

Proposed Amendment to Observatory Mesa Access Road Right-of-Way Easement

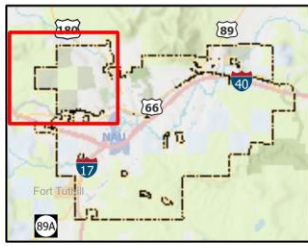
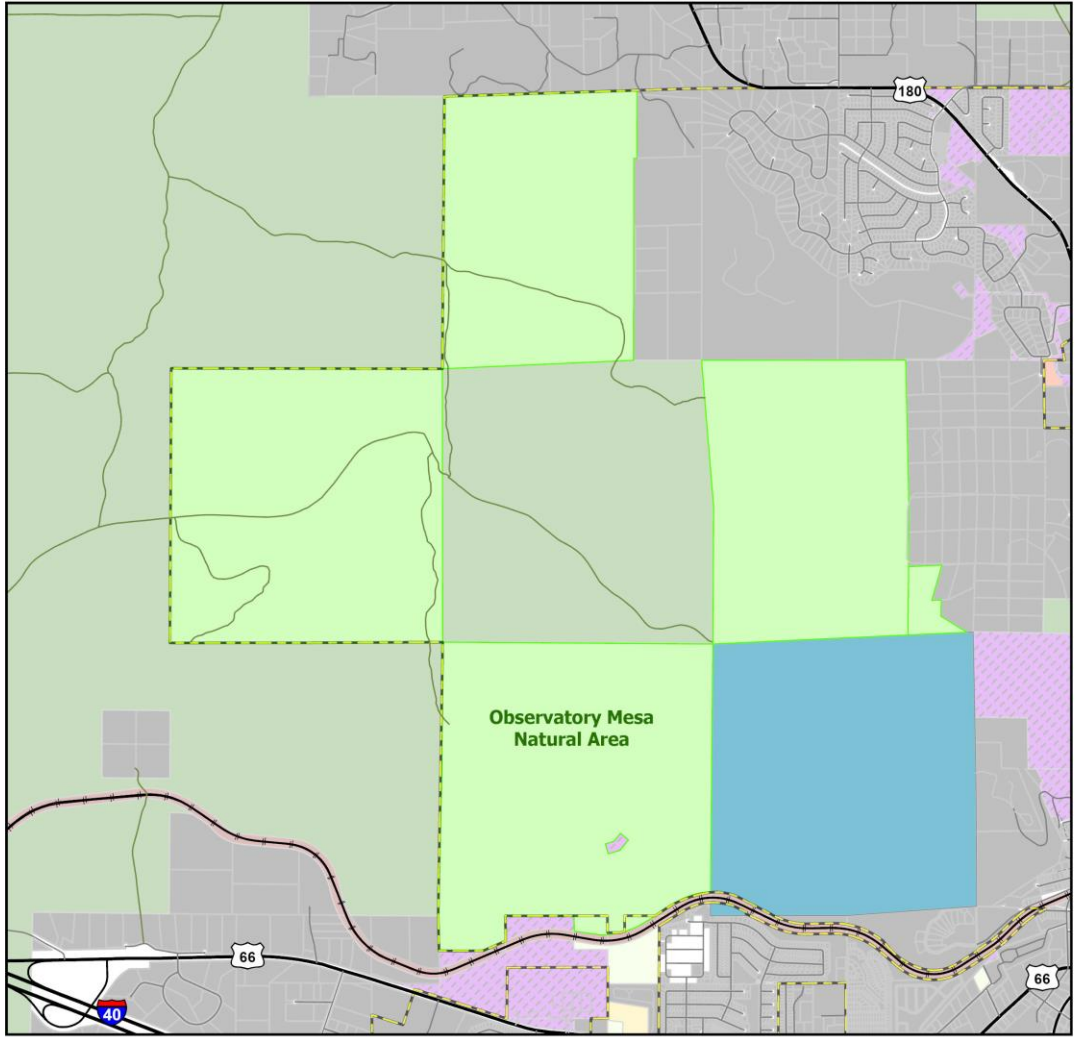


June 25, 2024



Overview

Observatory Mesa Natural Area

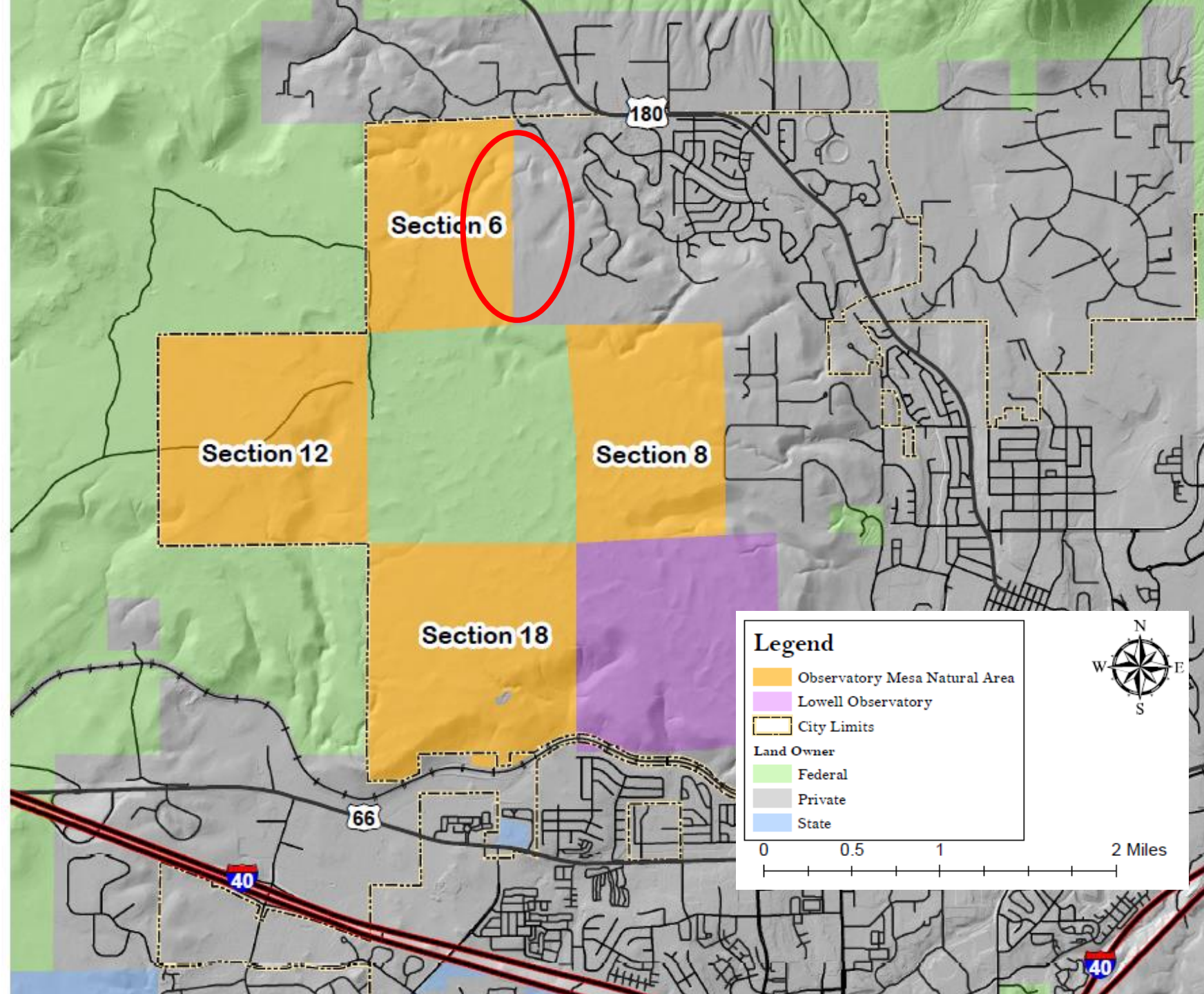


Observatory Mesa Natural Area	Coconino National Forest	
City Boundary	Private Ownership	
BNSF	State Trust	
City of Flagstaff Management	State of Arizona	
Coconino County	Lowell Observatory	

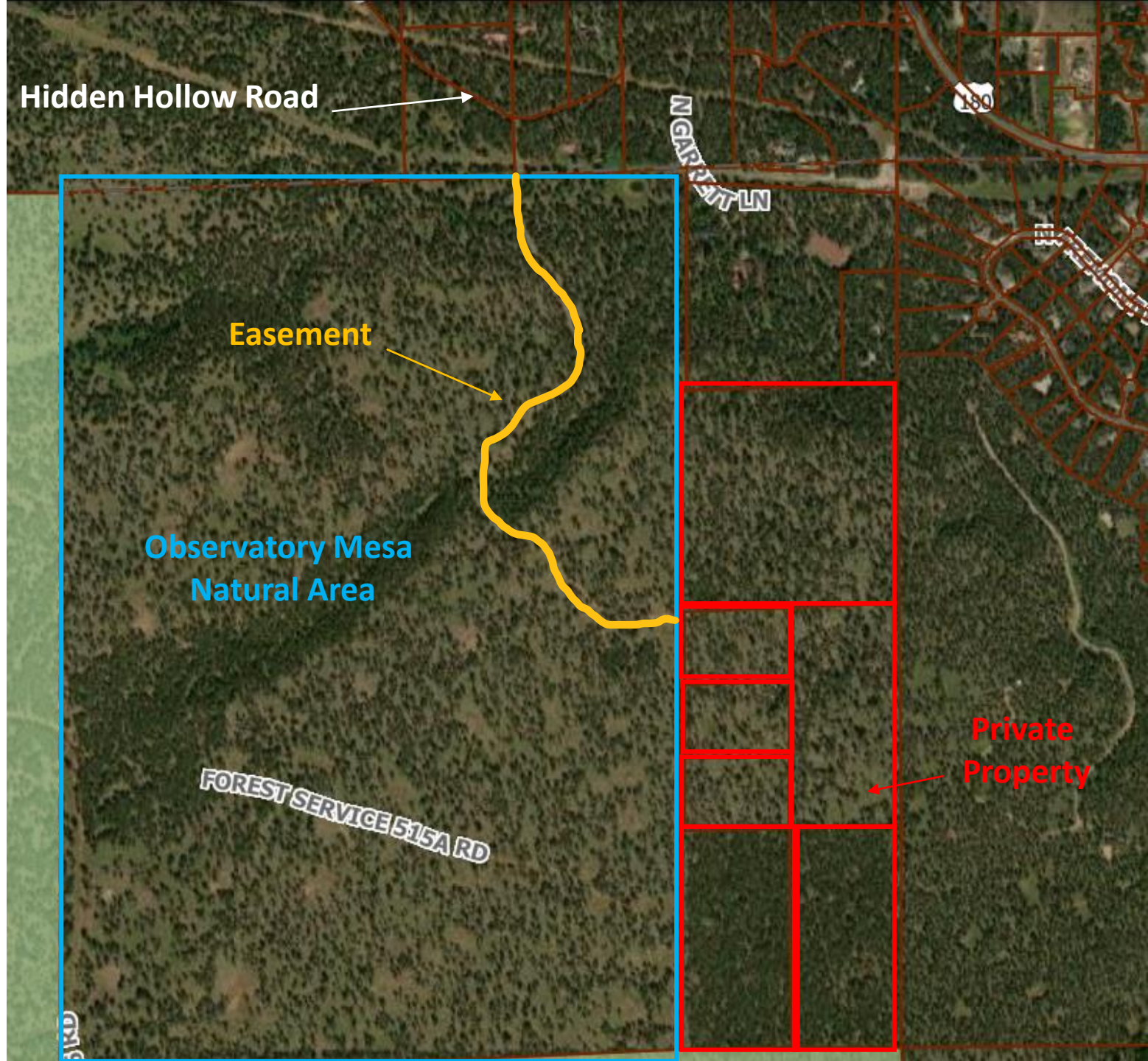
4/29/2020



Observatory Mesa
Natural Area
Section 6



**Observatory Mesa
Natural Area &
Proposed ROW
Amendment**





**Coming from Hidden Hollow,
proposed to align with the
current road outside of
current ROW**



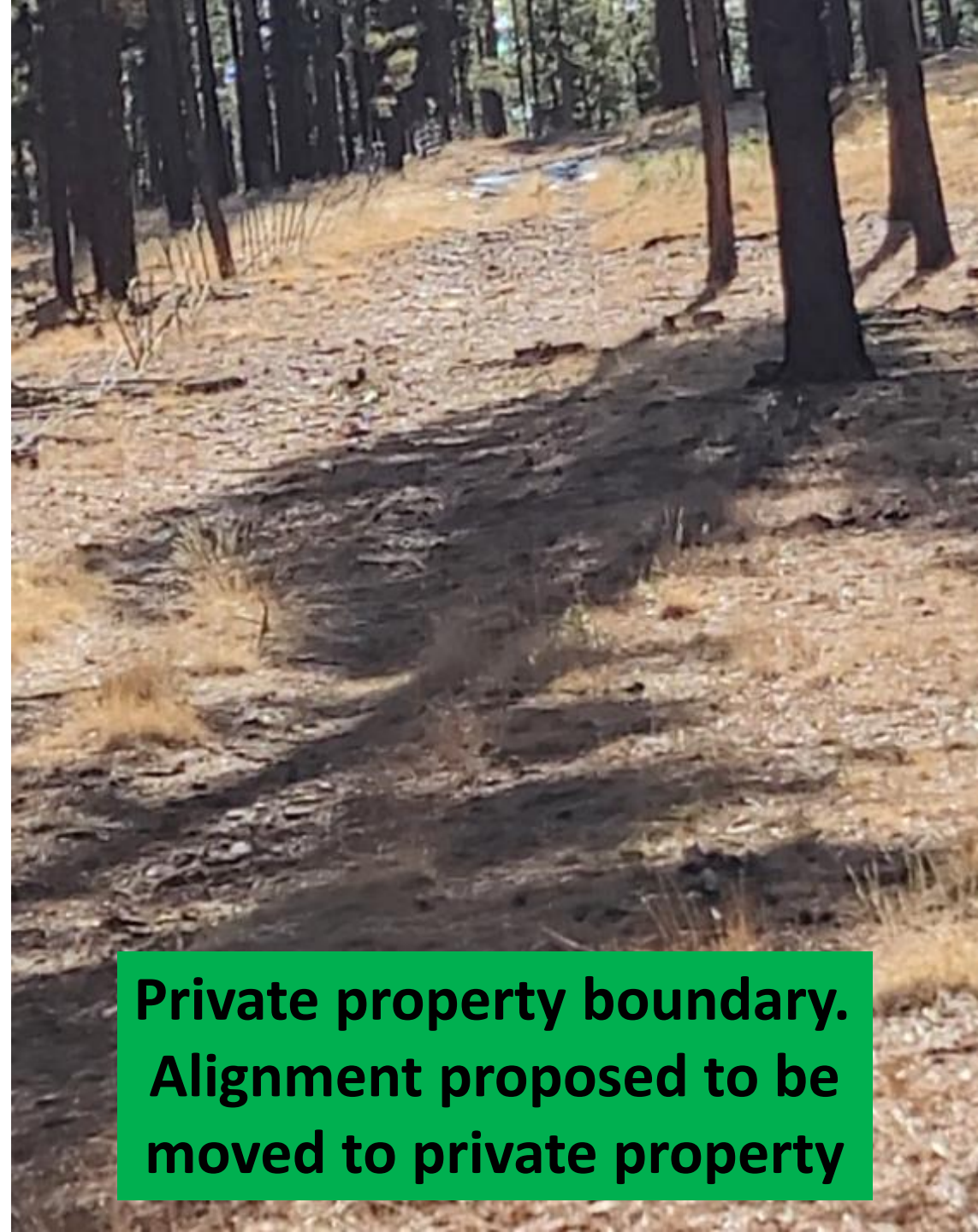
Terrain along alignment



Steep grade proposed for a new alignment



Approaching private property boundary

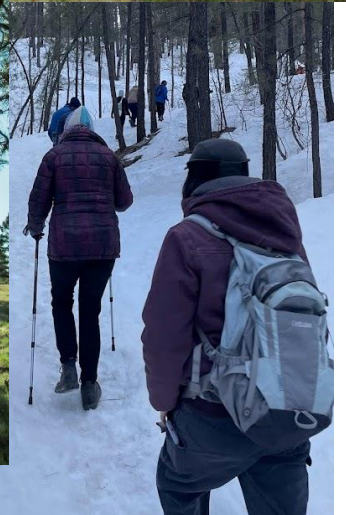


Private property boundary. Alignment proposed to be moved to private property



Changes in Land Protection and Use

- Voter-approved bond funds
- Arizona Growing Smarter Grant Acceptance
- Deed of Conservation Easement





City and State Role



- AZ State Parks and Trails has asked for initial City review
- Following City Council review an amended ROW and construction plans would need to be reviewed by Arizona State Parks and Trails and the State Historic Preservation Office





Deed of Conservation Easement



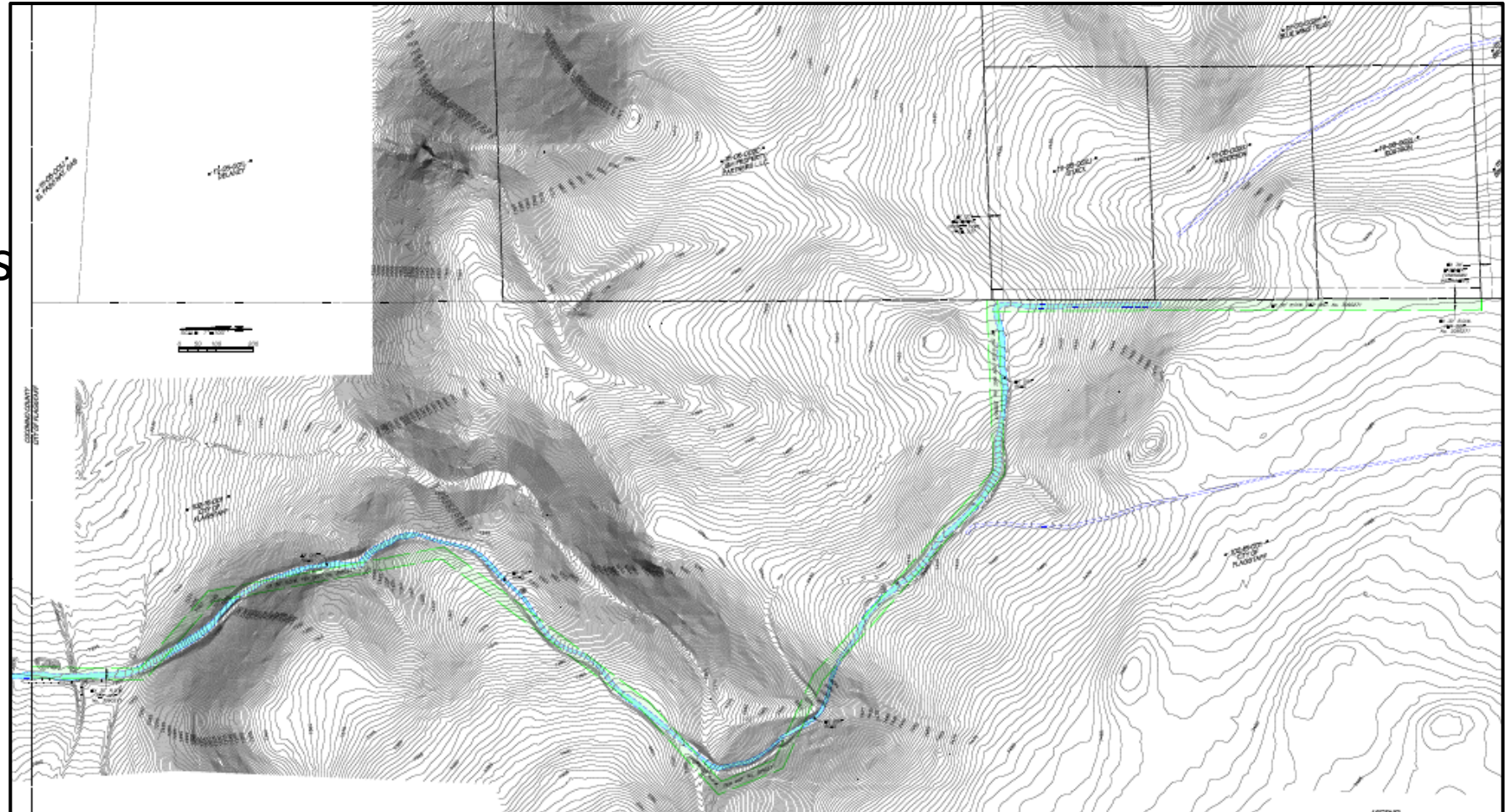
- Arizona State Parks holds a deed of conservation easement
 - This dictates types of improvement projects
 - Mechanism to protect the natural resources and baseline conditions
 - Facility development directed to consist of low-impact facilities
 - 20-acre limit on Natural Area development

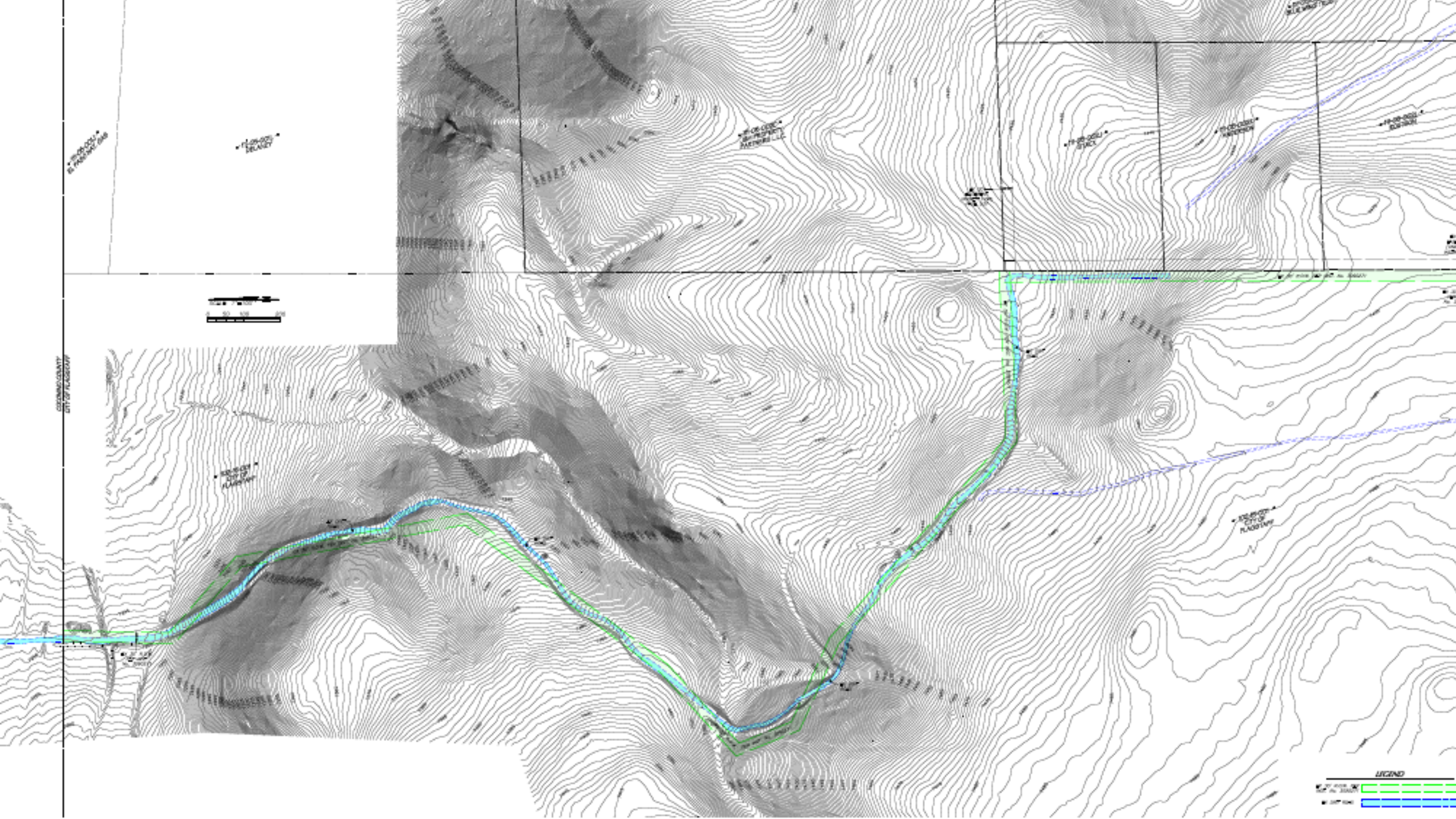




Considerations

- Current ROW 3.52 acres
- Proposed ROW 3.75 acres, includes construction impacts to 1.05 acres
- Completed revised ROW alignment 2.7 acres
- The ROW traverses the Natural Area
- Future trail planning underway

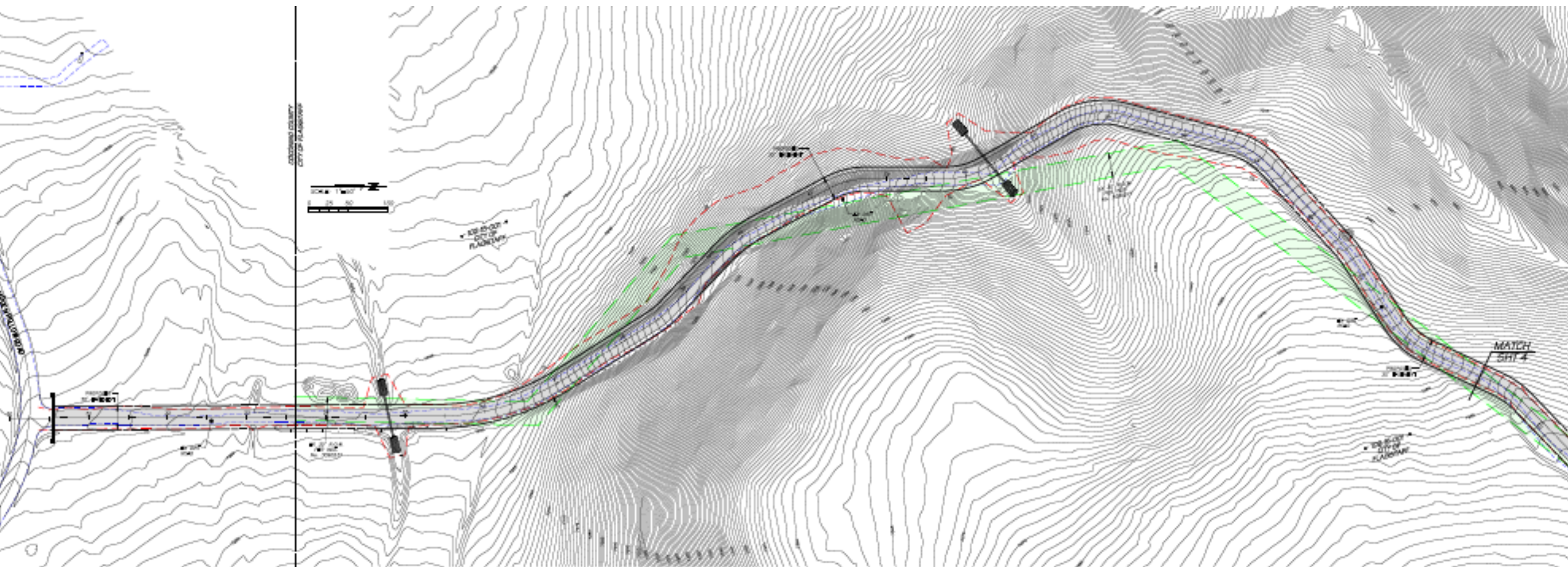






TEAM FLAGSTAFF

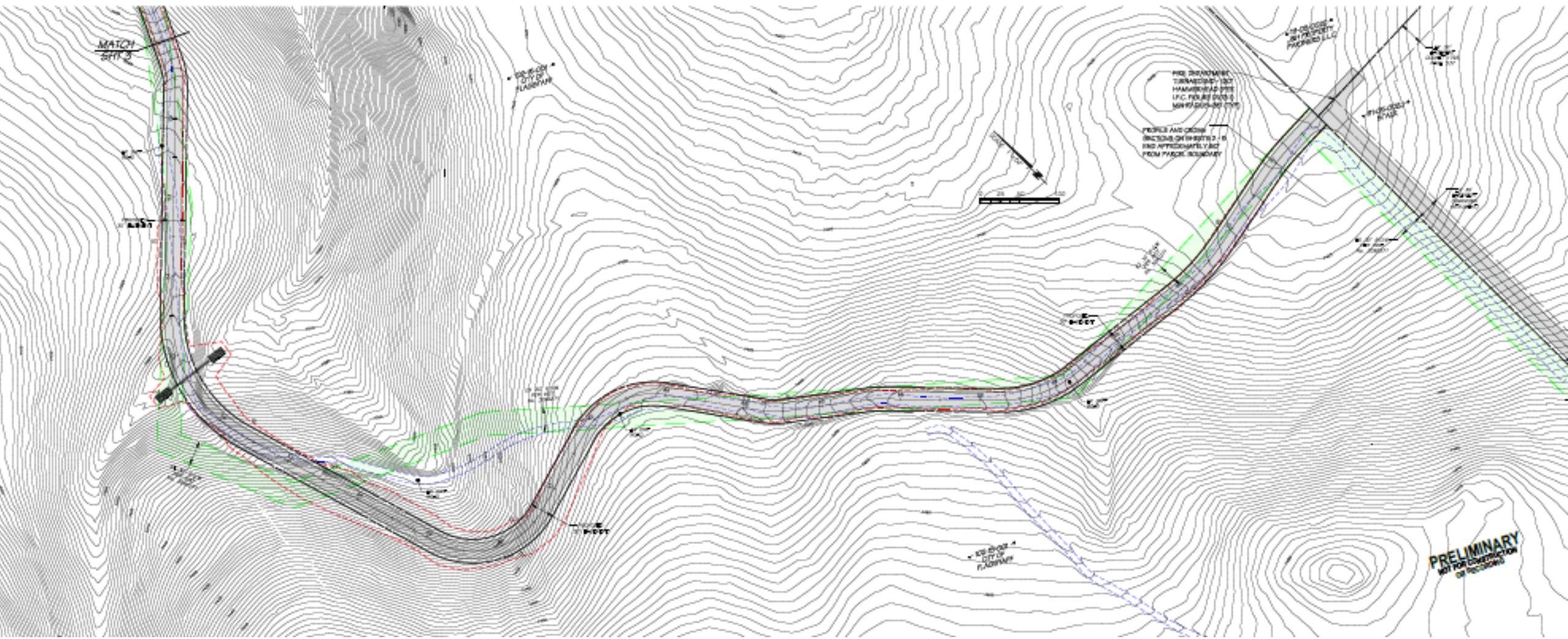
WE MAKE THE CITY BETTER





TEAM FLAGSTAFF

WE MAKE THE CITY BETTER





Open Spaces Commission Concerns



- Respecting the legal rights of existing easement
- Ensuring Deed of Conservation Easement upheld
- Road construction is not a benefit to Natural Area
- Full buildout affect the intended use
- Impacts to Hidden Hollow residents
- Impacts during construction



Open Spaces Commission Recommendation



The Open Space Commission recommends that the request to amend the right of way easement #16-88092 be considered by the City Council subject to the conditions in the current ROW easement and the following conditions:

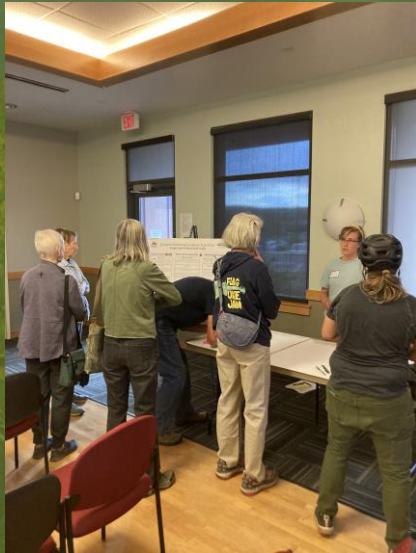
- Require the creation of an HOA to provide a legal entity responsible for maintaining the conditions
- Require a performance bond for the adjustment of the dirt road to ensure that the work will be completed and to warranty the work for three years to ensure proper construction
- Require all construction on OMNA property to go through the Arizona State Parks and Trails Conservation Easement review requirements, which include but are not limited to an archeological survey, Arizona State Parks and Trails review, and State Historic Preservation Office review before construction can begin

Open Spaces Commission Recommendation



- During the road construction, require a revegetation specialist (i.e., ecologist, botanist, vegetation specialist) who is experienced in restoration ecology and local native plant communities be included in the project team to assist with project planning, direction, construction observation, monitoring, to document any impacts to the Natural Area, and provide prior notification to the open space Section impacts and planned mitigation efforts
- All sections of the existing roadway that are not utilized in the proposed alignment must be decommissioned and restored to open space standards cited in the Restoration Guidelines
- Require the road to be constructed on the private property where the ROW easement currently parallels the OMNA property on the east boundary

Open Spaces Commission Recommendation



- Require the parcel owners to revegetate the road's cut and fill locations and abandoned alignments to open space standards cited in the Restoration Guidelines
- Require ongoing road maintenance
- Require all future utilities to be placed underground in the ROW so as not to interfere with the viewsheds on OMNA
- Require Dark Skies Compliant Lighting on all light sources within the parcels



Next Steps



- Tonight's Questions and Discussion
- September – come back with options for actions
- Arizona State Parks and Trails Review Process

