

**OREGON INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
SECTION 106 LEVEL OF EFFECT FORM**

Agency/Project: FHWA/Fern Valley Interchange Project (ODOT Key #12723, Federal Aid #S001164)	
Property Name: Medford Canal	
Street Address:	City, County: Various, Jackson

<b>Preliminary Finding of Effect:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> No Historic Properties Affected <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Historic Properties Adversely Affected <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Properties Adversely Affected	
<b>State Historic Preservation Office Comments:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Concur <input type="checkbox"/> Do Not Concur: <input type="checkbox"/> No Historic Properties Affected <input type="checkbox"/> No Historic Properties Adversely Affected <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Properties Adversely Affected	
Signed _____	Date _____
<b>Comments:</b>	

**Provide written description of the project, and its potential effects on the subject property per 36 CFR 800. Include maps, drawings, and photographs as necessary to effectively describe and discuss the project. Use continuation sheets as needed.**

**INTRODUCTION**

This statement of finding discusses the effect of the proposed project on the Medford Canal in Jackson County. A Determination of Eligibility form has been completed in which the property has been determined eligible for the National Register; the determination is currently under SHPO review.

It is the finding of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in concurrence with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) that the proposed project will have an effect on the National Register eligible Medford Canal, but this effect is "not adverse."

This statement of finding is made pursuant to the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (36 CFR 800), Executive Order 11593, and the National Environmental Policy Act.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Fern Valley Interchange Project is located in Phoenix, Oregon in Jackson County. The purpose of the proposed action is to reduce congestion and improve operational conditions at the Interstate 5 (I-5) interchange with Fern Valley Road (exit 24). In addition, the Fern Valley Road Bridge over Bear Creek is proposed for replacement. An Environmental Assessment (EA) is being compiled to assess the impacts of one no build and two build alternatives ("N. Phoenix Thru" and "Fern Valley Thru").

The two build alternatives would reconstruct the existing I-5 interchange at exit 24, replace the Fern Valley Road Bridge, and realign some of the nearby surface streets. Maps of the two alternatives are attached. In the vicinity of the Medford Canal, which is in the northeast corner of the project area, both of the alternatives are the same and would have the same impacts. A map of the project near the Medford Canal is attached. Because both alternatives are the same in the vicinity of the Medford Canal, impacts from the two build alternatives would be the same. For the purposes of this evaluation, the build alternatives are simply referred to as "the proposed project."

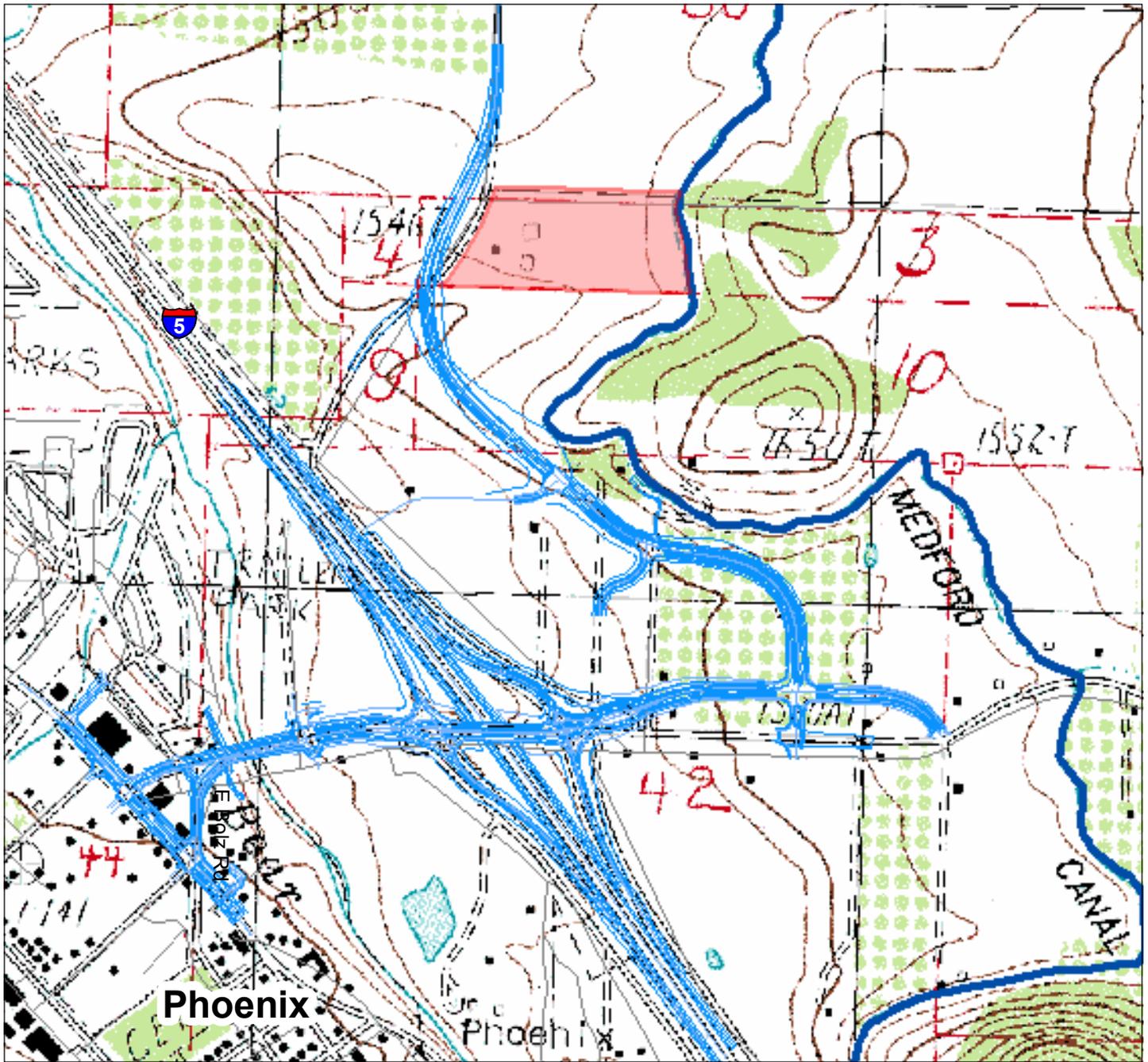
**IDENTIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE HISTORIC RESOURCE**

The Medford Canal is significant for its role in the development of irrigated agriculture in the Rogue Valley, and in particular, the development of orchards for which the region is well known. The Medford Canal is an irrigation canal in Jackson County. It begins in the vicinity of the confluence of the south and north forks of Little Butte Creek, approximately ten miles southeast of Eagle Point. At this point, it is at an elevation of approximately 1700' above sea level. It contours around the hills and drops only very slightly as it angles west then south, passing through the east side of Medford and then curving around the east side of Phoenix, Oregon, where it is at an elevation of approximately 1500'. It crosses under Interstate 5 and Bear Creek in a

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**Continuation Sheet**

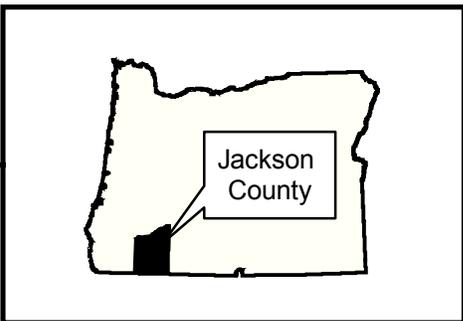
Agency/Project: Oregon Department of Transportation/Fern Valley Interchange Project	
Property Name: Medford Canal	
Street Address:	City, County: Phoenix, Jackson
<p>siphon and then joins the Phoenix Canal in southwest Phoenix. It is a man-made canal – that is, it is not a channelized stream – and is primarily a box-shaped channel approximately ten feet wide. A dirt maintenance road is located on the western side of the canal for most of its length. Sluice gates and diversion ditches exist along the length of the canal to supply water to farms and orchards that subscribe to the irrigation service. Although the sluice gates and other water control features within the canal are considered to be part of this determination of eligibility, the multitude of individual ditches leading to farms and orchards are not. These side ditches, built at different times, tend to be more readily altered.</p> <p><b>AVOIDANCE ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED</b></p> <p>An extensive study of potential solutions for the Fern Valley Interchange project was conducted over a period of more than three years. Over 37 conceptual designs were considered, sometime with mix-and-match options. These included a wide variety of interchange types, connecting roadway alignments, and highway cross-sections. The Medford Canal is at the eastern edge of the project area; in the vicinity of the canal, most of the roadway alignments focused on Fern Valley Road and N. Phoenix Road, and included various locations and cross-sections. Additional connections were considered north of Campbell Road, at the Arrowhead Ranch access, to S. Phoenix Road, and to Breckinridge Drive. In addition, connections outside the urban growth boundary east of Arrowhead Ranch were discussed, but were not advanced because of the extensive impacts to farmland. Throughout the alternatives development process, alternatives were evaluated for their potential impacts to natural and cultural resources.</p> <p><b>PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT/COORDINATION</b></p> <p>There have been (and will continue to be) numerous opportunities for public comment throughout the project development. During the alternatives development phase of the project, there were monthly Project Development Team (PDT) and Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings starting in March 2004. These meetings were open to the public, and included a public comment period. There have been three public open houses, held on March 30, 2004; September 1, 2005; and March 1, 2006. At each of these meetings, public comments have been recorded. In addition, ODOT has maintained a project website, issued periodic press releases regarding project updates, mailed newsletters to interested parties, and has responded to numerous individual requests for project information. The comments that have been received (and will continue to be received) throughout the project development have helped ODOT staff to refine the alternative designs to minimize impacts wherever possible.</p> <p><b>EVALUATION OF EFFECTS</b></p> <p>In the vicinity of the Medford Canal, the proposed project would realign N. Phoenix Road to contour around the hillside just south of (and below) the canal. Although the slope downhill from the canal would be re-graded to accommodate the realigned roadway, the construction work would be conducted to avoid any adverse impacts to the canal or to the canal's maintenance road. The canal would continue to function as an irrigation facility, and there would be no adverse effect to its historic character or significance. As a result, the finding is that there would be "No Historic Properties Adversely Affected."</p>	



**Map Features**

-  Fern Valley Thru Alternative
-  Coleman Ranch
-  Medford\_Canal

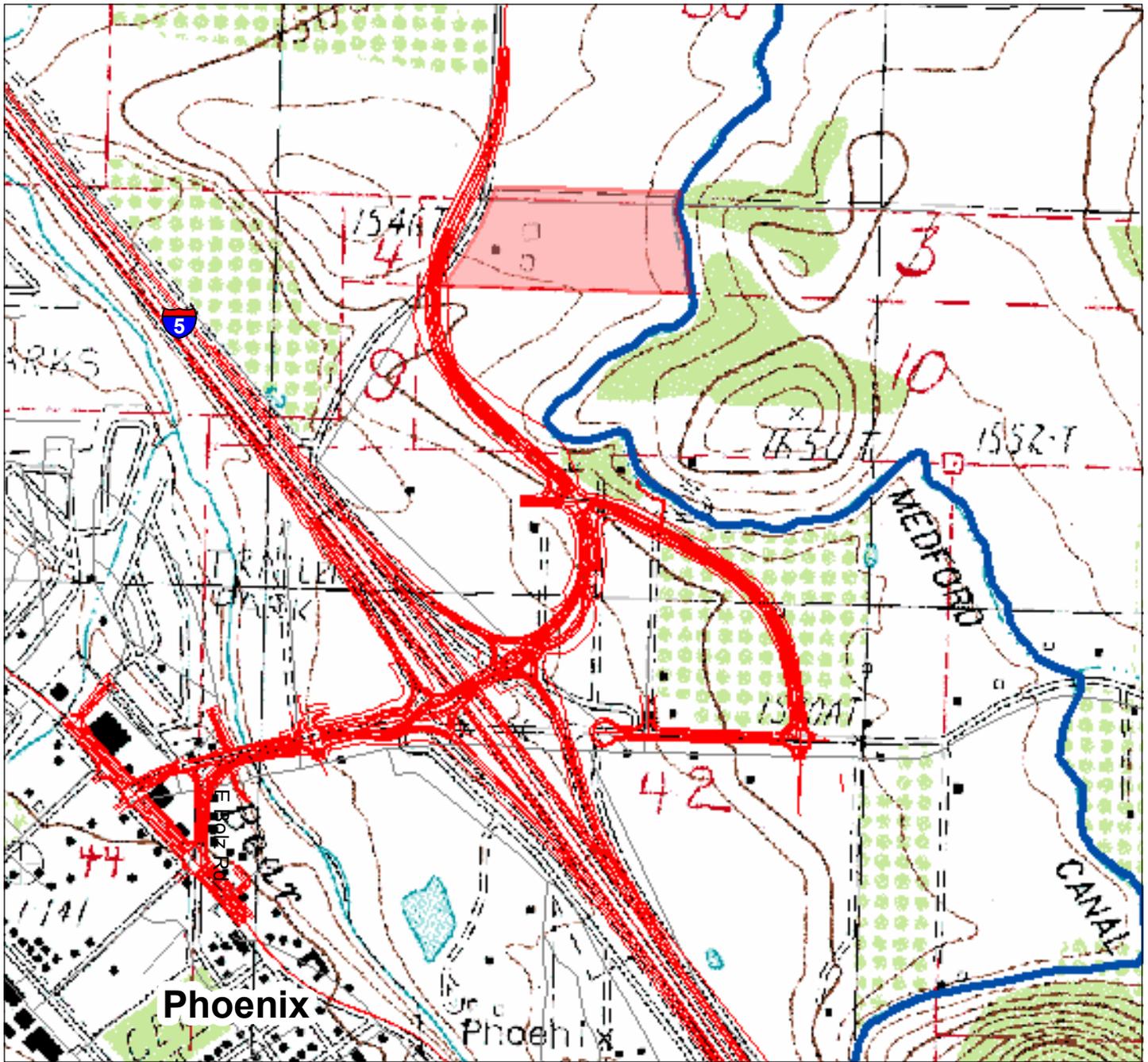
Source: ODOT  
USGS  
URS Corporation



## Fern Valley Thru Alternative

December 2007

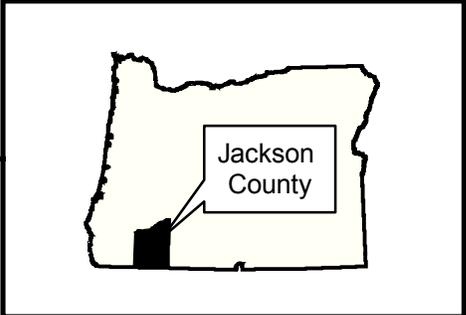




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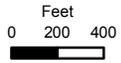
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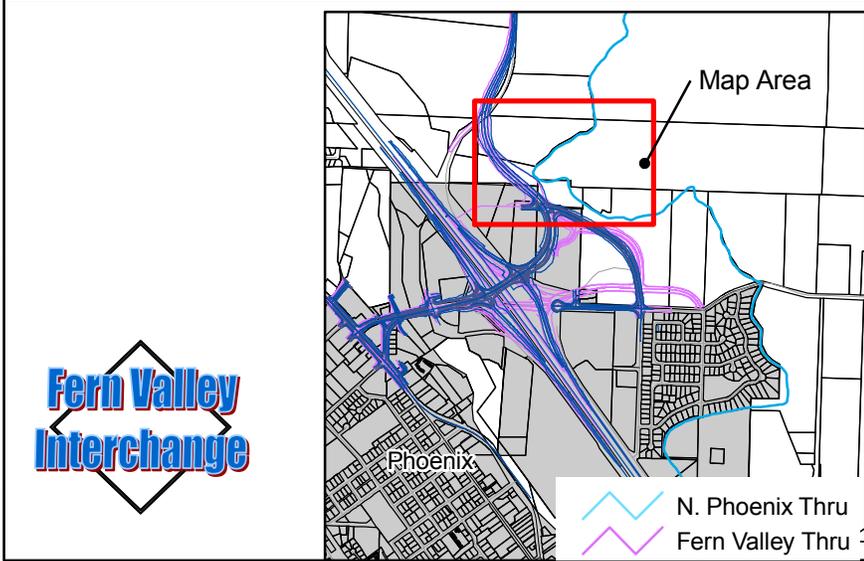
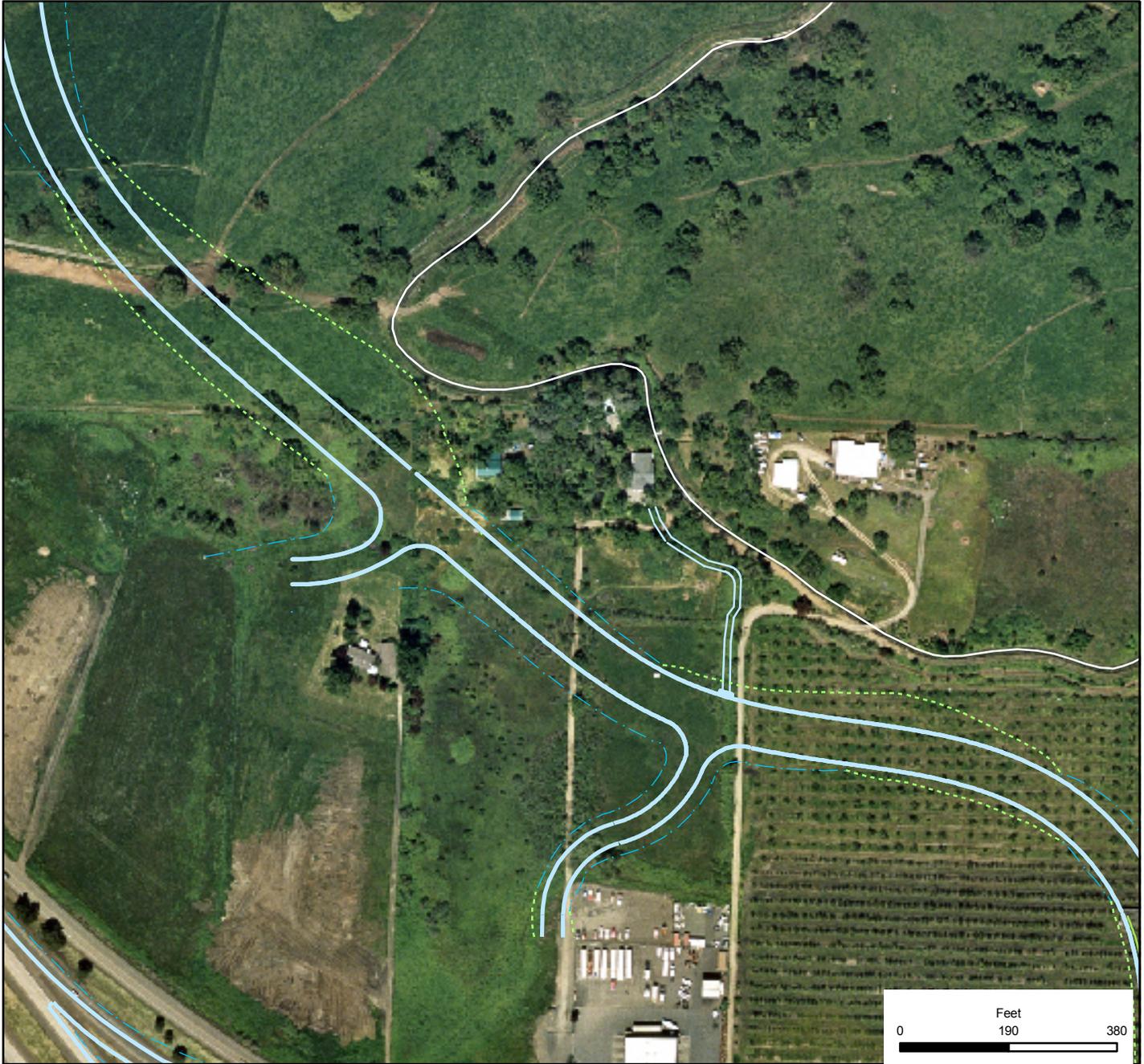
Source: ODOT  
USGS  
URS Corporation



## N. Phoenix Thru Alternative

December 2007





## Medford Canal

### Legend

-  Medford Canal
-  Edge of Fill Slope
-  Edge of Cut Slope
-  Edge of Pavement



**Fern Valley Interchange**