



DEIS Alternatives Analysis Technical Report

SH 68 from I-2/US 83 to I-69C/US 281

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Hidalgo County, Texas

Texas Department of Transportation – Pharr District

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1 1.0 INTRODUCTION

2 The Pharr District of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) proposes to construct
3 State Highway (SH) 68, a new highway facility from Interstate (I)-2/U.S. Highway (US) 83 to
4 I-69C/US 281, located in eastern Hidalgo County. The proposed project corridor would begin
5 at I-2/US 83 and travel north then west to connect to I-69C/US 281. The total length of the
6 proposed project is approximately 22 miles.

7 The purpose of this technical report is to document the identification, development, and
8 analysis of the full range of alternatives that were eliminated from further study in the Draft
9 Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). This technical report provides the alternatives
10 analysis methodology, the items used in the alternatives screening process (purpose and
11 need, critical issues, and project goal-based criteria), and describes the full range of
12 alternatives analyzed. This report concludes with the identification of the SH 68 reasonable
13 alternatives carried forward for analysis in the DEIS.

14 Section 2.0 of this report provides a summary of the project history, Section 3.0 describes
15 the study area, and Section 4.0 provides an overview of the alternatives analysis
16 methodology, including the criteria established for the determination of the reasonable
17 alternatives. Sections 5.0 through 8.0 describes the alternative analysis process used in
18 determining the reasonable alternatives. Section 9.0 provides descriptions of the
19 reasonable alternatives.

20 2.0 PROJECT HISTORY

21 The SH 68 project was originally conceived as a portion of a county-wide transportation
22 improvement project known as the Hidalgo County Loop. In 2000, the Hidalgo County
23 Metropolitan Planning Organization (HCMPO) added the Hidalgo County Loop to its
24 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Initial route and corridor studies to develop a loop
25 around the perimeter of the major cities within Hidalgo County were initiated starting in
26 2002 by the Hidalgo County Commissioners Court. A route analysis study within a six-mile-
27 wide corridor identified a preferred route for the Hidalgo County Loop, as documented in a
28 Hidalgo County Loop Alternatives Route Analysis Report, adopted by the Commissioners
29 Court on May 13, 2003 (Hidalgo County 2005).

30 In 2005, the Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority (HCRMA) was established to develop
31 and finance various projects within Hidalgo County. A key project for establishment of the
32 HCRMA was planning and development of the Hidalgo County Loop, a proposed toll-road
33 network that, according to the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) Minute Order
34 110315, “will provide an important reliever route for some of the noncommercial traffic, and
35 will provide for improved traffic circulation within the county” (TTC 2005). The proposed

1 Hidalgo County Loop was described in a 2009 public meeting summary report as “a system
2 of projects that is approximately 122 miles long and is composed of six interconnected but
3 independent projects.” (HCRMA 2009). The six independent sections were developed and
4 described as Sections A through F, with the section in the vicinity of the current SH 68
5 project area described as Section D.

6 The original Section D project area was developed as the northeastern portion of the
7 envisioned Hidalgo County Loop. Subsequently, with the designation of SH 68, it was
8 determined that the project could increase travel capacity for local and regional traffic
9 thereby improving traffic circulation in the eastern portion of Hidalgo County on its own.
10 Additionally, Hidalgo County had a population increase of approximately 36 percent between
11 2000 and 2010 and is projected to have an increase in population of approximately 22
12 percent between 2010 and 2020 (U.S. Census Bureau 1990 Table CP-1-45, 2000 Table DP-
13 1, 2010 Table P9, and Texas Demographic Center 2017). The increased population is
14 reflected by traffic on existing roadways within the study area and at the intersection of I-
15 69C/US 281 and I-2/US 83 (TxDOT 2015).

16 Because of available State funding, the project was pursued as a non-toll facility and it was
17 determined that TxDOT would oversee and manage the development of the proposed SH 68
18 project (formerly known as Section D) instead of the HCRMA. In February 2013, the Texas
19 Transportation Commission formally designated SH 68 as a new state highway facility by
20 Minute Order 113515 and project development began. An Environmental Assessment (EA)
21 was initiated by TxDOT and in September of 2014 a Meeting with Affected Property Owners
22 (MAPO) and a Public Meeting were conducted. The public meeting was heavily attended and
23 feedback from the public suggested disapproval with the project over the initial potential toll
24 aspect of the project and the general alignment as it related to potential displacements.
25 Based on the controversy from initial public outreach and because the project would consist
26 of a new location facility with up to 1,100 acres of new right-of-way (ROW) and
27 displacements, it was decided in February 2015 that the project would proceed as an
28 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS process for SH 68 officially began on August
29 28, 2015, with the publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) in both the Federal Register and
30 the Texas Register.

31 Additional details regarding the project history can be found in the technical report titled
32 *Final SH 68 Project History and EA Alternatives Report* which is on file at TxDOT (2016c).

33 3.0 STUDY AREA

34 As part of the transition from an EA to an EIS, the project team recommended the expansion
35 of the study area in order to ensure all reasonable alternatives for the proposed action were
36 examined, as required by the EIS process. In addition, previous public involvement

1 conducted prior to the initiation of the EIS process suggested that TxDOT should look at
2 other existing north-south roadways both east and west of the study area developed during
3 the EA process. Based on this information, the study area was expanded and presented to
4 local and state technical experts representing various modes of transportation at a modal
5 alternatives workshop held on January 22, 2016. These local experts were asked to provide
6 input regarding the study area boundaries for the project. In addition, the study area was
7 presented at the public scoping meeting and the agency scoping meeting. Based on input
8 received at these meetings, TxDOT determined that the study area was appropriate for the
9 development of the full range of alternatives for SH 68. **Exhibit 1 in Attachment A** provides a
10 comparison of the EA study area in relation to the and EIS study area.

11 The EIS study area is a rectangular area in eastern Hidalgo County, oriented generally
12 parallel to I-69C/US 281 and I-2/US 83. The study area runs from south of I-2/US 83 to
13 north of FM 490 (approximately 18.8 miles in length) and from east of FM 493 to west of
14 I-69C/US 281 (approximately 9.5 miles in width). It includes portions of the Cities of
15 Edinburg, Pharr, San Juan, Alamo, and Donna. The area also includes unincorporated
16 portions of Hidalgo County and the communities (census-designated places) of Faysville,
17 Hargill, Doolittle, Cesar Chavez, San Carlos, La Blanca, Nurillo, Muniz, Lopezville, and North
18 Alamo. The study area includes approximately 179 square miles or 114,627 acres.

19 The southern (I-2/US 83) and western (I-69C/US 281) boundaries of the study area were
20 determined based on the previous work associated with Section D of the Hidalgo County
21 Loop. The eastern extent of the study area was chosen since the HCRMA has a long-term
22 plan to investigate the need for an additional roadway identified as Section F, which is east
23 of the SH 68 EIS study area in the vicinity of Mercedes, Texas (HCRMA 2012). The northern
24 boundary was identified in the vicinity of FM 490 based on input from the City of Edinburg
25 requesting that TxDOT consider SH 68 connect near the South Texas International Airport at
26 Edinburg.

27 **4.0 ALTERNATIVES EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

28 The alternatives evaluation process for the DEIS began with the reconsidering of a full range
29 of alternatives that could possibly meet the project's Purpose and Need. This full range of
30 alternatives included the development of roadway study corridors to identify preliminary
31 roadway alternatives and other modal alternatives besides roadways. Section 5.0 provides
32 a detailed discussion on the full range of alternatives. The full range of alternatives included
33 the evaluation of modal alternatives, roadway study corridors preliminary roadway
34 alternatives and reasonable alternatives. Each study corridor and/or alternative considered
35 was screened against a) the purpose and need for the project, b) identified critical issues,
36 and c) project goal-based criteria in order to determine the reasonable alternatives for
37 analysis in the DEIS. Sections 4.1 – 4.3 define and describe the purpose and need for the

1 project, critical issues used in the analysis and project goals and criteria established for the
2 project.

3 **4.1 Purpose and Need**

4 SH 68 is needed because there are limited current north-south roadways in the area and
5 population is projected to increase substantially in the future, which will substantially
6 increase traffic volume on current north-south roadways in the area. SH 68 is also needed
7 to improve the emergency evacuation capacity of the state highway system in the south
8 Texas region. The study area contains several discontinuous roadways that provide partial
9 north-south connectivity. These roadways have not been able to handle the current and
10 projected increases in population and traffic in the area. Additionally, an additional
11 evacuation route is needed in the study area to accommodate a faster ramp-up of
12 evacuation traffic to access I-69C/US 281. Refer to the DEIS for a more detailed discussion
13 on the supporting facts and data that support the need for the project. The purpose of the
14 project is to accommodate population growth and higher traffic volumes, while relieving the
15 burden on the limited number of existing north-south roadways, and provide an alternate
16 north-south evacuation route during emergency events. A discussion on the purpose and
17 need as well as supporting facts and/or data is available in the DEIS.

18 The draft purpose and need for the project was available for comment at the March 2016
19 public and agency scoping meetings. The only comment from an agency regarding the Draft
20 Purpose and Need Statement was received from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
21 who recommended that the purpose and need in the DEIS should provide a clear objective
22 statement of the rationale for the proposed project. No public comments were received from
23 the scoping meeting that required modification of the Purpose and Need Statement. The
24 *Public Scoping Meeting Summary Report and Documentation of Agency Scoping Meeting*
25 are on file with TxDOT (2016e and 2016a).

26 **4.2 Critical Issues**

27 Critical issues within each 600-foot study corridor were identified by reviewing maps and
28 information from existing databases including federal, county, state and local government
29 websites, county tax appraisal district information, 2015 aerial imagery, and google street
30 view (where available). The critical issues used to screen the initial 600-foot wide study
31 corridors consisted of the following: airports; public parks; National Register of Historic
32 Places (NRHP) properties; cemeteries; places of worship; hazardous materials, including
33 landfills; jail complexes; federal wildlife refuges; public facilities, including schools; state
34 antiquities landmarks (SALs); and engineering design criteria. The items were considered
35 critical based on potential regulatory requirement, community, or project constraints that
36 would prevent the further development of a reasonable alternative.

1 Regulatory requirement constraints included: Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966 (public
2 parks, state antiquities landmarks (SALs), National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)
3 properties), federal wildlife refuges; Section 711 of the Texas Health and Safety Code of
4 1989 (cemeteries). Community constraints included locations that have the potential to
5 "...significantly affect the quality of the human environment (NEPA 1969)". The critical
6 issues that are in this category included places of worship, jail complexes, and public
7 facilities. Project related constraints consisted of Hazardous material sites and engineering
8 design criteria. Hazardous material sites were included to avoid: potential high clean-up
9 costs; significant increases on project costs; and health risks for workers, the general public,
10 or the ecological environment if the hazardous materials were not identified and managed
11 properly. Engineering design criteria included the ability for the alignment to accommodate a
12 70-mile-hour design speed and the ability to support heavy truck (WB-67) design vehicles.

13 **4.3 Project Goals and Criteria**

14 The project goals established for the SH 68 project include improvements in the areas of
15 safety, mobility, community/environment, feasibility/design, cost effectiveness, and
16 economic factors. Evaluation criteria were established under each of the project goals that
17 could be measured, counted, calculated, or qualified for each preliminary alternative. These
18 criteria were not intended to be compared against each other with equal weighting. The
19 criteria were solely established to provide a basis for comparing the preliminary alternatives
20 and determining if any alternatives could be eliminated from further study in the DEIS. The
21 goals and criteria used to evaluate the alternatives for the project are described below.

22 **4.3.1 Safety**

23 The first goal for SH 68 is to provide a safe roadway and to improve roadway safety in the
24 study area. Criteria to evaluate this goal include:

- 25 • Provides alternative route for larger/heavier vehicles,
- 26 • Provides bicycle and pedestrian accommodations,
- 27 • Minimizes safety impacts along I-2/US 83 – based on distance to existing ramps,
- 28 • Enhances safety/reduces crashes within the study area – based on the number of
29 grade separations along major intersecting roadways.

30 **4.3.2 Mobility**

31 The second goal for SH 68 is to improve mobility in eastern Hidalgo County. Criteria to
32 evaluate alternatives for this goal include:

- 33 • Provides additional capacity and improves mobility within the study area,

- 1 • Enhances system connectivity – based on ability to connect to existing and proposed
2 regional facilities,
- 3 • Enhances modal connectivity - based on ability to connect to existing other modal
4 facilities,
- 5 • Improves transportation system reliability within the study area – based on ability to
6 provide an alternate route other than I-69C/US 281.

7 **4.3.3 Community/Environment**

8 The third goal for development of the SH 68 project is to consider impacts to the community
9 and to environmental factors. Criteria to evaluate this goal include:

- 10 • Avoid and/or minimize impacts to the human environment including, but not limited
11 to: residential properties; schools; cemeteries; faith-based organizations such as
12 churches; public facilities or public services; commercial properties; civic centers;
13 croplands/orchards; parks and recreational facilities; oil/gas wells and pipelines;
14 utility infrastructure; canals; colonias; minority and low-income areas; noise-sensitive
15 receivers; landfills; and hazardous materials sites.
- 16 • Avoid and/or minimize impacts to cultural resources that included: State Antiquities
17 Landmarks (SALs); historical canal crossings; National Register of Historic Places
18 (NRHP) listed properties; recorded archeological sites; and historic-age resources.
- 19 • Avoid and/or minimize impacts to the natural environment including: critical habitat
20 for threatened and endangered species; National Wildlife Refuge properties;
21 brushland habitat; floodplains; potential waters of the US; National Wetland Inventory
22 (NWI) features; and prime farmland soils.

23 **4.3.4 Feasibility/Design**

24 The fourth goal is to ensure that the proposed roadway is feasible given physical constraints
25 within the study area and that the project would meet current design standards. Criteria to
26 evaluate this goal include:

- 27 • Maximizes driver expectancy – based on familiarity of a roadway design to a driver,
- 28 • Avoids potential air space clearance conflicts,
- 29 • Optimizes overall design – based on ability to minimize design constraints,
- 30 • Optimizes constructability – based on ability to minimize construction constraints,
- 31 • Expedite Phase 1 implementation – based on duration of post environmental
32 activities such as ROW acquisition, utility adjustments, and construction time.

33 **4.3.5 Cost Effectiveness**

34 The fifth goal for the SH 68 project is that the proposed alternative is cost effective. Criteria
35 to evaluate this goal include:

- 1 • Minimize construction cost – based on construction and mitigation estimates,
- 2 • Minimize ROW cost - based on Hidalgo County Appraisal District Market Values,
- 3 • Minimize relocation cost - based on 150% of ROW costs,
- 4 • Minimize utility displacement cost – based on 7% of construction costs plus an
- 5 additional escalation of 5% for areas of complex utility impacts,
- 6 • Minimize maintenance and operational cost – based on 6% of construction costs,
- 7 • Minimize total cost – based on cumulative cost of above categories.

8 **4.3.6 Economic Factors**

9 The final goal for the project is to consider economic factors. Criteria for this goal include:

- 10 • Maximize opportunity for economic development through adjacent access – based
- 11 on length of road adjacent to developable property,
- 12 • Minimize amount of lost tax revenue – based on existing land use taxable revenue
- 13 converted to transportation.

14 **5.0 ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT**

15 When the project was transitioned from an EA to an EIS, a full range of alternatives was

16 revisited within the expanded study area. This section describes the development and

17 consideration of modal alternatives (Section 5.1) and the development and description of

18 the roadway study corridors (Section 5.2 and 5.3).

19 **5.1 Modal Alternatives**

20 The development of modal alternatives was the initial task in the determining the full range

21 of alternatives. The modal alternatives developed included: transit, rail, truck only, highway

22 expansion, new highway, and bicycle/pedestrian modal alternatives. In addition,

23 Transportation System Management (TSM)/Transportation Demand Management (TDM),

24 Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), and modal connectivity were analyzed. The

25 following information provides brief definitions of modal alternatives developed as well as

26 system management strategies.

- 27 • Transit services are transportation services provided to the public, examples include
- 28 express bus, park and ride, bus rapid transit, and other forms of public mass
- 29 transportation.
- 30 • Rail could include light rail, commuter rail, and freight rail.
- 31 • Truck only lanes are dedicated lanes for trucks traveling long distances.
- 32 • Highway expansion would include the expansion of existing highways
- 33 • A new highway would include the construction of a new facility where one does not
- 34 exist.

- 1 • Bicycle and pedestrian accommodation would provide sidewalks or bicycle lanes

2 TSM/TDM, and ITS are defined as follows:

- 3 • TSM improves efficiency and reliability using incident management such as using
4 changeable message signs, signal synchronization, ramp metering.
- 5 • TDM refers to a set of transportation policies or strategies aimed at reducing traffic
6 congestion and improving roadway mobility without major capital expenditures to
7 increase physical roadway traffic capacity. Examples include ride sharing programs,
8 park and ride operations, staggered work hours, and transit improvements.
- 9 • ITS are advanced technologies such as real-time travel data and incident detection.

10 In order to evaluate different modes of transportation, a modal alternatives conference was
11 held for the project on January 22, 2016. Local and state technical experts representing the
12 various modes of transportation were invited and a total of 45 professionals participated
13 with 21 participants representing stakeholders from entities such as the HCMPO, the
14 HCRMA, municipalities, state agencies, representation from two international bridges, as
15 well as the Pharr Economic Development Corporation. The remaining participants were
16 TxDOT personnel and project associated consultants. The stakeholder participants were
17 asked to comment on the project and complete a survey during the conference to provide
18 feedback on the identification of the appropriate transportation mode to be carried forward
19 for study in the alternatives analysis as well as to provide input on potential system
20 management strategies. The comments and survey results received from the stakeholders
21 indicated that a roadway facility would best address the Draft Purpose and Need Statement.
22 A copy of the *Final Modal Alternatives Conference Report* is on file at TxDOT (2016b).

23 The recommendation from the stakeholders at the modal alternatives conference was in
24 agreement with the TxDOT determination that the appropriate mode of transportation for SH
25 68 should be an expressway facility with frontage roads. The other modal alternatives did
26 not meet the projects purpose and need. The justification for this determination is expanded
27 on in Section 6.0.

28 **5.2 Development of Study Corridors**

29 This section is an overview of the initial study corridor development and contains
30 descriptions and justification of the study corridors. Previous work conducted by the HCRMA,
31 TxDOT, input from the public, known environmental considerations, and engineering design
32 considerations were considered during the development of study corridors. The EIS process
33 began with the development of six study corridors and expanded to 12 study corridors
34 during the public involvement and alternatives analysis process. All study corridors were
35 developed at a 600-foot width in order to accommodate design standards, and allow

1 adequate room to avoid and/or minimize impacts to potential environmental constraints.
2 Standards used to develop all 600-foot corridors included the accommodation of a 70-mile-
3 hour design speed, ability to support heavy truck (WB-67) design vehicles, consideration of
4 baseline environmental constraints, and minimizing impacts to natural and human
5 environments.

6 Since the EA public meeting held in September 2014, the SH 68 project team continued to
7 engage the public through the project information office and small stakeholder meetings in
8 the community. As part of this public involvement, the team recorded 17 instances in which
9 members of the public and other entities suggested other routes or options for the SH 68
10 project corridor. These suggestions included: modifications to the EA Recommended
11 Alternative (six instances); improvements to existing US 281 (one instance); using FM 493
12 (seven instances); and using other north-south corridors (three instances). Based on
13 comments received, the project team developed six study corridors that were presented to
14 agencies and the public at the scoping meetings in March 2016 and have a “PSM”
15 designation in the name that represents “Public Scoping Meeting” (**Exhibit 2 in Attachment**
16 **A**). From west to east, these study corridors are:

- 17 • I-69C/US 281 PSM
- 18 • FM 907 PSM
- 19 • 2014 Modified PSM
- 20 • 2014 PSM
- 21 • FM 1423 PSM
- 22 • FM 493 PSM

23 Based on public and agency comments and project team considerations received during the
24 comment period following the scoping meetings, four additional study corridors were
25 developed (**Exhibit 3 in Attachment A**). From west to east, these additional study corridors
26 are:

- 27 • Tower Road
- 28 • 2014 Modified 2
- 29 • FM 1423 Modified (Golie Road)
- 30 • FM 493 Modified

31 Tower Road was added as an additional study corridor after comments from the public
32 suggested that existing roads be considered as alternatives. 2014 Modified 2 was added to
33 the study based on a comment received by the public by drawing a modified route on the
34 display exhibit provided at the public scoping meeting. FM 1423 Modified (Golie Road) was
35 added after a comment was received from the public indicated that an alternative west of

1 FM 493 should be added to the study parallel to Golie Road. FM 493 Modified was added to
2 the study based on a public comment to parallel FM 493 to the east.

3 The analysis of critical issues resulted in the modification of two of the PSM study corridors:

- 4 • FM 907 Modified
- 5 • FM 493 Modified 2

6 FM 907 Modified was added during the process because it was found that the FM 907 PSM
7 corridor would bisect the United States Fish & Wildlife Service Lower Rio Grande Valley
8 National Wildlife Refuge (LRGV-NWR) Goodfields Tract. FM 493 Modified 2 was added
9 during the process because it was found that FM 493 PSM would impact a church and a
10 school.

11 Throughout the alternatives analysis and the EIS process, the No-Build Alternative will be
12 carried forward as a baseline by which to measure the full range of alternatives. A copy of
13 the *Public Scoping Meeting Summary Report* and *Full Range of Alternatives Tech*
14 *Memorandum* are on file at TxDOT (2016e and 2016d).

15 5.3 Description of Study Corridors

16 The following twelve study corridors, plus the No-Build Alternative, represent the full range of
17 preliminary alternatives considered for the SH 68 alternatives analysis study. The study
18 corridors are described below and are shown in more detail on **Exhibits 2.0** and **3.0** in
19 **Attachment A**.

20 5.3.1 I-69C/US 281 PSM Study Corridor

21 This alternative route would follow the existing I-69C/US 281 corridor from the interchange
22 at I-2/US 83 in the south to the intersection with FM 490 in the north near the South Texas
23 International Airport at Edinburg. The study corridor has a length of approximately 17 miles,
24 is 600 feet in width, and includes an area of approximately 1,320 acres. The existing
25 I-69C/US 281 roadway has an existing ROW approximately 400 feet in width. The roadway
26 generally consists of two-lane or three-lane frontage roads in each direction and two-lane,
27 three-lane, or four-lane main lanes in each direction, with ramps, overpasses, and direct
28 connect ramps at the I-2/US 83 interchange. This study corridor would pass through the
29 Cities of Pharr and Edinburg, as well as the communities of Lopezville and Faysville.

30 5.3.2 FM 907 PSM Study Corridor

31 The FM 907 PSM Study Corridor is approximately 23 miles in length, is 600 feet in width,
32 and includes approximately 1,980 acres in area. The FM 907 PSM Study Corridor would
33 begin at I-2/US 83, approximately four miles east of I-69C/US 281.

1 This route would generally follow FM 907, an existing on-system roadway also known as
2 Alamo Road, approximately ten miles from the existing I-2/US 83 intersection in the south,
3 northward to FM 1925/Monte Cristo Road. North of FM 1925, the corridor would curve to
4 the northeast for approximately four miles before joining with the new location 2014 PSM
5 Study Corridor route at FM 2812 for the remaining approximately nine miles to FM 490 near
6 the South Texas International Airport at Edinburg. This study corridor would pass through the
7 City of Alamo and the communities of North Alamo, Nurillo, Cesar Chavez, and Doolittle.

8 **5.3.3 FM 907 Modified Study Corridor**

9 The FM 907 Modified Study Corridor is approximately 19.8 miles in length, is 600 feet in
10 width, and includes approximately 1,763 acres in area. The FM 907 Modified Study Corridor
11 follows the same route as FM 907 PSM to FM 1925/Monte Cristo Road.

12 North of FM 1925, the corridor would continue on new location northward for approximately
13 seven miles before curving westward for 1.8 miles, running along the north side of the
14 existing FM 490 for one mile and connecting to I-69C/US 281 near the South Texas
15 International Airport at Edinburg. This study corridor would pass through the City of Alamo
16 and the communities of North Alamo, Nurillo, Cesar Chavez, and Doolittle.

17 **5.3.4 Tower Road Study Corridor**

18 The Tower Road Study Corridor is approximately 20 miles in length, is 600 feet in width, and
19 includes approximately 1,779 acres in area. The Tower Road Study Corridor would begin at
20 I-2/US 83, approximately 4.5 miles east of I-69C/US 281.

21 This route would generally follow Tower Road, an existing off-system roadway, approximately
22 6.5 miles from the existing I-2/US 83 intersection in the south, northward to Curve Road.
23 North of Curve Road, the corridor would curve to the northwest for approximately two miles,
24 crossing SH 107 and joining with the FM 907 Modified Study Corridor route near Mile 17
25 Road. The Tower Road Study Corridor would follow the FM 907 Modified route north then
26 west for approximately 11.5 miles before connecting to I-69C/US 281 near the South Texas
27 International Airport at Edinburg. This study corridor would pass through the City of Alamo
28 and the communities of North Alamo, Muniz, Cesar Chavez, and Doolittle.

29 **5.3.5 2014 PSM Study Corridor**

30 This corridor was developed as a corridor that combined sections of several alternative
31 study routes previously developed by the HCRMA then further refined to become the 2014
32 PSM Study Corridor.

1 The 2014 PSM Study Corridor is approximately 22 miles in length, is 600 feet in width,
2 includes an area of approximately 1,946 acres, and is almost entirely on new location. It
3 connects to I-2/US 83 approximately seven miles east of I-69C/US 281, between the
4 FM 1423/Val Verde Road overpass and the North Hutto Road overpass, near the existing
5 intersection of the I-2/US 83 westbound frontage road and Valley View Road.

6 From I-2/US 83, the 2014 PSM Study Corridor would travel northwest on new location for
7 approximately three miles to near Minnesota Road before turning generally northward for
8 approximately seven miles through the communities of Muniz and San Carlos, crossing both
9 SH 107 to FM 1925/Monte Cristo Road.

10 North of FM 1925, the 2014 PSM corridor would curve to the east for approximately one
11 mile, approaching Mile 19 Road, where it would then run parallel to the west side of FM
12 1423/Val Verde Road for approximately four miles. The corridor would then curve to the
13 northwest for approximately four miles before running along the north side of the existing
14 FM 490 for three miles and connecting to I-69C/US 281 near the South Texas International
15 Airport at Edinburg.

16 **5.3.6 2014 Modified PSM Study Corridor**

17 The 2014 Modified PSM Study Corridor is approximately 22 miles in length, is 600 feet in
18 width, and includes an area of approximately 1,953 acres. The 2014 Modified PSM Study
19 Corridor follows the same route as the 2014 Study Corridor except for a section between
20 Curve Road to the south and a point approximately 0.5 mile north of FM 1925/Monte Cristo
21 Road, just east of Sharp Road. Between those two points, the corridor would curve west of
22 the 2014 Study Corridor to a maximum distance of approximately 0.3 mile near Mile 17 ½
23 Road.

24 **5.3.7 2014 Modified 2 Study Corridor**

25 The 2014 Modified 2 Study Corridor is approximately 21 miles in length, is 600 feet in
26 width, and includes approximately 1,895 acres in area. The 2014 Modified 2 Study Corridor
27 follows the same new location route as the 2014 PSM Study corridor from its intersection
28 with I-2/US 83 to SH 107, a distance of approximately eight miles. Approximately one mile
29 north of SH 107, near Mile 17½ Road, the 2014 Modified 2 Study Corridor would curve to
30 the west for approximately two miles, crossing FM 1925/Monte Cristo Road and Davis Road.

31 North of Davis Road, the 2014 Modified 2 route would run parallel to the west side of
32 Brushline Road for approximately five miles. The corridor would then curve to the northwest
33 for approximately two miles before running along the north side of the existing FM 490 for
34 three miles and connecting to I-69C/US 281 near the South Texas International Airport at
35 Edinburg. This study corridor would pass through the communities of Muniz and San Carlos.

1 5.3.8 FM 1423 PSM Study Corridor

2 The FM 1423 PSM Study Corridor is approximately 22 miles in length, is 600 feet in width
3 and includes an area of approximately 1,912 acres. The FM 1423/Val Verde Road Study
4 Corridor would begin at I-2/US 83, approximately six miles east of I-69C/US 281.

5 This corridor would generally follow the existing on-system roadway FM 1423/Val Verde
6 Road northward for approximately 7.5 miles from the intersection with I-2/US 83 to SH 107
7 in the community of San Carlos. From SH 107, the study corridor would continue northward
8 along Val Verde Road approximately two miles to FM 1925/Monte Cristo Road.
9 Approximately 1.5 miles north of FM 1925/Monte Cristo Road, between Mile 19 Road and
10 Davis Road, the route would then follow the 2014 PSM Study Corridor route for
11 approximately 11 miles north and west to I-69C/US 281 near the South Texas International
12 Airport at Edinburg. This study corridor would pass through the City of Donna and the
13 community of San Carlos.

14 5.3.9 FM 1423 Modified (Golie Road) Study Corridor

15 The FM 1423 Modified (Golie Road) Study Corridor is approximately 22 miles in length, is
16 600 feet in width and includes an area of approximately 1,935 acres. The FM 1423
17 Modified Study Corridor would begin at I-2/US 83 in the City of Donna, approximately eight
18 miles east of I-69C/US 281.

19 This corridor would start by following Golie Road for approximately three miles to near
20 Minnesota Road. The FM 1423 Modified Study Corridor would continue northward for
21 approximately 11 miles, crossing SH 107, FM 1925/Monte Cristo Road, and FM 2812. The
22 corridor in this area would be on new location between and parallel to FM 1423/Val Verde
23 Road and FM 493, passing through the community of San Carlos. North of Mile 22 ½ Road,
24 the FM 1423 Modified Study Corridor would then curve to the northwest for approximately
25 two miles before following the same route as 2014 PSM Study Corridor for the remaining six
26 miles to I-69C/US 281 near the South Texas International Airport at Edinburg.

27 5.3.10 FM 493 PSM Study Corridor

28 The FM 493 Study Corridor is approximately 24 miles in length, is 600 feet in width, and
29 includes an area of approximately 2,123 acres. The FM 493 PSM Study Corridor would
30 begin at I-2/US 83, approximately nine miles east of I-69C/US 281.

31 This corridor would generally follow the on-system roadway FM 493, also known as Salinas
32 Boulevard and La Blanca Road, northward for approximately 17 miles from the intersection
33 with I-2/US 83 to a point approximately 1.5 miles south of the community of Hargill. At this
34 point, the FM 493 PSM Study Corridor would curve to the west for approximately 3.5 miles

1 before running along the north side of FM 490 for approximately 4.5 miles to the
2 intersection with I-69C/US 281 near the South Texas International Airport at Edinburg. This
3 study corridor would pass through the City of Donna and the community of La Blanca.

4 **5.3.11 FM 493 Modified 2 Study Corridor**

5 The FM 493 Modified 2 Study Corridor is approximately 24 miles in length, is 600 feet in
6 width, and includes approximately 2,125 acres in area. The FM 493 Modified 2 Study
7 Corridor follows the same route as the FM 493 PSM Study Corridor except for an
8 approximately 3.5-mile-long section between Mile 9 Road and Mile 13 Road, where the
9 corridor parallels the existing FM 493 to the east.

10 **5.3.12 FM 493 Modified Study Corridor**

11 The FM 493 Modified Study Corridor is approximately 25 miles in length, is 600 feet in
12 width, and includes approximately 2,118 acres in area. The FM 493 Modified Study Corridor
13 follows the same route as the FM 493 PSM Study Corridor except for an eight-mile-long
14 section between Mile 11 ½ Road and Mile 19 Road, where the corridor swings out
15 approximately one mile east of FM 493, adjacent to an existing irrigation canal and drainage
16 ditch.

17 **5.3.13 No-Build Alternative**

18 The No-Build Alternative means that the construction of SH 68 would not occur. Under this
19 option, existing roadways in the study area would operate as they currently do. Normal
20 maintenance activities and rehabilitation of existing roadways and associated ROW would
21 continue. There would be no displacements or conversion of land to transportation uses,
22 and no substantial adverse environmental impacts associated with this option. However, the
23 No-Build Alternative would not improve north-south mobility, increase travel capacity for
24 local and regional traffic or provide an alternative north-south evacuation route during
25 emergency events; therefore, it would not meet the purpose and need for the proposed
26 project. Regardless, the No-Build Alternative is carried through the analysis to provide a
27 comparison of baseline information.

28 **6.0 PURPOSE AND NEED SCREENING**

29 The initial screening step for the alternatives analysis was to evaluate the modal alternatives
30 and the subsequent 600-foot study corridors against the Purpose and Need Statement.
31 Based on the evaluation and input from the modal conference, TxDOT determined that the
32 appropriate mode of transportation for SH 68 should be an expressway facility with frontage
33 roads. The expressway facility would address the Draft Purpose and Need Statement by
34 providing an alternate north-south evacuation route during emergency events in addition to

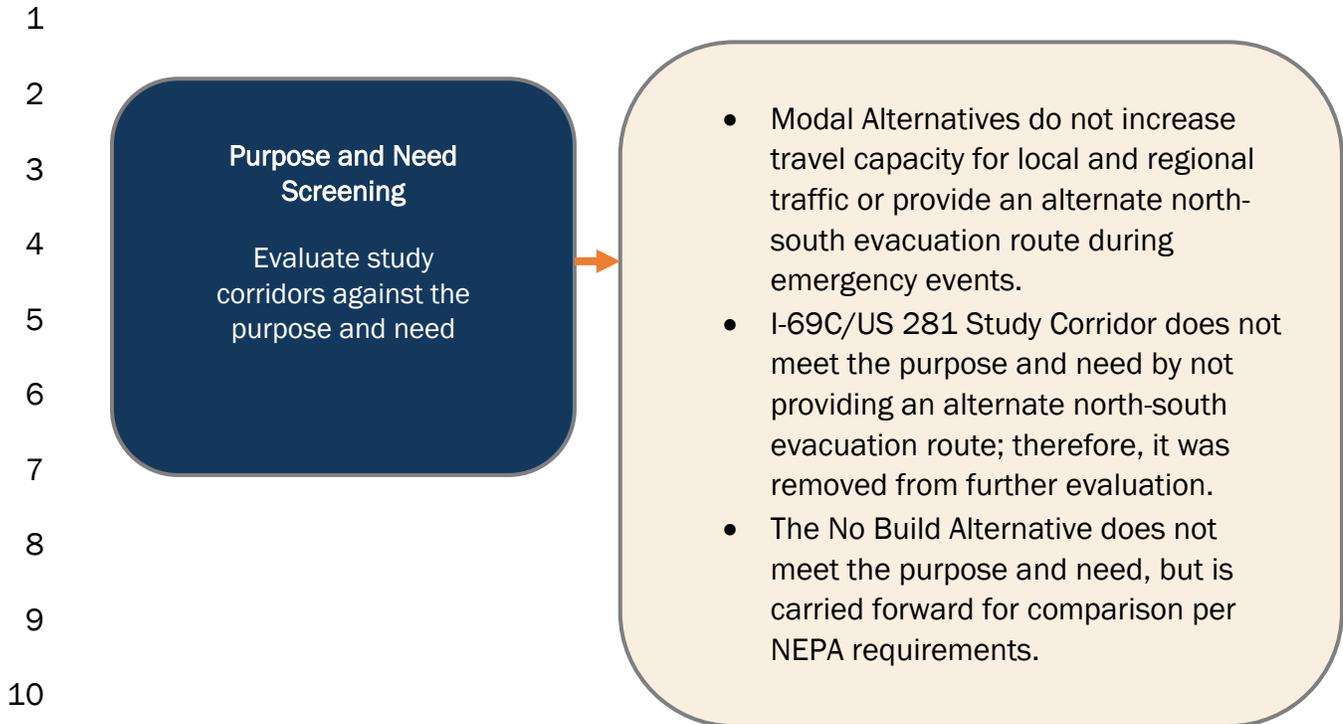
1 accommodating population growth and higher traffic volumes, while relieving the burden on
2 the limited number of existing north-south roadways and increasing travel capacity for local
3 and regional traffic. Transit, rail, truck only, and bicycle/pedestrian modal alternatives were
4 determined to not meet the project need to accommodate population growth and higher
5 traffic volumes, while relieving the burden on the limited number of existing north-south
6 roadways and increased travel capacity for local and regional traffic. The TSM/TDM and ITS
7 strategies would not increase travel capacity for local and regional traffic or provide an
8 alternate north-south evacuation route during emergency events. In addition, the expansion
9 of an existing highway facility would not provide an alternate north-south evacuation route.

10 All study corridors except for the No-Build Alternative would accommodate population growth
11 and higher traffic volumes, while relieving the burden on the limited number of existing
12 north-south roadways and increase capacity for local and regional traffic in the study area.
13 All study corridors except the No-Build Alternative and the I-69C/US 281 Study Corridor
14 would provide alternate north-south evacuation routes during emergency events. The
15 I-69C/US 281 Study Corridor is currently designated as a Major Evacuation Routes with
16 provisions for contraflow lane reversal. Based on this information, the I-69C/US 281 Study
17 Corridor was eliminated from further evaluation because it would not provide an alternate
18 north-south evacuation route during emergency events. **Table 1** summarizes the results of
19 purpose and need screening. **Figure 1** provides a visual summary of the purpose and need
20 screening. All the study corridors besides the No-Build Alternative and the I-69C/US 281
21 Study Corridor met the purpose and need of the project and were evaluated against the
22 identified critical issues in the next screening process. As previously stated, the No-Build
23 Alternative was carried forward throughout the process to provide a comparison of baseline
24 information.

1 **Table 1: Purpose and Need Screening Evaluation**

Meets Purpose and Need ?	Full Range of Corridors												
	NO BUILD	I-69C/US 281	FM 907 PSM	FM 907 MOD	Tower Rd	2014 PSM	2014 MOD PSM	2014 MOD 2	FM 1423 PSM	FM 1423 MOD (Golie Rd)	FM 493 PSM	FM 493 MOD 2	FM 493 MOD
Improve north-south mobility	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Increase capacity for local and regional traffic	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Provide an alternate north-south evacuation route during emergency events	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

2



11 Figure 1. SH 68 Purpose and Need Screening Summary

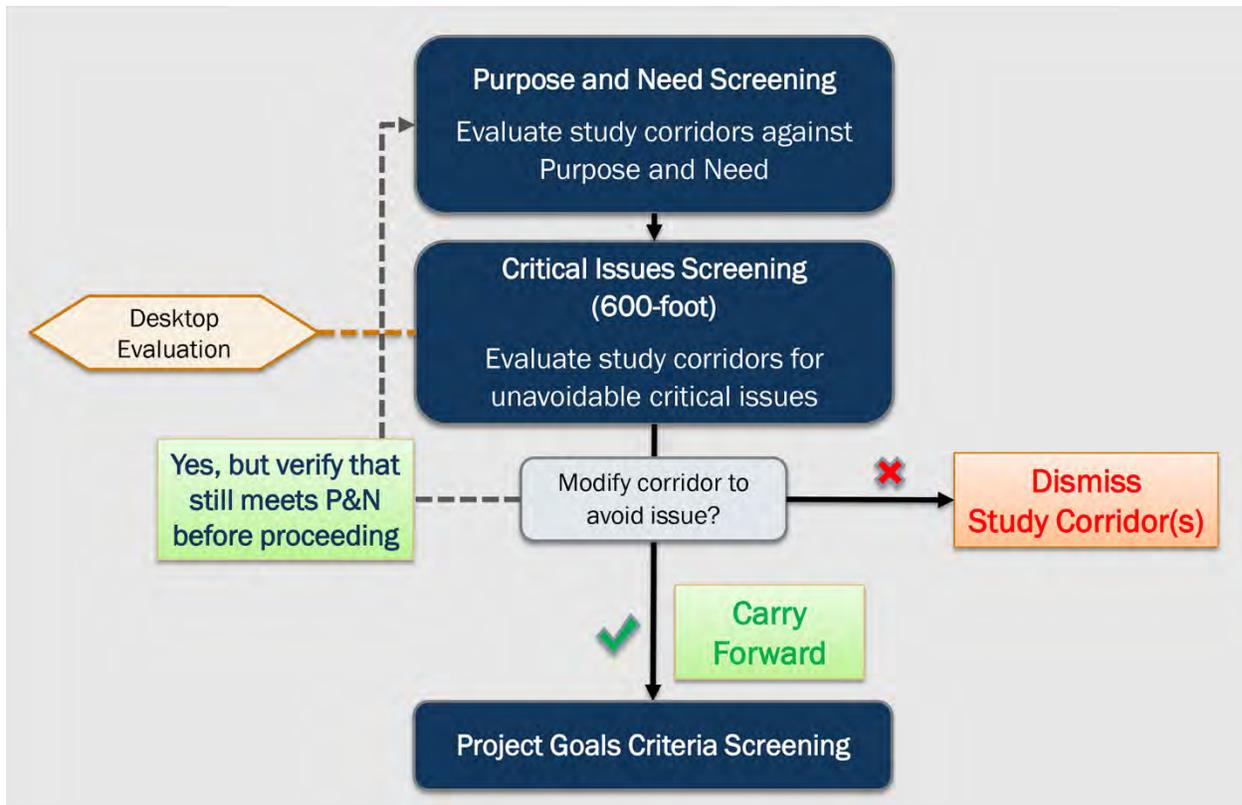
12 7.0 CRITICAL ISSUE SCREENING

13 The critical issues were screened against the remaining study corridors. As previously
 14 stated, the critical issues were identified as: airports; public parks; National Register of
 15 Historic Places (NRHP) properties; cemeteries; places of worship; hazardous materials,
 16 including landfills; jail complexes; federal wildlife refuges; public facilities, including schools;
 17 state antiquities landmarks (SALs); and engineering design criteria. Critical issues within the
 18 SH 68 study area are shown on **Exhibits 4.1** through **4.3** in **Attachment A. Table 2**
 19 summarizes the results of the critical issue screening. **Figure 2** shows the detailed process
 20 for the critical issue screening.

1 **Table 2: Study Corridor (600-foot) Screening for Critical Issues**

Critical Issues Avoided?	Remaining Corridors											
	NO BUILD	FM 907 PSM	FM 907 MOD	Tower Rd	2014 PSM	2014 MOD PSM	2014 MOD 2	FM 1423 PSM	FM 1423 MOD (Golie Rd)	FM 493 PSM	FM 493 MOD 2	FM 493 MOD
Airport	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public Parks/NRHP Historic Properties	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cemetery	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Church	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partial	No	Yes	Yes
HazMat, including Landfills	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jail Complex	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
National Wildlife Refuge	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public facilities, including Schools	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
State Antiquities Landmarks	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Design Criteria	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

2



1
2 Figure 2. SH 68 Critical Issues Screening Summary

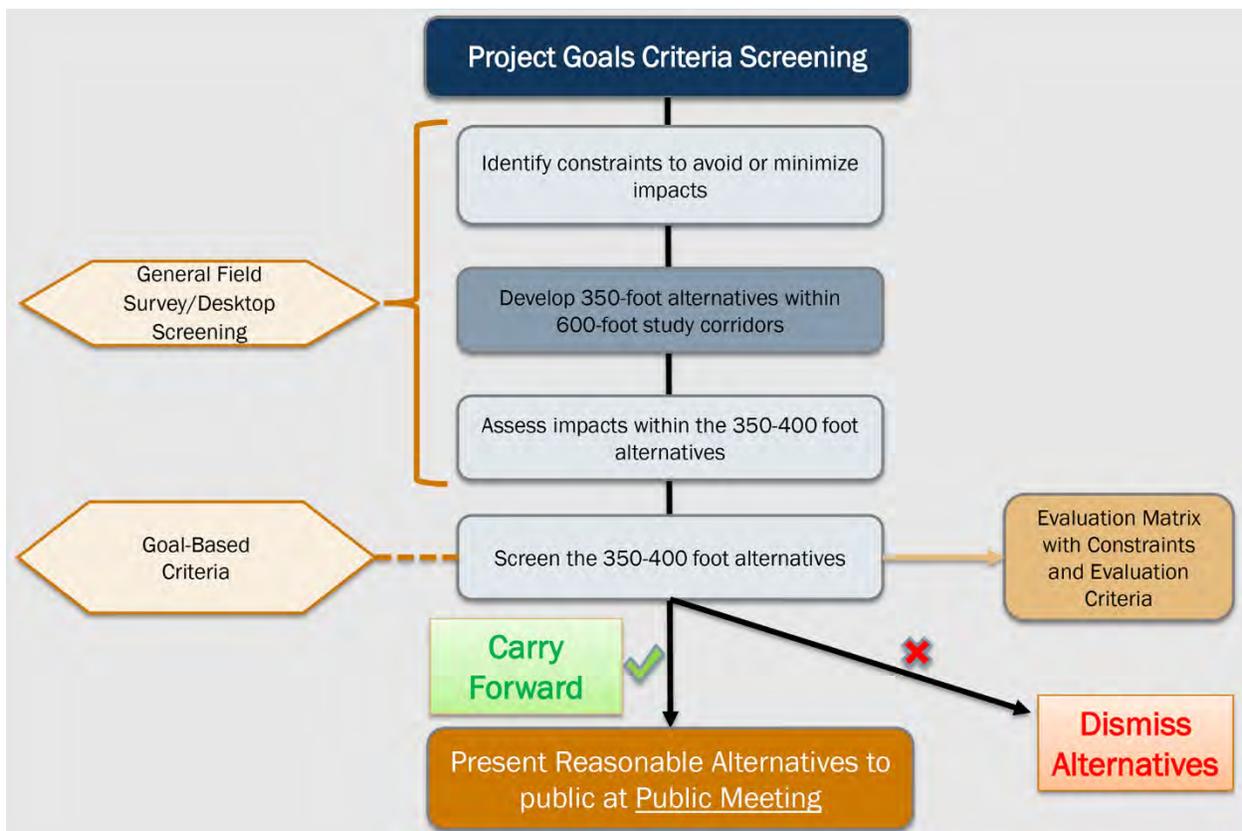
3 Based on the critical issue, two study corridors were eliminated. The FM 907 PSM Study
4 Corridor was removed from consideration because it bisected the United States Fish &
5 Wildlife Service Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge (LRGV-NWR) Goodfields
6 Tract. A modified version of the FM 907 PSM Study Corridor, called the FM 907 Modified
7 Study Corridor was developed that avoids the wildlife refuge and was carried forward in the
8 alternatives analysis process.

9 The FM 493 PSM Study Corridor was also removed from consideration because it would
10 impact an existing place of worship, the Salón del Reino de los Testigos de Jehová. An
11 additional version of the FM 493 PSM Study Corridor, called the FM 493 Modified 2 Study
12 Corridor, was developed to avoid the critical issue represented by the church (Salón del
13 Reino de los Testigos de Jehová). Another modified version of the FM 493 PSM study
14 corridor, called the FM 493 Modified Study Corridor, was developed in response to a public
15 comment to parallel FM 493 to the east. The hand drawn alignment paralleled an existing
16 canal; however, as drawn, the study corridor impacted the BFI landfill. Therefore, the study
17 corridor was adjusted to avoid impacts to the landfill.

18 As a result of the critical issue screening, nine study corridors plus the No-Build Alternative
19 were carried forward for further evaluation.

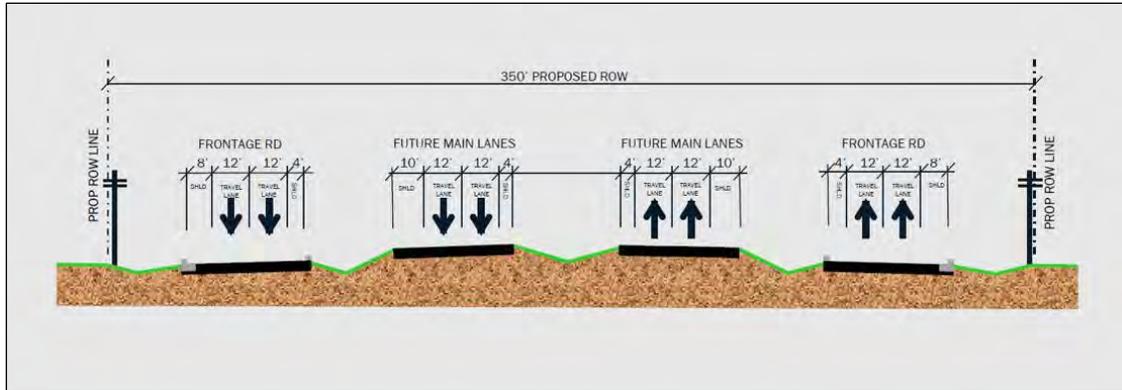
1 8.0 PROJECT GOALS CRITERIA SCREENING

2 After the alternatives were screened against critical issues, the remaining nine 600-foot
 3 study corridors were reanalyzed to develop 350 foot to 400 foot wide corridors using
 4 updated environmental constraints obtained between March 2016 and January 2017 from
 5 information gathered through research and limited windshield surveys from public ROW.
 6 These 350 foot to 400 foot wide corridors were identified as preliminary alternatives. The
 7 environmental constraints used in the reduction of the corridors included the critical issues
 8 (shown in **Exhibits 4.1** through **4.3** in **Attachment A**); land use and land cover; hydrology;
 9 colonias; prime farmland soils; hazardous materials; cultural resources; utilities; and oil/gas
 10 wells and pipelines, while maintaining a 70-mph design speed. These preliminary
 11 alternatives were then screened against the project goal-based criteria. **Figure 3** shows the
 12 detailed process for the project goals criteria screening.



13
 14 Figure 3. SH 68 Project Goals Criteria Screening Summary

15 Because the mode of transportation identified for SH 68 was an expressway facility with
 16 frontage roads, all preliminary alternatives developed for the project would include the same
 17 typical section (i.e. expressway facility with frontage roads) with the exception of the No-
 18 Build Alternative. The ultimate typical section of the proposed SH 68 facility is shown in
 19 **Figure 4**.



1
2 Figure 4. SH 68 Ultimate Typical Section

3 The preliminary alternatives were laid out for a 350-foot-wide typical ROW, with additional
4 width up to 400 feet to accommodate interchanges where existing facilities connect to a
5 proposed alternative corridor. In some cases, a 350-foot alternative was adjusted to avoid or
6 minimize constraints, or to meet engineering design criteria.

7 The preliminary Alternatives have the same name as the study corridors from which they
8 were developed and are shown in **Exhibit 5** in **Attachment A**. Detailed views and
9 environmental constraints for the 350-foot to 400-foot-wide preliminary alternatives are
10 shown on aerial imagery in a series of map exhibits in **Attachment A**:

- 11 • The FM 907 Modified and Tower Road Alternatives are shown on the **Exhibit 6a** Index
12 Map and **Exhibits 6a.1** through **6a.12**.
- 13 • The 2014 PSM, 2014 Modified PSM, and 2014 Modified 2 Alternatives are shown on
14 the **Exhibit 6b** Index Map and **Exhibits 6b.1** through **6b.13**.
- 15 • The FM 1423 PSM and FM 1423 Modified (Golie Road) Alternatives are shown on
16 the **Exhibit 6c** Index Map and **Exhibits 6c.1** through **6c.13**.
- 17 • The FM 493 Modified and FM 493 Modified 2 Alternatives are shown on the
18 **Exhibit 6d** Index Map and **Exhibits 6d.1** through **6d.14**.

19 In addition, **Exhibits 7.1** through **7.3** show water resource-related constraints for the 350 to
20 400-foot wide preliminary alternatives on topographic maps.

21 **8.1 Evaluation Matrix and Goal-based Criteria Screening**

22 An evaluation matrix was created and used as a visual tool to compare the preliminary
23 alternatives within individual criterion. The criteria were measured in qualitative and
24 quantitative values. Qualitative assessment criteria were associated with the safety,
25 mobility, and feasibility/design goals while quantitative assessment criteria were associated
26 with the community/environment, cost effectiveness, and economic factors goals. The

1 evaluation matrix was then color coded using a red/yellow/green system with red
2 considered less desirable, yellow as neutral, and green as more desirable.

3 The evaluation matrix was not created to compare the preliminary alternatives against each
4 other with regards to the sum desirability of all the criteria, which would give each criterion
5 equal weighting. Instead, the evaluation matrix was simply intended to identify individual
6 criterion that had significant variability between preliminary alternatives to aid in the
7 determination of the most reasonable alternatives to carry forward for analysis in the DEIS.
8 The evaluation matrix is available in **Attachment B** and shows each preliminary alternative,
9 the project goal-based criteria, and the data collected for each alternative.

10 Several criteria were redundant with the previously evaluated critical issues. These criteria
11 included impacts to schools, cemeteries, faith-based organizations (churches), public
12 facilities, civic centers, parks and recreational facilities, SALs, NRHP properties, wildlife
13 refuges, and airports. Since the critical issue screening eliminated any 600-foot corridors
14 that impacted these issues, the majority of these criteria were consistent with having no
15 impacts across all the preliminary alternatives; however, updated information for some of
16 the criteria identified previously unidentified issues leading to variability between preliminary
17 alternatives. These criteria included impacts to faith-based organizations (churches), civic
18 centers, and NRHP-Listed Irrigation District crossings.

19 In addition to the critical issue criteria identified above, several of the findings were similar
20 across all of the preliminary alternatives. All preliminary alternatives would:

- 21 • Provide alternate route for larger/heavier vehicles
- 22 • Provide bicycle and pedestrian accommodations
- 23 • Provide additional capacity and improves mobility within the study area
- 24 • Improve transportation system reliability within the study area
- 25 • Minimize impacts to utility infrastructure
- 26 • Avoid and /or minimize impacts to hazardous materials sites
- 27 • Avoid and/or minimize impacts to: critical habitat for threatened and endangered
28 species; potential waters of the US crossings; and prime farmland soils.

29 Since the above criteria had no variability between alternatives, they were not used in
30 determining the reasonable alternatives. Additionally, although the economic goal criteria
31 were collected and analyzed, the economic goal criteria were not used in the determination
32 of the reasonable alternatives.

33 The remaining criteria were analyzed to determine which preliminary alternatives would
34 better meet the goals of the project. The following sections identify the reasonable
35 alternatives and the criteria used in that determination (Section 8.2), and the preliminary

1 alternatives eliminated from further consideration and criteria used in that determination
2 (Section 8.3).

3 **8.2 Reasonable Alternatives**

4 Based on the overall goal-based analysis, the proposed reasonable alternatives (**Exhibit 8** in
5 **Attachment A**) for the SH 68 project to be analyzed in the DEIS were identified as the:

- 6 • 2014 Modified 2 Alternative,
- 7 • 2014 PSM Alternative,
- 8 • FM 1423 PSM Alternative.

9 The No-Build Alternative will also be carried through for analysis in the DEIS for comparative
10 purposes. The following information supports the identification of the reasonable
11 alternatives. The ordinal comparison used in the determination of impacts is in comparison
12 to the other preliminary alternatives.

13 **8.2.1 2014 Modified 2 Alternative**

14 The 2014 Modified 2 Alternative was identified as a reasonable alternative because it would
15 result in a lower number of residential structure impacts (estimated at 145), lower number
16 of impacts to commercial structures (estimated at 16), lower number of impacts to
17 commercial parcels/properties (estimated at 13), fewer impacts to potential historic age
18 resources (18), would not impact existing oil/gas well facilities, would not impact any faith-
19 based facilities, and would not impact colonias. The alternative also had the least amount of
20 potential impacts to floodplains (estimated at 140 acres) and equaled the lowest amount of
21 impacts to NWI features (0.3 acre) while meeting the safety goals. Furthermore, this
22 alternative would have the lowest estimated total project cost of all preliminary alternatives
23 (estimated at \$723 million).

24 **8.2.2 2014 PSM Alternative**

25 The 2014 PSM Alternative is very similar to the 2014 Modified 2 Alternative as the southern
26 portions of these alternatives are the same. The 2014 PSM Alternative was identified as a
27 reasonable alternative because it would result in a lower number of residential structure
28 impacts (estimated at 143), lower number of impacts to commercial structures (estimated
29 at 16), lower number of impacts to commercial parcels/properties (estimated at 13), the
30 lowest number of potential historic age resource impacts (estimated at 14), and would not
31 impact any faith-based facilities or colonias. The alternative also equaled the lowest amount
32 of impacts to NWI features (0.3 acre) and met the safety goals. Furthermore, this alternative
33 had a total project cost estimated at \$753 million, which was the third lowest estimated
34 total project cost for all preliminary alternatives. Regarding the mobility goals, the 2014 PSM

1 Alternative would provide more desirable connectivity to existing and planned infrastructure
2 improvements.

3 **8.2.3 FM 1423 PSM Alternative**

4 Based on input received during public involvement efforts, an existing roadway alternative
5 was requested to be included as an alternative for the project. Based on this request and
6 the lower impacts identified of all the preliminary alternatives that follow existing roadways,
7 the 1423 PSM Alternative was identified as a reasonable alternative. In analyzing the goal-
8 based criteria, the alternative had relatively lower impacts to brushland (estimated at 83
9 acres), lowest impacts to croplands/orchards (estimated at 342 acres), lower impacts to
10 pipeline crossings (estimated at 18), no impacts to oil/gas wells, equaled the lowest amount
11 of impacts to NWI features (0.3 acre), and met the safety goals. Additionally, this alternative
12 has the lowest number of impacts to residential parcels/properties of all the alternatives
13 that follow existing roadways (estimated at 173). Furthermore, this alternative had a total
14 project cost estimated at \$795 million, which was the second lowest estimated total project
15 cost for all preliminary alternatives that follow existing roadways.

16 **8.3 Alternatives Eliminated from Further Consideration**

17 The following section provides the justification for the elimination of the remaining six of the
18 nine preliminary alternatives. As discussed in the reasonable alternatives section above, the
19 comparisons used in the determination of impacts is in comparison to the other preliminary
20 alternatives.

21 **8.3.1 FM 907 Modified**

22 FM 907 Modified Alternative was eliminated because of the high number of residential
23 parcels/properties impacts (343 estimated), high number of residential structure impacts
24 (390 estimated), impacts to two places of worship, high impacts to commercial
25 parcels/properties (63 estimated), high impacts to commercial structures (69 estimated),
26 the highest number of impacts to potential historic age resources (40), one oil/gas well
27 impact, impacts to three colonias, high number of potential noise impacts (312 estimated),
28 and high impacts to NWI features (estimated 0.9 acre). Additionally, the estimated high ROW
29 acquisition and relocation cost would give the FM 907 Modified Alternative a relatively high
30 total project cost in comparison to the reasonable alternatives (estimated at \$812 million).
31 The FM 907 Alternative is also expected to have one of the longest durations to initiate
32 construction based on the significantly larger number of parcels needed and anticipated
33 utility adjustments.

1 **8.3.2 Tower Road**

2 The Tower Road Alternative was eliminated because of having the highest number of
3 residential parcels/properties impacts (413 estimated), highest number of residential
4 structure impacts (450 estimated), impacts to two places of worship, high impacts to
5 commercial properties (50 estimated), high impacts to commercial structures (57
6 estimated), impacts to one civic center (Palazzio Event Center), high number of impacts to
7 potential historic age resources (33), one oil/gas well impact, highest number of potential
8 noise impacts (353 estimated), impacts to eight colonias, and high impacts to NWI features
9 (estimated at 0.9 acre). Similar to the FM 907 Alternative, the estimated high ROW
10 acquisition and relocation cost would give the Tower Road Alternative a relatively high total
11 project cost in comparison to the other reasonable alternatives (estimated at \$808 million).
12 Additionally, the Tower Road Alternative provided less than 1 mile to an adjacent state route
13 interchange along I-2/US 83, which was the least desirable of the safety goal criteria to
14 minimize safety impacts along I-2/US 83. The Tower Road Alternative is also expected to
15 have one of the longest durations to initiate construction based on the significantly larger
16 number of parcels needed and anticipated utility adjustments.

17 **8.3.3 2014 Modified PSM**

18 2014 Modified PSM Alternative was eliminated based on its similarity to the 2014 PSM
19 Alternative. Because of the similarity, certain criteria were evaluated to determine the more
20 reasonable of the two alternatives. Of the two alternatives, the 2014 Modified PSM
21 Alternative would potentially impact a church and has a higher impact to
22 croplands/orchards. Additionally, the 2014 Modified PSM Alternative has the highest
23 number of oil and gas pipeline crossings (estimated at 34) of all the preliminary alternatives
24 and is very close to a major electrical substation, with as little as 8 feet of clearance to avoid
25 this constraint. The 2014 Modified PSM Alternative would also impact a gas gathering
26 station.

27 **8.3.4 FM 1423 Modified (Golie Road)**

28 The FM 1423 Modified (Golie Road) Alternative was eliminated based on its similarity to the
29 FM 1423 PSM Alternative. Because of the similarity, certain criteria were evaluated to
30 determine the more reasonable of the two alternatives. Of the two preliminary alternatives,
31 the FM 1423 Modified (Golie Road) Alternative would potentially impact two churches, had a
32 higher number of impacts to residential parcel/properties and structures, and had a higher
33 impact to croplands/orchards. Additionally, the FM 1423 Modified (Golie Road) Alternative
34 had the highest amount of impacts to NWI features (1.1 acres). Feasibility and design
35 criteria with regards to constructability was also an issue since the preliminary alternative is
36 adjacent to a major transmission line and in the vicinity of the North Alamo Water Supply

1 Corporation wastewater treatment plant, which is under construction near Golie Road and
2 Minnesota Road.

3 **8.3.5 FM 493 Modified 2**

4 The FM 493 Modified 2 Alternative was eliminated because of high residential structure
5 impacts (317 estimated), impacts to one oil/gas well, 22 irrigation canal crossings, impacts
6 to 11 colonias, high number of impacts to potential historic age resources (33), and the
7 highest number of crossings of a historical canal (19). Additionally, the preliminary
8 alternative had the second highest cost at an estimated \$914 million. The FM 493 Modified
9 2 Alternative is also expected to have one of the longest durations to initiate construction
10 based on the significantly larger number of parcels needed and anticipated utility
11 adjustments.

12 **8.3.6 FM 493 Modified**

13 The FM 493 Modified Alternative was eliminated because of impacts to croplands/orchards
14 (estimated at 505 acres), 15 irrigation canal crossings, impacts to three colonias, the
15 highest impact to mapped floodplains (350 acres), the highest impact to prime farmland
16 soils (1,185 acres), increased construction complexity because of adjacent irrigation canals,
17 and the highest total project cost of all preliminary alternatives (estimated at \$918 million).

18 **9.0 REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES DESCRIPTIONS AND SUMMARY**

19 The following section describes in detail the 350 foot to 400 foot wide corridors that will be
20 evaluated in the DEIS. Additionally, a summary of the alternatives analysis and next steps
21 are provided.

22 **9.1 2014 Modified 2 Alternative**

23 The 2014 Modified 2 Alternative (light purple route, see **Exhibit 8**) is approximately
24 21.7 miles in length and would require an estimated 1,057 acres of ROW. The 2014
25 Modified 2 Alternative is almost entirely on new location.

26 This reasonable alternative connects to I-2/US 83 approximately seven miles east of I-
27 69C/US 281, between the FM 1423/Val Verde Road overpass and the North Hutto Road
28 overpass, near the existing intersection of the I-2/US 83 westbound frontage road and
29 Valley View Road. From I-2/US 83, the 2014 Modified 2 Alternative would travel northwest
30 on new location for approximately three miles to near Minnesota Road before turning
31 generally northward for approximately seven miles through the communities of Muniz and
32 San Carlos to north of SH 107.

1 Approximately one mile north of SH 107, near Mile 17 ½ Road, the 2014 Modified 2
2 Alternative would curve to the west for approximately two miles, crossing FM 1925 (Monte
3 Cristo Road) and Davis Road. North of Davis Road, the 2014 Modified 2 route would run
4 parallel to the west side of Brushline Road for approximately five miles. The proposed
5 roadway would then curve to the northwest for approximately two miles before running along
6 the north side of the existing FM 490 for approximately three miles and connect to
7 I-69C/US 281 near the South Texas International Airport at Edinburg.

8 Future mainlane overpasses are assumed to be at Ferguson Road, Sioux Road, East Nolana
9 Loop/Earling Road, Owassa Road, Alberta Road, Trenton Road, Wisconsin Road, Canton
10 Road, SH 107, FM 1925/Monte Cristo Road, FM 2812, CR 2050/Brushline Road and Air
11 Cargo Drive.

12 9.2 2014 PSM Alternative

13 Like the 2014 Modified 2 Alternative, the 2014 PSM Alternative (orange route, see
14 **Exhibit 8**) is almost entirely on new location. The 2014 PSM Alternative is approximately
15 22.4 miles in length and would require an estimated 1,076 acres of ROW. The 2014 PSM
16 Alternative follows the same new location route as the 2014 Modified 2 Alternative from its
17 intersection with I-2/US 83 to SH 107, a distance of approximately eight miles, and
18 continues generally northward for another two miles to cross FM 1925/Monte Cristo Road.

19 North of FM 1925/Monte Cristo Road, the 2014 PSM corridor would curve to the east for
20 approximately one mile, approaching Mile 19 N Road, where it would then run parallel to the
21 west side of FM 1423/Val Verde Road for approximately four miles. The corridor would then
22 curve to the northwest for approximately four miles before running along the north side of
23 the existing FM 490 for approximately three miles and connect to I-69C/US 281 near the
24 South Texas International Airport at Edinburg.

25 This reasonable alternative would also pass through the communities of Muniz and San
26 Carlos. Future mainlane overpasses are assumed to be at Ferguson Road, Sioux Road, East
27 Nolana Loop/Earling Road, Owassa Road, Alberta Road, Trenton Road, Wisconsin Road,
28 Canton Road, SH 107, FM 1925/Monte Cristo Road, FM 2812, CR 2050/Brushline Road,
29 and Air Cargo Drive.

30 9.3 FM 1423 PSM Alternative

31 The FM 1423 PSM Alternative (dark pink route, see **Exhibit 8**) is approximately 21.6 miles in
32 length and includes an area of approximately 1,061 acres. This reasonable alternative
33 would connect to I-2/US 83 approximately six miles east of I-69C/US 281.

1 This reasonable alternative would generally follow FM 1423/Val Verde Road northward for
2 approximately 7.5 miles from the intersection with I-2/US 83 to SH 107 in the community of
3 San Carlos. From SH 107, the alternative would continue northward along Val Verde Road
4 approximately two miles to FM 1925/Monte Cristo Road. Approximately 1.5 miles north of
5 FM 1925/Monte Cristo Road, between Mile 19 Road and Davis Road, the route would then
6 follow the 2014 PSM Alternative route for approximately 11 miles north and west to
7 I-69C/US 281 near the South Texas International Airport at Edinburg.

8 This reasonable alternative would pass through the City of Donna and the community of San
9 Carlos. Future mainlane overpasses are assumed to be at FM 495/Kansas Road, Sioux
10 Road, East Nolana Loop/Earling Road, Roosevelt Road, Alberta Road, Trenton Road,
11 Wisconsin Road, Canton Road, SH 107, FM 1925/Monte Cristo Road, FM 2812, CR
12 2050/Brushline Road, and Air Cargo Drive.

13 9.4 Summary of Next Steps

14 **Table 3** shows the full range of alternatives developed for the SH 68 project and the status
15 of each study corridor, preliminary alternative, reasonable alternative, and the No-Build
16 Alternative through the alternatives analysis. As part of the NEPA and alternatives analysis
17 process, a public meeting was held on January 3, 2017, to provide public with the
18 opportunity to review the reasonable alternatives.

19 The recommended preferred alternative will be identified in the DEIS based on technical
20 studies containing more refined information on the affected environment for the reasonable
21 alternatives. The recommended preferred alternative will be presented to the public at a
22 public hearing and the DEIS would be made available for review and comment. The Final
23 Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) will discuss in more detail the impacts and
24 mitigation measures of the preferred alternative as well as supplement any updated
25 information on the affected environment and address any issues raised following the DEIS.
26 In accordance with FHWA guidance, the FEIS will also identify any new impacts resulting
27 from project modifications, substantive new circumstances, or information regarding the
28 recommended preferred alternative following the circulation of the DEIS.

29

Table 3. Alternatives Analysis Summary

Alternatives	Purpose and Need	Critical Issue Screening	Reasonable Alternatives
I-69C/US 281 PSM	Eliminated	--	--
FM 907 PSM	Continue	Eliminated	--
FM 907 Modified	Continue	Continue	Eliminated
Tower Road	Continue	Continue	Eliminated
2014 PSM	Continue	Continue	Continue
2014 Modified PSM	Continue	Continue	Eliminated
2014 Modified 2	Continue	Continue	Continue
FM 1423 PSM	Continue	Continue	Continue
FM 1423 Modified (Golie Rd)	Continue	Continue	Eliminated
FM 493 PSM	Continue	Eliminated	--
FM 493 Modified 2	Continue	Continue	Eliminated
FM 493 Modified	Continue	Continue	Eliminated
No-Build Alternative	Continue	Continue	Continue

1

2

3 **10.0 REFERENCES**

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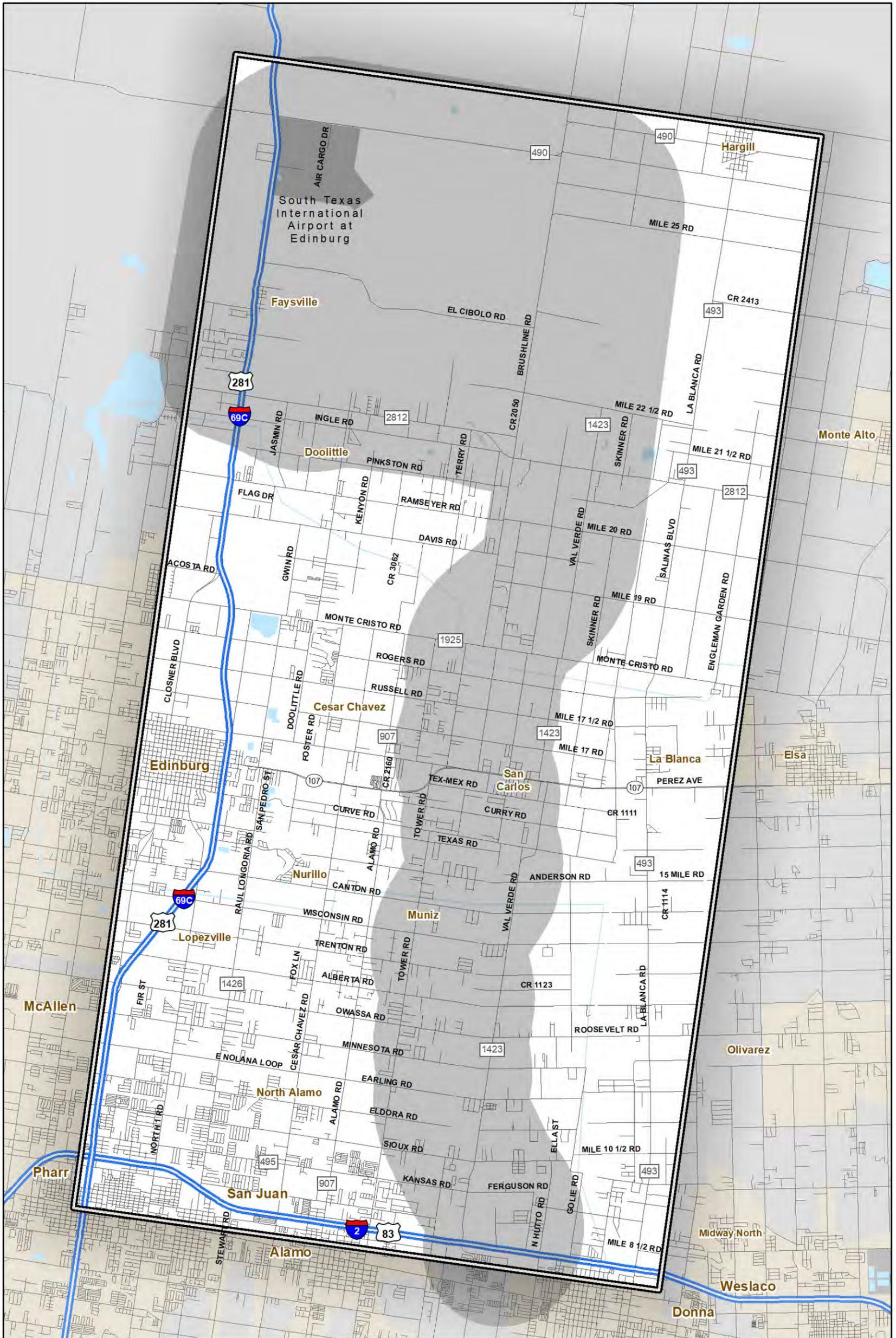
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- 3 _____. 2016c. Final SH 68 Project History and EA Alternatives Report, SH 68 from I-2/US 83
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- 18

1

Attachment A

2

Exhibits



Base Map: ESRI-USA Base Map

-  Study Area
-  EA Study Area

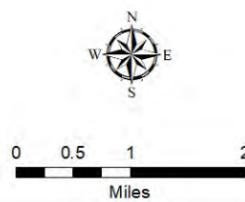
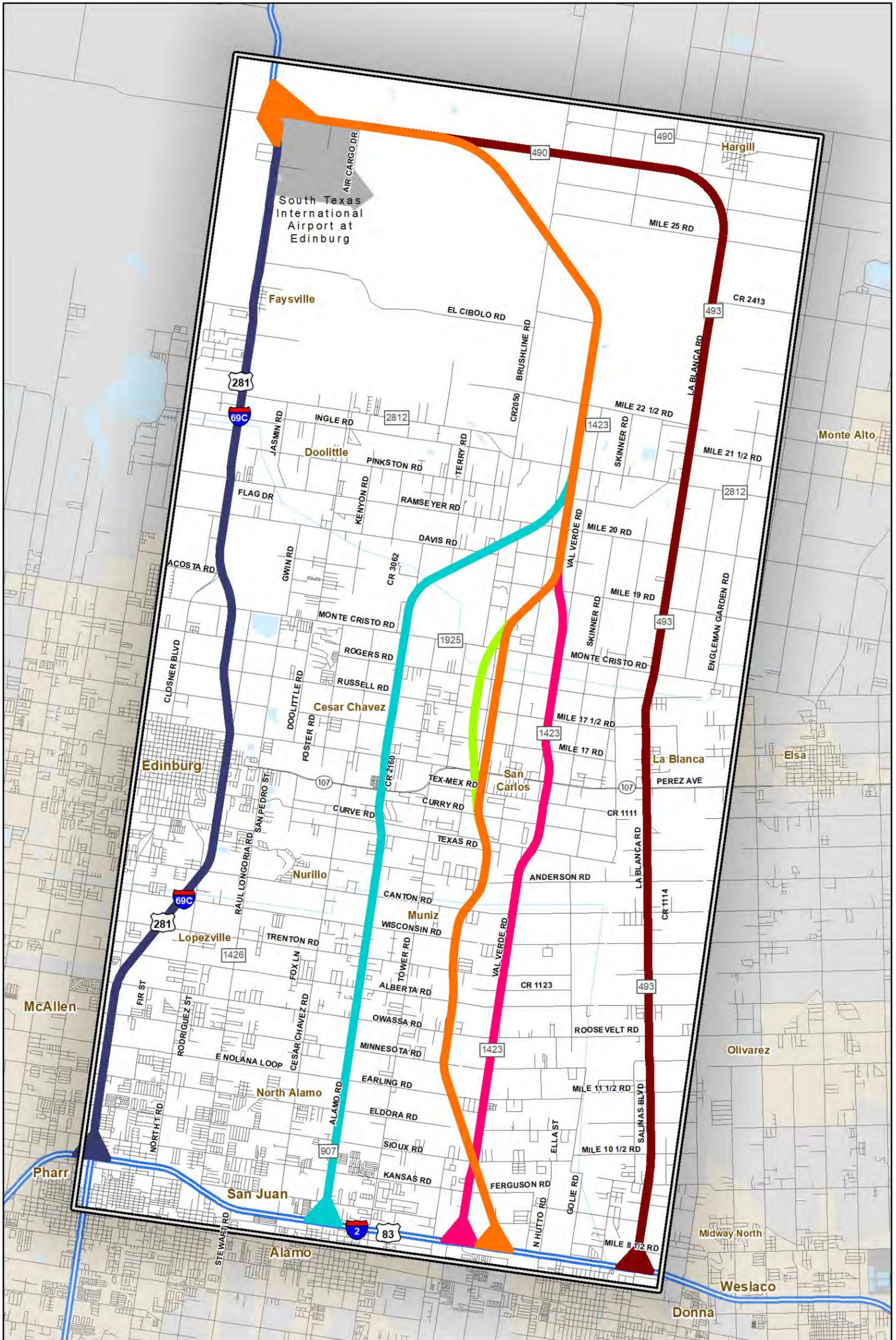


Exhibit 1
 SH 68 from
 I-2/US 83 to I-69C/US 281
 Hidalgo County, Texas
 CSJs: 3629-01-001, 002, and 003



600-foot Study Corridors (PSM)

- I-69C/US 281 PSM
- FM 907 PSM
- 2014 Modified PSM
- 2014 PSM
- FM 1423 PSM
- FM 493 PSM
- EIS Study Area

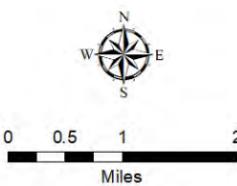
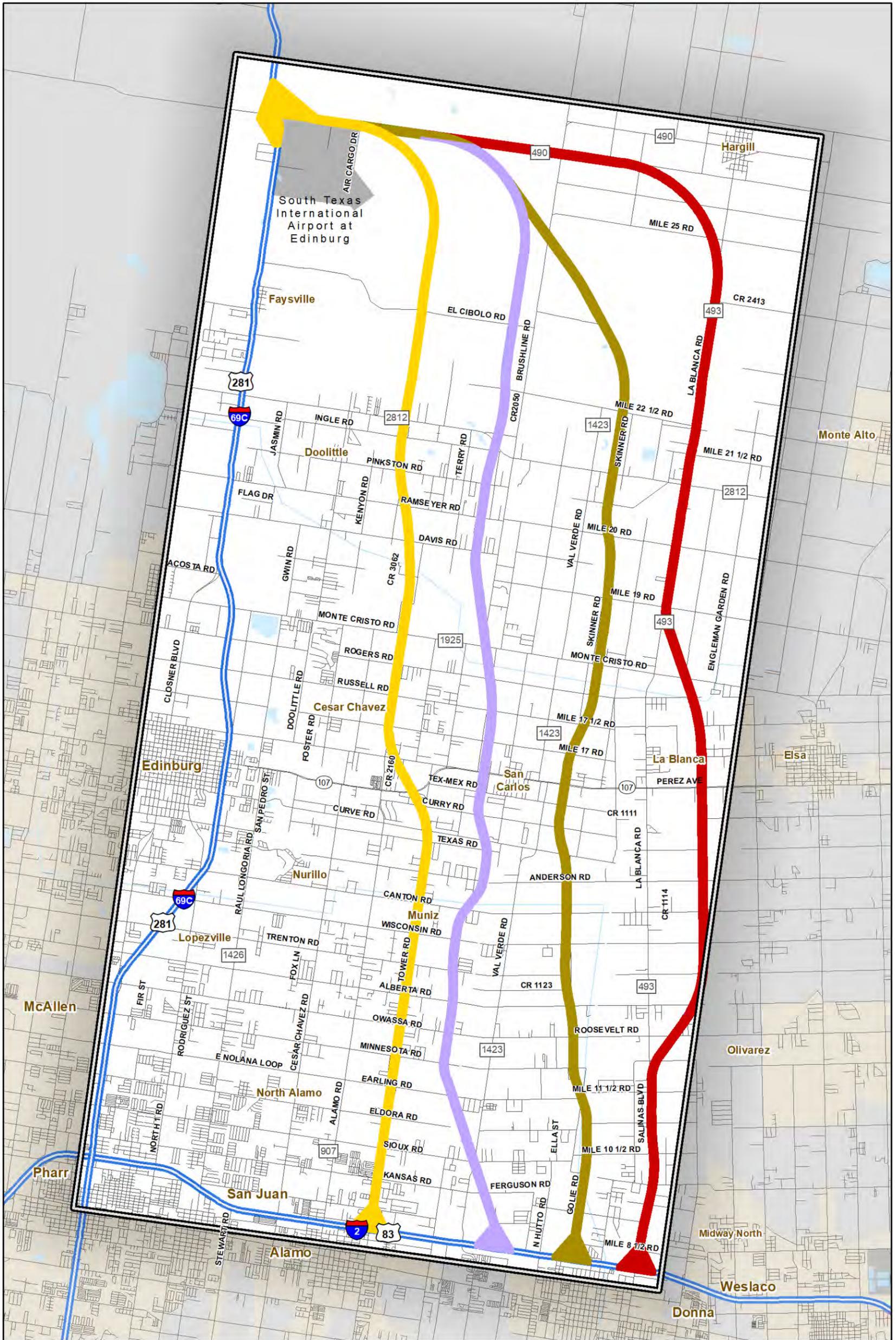


Exhibit 2
 600-foot Study Corridors (PSM)
 SH 68 from
 I-2/US 83 to I-69C/US 281
 Hidalgo County, Texas
 CSJs: 3629-01-001, 002, and 003



Additional 600-foot Study Corridors

- Tower Road
- 2014 Modified 2
- FM 1423 Modified (Golie Rd)
- FM 493 Modified
- EIS Study Area

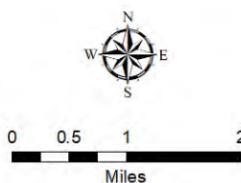
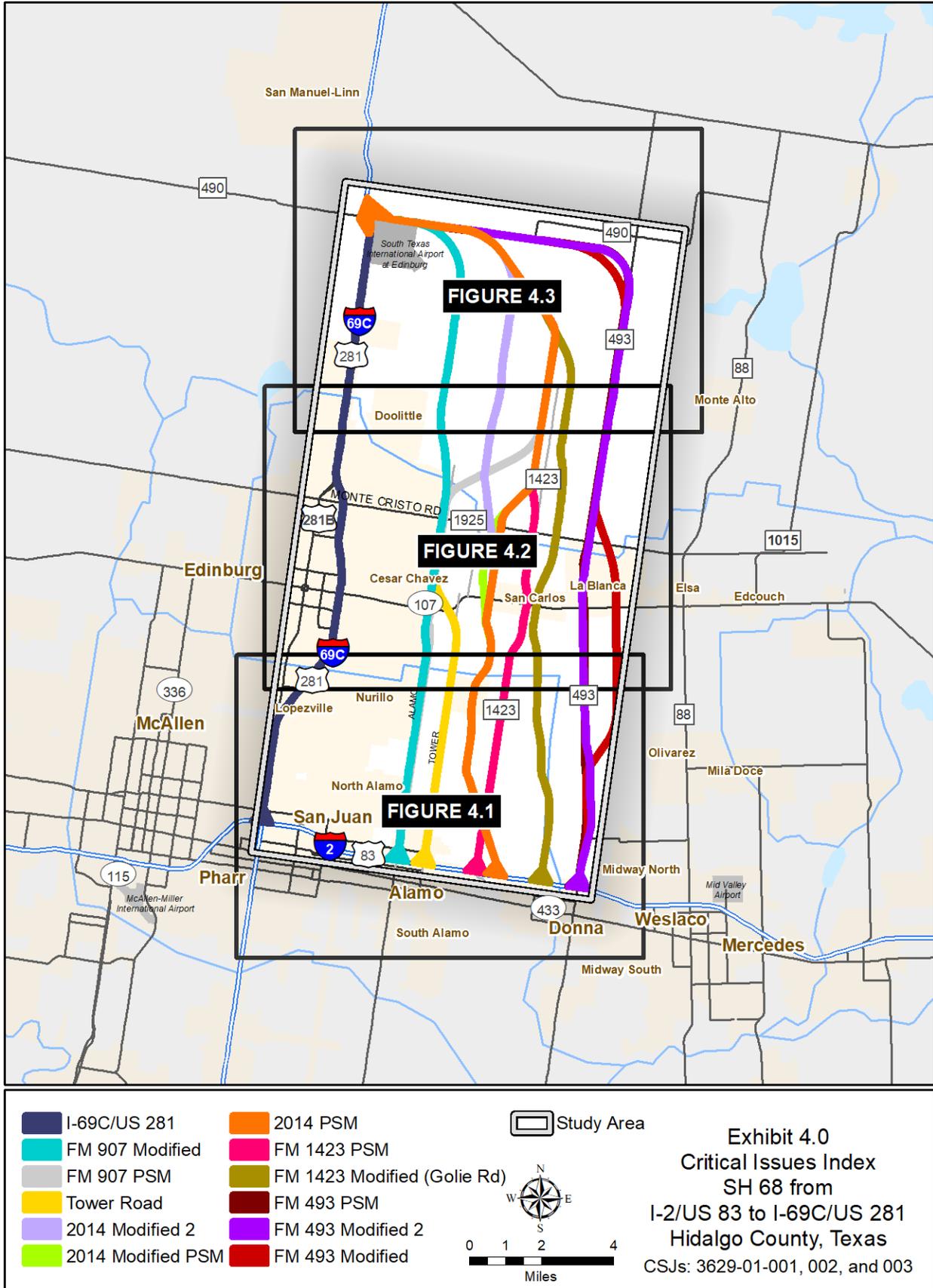
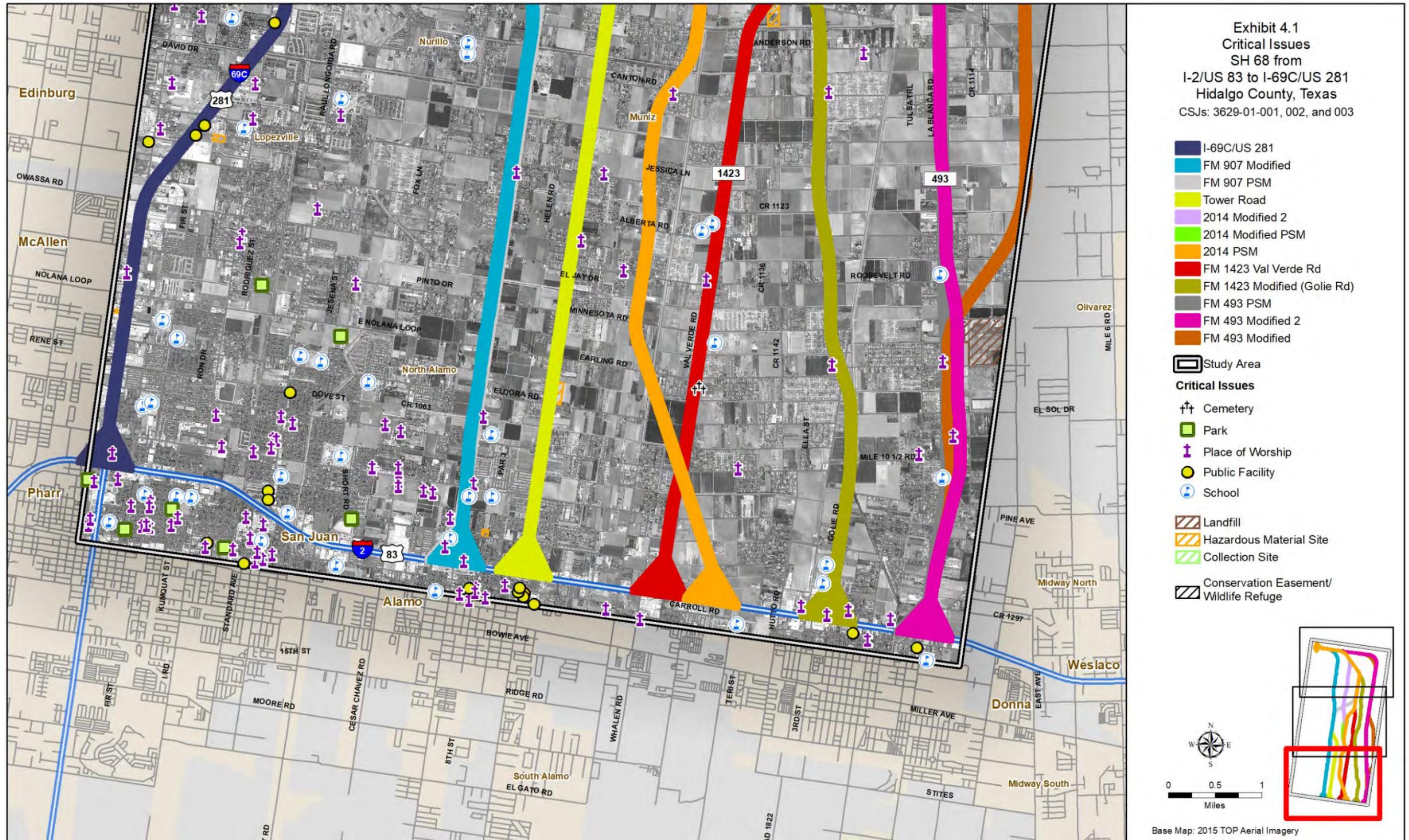
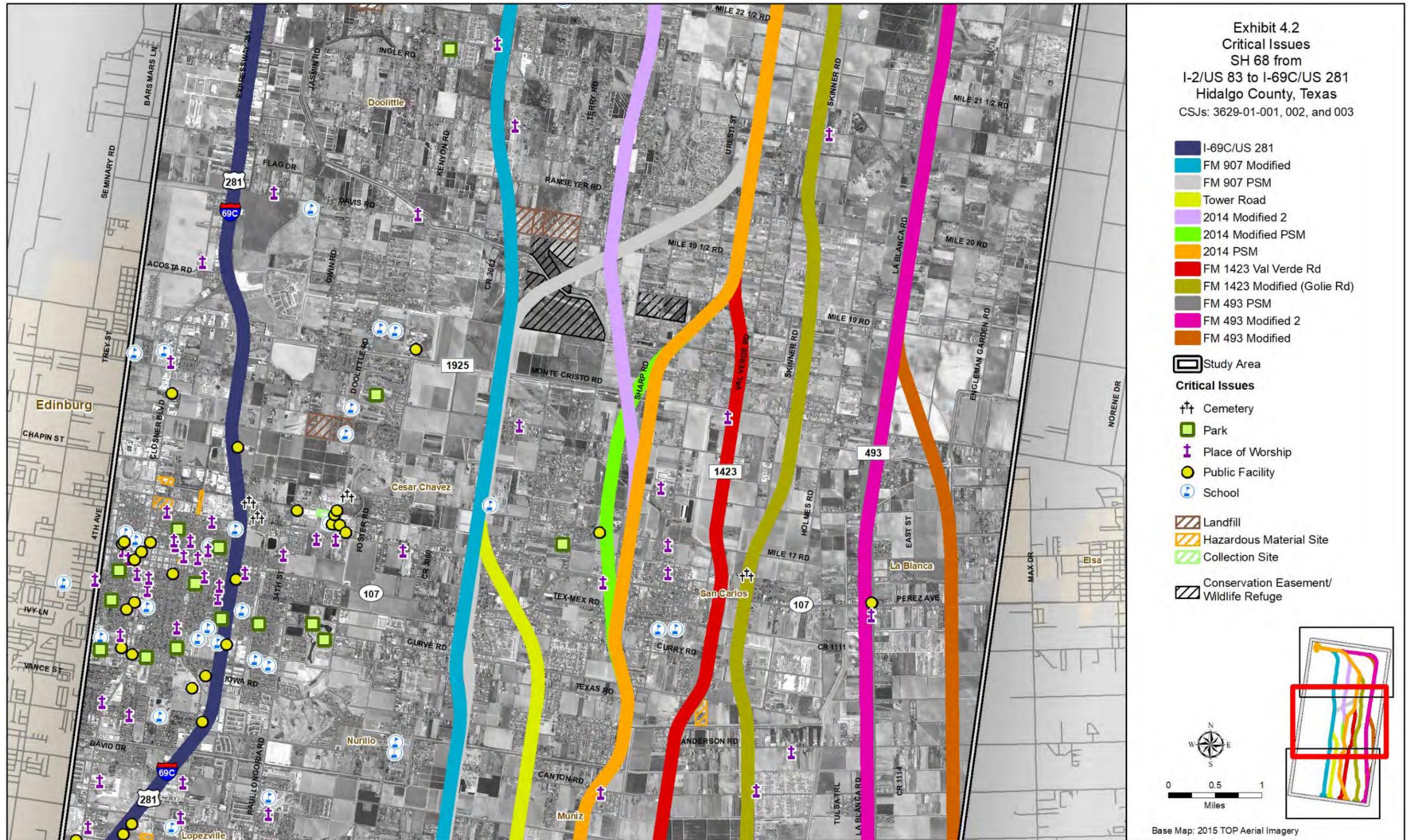


Exhibit 3
 Additional 600-foot Study Corridors
 SH 68 from
 I-2/US 83 to I-69C/US 281
 Hidalgo County, Texas
 CSJs: 3629-01-001, 002, and 003







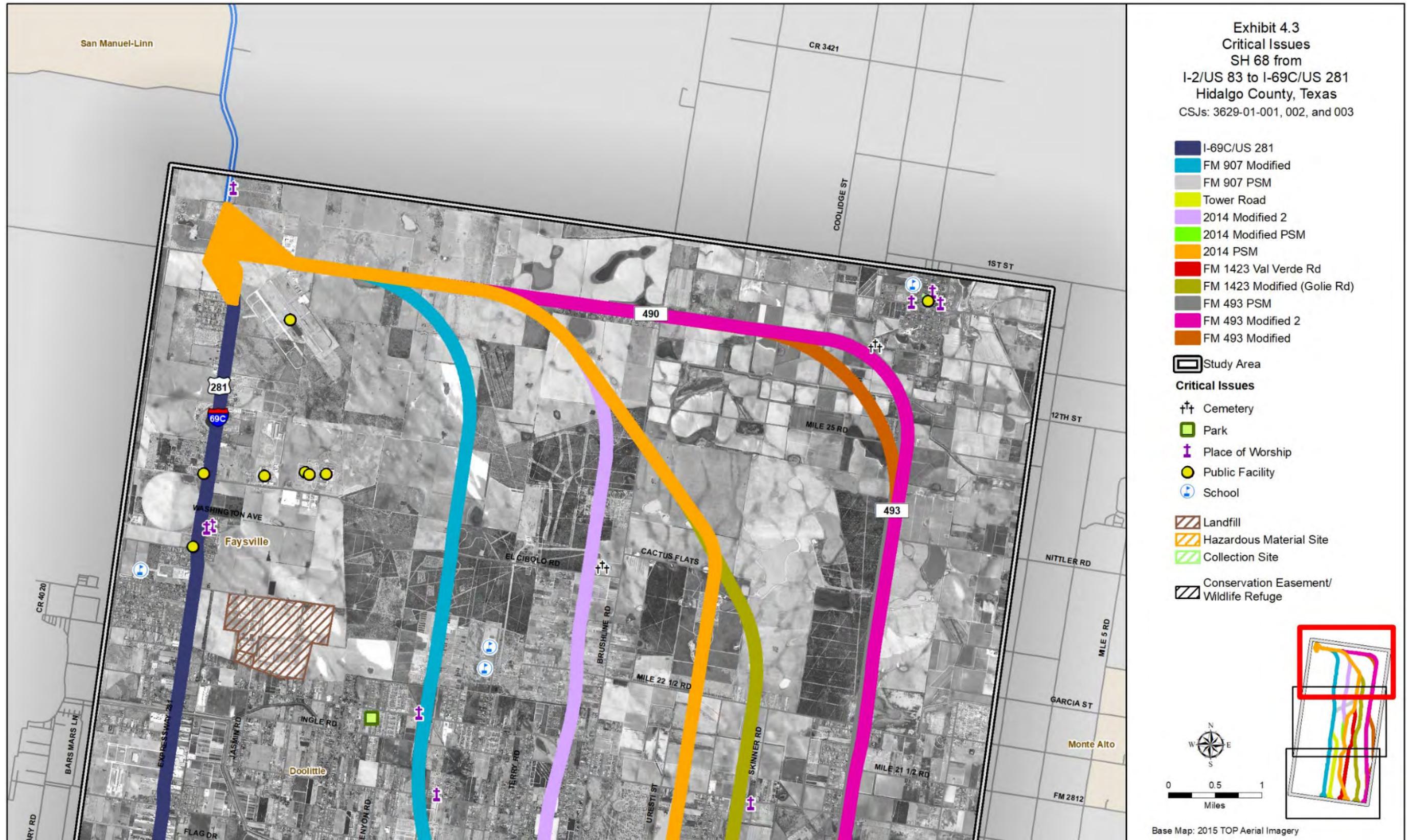
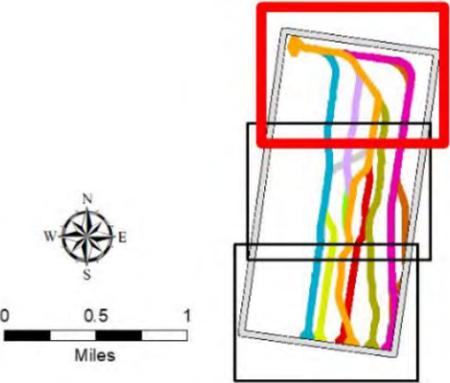


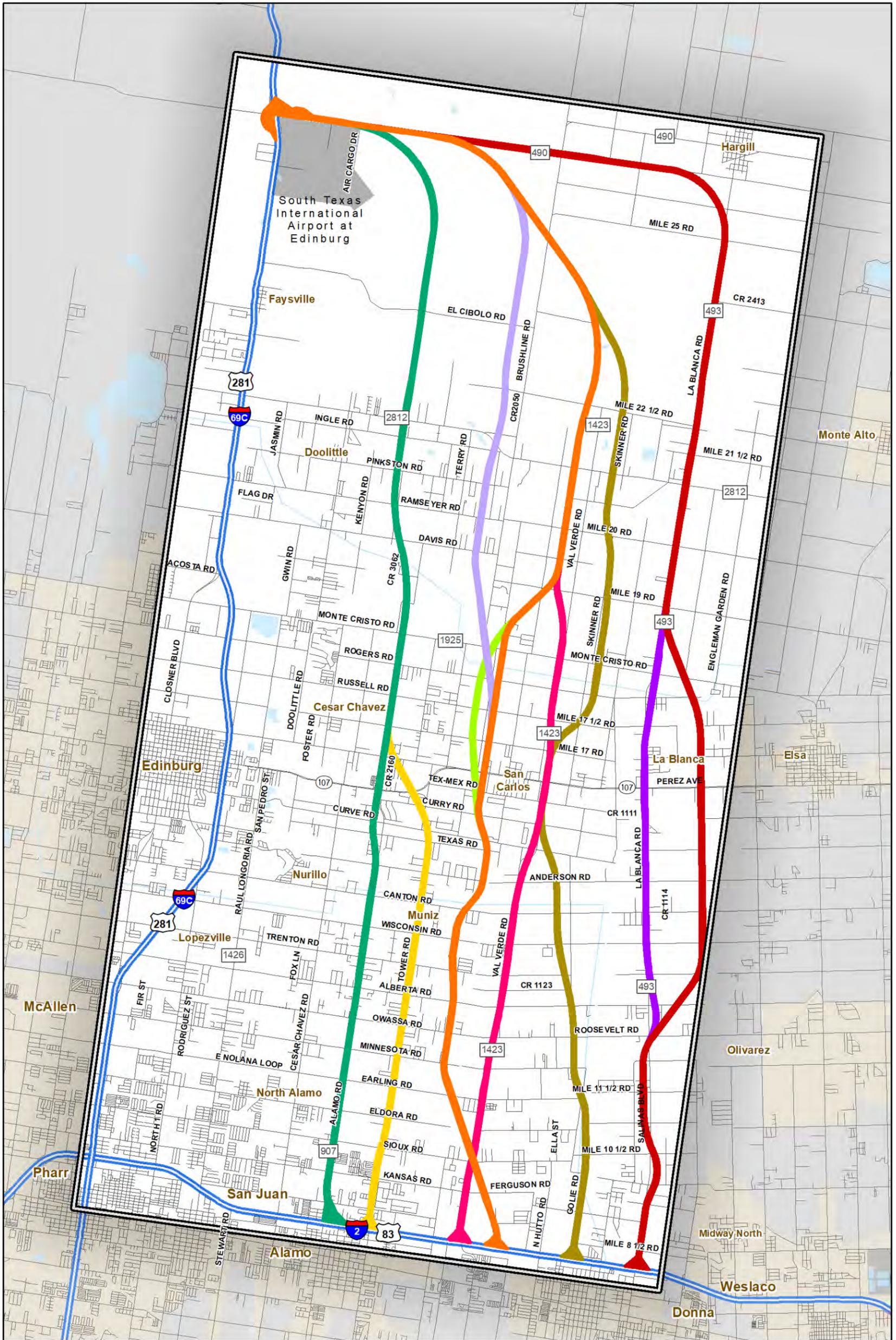
Exhibit 4.3
Critical Issues
 SH 68 from
 I-2/US 83 to I-69C/US 281
 Hidalgo County, Texas
 CSJs: 3629-01-001, 002, and 003

- I-69C/US 281
- FM 907 Modified
- FM 907 PSM
- Tower Road
- 2014 Modified 2
- 2014 Modified PSM
- 2014 PSM
- FM 1423 Val Verde Rd
- FM 1423 Modified (Golie Rd)
- FM 493 PSM
- FM 493 Modified 2
- FM 493 Modified

- Study Area
- Critical Issues**
- Cemetery
- Park
- Place of Worship
- Public Facility
- School
- Landfill
- Hazardous Material Site
- Collection Site
- Conservation Easement/
Wildlife Refuge



Base Map: 2015 TOP Aerial Imagery



350 to 400-foot Preliminary Alternatives

- FM 907 Modified
- Tower Road
- 2014 Modified 2
- 2014 Modified PSM
- 2014 PSM
- FM 1423 PSM
- FM 1423 Modified (Golie Rd.)
- FM 493 Modified 2
- FM 493 Modified
- EIS Study Area

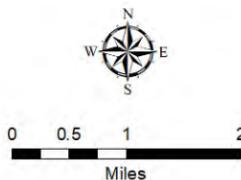
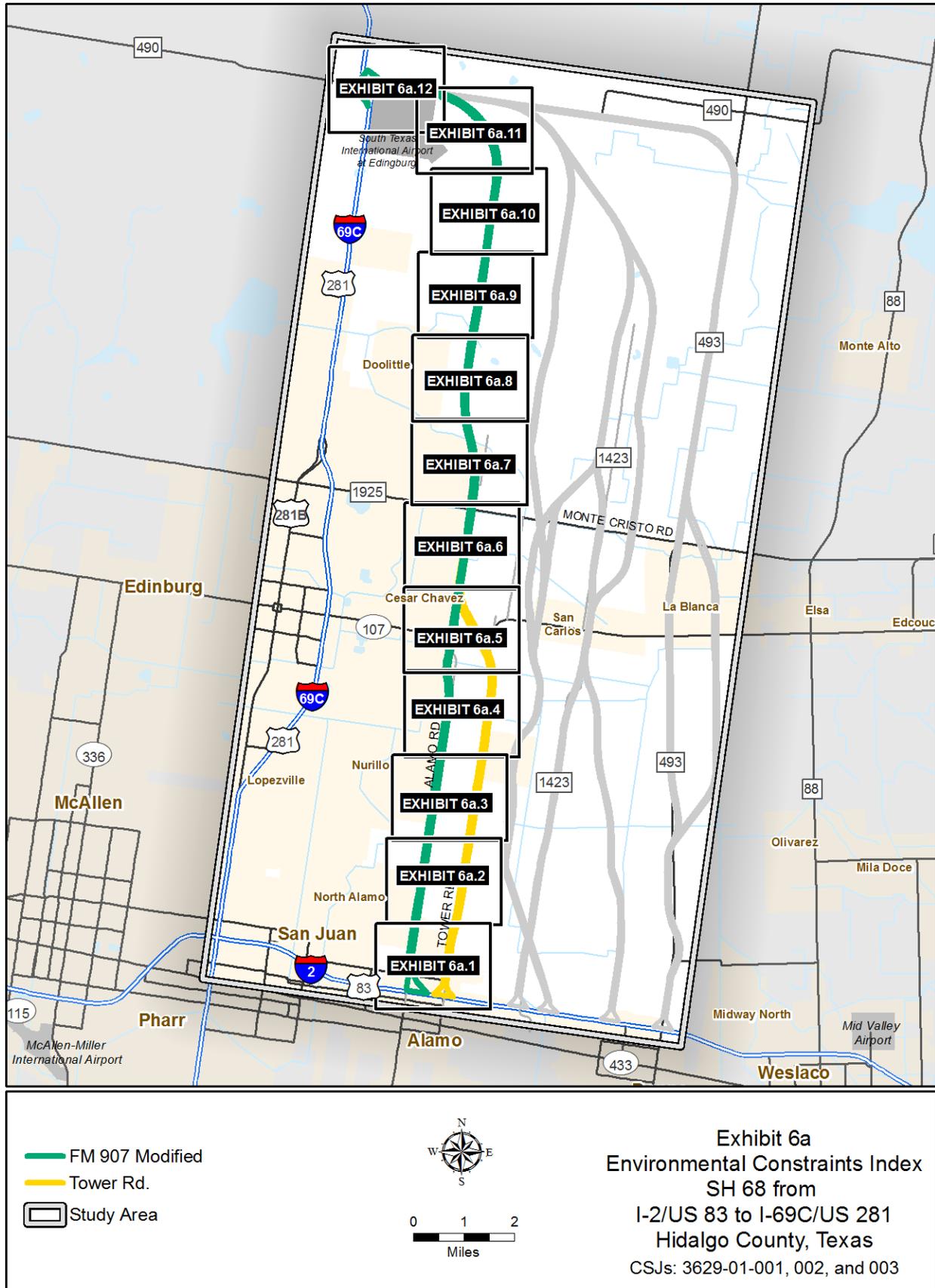
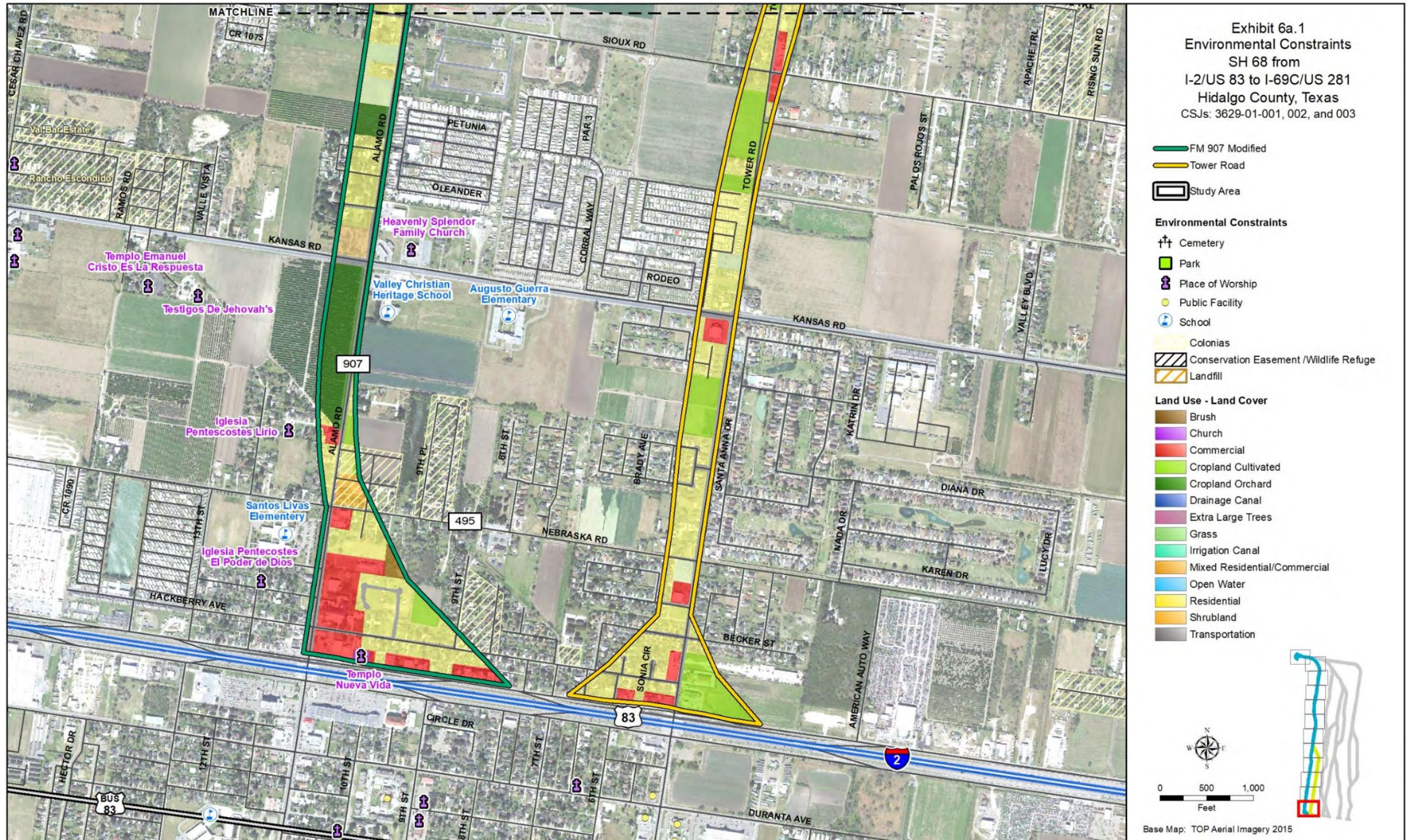
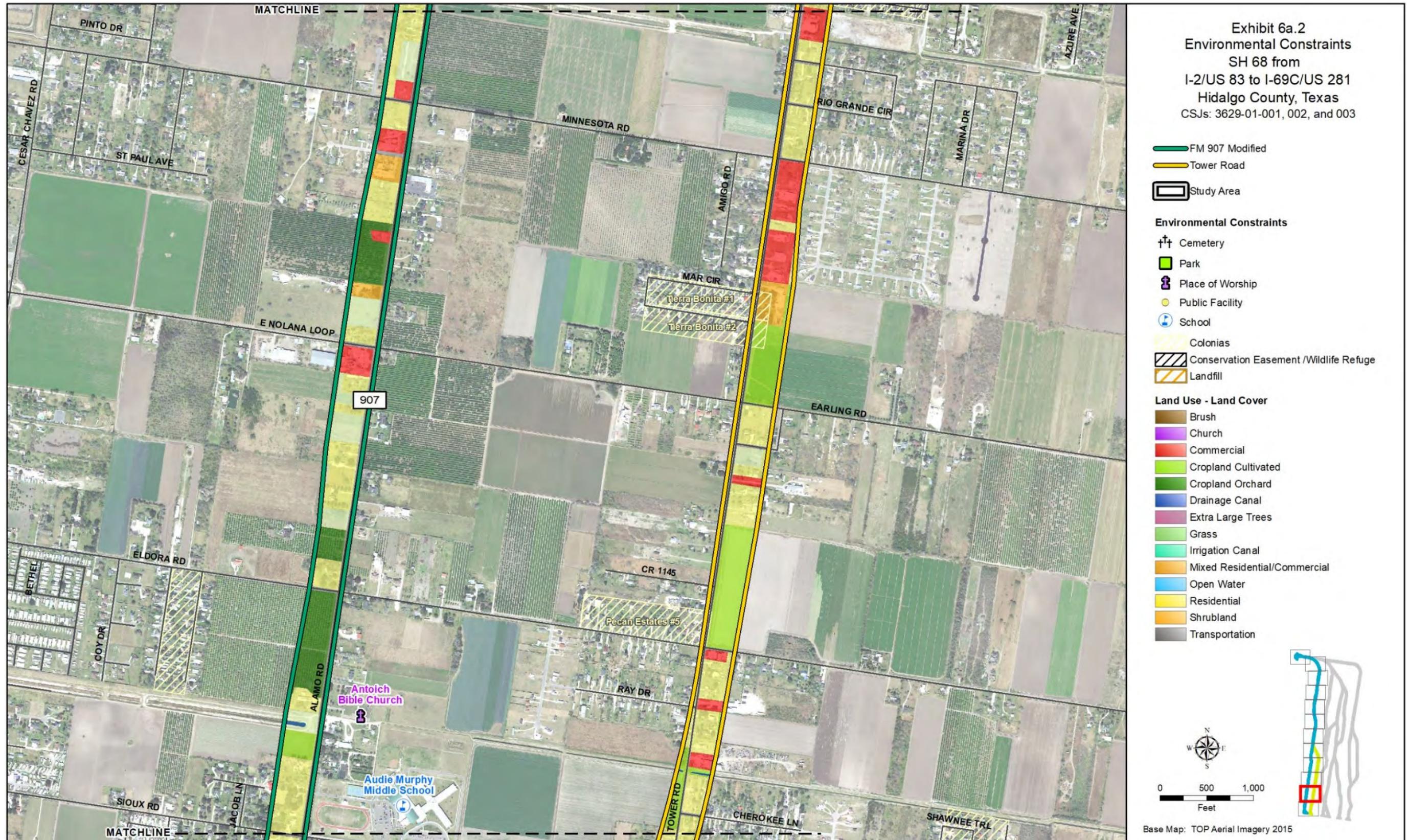
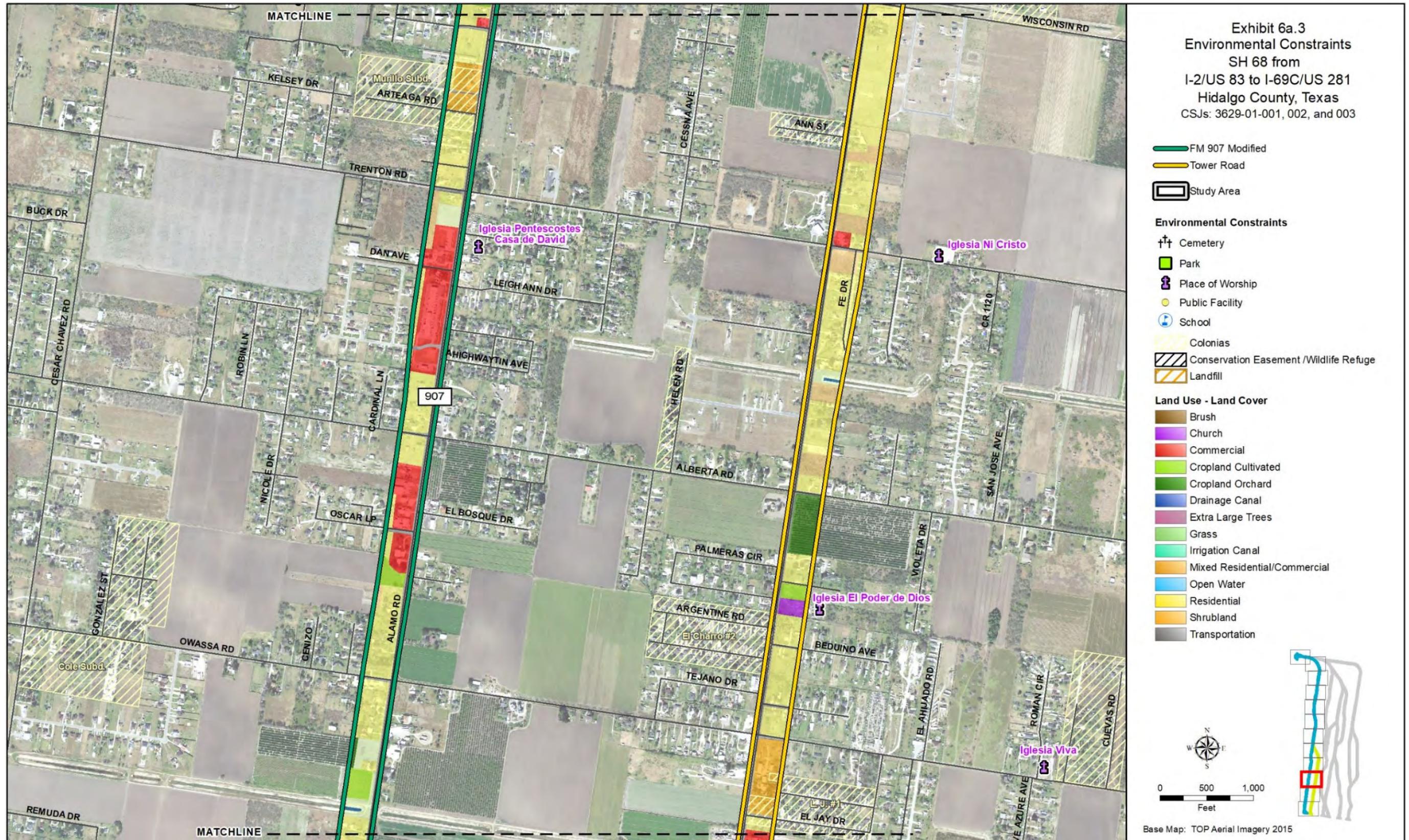


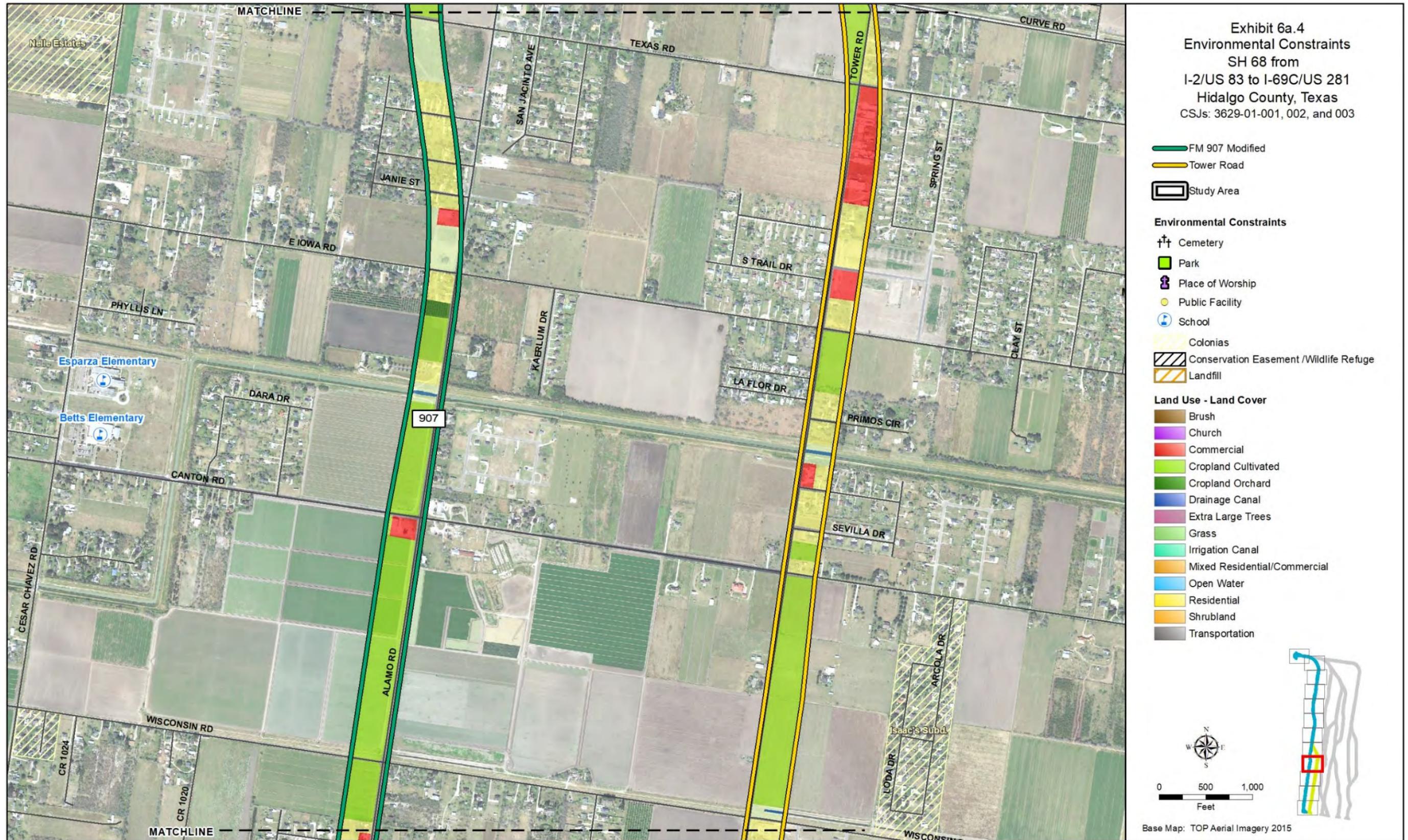
Exhibit 5
 350 to 400-foot Preliminary Alternatives
 SH 68 from
 I-2/US 83 to I-69C/US 281
 Hidalgo County, Texas
 CSJs: 3629-01-001, 002, and 003

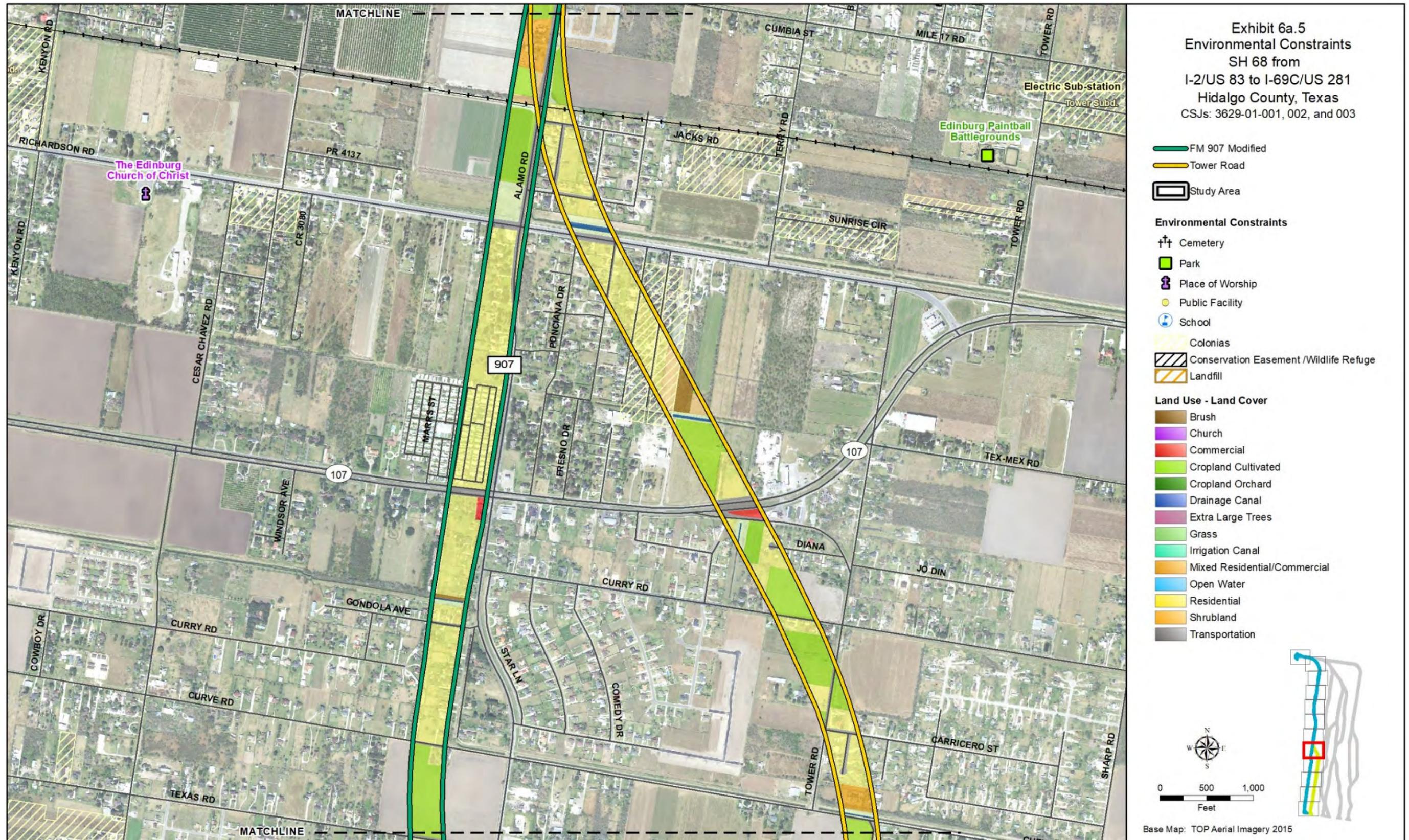


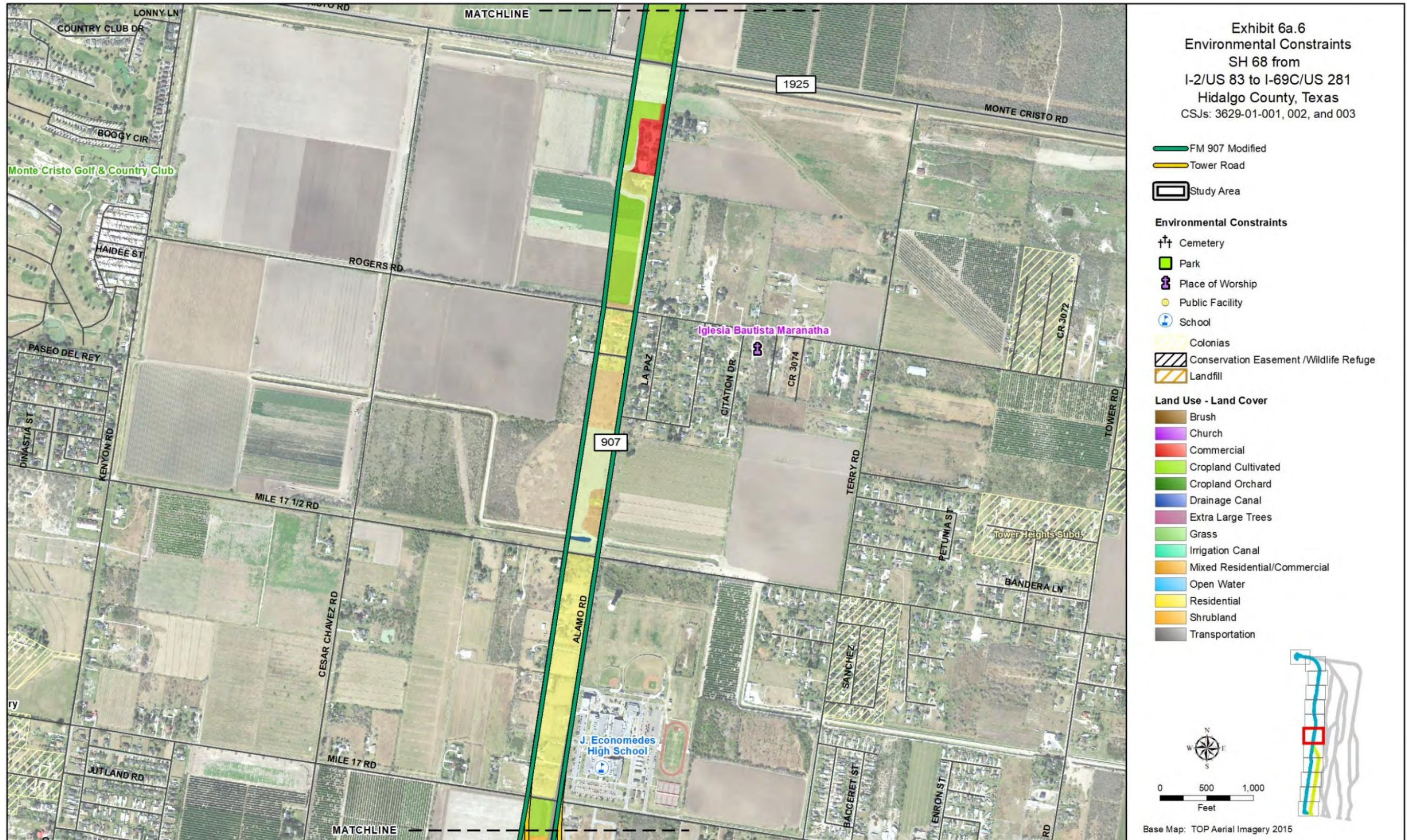


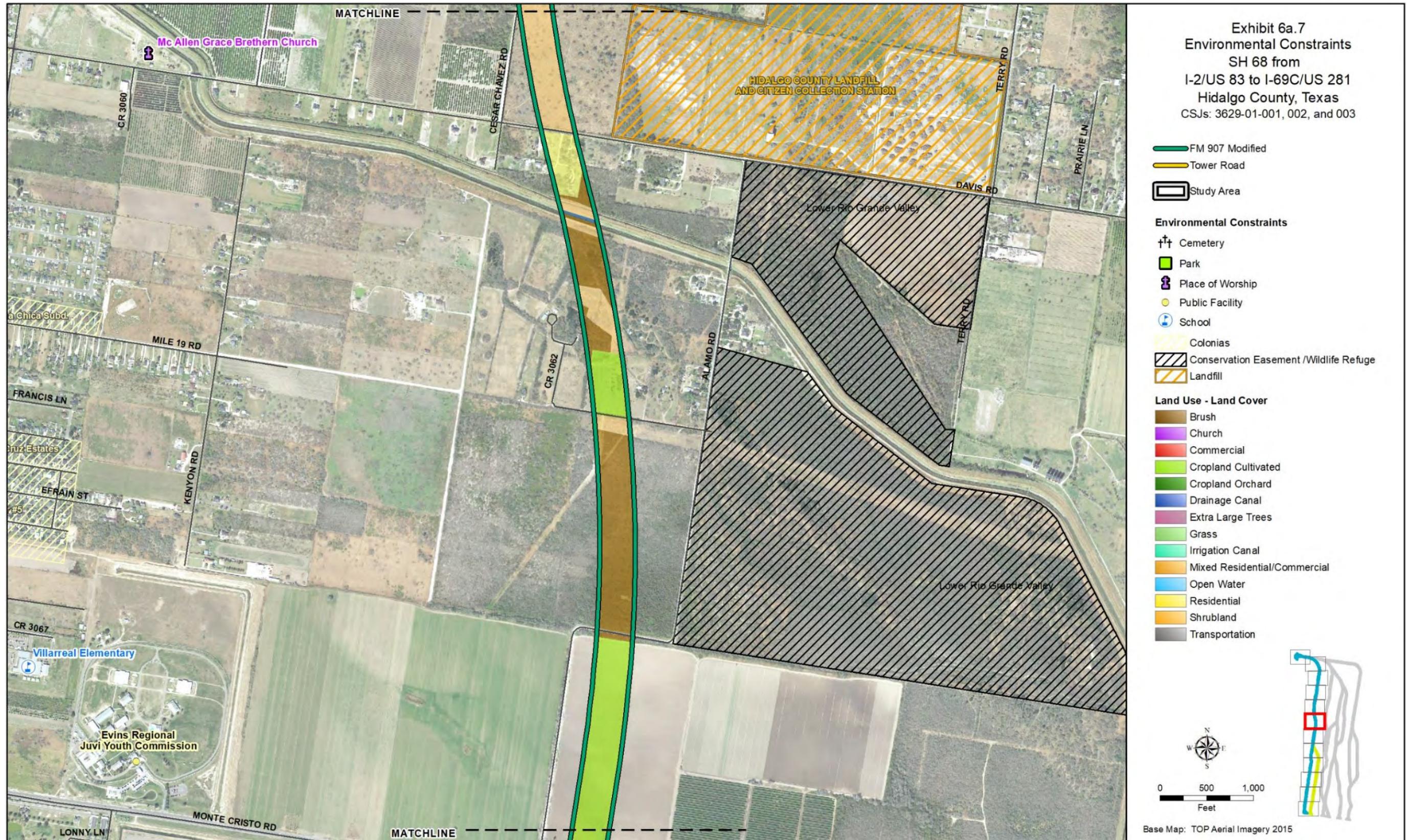




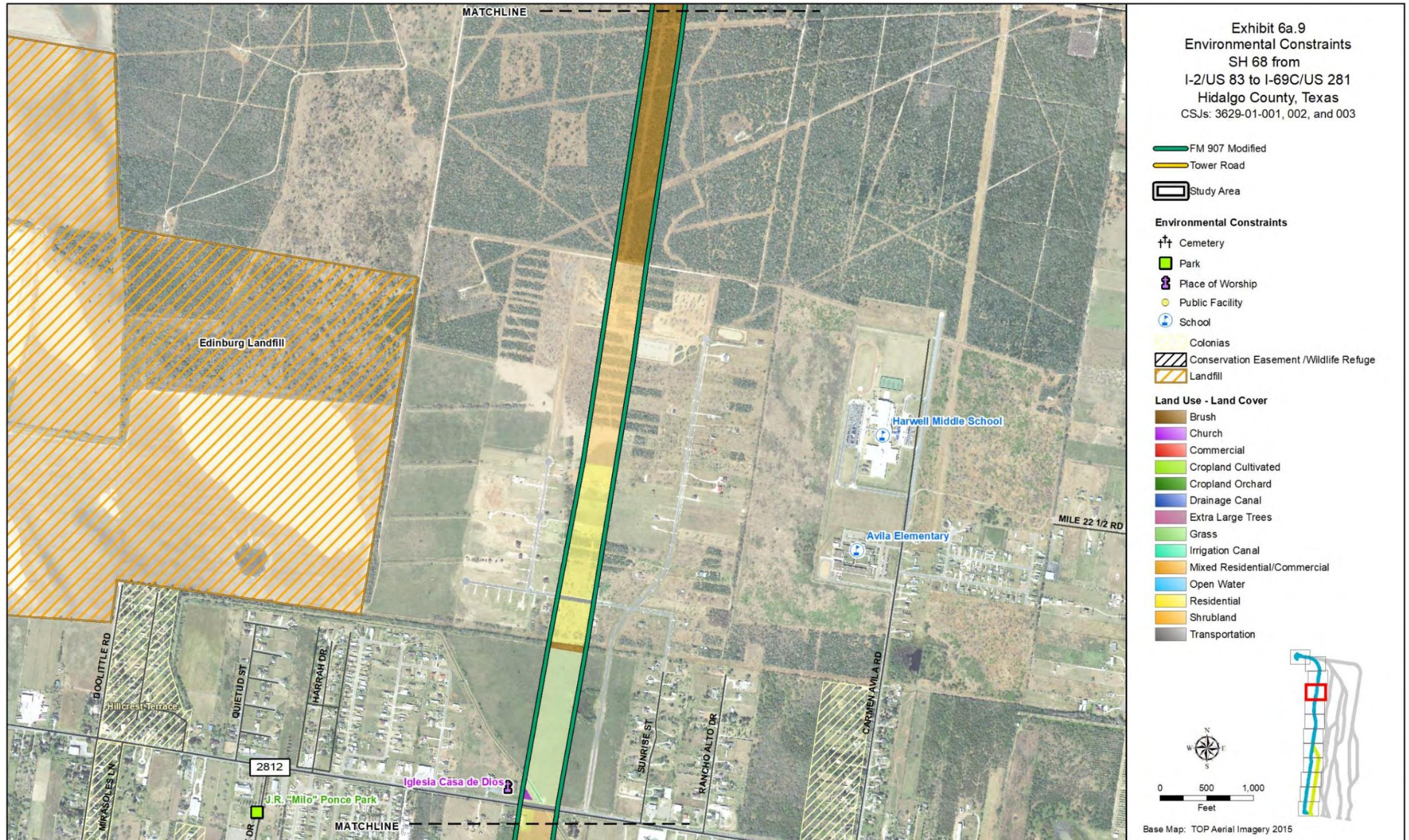


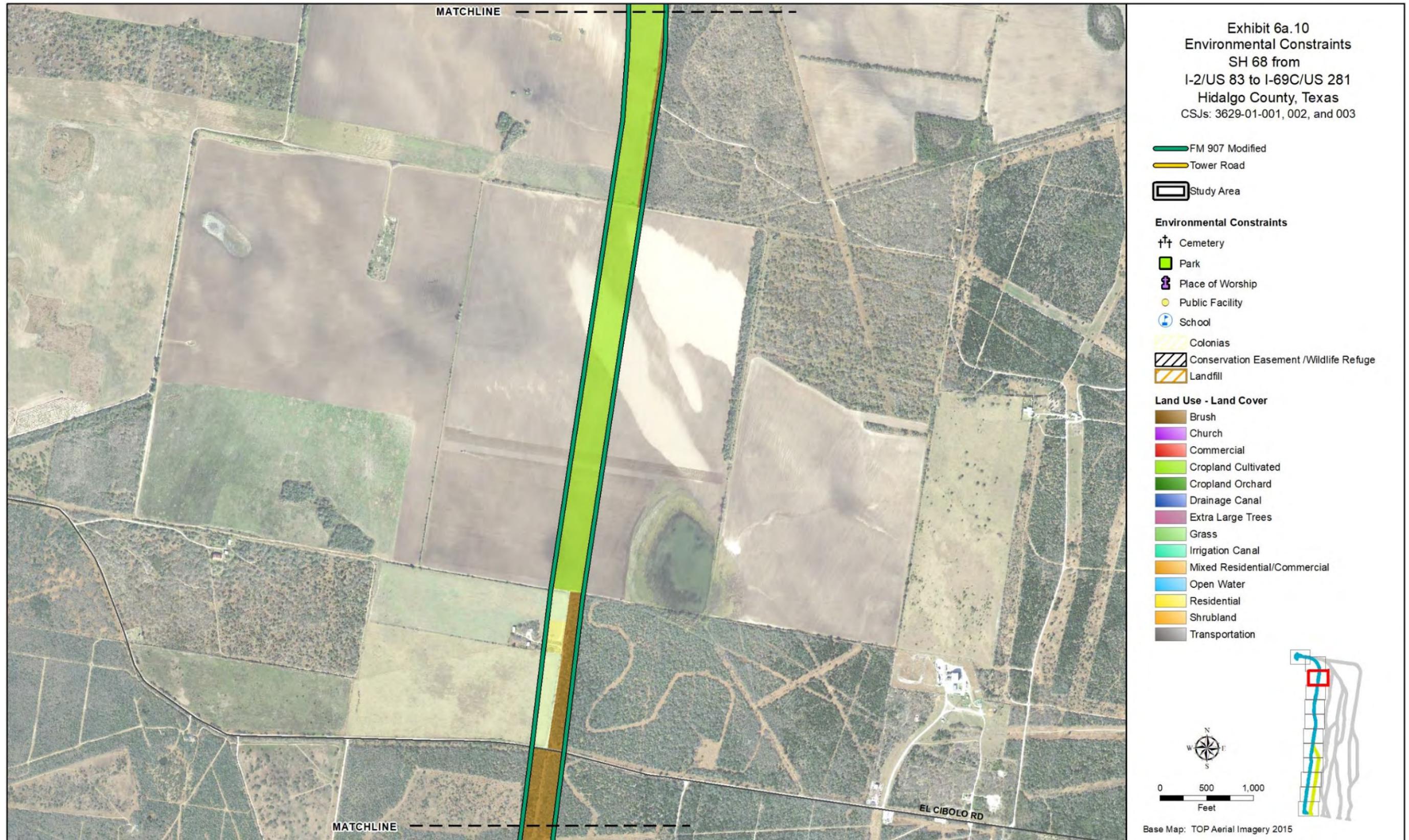




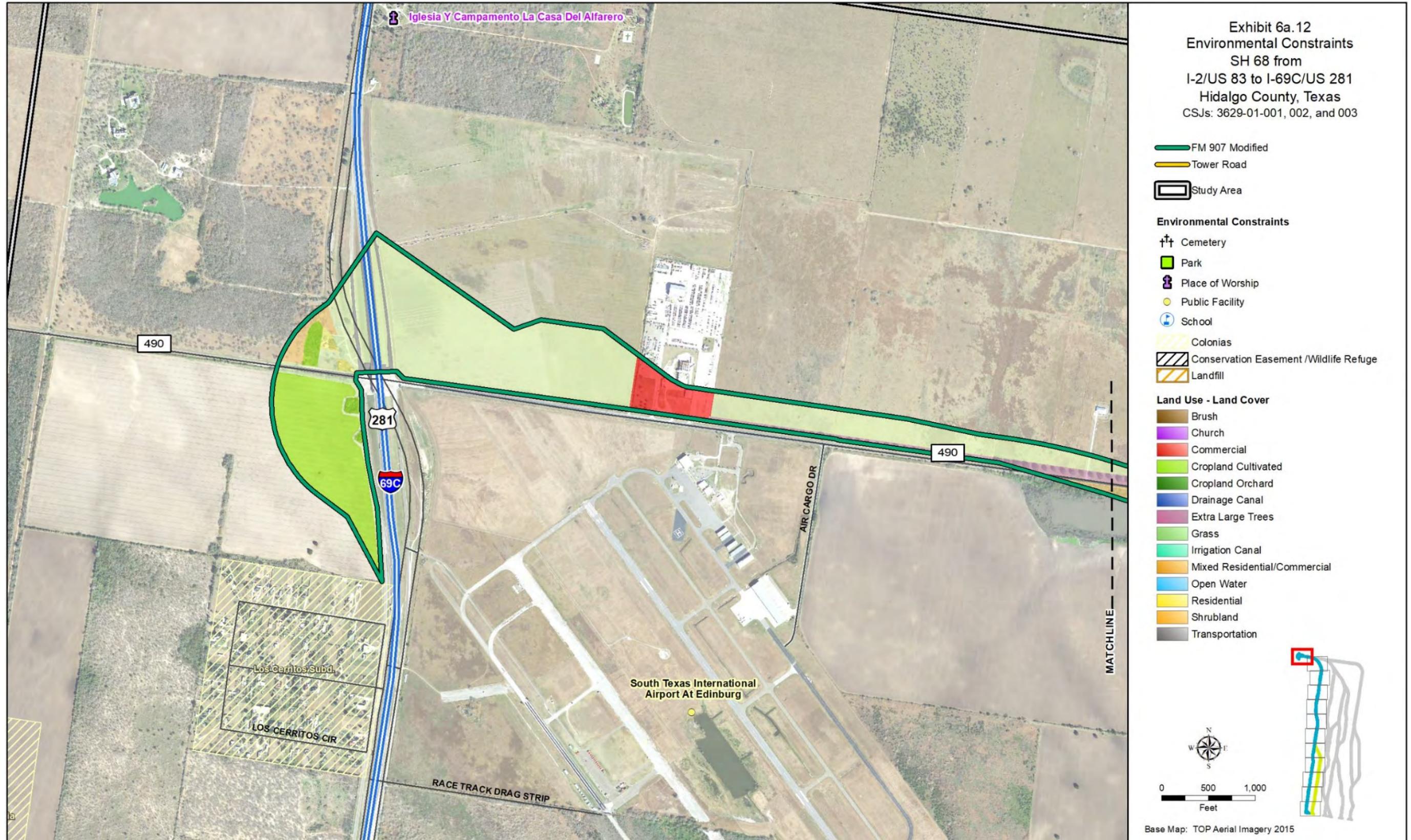


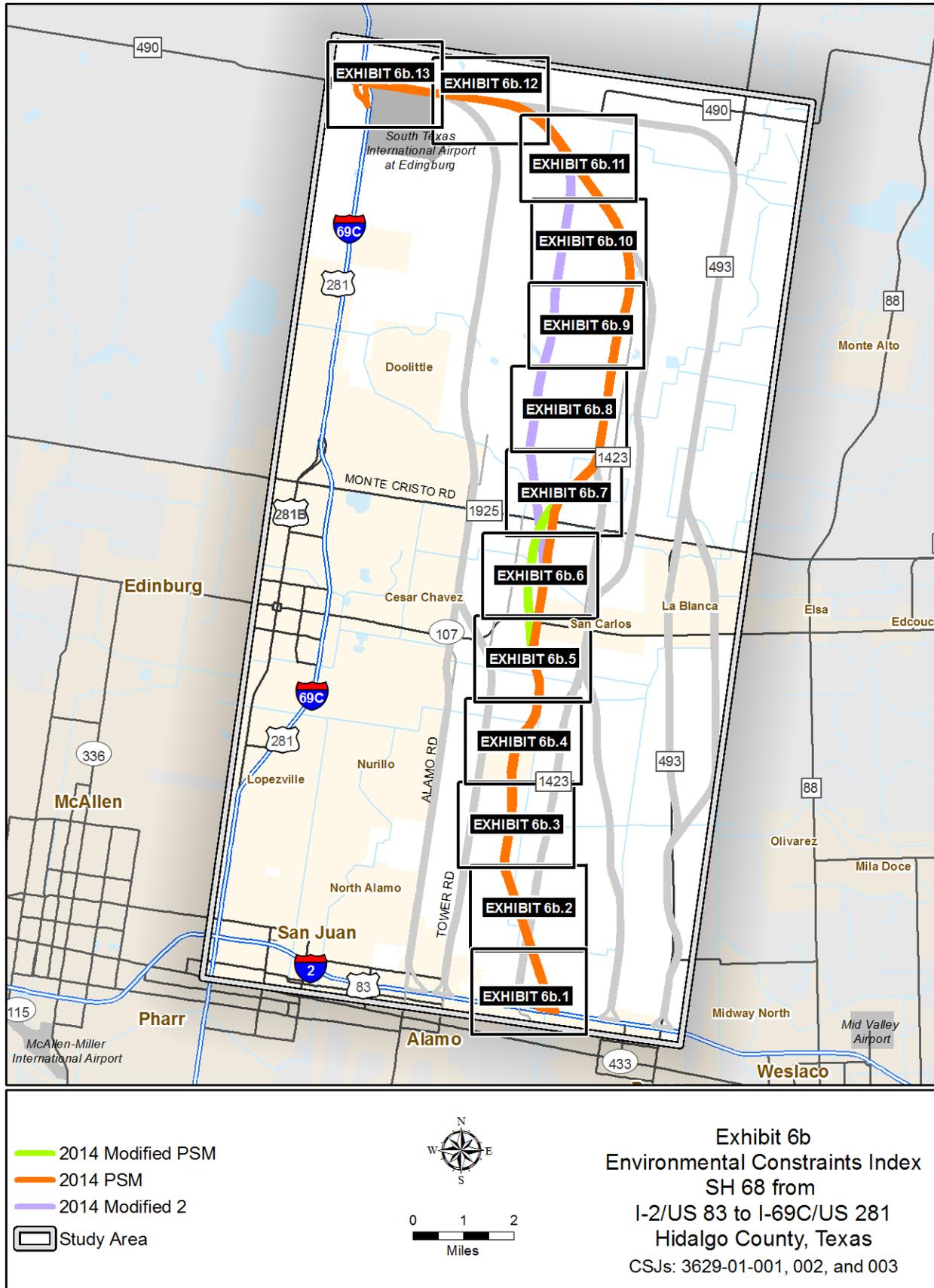


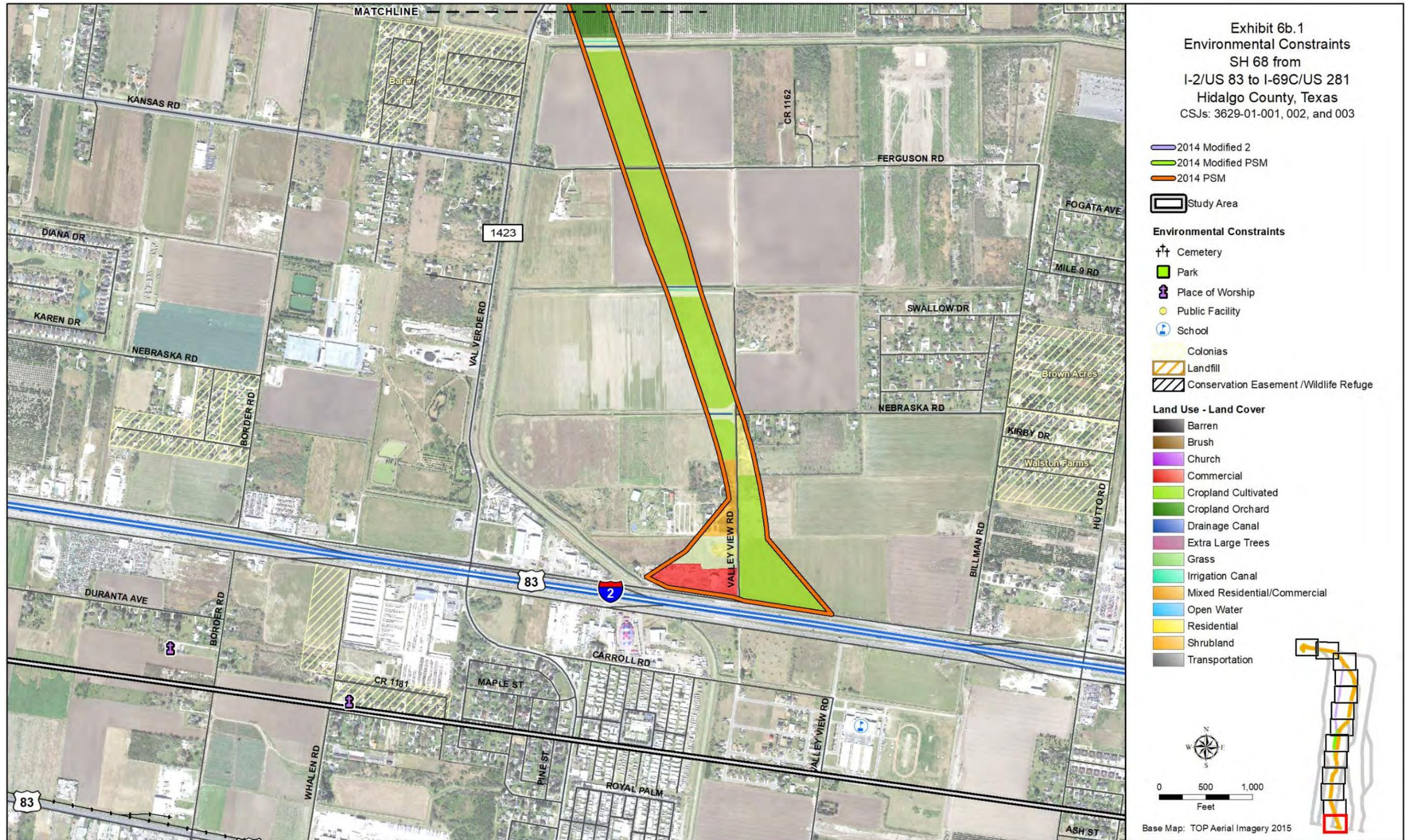


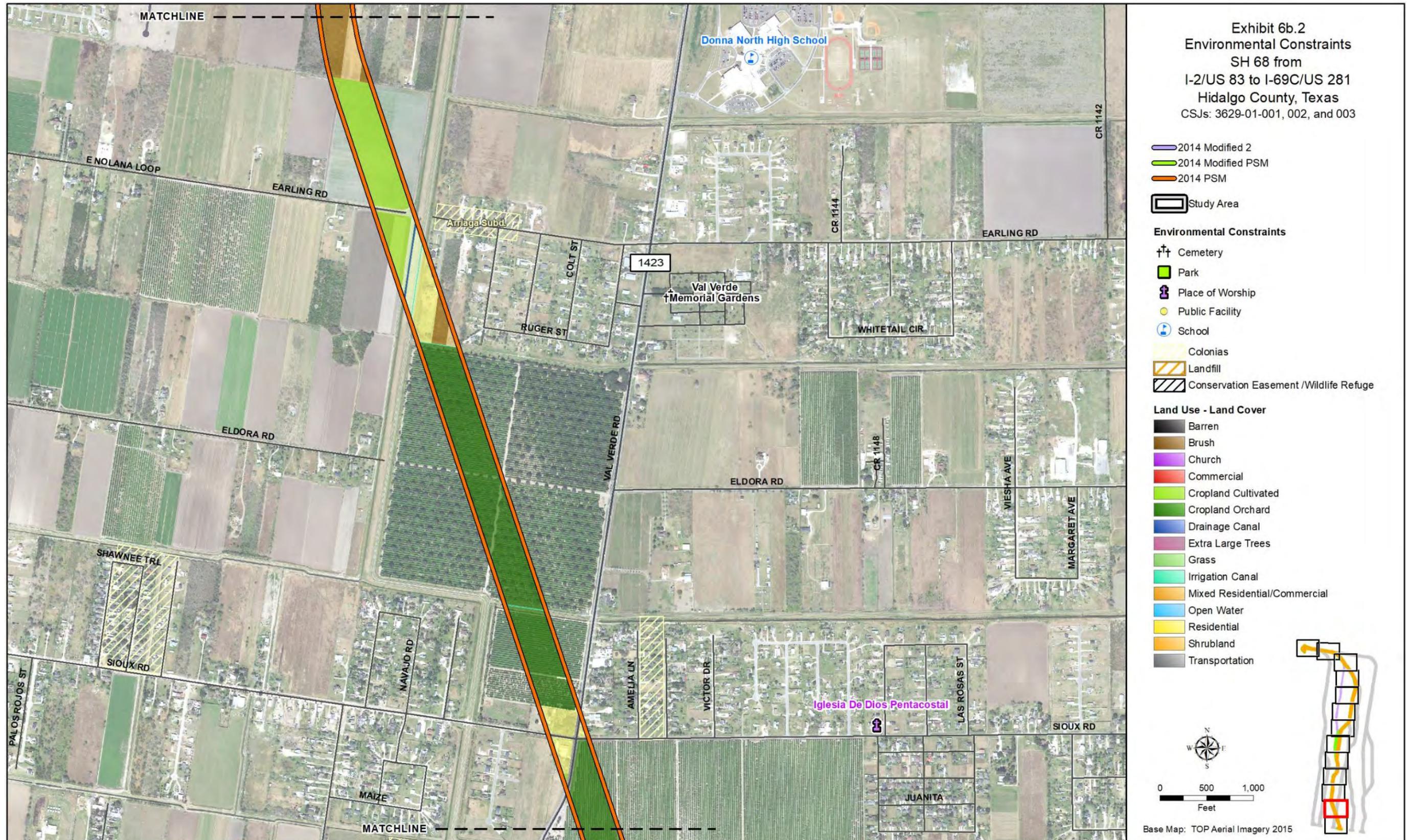


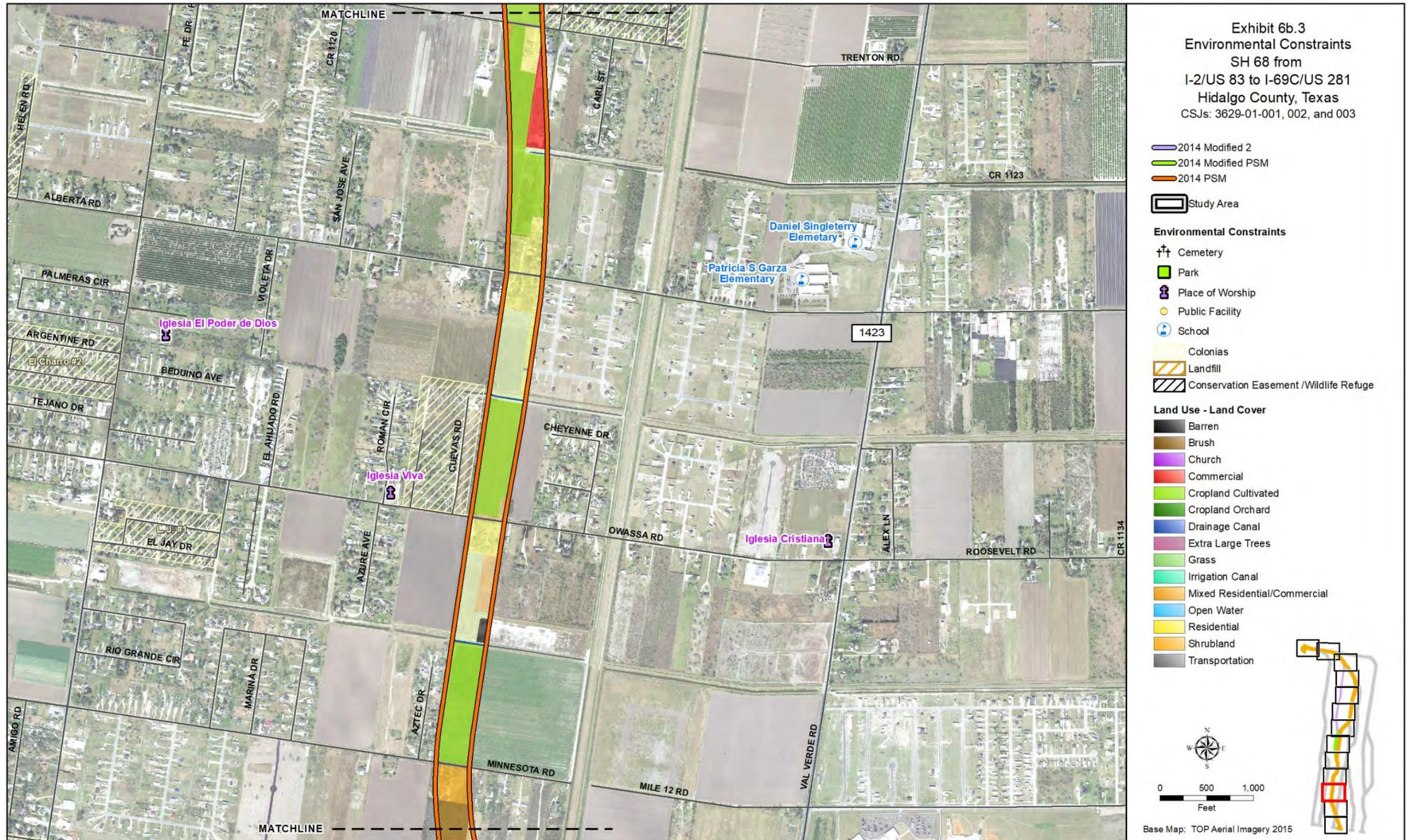




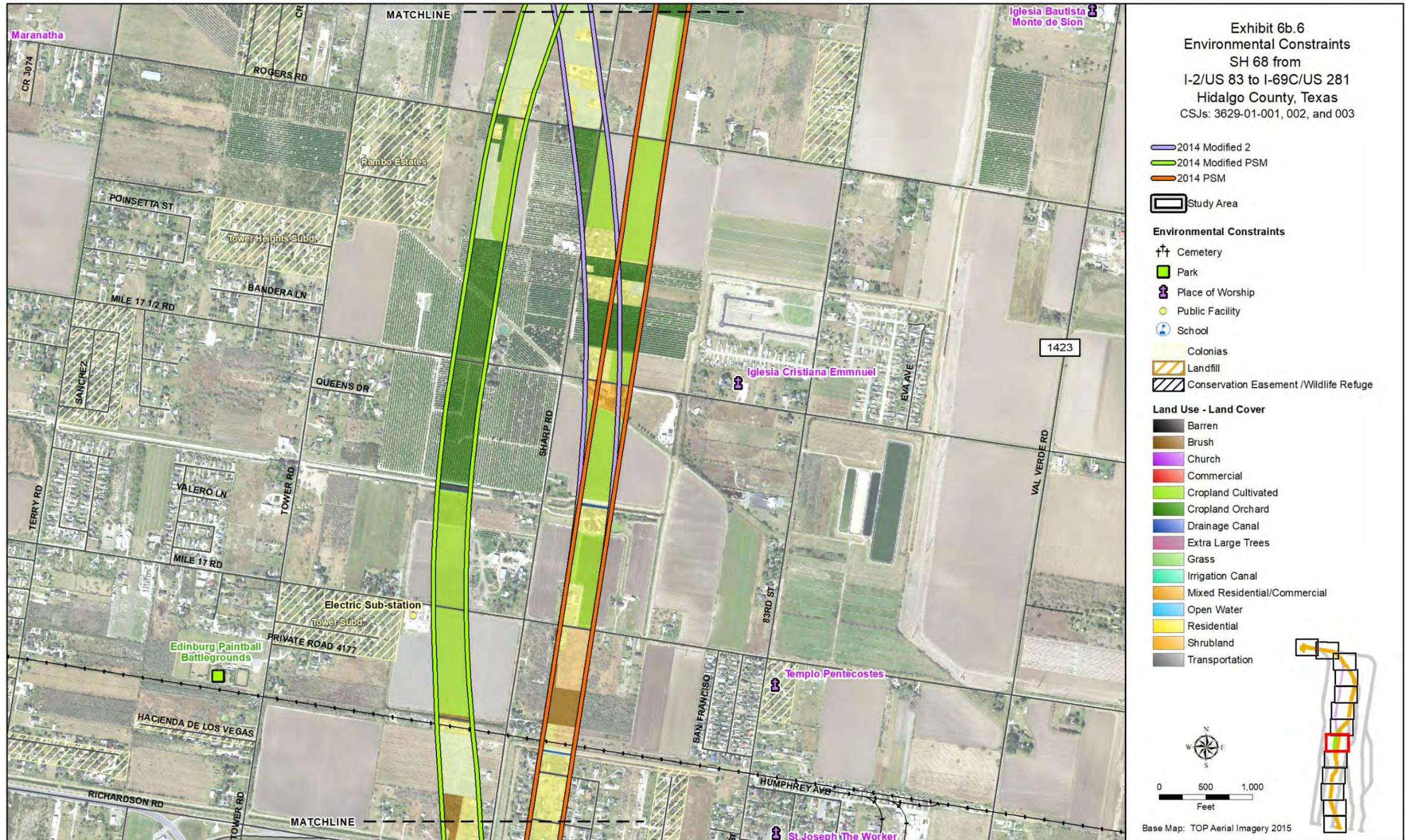


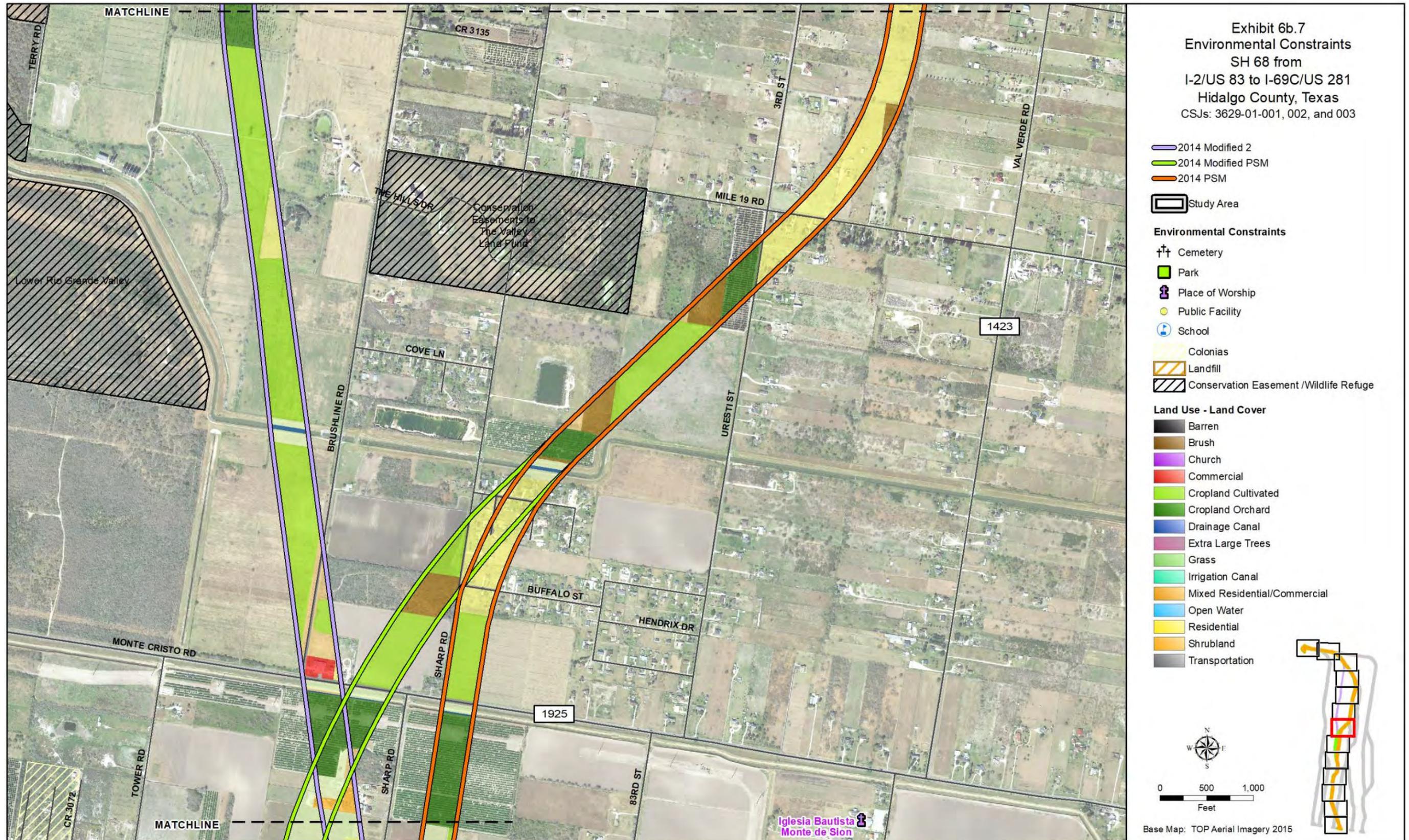


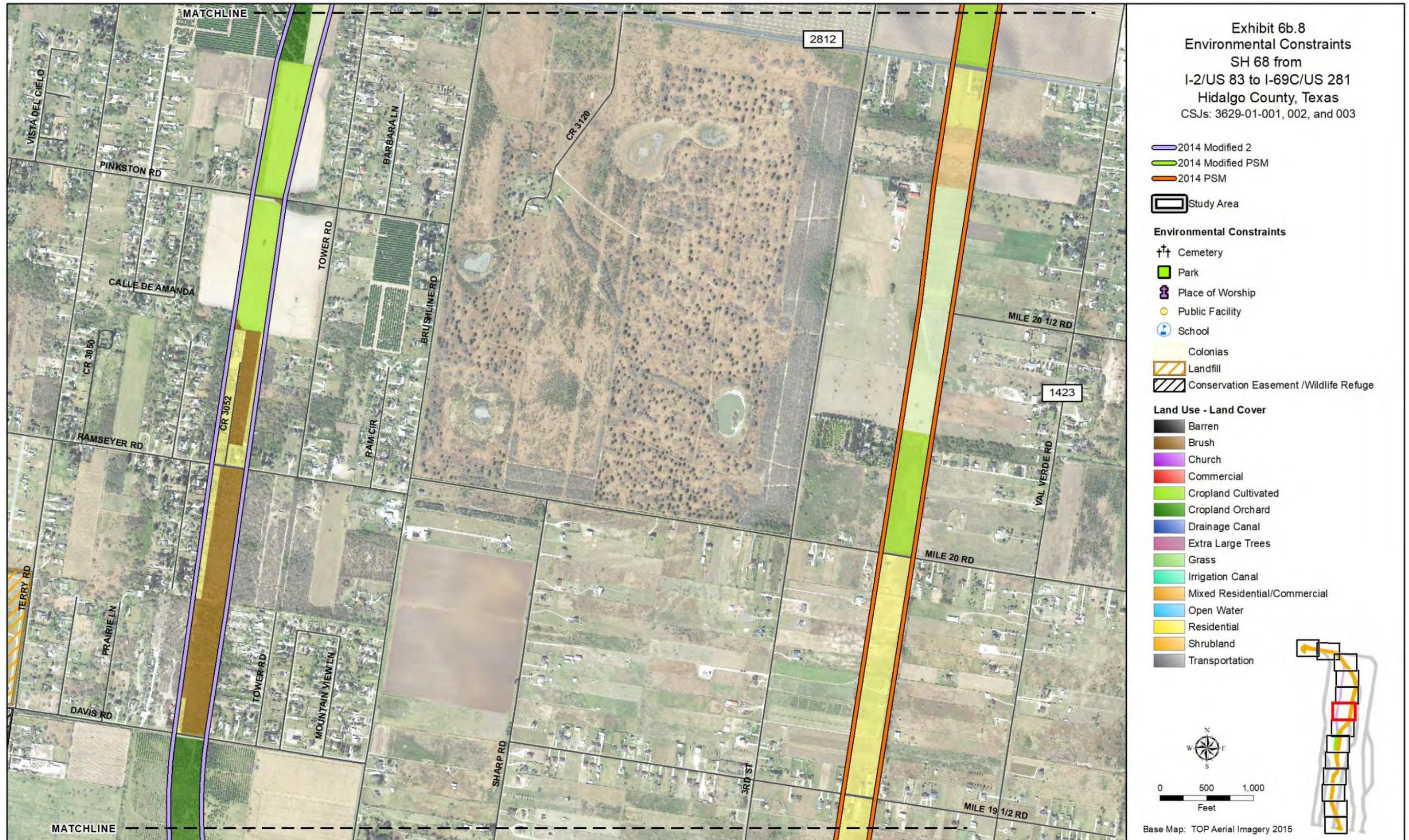


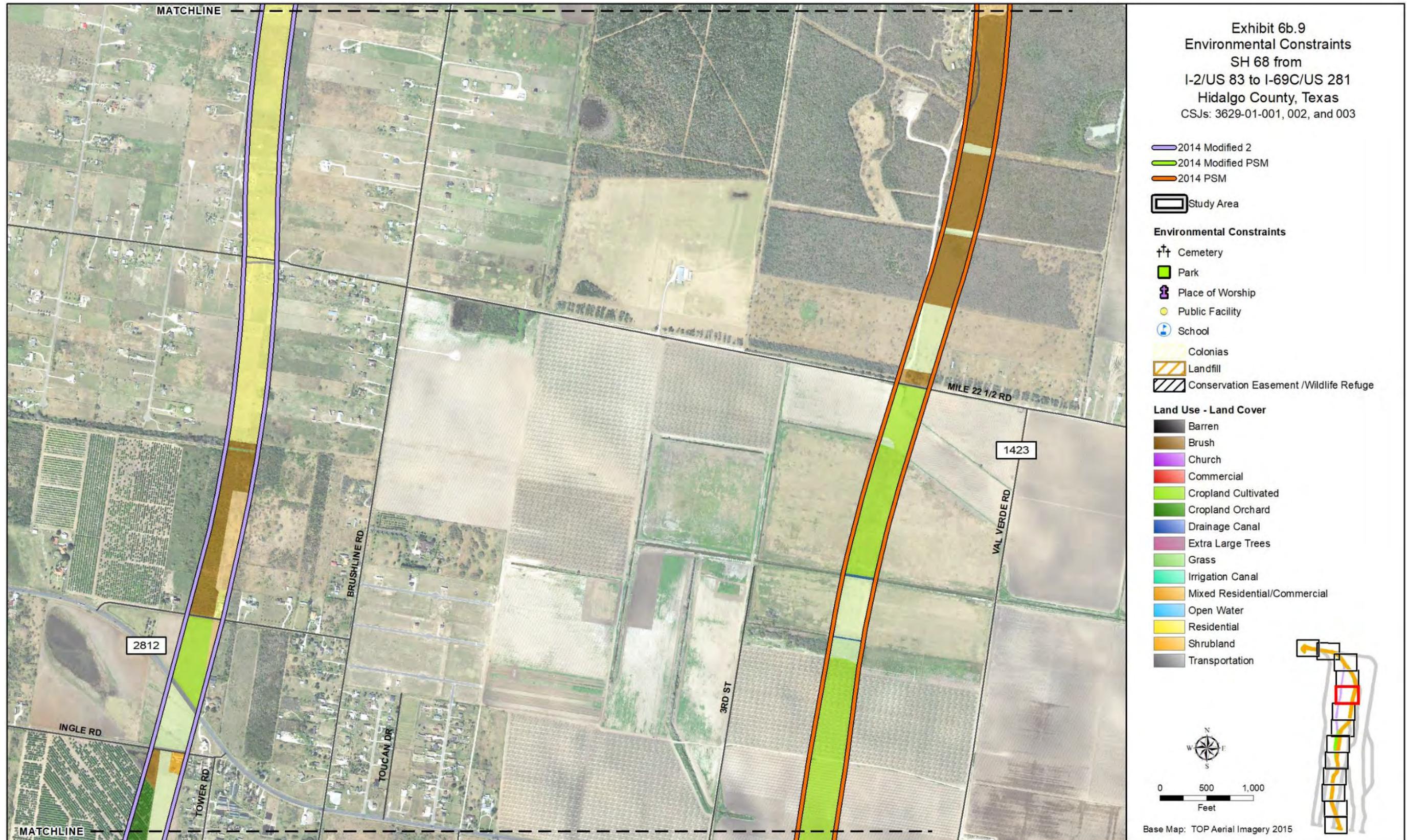




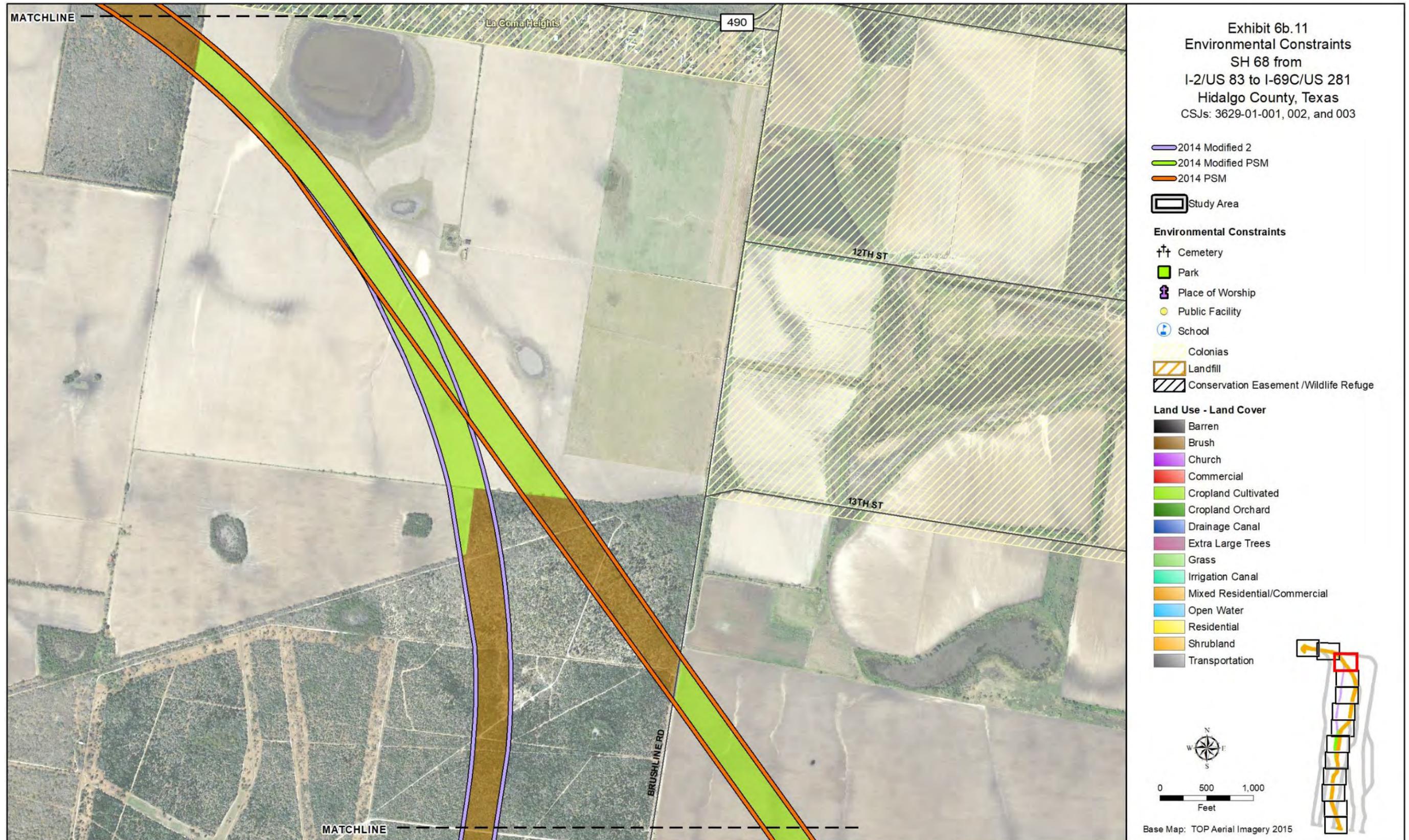






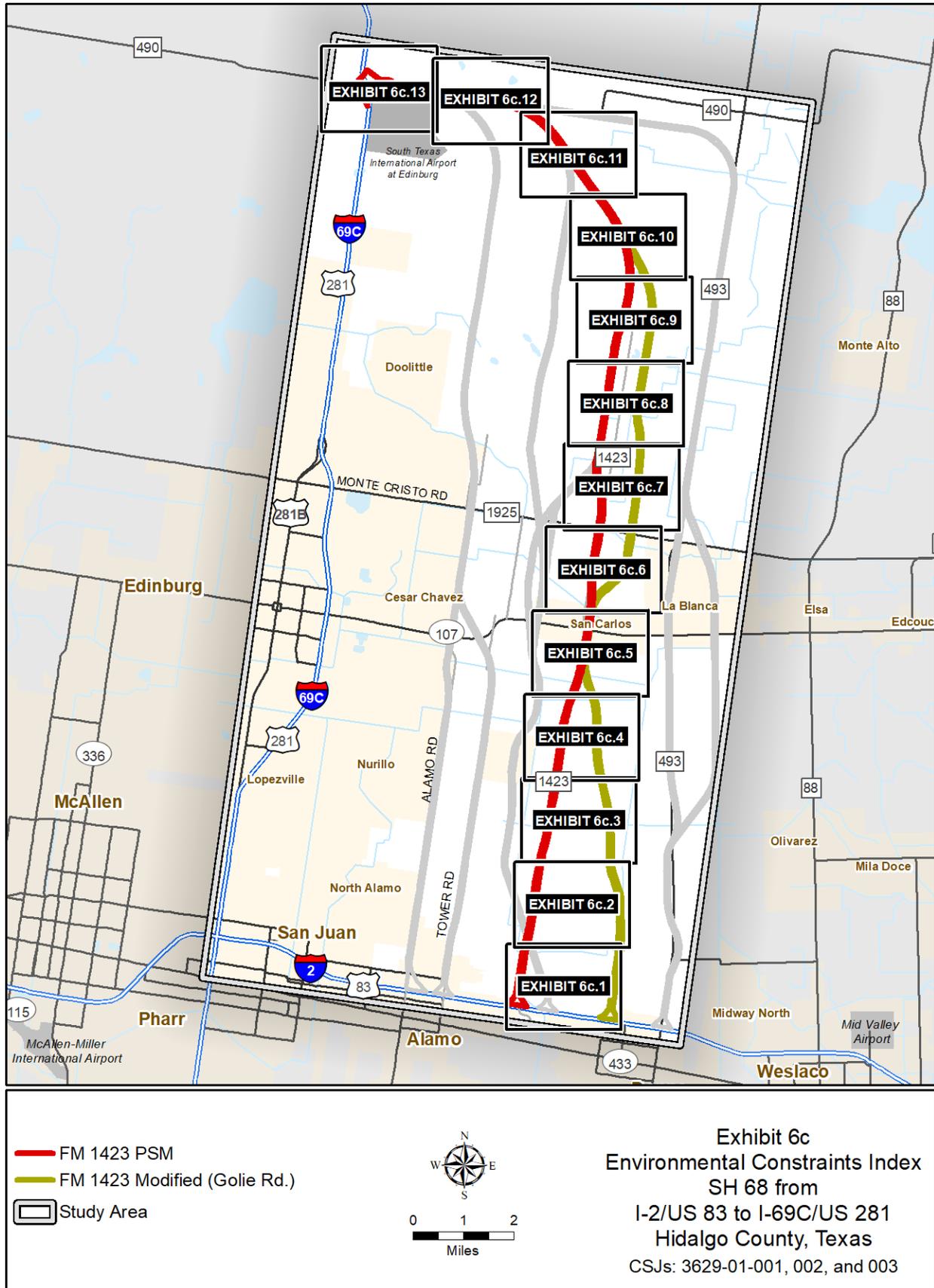


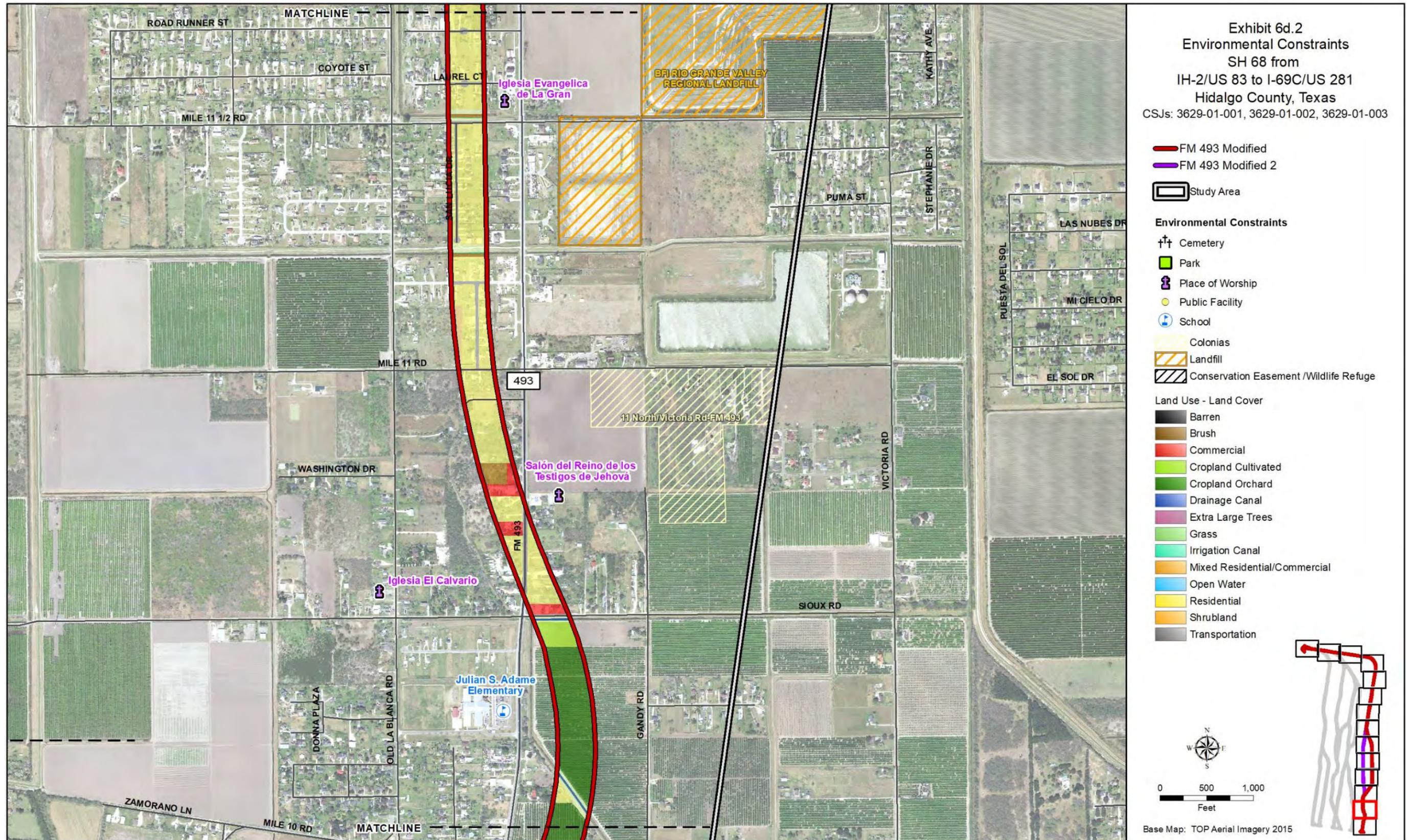


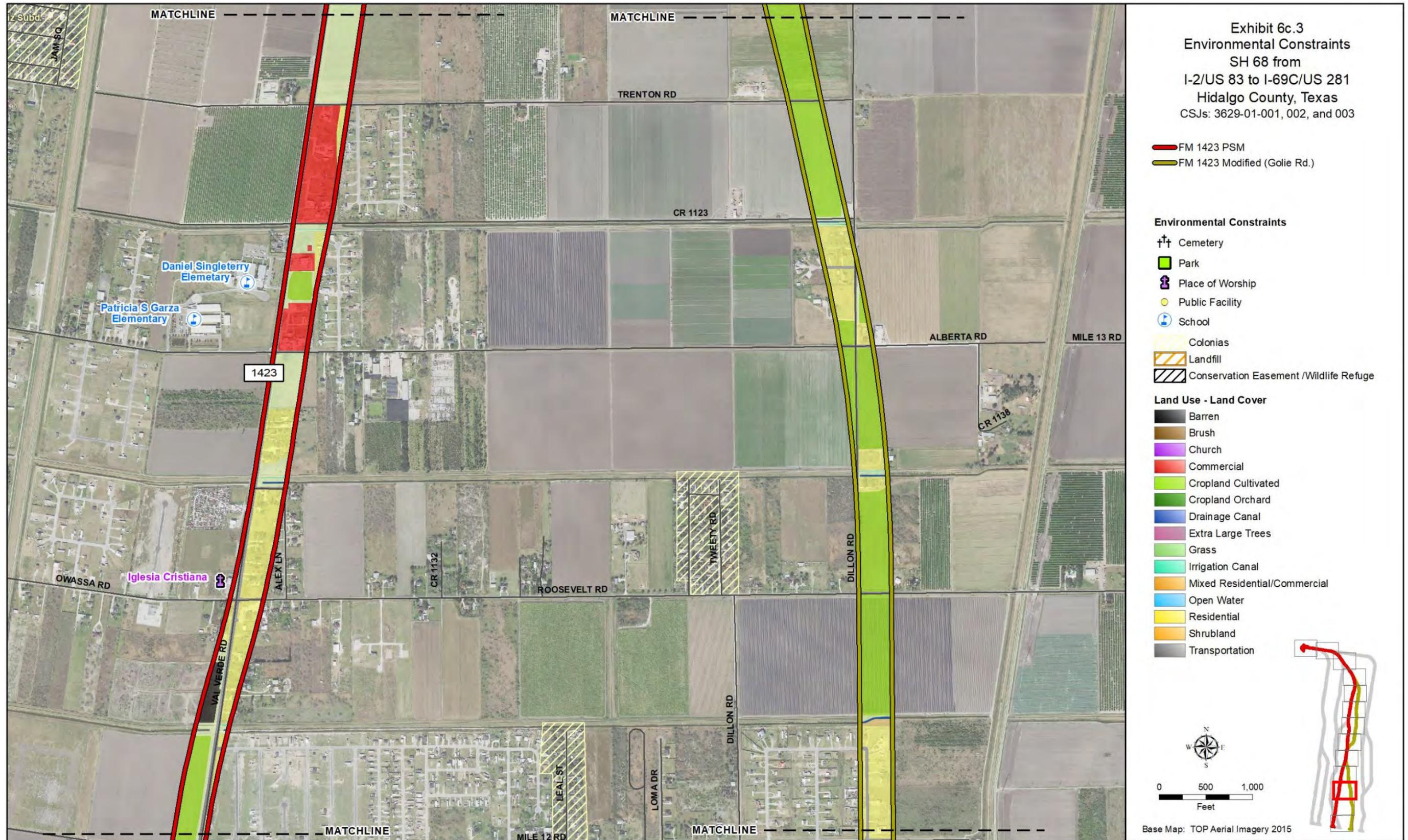




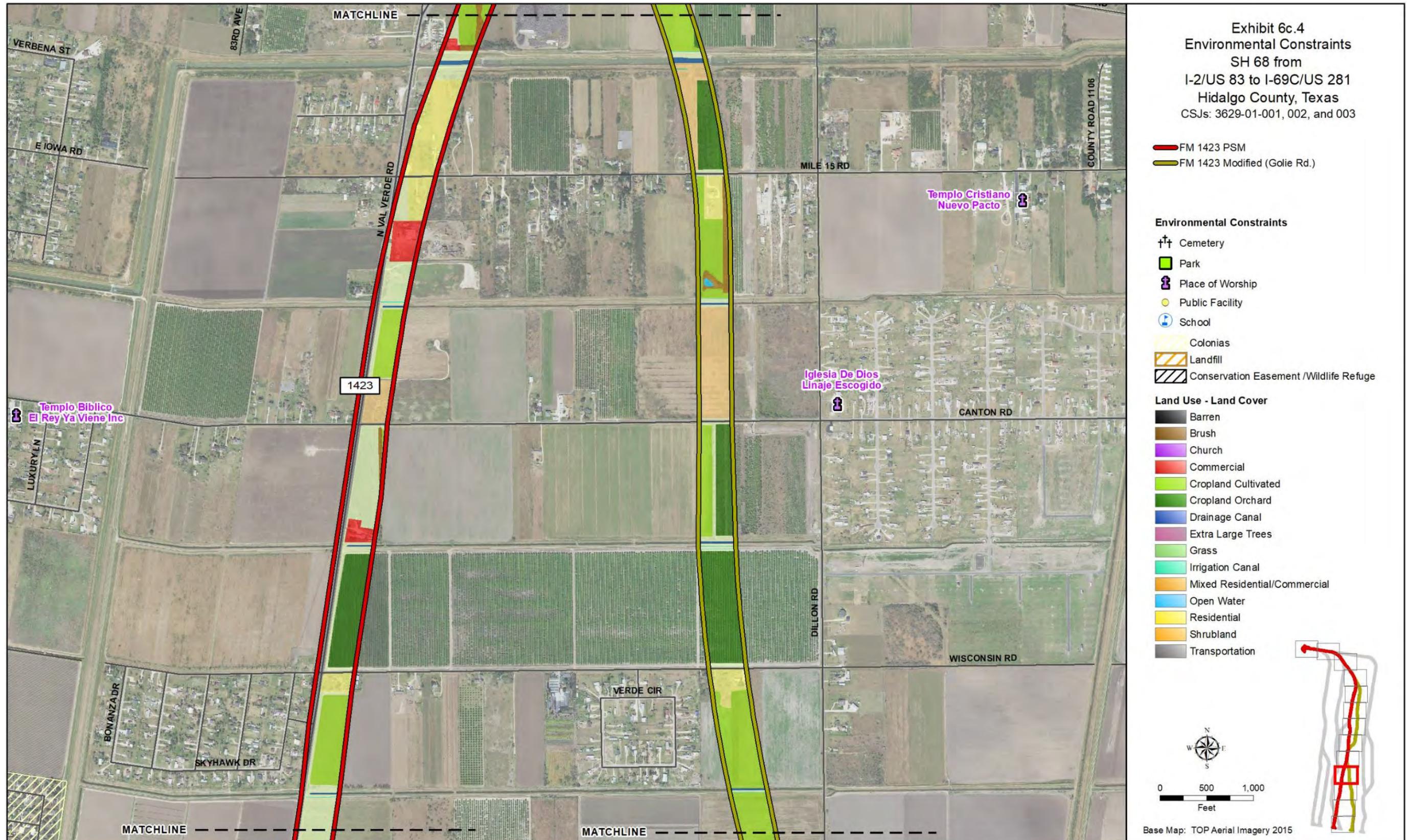




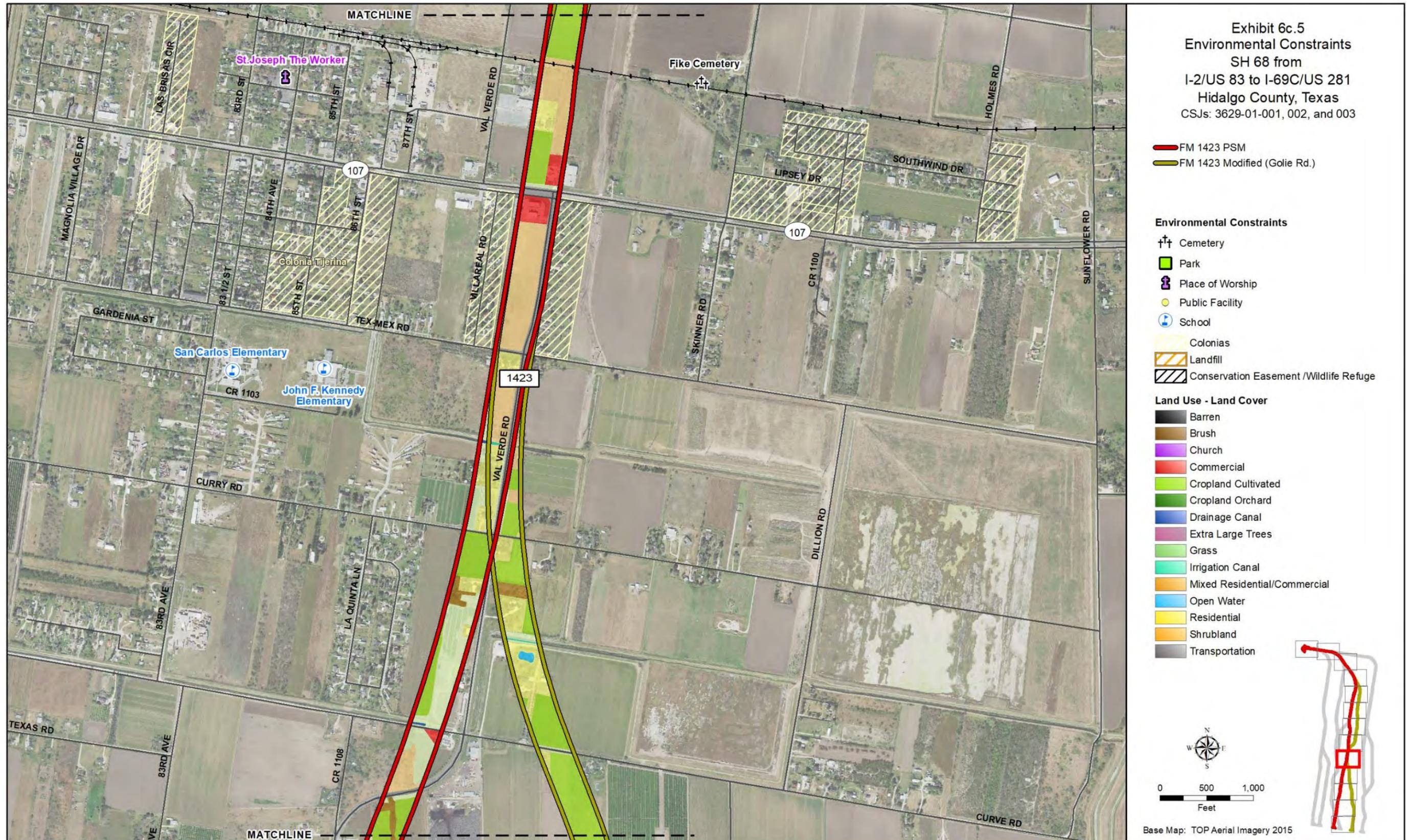


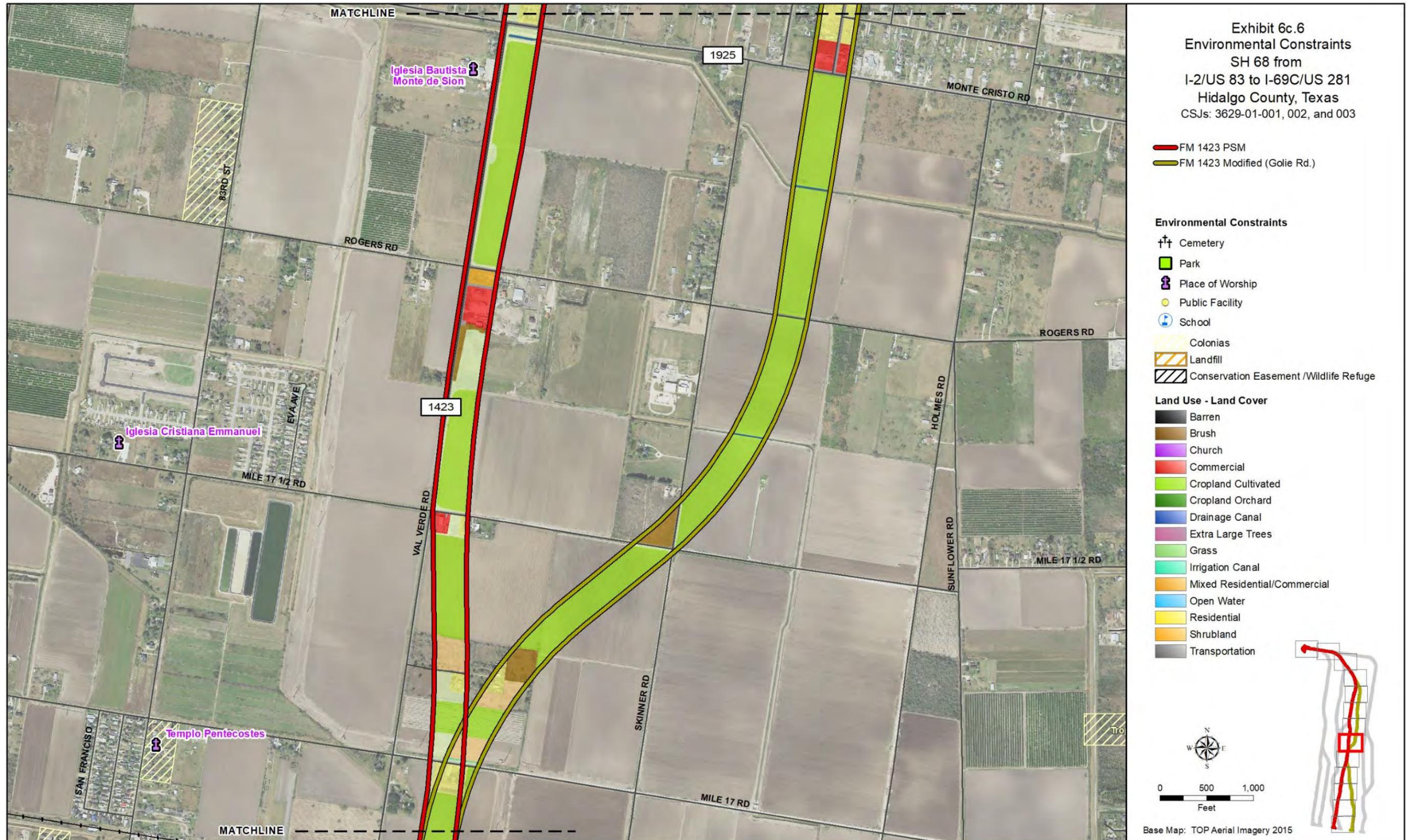


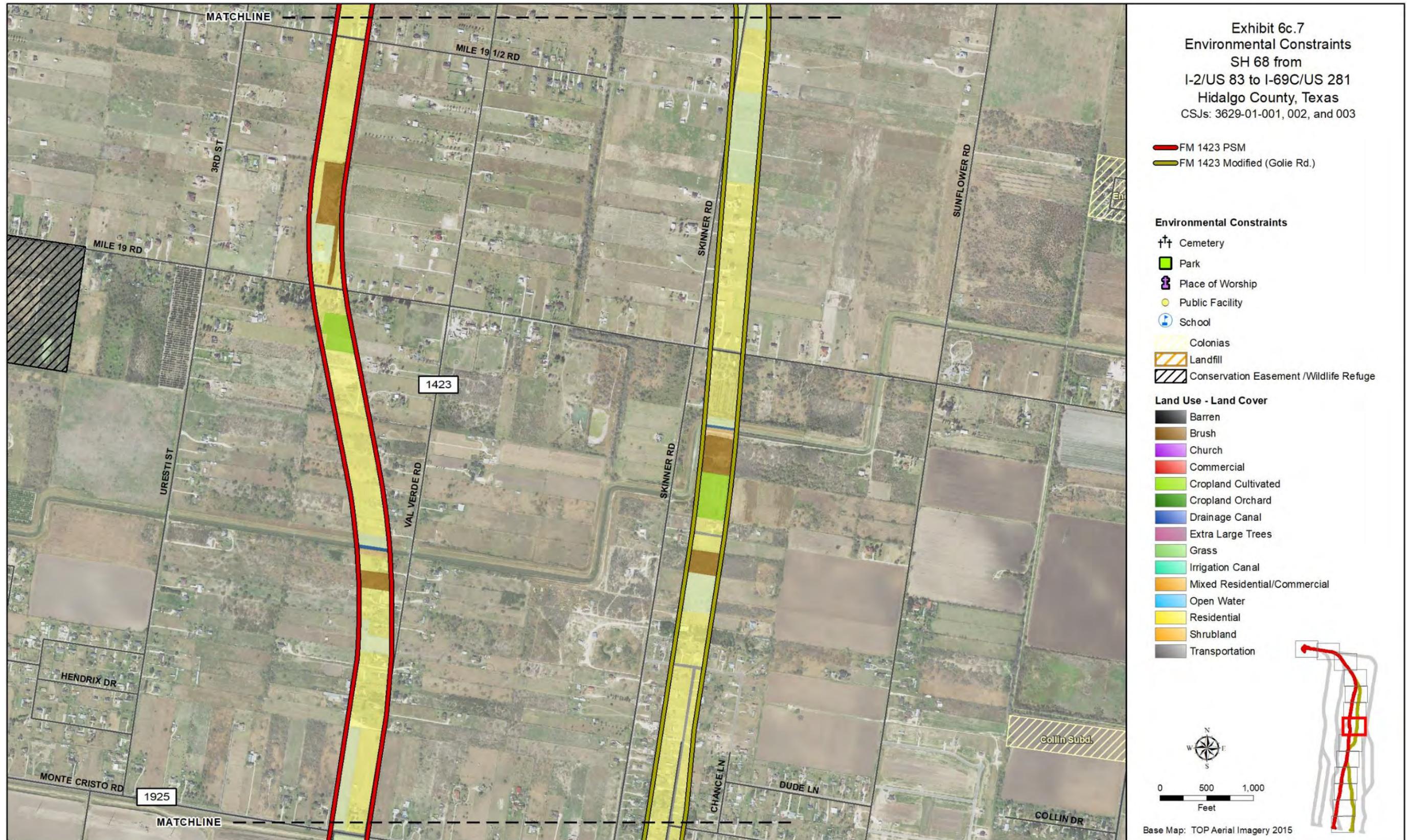
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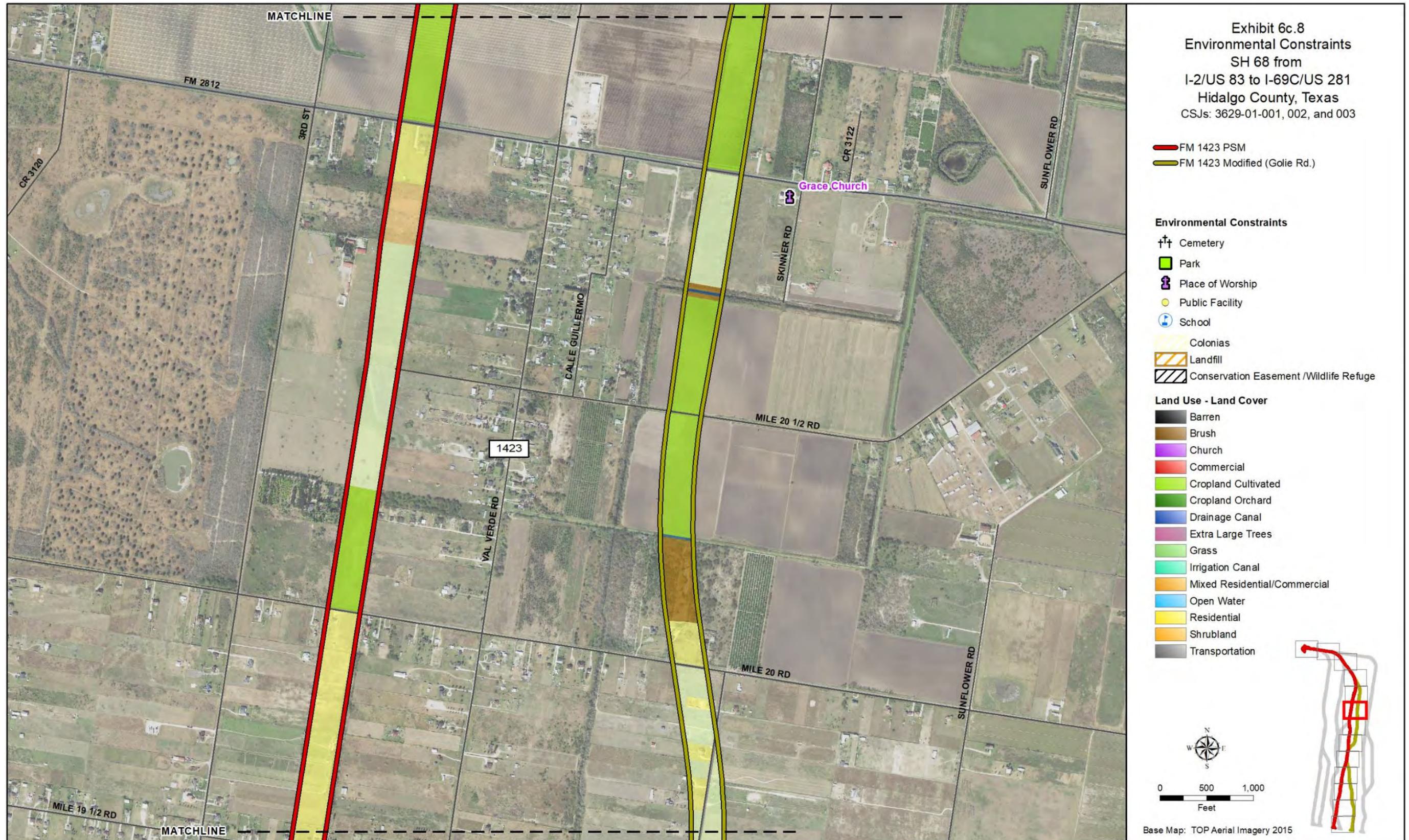


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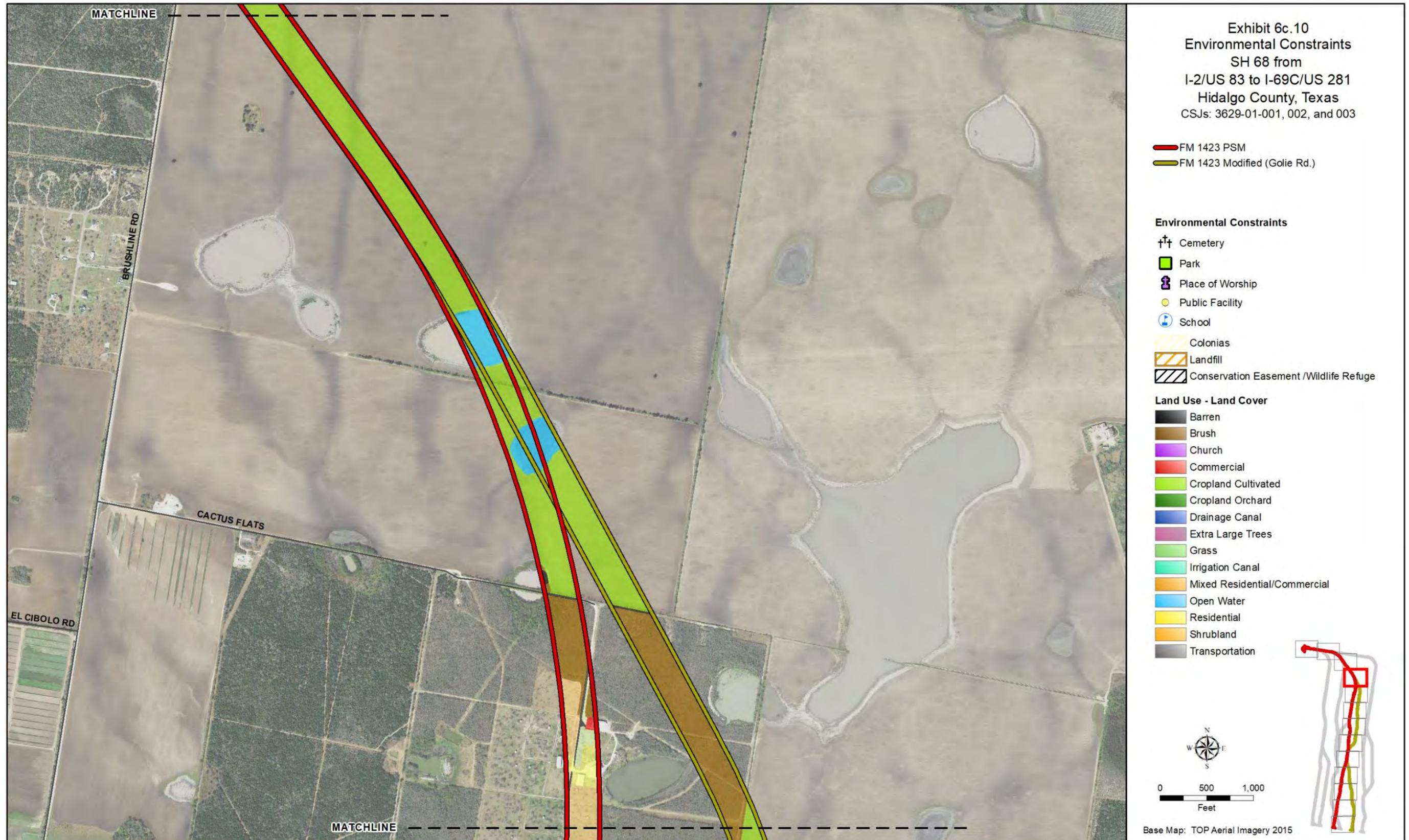


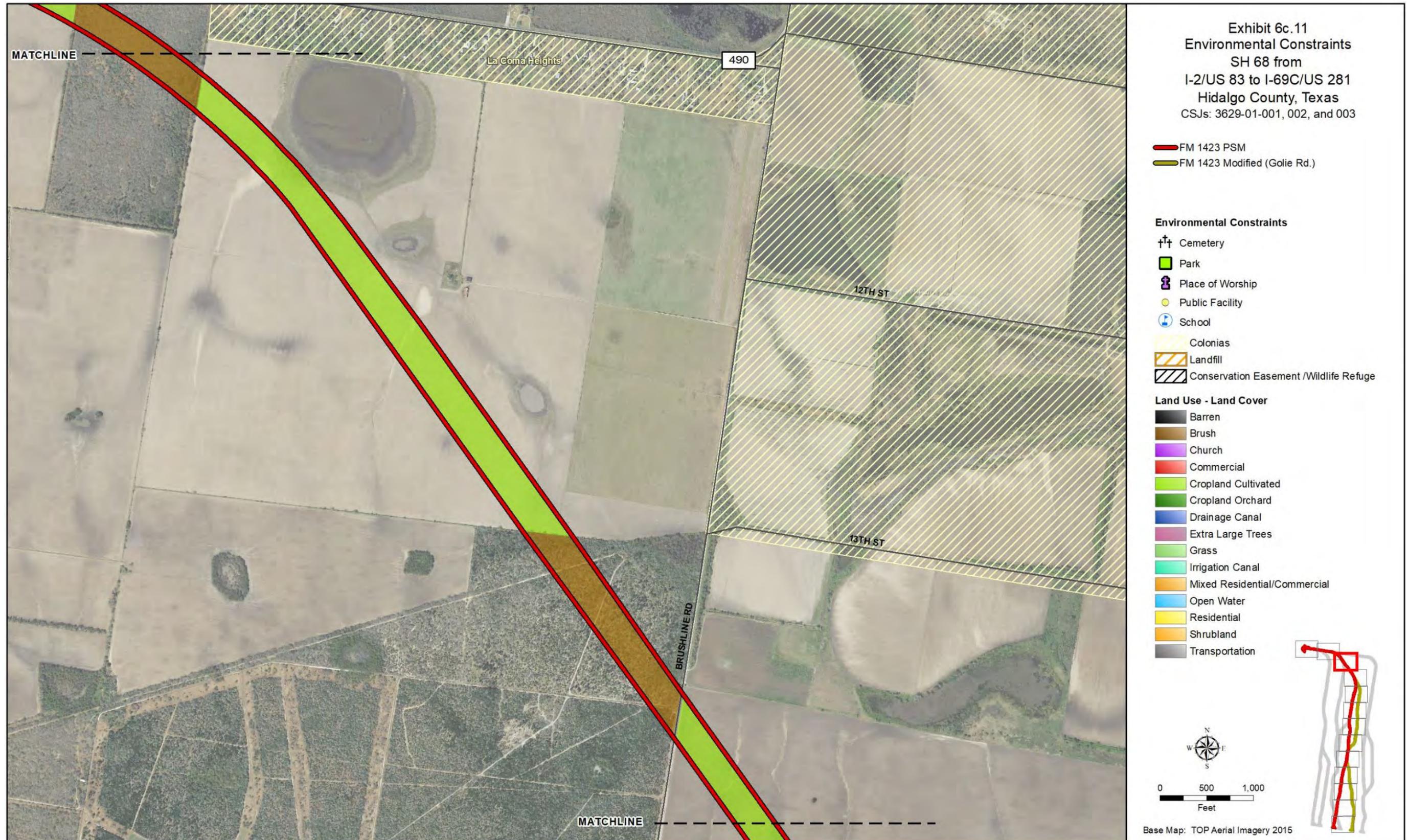




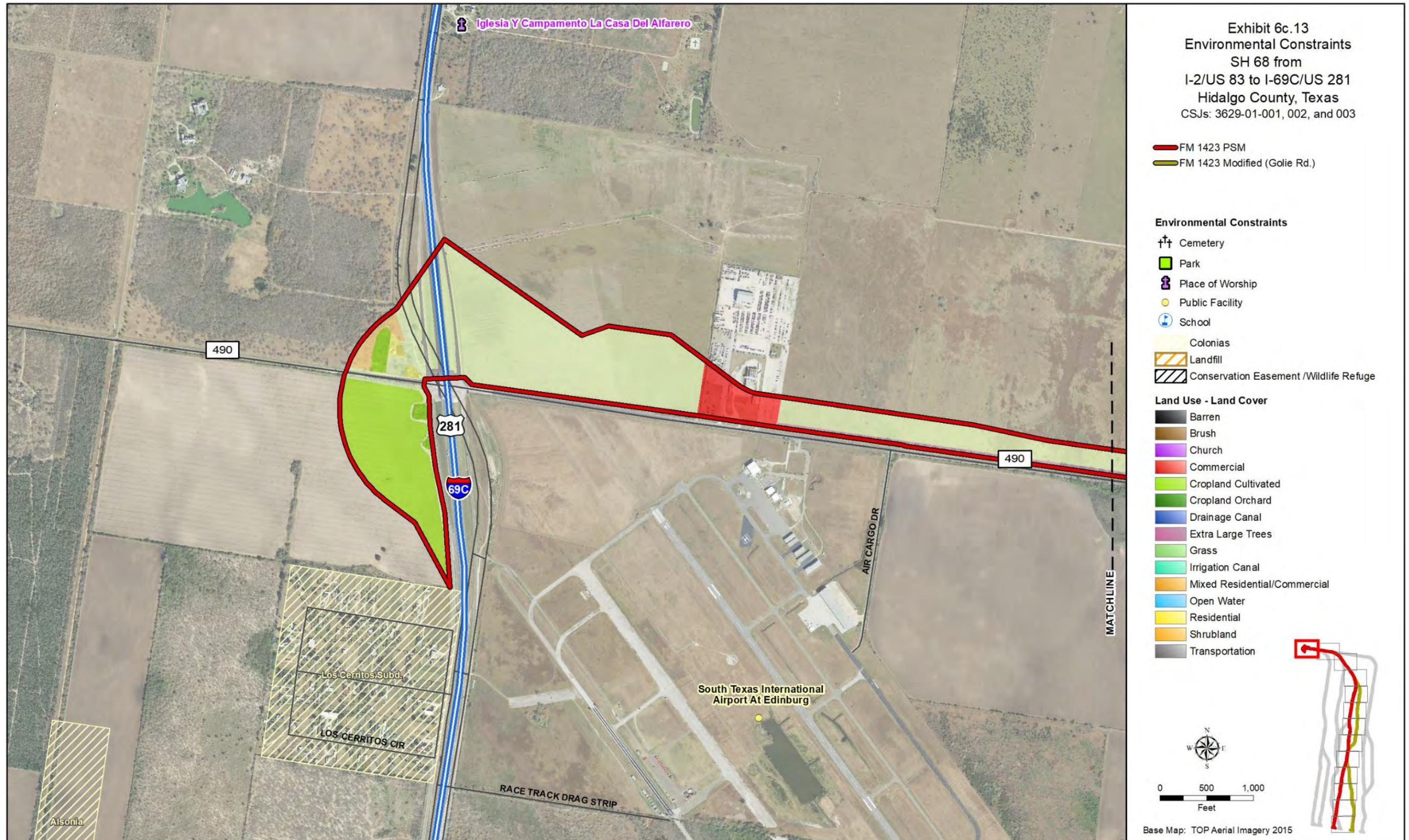


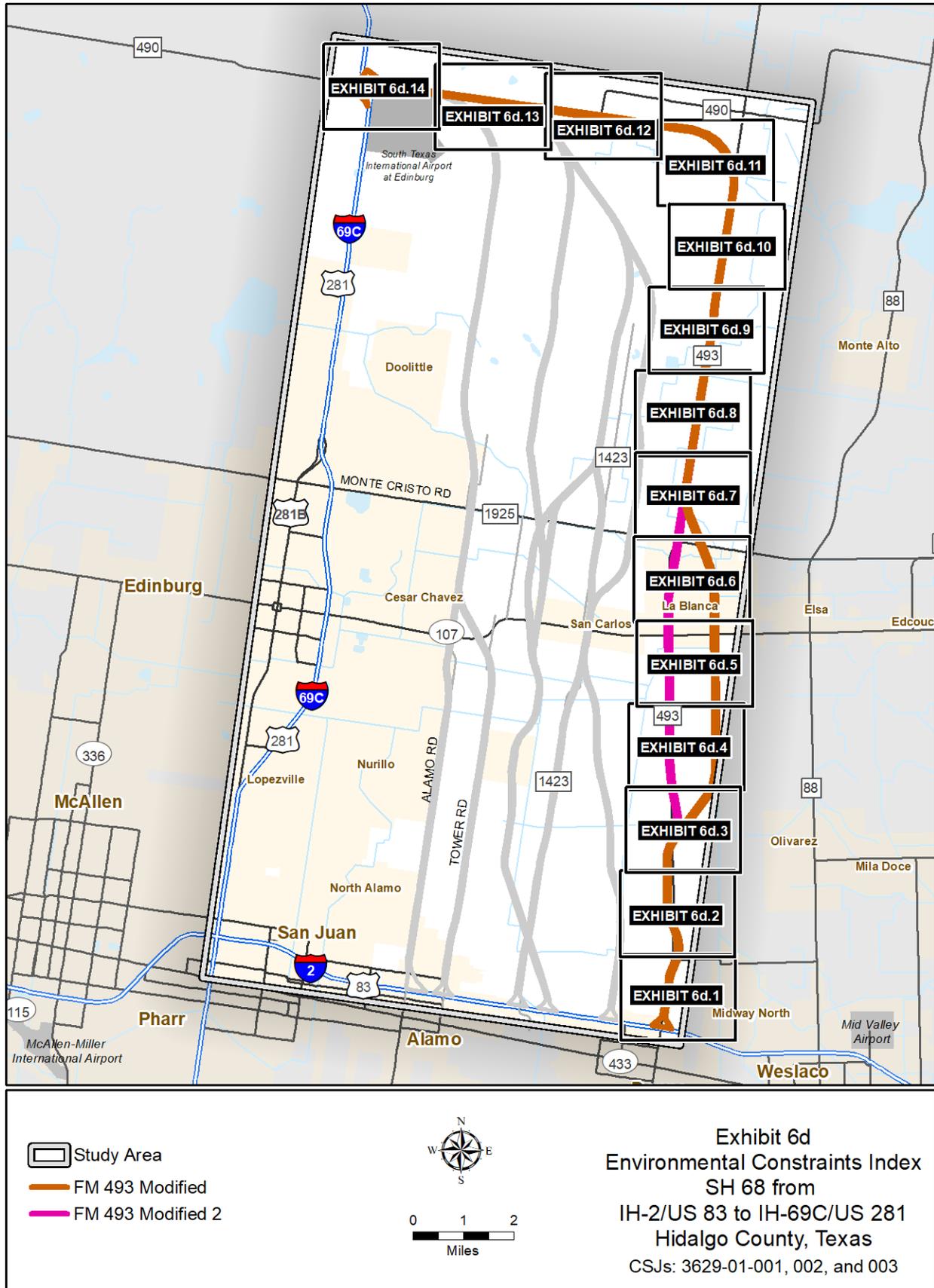


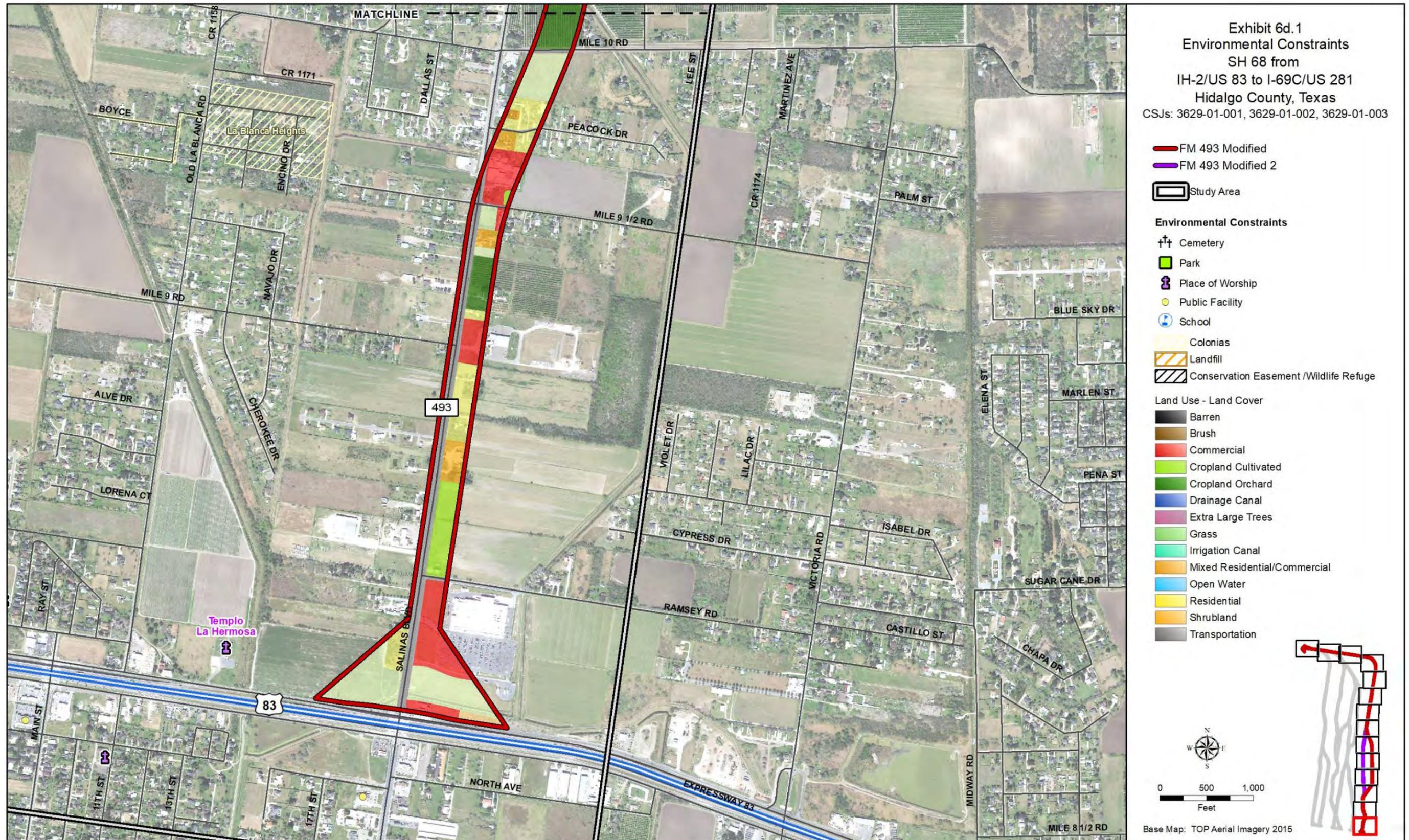


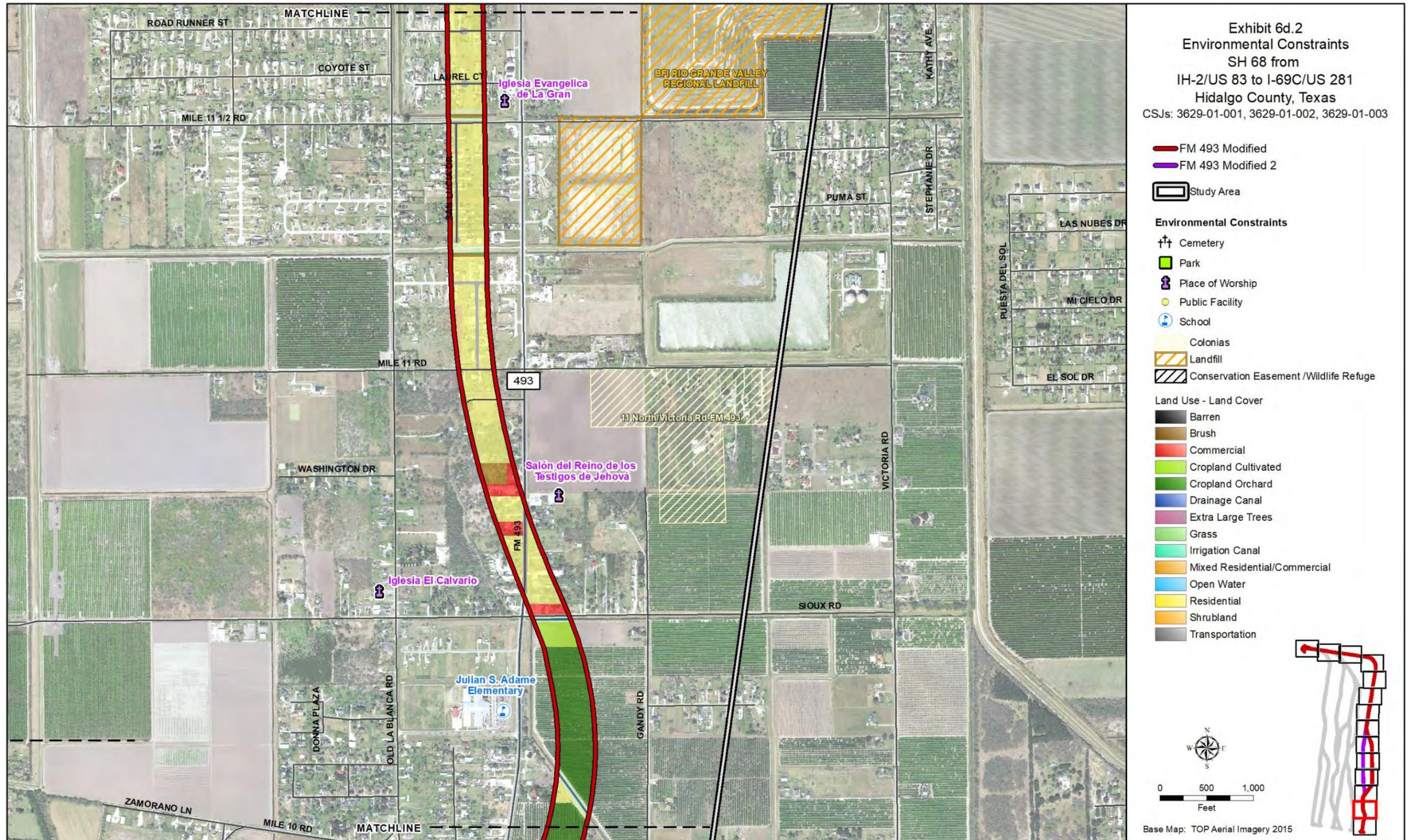


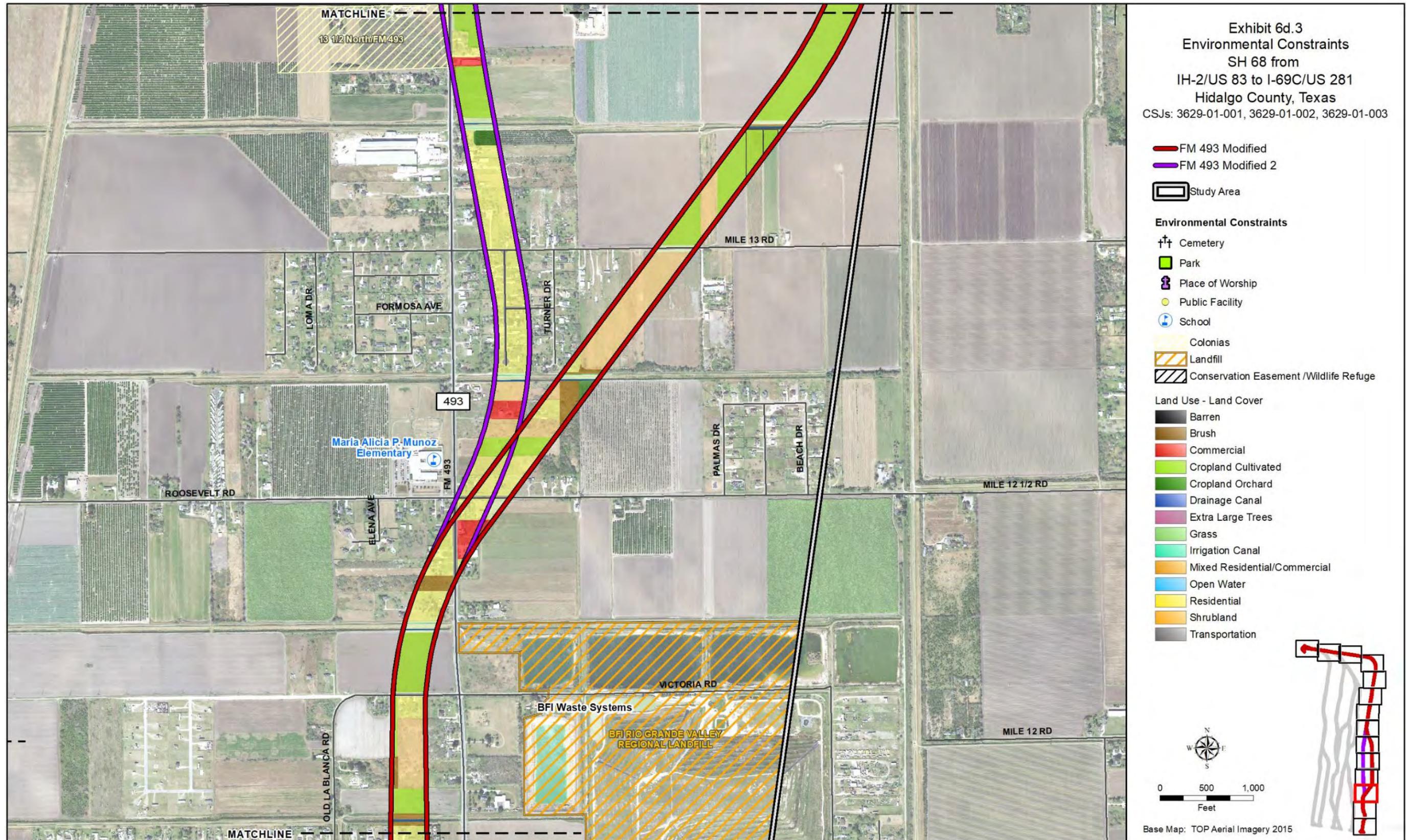


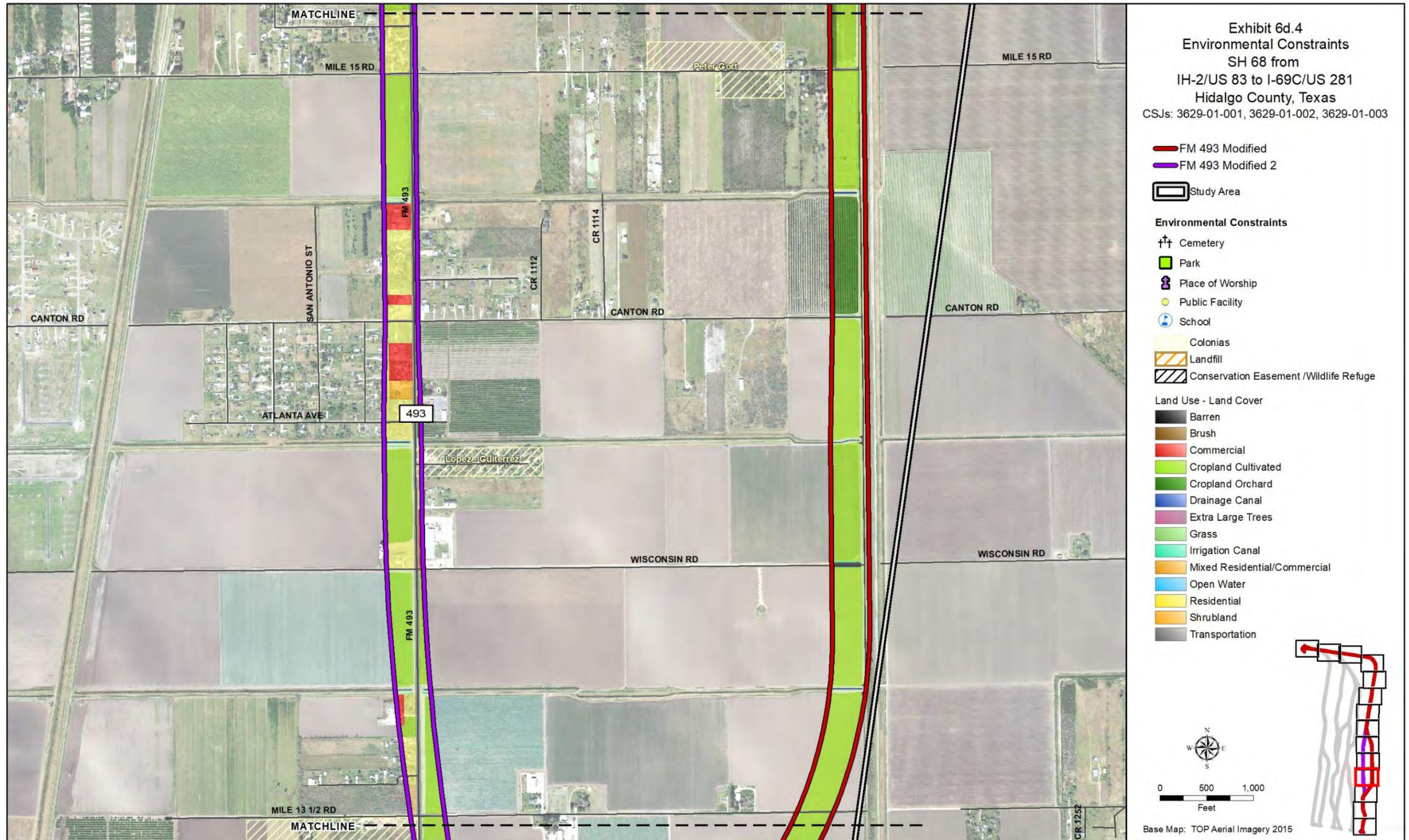


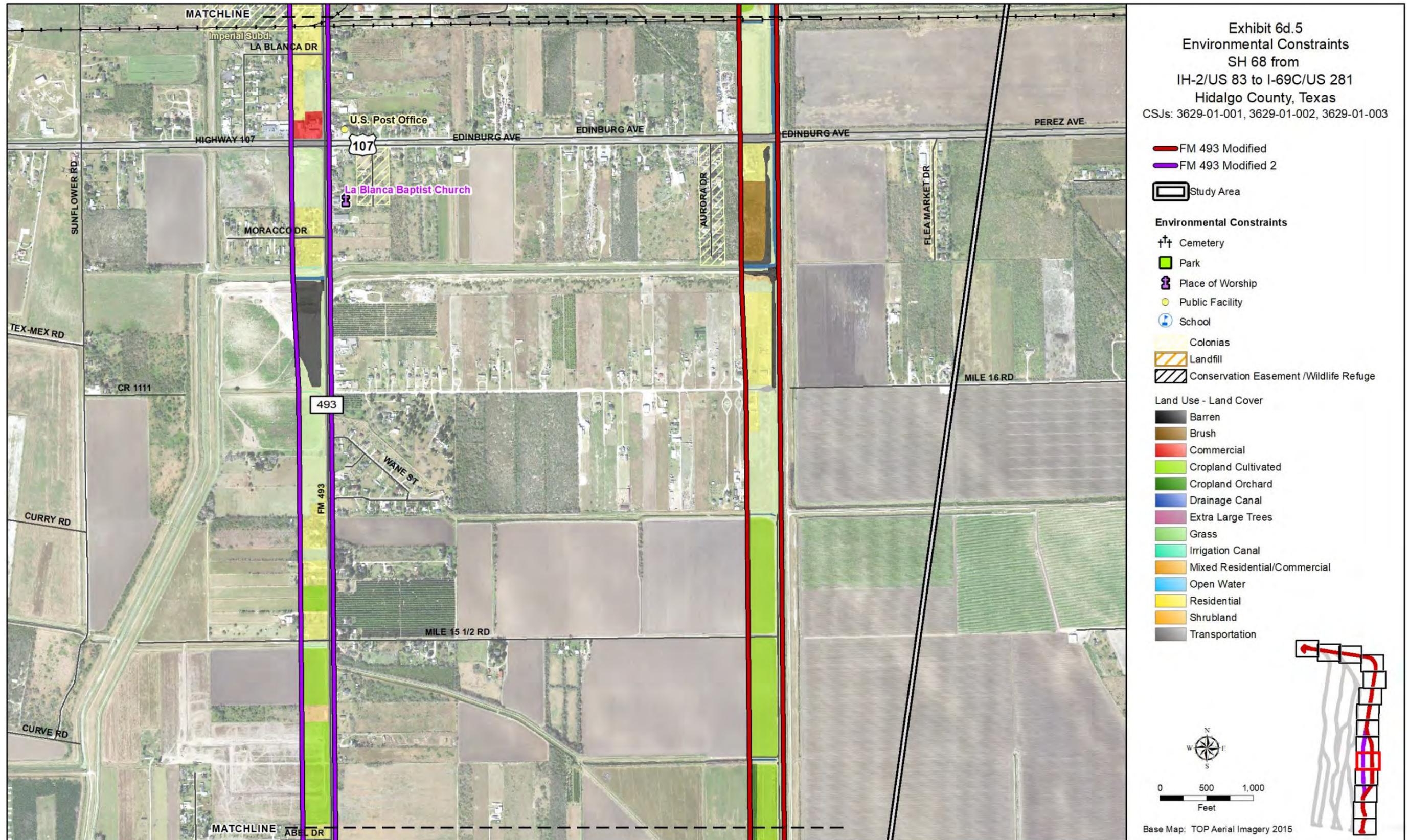


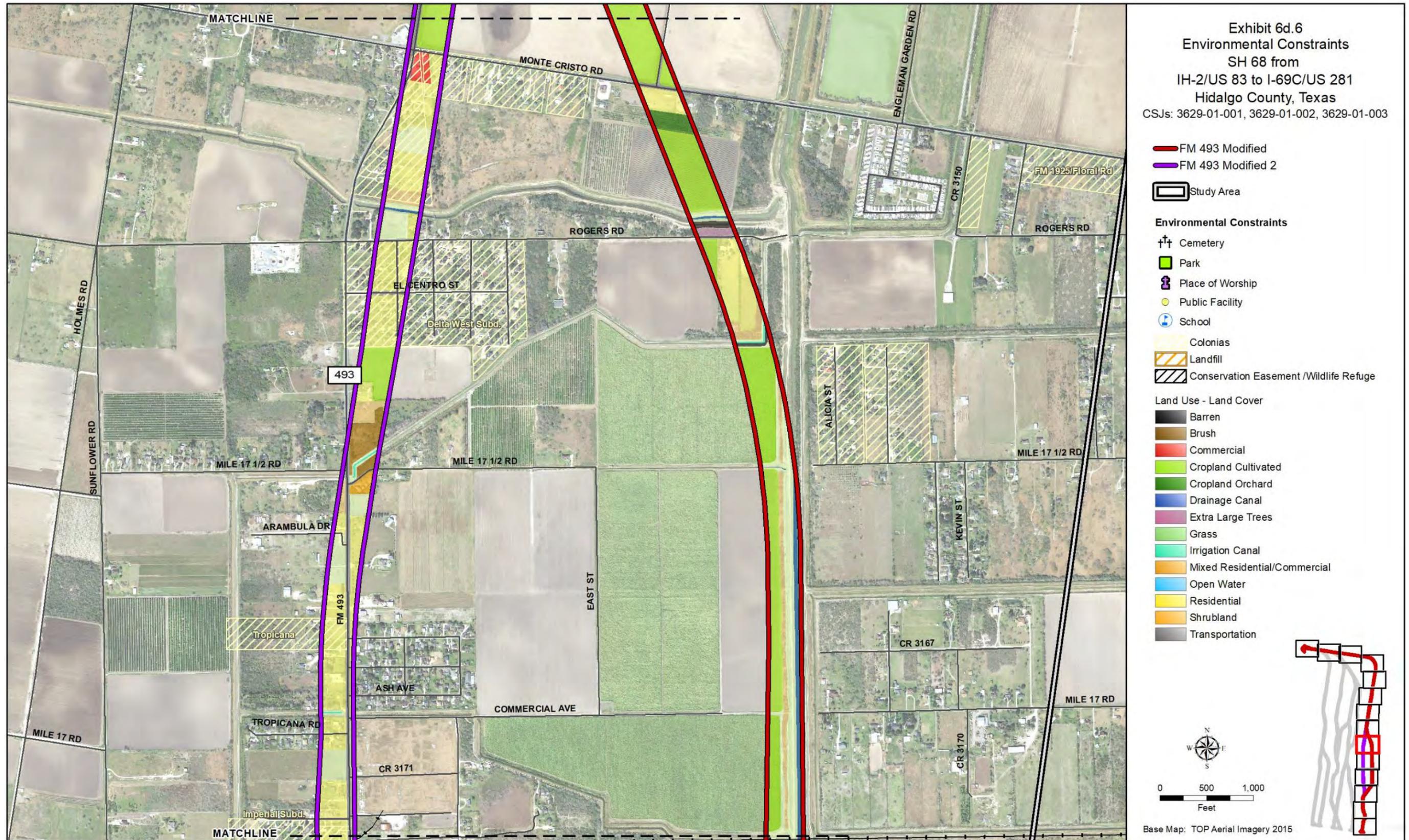


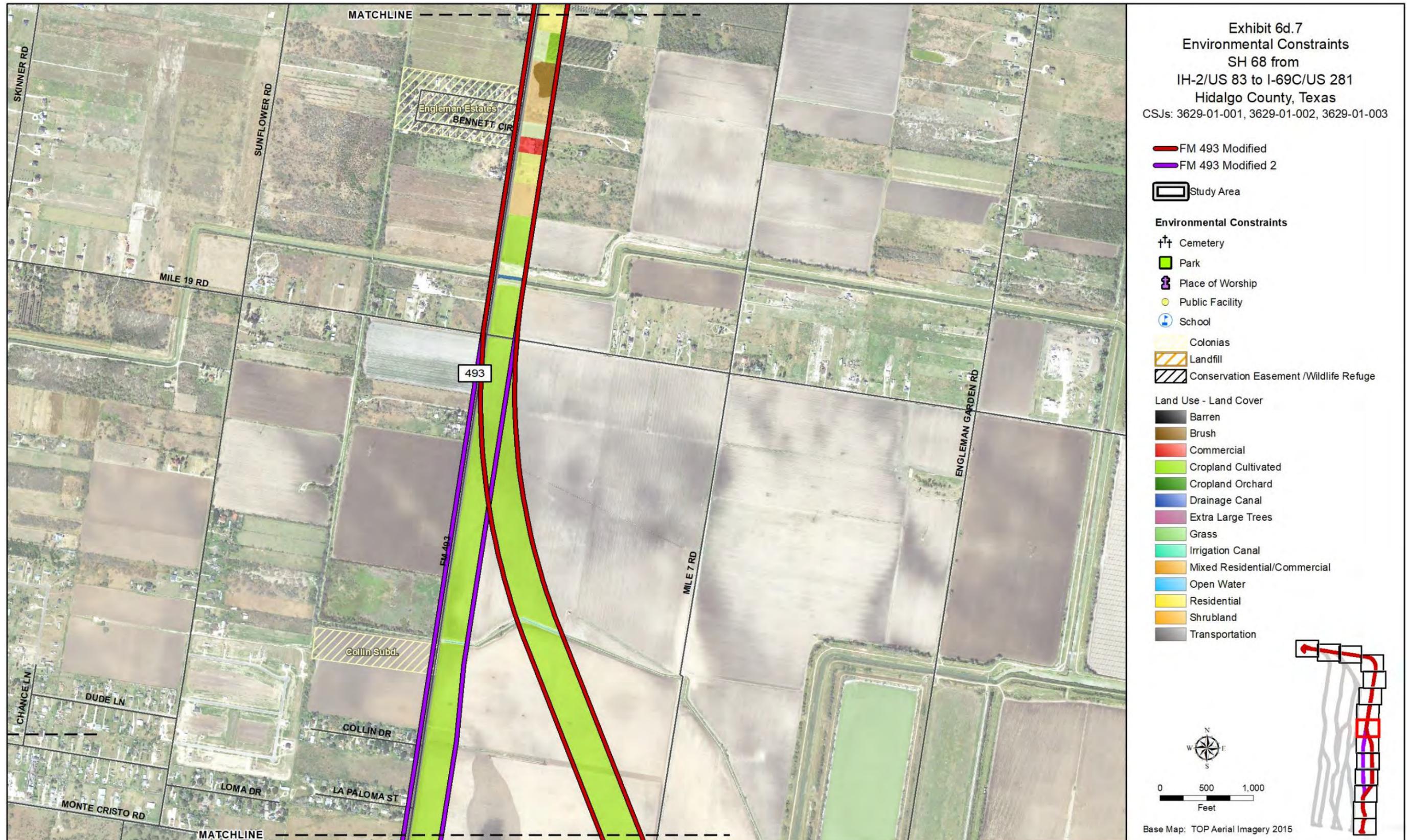


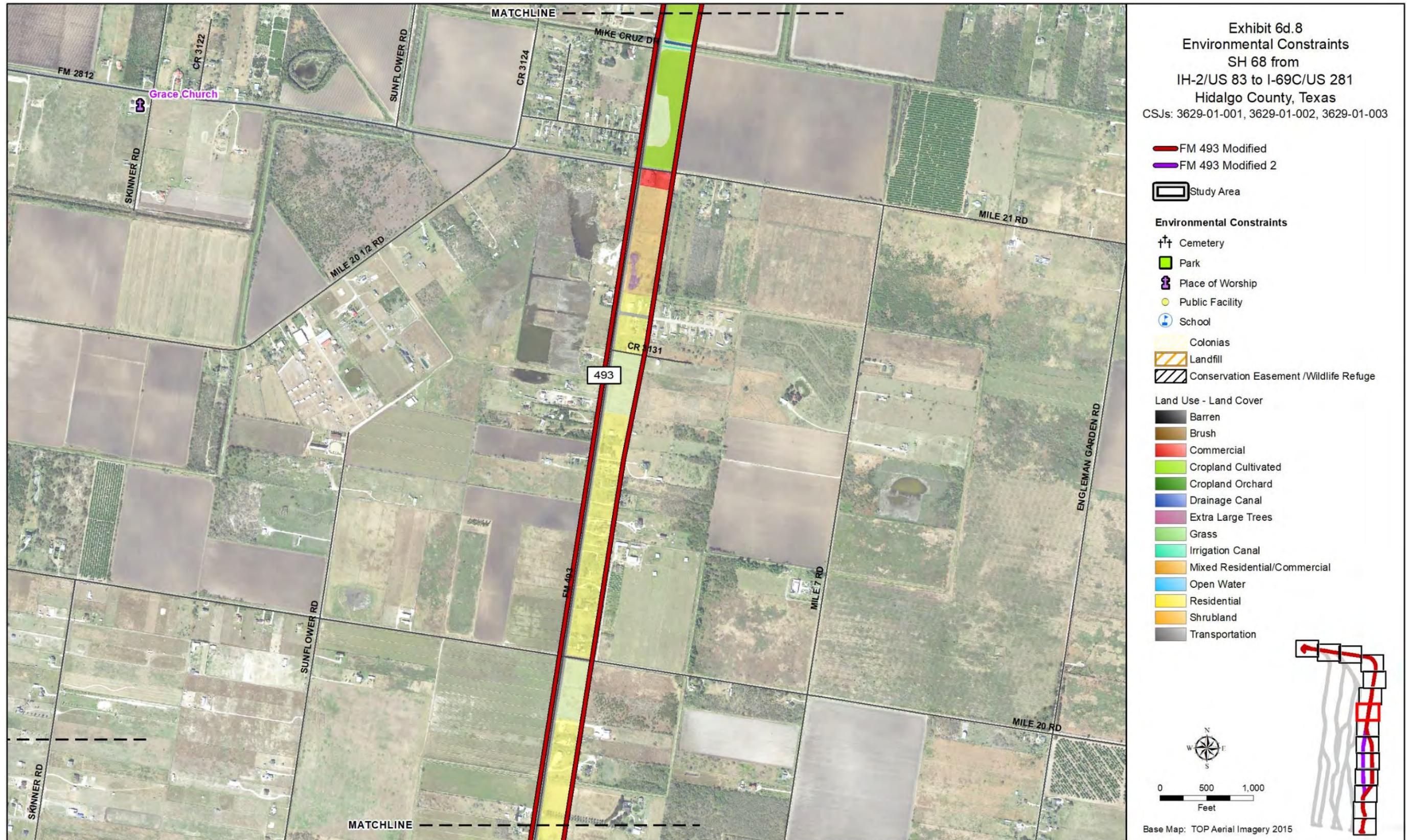


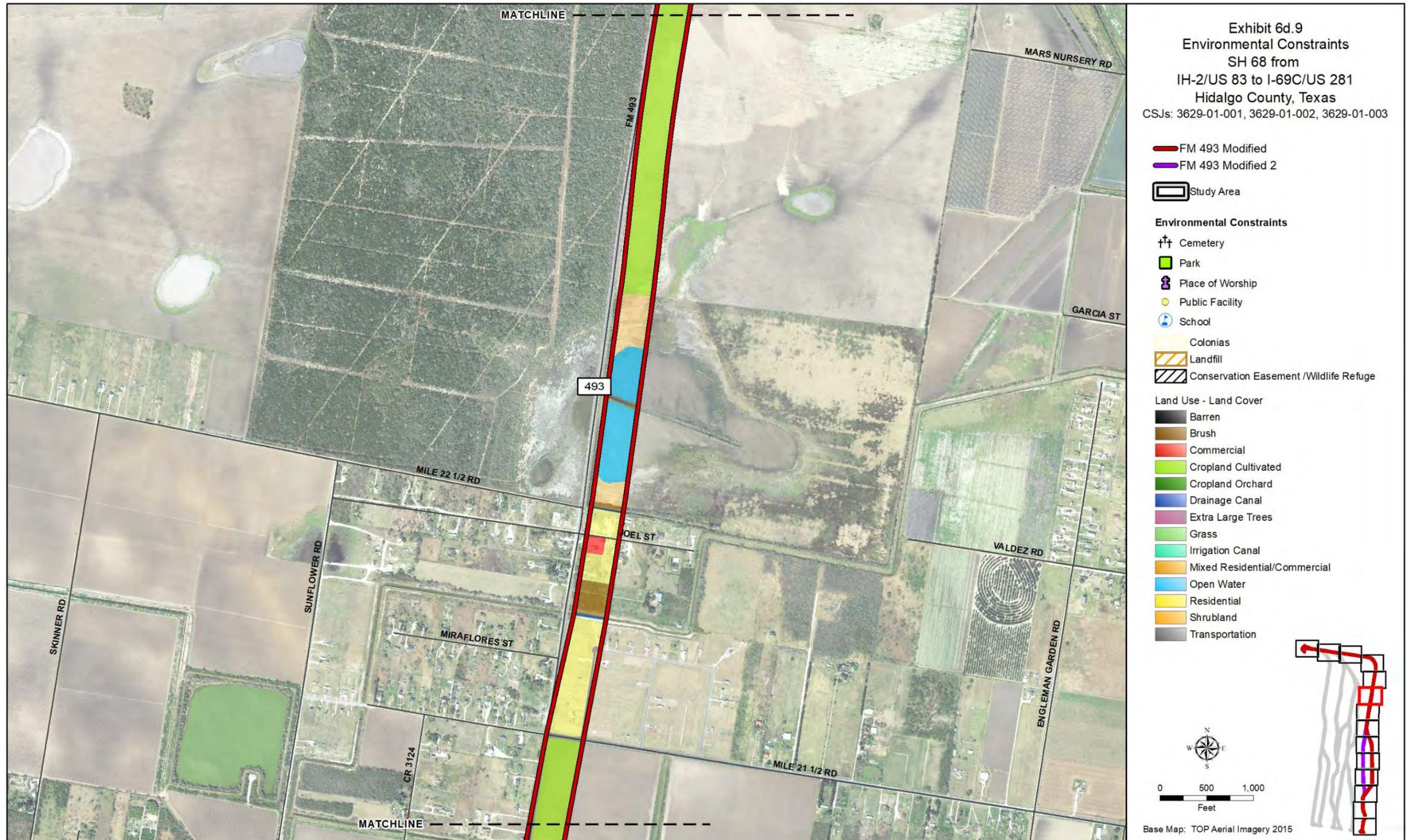






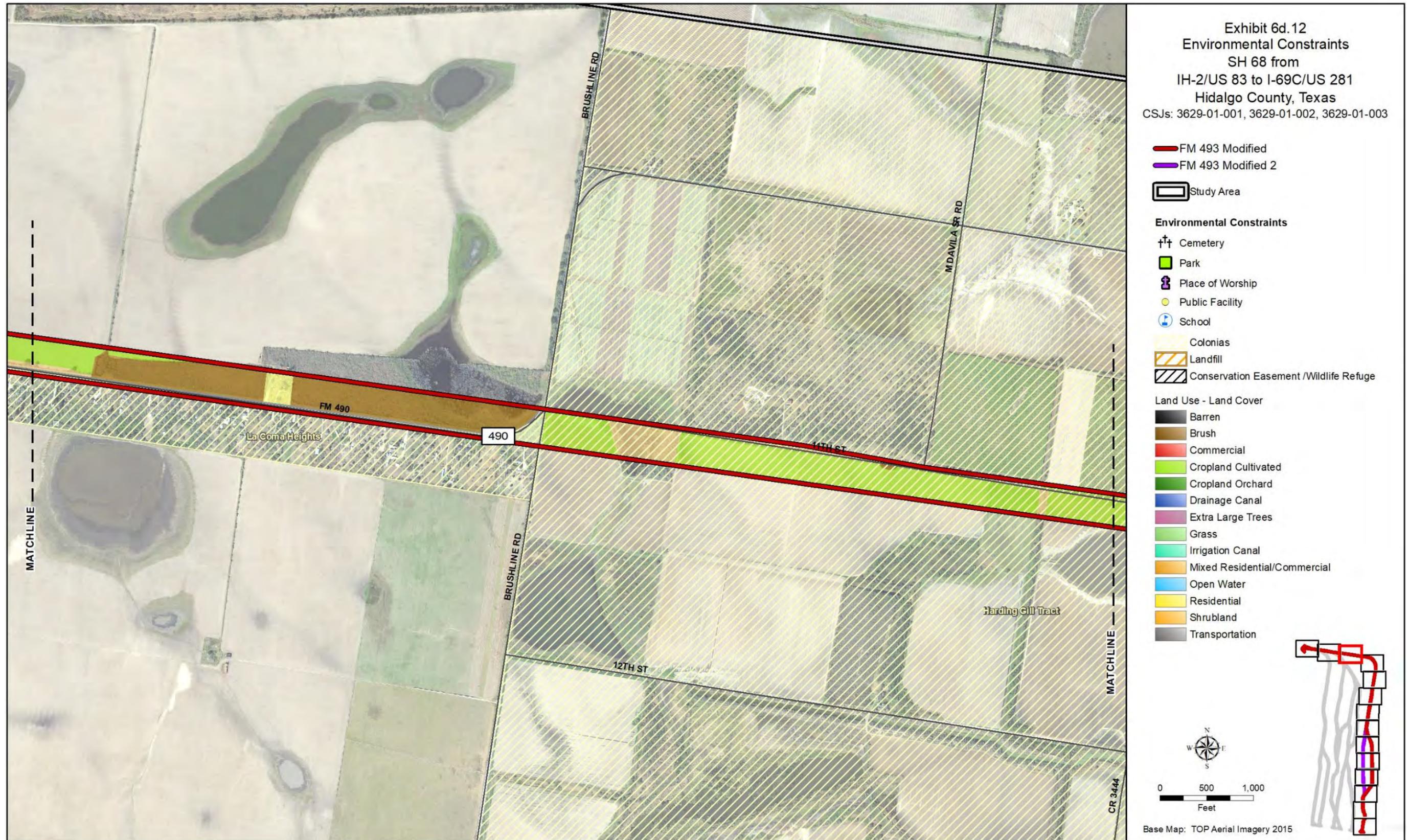




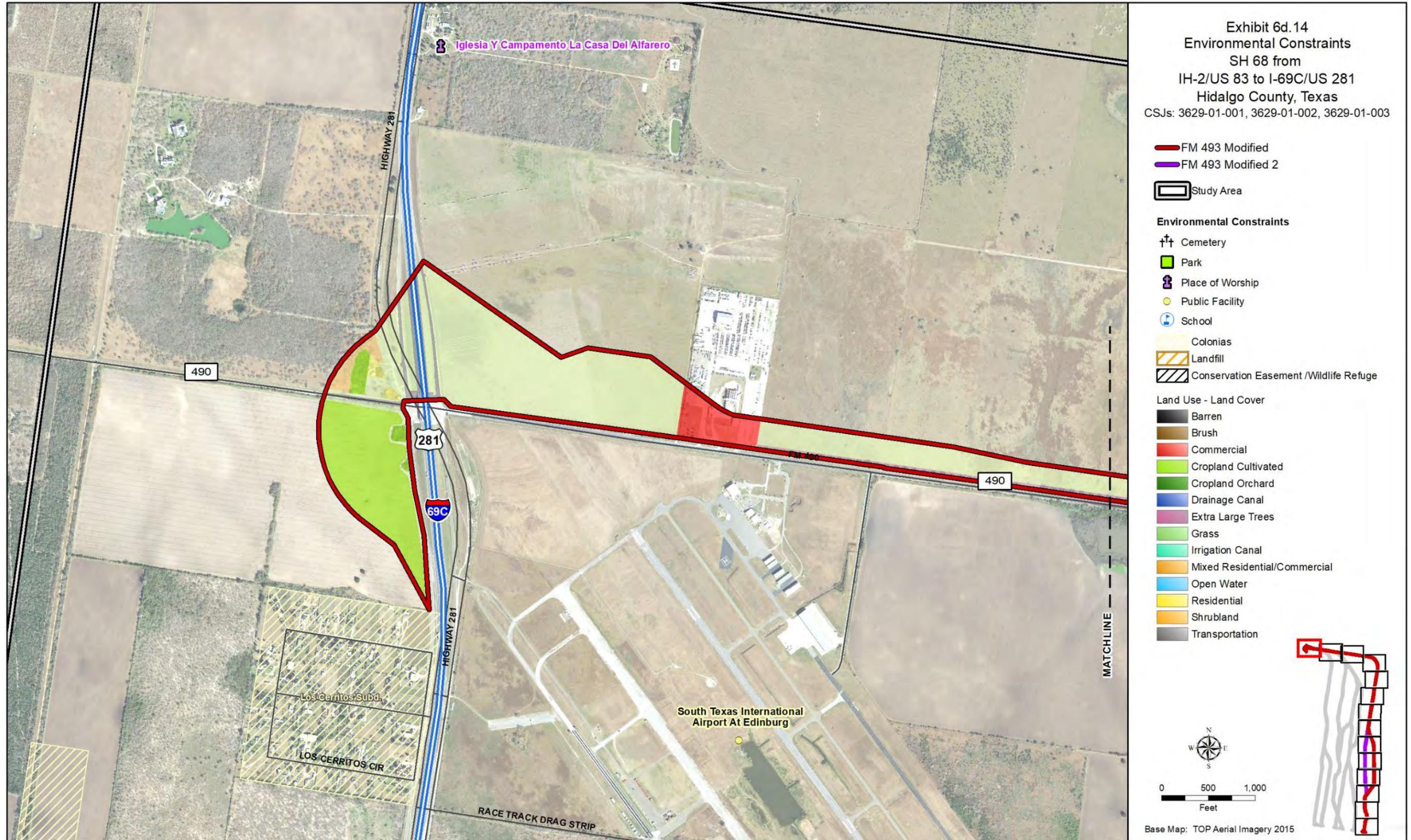


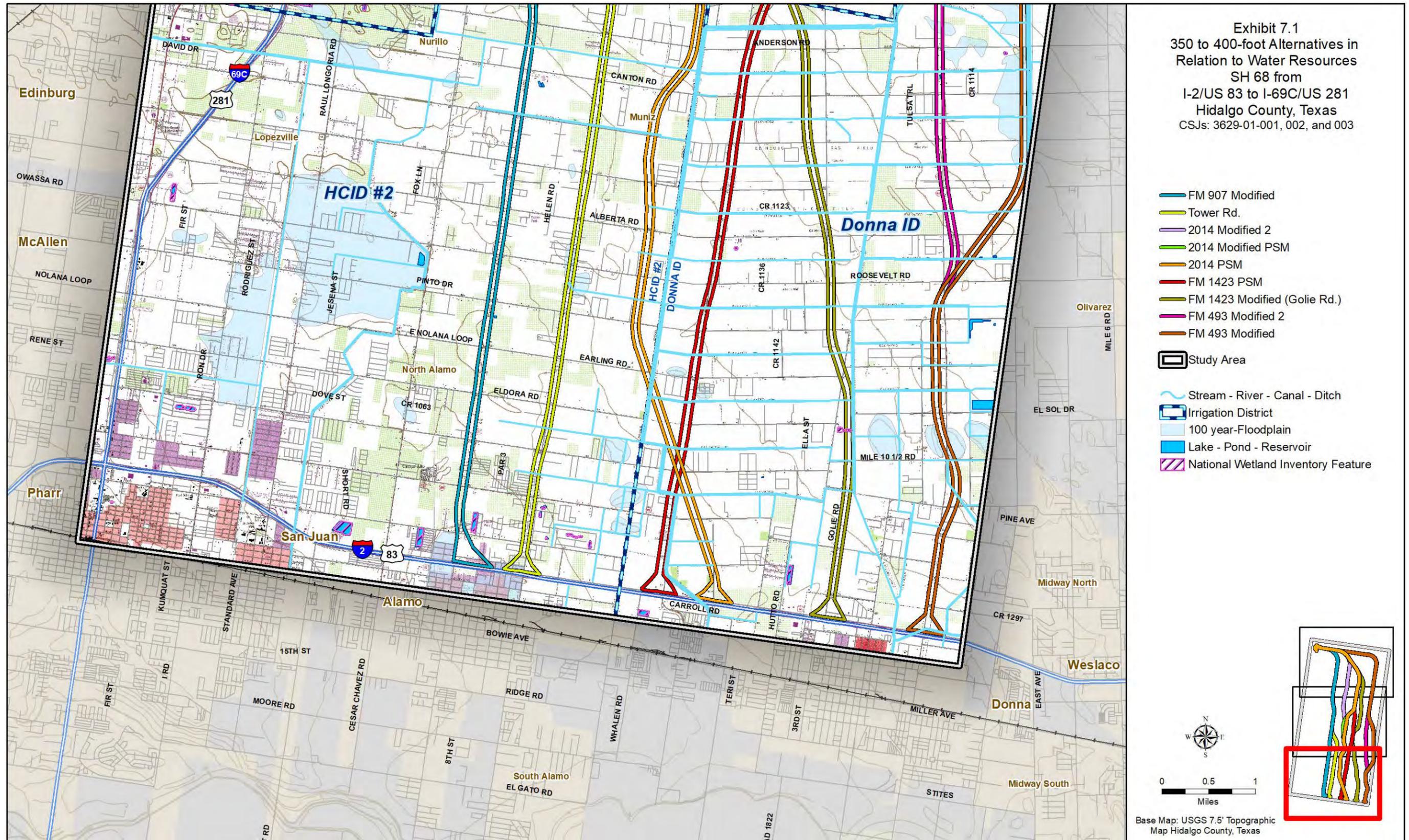


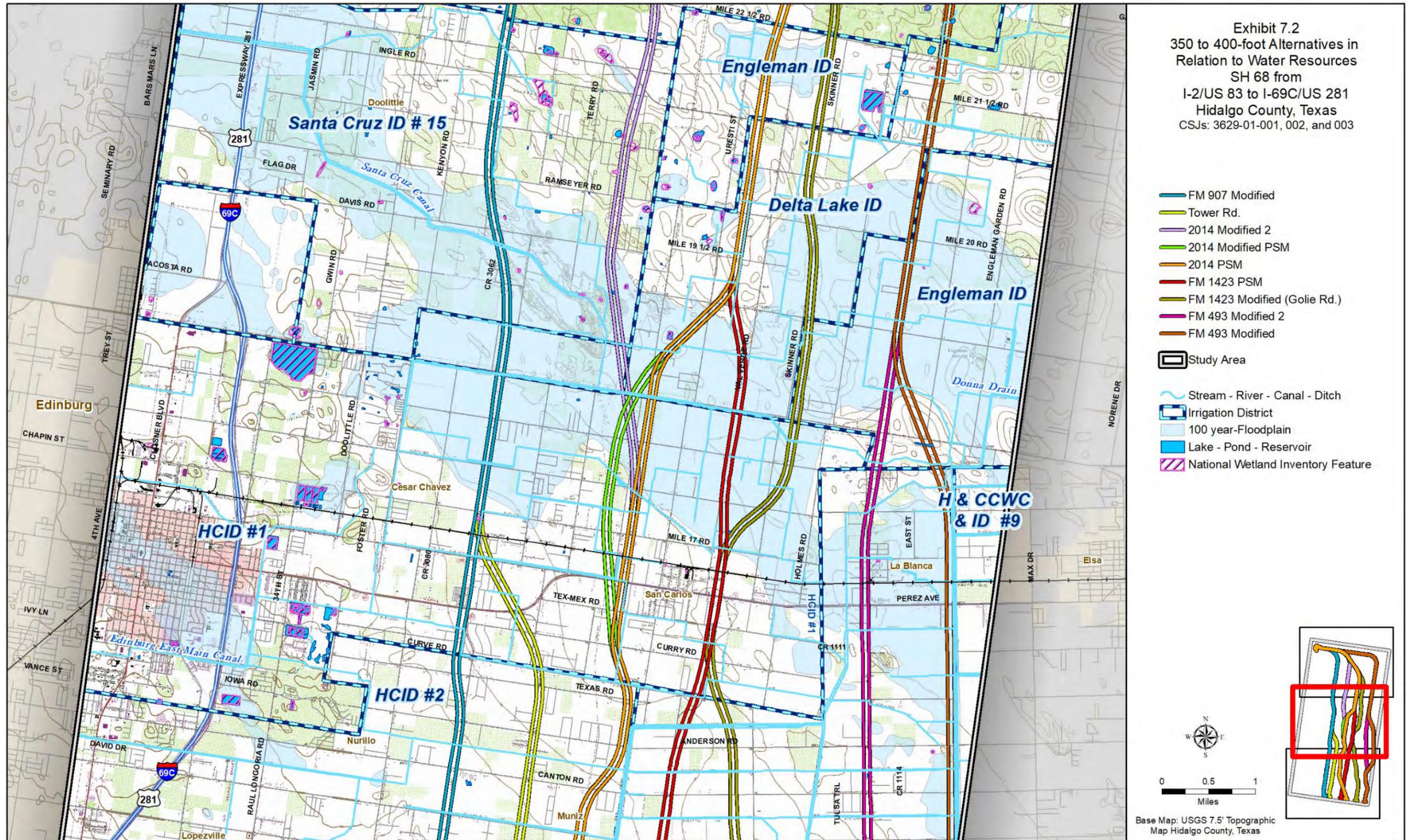


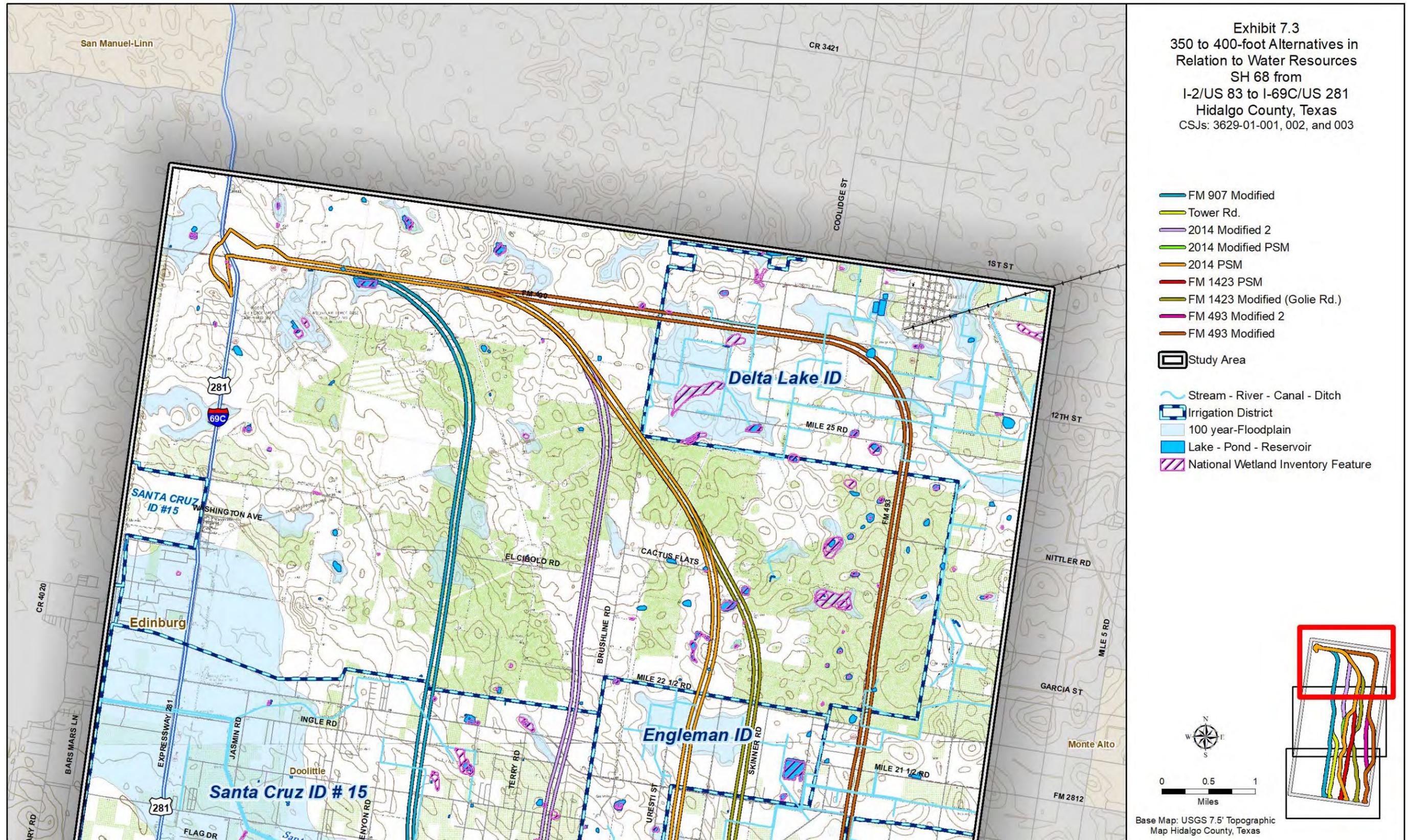


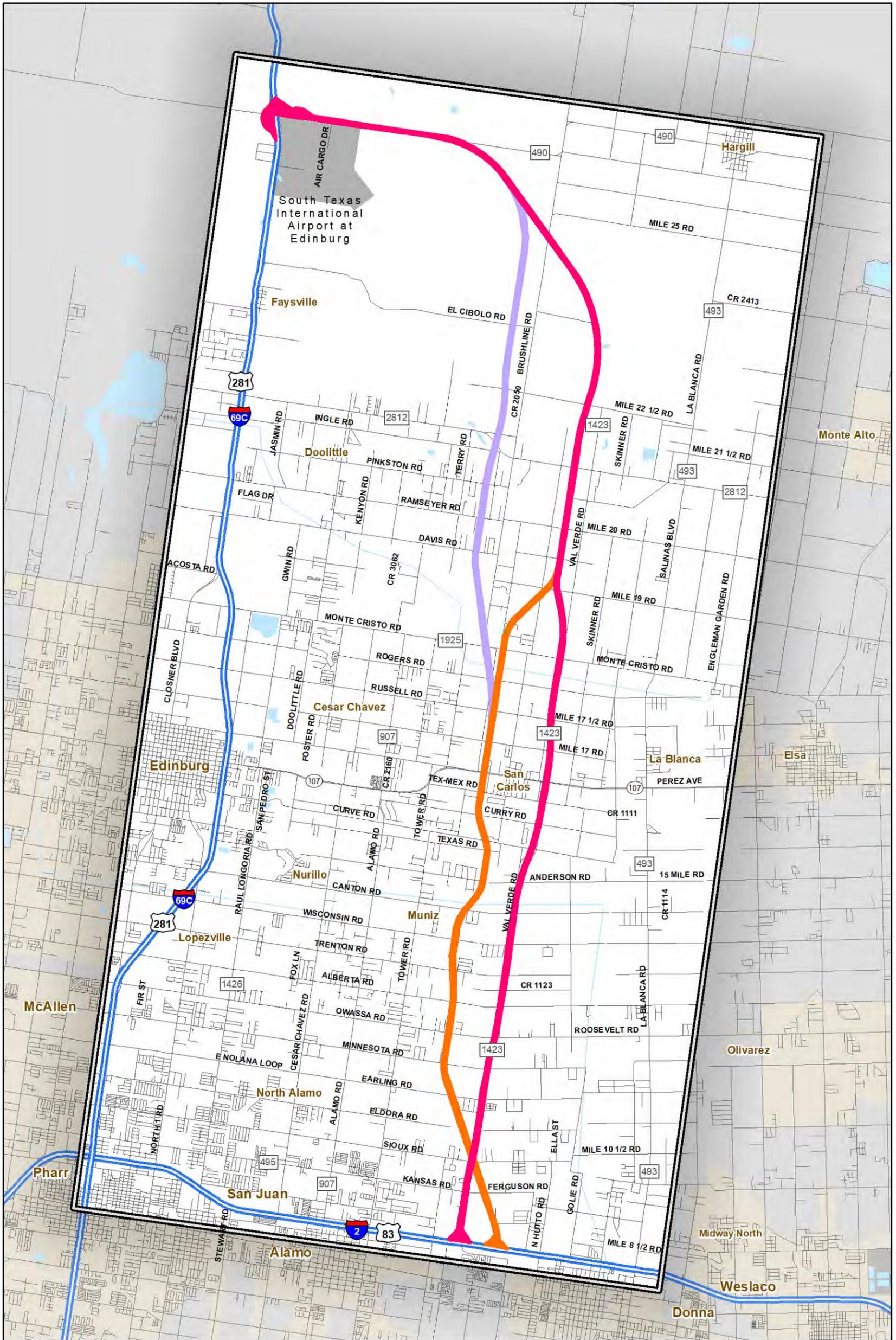












Base Map: ESRI-USA Base Map

Reasonable Alternatives

- 2014 Modified 2
- 2014 PSM
- FM 1423 PSM
- Study Area

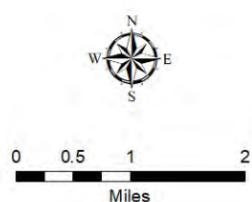


Exhibit 8
 Reasonable Alternatives
 SH 68 from
 I-2/US 83 to I-69C/US 281
 Hidalgo County, Texas
 CSJs: 3629-01-001, 002, and 003

1

Attachment B

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Evaluation Matrix for 350-foot to 400-foot Alternatives

SH 68, 350 to 400-foot-wide Alternatives		SH 68 Alternatives Evaluation Matrix										
Evaluation Matrix		Criteria: Green=More Desirable, Yellow=Neutral, Red=Less Desirable										
Criteria By Goal	Measure	Notes / Description of Data Collected	No-Build Option	FM 907 Modified	Tower Rd	2014 PSM	2014 Modified PSM	2014 Modified 2	FM 1423 PSM	FM 1423 Modified (Golie Rd)	FM 493 Modified 2	FM 493 Modified
Length of Alternative	Miles		0	19.8	20	22.4	22.5	21.7	21.6	22.4	24.9	25.2
Area of Alternative	Acres		0	1,011	1,001	1,076	1,091	1,057	1,061	1,071	1,188	1,207
Safety Goal												
Provides alternate corridor for larger/heavier vehicles	Yes/No	Qualitative assessment of the alternatives to provide larger/heavier vehicles an alternate corridor for travel. Corridors in proximity to adjacent collectors/arterials would attract heavy/large truck traffic from existing facilities onto SH 68. Build corridors will be designed to current TxDOT / AASHTO 70 mph and specifications to better accommodate larger/heavier vehicles.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Provides bicycle and pedestrian accommodations	Yes/No	Qualitative assessment of Bike/Ped accommodation effectiveness. Build corridors will be designed to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Minimizes safety impacts along IH-2	Proposed SH 68 system interchange location at IH-2	Qualitative assessment of potential safety impacts to IH-2 resulting from integration of proposed SH 68 direct connector ramps and existing IH-2 ramps. AASHTO's A Policy on Design Standards Interstate System and FHWA's Interstate System Access Informational Guide were used as references. System interchange spacing of 2 or more miles between existing state route interchanges and proposed SH 68 locations was considered more desirable. One mile spacing was considered absolute minimum.	2	3	1	3	3	3	3	2	3	3
Enhances safety/reduces crashes within the study area	Provides grade separations at major crossings	Qualitative assessment based on the potential number of grade separations/interchanges that could be provided at major collectors or larger functionally classified roads. Functional classification of roads based on HCMPO Functional Classification Map approved October 2014.	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2
Mobility Goal												
Provides additional capacity and improves mobility within the study area	Yes/No	Qualitative assessment of effectiveness to attract vehicular traffic from existing on-system N/S collectors/arterials to SH 68.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Enhances system connectivity	Connectivity to existing and proposed regional facilities	Qualitative assessment of the proposed corridors to provide effective connectivity to other major regional existing and planned transportation improvements within the study area.	1	3	2	3	2	2	1	3	3	2
Enhances modal connectivity	Connectivity to existing and proposed regional facilities	Qualitative assessment of the proposed corridors to provide connectivity between airport, ports of entry, transit and bicycle/pedestrian facilities for existing and planned facilities.	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3
Improves transportation system reliability within the study area	Yes/No	Qualitative assessment of the proposed corridor to provide alternative route other than IH-69C/US 281 in case of an incident on IH-69C/US 281.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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For quantitative criteria, the highest value for each criterion was divided into thirds and each range of thirds was assigned to the red/yellow/green categories based on desirability. The exception to this methodology was the cost effectiveness goal. In order to provide a wider degree of separation between the alternatives, the difference between the highest and lowest costs for each criterion was determined. Within that high to low range, values were ranked by upper, middle, and lower thirds to determine the respective red, yellow, and green categories.

SH 68 Alternatives Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Matrix			Criteria: Green=More Desirable, Yellow=Neutral, Red=Less Desirable									
Criteria By Goal	Measure	Notes / Description of Data Collected	No-Build Option	FM 907 Modified	Tower Rd	2014 PSM	2014 Modified PSM	2014 Modified 2	FM 1423 PSM	FM 1423 Modified (Golie Rd)	FM 493 Modified 2	FM 493 Modified
Community and Environmental Goal												
Human Environment												
Minimize impacts to residential parcels/property	# parcels	A residential property would be counted as "impacted" if the property is within the potentially proposed ROW. Residential property as identified via Hidalgo County Central Appraisal District (CAD) data, windshield surveys and aerial imagery.	0	343	415	177	167	192	173	204	323	197
Minimize impacts to residential structures	# structures	Residential structures as identified via aerial imagery on residential parcels. A residential structure would be counted as "impacted" if the structure is within the potentially proposed ROW.	0	380	450	143	141	145	217	175	317	170
Minimize impacts to schools	# schools	Based on mapped information and windshield surveys	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Avoid impacts to cemeteries	# cemeteries	Public and private cemeteries, as identified by maps and research	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minimize impacts to faith-based organizations	# churches	Based on mapped information and windshield surveys	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	2	0	0
Minimize impacts to Public Facilities/Public Services	# facilities/services	Based on mapped information and windshield surveys	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minimize impacts to commercial properties	# properties	A commercial property would be counted as "impacted" if the property is within the potentially proposed ROW. Commercial properties identified based on CAD data (parcels) and windshield survey.	0	63	50	13	14	13	30	22	32	20
Minimize impacts to commercial structures	# structures	A commercial structure would be identified as "impacted" if the structure is within the potentially proposed ROW. Commercial structures identified based on windshield survey and aerial imagery.	0	69	57	16	12	16	45	17	32	23
Minimize impacts to civic centers	# civic centers	Based on mapped information and windshield surveys	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minimize impacts to croplands/orchards	acres of croplands/orchards	Based on Landuse/Landcover data.	0	270	277	480	391	451	342	473	409	505
Avoid impacts to parks and recreational facilities	# parks	Based on mapped information and windshield surveys	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minimize impacts to oil/gas wells	# wells	Wells identified based on Railroad Commission data and USGS maps	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Minimize Oil and Gas Pipeline Crossings	# pipeline crossings	Oil and Gas Pipelines identified based on Railroad Commission data and USGS maps.	0	21	21	27	34	22	18	13	16	16
Minimize impacts to existing utility infrastructure	# sites or crossings	Includes minor utility stations and major transmission power lines, as identified through maps and windshield surveys	0	6	6	6	7	6	6	6	5	6
Minimize irrigation canal crossings	# of irrigation canal crossings	Based on mapped information and windshield surveys	0	6	9	9	10	10	13	11	22	15
Minimize impacts to colonias	# colonias	Count of colonias crossed by the potentially proposed ROW. Mapped Colonia locations obtained from the Secretary of State's Office.	0	3	8	0	0	0	2	1	11	3
Minimize impacts to minority areas.	Percentage of census blocks with minority population greater or equal to 50% out of the total blocks impacted by alternative.	Based on 2010 census data.	0	79	77	67	69	78	76	69	72	67
Minimize impacts to low-income areas.	Percentage of census block groups with low income populations greater or equal to 50% out of the total blocks impacted by alternative.	Based on 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5 year estimates.	0	12	6	13	13	13	12	15	15	21
Minimize traffic noise impacts	# potential receivers	Potential noise impacts identified based on proximity of sensitive noise receivers to residential, church, school, and park properties	0	312	353	179	157	191	232	156	266	225
Minimize impacts to landfills	# sites	Based on hazardous materials database search results	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minimize Impacts to Superfund Sites	# sites	Based on hazardous materials database search results	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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Cultural Resources												
State Antiquities Landmarks (SAL)	# sites	Based on review of THC online historic sites atlas.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minimize Historical canal crossings	# crossings	# of historical canal crossings	0	3	6	8	9	8	18	10	19	12
Minimize crossing of NRHP-Listed Irrigation District	# crossings	Based on review of THC online historic sites atlas irrigation district	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Minimize impacts to NRHP-Listed sites (Non-Irrigation Districts)	# sites	Based on review of THC online historic sites atlas non-irrigation district	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minimize impacts to recorded archeological sites	# sites	Measure based on background research and review of the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) online historic sites atlas and the restricted-access online Texas Archeological Sites Atlas, as well as records from the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Minimize impacts to potential historic age resources	# of parcels with a historic-age structure	Measure based on review of CAD data, pre 1975	0	10	33	14	21	18	20	23	33	22
Natural Environment												
Critical Habitat for Threatened and Endangered Species	Yes/No	Based on USFWS Critical Habitat Mapper	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Avoid impacts to National Wildlife Refuge	Yes/No	Based on USFWS LRGV-NWR property map	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minimize impacts to brushland habitat	Acres	Based on Landuse/Landcover data.	0	80	80	89	93	120	83	87	73	77
Minimize impacts to floodplains	acres of floodplain	Based on most recent FEMA flood maps	0	148	145	149	144	140	161	195	231	300
Minimize impacts to potential waters of the US	# crossings	Based on interpretation of USGS topographic maps.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minimize impacts to National Wetland Inventory Features	Acres	Based on USFWS NWI data	0	0.9	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	1.1	0.3	0.3
Minimize impacts to prime farmland soils	acres of prime farmland soils	Based on information from NRCS	0	922	922	1054	1068	1033	1038	1066	1165	1185

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Feasibility / Design Goal												
Maximizes Driver Expectancy	Qualitative Index	Qualitative assessment of how common and consistent to accepted standards the operational design is to a driver	N/A	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Avoids potential air space clearance conflicts	Qualitative Index	Qualitative assessment of potential air space clearance conflicts within the study area	N/A	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Optimizes overall design	Qualitative Index	Provides optimal design criteria for mainlanes	N/A	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
		Provides optimal alignment for interchange configuration	N/A	3	2	3	2	2	3	3	3	2
		Provides optimal design criteria for frontage roads	N/A	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	3	2
		Provides optimal design criteria adjacent and across irrigation canals	N/A	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
		Provides optimal design criteria to accommodate major utilities	N/A	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	3
Optimizes constructability	Qualitative Index	Construction complexity for mainlanes	N/A	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2
		Construction complexity for interchanges	N/A	3	2	3	2	2	3	3	3	2
		Construction complexity for frontage roads	N/A	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
		Construction complexity for major utility corridors	N/A	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3
		Construction complexity adjacent and across irrigation canals	N/A	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	2	1
		Construction complexity for cross roads/T intersections	N/A	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2
Expedite Phase 1 Implementation	Duration	ROW acquisition/# of parcels/utility adjustments/construction time	N/A	1	1	3	3	3	2	3	1	2
Cost Effectiveness												
Minimize construction cost	Cost estimate in millions	Construction and mitigation cost estimates for the alternatives were developed at a level consistent with conceptual level of analysis and includes "rule-of-thumb" cost contingency factors. Cost estimate included significant construction elements such as: structures, retaining wall, pavement structure and cut and fill quantities	N/A	506	506	539	537	514	556	527	618	655
Minimize right of way cost	Cost estimate in millions	Based on Hidalgo County Appraisal District Market Values as of September 2016	N/A	99	96	62	62	61	69	76	86	74
Minimize relocation cost	Cost estimate in millions	Based on 150% of right-of-way costs	N/A	148	144	93	93	92	104	114	128	110
Minimize utility displacement cost	Cost estimate in millions	Based on 7% of construction costs plus an additional escalation of 5% for areas of complex utility impacts	N/A	33	35	30	30	29	36	29	49	44
Minimize maintenance and operational costs	Annualized life cycle cost estimate in millions	6% of Construction Costs	N/A	27	27	28	28	27	29	28	33	35
Minimize total cost	Cost estimate in millions	Cumulative of Identified Costs	N/A	812	808	753	751	723	795	773	914	918
Economic Factors												
Maximize opportunity for economic development through adjacent access	Miles	Length of frontage road adjacent to developable property		23	21	31	30	33	29	32	27	24
Minimize amount of lost tax revenue	Cost estimate in millions	Quantitative assessment of the value of existing landuse taxable revenue converted to transportation use. Lost tax revenue based on the 2016 HCAD estimated tax.		1.8	2.9	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.6	1.2	1.9	1.2

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1 This report was written on behalf of the Texas Department of Transportation by



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