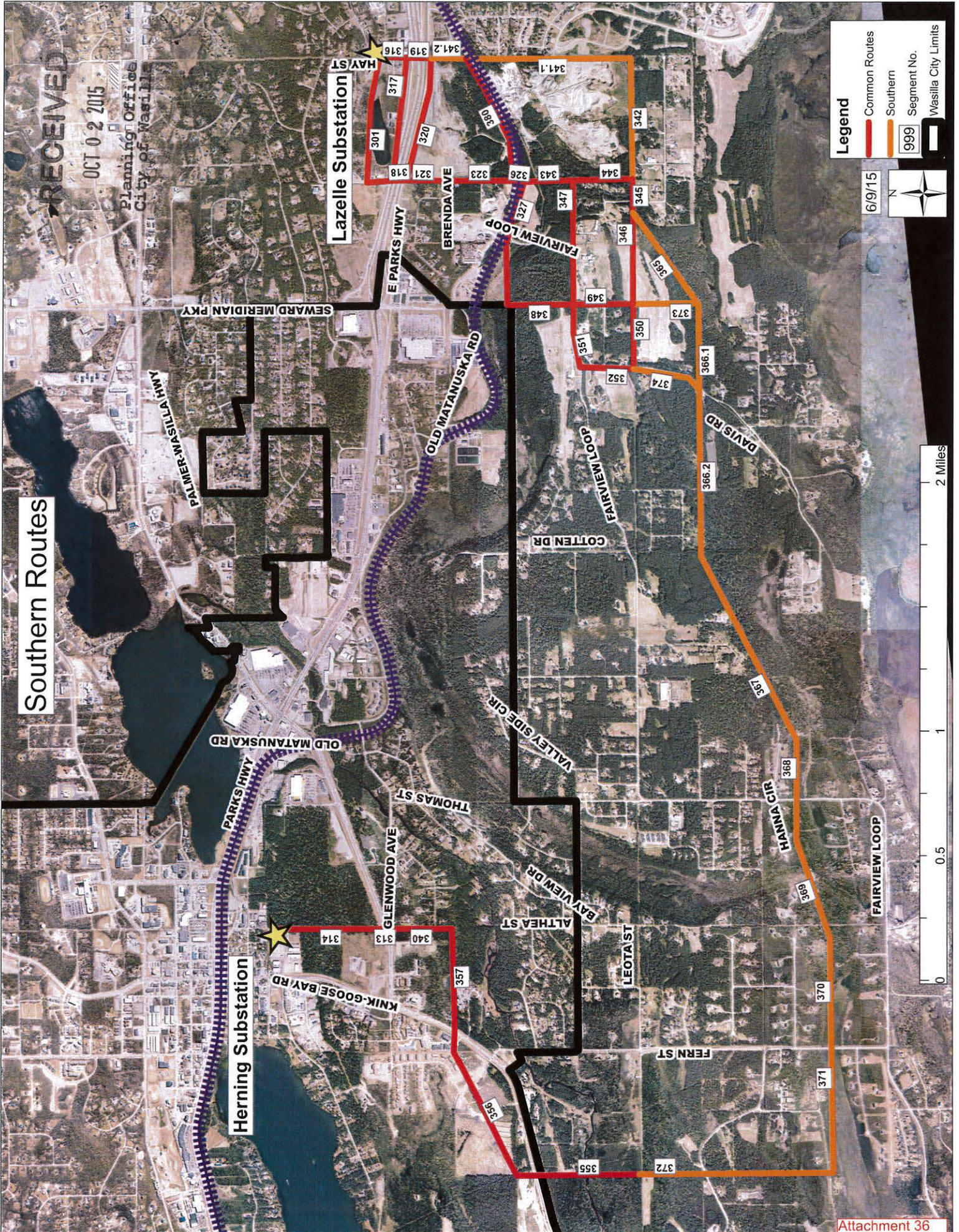


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Southern Routes



Legend

- Common Routes
- Southern
- 999 Segment No.
- Wasilla City Limits

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2 Miles





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Lazelle Substation

Lazelle T-Line

Land Use

Seward Meridian

Bogard T-Line

Herring Substation

Teiland T-Line

Fairview Loop

Ferm St



**Legend**

- Gas Line
- DOT/MSB Roads
- Wasilla Bypass Corridor
- AKRR\_ROW
- Wetlands
- Wasilla City Limits

**Parcels**

- <1/2 Acre
- 1/2 to 1 Acre
- 1 to 2 1/2 Acres
- >2 1/2 Acres

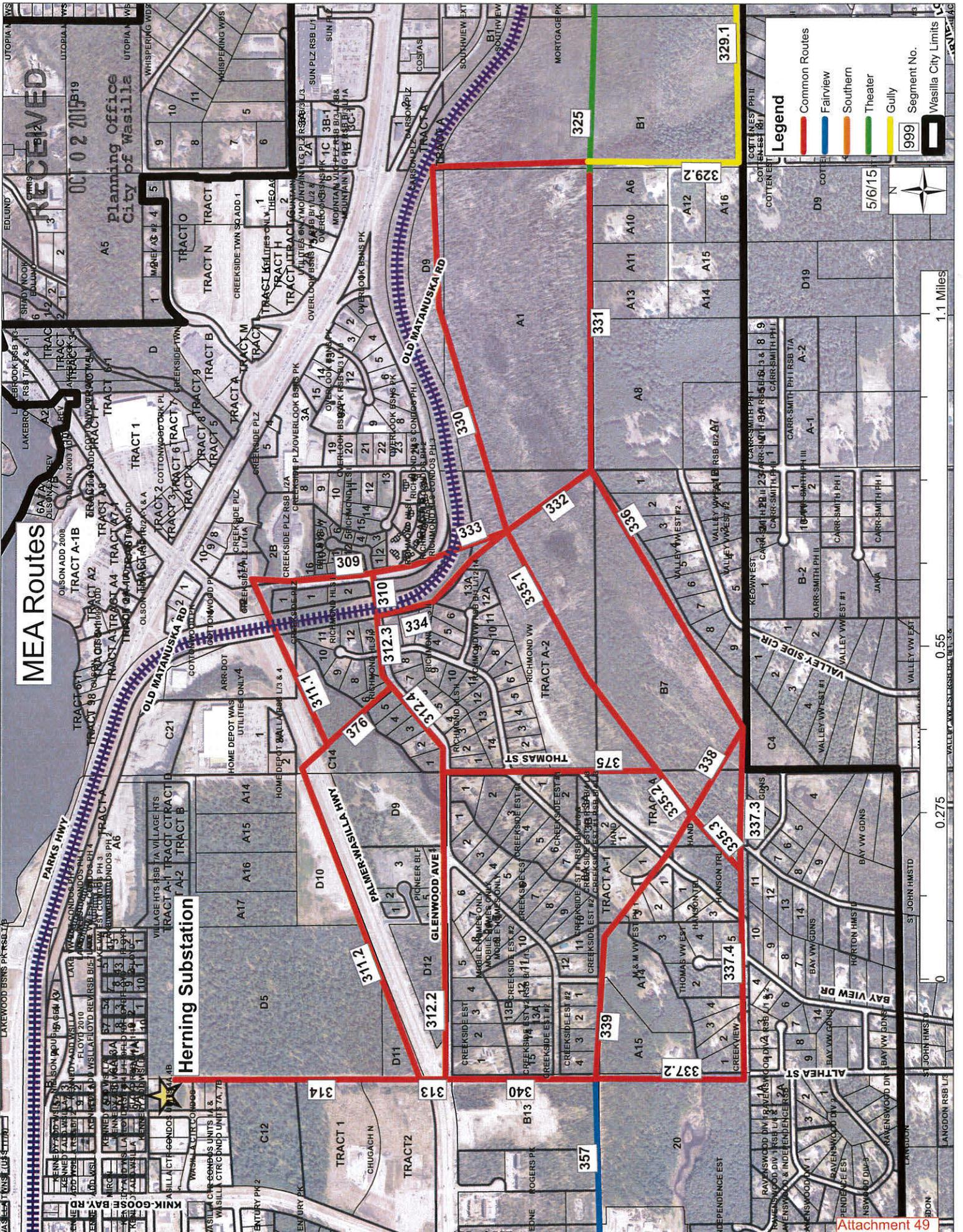
# MEA Routes

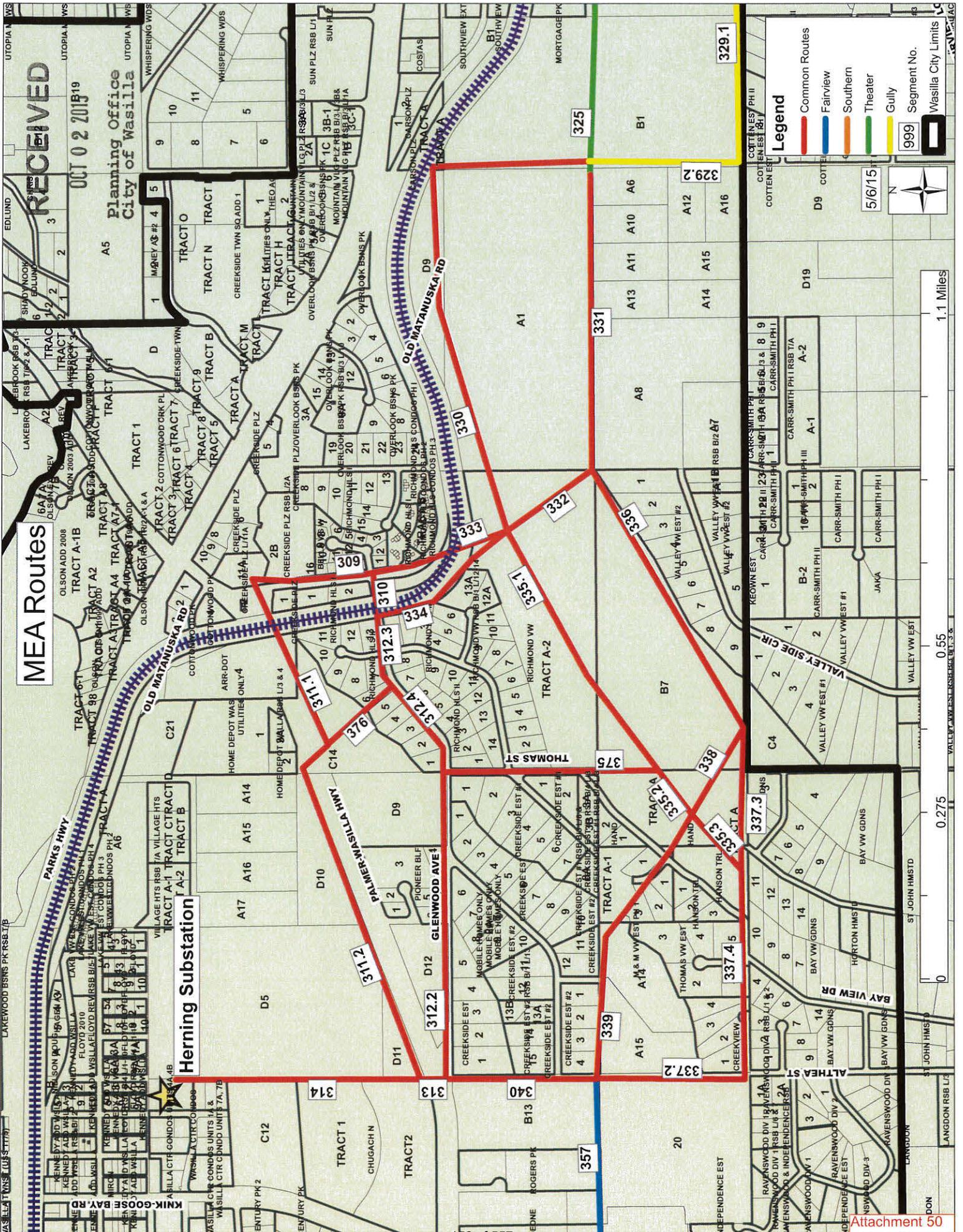
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Herring Substation

**Legend**

- Common Routes
- Fairview
- Southern
- Theater
- Gully
- 999 Segment No.
- Wasilla City Limits





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**MATANUSKA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
**CRITICAL ELECTRICAL INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS**  
**LAZELLE SUBSTATION TO HERNING SUBSTATION**  
**115 kV TRANSMISSION LINE**  
**BRIEFING PAPER**

**INTRODUCTION**

Due to the rapid growth of the Matanuska-Susitna Valley and Eagle River Areas, coupled with an aging power delivery system, Matanuska Electric Association, Inc. has embarked on a plan to improve its electric supply system to further reliability, while economically meeting the needs of its members. The Wasilla area consumes the most electricity in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley. From 2005 to 2012 the city and surrounding area's electric usage increased from 16.5 to 23 megawatts, a 6% annual load growth compared to the overall system load growth of about 1% per year. Projections are that load growth will increase at a similar rate through 2020. As a result of this rapid growth, MEA is making major investments in the Wasilla area to bring the transmission and substation systems up to meet current and future demand and further the economic vitality of the area.

**SUBSTATION UPGRADES**

In 2009 MEA performed a Long Range Plan (LRP) that identified the need to upgrade key substations to allow for new transmission connections in response to existing demand and future growth. As a result, plans were made to reconfigure Hospital, Lazelle, Shaw and Hering substations. These improvements not only connect the transmission system, but also improve the protective relaying systems that reduces vulnerability of the region's transmission and substation infrastructure while improving system reliability and redundancy.

Hering substation, one of the key substations identified, is the essential hub providing electrical power to Wasilla and its rapidly expanding commercial venues. Studies show that the average MEA commercial user consumes about eight times the electricity of a residential user. As Wasilla strives to increase its commercial and industrial sector, the commercial load growth has risen substantially more than that of the residential growth causing greater demand for power from Hering substation. This growth is outpacing the existing substation capacity at times, requiring upgrades to Hering substation to meet peak load needs. Hering is already operating at higher than desired load levels which increases the potential for outages and thereby decreases reliability.

**TRANSMISSION LINE IMPROVEMENTS**

MEA is systematically upgrading its transmission system to develop a transmission grid that will increase capacity and provide alternate, redundant transmission routing to many of its substations.

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### Recent Improvements:

- Teeland to Redington transmission line was upgraded to meet the capacity needs of the rapidly growing Knik-Goose Bay Road area.
- EGS to Hospital substation transmission line created a looped system between EGS, Palmer and the Hospital substation. This looped system provides the capacity to transfer power in two directions to Palmer providing redundancy and significantly reducing the risk of power outages.

### Next Steps:

The next step in transmission line development is a new link to Lazelle substation. This will create a loop between Hospital and Lazelle substations, providing two sources of power for the Lazelle substation, which also serves many homes and businesses in the Seward Meridian area of Wasilla. With this new link, the growing areas along the eastern border of the City of Wasilla and beyond served by Lazelle substation will have increased reliability and transmission capacity from these redundant transmission circuits.

As the primary source of power delivery for Wasilla's business and residential growth, it is vital that this transmission line development continue to Herning substation to ensure that the Wasilla area has reliable, redundant and economic sources of power. Currently, MEA's direct power can only be supplied to Herning via one limited capacity transmission line -- the Bogard Road transmission line. MEA must be able to continue to supply the power needed during the loss of this single transmission line. For example, this transmission line will need to be taken out of commission during planned expansions of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway and Bogard Road, leaving limited options to bring necessary power to the area. This one existing line is inadequate to provide for the needs of Wasilla and places an even greater risk to the reliability of the system. Therefore, a transmission line segment between Lazelle substation and Herning substation is necessary. Adding a second circuit to Herning substation (and beyond) will improve reliability, capacity and redundancy, which will also reduce power outages and restoration times by supplying another MEA alternative source of power to the substation. With the load growth and vulnerabilities that exist, this is not an optional project for MEA and its members in this area.

### System realities:

- Placing transmission lines underground is not an option MEA is able to consider due to cost of construction, maintenance, and the unacceptable risk to system reliability.
- The system that feeds the Wasilla area needs to be reliable. The transmission grid is fragile, was built many years ago, and has not had the necessary upgrades to support the growing demand.
- The system does not meet current reliability standards that dictate a transmission system should surround the load center and feed into the center with distribution lines.
- MEA's transmission systems and substations are designed to provide backup of adjacent areas in case of a failure in the system. Due to rapid load growth in the Wasilla area, load has outpaced electrical improvements. Herning is not capable of redundant supply capacity because power demand outpaced its capacity.
- MEA has significant infrastructure with few members to cover the costs. Therefore, MEA needs to ensure the solution is the most economic choice.

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- MEA commits to our members to ensure our infrastructure has the least disruption possible. We also look for routing options with the least impact to adjacent property owners and overall land use. Studies indicate utility corridors in commercial areas do not change commercial use, but they can have significant adverse impact in residential areas.

## **COOPERATIVE EFFORT**

MEA's goal is to work with the city, the residents of Wasilla and the Borough to provide this vital infrastructure. A new transmission line is essential. Over the past year, MEA has met with major stakeholders and reconsidered many possible routing options. We have mapped existing residential and commercial land, DOT and AKRR rights-of-way and future projects, wetlands, cultural resources and other considerations. From this exercise, we have identified several corridors with multiple possible routes within those corridors. We look forward to the public's input to help us examine possible corridors and routes to reach Herning substation.

## **SUMMARY**

What we hope to accomplish during the public participation process:

- Present sufficient information to assist the public and affected property owners to understand MEA's challenges in providing the Wasilla and neighboring areas with the power it requires and the critical role of the Herning substation
- Identification of issues, comments, concerns and questions about suggested and proposed corridors and routes within those corridors
- Receive recommendations and solutions for consideration in the final route selection.

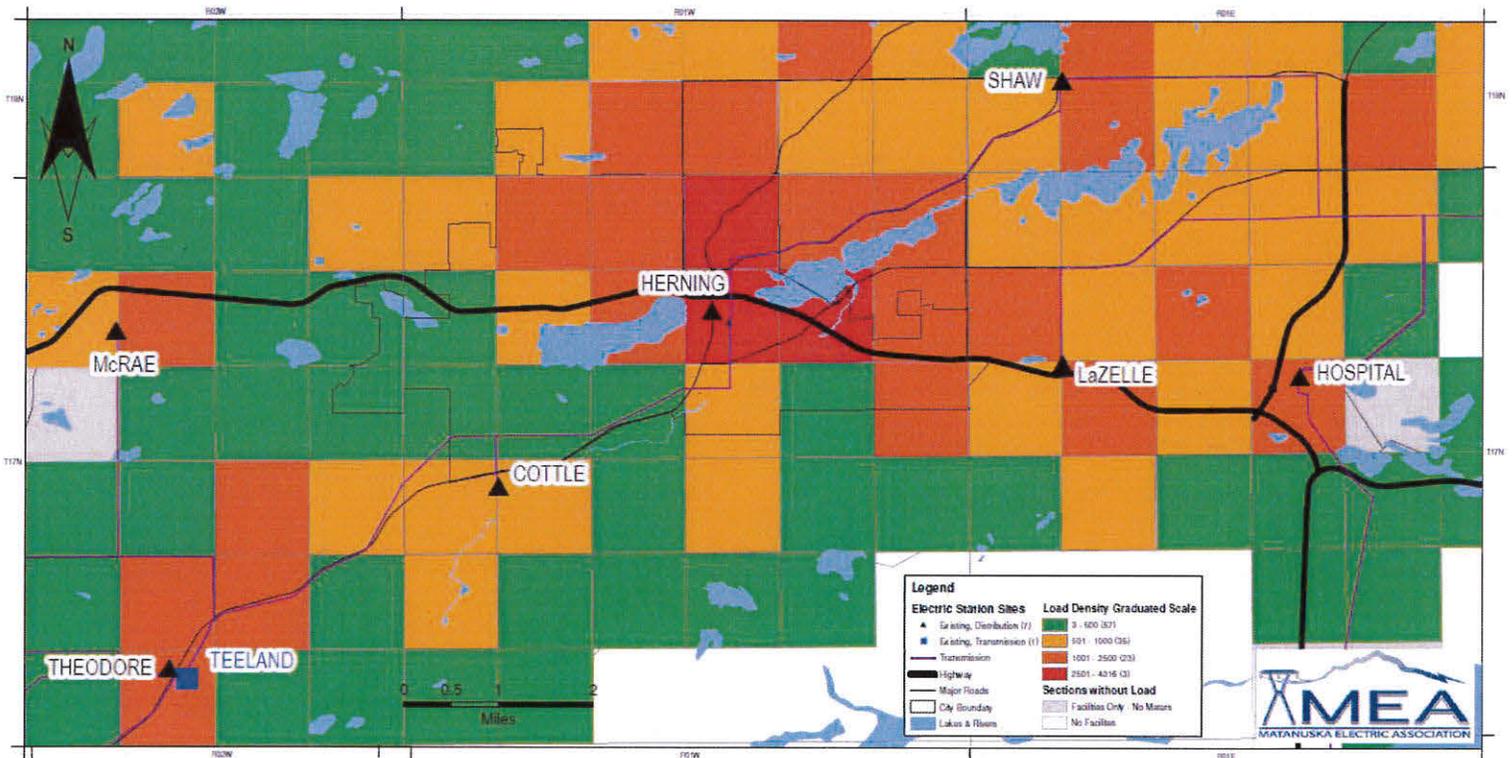
Ultimately, MEA is looking for the best alternative with the least impact to serve the Wasilla area with reliable, economic power. Our goal is that these public participation efforts will identify and define the best corridor routing alternative that meets this criteria.

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# 2014 MEA LOAD DENSITY GRADUATED HERNING SUBSTATION & WASILLA AREA



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## Underground vs. Overhead Transmission Lines

MEA is often asked why it doesn't simply bury its transmission lines. While burying transmission lines is an intuitively desirable approach, many people don't recognize the technical difficulties and significant cost increase of installing transmission infrastructure underground.

Smaller distribution lines that feed our homes and businesses can economically and safely be placed underground. Nationwide, however, burying the larger transmission lines is uncommon. Of the more than 200,000 miles of transmission lines in the U.S., less than 3 percent are underground. Why?

### Significantly Higher Costs

Unlike distribution power lines that deliver power to homes, high-voltage power lines are extremely expensive to build underground. Underground construction of transmission lines often costs 5 to 10 times more than overhead construction.

Insulated cables, underground surveying and excavation, splicing vaults and concrete-encased conduits to protect lines from dig-ins contribute to higher costs. The lifespan of underground lines is 30 to 35 years, about half that of overhead lines.

Those costs must be passed along to our members through rates.

### Longer Outages

While underground lines are less susceptible to storm-related outages than overhead lines, when outages do occur, it takes an average of a week or more to locate and repair the problem, compared to a few hours for overhead lines. That's an important reliability concern since tens of thousands of customers can be affected by a transmission line outage. A study done in North Carolina from 1998-2002 found that while underground lines had approximately half as many outages as overhead lines, repairing outages took about 58% longer. The delays would increase exponentially with the frozen ground, icing conditions, and deep snow cover we deal with in Alaska a large part of the year. Earthquakes pose the potential for a catastrophic loss, especially with lead time to obtain replacement cable between 6 and 12 months.

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Matanuska Electric Association, Inc., Alaska's oldest and second-largest electric cooperative, is owned and operated by its members. MEA's service area covers more than 4,000 miles of power lines in Southcentral Alaska, and the co-op leads projects statewide to provide customers with affordable, reliable energy.

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907-761-9300, [www.mea.coop](http://www.mea.coop)

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### Significant Impact During Construction

Underground transmission lines are almost 5 times as large as above-ground lines. The underground cables may be direct buried or placed in conduit. Direct burial of the cable is a less costly construction method, but the cable has a shorter operational life and is difficult to replace in the event of a fault. Installation in conduit is more expensive to construct but has a longer operational life. Even then conduit replacement is costly and time consuming. To minimize costly replacement, companies will either install an additional cable in conduit as a replacement, or install additional empty conduits for a replacement circuit, which further increases the construction cost. Differential settling, frozen conduits and earthquakes increase the risk that spare conduits may not be usable when needed.



Georgia Transmission Company

A 16 feet wide and 9 feet deep trench is required to install buried transmission lines; digging this trench and installing support structures is several times the construction cost of an overhead line. This trenching must contend with other buried utilities and road-access cutting. Large structures are needed at each end for transition from below ground to above ground transmission lines. These transition structures may require up to a one acre site at each end.

MEA has evaluated the costs and benefits of constructing underground lines. The negative impact on our daily lives and the economic vitality of the area resulting from the disruptions caused by a car length trench across driveways, entrances to businesses and the roads that lead to our homes, schools and areas of commerce cannot be underestimated or ignored.

### Right of Way Considerations:

The perception is undergrounding transmission lines will require less right of way and reduce the amount of vegetation clearing. In reality trench depth and excavation stockpiling widths

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for underground lines require similar right of way widths to overhead lines for construction, maintenance and repair. Vegetation clearing for construction, maintenance and repair activities access, as well as protection of the cables from root systems, precludes most vegetation growth within the right of way.

### **Safety Concerns**

Transmission lines carry a significant amount of energy. A fault in the line could transfer that high voltage energy into a nearby structure, utility system or water source, putting people and animals in danger.

### **Maintenance is Disruptive and Expensive**

Underground line maintenance is more expensive. Differential settling from poor soil conditions and the annual freeze-thaw cycle regularly increase the risk damage to the cable, splices and joint connections. Since the lines are underground, additional digging and disruption occurs, especially since the lifetime of an underground line is only about half that of an overhead line. Underground lines also complicate access for neighboring property owners for the lifetime of the line. In addition, construction and maintenance require breaking ground and will likely impact other utility infrastructure like pipes or fiber lines. Above-ground factors like traffic and vegetation must also be considered.

### **Where Does MEA Stand?**

Based on the facts, it is not in the best interest of our members to build transmission lines underground.

- Underground options are too costly and would result in increased rates
- They are in most cases technically inconsistent with industry practices.
- The disruption caused by installation and maintenance is not in the best interest of our members or communities.
- The issues experienced in the Lower-48 are increased significantly with Alaska's arctic climate and higher costs.

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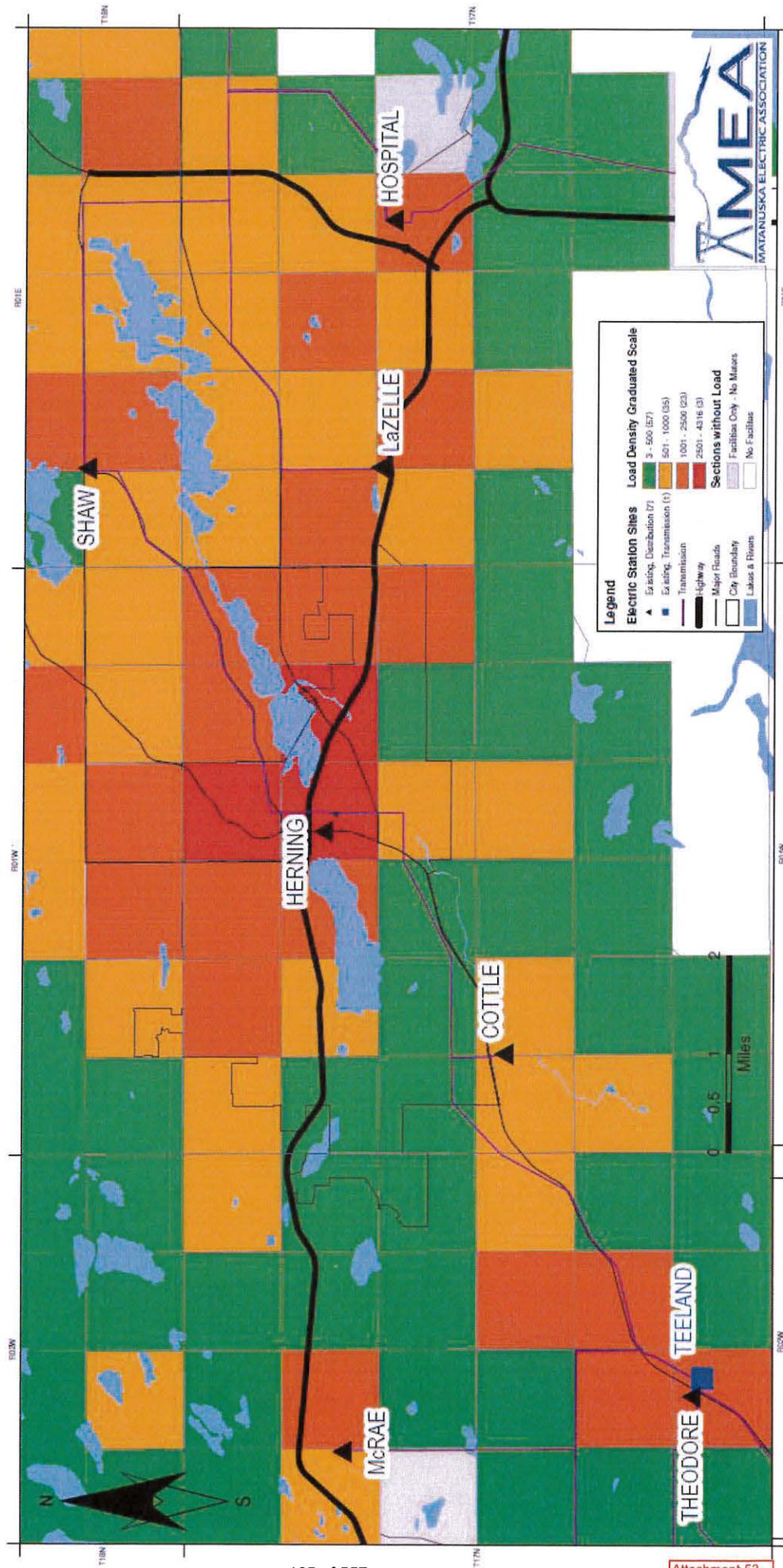
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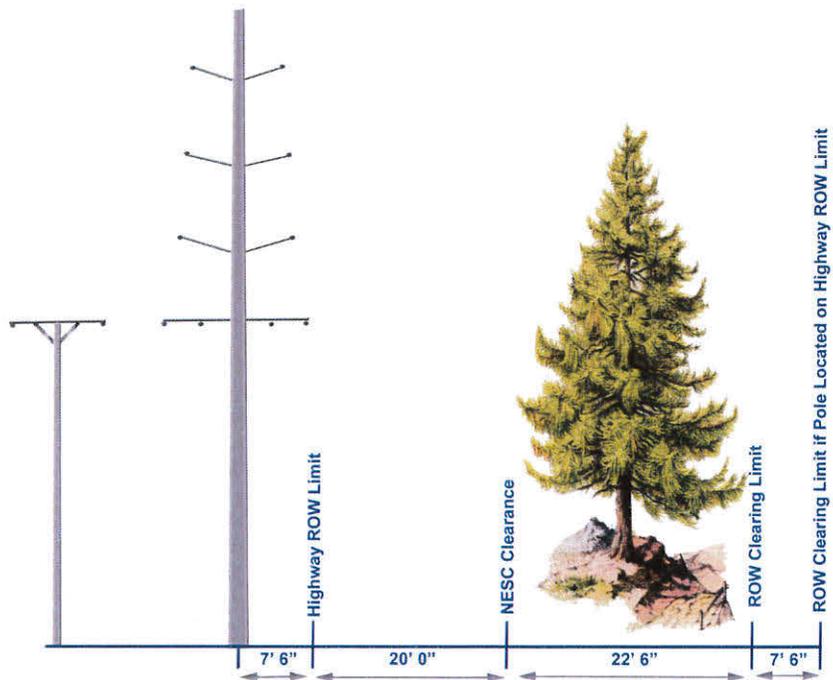
# 2014 MEA LOAD DENSITY GRADUATED HERNING SUBSTATION & WASILLA AREA





# PROJECT SCHEDULE AND STRUCTURES

	2015			2016				2017				2018	
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Public Participation Process	█												
Route Selection		█											
City of Wasilla Route Approval			█										
Engineering Design			█	█	█	█							
ROW Permits & Acquisition				█	█	█	█	█					
Transmission Construction								█	█	█	█	█	█



RIGHT OF WAY CLEARING FOR DOUBLE CIRCUIT

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24	Daniel K. & Shirley A. Shaw	2,800	100	6.43 acres
25	Richard C. & C. Yvonne Sumner	50	100	5,000 SF
26	Ridah LLC	2,620	100	6.01 acres
27	Walter, Vicki & Kenneth Hand	370	100	0.85 acres
28	Evelyn Harden	210	100	0.48 acres
29	Clinton N. & Linda L. Thomas	315	40	12,000 SF
30	Brian J. & Felicidad A. Gelting	270	100	0.62 acres
31	Charles O & Demma Green	85	100	8,500 SF
32	Charles O. & Demma Green	90	70	6,300 SF
33	Keith Boitz	135	40	5,400 SF
34	Keith Boitz	300	40	12,000 SF
35	Smith-Hagen Family Trust	1,320	40	1.21 acres
36	Jay Jon & Deanna Marquardt	1,260	20	0.58 acres
37	Southcentral Foundation	515	10	5,150 SF
38	Southcentral Foundation	580	10	5,800 SF
39	Mark D. Santoro	760	10	7,600 SF
40	City Center Wasilla LLC	95	10	950 SF
41	City Center Wasilla LLC	95	10	950 SF
42	City Center Wasilla LLC	95	10	950 SF

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