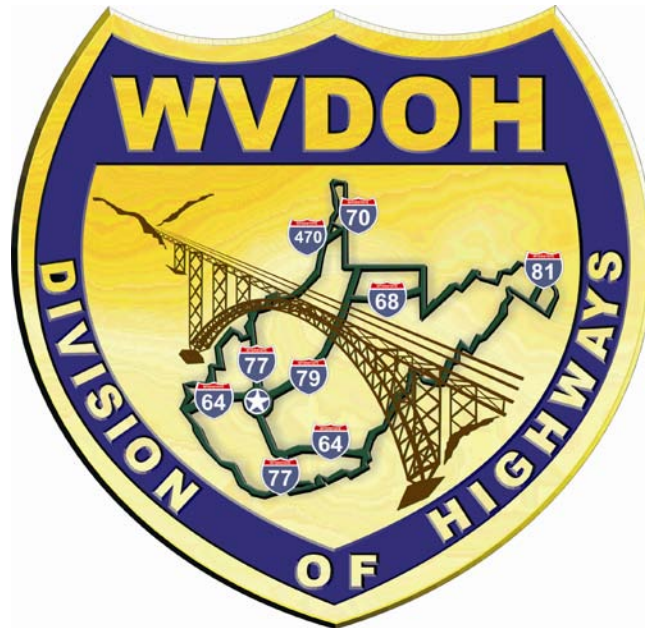


Workshop Public Meeting For Environmental Assessment



**WV Department of Transportation
Division of Highways
In cooperation with the Federal Highway
Administration and the West Virginia National
Guard**

State Project X230-219/32-0.00

**Coonskin Park Access
Kanawha County
December 14th, 2010-Capital High School
December 16th, 2010- Elk Center Elementary**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways (WVDOH), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), proposes to construct a new entrance to Coonskin Park, a public park of the Kanawha County Parks and Recreation system located in Charleston, WV (Exhibit 1), and to close the current entrance to Coonskin Park and approximately 1,900 feet (0.36 mile) of County Route 51/2 (Coonskin Drive). This project would be funded by the U.S. Department of Defense and the Office of the Adjutant General of the West Virginia National Guard (WVNG).

Evaluations conducted for the proposed project included coordination with the general public, landowners, Kanawha County officials, Federal and state regulatory agencies, the U.S. Department of Defense, and the WVNG. Assessment of alternatives included careful consideration of potential environmental impacts and of comments received on a range of alternatives developed for preliminary assessment. Analysis has led to selection of a Preferred Alternative that avoids, minimizes, and mitigates for environmental impacts, all of which would fall below a level of significance.

The project area includes Coonskin Park and adjacent roadways and neighborhoods (Exhibit 2). Coonskin Park is approximately 1,000 acres in size, and includes woodlands with a trail system, a golf course, a pool, a soccer field with seating for 2,000, an amphitheater, a clubhouse with banquet rooms, a pond with pedal boat rentals and fishing, and several types of courts, playgrounds, and picnic areas. The current entrance to the park is on Coonskin Drive at the southern end of the park, approximately 0.8 mile north of Greenbrier Street (WV State Route 114), just beyond a complex of WVNG facilities. Upon entering the park, visitors first encounter a woodland area with trails and picnic areas; the majority of recreational facilities listed above are located approximately 1.0 to 1.5 miles farther north in the park.

The need for the project has a primary component related to military security measures, and a secondary component related to emergency evacuation throughout the project area:

- The WVNG facilities along Coonskin Drive do not currently comply with certain U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) military security requirements, such as minimum allowable distances between military facilities and public roadways. To meet security standards, the WVNG plans to emplace a new Access Control Point (ACP) to their facilities along Coonskin Drive. Once the new ACP is in place, public access to Coonskin Park will be denied. Therefore, a need for the proposed project is to mitigate for the loss of access to the public park.
- Past flooding along Greenbrier Street has caused people to be stranded up Coonskin Drive and Airport Road. Because of the linkage between the Yeager Airport, the WVNG complex, and Coonskin Park via Commando Drive, a new exit from Coonskin Park that would not rely on Green brier Street could serve as an evacuation route for all three facilities.

With these needs in the project area, the purpose of this project is to implement and mitigate the DoD mandated physical security measure that will restrict personnel and vehicular traffic through the WVNG complex along Coonskin Drive and maintain minimum clearances between WVNG's facilities and the public roadways. A secondary purpose of this project is to provide an emergency entrance and exit from the WVNG complex, Kanawha County's Coonskin Park, and Yeager Airport in case of flooding along Greenbrier Street.

Alternatives

For the new park access, a range of alternatives were considered by WVDOH and through public and agency outreach. Eleven (11) land and bridge alternatives were developed (Exhibit 3), and two alternatives were considered as secondary routes for accessing the park in addition to a primary route (Exhibit 4). Although it would not satisfy the project's purpose and need, the No-Build Alternative was retained for detailed study to serve as a baseline for alternatives comparison.

A summary of each of the alternative's potential impacts is provided in Table ES-1. The following factors weighed heavily in the selection of a Preferred Alternative:

- Satisfaction of purpose and need.
- Feasibility.
- Impacts to Coonskin Park. As a publically owned park, Coonskin Park is a "Section 4(f) resource,"afforded protection under the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966. Additionally, because the park contains land purchased using the Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF), it contains "Section 6(f) property" for which proposed alterations would be subject to review by the National Park Service (NPS).
- Public and resource agency feedback.

After initial consideration of these screening criteria and two stakeholder coordination meetings in 2009, nine of the initial ten preliminary alternatives were eliminated from further consideration, leaving Alternative 5. An eleventh alternative, Alternative 5A, was developed after consideration of comments from natural resource agencies. The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) expressed concern for possible project effects on Federally listed endangered species as well as other species known to inhabit the Elk River.

In response to comments following public outreach, WVDOH developed two secondary route alternatives that could potentially provide an entrance to the park for visitors from Greenbrier Street. Because of engineering constraints, such as grade steepness, these routes could not serve as a primary route, and because of their placement, these routes could not serve as the primary access point for the park while satisfying the project's purpose and need. However, as secondary routes, they were assessed for environmental impact. Because of the large acreages of forest impacts and cubic yards of earthwork requirements, the relatively large added cost, and the acreages of impacts to a Section 4(f) resource and Section 6(f) property, these routes were eliminated from further consideration.

Alternative 5A is a feasible and prudent alternative that would satisfy the purpose of the project; would have only *de minimis* impact (described within) to Coonskin Park, a Section 4(f) resource; and would have minimal impact to the function and recreational capacity of Section 6(f) property. Therefore, it has been selected as the Preferred Alternative for detailed assessment (Exhibit 5).

Table ES-1: Summary of Preliminary Alternatives

| Item | Alternative | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 1 ELIMIN. | 2 ELIMIN. | 3 ELIMIN. | 4 ELIMIN. | 5 ELIMIN. | 5A** PREFER. | 6 ELIMIN. | 7 ELIMIN. | 8 ELIMIN. | 9 ELIMIN. | 9A ELIMIN. | 10 ELIMIN. |
| Bridge Length* (ft) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 400 | 400 | 400 | 425 | 565 | 750 | 500 | 650 | 375 |
| Total Length (ft) | 4,000 | 6,000 | 12,000 | 3,400 | 1,600 | 1,600 | 1,075 | 1,565 | 2,100 | 4,300 | 5,500 | 7,975 |
| Design Speed (mph) | 35 | 35 | 30 | 25 | 30 | 30 | 25 | 25 | 40 | 25 | 25 | 40 |
| Est. Earthwork (CY) | 163,000 | 2,023,000 | 2,015,000 | 184,000 | 25,000 | 25,000 | 25,000 | 25,000 | 289,000 | 31,000 | 150,000 | 884,000 |
| Park Impacts (acres) | 1.6 | 24.5 | 51.0 | 7.2 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 0.8 | 1.7 | 1.6 | 0.6 | 4.3 | 48.4 |
| Residents Displaced | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| Stream Impacts | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Meets Military Reqs | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Provides Emergency Entrance and Exit | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Involves RR that is to be reactivated | No | No | No | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | Yes |
| Est. Cost (\$Million) | \$9.184 | \$23.194 | \$24.324 | Not Feasible | \$12.124 | \$14.951 | \$14.014 | \$13.118 | \$23.980 | \$14.097 | \$21.372 | Not Feasible |

Notes: ELIM. = Eliminated from consideration as Preferred Alternative. PREFER. = Preferred Alternative.

*Bridge length is approximate main span length. ** Cost estimate for Alternative 5A includes techniques for not impacting the river during construction.

Summary of Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative would include closing the current entrance to Coonskin Park and approximately 0.36 mile (1,900 feet) of Coonskin Drive and would provide a new entrance to Coonskin Park. The new entrance would not be in close proximity to the WVNG facilities, but could serve as an emergency evacuation route for the WVNG complex and Yeager airport. The proposed new right-of-way, totaling 1.48 acres, would begin on the north side of the Elk River in the community of Elk Hills along U.S. Route 119 (US 119), approximately 0.8 mile east of the Mink Shoals exit ramp off Interstate 79 (I-79). In its approach to a new bridge crossing, the Preferred Alternative would include one or two turning lanes, approximately 100 feet in length, along US 119. The main bridge span would be approximately 400 feet long. The bridge would include two abutments, one on either side of the river, placed outside the Elk River and its floodway. After crossing the river, the Preferred Alternative would enter Coonskin Park alongside and overlapping a portion of its maintenance facility area. The new roadway would be approximately 0.3 mile (1,600 feet) long. The southern terminus of the new roadway would lie between the golf course and the railroad within the park.

For this Environmental Assessment (EA) of the proposed project, WVDOH considered impacts to the natural, physical, and socioeconomic environments. After preliminary considerations, evaluations focused on the following resources and issues, as detailed within: land use, transportation planning, parks and recreation, Section 4(f) resources, Section 6(f) property, hazardous materials, socioeconomic, pedestrian and bicyclist facilities, historic and archaeological resources, surface waters and floodplains, fish and wildlife, air quality, noise, visual and aesthetic environment, and indirect and cumulative effects. A summary of some key impact considerations from the alternatives analysis is included in Table ES-1.

On both sides of the river, all of the land within the Preferred Alternative right-of-way has been previously disturbed, and associated impact of converting land to transportation uses would not constitute significant impact to land use, vegetation, or wildlife species. In addition to the single residential displacement (Table ES-1), the Preferred Alternative would displace several buildings within the current Coonskin Park maintenance facility. Coordination between the Adjutant General of the WVNG and the Kanawha County Parks and Recreation Commission has resulted in a mitigation plan that provides funding for construction of a temporary maintenance facility as well as permanent replacement facilities.

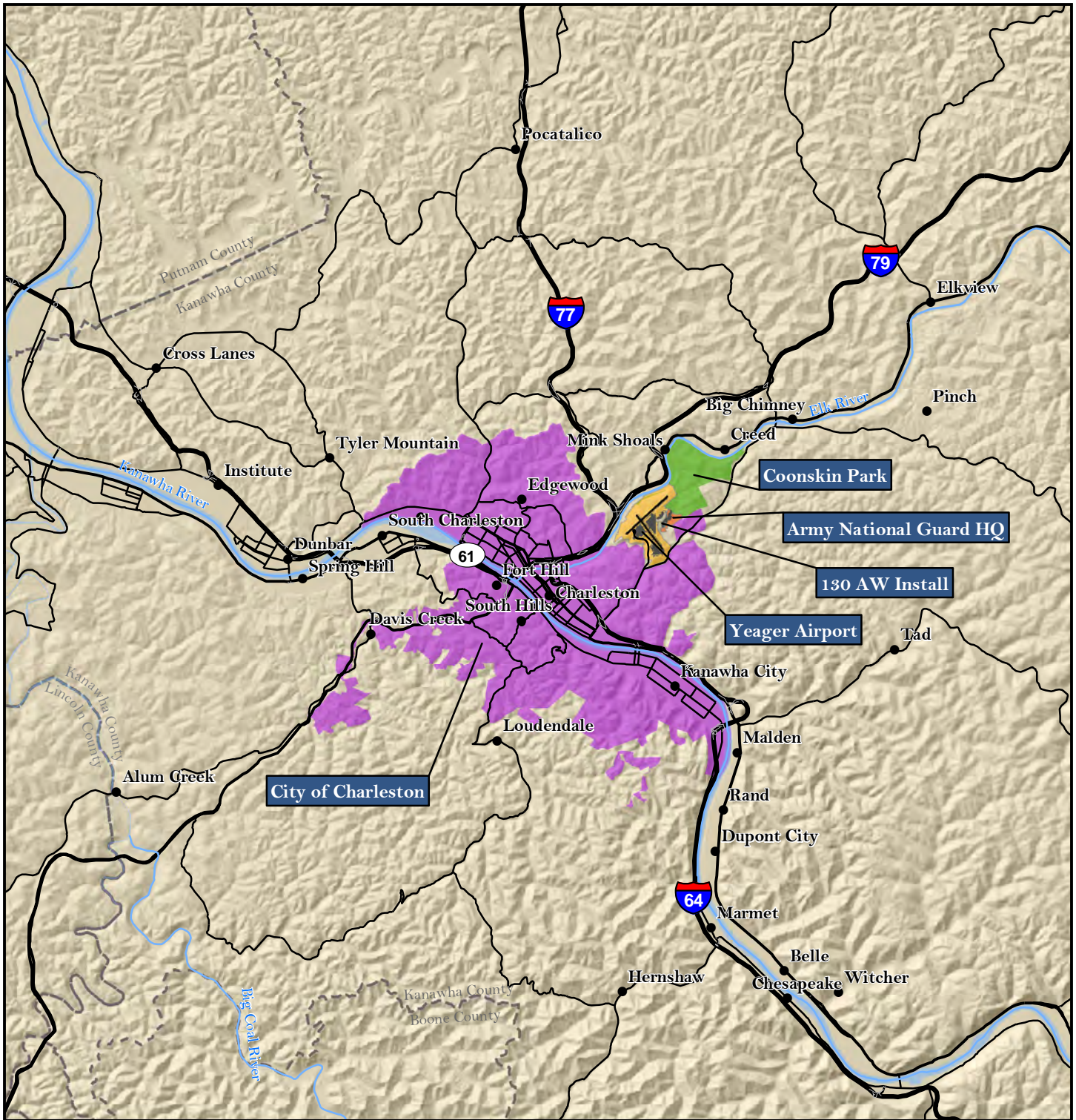
With placement of the bridge piers outside the Elk River and its floodway, and with implementation of mitigation measures developed in coordination with the USFWS, there would not be impact to surface waters. In addition, WVDOH determined that the Preferred Alternative is not likely to adversely affect any Federally listed threatened, endangered, or candidate species. In a letter dated November 18, 2010, USFWS concurred with this determination and stated that no further Section 7 consultation under the Endangered Species Act is required.

The Preferred Alternative would not result in significant adverse impacts to Coonskin Park or users of the park. Current users of the park whose trips originate near the existing park entrance would experience longer travel distance and time for using the park. For the majority of Kanawha County residents, travel time to the park, and particularly to the principle activity centers of the park, would be shortened. Because of the dilapidated state of some of the maintenance facilities, restoration of the maintenance area after project construction will likely be considered a beneficial impact to the park with regards to safety, utility, and aesthetics. Additionally, with the Preferred Alternative, high traffic flow would be removed from passive recreation areas in the south end of the park, and multiple routes would exist for evacuations from the park.

Because the proposed right-of-way overlaps Section 6(f) property, WVDOH initiated resource agency coordination in accordance with 36 CFR 59.3. As determined by the State Liaison Officer for the L&WCF and the NPS, the Preferred Alternative would not result in a conversion of Section 6(f) property. Coordination with the NPS would be finalized prior to implementing the proposed project.

Considering all impacts to Coonskin Park, FHWA has made the preliminary determination that the proposed project would have a *de minimis* effect on the Section 4(f) resource. As stipulated in Federal regulations (23 CFR 774.3(b), 774.5(b), 774.17). The Kanawha County Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission, as the officials with jurisdiction over the park, concurred in a Resolution dated November 2010 that the project would not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes that qualify the resource for protection under Section 4(f). A detailed Section 4(f) *de minimis* analysis, including a review of applicable regulations and a copy of the officials' Resolution, is provided within. This publication, along with this entire EA, afford the public an opportunity for review of the proposed project's effects on Section 4(f) property. In addition, following publication of the EA, two public workshops will be held in the project area, and a public comment period will be provided for exchange of information on the project.

For more information and a printable version of the complete Environmental Assessment visit www.transportation.wv.gov and click on comment on projects.



Coonskin Park Access Project Environmental Assessment

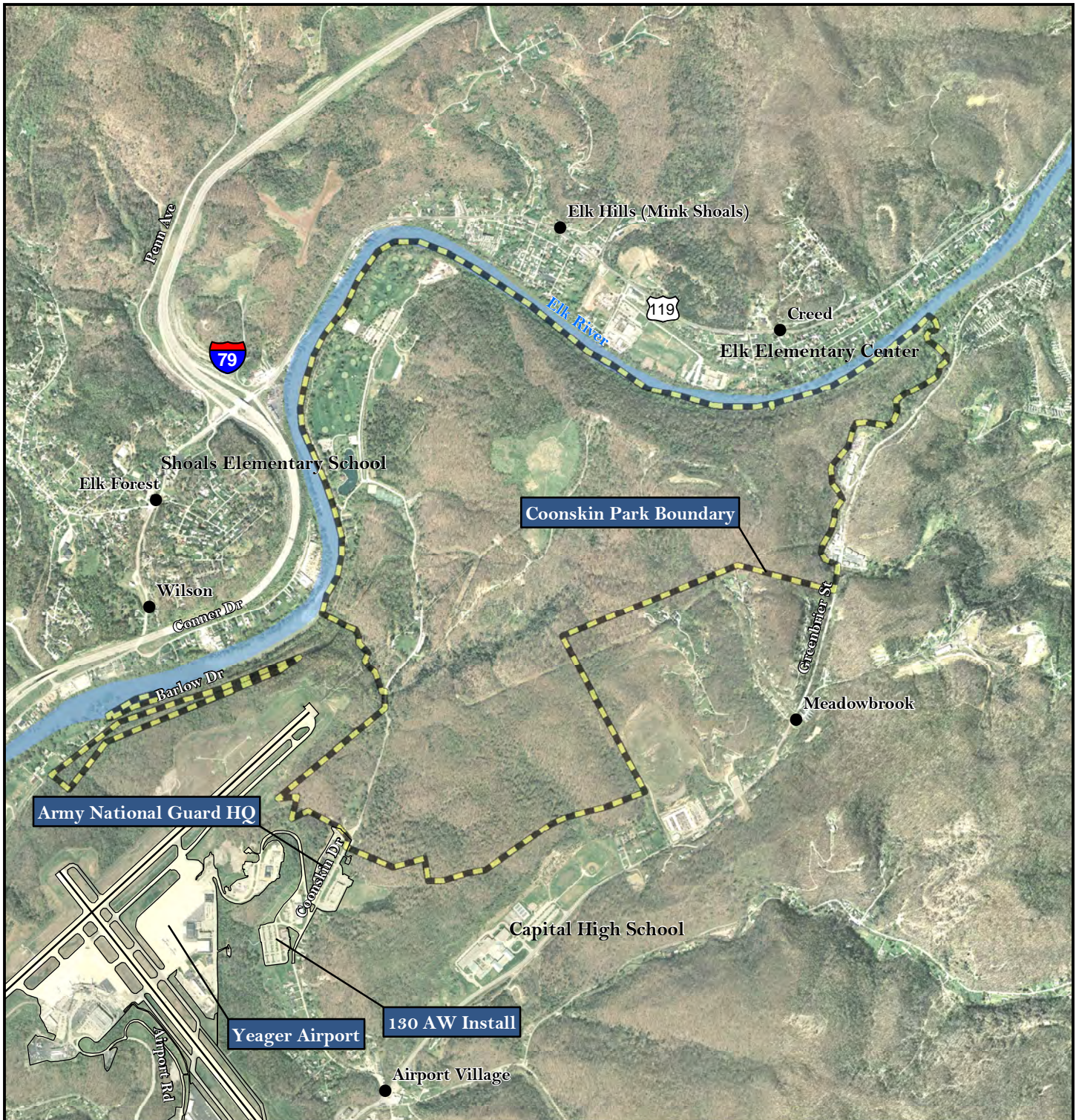
EXHIBIT 1: PROJECT LOCATION



1 in = 3 miles
 0 0.5 1 2 Miles

- City of Charleston
- Yeager Airport
- WV Army National Guard HQ
- Coonskin Park Boundary





Coonskin Park Access Project Environmental Assessment

EXHIBIT 2: PROJECT AREA

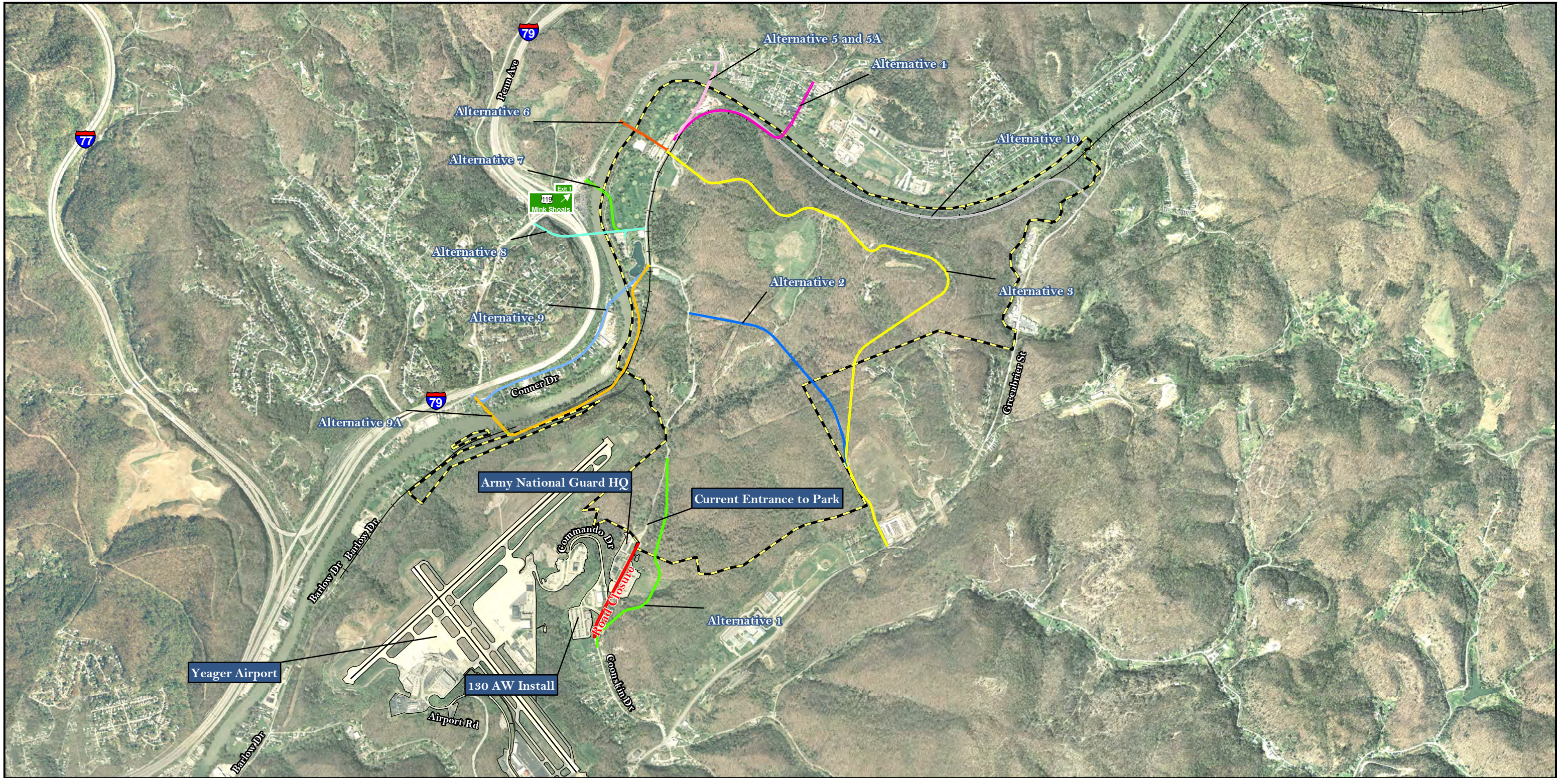


1 in = 2,000 feet
 0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet



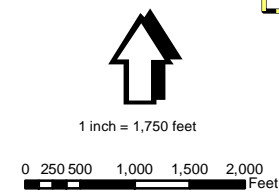
 Coonskin Park Boundary





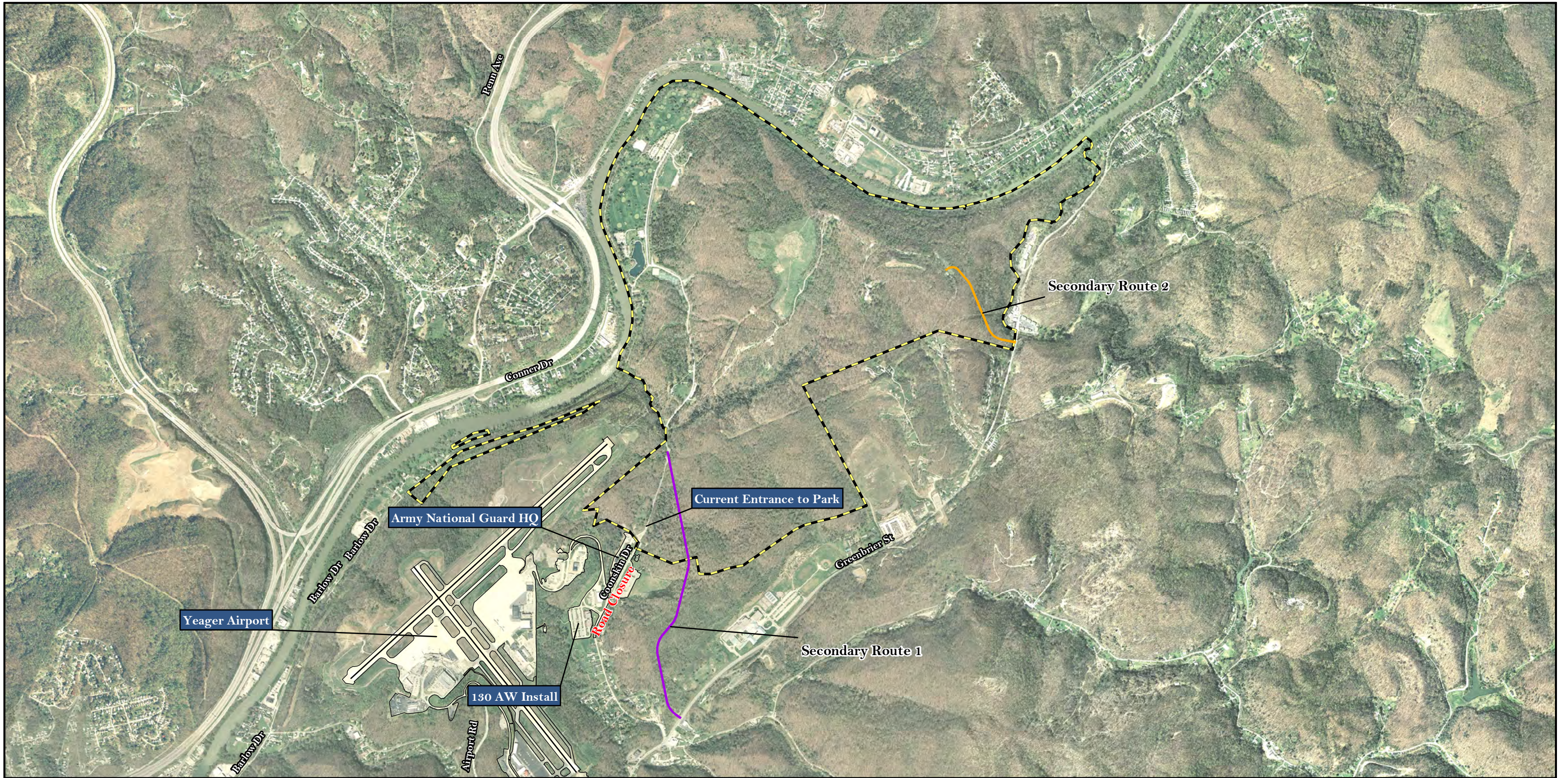
Coonskin Park Access Project Environmental Assessment

EXHIBIT 3: BUILD ALTERNATIVES



- | Coonskin Park Boundary | | Alternatives | |
|------------------------|------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| | Coonskin Park Boundary | | Alternative 1 |
| | Alternative 2 | | Alternative 11 |
| | Alternative 3 | | Alternative 8 |
| | Alternative 4 | | Alternative 9 |
| | Alternative 5 and 5A | | Alternative 9A |
| | Alternative 6 | | Alternative 10 |
| | Road Closure | | Road Closure |



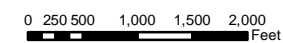


Coonskin Park Access Project Environmental Assessment

EXHIBIT 4: SECONDARY ROUTES

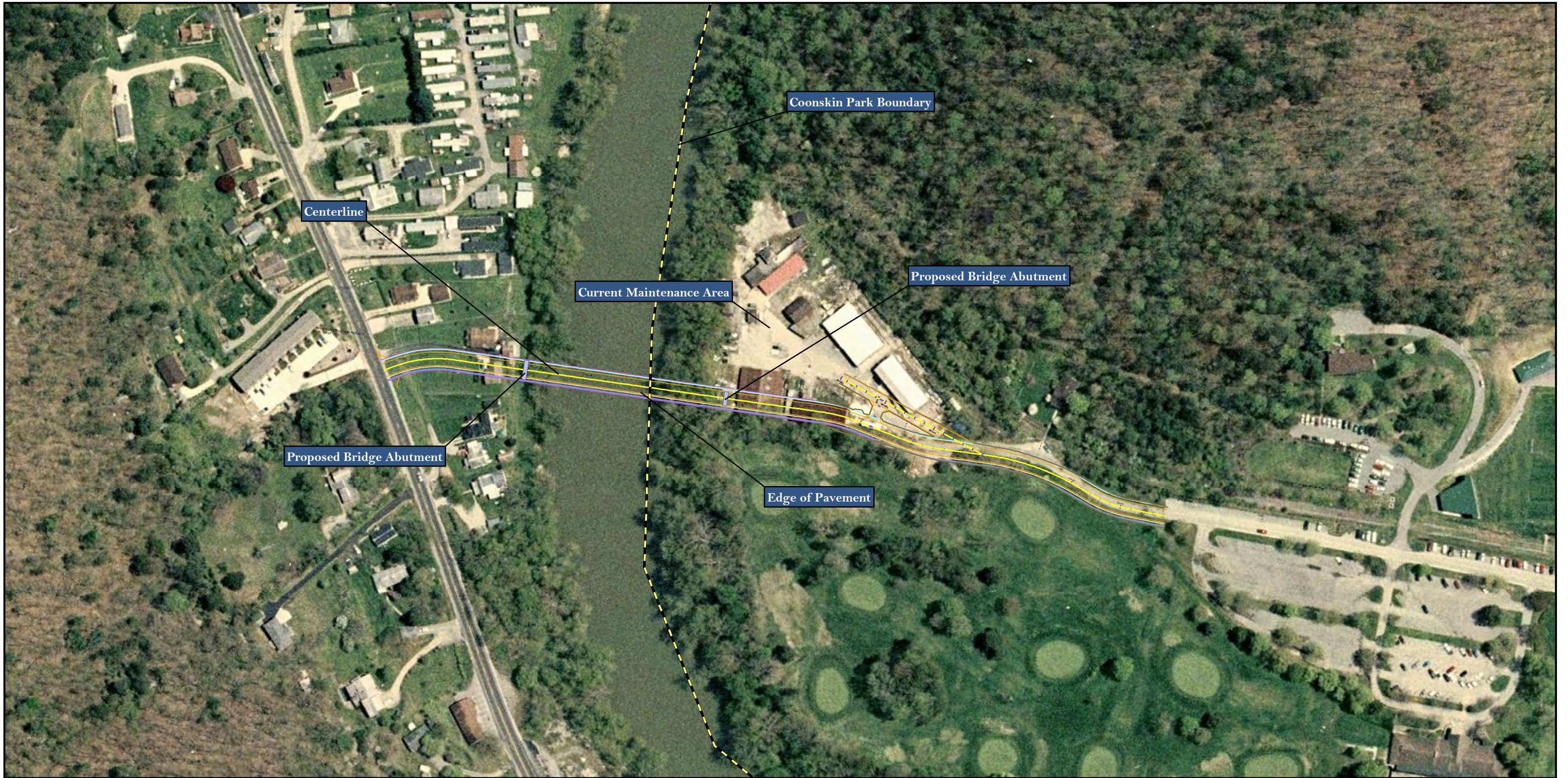


1 inch = 1,750 feet



- Coonskin Park Boundary
- Secondary Route 1
- Secondary Route 2



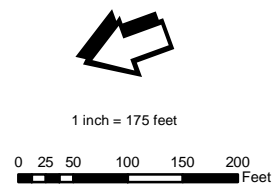


Coonskin Park Access Project Environmental Assessment

EXHIBIT 5: PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE



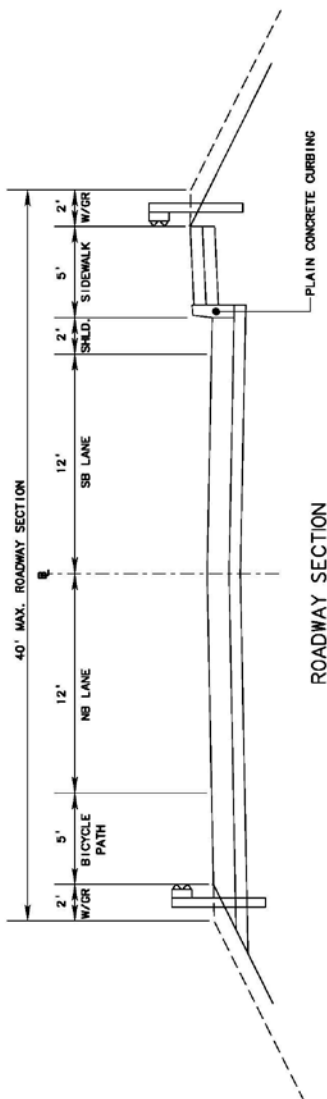
Baker



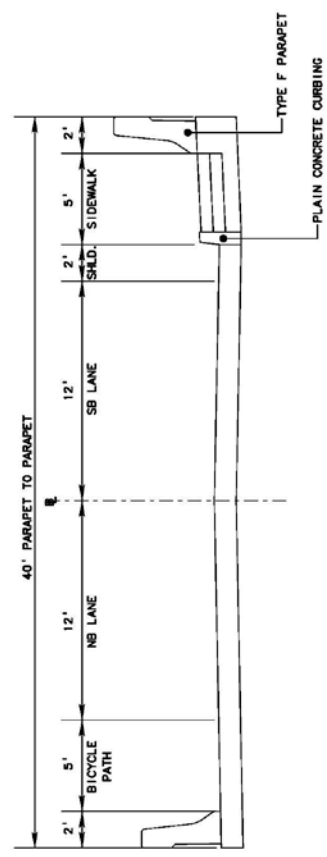
- | | | |
|------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Centerline | Guardrail | Proposed Bridge Abutments |
| Concrete Gutter | Shoulder | Coonskin Park Boundary |
| Curbline | Sidewalk | |
| Edge of Pavement | Ticks | |
| Fill Limits | | |



| | | | | | |
|------|----|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| DATE | BY | APP'D | PROJECT | COUNTY | SECTION |
| W.V. | 1 | 2/12/22 | 2013 | MARSH | |
| | | 6:08 | | | |



ROADWAY SECTION



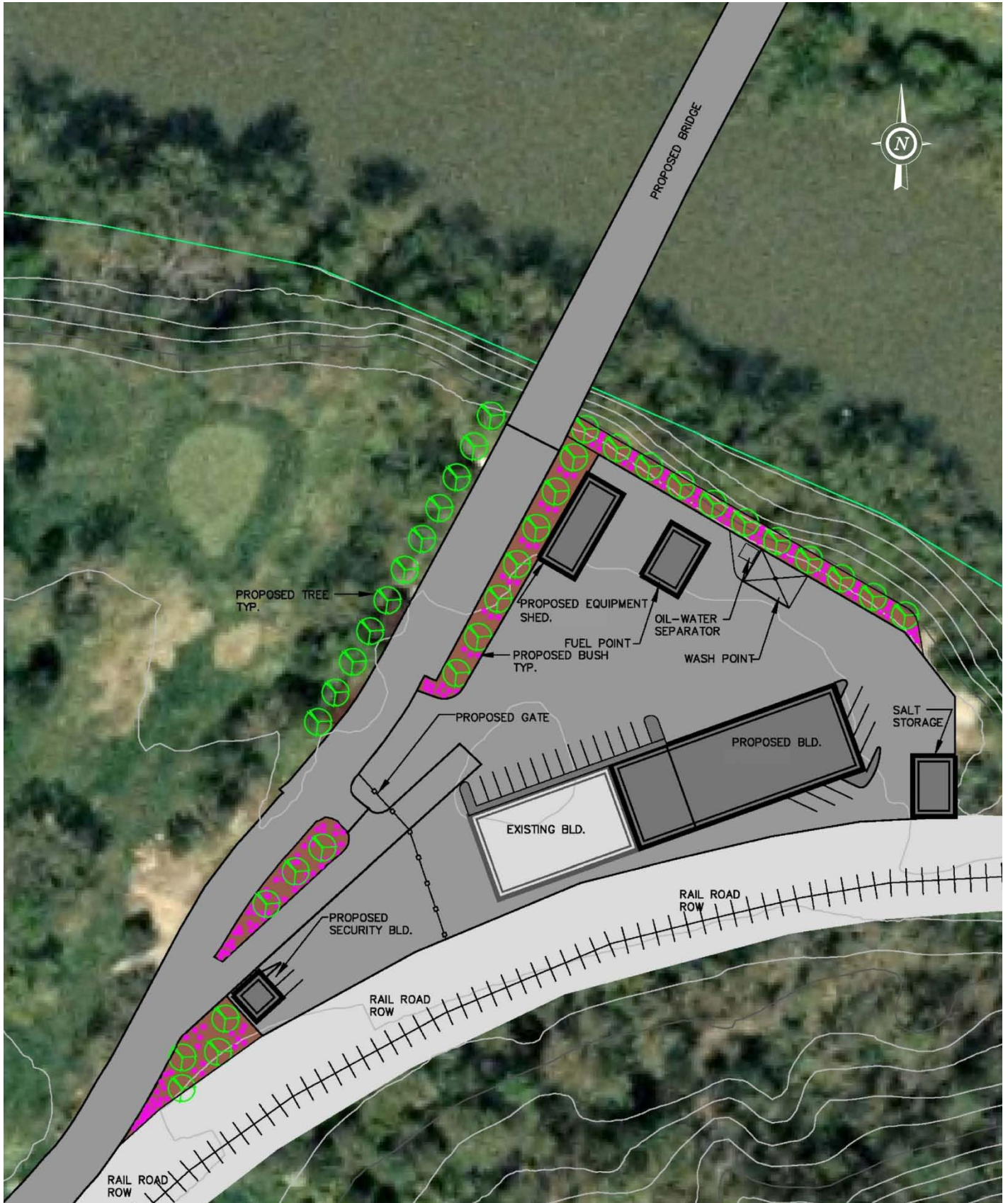
BRIDGE SECTION

| | |
|--|------|
| THE WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS | |
| TYPICAL SECTIONS | |
| PROJECT NO. | DATE |
| SECTION | BY |

NOTE: FOR INFORMATION ONLY, DIMENSIONS AND USAGE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Figure 6: Generalized typical section along the bridge within the Preferred Alternative.

Changes in Use to Coonskin Park



Overlap with current maintenance facilities and preliminary proposed replacement plans.



Current park entrance would have gate to be used only for emergencies.



Temporary maintenance facilities would be needed during construction. These would be located in a barren area to the south of the soccer field. This location allows for converting the temporary maintenance facility to recreation use needed by the park. The area is planned for restroom and locker room facilities for the soccer field.

DATE: _____

Mr. Gregory L. Bailey, P.E.
Director, Engineering Division
West Virginia Division of Highways
State Capitol Complex, Building 5
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Charleston, West Virginia 25305-0430

CIRCLE MEETING ATTENDED:

DATE: December 14th, 2010

DATE: December 16th, 2010

LOCATION: Capital High School

LOCATION: Elk Center Elementary

SUBJECT: INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP PUBLIC MEETING

PROJECT: Coonskin Park Access
Kanawha County

COMMENTS DUE BY: January 17, 2011

Please consider the following comments:

(Please print the following information)

NAME:

ADDRESS:

ORGANIZATION (IF ANY):