

Memorandum

Re: Towns-to-Trails Antelope Valley Alignment Alternatives
Date: January 29, 2025
To: Antelope Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee
From: Elaine Kabala, Executive Director, Eastern Sierra Council of Governments
Marcella Rose, Sustainable Recreation Manager, Mono County

Background

The Trails Plan is a recreational conceptual plan administered through the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG). The Towns-to-Trails planning initiative was developed out of the Sustainable Recreation Tourism Initiative, which convened and facilitated Eastern Sierra recreation stakeholders to submit ideas for desired sustainable recreation projects which were then scored for their stewardship value, benefits for access and equity, and benefits for local communities.

Towns-to-Trails identifies existing trails and other soft surface infrastructure networks for the development of a trail network paralleling the Pacific Crest Trail from Lone Pine to Markleeville and beyond. The Trails Plan will also identify environmental planning needs and opportunities for on-the-ground implementation projects. The outcome of the Trails Plan will be a collaboratively developed plan for trail alignments that connect Eastern Sierra gateway communities to each other, as well as connecting the public to the recreation opportunities and the public lands of the region.

The Towns to Trails plan builds on analysis of current trail infrastructure and stakeholder input to develop potential alignments and identifying potential environmental planning needs. It will support and promote recreation, tourism, and economic development in the Eastern Sierra by creating connections between gateway communities and public land recreation opportunities.

The project team is being administered by the ESCOG, with support from Alta Planning and Design and the Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation.

Project Development

Following several rounds of GIS-based data analysis and public input in Inyo, Mono and Alpine Counties, the project team has identified a recommended final alignment using primarily existing soft surface roads to connect Eastern Sierra communities. The plan does not expand or encourage any modification of existing allowable uses, and the base assumption for through method of travel is cyclists and pedestrians. In the final round of agency consultation, the team was informed the recommended access through Slinkard Valley does not permit any motorized travel – including cyclists – per California State Law.

Towns to Trails is in the final phase of the project in which a feasibility analysis will be generated which will propose a final alignment. At the time that the public meetings were held within each County, various route alignments had not yet been excluded. The Towns-to-Trails project team has consulted with Mono County regarding alternative routes to connect from HWY 89 to Walker Canyon through the Coleville and Walker Communities and is seeking the Antelope Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee's input on alternative routes.

Alternative Routes

The Towns-to-Trails team is currently proposing two alternatives to Slinkard Canyon through Antelope Valley: Eastside Lane to Burcham Flat or Eastside Lane to Blackwell Canyon. Both routes would use an unnamed dirt road to travel from HWY 395 north of Topaz Lane to access Eastside Lane. The Eastside Lane to Burcham Flat route would then follow Eastside Lane to Burcham Flat Road to rejoin the route South of Walker at the entrance to Walker Canyon. The Eastside Lane to Blackwell Canyon route would follow Eastside Lane to Blackwell Canyon and then would rejoin the primary route on a segment of Burcham Flat to connect with the route at the south end of Walker.

These alternatives are illustrated below.

This project is currently a feasibility analysis and is conceptual only.

Please return any feedback by February 14th.

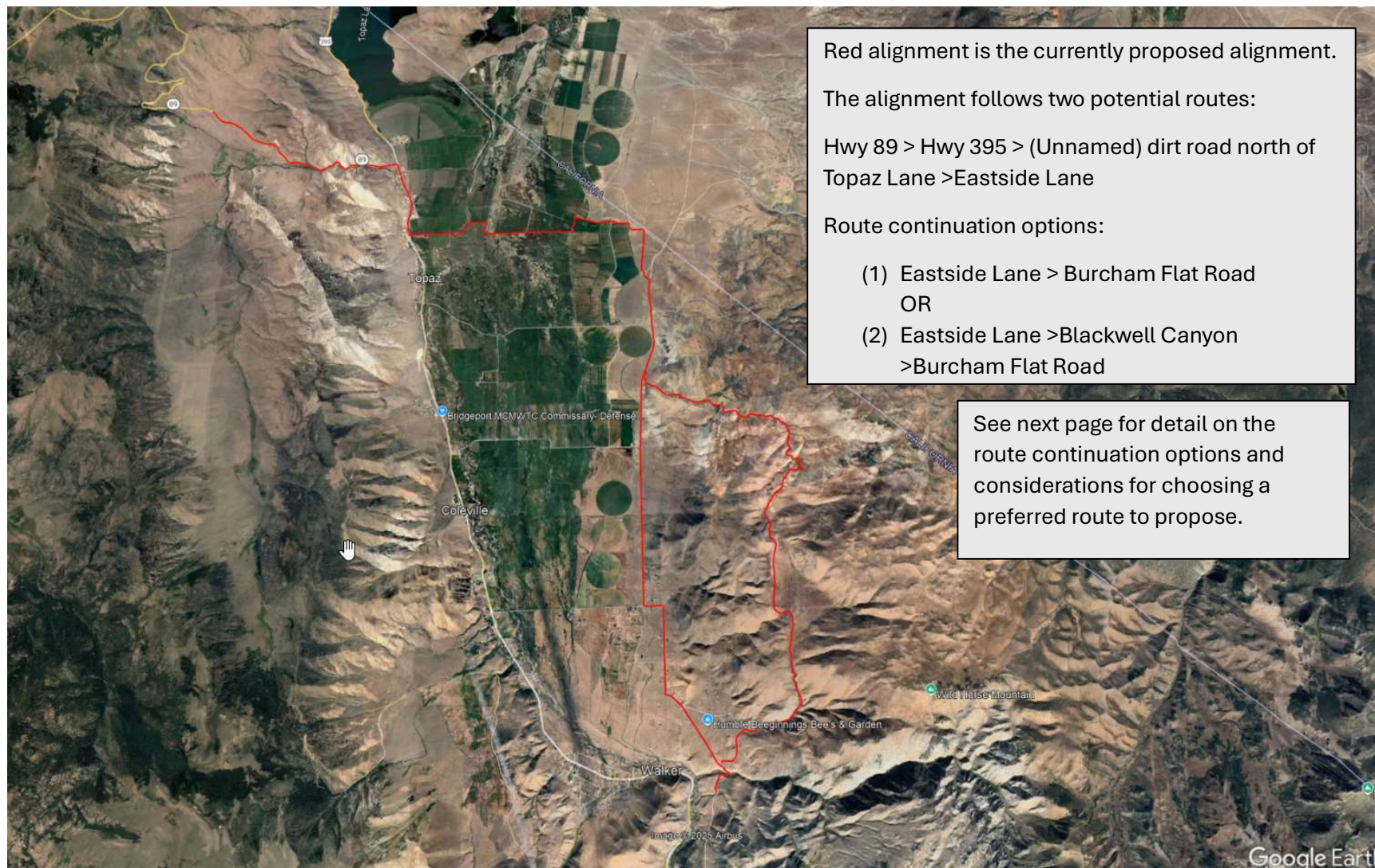


Figure 1: Proposed Towns to Trails alignment connecting Hwy 89 to Burcham Flat Road south of Walker. Route options are to either (1) continue on Eastside Lane to connect to Burcham Flat Road, OR (2) Turn off Eastside Lane onto Blackwell Canyon then connecting to Burcham Flat Road.



Figure 2: Detail of the route continuation options to be presented in the final proposed alignment for the Towns to Trails project.

Option (1) Eastside Lane > Burcham Flat Rd

Option (2) Eastside Lane > Blackwell Canyon > Burcham Flat Rd

Route considerations: Proximity to residential areas; proximity to town access (for economic benefit); remote trail experience

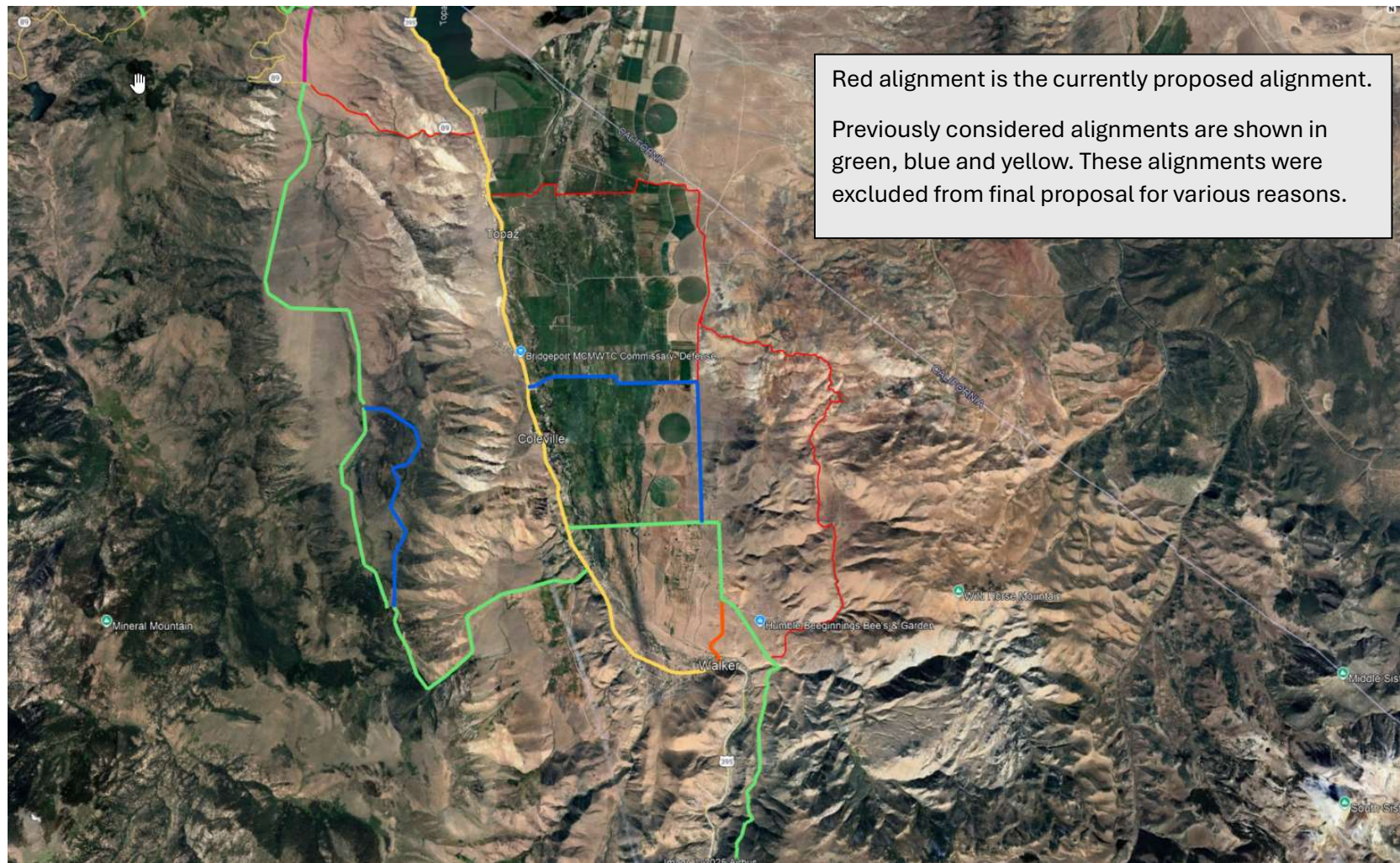


Figure 3: Previously considered but NOT proposed alignments to connect Hwy 89 to Burcham Flat Road for the Towns To Trails project. Only the RED alignments are being proposed – the colors of all other alignments were excluded for various reasons – to be discussed.