MEMORANDUM

TO: Brent Johnson, Assembly President Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly Members

FROM: Robert Ruffner, Planning Director



DATE: March 22, 2023

RE: Vacate portions of two seismograph trails and associated utility easements on Ninilchik Right-Of-Way Map, Plat HM 84-115; KPB File 2023-020V

In accordance with AS 29.40.140, no vacation of a Borough right-of-way and/or easement may be made without the consent of the Borough Assembly.

During their regularly scheduled meeting of March 20, 2023 the Kenai Peninsula Borough Planning Commission granted approval of the proposed vacation of portions of two seismograph trails and associated utility easements on Ninilchik Right-Of-Way Map, Plat HM 84-115 by unanimous vote based on the means of evaluating public necessity established by KPB 20.65. This petition is being sent to you for your consideration and action.

A draft copy of the unapproved minutes of the pertinent portion of the meeting and other related materials are attached.

March 20, 2023 Planning Commission Draft Meeting Minutes July 13, 2020 Agenda Item E4 Meeting Materials



Planning Department

144 N. Binkley Street, Soldotna, Alaska 99669 • (907) 714-2200 • (907) 714-2378 Fax

PETITION TO VACATE PLATTED RIGHT OF WAY / PLATTED PUBLIC EASEMENT / PLATTED PUBLIC AREA

PUBLIC HEARING REQUIRED

Upon receipt of complete application with fees and all required attachments, a public hearing before the Planning Commission will be scheduled. The petition with all required information and attachments must be in the Planning Department at least 30 days prior to the preferred hearing date. By State Statute and Borough Code, the public hearing must be scheduled within 60 days of receipt of complete application.

Initially, a sketch may be included with the vacation petition for review by the Planning Commission. After the Planning Commission takes action on the vacation, a Subdivision Plat must be prepared by a licensed land surveyor. The plat will be processed in accordance with KPB 20.10.080. Platting authority is vested in the Planning Director.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

A platted right of way vacation (ROWV) application will be scheduled for the next available planning commission meeting after a complete application has been received. - \$500 non-refundable fee to help defray costs of advertising public hearing. Plat fees will be in addition to the vacation fees. - City Advisory Planning Commission. Copy of minutes at which this item was acted on, along with a copy of City Staff Report. Seismograph Trail platted public right of way proposed to be vacated was dedicated by the plat of Right of Way Map Subdivision, filed as Plat No. 84-115 in the Homer **Recording District.** I - 3 copies of the plat or map showing the platted right of way to be vacated. Must not exceed 11 x 17 inches in size. Area to be vacated must be clearly depicted. Proposed alternative public access to be shown and labeled on the sketch. - REASON FOR VACATING The petitioner must attach a statement with reasonable justification for the vacation of the platted right of way / platted easement / platted public area. Has the platted right of way been fully or partially constructed? Yes No Is the platted right of way used by vehicles / pedestrians / other? Yes 1 No Is alternative right-of-way being provided? Yes No Are there utility easements associated with the right of way to be vacated? Yes No Is the platted right of way and or associated utility easement in use by any utility company? Yes No If so, which utility provider?

LEGAL DESCRIPTION ADJOINING LAND:

Lot, Block, Subd. or street address TRACT B HARDEN SUBD , 53080 Oil Well Road	
Section, township, range T 2S R 12W SEC	16 SEWARD MERIDIAN
City (if applicable)	General area Caribou Hills

The petition must be signed by owners of a majority of the land affected by the platted right of way proposed to be vacated. Each petitioner must include address and legal description of his/her property. Attach additional signature sheets if needed.

Submitted by:

Land Owner	21.10 1
Name (printed): Patrick Carmody	Signature atrial Carmoda
e-mail: Carmody Masonry Ox thoo. com	Address: DO Bay 6997
Owner of: 53080 Oil well road	NIKISKI AK 99635

Land Owner:

Name (printed):	Signature	
e-mail:	Address:	
Owner of:		_

KPB FILE #____

ITEM 4 - RIGHT OF WAY VACATION VACATE PORTIONS OF TWO SEISMOGRAPH TRAILS GRANTED ON NINILCHIK RIGHT-OF-WAY MAP, PLAT HM 84-115 and ASSOCIATED UTILITY EASEMENTS

KPB File No.	2023-020V
Planning Commission Meeting:	March 20, 2023
Applicant / Owner:	Patrick Carmody of Nikiski, Alaska
Surveyor:	Jason Young, Mari Aimonetti / Edge Survey and Design, LLC
General Location:	Oil Well Road, Beatty Avenue, Grassim Street, Ninilchik
Legal Description:	Seismograph Trails within Lot 270, Section 16, Township 2 South, Range 12 West, Right of Way Map (also known as the Ninilchik Right of Way Map), HM 84-115

Staff report given by Platting Manager Vince Piagentini.

Chair Brantley opened the item for public comment.

Jason Young, Edge Survey & Design; PO Box 208, Kasilof, AK 99610: Mr. Young was the surveyor on this project. He stated the purpose for this vacation is to clean up some of the old seismographic trails from the HM 84-115 plat that created several oddly shaped, small and unusable parcels. In this case the vacations are close to existing intersections and it made sense to give and take a little. He noted that the trails are not improved and are not really used. The seismographic trails are overgrown with vegetation and are not practical for use.

Seeing and hearing no one else wishing to comment, public comment was closed and discussion was opened among the commission.

MOTION: Commissioner Venuti moved, seconded by Commissioner Slaughter to recommend the approval of the vacation as petitioned, based on the means of evaluating public necessity established by KPB 20.65, based on staff recommendations and subject to the 4 recommendations as set forth in the staff report.

Commissioner Stutzer asked what was the history behind the dedication of these seismographic trails. Ms. Hindman replied that these easements were dedicated in 1984 as rights-of-way. They were logging roads before that and she does not know how long they were in existence before then. She believed that the surveyors back in 1984 used arial photos to find what they thought were heavily used trails. She then noted that the surveyor may have additional history of these dedications. Mr. Young replied that he personally knows several of the surveyors who worked on the 1984 plat. It was kind of willy-nilly – they used aerial photos to try and guess which trails were used and which were not. As far as he knows there was no research done on which trails were being used. These seismographic trails have been an issue for a lot of landowners in the area as these trails have split up parcels, creating odd little unusable lots of land. There was really no hard science regarding which trails were being used. The surveyors literally used tracing paper and old photos back in 1984 to create these dedications.

Hearing no objection or further discussion, the motion was carried by the following vote: **MOTION PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE**:

Yes - 12	Brantley, Fikes, Gillham, Hooper, Horton, Martin, Morgan, Slaughter, Staggs, Stutzer,
165 - 12	Tautfest, Venuti

AGENDA ITEM F. PLAT COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Gillham reported the plat committee reviewed and granted preliminary approval to 5 plats

Ms. Shimberg asked for volunteers for the Plat Committee for the second quarter (April-May-June). The plat committee for the second quarter:

Commissioner Gillham

E. NEW BUSINESS

4. Seismographic Trails Vacation; KPB File 2023-020V Edge Survey & Design, LLC / Carmody Request: Vacates two portion of two seismograph trails granted on Ninilchik Right-Of-Way Map, Plat HM 84-115 Ninilchik Area



Vicinity Map



The information depicted hereon is for a graphical representation only of best available sources. The Kenai Peninsula Borough assumes no responsibility for any errors on this map.



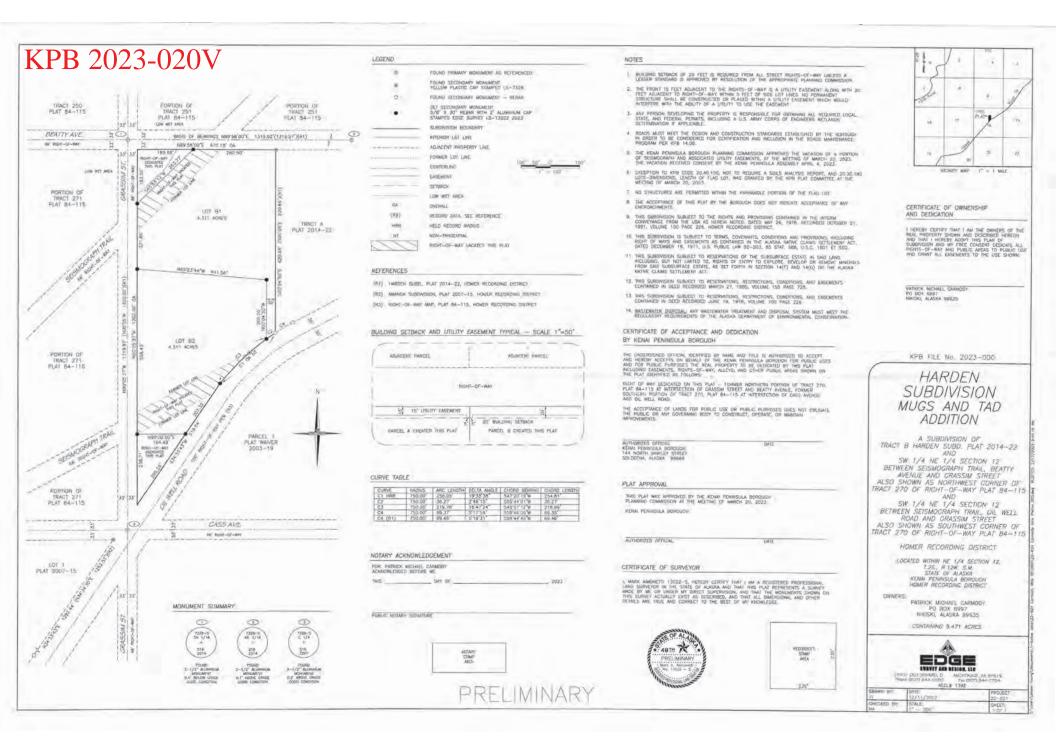
Aerial View

KPB 2023-020V 2/21/2023

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AGENDA ITEM E. NEW BUSINESS

ITEM 4 - RIGHT OF WAY VACATION VACATE PORTIONS OF TWO SEISMOGRAPH TRAILS GRANTED ON NINILCHIK RIGHT-OF-WAY MAP, PLAT HM 84-115 and ASSOCIATED UTILITY EASEMENTS

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	Map), HM 84-115

STAFF REPORT

Specific Request / Purpose as stated in the petition: Right-of-way vacation justification.

- 1. Right-of-way granted per plat 84-115, in which trails were located via air photos depicting old seismograph trails.
- 2. Dedication of seismograph created small unusable tracts.
- 3. Vacating the trails will provide more space for adjacent parcels.
- 4. Trails to be vacated are no improved or used.
- 5. Trails to be vacated are grown shut with vegetation and not practical for use.
- 6. This platting action intends to dedicate along with vacate right-of-way to make larger parcels and better overall public access.
- 7. This platting action will dedicate .850 acres and vacate 1.032 acres.

Notification: The public hearing notice was published in the March 15, 2023 issue of the Homer News as part of the Commission's tentative agenda.

The public notice was posted on the Planning Commission bulletin board at the Kenai Peninsula Borough George A. Navarre Administration building. Additional notices were mailed to the following with the request to be posted for public viewing.

Library of Ninilchik

Post Office of Ninilchik

Fourteen certified mailings were sent to owners of property within 600 feet of the proposed vacation. Six receipts had been returned when the staff report was prepared.

Twenty public hearing notices were emailed to agencies and interested parties as shown below;

State of Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game	Ninilchik Traditional Council
State of Alaska DNR	Alaska Communication Systems (ACS)
State of Alaska DOT	ENSTAR Natural Gas
State of Alaska DNR Forestry	General Communications Inc, (GCI)
Ninilchik Emergency Services	Homer Electric Association (HEA)
Kenai Peninsula Borough Office	Caribou Hills Cabin Hoppers

Legal Access (existing and proposed): The proposed vacation is within the area known as Caribou Hills. The Ninilchik Right-of-Way map, Plat HM 84-115, dedicated 66 foot wide rights-of-way on the depicted seismograph

trails in additions to dedicating 66 foot wide rights-of-way centered on all 1/16th and ½ aliquot lines and section lines except for some lands that were not subject to the plat.

The area with the proposed vacations is located near mile 15 of Oil Well Road, the main access to the Caribou Hills area. The areas described are located north of Oil Well Road unless otherwise noted. Grassim Street is a 60 foot wide dedication that runs north from Oil Well Road. Beatty Avenue is a 66 foot wide right-of-way that runs west from Oil Well Road. One of the seismograph rights-of-way proposed for vacation is in the area where Beatty Avenue and Grassim Street meet. The other vacation is off Oil Well Road and connects to Grassim Street.

The dedications in the area split Tract 270, as named on the Right-Of-Way Map, into multiple lots. A few of those have been divided by deed and another portion by subdivision plat. The seismograph locations created two smaller lots that were split into triangles.

The parcels in the area will remain having access from Grassim Street, Beatty Avenue, Oil Well Road, and other seismograph dedications.

The northern right-of-way proposed for vacation is an approximate 400 foot length of a seismograph trail that connects between Grassim Street and Beatty Avenue. It looks like there may be some areas that have been used as a trail. Per the submittal some of the area has grown over with vegetation. It is difficult to detect but does seem to contain more vegetation within the southwest portion. The dedication continues to the west past Grassim Street. The area to the west contains large areas of wetlands but they still appear to be used as tracks appear within imagery. The right-of-way also continues to the north of Beatty Avenue. This area appears to be used more and contains clearings that connect to other trails. The owners are proposing to dedicate the triangle lot for right-of-way in exchange for the vacated portion that can be added to their existing lots.

The southern right-of-way proposed for vacation is an approximate 420 foot length of a seismograph trail that connects between Grassim Street and Oil Well Road. It looks like there may be some areas that have been used as a trail through the years with heavier use appearing to the west and south. The dedication does continue to the west of Grassim Street. That area appears to be heavily used as does the southern portion Grassim Street. The owners are proposing to dedicate a portion of the southern lot as right-of-way to allow the vacated area to be added to the main lot.

The block is closed. Some portions are currently smaller than allowed by code but the proposed vacation will bring the blocks into compliance.

KPB Roads Dept. comments	Out of Jurisdiction: No
	Roads Director: Griebel, Scott Comments: Vacation appears to allow for alternative access to all surrounding parcels.
SOA DOT comments	No comments – DOT Engineering

<u>Site Investigation</u>: There are low wet areas within the intersection of Grassim Street and Beatty Avenue. The designation is a depression designation. There are some low wet areas within the proposed northern vacation. The proposal will place most of the proposed dedication into the depression area and the drier land will be added to the adjacent parcels. There are no low wet areas within the southern area proposed for vacation or dedication.

The terrain contains slopes but not within the existing dedications or proposed dedications that appear to be steeper than 10 percent. The area within the northern proposed dedication does appear to be flatter than the current dedication.

KPB River Center review	A. Floodplain
	Reviewer: Carver, Nancy
	Floodplain Status: Not within flood hazard area
	Comments: No comments

B. Habitat Protection Reviewer: Aldridge, Morgan Habitat Protection District Status: Is NOT within HPD Comments: No comments
C. State Parks Reviewer: Russell, Pam Comments: No Comments

<u>Staff Analysis:</u> The proposed vacation is within the Caribou Hills recreational area. The plat that dedicated the rights-of-way created various lots that were not surveyed but were aliquot descriptions that excluded dedications. The map did however indicate numbers to help tell the lots apart on the plat due to the scale. The area proposed for vacation is within the SW1/4 NE1/4 of Section 16, Township 2 South, Range 12 West.

The dedications split the SW1/4 NE1/4 of Section 16, Township 2 South, Range 12 West into four parcels. Some portions have been split so that there are now six lots in the area. The parcels that are part of this platting action are .39, .83, and 7.33 acres in size. One of the lots is approximately 17,000 square feet and another is 36,000. Neither lot is compliant with borough code. Additionally, the lots have 10 foot utility easements on all three sides which further limit usage. Per KPB Code 20.30.200, the minimum lot size should be 40,000 square feet if onsite water and wastewater disposal are required. The new configuration will bring all proposed lots into compliance.

If the vacation is approved the owners will add the vacated area to the larger parcel and then subdivide it into two lots. The current acreage of all the lots is approximately 8.55 acres and the subdivision will allow increase the acreage to 8.62. While the acreage is increasing slightly it is putting all the land together and will make compliant lots and blocks that can have more improvements, development, or allow further subdivision to occur.

If the vacation is approved the owner will be dedicating the northwestern and southern triangle portions as right-ofway. These proposed areas are irregular and will result in wide rights-of-way at intersections. Upon reviewing the unusual design, the northern dedication could be of benefit as the Beatty Avenue and Grassim Street intersection contains low wet areas. The proposed dedication contains some dryer areas that may provide a better right-of-way area. The southern dedication will provide a wider intersection of Grassim Street with Oil Well Road. Having this location available could be viewed as a benefit as it could provide additional turnaround area for vehicles and provide multiple options to connect to Oil Well Road in that area in the best location based on terrain and line of sight.

The right-of-way map did not put into place building setbacks but did grant 10 foot utility easements adjacent to the rights-of-way. The proposal will vacate those adjacent easements if the right-of-way vacation is approved. Utility easements will remain adjacent to the remaining rights-of-way and new ones granted along the new dedications.

The owner is stating that the areas proposed for dedication have become grown over and not in use. If information is presented that states otherwise, the owner will be required to get a permit from the KPB Roads Department and will need to improve the new dedications better than the existing rights-of-way.

While this is an area with heavy recreational use it should be noted that these are dedicated rights-of-way. While they are primarily used by ATVs or snowmachines they are to be viewed as borough rights-of-way with intended vehicle use. Due to the placement of some of these seismograph trails and the terrain there have been issues of trespass or unusable rights-of-way. As the platting staff reviews these they are considering all KPB Code as these dedications that were granted in 1984 resulted in lots and blocks that do not comply with our code. They have resulted in lots that have limited development due to size and being non-compliant with code. While this is a recreational area currently there has been an increase in development with some owners transitioning to year round residents in the area. Platting items in this area should be reviewed in compliance with borough code and how future development needs can be met.

20.65.050 – Action on vacation application

- D. The planning commission shall consider the merits of each vacation request and in all cases the planning commission shall deem the area being vacated to be of value to the public. It shall be incumbent upon the applicant to show that the area proposed for vacation is no longer practical for the uses or purposes authorized, or that other provisions have been made which are more beneficial to the public. In evaluating the merits of the proposed vacation, the planning commission shall consider whether:
 - 1. The right-of-way or public easement to be vacated is being used; **Staff comments:** Actual use is unknown. According to petition no longer used.
 - A road is impossible or impractical to construct, and alternative access has been provided;
 Staff comments: It appears that either of the rights-of-way could be constructed in current locations. The owners are shifting the dedication.
 - 3. The surrounding area is fully developed and all planned or needed rights-of-way and utilities are constructed;

Staff comments: There are improvements on the lots but many lots in area are not improved with only main rights-of-way developed to borough standards.

- The vacation of a public right-of-way provides access to a lake, river, or other area with public interest or value, and if so, whether equal or superior access is provided;
 Staff comments: Does not provide access to public lands.
- 5 The proposed vacation would limit opportunities for interconnectivity with adjacent parcels, whether developed or undeveloped;
 Staff comments: There are other rights-of-way within the area to provide access.
- 6. Other public access, other than general road use, exist or are feasible for the right-of-way; **Staff comments:** They could be used for pedestrian use.
- 7. All existing and future utility requirements are met. Rights-of-way which are utilized by a utility, or which logically would be required by a utility, shall not be vacated, unless it can be demonstrated that equal or superior access is or will be available. Where an easement would satisfactorily serve the utility interests, and no other public need for the right-of-way exists, the commission may approve the vacation and require that a utility easement be granted in place of the right-of-way.

Staff comments: The existing easements are not in use. New easements will be granted.

 Any other factors that are relevant to the vacation application or the area proposed to be vacated. Staff comments: This will slightly realign the dedications but will bring the block and lots into compliance.

A KPB Planning Commission decision denying a vacation application is final. A KPB Planning Commission decision to approve the vacation application is subject to consent or veto by the KPB Assembly. The KPB Assembly must hear the vacation within thirty days of the Planning Commission decision.

The Assembly will hear the vacation at their scheduled April 4, 2023 meeting.

If approved, Harden Subdivision Mugs and Tad Addition will finalize the proposed right of way vacations. The Plat Committee is scheduled to review the plat on March 20, 2023.

KPB department / agency review:

Planner	
Code Compliance	Reviewer: Ogren, Eric
	Comments: Vacating ROW is necessary to conjoin the 3 lots.
Addressing	Reviewer: Sjogren, Bobbi
	Affected Addresses:
	Action will not affect addresses.
	Existing Street Names are Correct:
	List of Correct Street Names:
	Existing Street Name Corrections Needed:
	All New Street Names are Approved:
	List of Approved Street Names:
	List of Street Names Denied:
	Comments: No other comments
Assessing	Reviewer: Windsor, Heather
	Comments: No comment

Utility provider review:

HEA	
ENSTAR	No comments or recommendations
ACS	No objections
GCI	Approved as shown

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on consideration of the merits as per KPB 20.65.050(D) as outlined by Staff comments, Staff recommends <u>APPROVAL</u> as petitioned, subject to:

- 1. Consent by KPB Assembly.
- 2. Compliance with the requirements for preliminary plats per Chapter 20 of the KPB Code.
- 3. Grant utility easements requested by the utility providers.
- 4. Submittal of a final plat within a timeframe such that the plat can be recorded within one year of vacation consent (KPB 20.70.130).

KPB 20.65.050 – Action on vacation application

- H. A planning commission decision to approve a vacation is not effective without the consent of the city council, if the vacated area to be vacated is within a city, or by the assembly in all other cases. The council or assembly shall have 30 days from the date of the planning commission approval to either consent to or veto the vacation. Notice of veto of the vacation shall be immediately given to the planning commission. Failure to act on the vacation within 30 days shall be considered to be consent to the vacation. This provision does not apply to alterations of utility easements under KPB 20.65.070 which do not require the consent of the assembly or city council unless city code specifically provides otherwise.
- I. Upon approval of the vacation request by the planning commission and no veto by the city council or

assembly, where applicable, the applicant shall have a surveyor prepare and submit a plat including the entire area approved for vacation in conformance with KPB 20.10.080. Only the area approved for vacation by the assembly or council may be included on the plat. The final plat must be recorded within one year of the vacation consent.

- J. A planning commission decision denying a vacation application is final. No reapplication or petition concerning the same vacation may be filed within one calendar year of the date of the final denial action except in the case where new evidence or circumstances exist that were not available or present when the original petition was filed.
- K. An appeal of the planning commission, city council or assembly vacation action under this chapter must be filed in the superior court in accordance with the Alaska Rules of Appellate Procedure.

The 2019 Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan adopted November, 2019 by Ordinance No. 2019-25. The relevant objectives are listed.

Goal 3. Preserve and improve quality of life on the Kenai Peninsula Borough through increased access to local and regional facilities, activities, programs and services.

- Focus Area: Energy and Utilities
 - Objective A Encourage coordination or residential, commercial, and industrial development with extension of utilities and other infrastructure.
 - Strategy 1. Near Term: Maintain existing easements (especially section line easements) in addition to establishing adequate utility rights of way or easements to serve existing and future utility needs.
 - Strategy 2. Near Term: Maintain regular contact with utility operators to coordinate and review utility easement requests that are part of subdivision plat approval.
 - Strategy 3. Near Term: Identify potential utility routes on Borough lands.
- Housing
 - Objective D. Encourage efficient use of land, infrastructure and services outside incorporated cities by prioritizing future growth in the most suitable areas.
 - Strategy 1. Near Term: Collaborate with the AK Department of Transportation, incorporated cities within the borough, utility providers, other agencies overseeing local services, and existing communities located adjacent to the undeveloped areas that are appropriate for future growth, to align plans for future expansion of services to serve future residential development and manage growth.
- Goal 4. Improve access to, from and connectivity within the Kenai Peninsula Borough
 - Focus Area: Transportation
 - Objective B. Ensure new roads are developed in alignment with existing and planned growth and development.
 - Strategy 2. Near Term: Establish subdivision codes that dictate road construction standards to accommodate future interconnectivity and/or public safety.
 - Strategy 3. Near Term: Identify areas of anticipated growth to determine future access needs.

END OF STAFF REPORT

KPB 2023-020V 2/21/2023



Aerial View





Wetlands



2/21/2023

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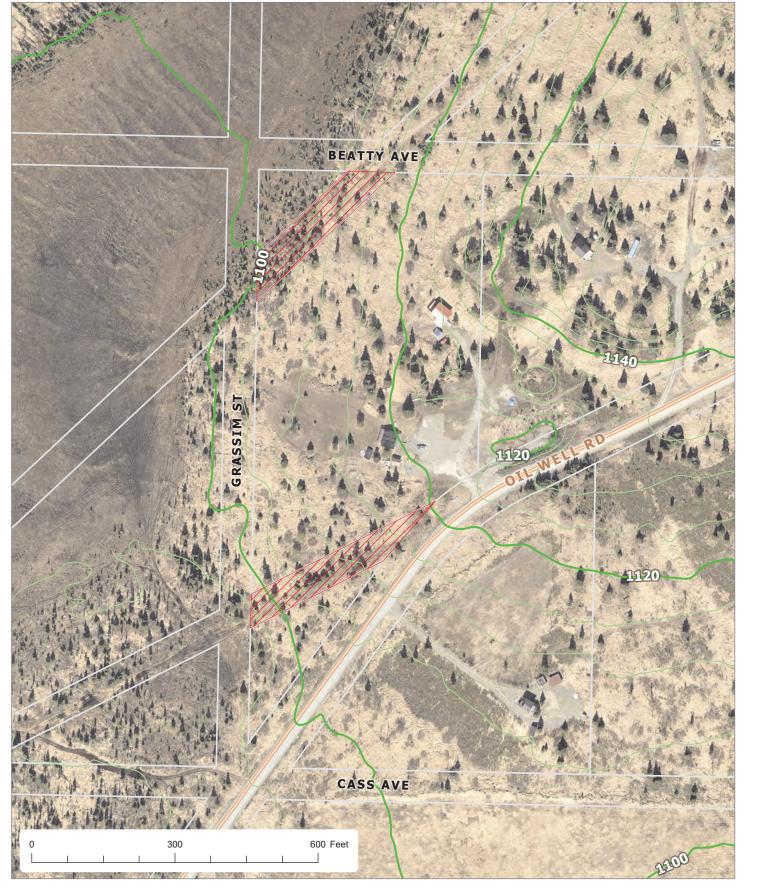


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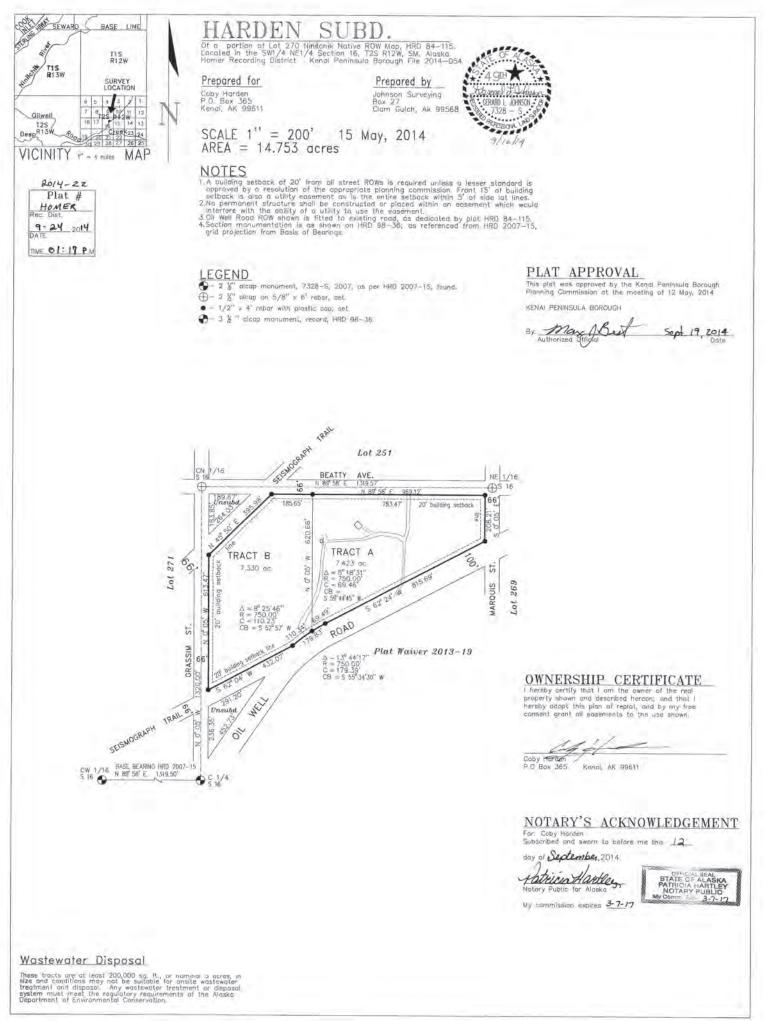


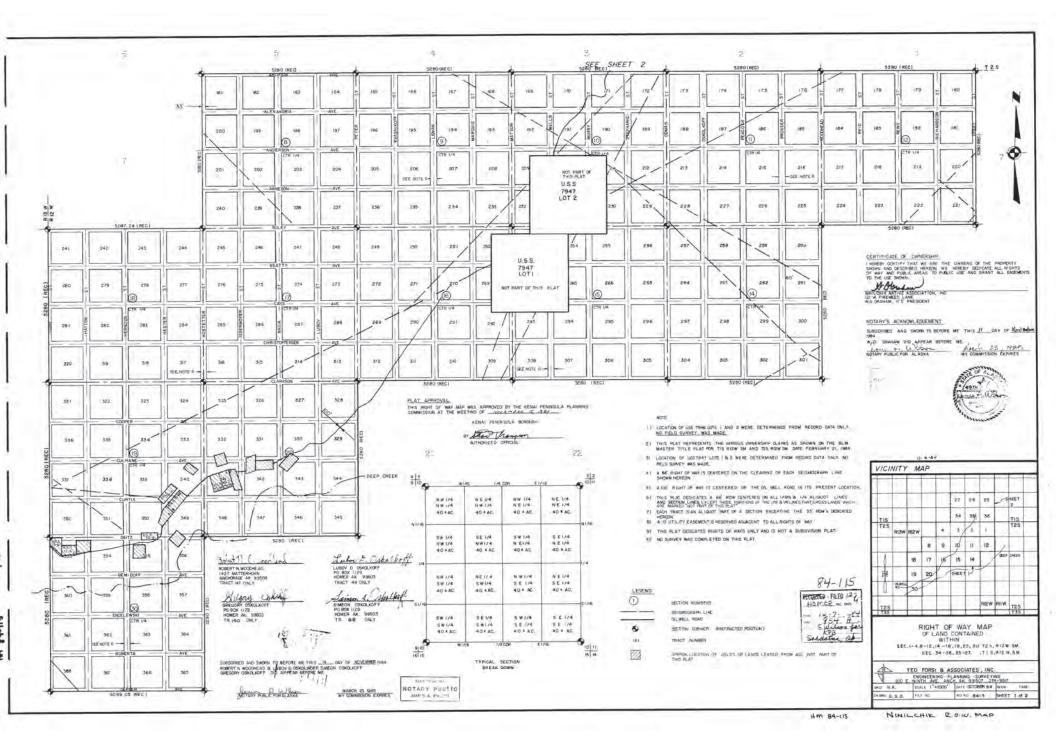


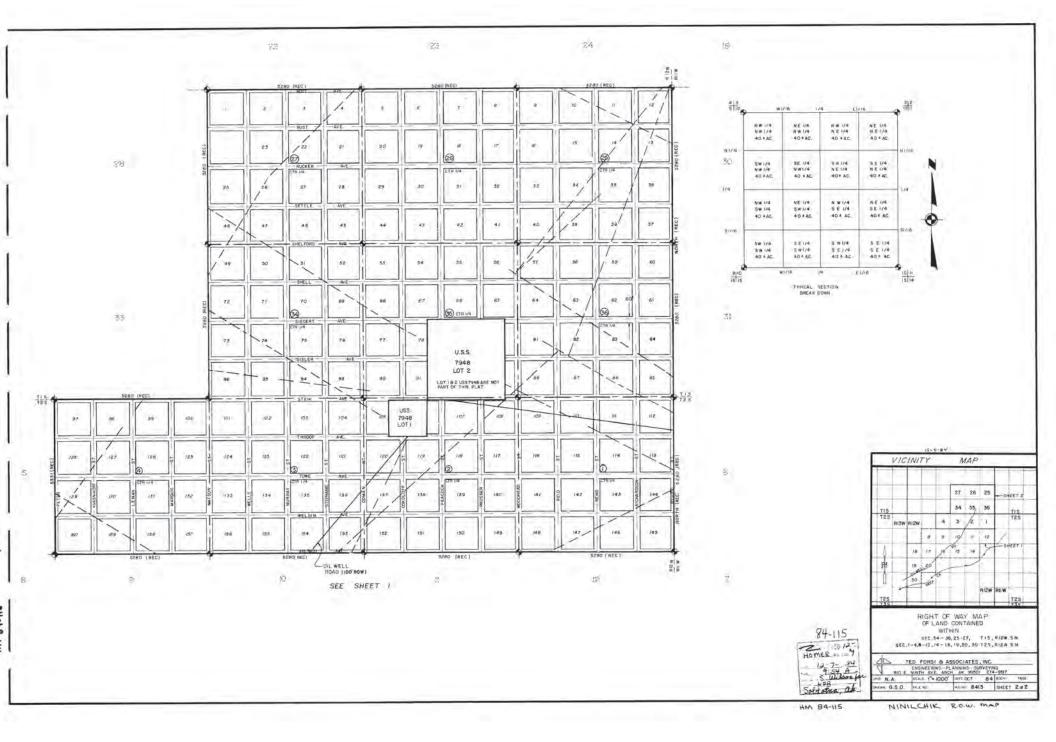
Aerial with 5-foot Contours



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E4-15