

## Project Description

The Brightline West (previously XpressWest) Las Vegas to Victor Valley Project (Project) consists of the construction and operation of a fully grade-separated, passenger-only high-speed rail system along an approximately 170-mile corridor connecting Victor Valley, California to Las Vegas, Nevada.

## PRIOR NEPA REVIEW AND APPROVALS

### JULY 2011 RECORD OF DECISION

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), its implementing regulations, and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Procedures for Considering Impacts to the Environment (Environmental Procedures), FRA began the environmental review for the Project in 2006 with the publication of a Notice of Intent to initiate an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Project was evaluated in the following documents (collectively referenced as the DesertXpress EIS):

- March 2009 *Draft Environmental Impact Statement and 4(f) Evaluation for the proposed DesertXpress High-Speed Passenger Train* (DesertXpress DEIS)
- April 2010 *Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement and 4(f) Evaluation for the proposed DesertXpress High-Speed Passenger Train* (DesertXpress SEIS)
- March 2011 *Final Environmental Impact Statement and 4(f) Evaluation for the proposed DesertXpress High-Speed Passenger Train Victorville, California to Las Vegas, Nevada* (DesertXpress FEIS)

FRA served as the Lead Federal Agency for the environmental review of the Project. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Surface Transportation Board (STB), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the National Parks Service (NPS) were Cooperating Agencies. On July 8, 2011, FRA issued the Record of Decision DesertXpress High-Speed Passenger Train (DesertXpress ROD) approving the Project. The BLM (Barstow, Needles and Las Vegas field offices) signed a ROD for the project on October 11, 2011. The California and Nevada Divisions of FHWA also signed a ROD for the Project on November 18, 2011.

### SEPTEMBER 2020 REEVALUATION

In January 2019, DesertXpress Enterprises, LLC submitted Project modifications, including a refined alignment between Victor Valley and Las Vegas (with a greater proportion within the Interstate 15 [I-15] freeway median), modified station sites in Apple Valley and the Las Vegas area, and changes to ancillary facilities.

In accordance with FRA's *Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts* (64 Fed. Reg. 28545, May 26, 1999):

If major steps toward implementation of the proposed action have not occurred within the time frame, if any, set forth in the final EIS, or within five years from the date of approval of the final EIS, a written reevaluation of the adequacy, accuracy, and validity of the final EIS shall be prepared, and a new or supplemental EIS prepared, if necessary.

FRA documents this process in a reevaluation. A reevaluation is not a NEPA document as defined in the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations and is not required to undergo public review. Reevaluations are instead used to document an agency's decision whether a supplemental EIS is required.

In February 2019, in response to the project modifications, FRA initiated a Reevaluation of the DesertXpress FEIS and DesertXpress ROD. FRA in cooperation with BLM, STB, FHWA, and the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), with the added participation of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), analyzed whether changes in the environmental setting due to the passage of time or the proposed project modifications would result in new significant environmental impacts. Concurrently with the preparation of the Reevaluation, FRA informally consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Additionally, FRA is continuing to work with the following Consulting Parties in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106):

- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP)
- California and Nevada State Historic Preservation Officers
- Federally recognized Native American tribes with an interest in the Project area
- Federal agencies (BLM, STB, FHWA, and USACE, FAA, NPS)
- Interested parties (Clark County Department of Aviation, Old Spanish Trail Association)
- NDOT
- Caltrans

FRA completed the first Reevaluation of the DesertXpress FEIS and DesertXpress ROD in September 2020.<sup>1</sup> Based on the findings of the September 2020 Reevaluation, FRA determined the Project modifications would not result in substantial changes in the evaluation of impacts described in the DesertXpress EIS, and therefore a supplemental EIS would not be required for the Project modifications.

## **PROJECT MODIFICATIONS EVALUATED IN THIS REEVALUATION (SUBSEQUENT TO THE SEPTEMBER 2020 REEVALUATION)**

As the Brightline West Las Vegas to Victor Valley Project moves into final design and preparation to begin construction, additional Project modifications have been identified.

These modifications are described in Table 1 and depicted in Figure 1 through Figure 7 below.

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<sup>1</sup> The September 2020 Reevaluation document and attachments are available at: <https://railroads.dot.gov/environment/environmental-reviews/desertxpress-xpresswest-las-vegas-victorville>.

**Table 1 Project Modifications**

Project Feature	Description of Modification(s)
Alignment  Segment 1 Alignment (Apple Valley to Lenwood)	<p>The Project modifications involve relocating the rail alignment between the Dale Evan Station and Sidewinder Road from the east side of the I-15 freeway to the median (see Figure 2). As such, the entirety of the Segment 1 rail alignment is now within the I-15 freeway median, which would result in reduced impacts and increase the efficiency of train operations This design change is also favorable with Caltrans and FHWA as it would improve constructability of potential future I-15 freeway improvements in either the northbound or southbound directions. Additionally, the Segment 1 rail alignment would be extended one mile south of the Victor Valley Station to access a maintenance of way track that will be constructed to move equipment from the median rail mainline to the maintenance of way facility. Construction of a median-running rail alignment in this area, south of the Dale Evans Parkway intersection, would require realignment of the existing I-15 northbound travel lanes approximately 50 feet east, and reconstruction of the Dale Evans Parkway interchange including the overpass.<sup>2</sup> This is discussed further under the Victor Valley Station description below. Additionally, the I-15 northbound travel lanes south of the interchange would be elevated approximately 25 feet to allow the maintenance of way track to pass from the median to the maintenance of way facility (see Figure 7). All roadway work would occur within existing Caltrans Right-of-way (ROW).</p>
Segment 5 Alignment (Primm to Sloan Road)	<p>Project modifications would relocate the rail alignment between Primm and north of Goodsprings Road near Jean from the east side of the I-15 freeway to the freeway median (see Figure 4). As such the entirety of the Segment 5 rail alignment is now located within the I-15 freeway median, which would result in reduced impacts, increase the safety and efficiency of train operations, and improve Project constructability for future I-15 widening in this portion of the alignment.</p> <p>Additionally, the previously considered Braid Structures near Primm and at the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) crossing are no longer needed and have been removed.</p>

<sup>2</sup> This Reevaluation has assumed full reconstruction and replacement of the overpass. Caltrans will determine the necessary modifications to the I-15/Dale Evans interchange which may not include full reconstruction and replacement of the overpass.

Project Feature	Description of Modification(s)
Stations	
Victor Valley Station (previously referred to as Dale Evans Station)	<p>The Project design evaluated in September 2020 considered collocating an operations, maintenance, and storage facility (OMSF) with the Victor Valley Station, with a permanent footprint of approximately 300 acres. As discussed below, the current Project modifications include a relocation of the Vehicle Maintenance Facility (VMF) to a site on the west side of I-15 in Sloan.</p> <p>The Victor Valley Station permanent footprint would remain unchanged. As noted above, under Segment 1, the Project Modifications include relocating the rail alignment into the median of the I-15 freeway. To accommodate this new rail alignment, the Victor Valley Station layout has been revised to include the passenger boarding and alighting platforms in the median of the I-15 freeway. In order to provide the necessary footprint and access for these platforms, the existing I-15 northbound lanes would be raised and moved east within the Caltrans ROW south of the Dale Evans Parkway interchange. Passengers would access station platforms using a walkway underneath the relocated I-15 freeway northbound lanes (see Figure 7).</p>
Ancillary Features	
Freeway Ramp Realignments/Modifications	<p>The Project design evaluated in September 2020 included realignment of portions of approximately 17 existing freeway on and off- ramps to accommodate the rail line within the I-15 freeway ROW. The current Project modifications include extending these on and off ramp realignments and ramp modifications, and changing the location where these ramp realignment/reconstructions transition to the existing roadway/pavement. There are 6 locations where these proposed freeway ramp modifications occur (from south to north):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The I-15 southbound ramps at Dale Evans Parkway</li> <li>• The I-15 northbound ramps at Main Street in Barstow</li> <li>• The I-15 northbound ramps and southbound ramps at East Primm Boulevard</li> <li>• The I-15 southbound ramps at Goodsprings Road</li> <li>• The I-15 southbound ramps at Sloan Road</li> </ul> <p>These modifications would be located primarily on previously evaluated Project footprint within existing Caltrans/NDOT, and local ROW along the I-15 freeway. These modifications are the result of coordination with Caltrans and NDOT on final design details, in order to update the modified median-running alignment to adhere to current safety design standards.</p>

Project Feature	Description of Modification(s)
California Highway Patrol (CHP) and Nevada Highway Patrol (NHP) Emergency Crossovers	<p>The Project design evaluated in September 2020 included eight emergency crossovers along the alignment in California. The current Project modifications include two new emergency crossovers at Zzyzx Road and Halloran Springs. Additionally, five previously evaluated emergency crossovers in Segment 3 would be relocated. These are located near Coyote Lake Road, Basin Road, Baker, and both north and south of Halloran Springs. Emergency crossovers would be located mainly on previously evaluated Project footprint within the existing Caltrans ROW.</p> <p>In total, the modified Project would include 10 emergency crossovers in California, located in Segment 3 between Yermo and Mountain Pass, and one emergency crossover in Nevada approximately 1.5-miles south of Sloan.</p>
Roadwork	<p>The Project design evaluated in September 2020 included roadwork at local interchanges and along the I-15 freeway at various locations. The current Project modifications include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realigning the I-15 freeway northbound lane approximately 50 feet east and raising the lane approximately 25 feet, to accommodate the passenger platforms in the I-15 median, tail track for train storage, a pedestrian underpass for access to/from the platforms, and a maintenance of way access track for trains. These roadwork improvements would occur along an approximately one-mile portion of the I-15 freeway northbound lane adjacent to the Victor Valley Station (see Figure 7).</li> <li>• Additional roadwork at the Dale Evans Parkway interchange accessing the I-15 freeway southbound ramps</li> <li>• I-15 freeway median widening at Segment 5 to accommodate the modified median-running alignment</li> <li>• Raising of I-15 southbound lanes just south of the Sloan Road interchange to allow for tracks to exit the I-15 median under the southbound lanes and into the relocated VMF site.</li> </ul> <p>The Project modifications also include small, on-road lane realignments along the I-15 freeway at Segment 6, near Silverado Ranch Boulevard and Blue Diamond Road.</p>
Culverts	<p>The Project design evaluated in September 2020 included drainage and culvert work throughout the Project limits. The current Project modifications include revised designs for three culverts and the addition of four culverts within Segment 5. The associated drainage and grading activities have also been modified accordingly.</p>

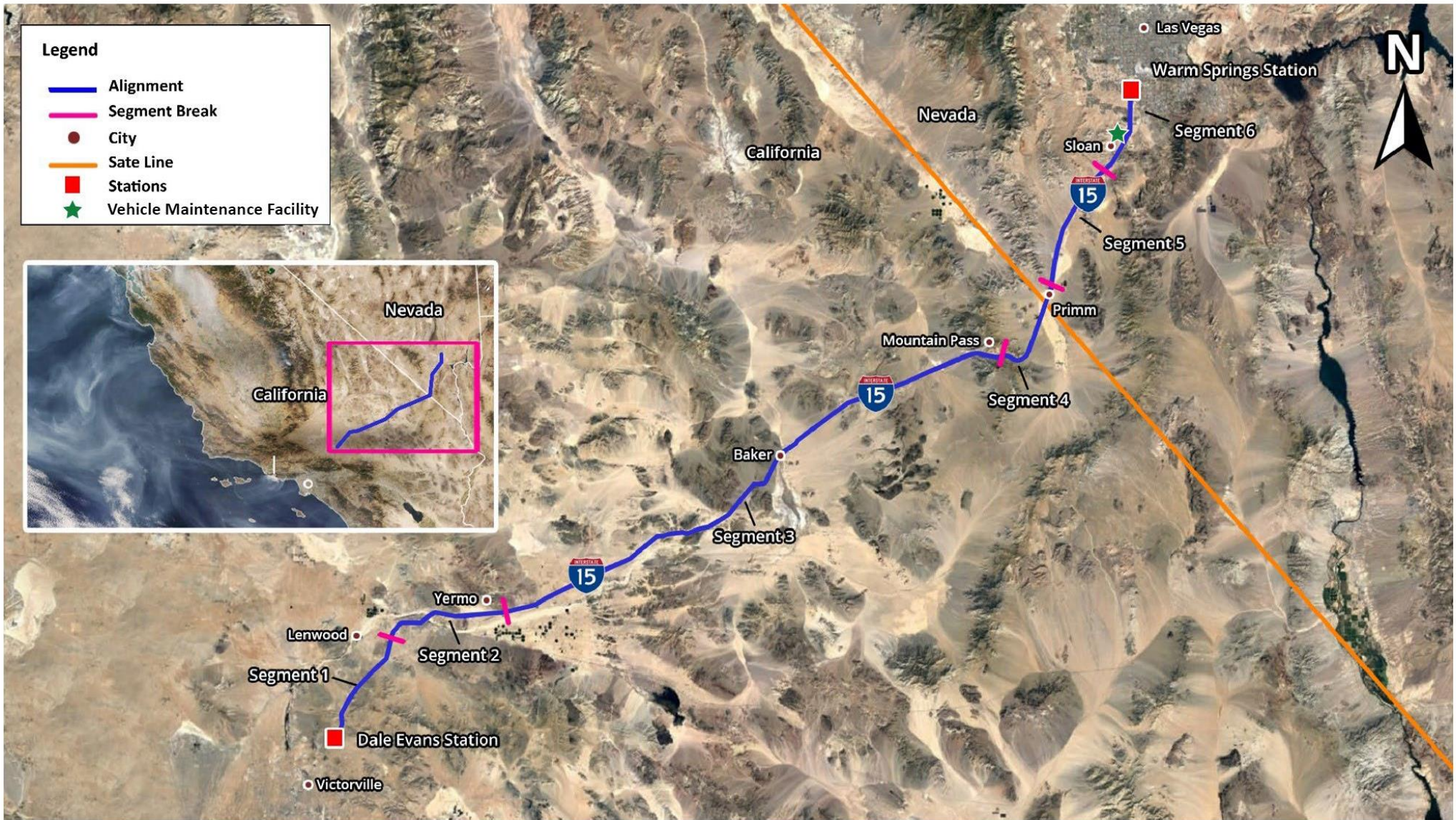
Project Feature	Description of Modification(s)
CEMEX Facility and Rail Connection	<p>A new connection to the existing Cemex industrial rail track is proposed on the north side of Apple Valley, CA near the proposed Victor Valley Station. The connection would consist of a turnout off the existing Cemex track and approximately 2 miles of new track along the east side of I-15 freeway heading north, all within the Caltrans ROW limit.</p> <p>This connection would allow rail transportation of construction materials such as track ballast to the Project area. This reduces the need for trucking construction materials to the Project area.</p>
Ivanpah Traction Power Substation (TPSS)	<p>The Ivanpah modified TPSS 3-mile utility line and 3.5-mile redundant utility line would travel north of the existing solar field to connect to a Southern California Edison (SCE) substation adjacent to the BrightSource Ivanpah Electrical Generating System, west of the I-15 freeway, resulting in the reduction of approximately 0.18 acres of permanent footprint. These modifications are the result of coordination with SCE, BLM, and USFWS (see Figure 3).</p>
California Maintenance of Way (MOW) Facility	<p>The Project design evaluated in September 2020 considered the relocation of the California MOW Facility from Baker, California, to the I-15 freeway median approximately six miles south of the California/Nevada state line, adjacent to the existing California Agricultural Inspection Station. The 25-acre facility was proposed to be utilized for passive equipment storage.</p> <p>The current Project modifications now have the MOW facilities divided between the new site at Sloan and the Victor Valley Station area.</p>
Sloan Vehicle Maintenance Facility (VMF)	<p>The Project design evaluated in the DesertXpress EIS included an OMSF in close proximity to the original Victorville Station west of the I-15 freeway, and included facilities for maintaining and storing trains. Project modifications evaluated in 2020 included relocating the Victorville Station to the south side of the I-15 freeway at Dale Evans Parkway in Apple Valley. At that time, it was proposed the OMSF would be collocated with the Victorville Station, and a separate location for vehicle maintenance and storage had not been identified.</p> <p>The current Project modifications include locating the vehicle maintenance and storage activities at a site located in Segment 6 west of and within 1.5 miles of the I-15 freeway, and south of Sloan Road (see Figure 5 and Figure 6); the Victor Valley Station permanent footprint would remain unchanged. An additional freight track corridor will be constructed to connect the VMF to the adjacent UPRR.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Brightline West have filed a connection request and are coordinating with UPRR regarding the connection design and operational concepts. UPRR have granted preliminary approval of this rail connection, which would be subject to additional design development.</li> </ul> <p>The Sloan VMF and adjacent UPRR connection would require 246 acres of permanent footprint and 105 acres of temporary footprint, and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Storage and staging tracks and overhead catenary system from which trains would be mobilized for daily operations.</li> <li>▪ Equipment and operations associated with the Sloan VMF, including but not limited to a train car wash station, a train performance monitoring station,</li> </ul>

Project Feature	Description of Modification(s)
	<p>an Operations Control Center, a power substation and distribution lines, utility connections, circulation system, site control, fencing, and parking. The Sloan VMF will be a permanent workplace for approximately 100 employees related to either the maintenance of the Brightline West train fleet or performing other functions such as driving the trains. These facilities would be located on land under BLM jurisdiction and would therefore require a ROW grant lease from BLM.</p>

Temporary Construction Areas (TCAs)

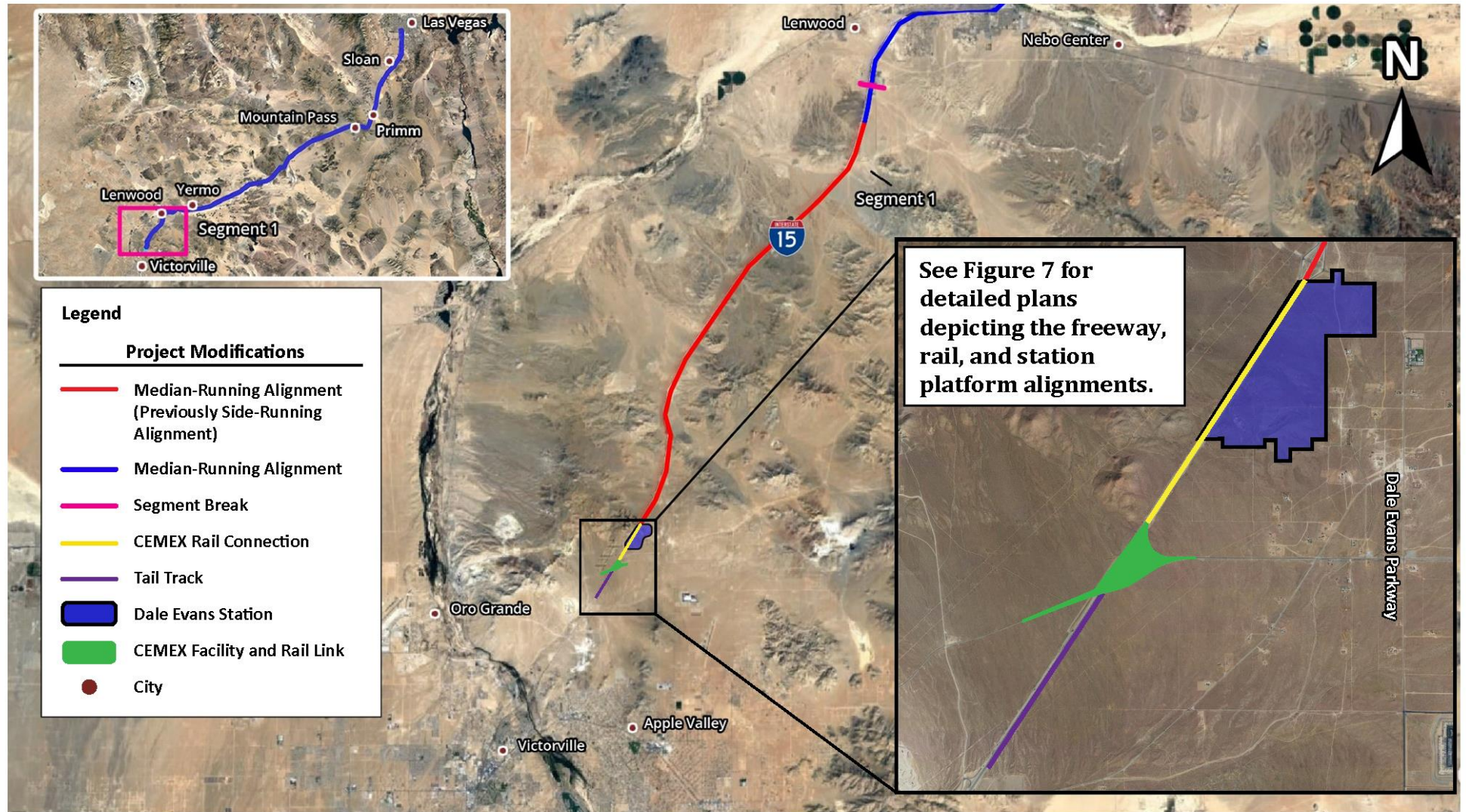
TCAs are areas that would be utilized for construction staging and storage. No permanent project features would be installed in these areas, and they would be restored/vacated upon completion of construction. The modified Project includes an additional 202 TCAs located along the I-15 freeway corridor for construction of the rail alignment. These are in addition to TCAs previously identified in the original project description and the September 2020 Reevaluation. The majority of these additional TCAs are areas located within the existing I-15 freeway ROW. The addition of these TCAs adds 1,492 acres of temporary footprint to the project. The Sloan VMF facility footprint includes 105 acres of temporary footprint required for constructing the Sloan VMF and UPRR Connection.





Brightline West Project Overview

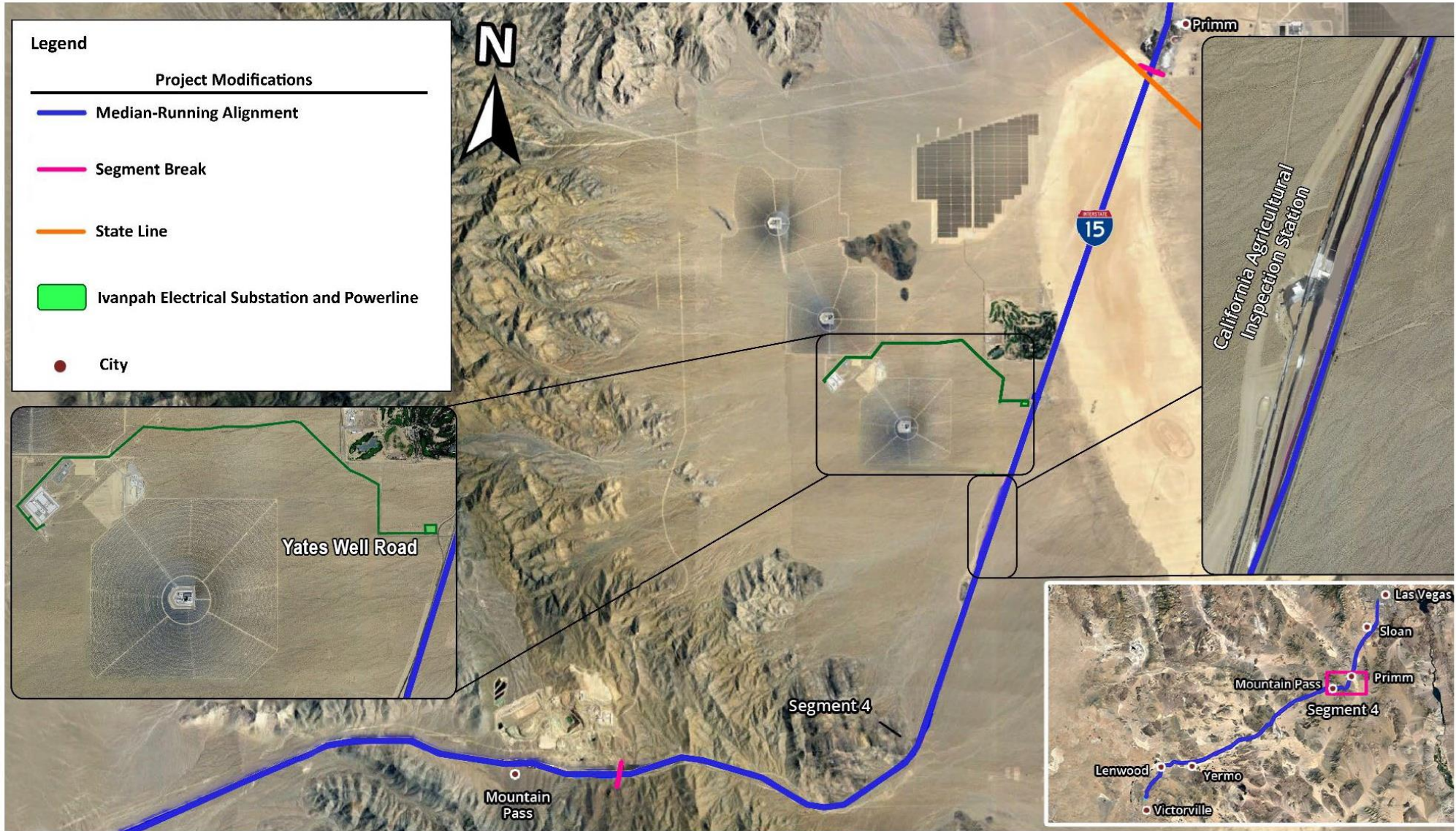




Project Modifications (Segment 1)

Figure





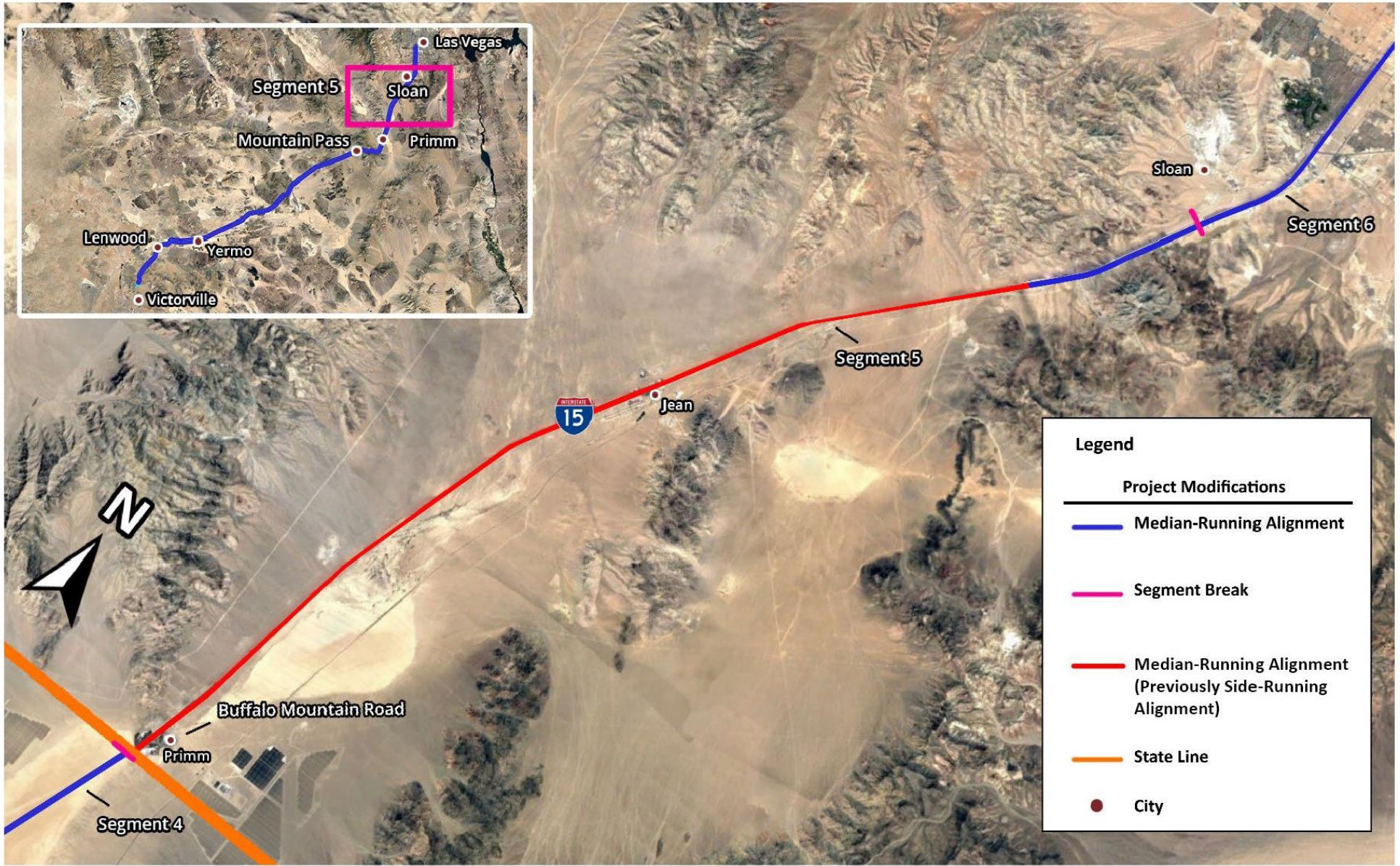
Source: Google Earth, 2019

Project Modifications (Segment 4)

Figure

Source: Google Earth, 2022

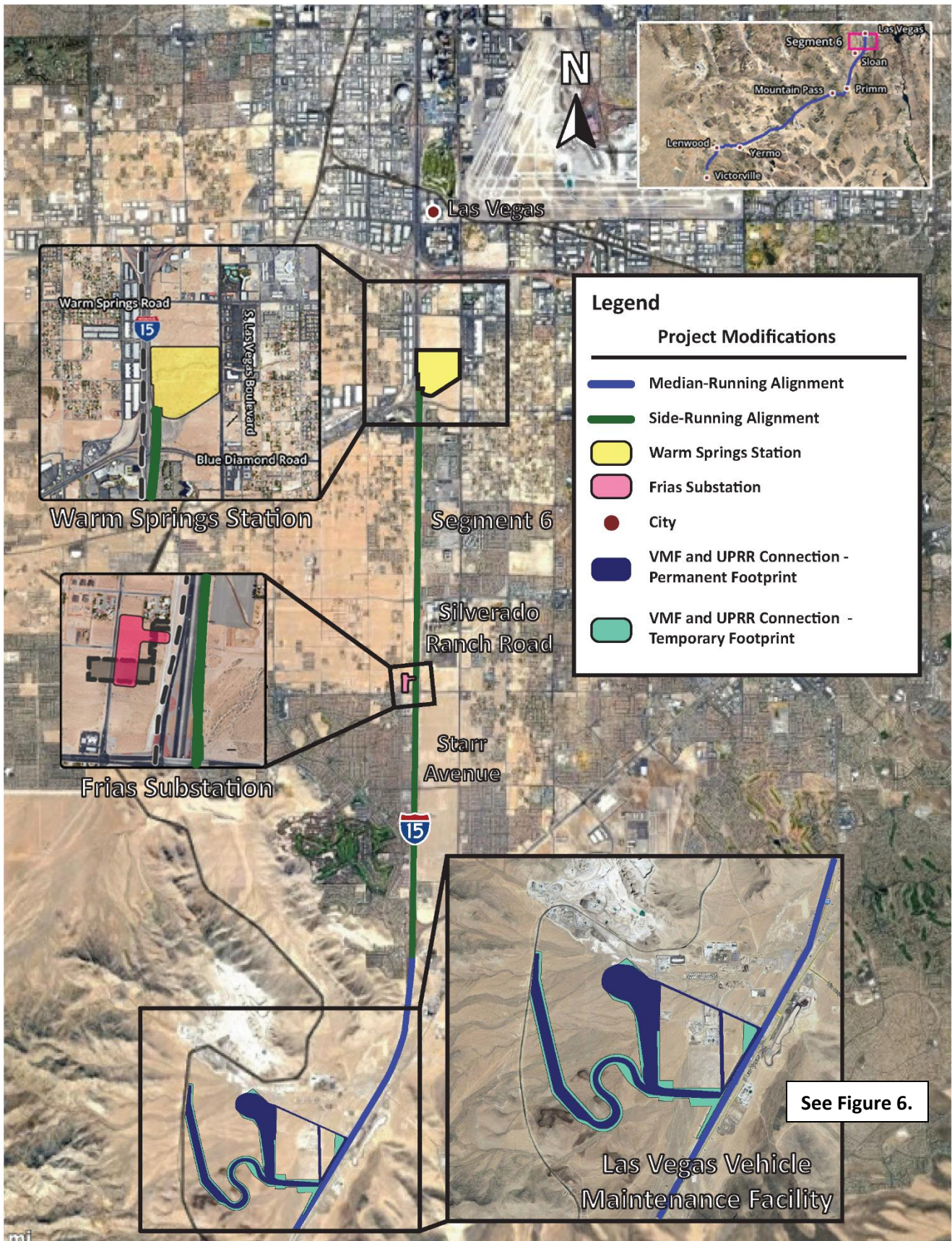




Project Modifications (Segment 5)

Figure

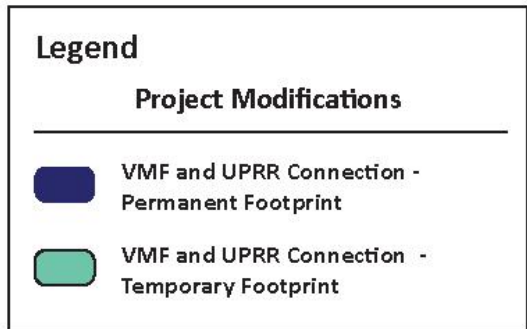
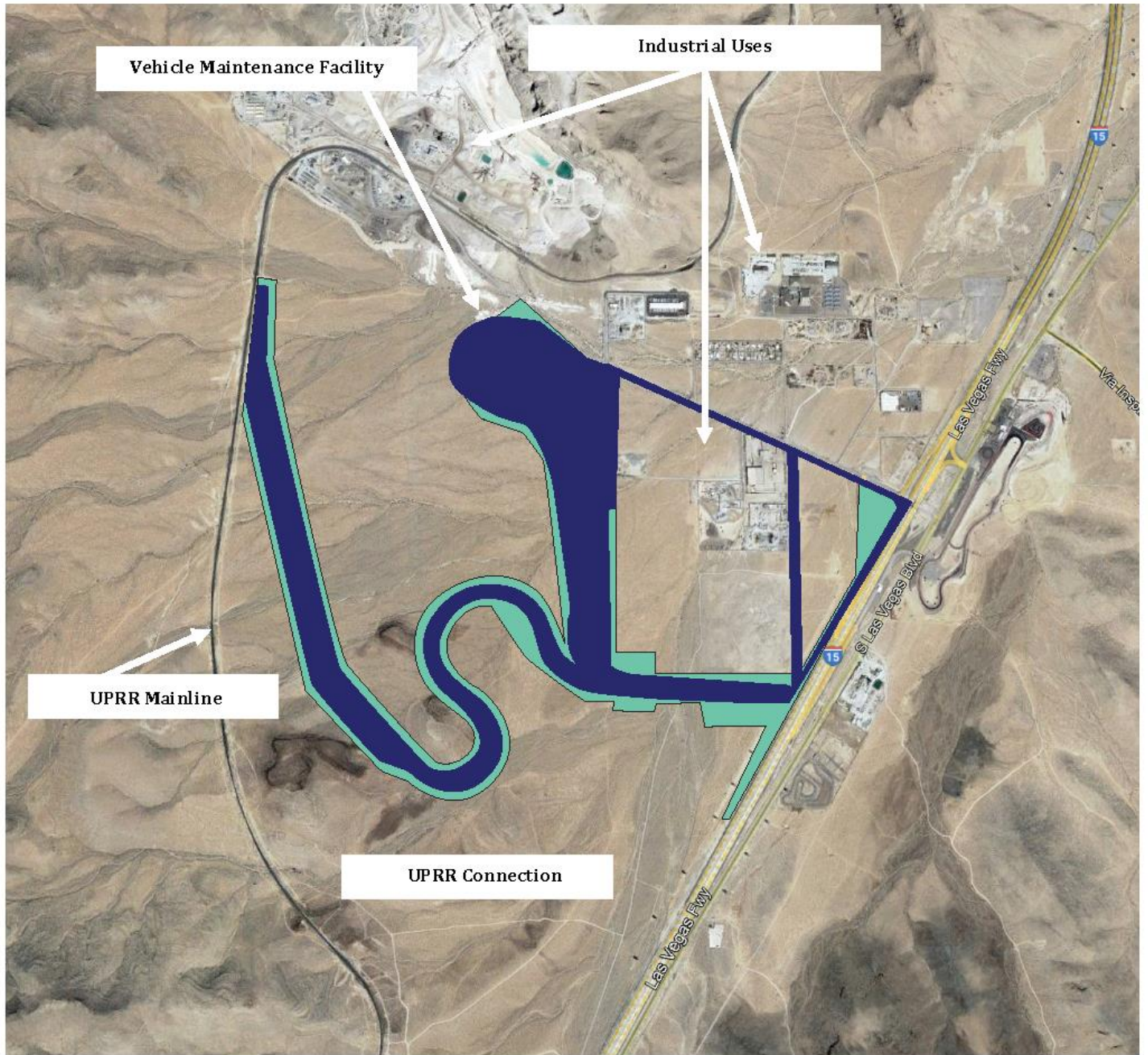




Project Modifications (Segment 6)

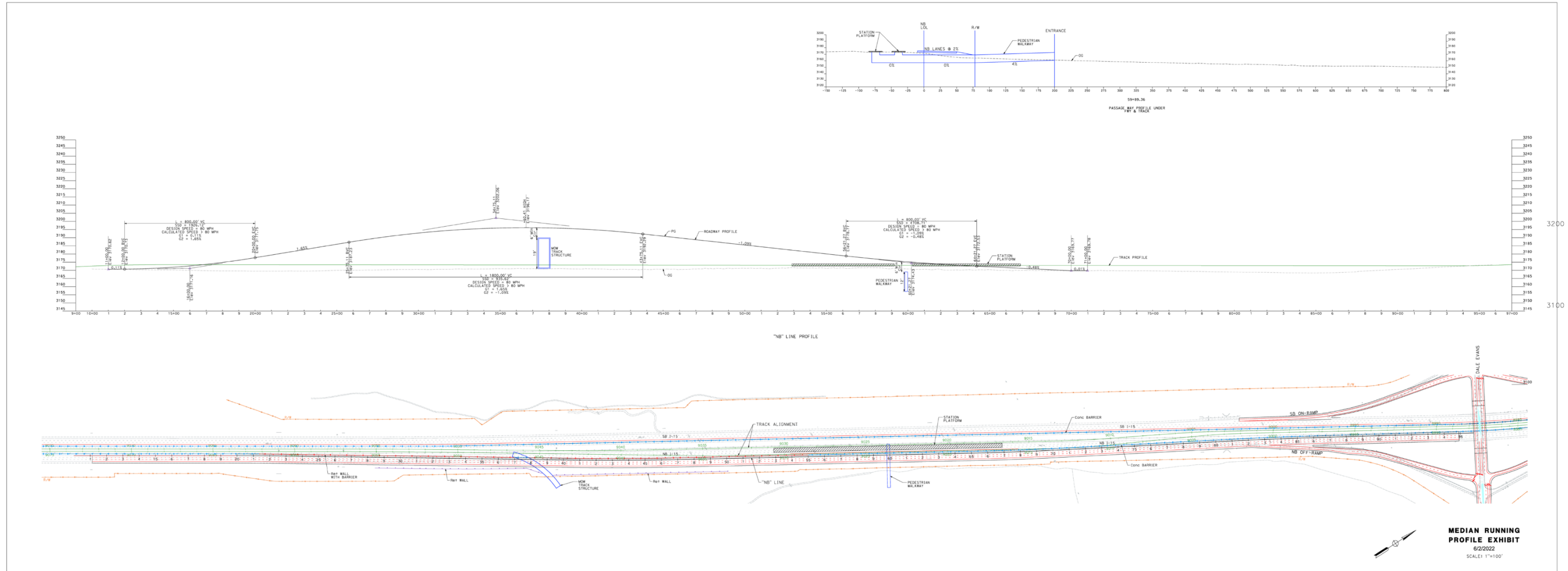
Figure





Las Vegas Vehicle Maintenance Facility

Figure



Median Running Profile Exhibit (Dale Evans Station/Segment 1)

Figure