



GREAT REDWOOD TRAIL AGENCY

MEETING DATE: April 3, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: 6. Trail Development Division Report

FROM: Louisa Morris

RE: Trail Development Division Staff Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

SCC's GRT staff took three GRT/GRTA grants to the February 13, 2025 SCC Board meeting for approval, for a total amount of \$6,128,800 in funding for the Great Redwood Trail. Additionally, in Humboldt County, four trail projects are moving into their next phases of development, moving into construction, completing preliminary planning, and applying for planning funding. GRTA staff hired a paid student intern to assist with a project to organize and downsize a cache of old railroad documents that have been stored with the Timber Heritage Association since the Eureka office for NCRA closed. This project is part of an ongoing GRTA effort to clean up legacy debris and centralize record-keeping. Lastly, SCC's GRT project staff is managing a \$67,850 contract with Evari GIS Consulting, to digitize its Valuation Maps, licenses and leases, deeds, title reports, and other property information into an online ArcGIS format. This project will result in a comprehensive data visualization tool that GRTA can utilize to manage its property.

BACKGROUND:

Three Great Redwood Trail grants were approved by the State Coastal Conservancy ("Conservancy") Board on February 13, 2025:

1. \$5,000,000 to Great Redwood Trail Agency ("GRTA"), via the Conservancy/GRTA's Sonoma County Inter-Agency Agreement, for engineering and environmental services, planning and design, public outreach, coordination with California Native American Tribes, organizational development, advancement of the railbanking process, technical support, staffing for the Great Redwood Trail Agency, and other costs and services as may be required for the advancement of the Great Redwood Trail in Mendocino, Trinity, and Humboldt Counties. These funds must be used by 6/30/2028.
2. \$503,400 to Mendocino Land Trust for Great Redwood Trail, Willits to Longvale segment planning (12.7 miles).

3. \$350,000 to City of Ukiah for Great Redwood Trail Construction (1.9 miles, Phase 4), which will complete the GRT in the City of Ukiah. The remainder of the Phase 4 construction costs are being funded by California Natural Resource Department's Urban Greening Program.

Project Manager Louisa Morris will be managing these three grants.

Additionally, four projects in Humboldt County are transitioning between phases of trail development:

1. Preparing to move from final planning stages to construction this year, the City of Arcata is completing final site control and design for the Arcata Annie & Mary Trail Connectivity Project that will result in a paved, Class I multi-use pathway from the Arcata Skate Park at Sunset Avenue to the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District Park 1 on West End Road, with trail connections to Cal Poly Humboldt, new student housing, and the Valley West Neighborhood. This 3.5-mile trail is included in an updated trail license agreement between GRTA and the City of Arcata, which has been prepared for GRTA Board consideration at this meeting.
2. Wrapping up preliminary planning, the County of Humboldt is preparing a report on their recent planning efforts for the College of Redwoods to Eureka Waterfront Trail, GRT segment (4.5 miles). GRTA staff are providing input, and the County's public report will be available in early 2025.
3. Moving into early planning stages, the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation, and Conservation District is leading the environmental studies and design efforts for the Samoa segment of the GRT (approx. 3 miles), as part of their adjacent Heavy Lift Marine Terminal Project. More information about this project is included in the background for the right-of entry agreement prepared by GRTA staff for Board consideration at this meeting.
4. In the earliest stage of development, the Fortuna segment of the Great Redwood Trail may start planning efforts in 2025. GRTA staff have been coordinating with the City Engineer and gave a presentation about the Great Redwood Trail to the Fortuna City Council on March 17th. Fortuna Councilmembers gave direction to City staff to apply for a Conservancy planning grant for approximately 6 miles of Great Redwood Trail which will travel from the Highway 36/101 intersection, through Fortuna, to Fernbridge.

Project Manager Hannah Bartee is managing the agreements related to these projects in Humboldt County and the next two file organization projects.

GRTA staff hired a paid student intern, a Cal Poly Humboldt history major, to assist with a project to organize and downsize old railroad and NCRA operations documents that have been stored with the Timber Heritage Association since the Eureka office for NCRA closed. This

project is part of an ongoing GRTA effort to clean up legacy debris and centralize record-keeping. Materials were assessed for damage and relevance to GRTA operations, with documents of only historical interest being donated to interested archival groups, such as the Timber Heritage Association, the Clarke Historical Museum, and the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Historical Society.

Lastly, the Coastal Conservancy's GRT staff are managing a \$67,850 contract with Evari GIS Consulting to digitize, into ArcGIS format, GRTA's property data, including the Agency's 133 Valuation Maps, mileposts, parcel deeds, title information, licenses and leases, and more. This important work will enable GRTA to use an online GIS database to coordinate trail planning and construction efforts as well as better manage property inquiries, cleanup needs, and license and lease agreements. This data digitization will be completed over the next three months, and the entire GRTA team will be trained to use the new system.

RECOMMENDATION:

Informational item only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

From grants approved by Conservancy Board on 2/13/2025: Increase capacity of GRTA; \$5,000,000 appropriation of funding must be used by June 30, 2028.

From trail projects covered in report: GRT planning and construction continues in Mendocino, Trinity, and Humboldt counties, led by partner agencies.

From Valuation Map Digitization Project: No direct impact to GRTA. Conservancy's 2021 GRT funding is being used to fund this contract.

ATTACHMENTS:

A. TRAIL REPORT 04.03.2025

Great Redwood Trail Staff Report

GRTA Board Meeting
March 20, 2025



GREAT REDWOOD
TRAIL AGENCY



Funding Updates

Funding to GRTA

At February 2025 SCC Board Meeting, approved \$5,000,000 to GRTA, via the SCC/GRTA/Sonoma County Inter-Agency Agreement, to be used for:

- Engineering and environmental services,
- Planning and design & public outreach
- Coordination with California Native American Tribes,
- Advancement of the railbanking process,
- Organizational development, technical support, staffing for the Great Redwood Trail Agency, and
- Other costs and services as may be required for the advancement of the Great Redwood Trail.

Funds will need to be used by 6/30/2028.



\$350K in Funding for GRT Construction:

City of Ukiah Rail-with-Trail, Phase 4
(~1.9 miles, Segment 4)

Partner: City of Ukiah; has GRTA
license agreement

Funding: \$350K grant approved at
February 2025 SCC Board meeting

Other Secured Funding: CNRA's
Urban Greening Program

CEQA: MND; adopted by GRTA

Construction Time Frame:
2025-2026



Photo: Ribbon cutting tour on existing GRT in Ukiah.

\$503,400- Funding for GRT Planning:

Willits to Longvale (12.7 miles, Seg. 10 & 11)

Partner: Mendocino Land Trust (MLT)

Funding: Planning grant approved at February 2025 State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) Board meeting

Grant Elements:

- Cultural/historical studies,
- Tribal engagement,
- Biological studies,
- Geotechnical studies,
- Engineering and preliminary designs.

Time Frame: 2025-2027

Photo: Aug. 2024 field visit with GRTA Team and MLT. Trestle over Outlet Creek, north of Willits.





More Trail Updates

Photo: Existing Great Redwood Trail in Arcata

GRT Construction Update:

Willits Project (1.6 miles, Segment 9)

Partner: City of Willits

Funding: Active Transportation Program (ATP)
and State Coastal Conservancy

CEQA: City Completed (ISMND)

Construction Time Frame: 2025-2026

Update: Local contractor selected
(Bouthillier's Construction), will start
construction this spring.



GRT Construction Update:

Annie & Mary Trail Connectivity Project
(3.5 miles, Segment 37)

Connections:

- Arcata Skate Park to Humboldt Bay
Municipal Water District Park 1
- Cal Poly Humboldt; Valley West
neighborhood

Partner: City of Arcata

Funding: Active Transportation Program (ATP)

CEQA: City Completed (ISMND)

Next Steps: City will continue to outreach
and connect with adjacent landowners.
GRTA Board to consider trail license and CEQA
adoption

Construction Time Frame: 2025-2026

Photo: Conceptual design showing Class I trail next to Arcata Skate Park.
Source: City of Arcata



10' Trail

2' Shoulder

GRT Planning Update:

Eureka to College of the Redwoods
(4.5 miles, Segment 33)

Connections: College of the Redwoods
to Tooby Rd. Trailhead for Eureka
Waterfront Trail/Humboldt Bay Trail

Partner: County of Humboldt

Funding: Caltrans (Sustainable
Transportation Planning Grant) and
HCAOG

Current Efforts: County finalizing report
from early planning phase; GRTA
providing comments

Next Steps: Identify lead and funding for
next phase



GRT Planning Beginning:

Samoa

(~3 miles, Segment 43)

Connections: Peninsula Picnic Area Bay St., through the town of Samoa.

Partner: Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation, & Conservation District

Funding: Federal Department of Transportation INFRA Grant; awarded 2024

Next Steps:

- Continued tribal consultation and community engagement
- Analyze opportunities and constraints
- Conduct site surveys and environmental studies
- Develop preliminary designs

Photo: GRTA right-of-way on the Samoa Peninsula, looking south.



Potential Funding for GRT Planning:

Fortuna
(~6 miles, Segment 31)

Connections: Hwy 36/101
intersection to Fernbridge through
Fortuna

Partner: City of Fortuna

Potential Funding: Possible
SCC Grant for consideration in
Fall 2025

Next Steps:

- Collaborate on development
of SCC grant proposal

Photo: City of Fortuna with HWY 101 and railroad tracks in center; Eel River shown in top left.





Document Clean Up Project

Photo: Tracks crossing Kenmar Rd. in Fortuna

Document Clean Up and Organization

- More than 100 boxes!
- Old RR documents, reports, and maps from NCRA Eureka Office
- Stored with THA for decades

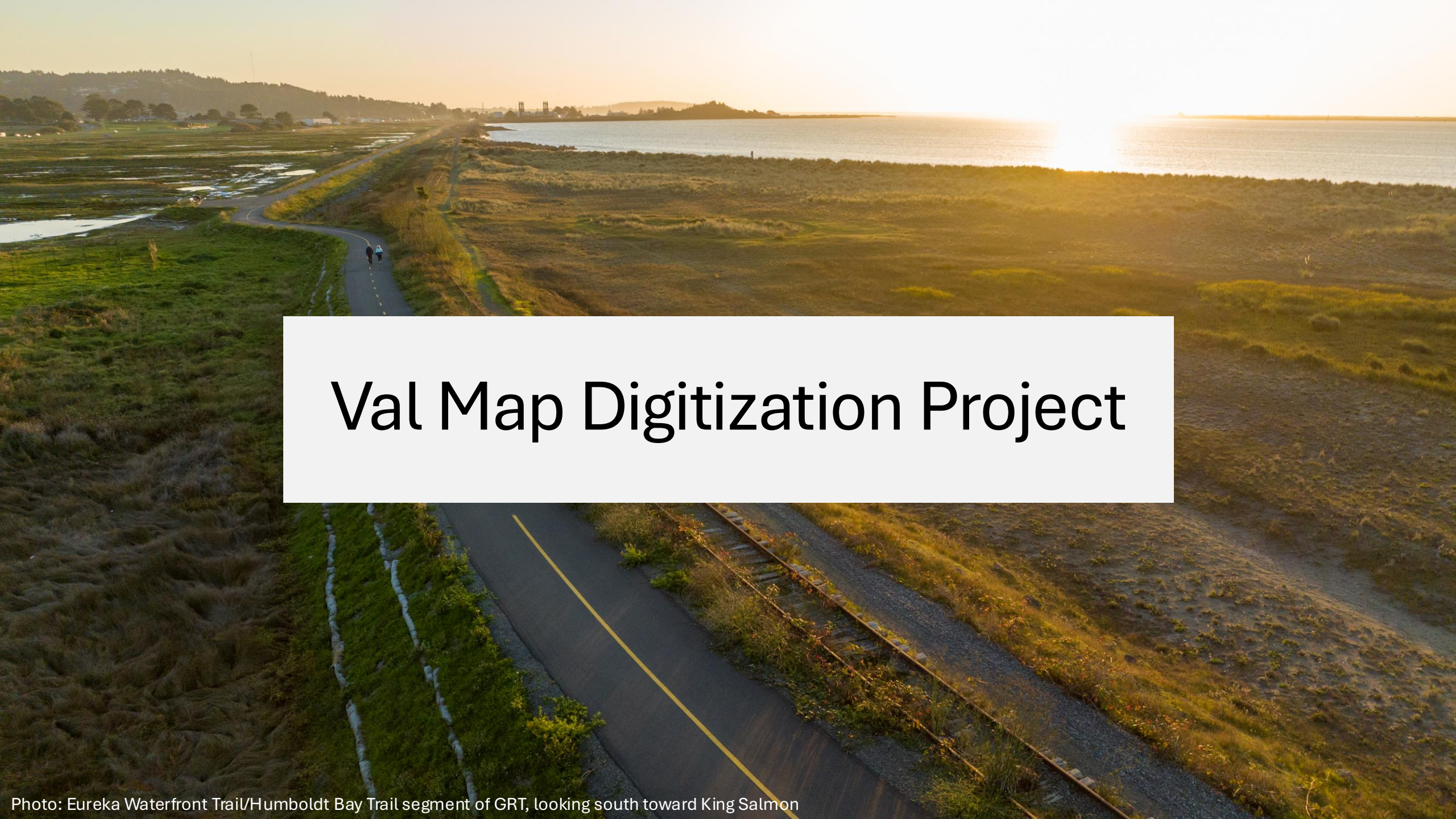
Organizing Team:

- GRTA staff
- Cal Poly Humboldt history student (GRTA-paid intern)
- THA Volunteers

Donations to:

- Timber Heritage Association (THA)
- Clarke Historical Museum
- Northwestern Pacific Railroad Historical Society



An aerial photograph of a coastal trail at sunset. The trail, a paved path with a yellow line, runs along a grassy dune area. To the right of the trail is a body of water, and to the left is a marshy area with some standing water. In the distance, a town and hills are visible under a warm, orange sky. Two people are walking on the trail in the distance.

Val Map Digitization Project

Photo: Eureka Waterfront Trail/Humboldt Bay Trail segment of GRT, looking south toward King Salmon

Digitization Benefits

- Consolidate 133 Valuation Maps (over 230 mi.) onto one platform (ArcGIS)
- Improve planning and management processes
- Create ability to layer data, such as:
 - Parcels boundaries and deeds
 - Licenses and leases
 - Infrastructure inventory and condition assessments
 - Restoration opportunity locations
 - Trail planning designs
 - Topography and aerial imagery
 - And much more!

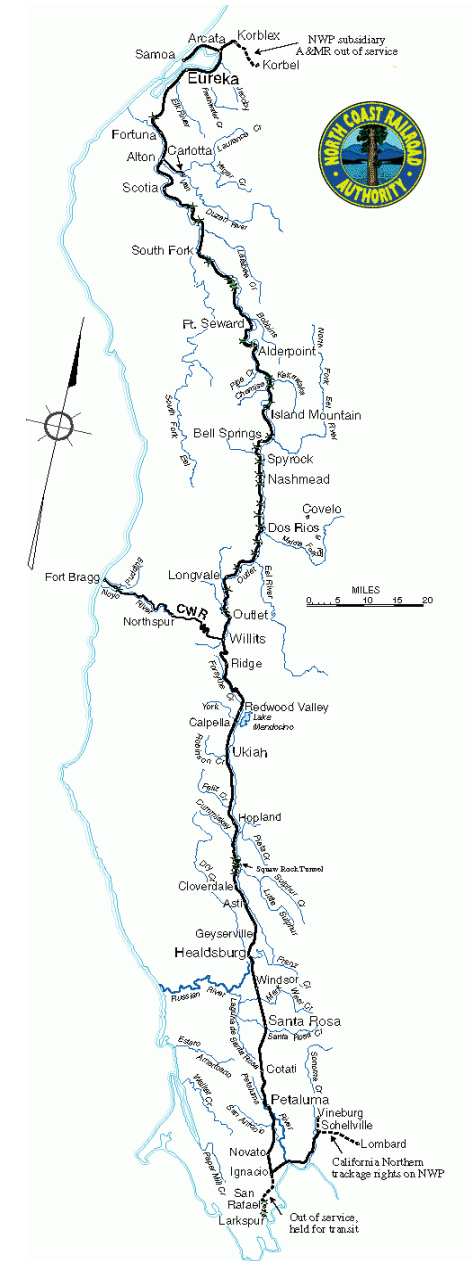
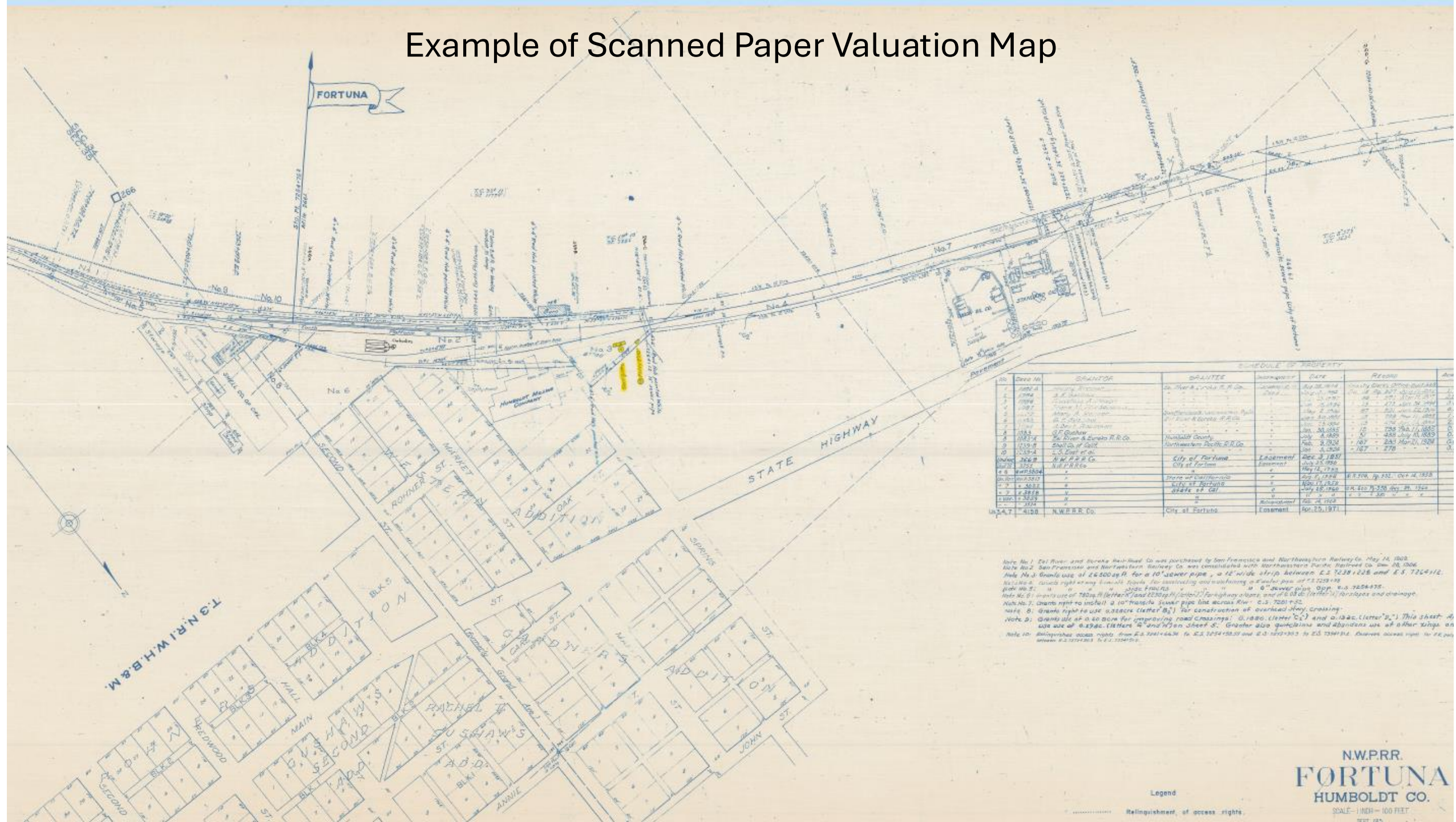
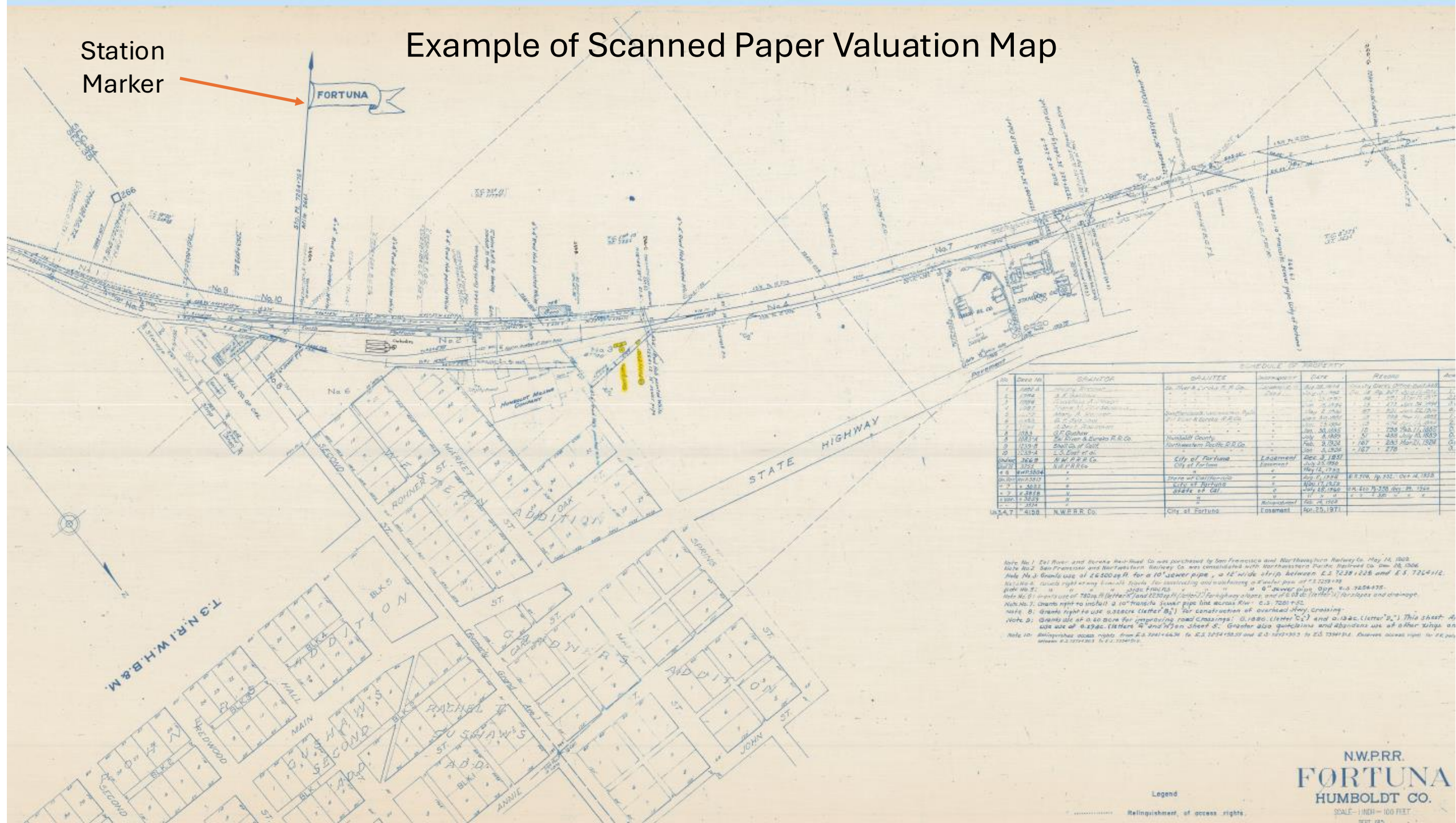


Photo: Outdated NCRA route map

Example of Scanned Paper Valuation Map

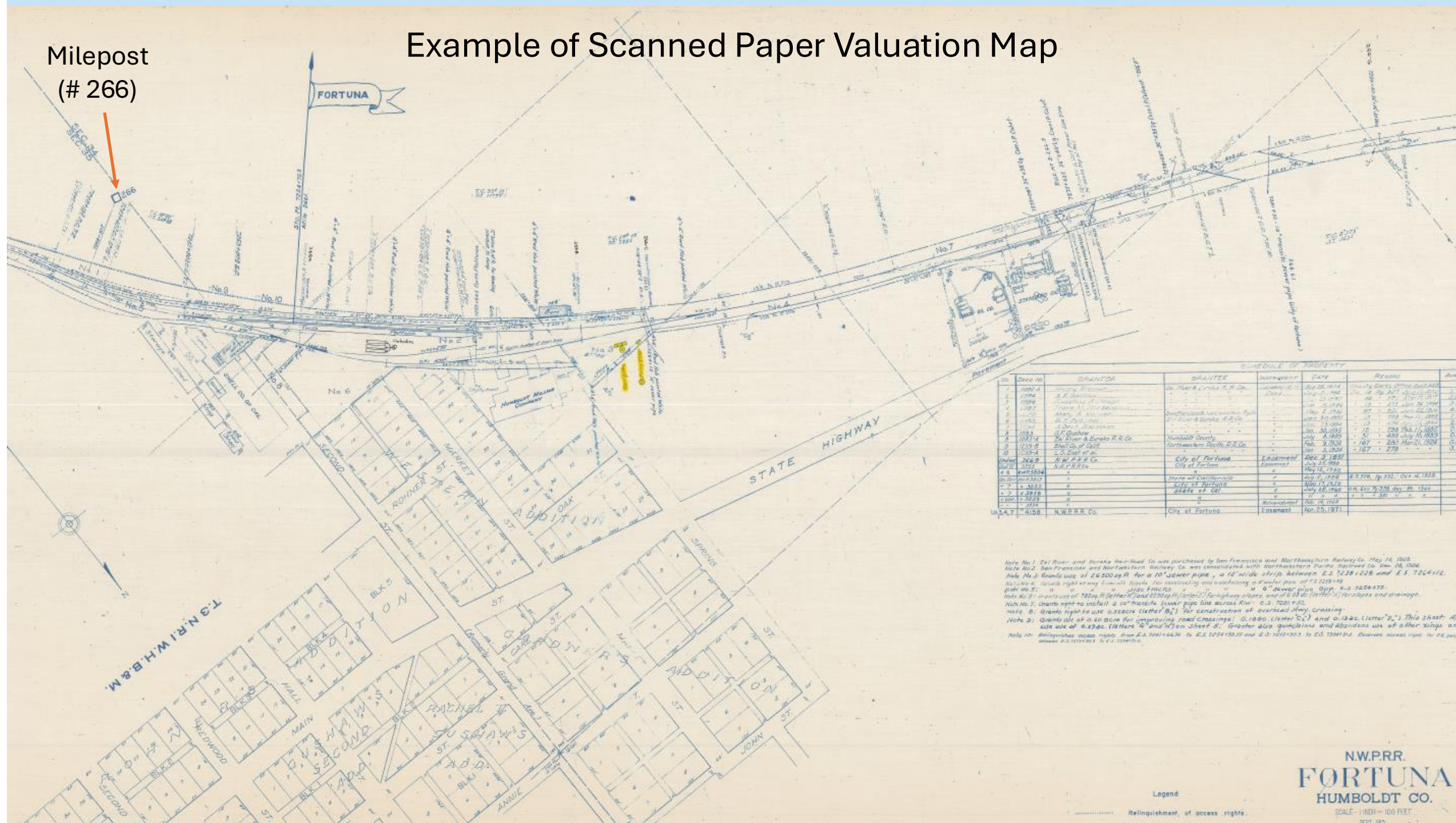


Example of Scanned Paper Valuation Map

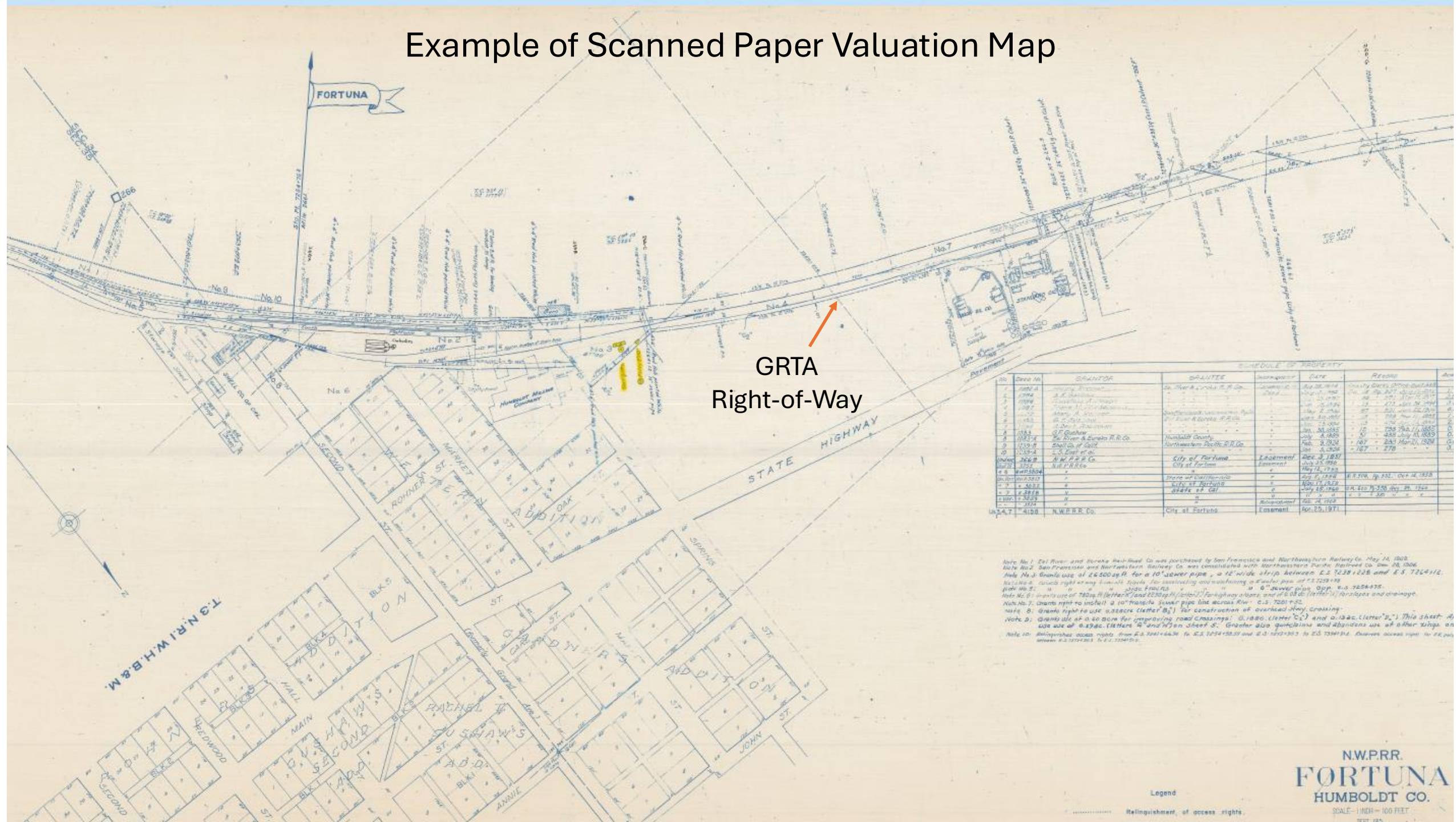


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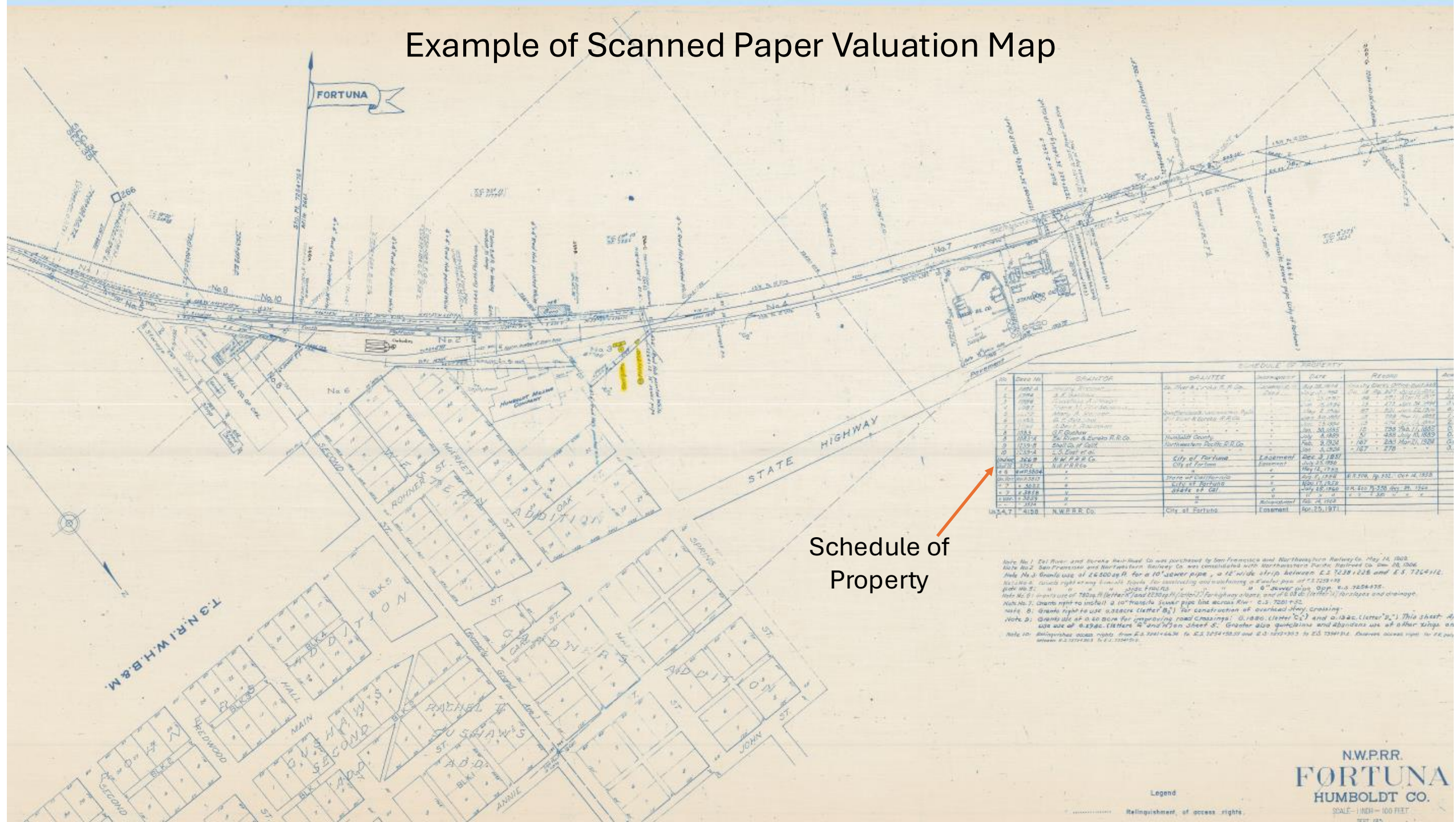
Example of Scanned Paper Valuation Map



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Example of Scanned Paper Valuation Map



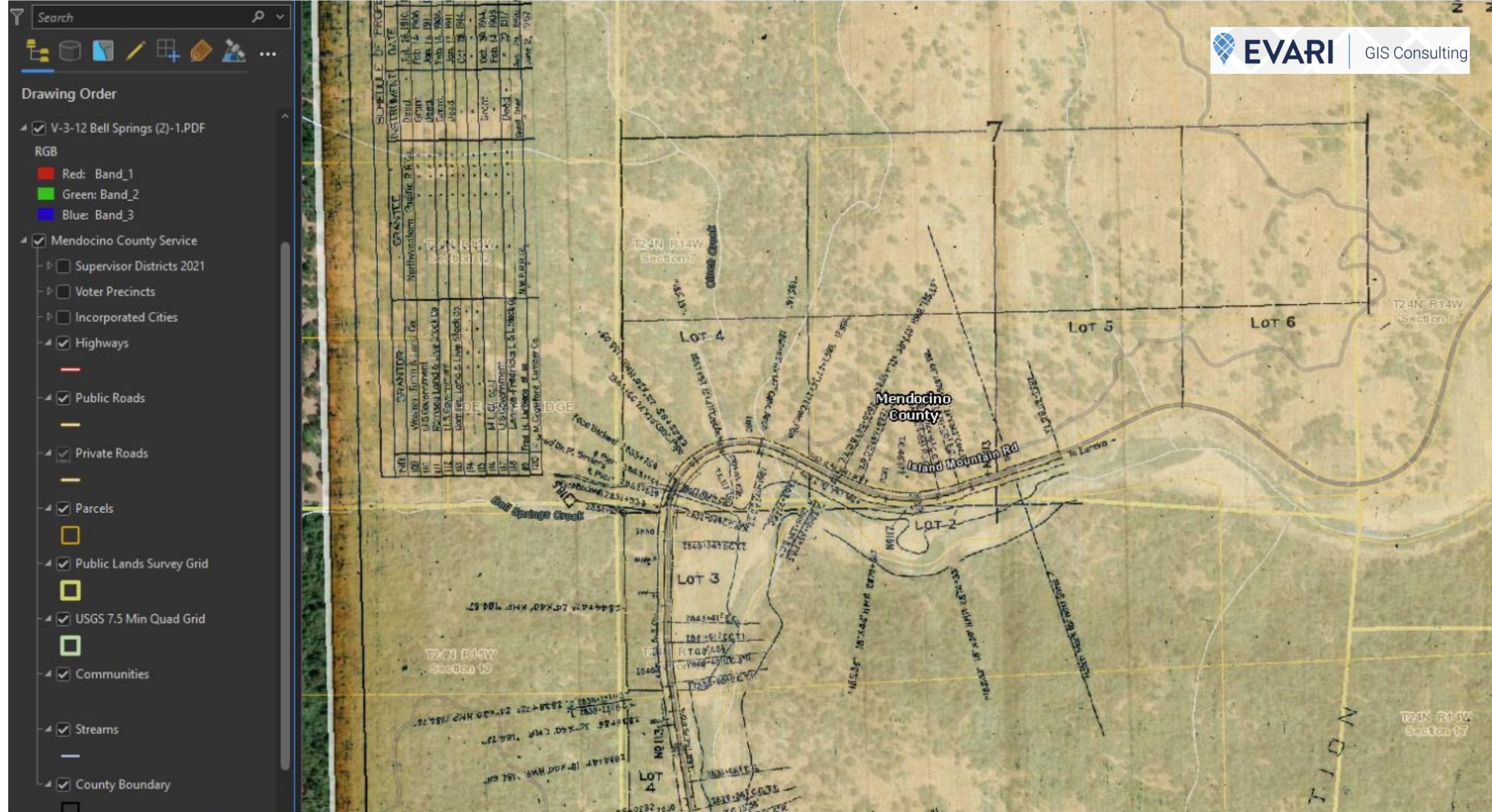


Figure 1 - Example Digitized PDF, text for digitization, and associated GIS contents

Thank you!



Photo: Existing GRT over Elk River in Eureka