



PUBLIC NOTICE

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT**

BUILDING STRONG®

APPLICATION FOR PERMIT Park Place Project Tract 60259

Public Notice/Application No.: SPL-2014-00354-GS

Project: Park Place Project Tract 60259

Comment Period: December 29, 2014 through January 28, 2015

Project Manager: Gerardo Salas; 213-452-3417; Gerardo.Salas@usace.army.mil

Applicant

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Contact

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(949) 489-2700 x 213

Location

The proposed project is located in Tick Canyon Wash and unnamed tributaries, in the city of Santa Clarita, Los Angeles County, California (at: 34.458245, -118.37789).

Activity

To temporarily discharge fill material onto 1.417 acres of non-wetland waters of the United States and permanently discharge fill material onto 1.956 acres of non-wetland waters of the United States for the construction of a residential development and public park (Park Place Project Tract 60259) (Project). The Project would develop approximately 258 acres and would support approximately 492 residential units (see attached drawings). For more information, see page 4 of this notice.

Interested parties are hereby notified an application has been received for a Department of the Army permit for the activity described herein and shown on the attached drawing(s). We invite you to review today's public notice and provide views on the proposed work. By providing substantive, site-specific comments to the Corps Regulatory Division, you provide information that supports the Corps' decision-making process. All comments received during the comment period become part of the record and will be considered in the decision. This permit will be issued, issued with special conditions, or denied under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Comments should be mailed to:

Department of the Army
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Regulatory Division
ATTN: Gerardo Salas
915 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 930
Los Angeles, California 90017

Alternatively, comments can be sent electronically to: Gerardo.Salas@usace.army.mil

The mission of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Program is to protect the Nation's aquatic resources, while allowing reasonable development through fair, flexible and balanced permit decisions. The Corps evaluates permit applications for essentially all construction activities that occur in the Nation's waters, including wetlands. The Regulatory Program in the Los Angeles District is executed to protect aquatic resources by developing and implementing short- and long-term initiatives to improve regulatory products, processes, program transparency, and customer feedback considering current staffing levels and historical funding trends.

Corps permits are necessary for any work, including construction and dredging, in the Nation's navigable waters and their tributary waters. The Corps balances the reasonably foreseeable benefits and detriments of proposed projects, and makes permit decisions that recognize the essential values of the Nation's aquatic ecosystems to the general public, as well as the property rights of private citizens who want to use their land. The Corps strives to make its permit decisions in a timely manner that minimizes impacts to the regulated public.

During the permit process, the Corps considers the views of other Federal, state and local agencies, interest groups, and the general public. The results of this careful public interest review are fair and equitable decisions that allow reasonable use of private property, infrastructure development, and growth of the economy, while offsetting the authorized impacts to the waters of the United States. The permit review process serves to first avoid and then minimize adverse effects of projects on aquatic resources to the maximum practicable extent. Any remaining unavoidable adverse impacts to the aquatic environment are offset by compensatory mitigation requirements, which may include restoration, enhancement, establishment, and/or preservation of aquatic ecosystem system functions and services.

Evaluation Factors

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Factors that will be considered include conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food production and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. In addition, if the proposal would discharge dredged or fill material, the evaluation of the activity will include application of the EPA Guidelines (40 CFR Part 230) as required by Section 404 (b)(1) of the Clean Water Act.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact

Statement (EIS) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Preliminary Review of Selected Factors

EIS Determination- A preliminary determination has been made an EIS is not required for the proposed work.

Water Quality- The applicant is required to obtain water quality certification, under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, from the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. Section 401 requires any applicant for an individual Section 404 permit provide proof of water quality certification to the Corps of Engineers prior to permit issuance.

Coastal Zone Management- This project is located outside the coastal zone and preliminary review indicates it would not affect coastal zone resources. After a review of the comments received on this public notice and in consultation with the California Coastal Commission, the Corps will make a final determination of whether this project affects coastal zone resources.

Essential Fish Habitat- No Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), as defined by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, occurs within the project area and no EFH would be affected by the proposed project.

Cultural Resources- The latest version of the National Register of Historic Places has been consulted and this site is not listed, although there are four listed sites in the vicinity of the proposed project. However, none of the historic sites are found within the project boundaries. In addition, a cultural resource investigation by Archaeological Associates, Ltd., including a field inspection, was completed for the project area in 1991 and 2005 and did not identify any surface evidence of prehistoric sites. An updated records search was completed in 2014 by Curt Duke, and identified an additional four sites not included within the Archaeological Associates, Ltd., report from 1991 and 2005, all of which are found offsite. This review constitutes the extent of cultural resources investigations by the District Engineer, and she is otherwise unaware of the presence of such resources.

The Corps will determine whether the proposed activity would have any effect on historic properties listed on, or determined eligible for listing in the National Register. The Corps may initiate consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to determine the adequacy of the inventory and the Corps evaluation of any cultural resources that may be located within the project's Area of Potential Effect. If the Corps determines there may be an effect within our scope, the Corps may also consult with the appropriate Native American Tribes regarding the proposed impacts of the project. Mitigation measures may also be incorporated as part of project implementation to reduce potential impacts to cultural resources, if deemed appropriate.

Endangered Species- Preliminary determinations indicate the proposed activity would not affect federally listed endangered or threatened species, or their critical habitat. Therefore, formal consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act does not appear to be required at this time.

Public Hearing- Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearing shall state with particularity the reasons for holding a public hearing.

Proposed Activity for Which a Permit is Required

Basic Project Purpose- The basic project purpose comprises the fundamental, essential, or irreducible purpose of the proposed project, and is used by the Corps to determine whether the applicant's project is water dependent (i.e., requires access or proximity to or siting within the special aquatic site to fulfill its basic purpose). Because no fills are proposed within special aquatic sites, identification of the basic project purpose is not necessary.

Overall Project Purpose- The overall project purpose serves as the basis for the Corps' 404(b)(1) alternatives analysis and is determined by further defining the basic project purpose in a manner that more specifically describes the applicant's goals for the project, and which allows a reasonable range of alternatives to be analyzed. The overall project purpose for the proposed project is to construct a residential development and public park, approximately 250 to 300 acres in size, which could support approximately 492 residential units in the general vicinity of Santa Clarita, California.

Additional Project Information

Baseline information- The project site covers approximately 523 acres. Site elevations range from 1,790 feet to 2,300 feet above mean sea level. Single-family dwelling units occur on the western site boundary and an approved single-family development, Vesting Tentative Tract No. 48086 (Spring Canyon), is located southeast of the site. Single-family dwelling units also border the areas to the east and west of the southerly extension of Shadow Pines Boulevard/Tick Canyon Road, between Grandifloras Road and the southern site boundary. A limited number of rural residential units and the SLA Sanctuary, a privately operated animal sanctuary, are located to the north and northeast of the site. The rural residential units and the SLA Sanctuary generally obtain access from an approximately 16-foot wide unimproved (dirt) Shadow Pines Road paralleling Tick Canyon Wash both onsite and offsite.

The existing 523 acres support approximately 226.69 acres of Riversidean sage scrub habitat, 146.0 acres of scrub oak chaparral, 40.67 acres of non-native grassland, valley and foothill grassland, 1.55 acres of saltbush scrub, 9.26 acres of disturbed juniper woodland, 6.85 acres of chamise chaparral, 0.10 acre of Riversidean alluvial fan sage scrub, 78.0 acres of residential/urban/exotic disturbed, and 24.69 acres of actively scoured Tick Canyon Wash. The project area supports a total of 7.64 acres of ephemeral non-wetland waters of the United States. The proposed project would result in permanent impacts to approximately 1.96 acres and temporary impacts to approximately 1.42 acres of non-wetland waters of the United States.

Project description- The applicant proposes to construct the Park Place Project Tract 60259 on an approximately 523-acre parcel. The proposed project includes 492 single-family dwelling units (each 5,000 to 7,000 square feet), a 38-acre neighborhood park, public facility lots, a water tank lot, and a water pump station lot (see attached Figure 5). A system of roadways is also planned, including the extension of Shadow Pines Boulevard from its current terminus south of the site and its northern extension as a private drive, and secondary fire access road. The northern extension of Shadow Pines Boulevard extends approximately one-mile to Summit Knoll Drive. The extension of Shadow Pines Boulevard includes the construction of two bridges over Tick Canyon Wash. The 38-acre neighborhood park is proposed in the northeast corner of the site.

Project impacts would include the permanent discharge of fill material into 1.96 acres of non-wetland waters of the United States, and the temporary discharge of fill material into 1.42 acres of non-wetland waters of the United States.

Proposed Mitigation— The proposed mitigation may change as a result of comments received in response to this public notice, the applicant's response to those comments, and/or the need for the project to comply with the 404(b)(1) Guidelines. In consideration of the above, the proposed mitigation sequence (avoidance/minimization/compensation), as applied to the proposed project is summarized below:

Avoidance: The project area supports a total of 7.64 acres of non-wetland waters of the United States. A total of 4.27 acres of waters of the United States would be avoided in the project area. Furthermore, as originally designed, the development would have resulted in permanent impacts to approximately 2.44 acres of non-wetland waters of the United States. As a result, the current project design includes substantial modifications that have reduced impacts to jurisdictional areas.

Minimization: Standard Best Management Practices for water quality would be required during construction. Furthermore, the applicant shall ensure all sites within waters of the U.S. subject to authorized, temporary impacts are restored to pre-project alignments, elevation contours, and conditions to the maximum extent practicable to ensure expeditious resumption of aquatic resource functions.

Compensation: As compensatory mitigation for permanent impacts to several ephemeral streams, the applicant proposes the following:

- Establishment of 3.17 acres of non-wetland waters of the United States within the bottom of Tick Canyon Wash, which includes planting/installation, and five years of maintenance, monitoring, and reporting.
- Rehabilitation of 1.63 acres within Tick Canyon Wash, which includes weeding, planting, trash removal, and monitoring and reporting for five years.

Preliminary Alternatives Analysis- The applicant submitted a preliminary alternatives analysis for the Corps' consideration in response to the requirement to demonstrate compliance with section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act, i.e., the "404(b)(1) Guidelines". The Corps has not yet evaluated the preliminary analysis of alternatives for compliance, but is providing the following excerpts from the submittal for review and comment:

- *No Federal Action/Full Avoidance Alternative* - This alternative would consist of the elements of the proposed project that could be carried out in the absence of federal action (e.g., permits, funding). Under Alternative 1, development would occur without impacts to jurisdictional waters. Alternative 1 (see attached Figure 6) reduces the overall project footprint to the development of 69 single family lots and would not require a Corps permit. Access to the site would occur from extending Snow Drop Court and Jasmine Valley Road from their current terminus in the existing residential neighborhood. Alternative 1 reduces the residential component of the project by 423 units and results in the elimination of the park site. Therefore, Alternative 1 does not meet the overall project purpose.
- *Alternative 2 -- Preserve Drainages T and U* - This alternative was developed to consider reduced impacts to waters of the United States while still providing a significant number of

residential units (447 units) and the neighborhood park site. Under this alternative, development would occur with preservation of the jurisdictional waters in Drainages T and U. Drainage T and its tributaries total 0.25 acre (4,284 linear feet) of ephemeral drainages. Drainage U and its tributaries total 0.35 acre (7,617 linear feet) of ephemeral drainages. Alternative 2 (see attached Figure 7) reduces the overall project footprint to 447 residential units and a 38-acre park site. Avoidance of Drainages T and U would require the use of retaining walls and bridges to allow internal project circulation and construction of Shadow Pines Boulevard. The applicant states Alternative 2 is not practicable from a logistical or cost perspective due to the excess cut dirt required to be trucked off-site and the associated cost of \$22 million to export the dirt. In addition, the approximately 244,000 truck trips would cause substantial impacts to air quality, noise, and traffic. The developable area is insufficient to cover the increased cost of the project infrastructure, including over \$20 million required to construct bridges. Therefore, Alternative 2 is not considered practicable by the applicant because it results in greater environmental impacts than the proposed project and would be significantly more costly.

- *Alternative 3 -- Minimize Impacts to the Northwest Portion of the Site* - Alternative 3 (see attached Figure 8) was developed to minimize impacts to the northwest portion of the site through development in the southeast portion of the site. The southeast portion of the site is characterized by steep slopes with less jurisdictional drainages. However, the slopes along the southeast portion of the site, which extend from Tick Canyon Wash to the project boundary, contain a substantial landslide risk and are considered geologically unstable; therefore, an increase in grading impacts to Tick Canyon Wash would result. Development under this alternative is not considered practicable by the applicant because of the increased impacts to Tick Canyon Wash due to significant grading required to stabilize the landslide risk area.
- *Alternative 4 -- Development of the Northwest Portion of the Site* - This alternative (see attached Figure 9) would shift the impacts to the northwest portion of the site and consolidate the onsite open space with the offsite open space, thereby reducing the impacts to the northern and eastern portion of the site and increasing impacts to the northwestern drainages. This portion of the site is characterized by steep slopes, which have code restrictions by the City of Santa Clarita and therefore cannot be graded. Furthermore, due to the grading limitation of this portion of the site, cut and fill volumes would not balance during the grading operation, which would result in substantial higher on-site construction costs and off-site transportation and disposal costs. Development under this alternative is not considered practicable because of the logistical impacts associated with significant ridgeline code restrictions, the steep slope code restrictions, and the environmental and cost impacts associated with transporting the excess fill offsite; therefore, this alternative is not considered practicable by the applicant.

Proposed Special Conditions

No Permit Special Conditions are proposed at this time.

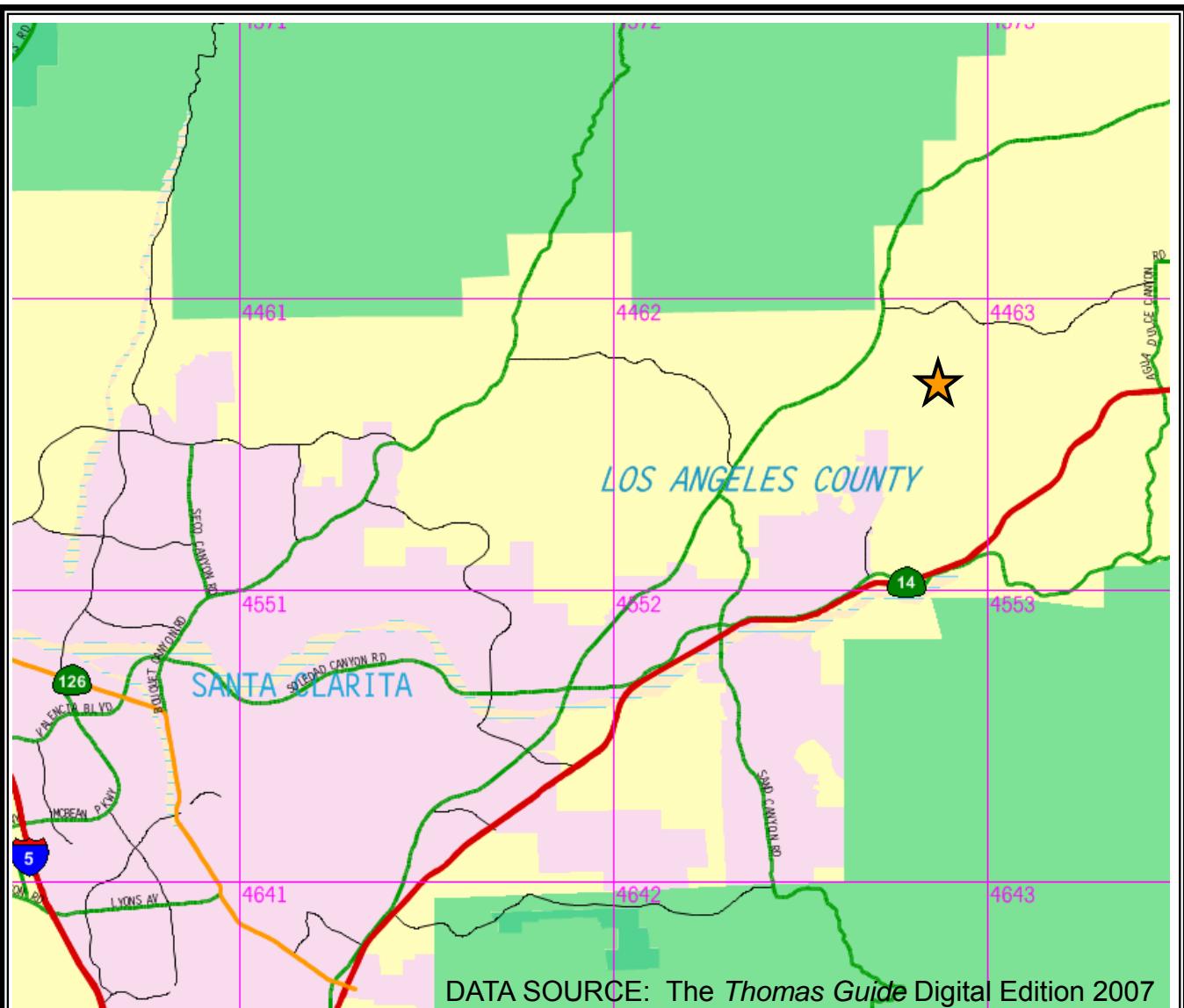
For additional information, please call Gerardo Salas at 213-452-3417 or via e-mail at Gerardo.Salas@usace.army.mil. This public notice is issued by the Chief, Regulatory Division.



Regulatory Program Goals:

- To provide strong protection of the nation's aquatic environment, including wetlands.
- To ensure the Corps provides the regulated public with fair and reasonable decisions.
- To enhance the efficiency of the Corps' administration of its regulatory program.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**
915 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD, SUITE 930
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90017
WWW.SPL.USACE.ARMY.MIL/MISSIONS/REGULATORY



PARK PLACE PROJECT

REGIONAL LOCATION MAP

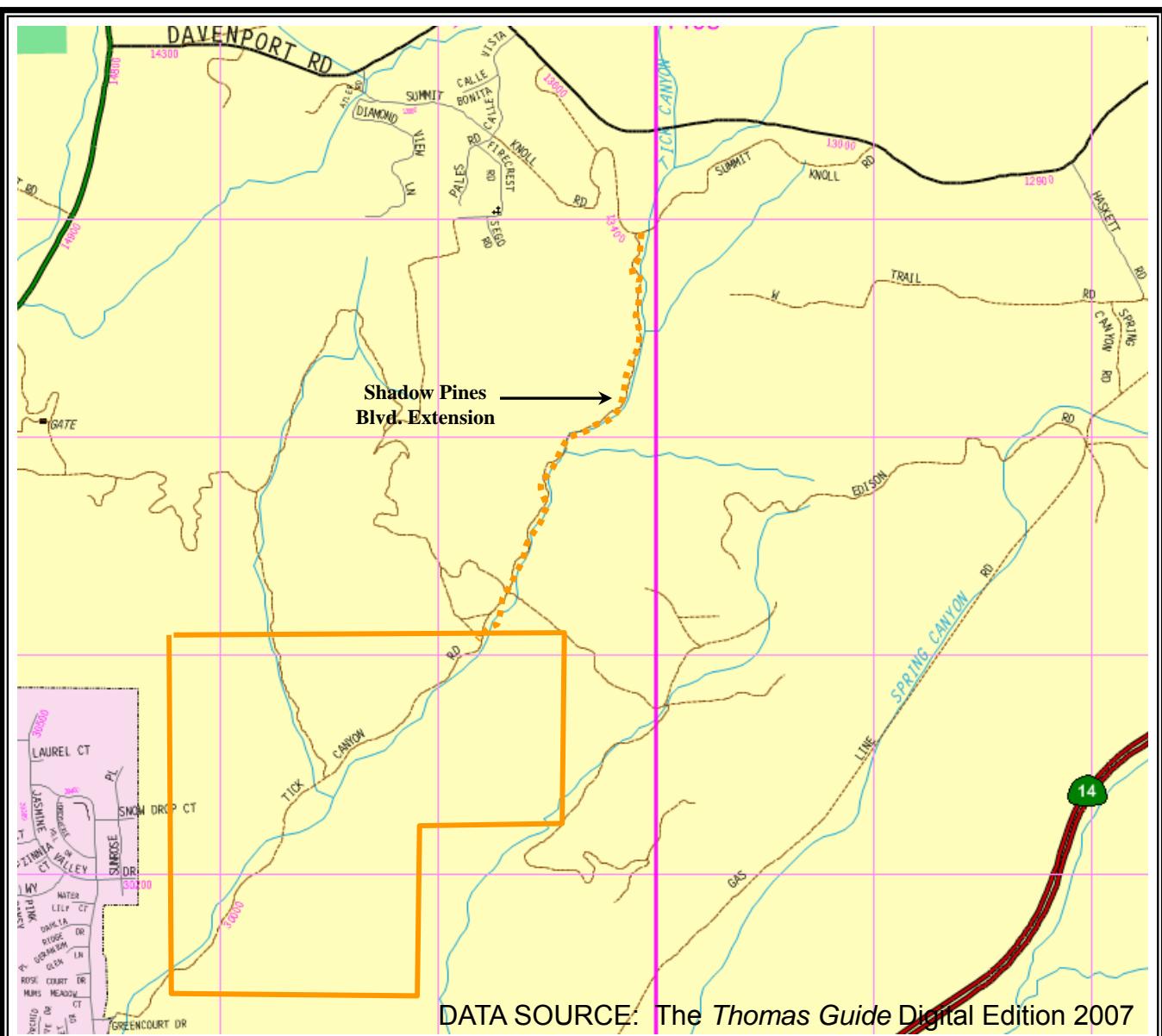
Approximate Project Location



VCS ENVIRONMENTAL
30900 Rancho Viejo Road, Suite 100
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
(949) 489-2700
Fax (949) 489-0309



FIGURE 1



PARK PLACE PROJECT

SITE VICINITY MAP



Approximate Project Boundary

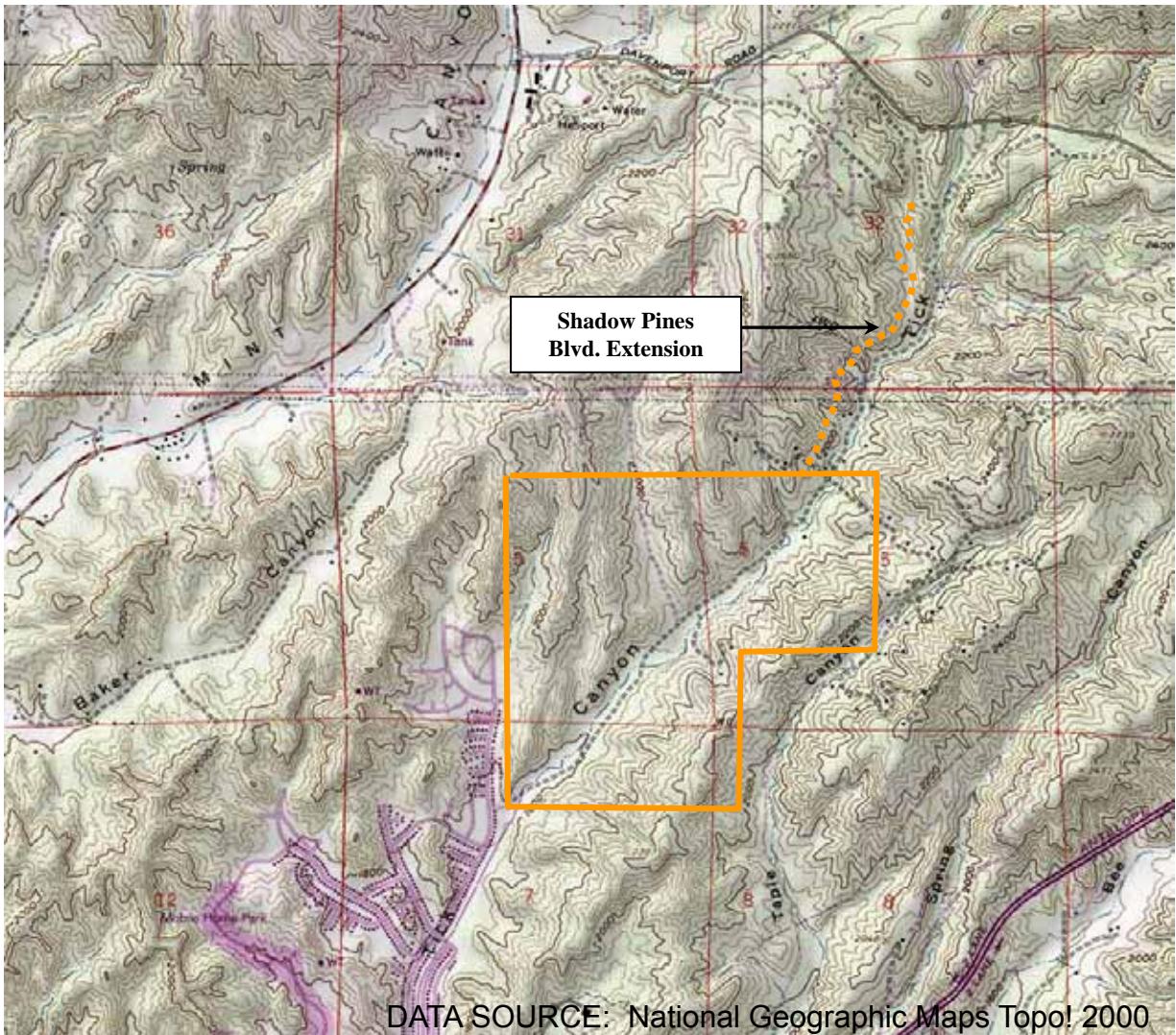


Shadow Pines Road Extension



VCS ENVIRONMENTAL
30900 Rancho Viejo Road, Suite 100
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
(949) 489-2700
Fax (949) 489-0309

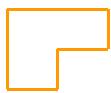
FIGURE 2



PARK PLACE PROJECT

U.S.G.S. 7.5 Minute Quadrangle Map

Mint Canyon, CA Quadrangle



Approximate Project Boundary

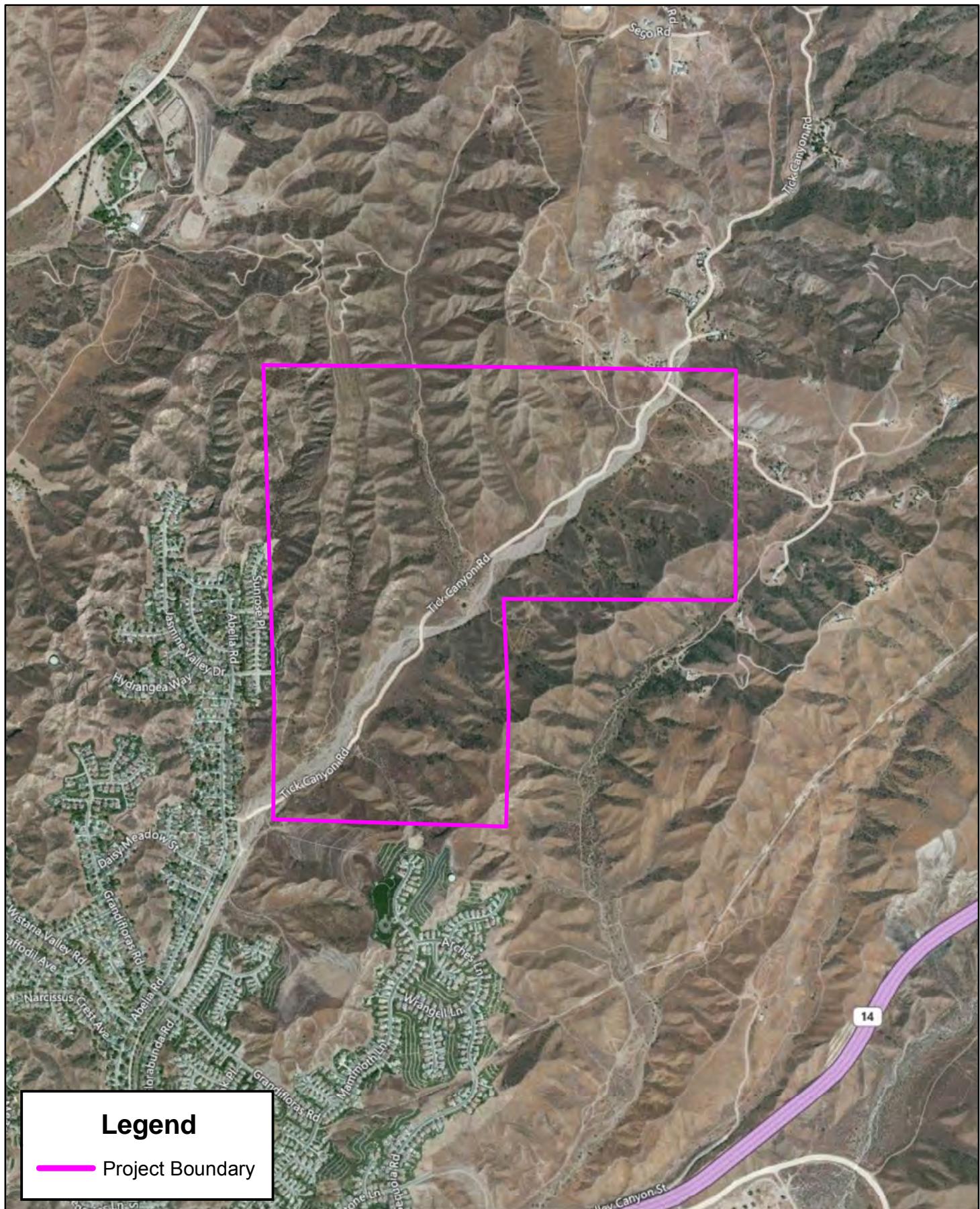


Shadow Pines Road Extension



VCS ENVIRONMENTAL
30900 Rancho Viejo Road, Suite 100
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
(949) 489-2700
Fax (949) 489-0309

FIGURE 3



Prepared By:  VCS Environmental	Map Created: 4/7/2014	 0 375 750 1,500 Feet 1 inch = 1,500 feet	Data Sources: Bing Maps	Tick Canyon/Park Place Project Aerial Photograph
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FIGURE 4

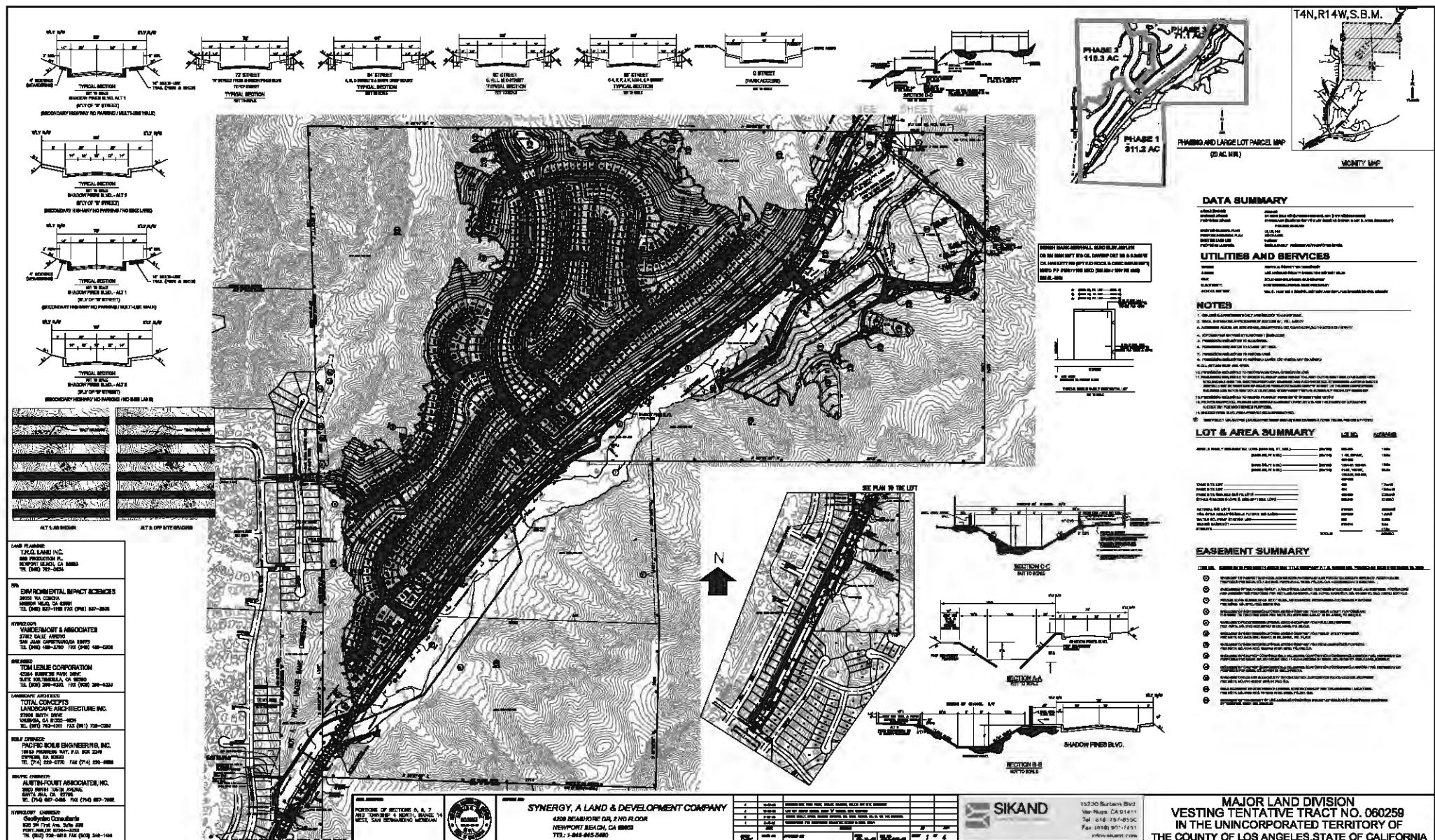
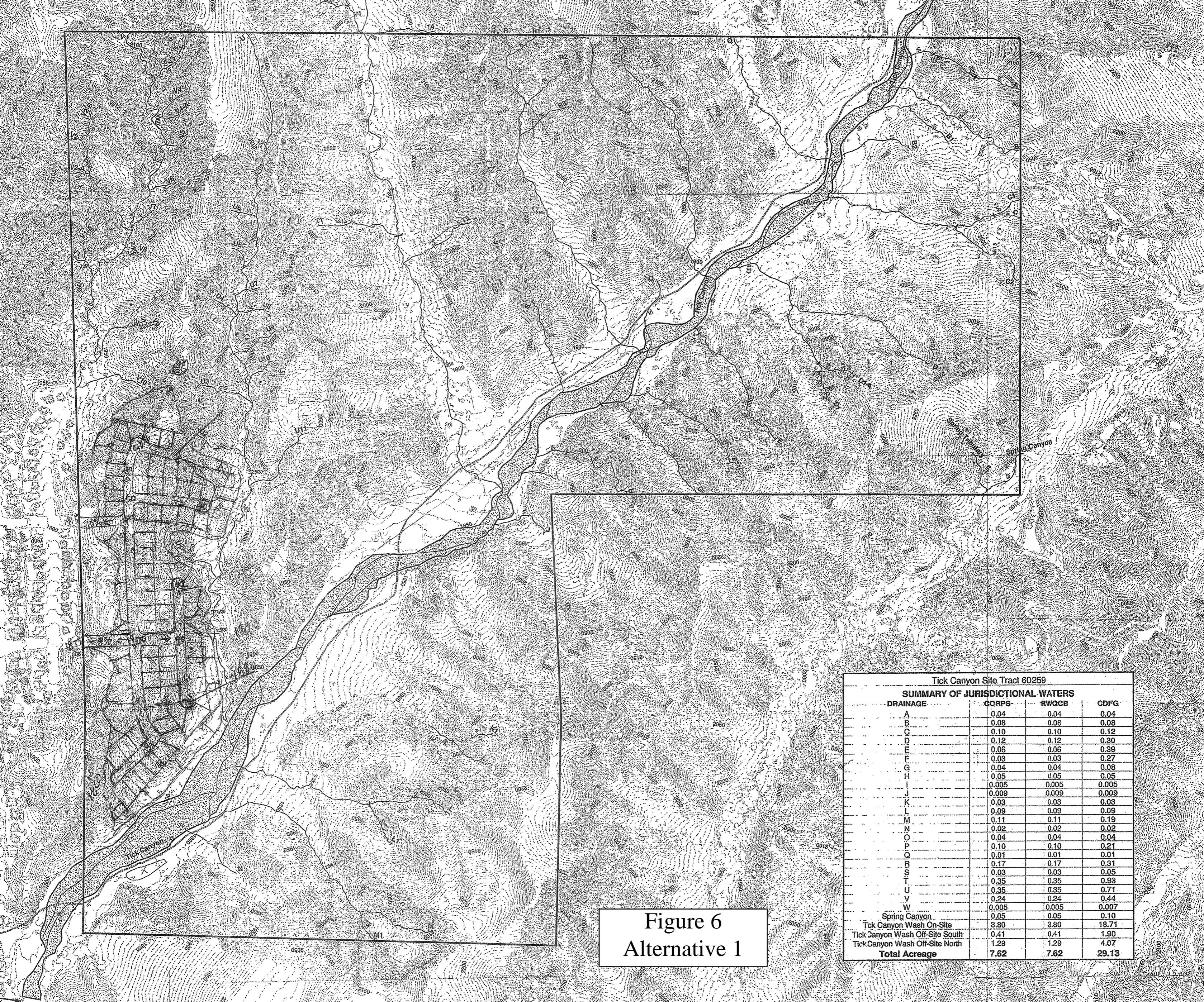
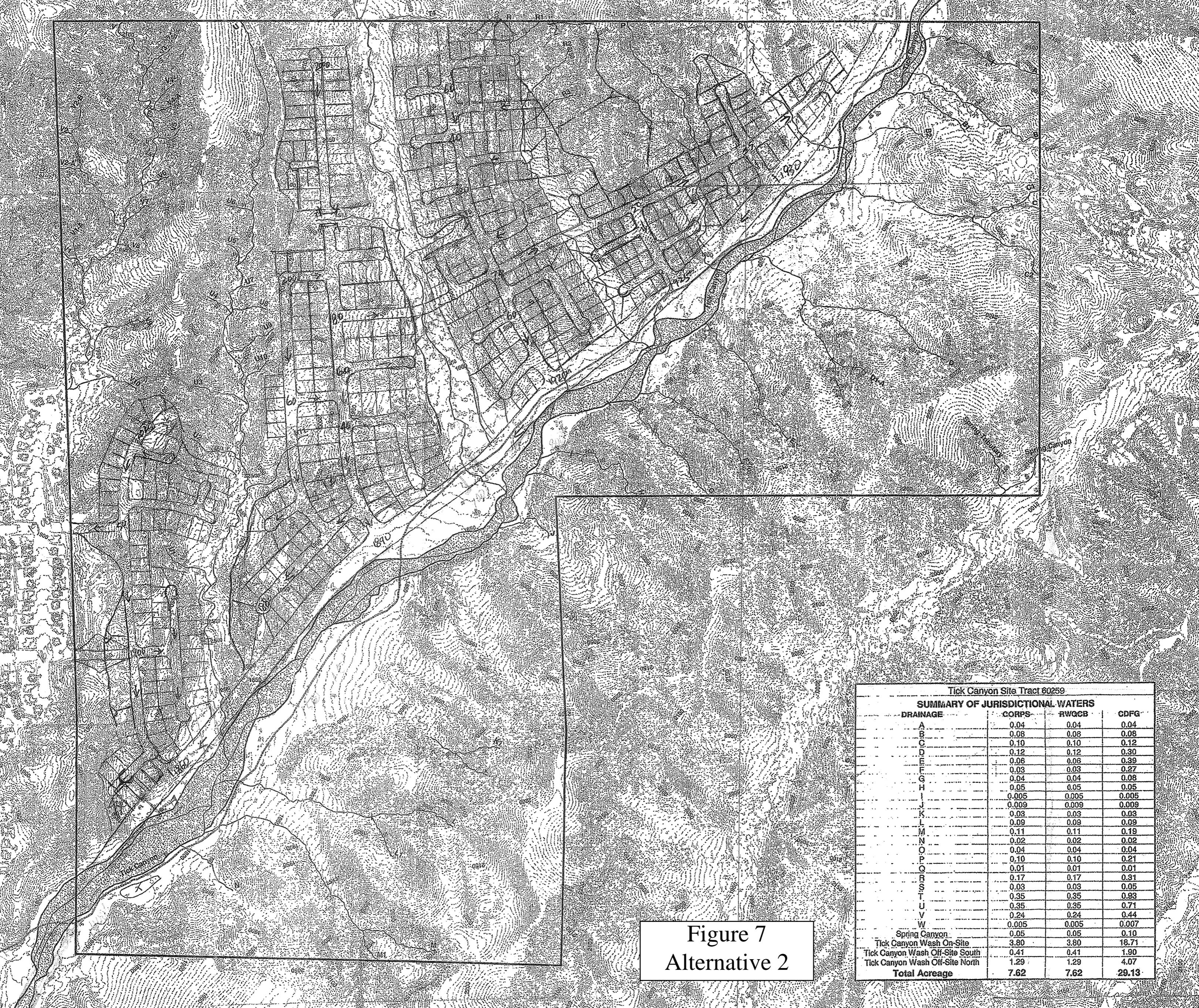
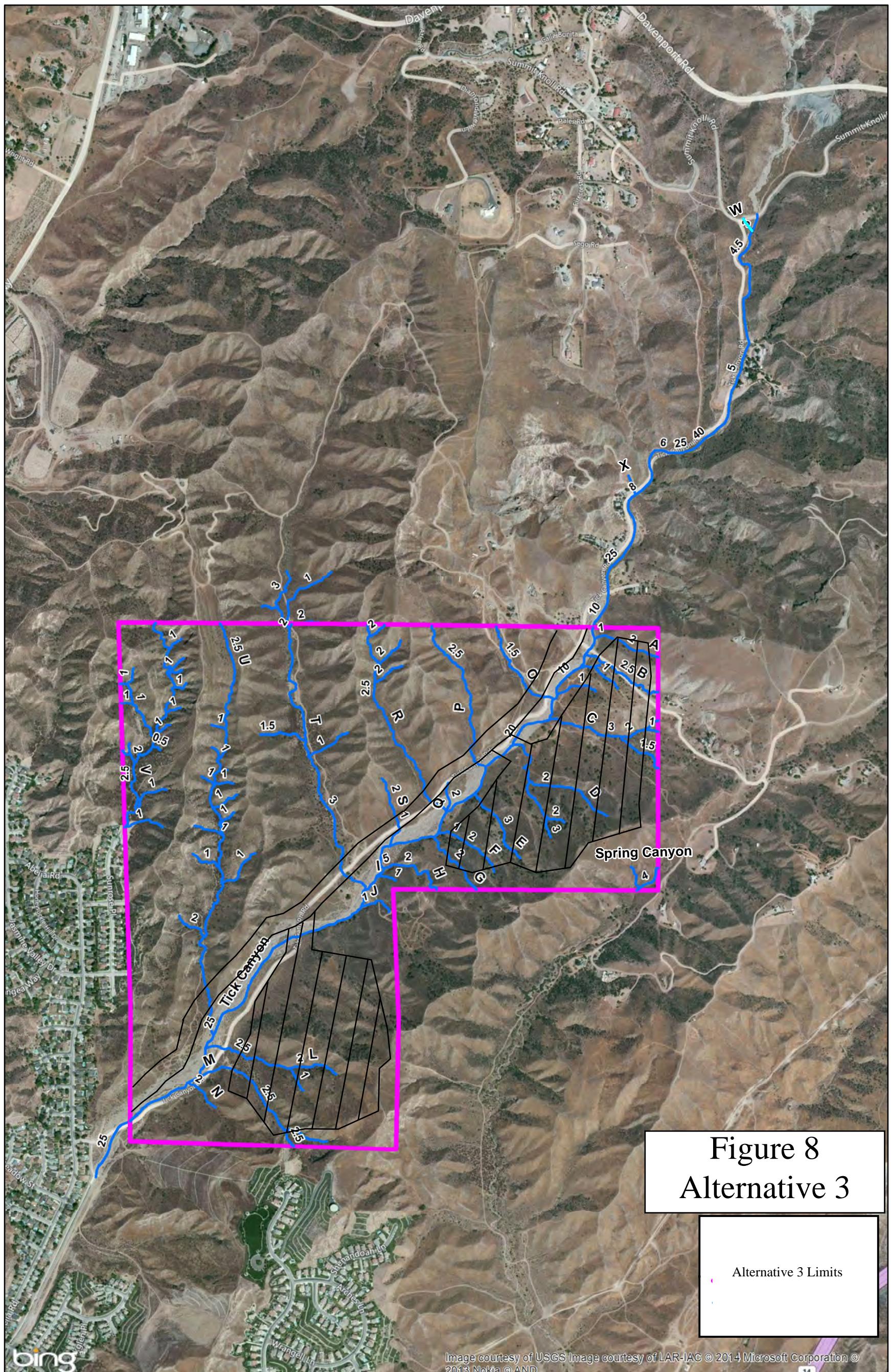


Figure 5-Proposed Project







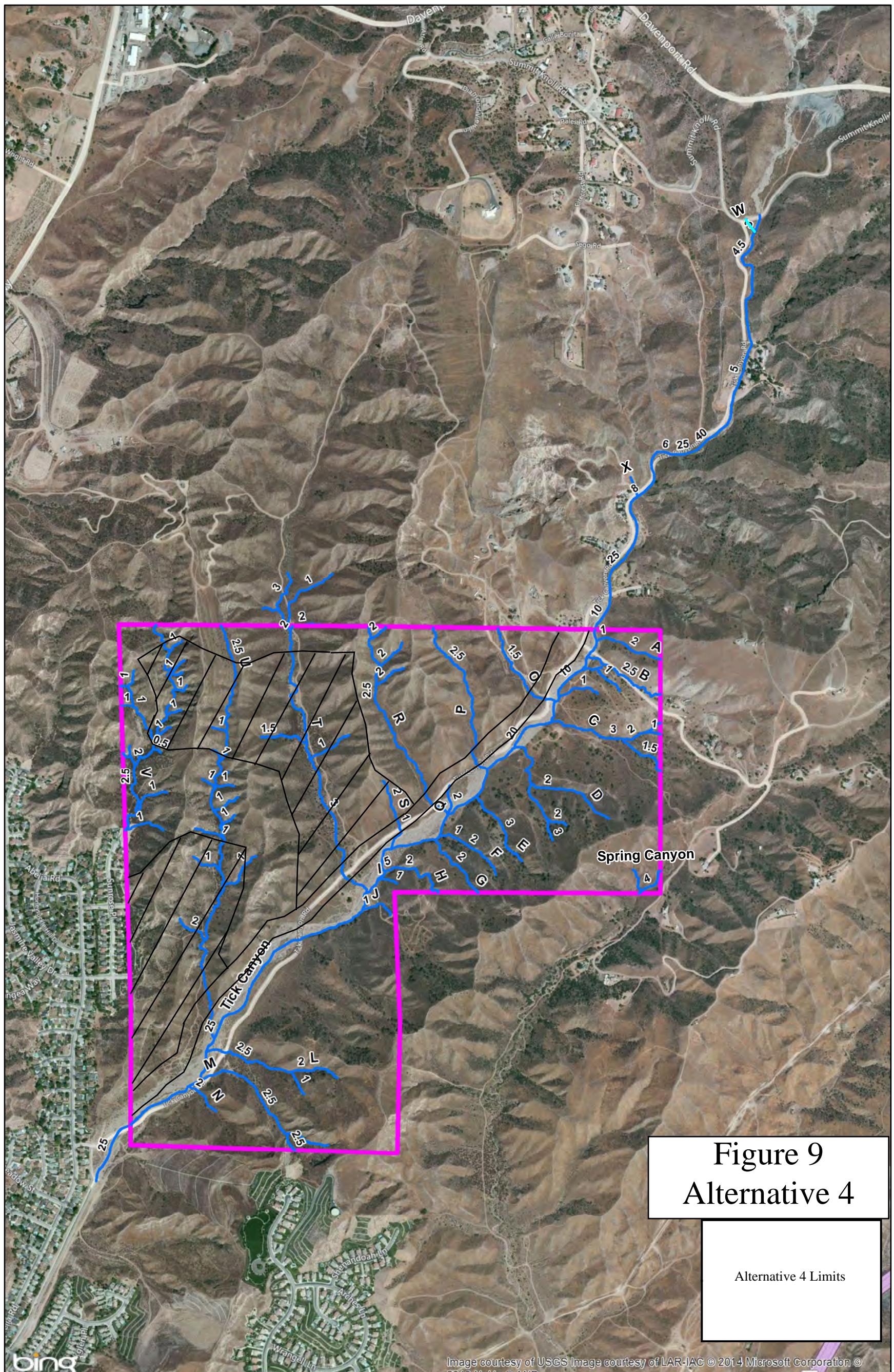
**Figure 8
Alternative 3**

Alternative 3 Limits

Image courtesy of USGS Image courtesy of LAR-IAC © 2014 Microsoft Corporation © 2013 Nokia © AND 14

Prepared By:  VCS Environmental 949.489.2700		Sources: Bing	Park Place Project Tract 60259
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250 125 0 250 500 750 1,000
Feet
1 inch = 1,000 feet



Prepared By: VCS Environmental 949.489.2700		Sources: Bing	Park Place Project Tract 60259
250 125 0 250 500 750 1,000 Feet 1 inch = 1,000 feet			