

*DEC 15 2011***Energy Facility Permitting**
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2198
651.296.4026 | fax 651.297.7891
www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us

December 8, 2011

Dear Landowner,

You are receiving this letter because your property may be directly or indirectly affected by route alternatives for the proposed Hollydale 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission line rebuild project. The 13 route alternatives suggested during the scoping process will be evaluated in an environmental assessment (EA), which is being prepared by the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Facility Permitting staff (EFP).

This letter provides you with information on the transmission line project, the route permitting process, and future opportunities to participate in the process. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the proposed project, sign up for the project mailing list, and participate in the route permitting process.

Project Overview

A high-voltage transmission line route permit application (RPA) for the project was filed by the applicants on June 30, 2011, and was accepted by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) on August 25, 2011. The route permit will be reviewed under the alternative review process, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 216E (Power Plant Siting Act) and Minnesota Rules 7850.2800 to 7850.3900. Under the alternative permitting process the Commission has six months from the date the application was accepted as complete to make a decision on the route permit. The Commission may extend this time limit up to three months for just cause or upon agreement of the applicant (Minnesota Rule 7850.3900, subpart 1).

As described in the RPA, Xcel Energy and Great River Energy (applicants) are proposing a rebuild of 8 miles of the existing Great River Energy (GRE) 69 kV transmission line to a 115 kV transmission line, constructing approximately 0.8 miles of new 115 kV transmission line, constructing a new 115 kV substation and modifying associated facilities.

The applicants are requesting a 200 foot route width where the transmission line is to be rebuilt along the existing 69 kV transmission line route, which extends from the existing Medina substation located southwest of the intersection of Willow Drive and County State Aid Highway 24 to the intersection of GRE's existing 115 kV transmission line just north of Fernbrook Lane in the city of Plymouth. A 400 foot route width is being requested for the 0.8 miles of new 115 kV transmission that would run from the intersection of the existing GRE 115 kV transmission line and follow along the north side of the Canadian Pacific Railway east to Cheshire Lane, then south along Cheshire Lane, and east along Schmidt Lake Road to the proposed location of Substation Site A.

The proposed transmission line will require a right-of-way of 75 feet (37.5 feet on either side of centerline). The proposed project includes a rebuild of approximately 8 miles of existing 69 kV transmission line that has a current right-of-way between 70 to 100 feet depending on the location. The applicants indicate in the RPA that the project can be designed to fit within these existing easements, thereby requiring little to no new right-of-way while still satisfying the needs of the project.

Review Process

The first step in the environmental review process is developing the scope of the EA for the project. The scoping process, which has already been completed, has two primary purposes: (1) to identify issues that are important to communities along the proposed routes for study in the EA, and (2) to solicit suggestions for route alternatives, beyond those proposed by the applicants, to study in the EA.

EFP staff held a public information and scoping meeting on October 26, 2011, to gather public input on the proposed project and routes. At these meetings, the public had the opportunity to propose route alternatives for consideration in the EA scoping decision. Letters and emails were also accepted during the comment period that closed on November 9, 2011. EFP staff received 450 comments during the comment period. As part of this public comment process, several alternative routes described in the RPA were suggested, as well as new alternative routes developed and submitted by the advisory task force and public citizens. **Property records indicate you are located near, or own property on, one or more of these new alternative routes.** These new alternative routes, which will be evaluated in the EA, can be found in the EA scoping decision for this project at:

http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/documents/32121/ATF_Notice_of_Meetings.pdf.

In addition to these public meetings, there will be a public hearing conducted in the area of the proposed project in early 2012. The hearing will be conducted by an administrative law judge from the Minnesota Office of Administrative Hearings. Anyone may speak at the public hearings, present evidence, ask questions of the applicants and EFP staff, and submit comments on the proposed project. The administrative law judge will make a recommendation on a route permit to the Commission. A decision on the route permit by the Commission is not expected before February 2012.

Participation

Information about this project and the route permitting process is available on the Commission's website: <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=32121>, and on the Department of Commerce's eDockets website: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> (enter the docket number year "11" and number "152").

- **Project Mailing List.** Notice of the public hearing will be published in local newspapers and mailed to persons who register their names on the Department of Commerce project mailing list. Persons interested in adding their names to the mailing list for this project should contact the EFP state permit manager or public advisor, or register online at: <http://www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/#mailing>.

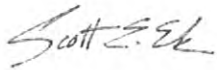
- **Maps.** Maps of the applicants' proposed routes and of the alternative routes identified during the scoping process are available on the Commission's website:
http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/documents/32121/11-152_EA_Scoping_Decision_webversion.pdf. Alternative routes included for further evaluation in the EA are described scoping decision document dated December 7, 2011.

If you have questions or if you would like further information about this project please contact:

Scott Ek, State Permit Manager
Energy Facility Permitting
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198
(651) 296-8813
scott.ek@state.mn.us

Raymond Kirsch, Public Advisor
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raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Ek".

Scott Ek, State Permit Manager



STATE OF MINNESOTA
Energy Facility Permitting



Issued: December 7, 2011

**NOTICE OF SCOPING DECISION AND INTENT TO PREPARE AN
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**In the Matter of the Route Permit Application for the Hollydale 115 kV Transmission Line
Project in the Cities of Plymouth and Medina, Hennepin County**

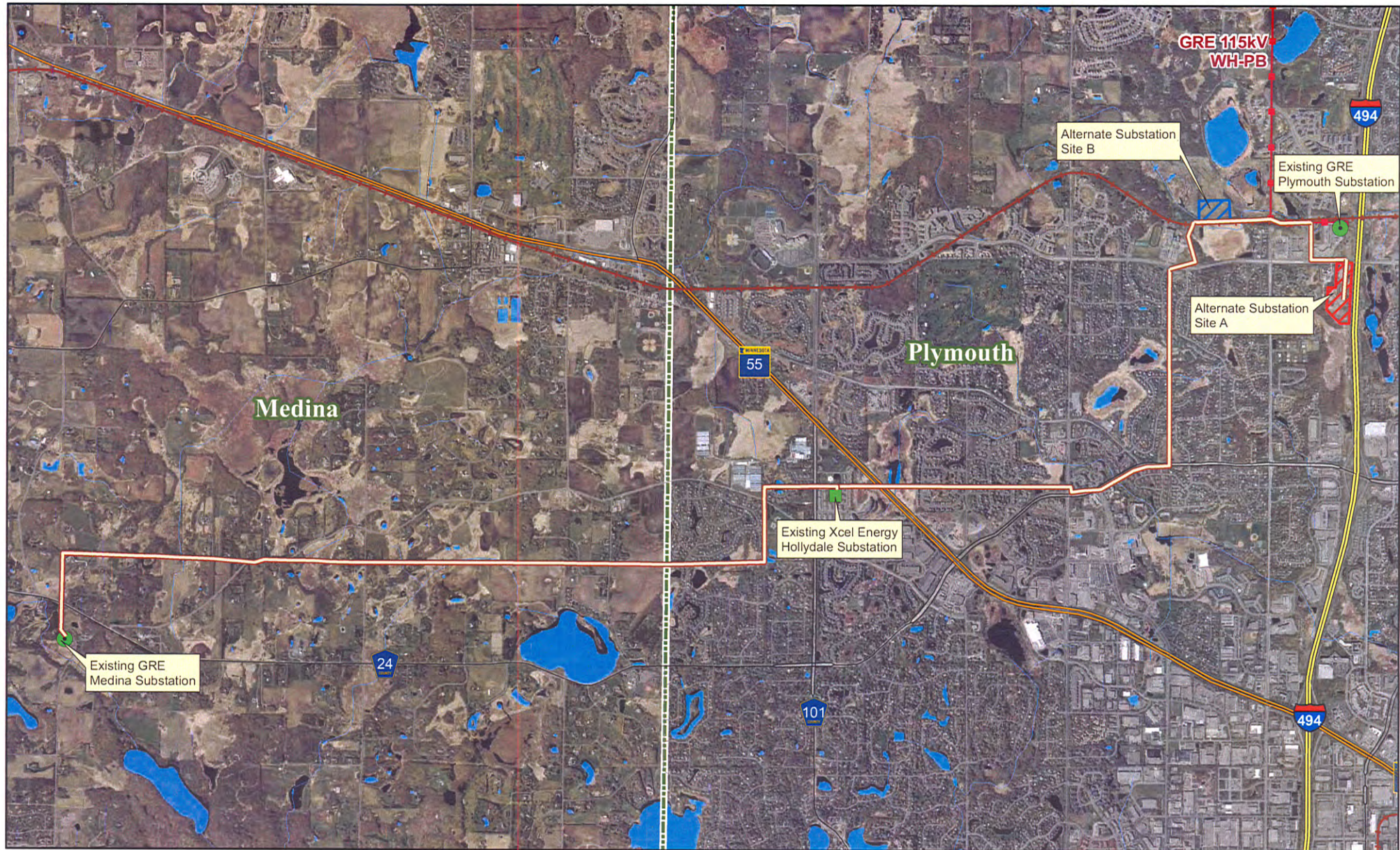
PUC Docket No. E002/TL-11-152

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Energy Facility Permitting (EFP) announces the release of the scoping decision and notice of intent to prepare an environmental assessment (EA) for Xcel Energy's and Great River Energy's proposed Hollydale 115 kV transmission line rebuild project.

Electronic versions of the EA scoping decision, route permit application and other documents relevant to this matter are available on the Public Utilities Commission's EFP website: <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=32121>, and on the Department of Commerce eDockets website: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> (enter the Docket Number Year "11" and Number "152").

The scoping decision identifies the issues and alternative routes that the deputy commission of the Department of Commerce has determined are appropriate for inclusion in the EA. The scoping decision also identifies certain issues that will not be included in the EA. The EA is anticipated to be complete and available in February 2012.

If you have any questions about this project or would like more information, please contact the EFP state permit manager: Scott Ek, 85 7th Place East, Suite 500, St. Paul, MN 55101; Tel: 651.296.8813, e-mail: scott.ek@state.mn.us.



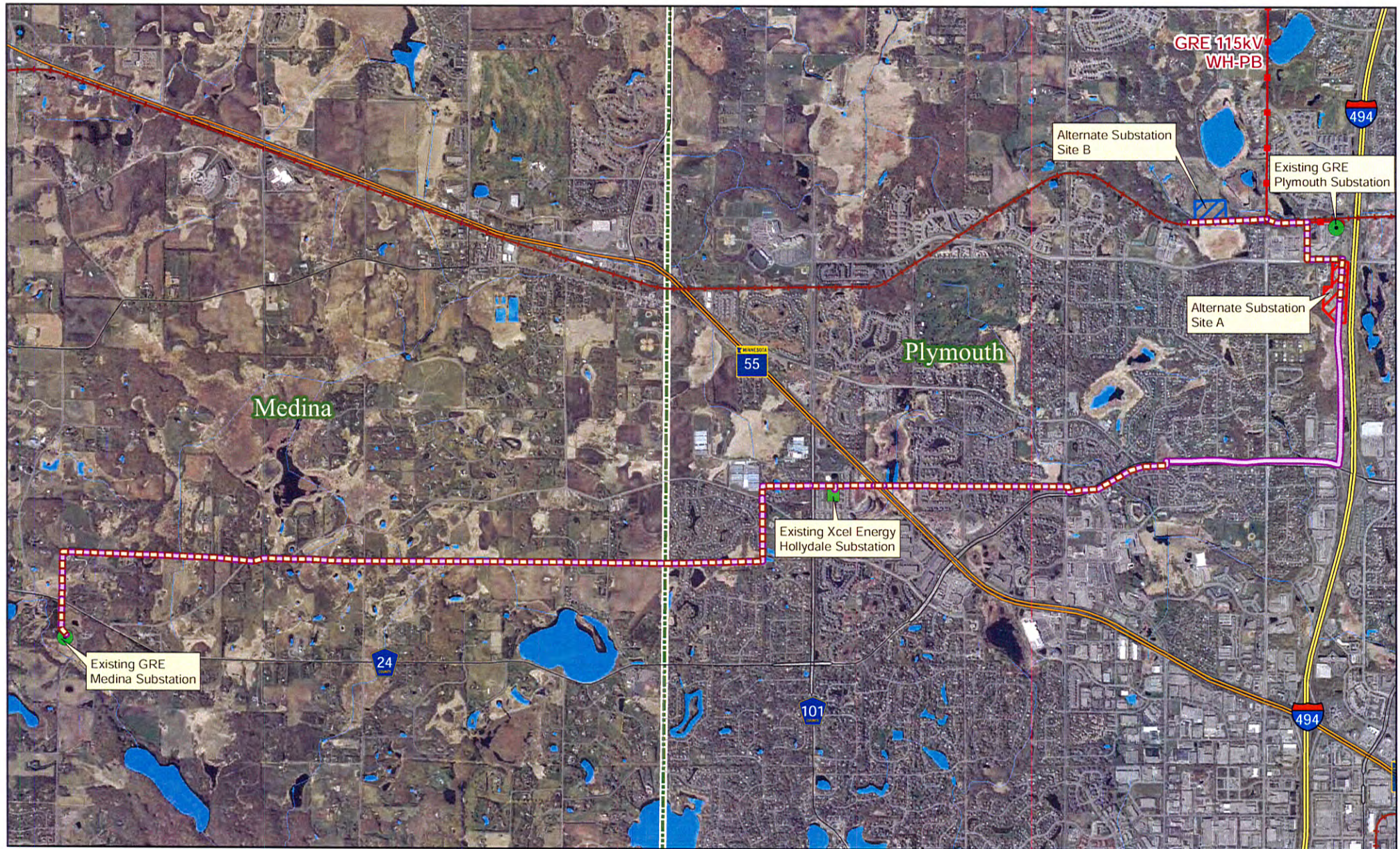
-  Proposed Route
-  Substation Site A
-  Substation Site B
-  Existing Xcel Energy Substation
-  Existing GRE Substation
-  GRE Transmission Line WH-PB
-  Railroad



Figure 1

PROPOSED ROUTE
Hollydale 115 kV Project





- Alternative Route Segment A
- Portion of Alternative Route Shared with Proposed Route
- Proposed Route
- Substation Site A
- Substation Site B
- Existing Xcel Energy Substation
- Existing GRE Substation
- GRE Transmission Line WH-PB
- Railroad

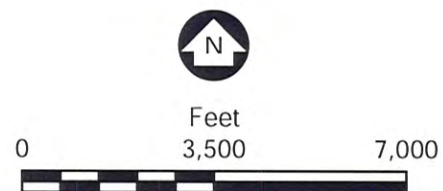
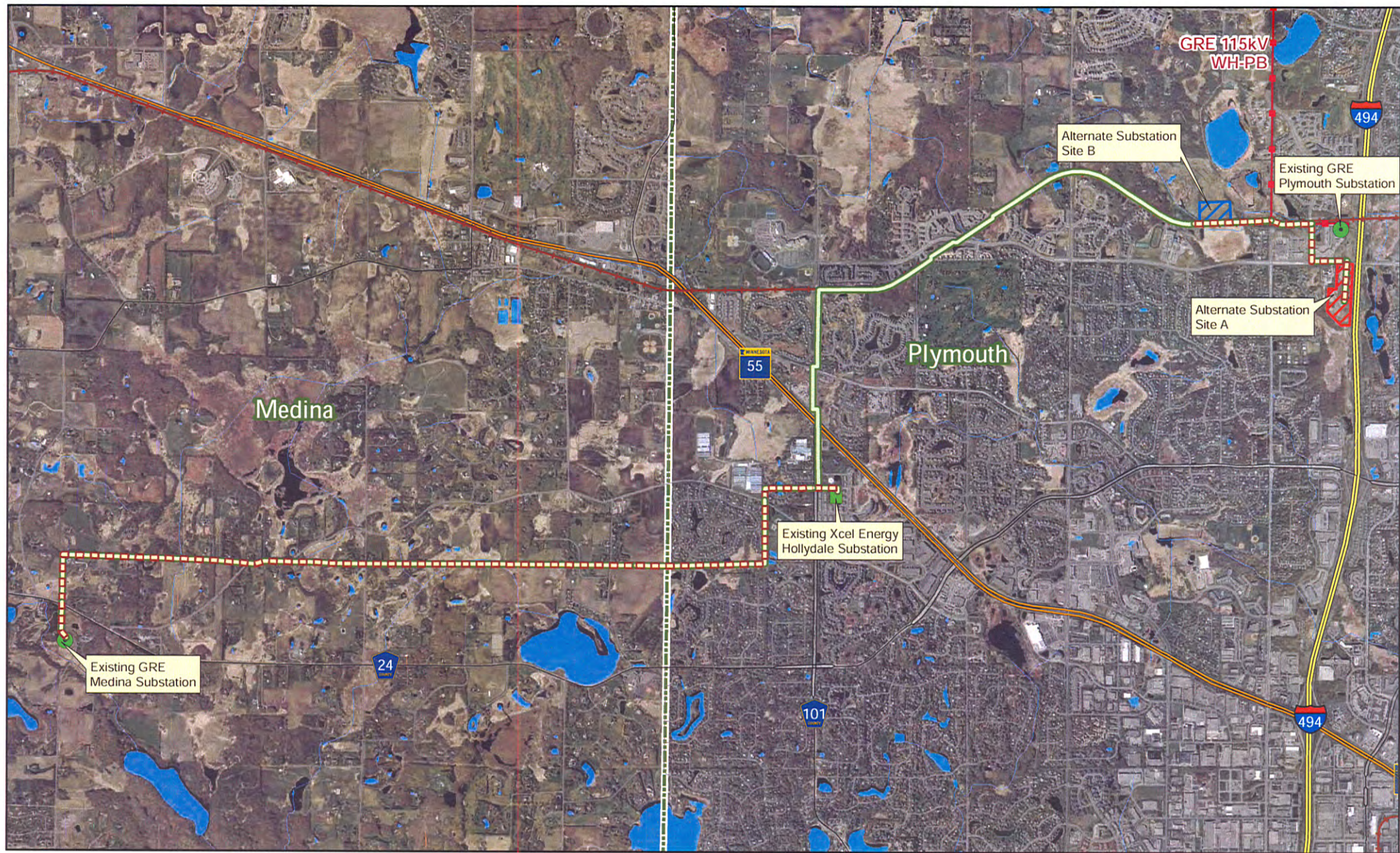


Figure 2

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE A
Hollydale Project



- Alternative Route Segment B
- - - Portion of Alternative Route Shared with Proposed Route
- Proposed Route
- Substation Site A
- Substation Site B
- Existing Xcel Energy Substation
- Existing GRE Substation
- GRE Transmission Line WH-PB
- Railroad

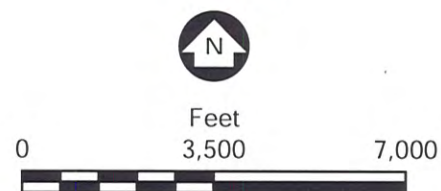
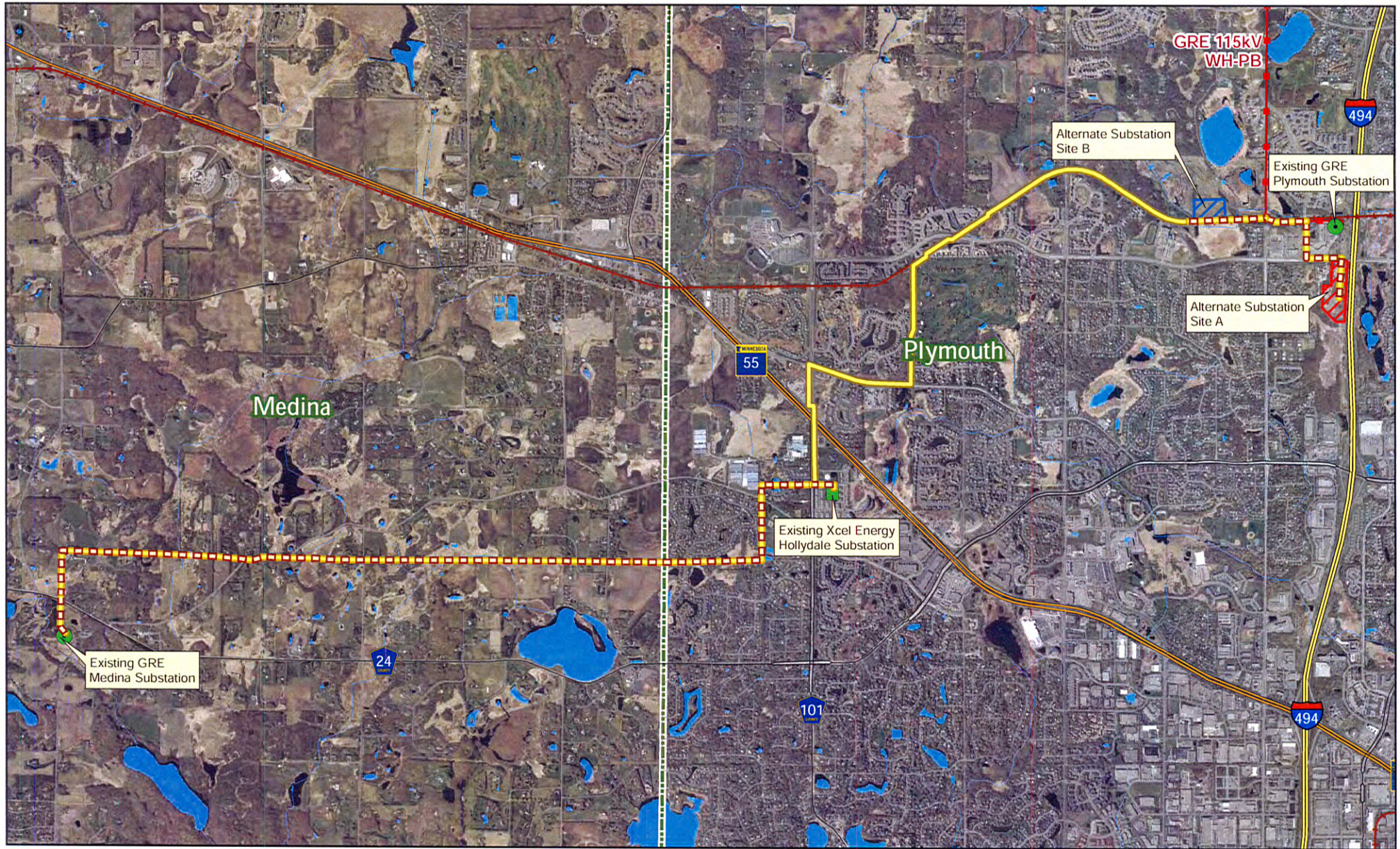


Figure 3

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE B
Hollydale Project





- ATF Alternative Route Segment B-1
- Portion of Alternative Route Shared with Proposed Route
- Proposed Route
- Substation Site A
- Substation Site B
- Existing Xcel Energy Substation
- Existing GRE Substation
- GRE Transmission Line WH-PB
- Railroad

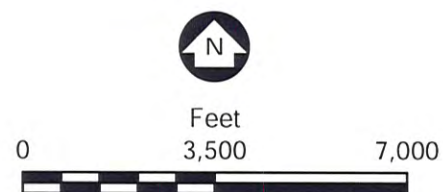
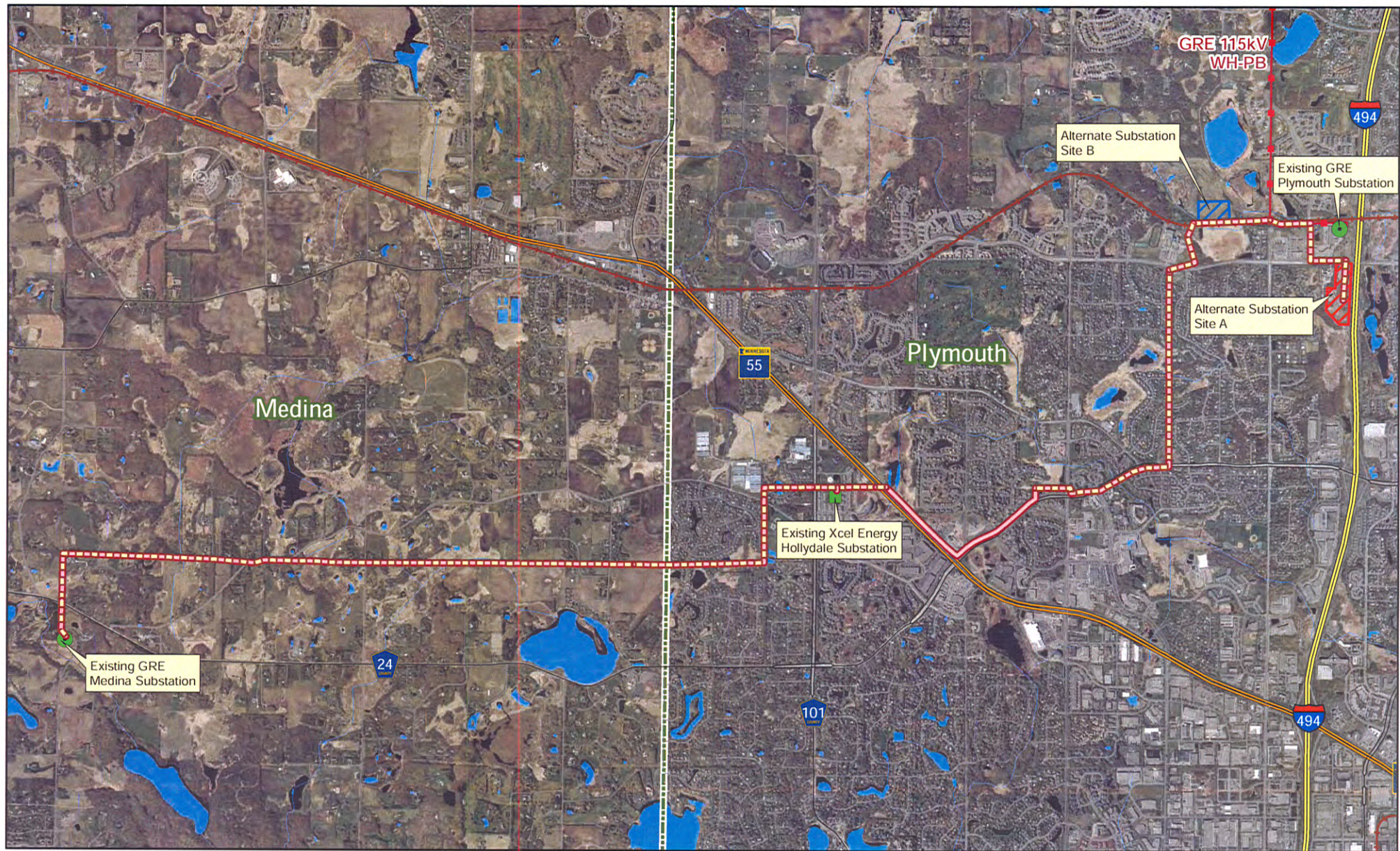











Figure 4

ATF ALTERNATIVE ROUTE B-1
Hollydale Project



-  Alternative Route Segment C
-  Portion of Alternative Route Shared with Proposed Route
-  Proposed Route
-  Substation Site A
-  Substation Site B
-  Existing Xcel Energy Substation
-  Existing GRE Substation
-  GRE Transmission Line WH-PB
-  Railroad

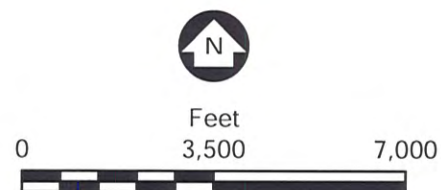
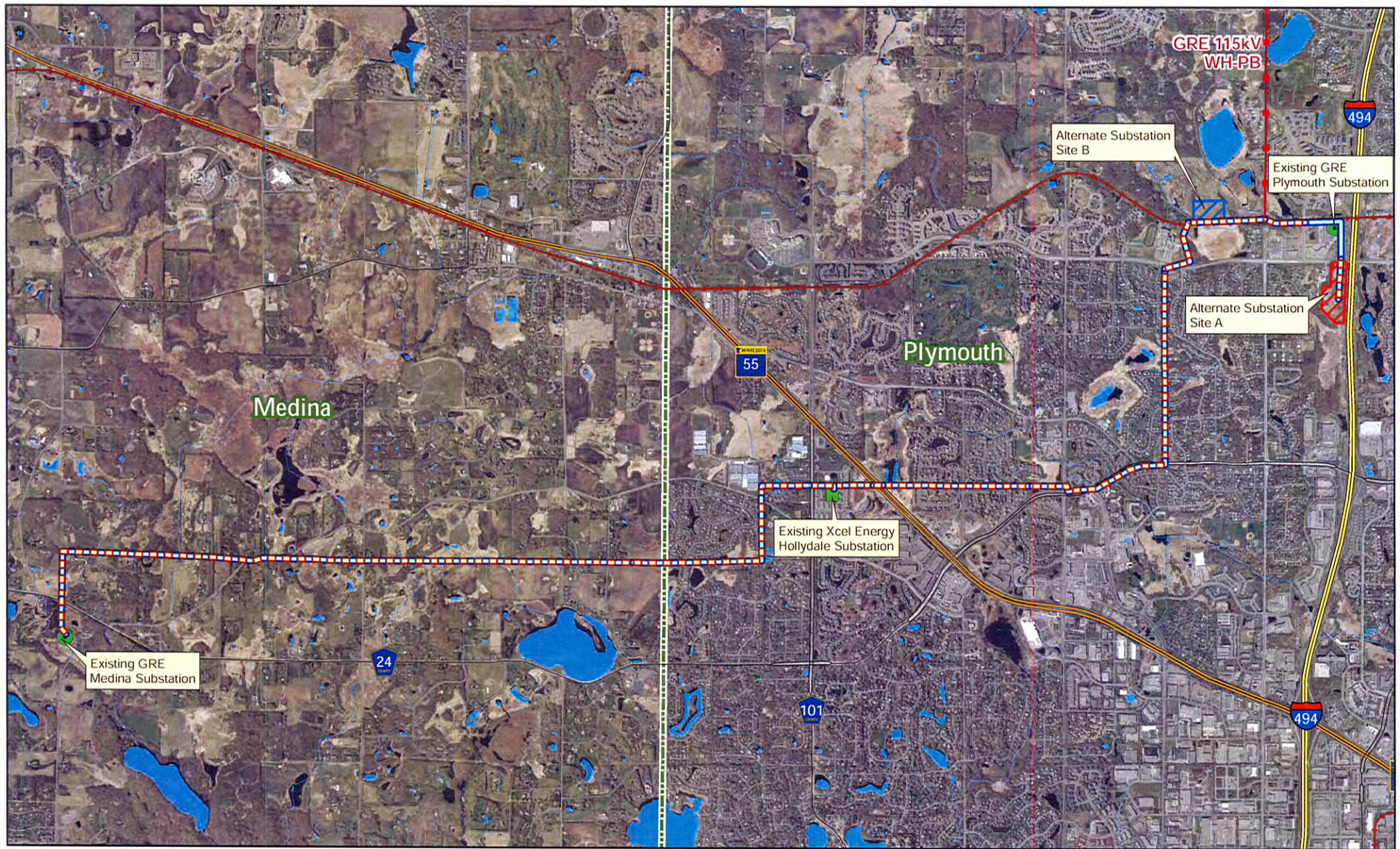


Figure 5
ALTERNATIVE ROUTE C
Hollydale Project



- Alternative Route Segment D
- Portion of Alternative Route Shared with Proposed Route
- Proposed Route
- Substation Site A
- Substation Site B
- Existing Xcel Energy Substation
- Existing GRE Substation
- GRE Transmission Line WH-PB
- Railroad

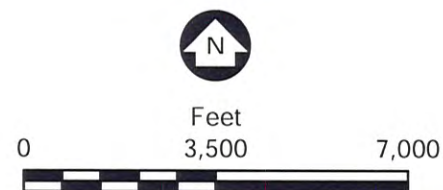
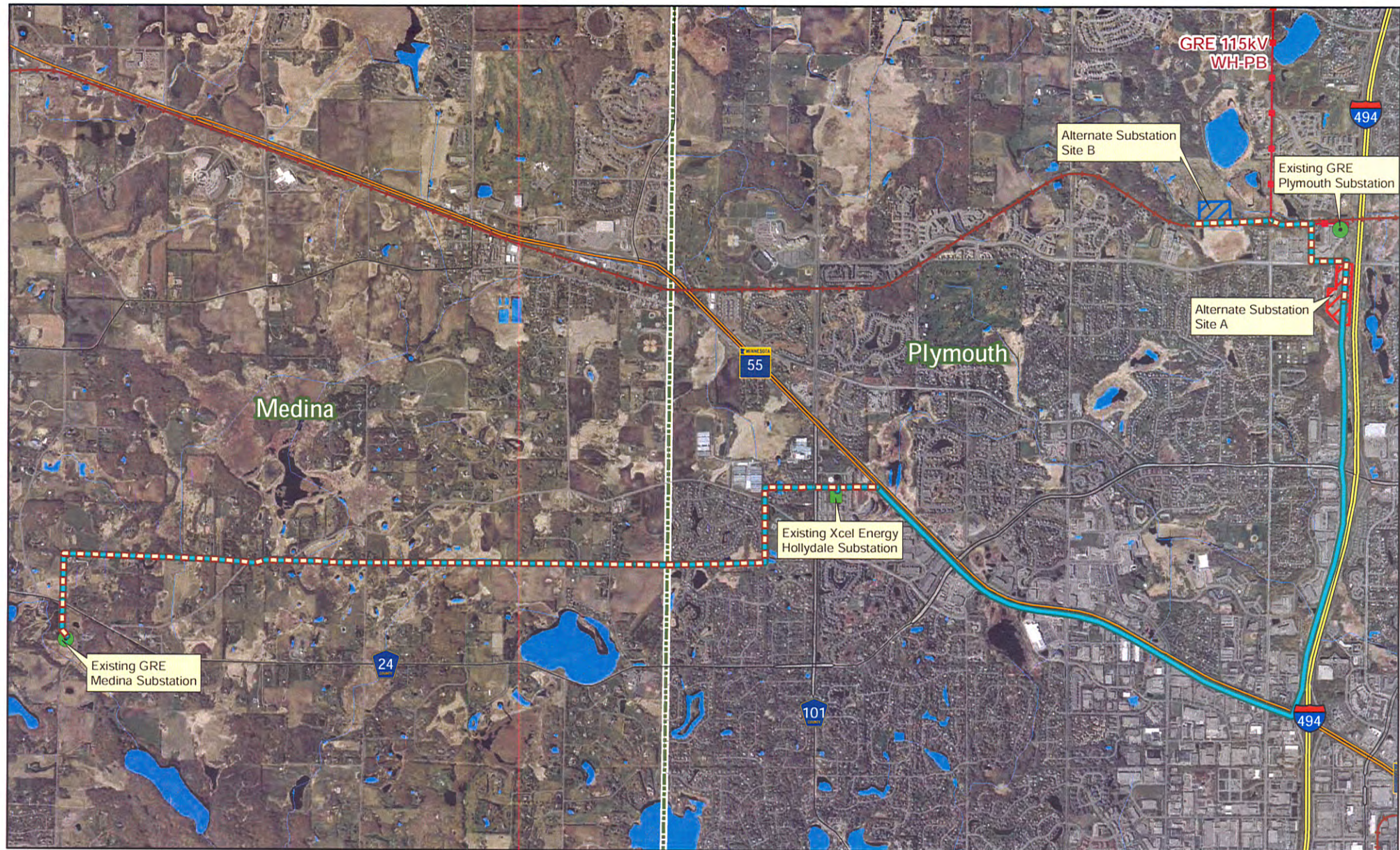











Figure 6

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE D
Hollydale Project



-  ATF Alternative Route Segment E
-  Portion of Alternative Route Shared with Proposed Route
-  Proposed Route
-  Substation Site A
-  Substation Site B
-  Existing Xcel Energy Substation
-  Existing GRE Substation
-  GRE Transmission Line WH-PB
-  Railroad

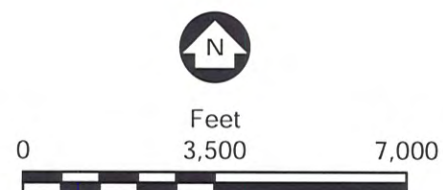
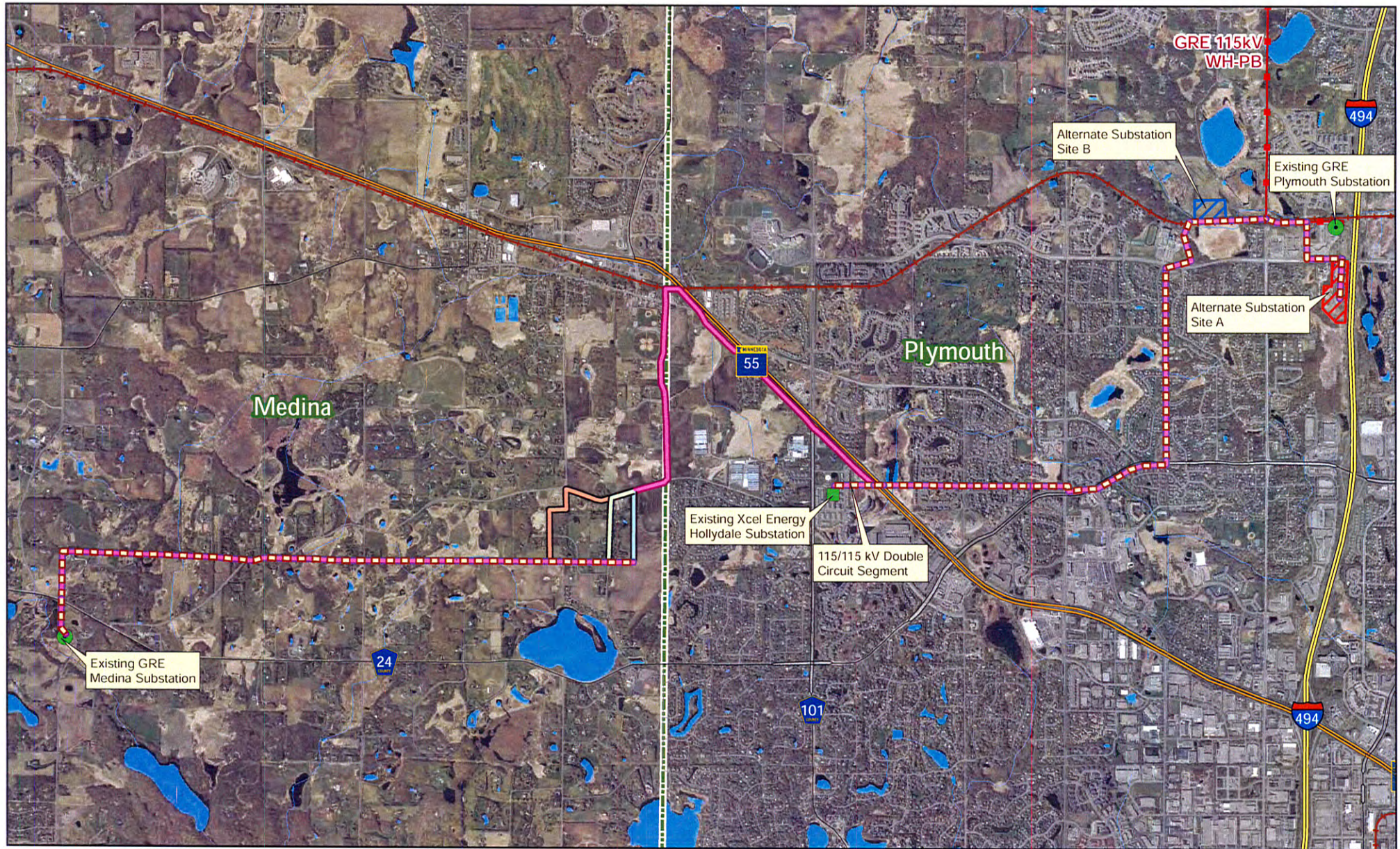














Figure 7

ATF ALTERNATIVE ROUTE E
Hollydale Project



-  Alternative Route Segment F
-  Alternative Route Segment F-1
-  Alternative Route Segment F-2
-  Alternative Route Segment F-3
-  Portion of Alternative Route Shared with Proposed Route
-  Proposed Route
-  Substation Site A
-  Substation Site B
-  Existing Xcel Energy Substation
-  Existing GRE Substation
-  GRE Transmission Line WH-PB
-  Railroad

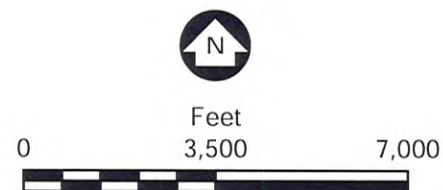


Figure 8

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE F
Hollydale Project



-  Alternative Route Segment G
-  Portion of Alternative Route Shared with Proposed Route
-  Proposed Route
-  Substation Site A
-  Substation Site B
-  Existing Xcel Energy Substation
-  Existing GRE Substation
-  GRE Transmission Line WH-PB
-  Railroad

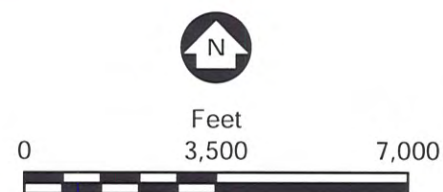
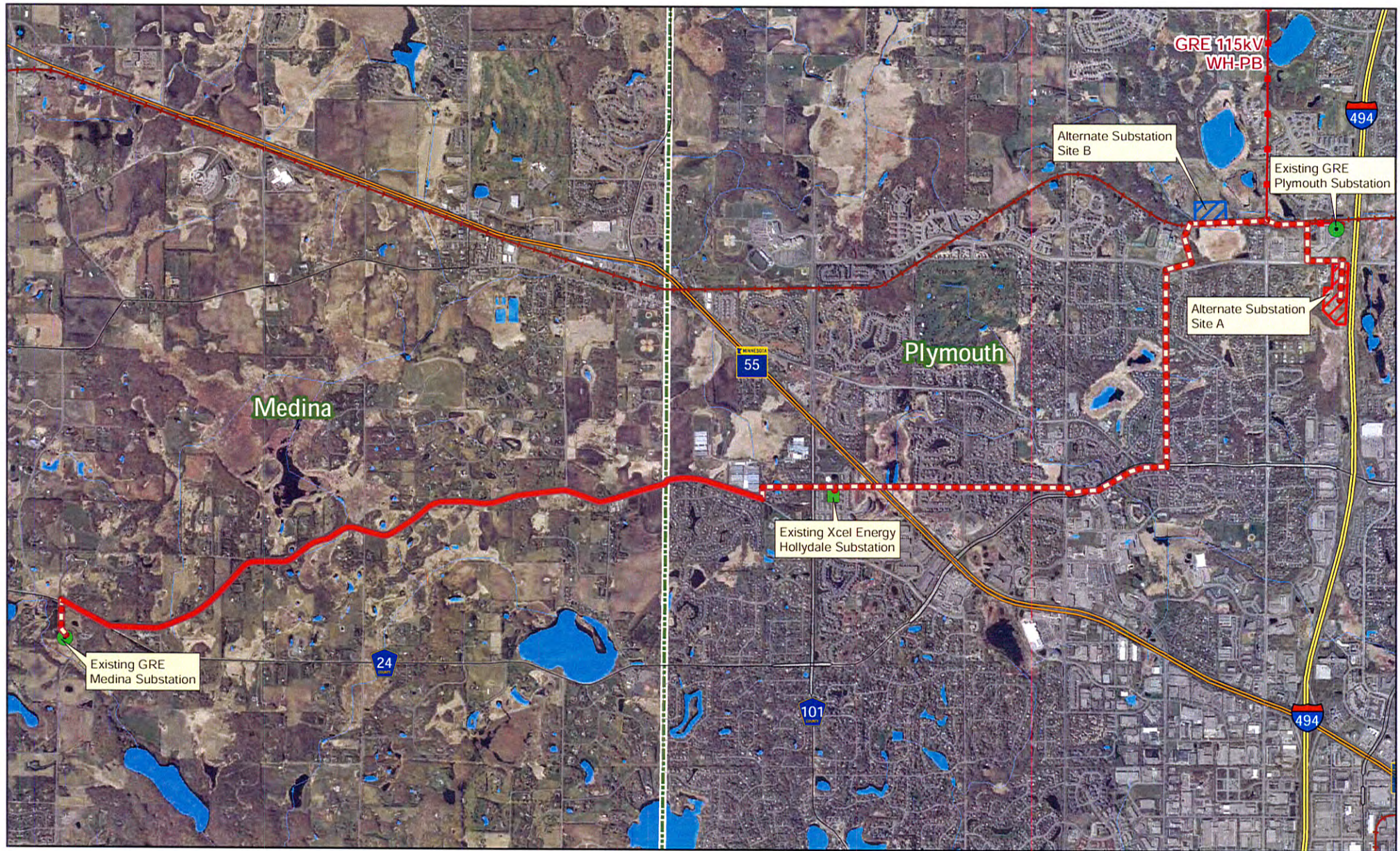











Figure 9

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE G
Hollydale Project





-  Medina Road Alternative Route Segment
-  Portion of Alternative Route Shared with Proposed Route
-  Proposed Route
-  Substation Site A
-  Substation Site B
-  Existing Xcel Energy Substation
-  Existing GRE Substation
-  GRE Transmission Line WH-PB
-  Railroad

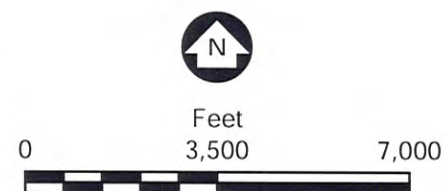
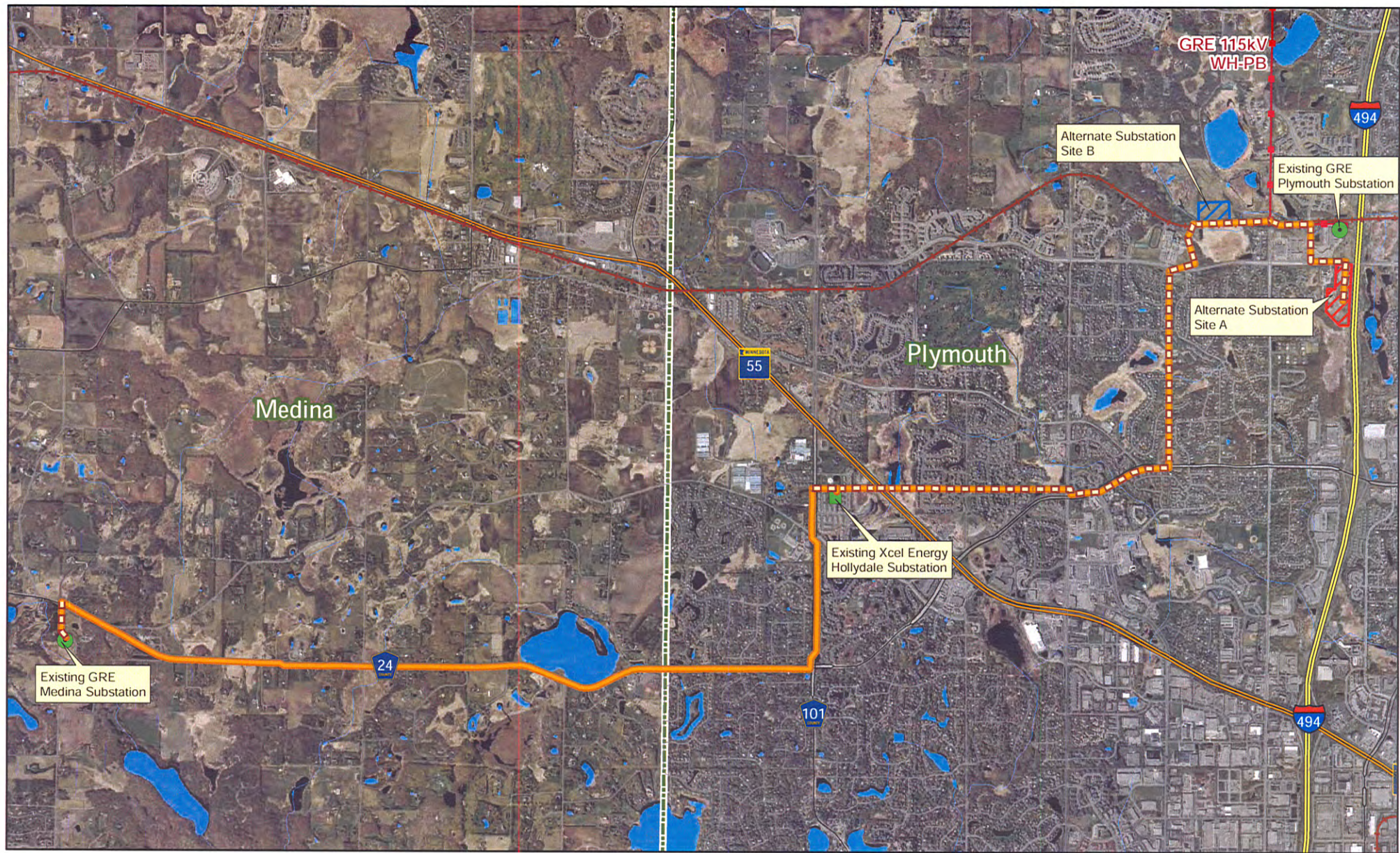


Figure 10

MEDINA ROAD
ALTERNATIVE ROUTE
Hollydale Project



- CSAH 24 Alternative Route Segment
- Portion of Alternative Route Shared with Proposed Route
- Proposed Route
- Substation Site A
- Substation Site B
- Existing Xcel Energy Substation
- Existing GRE Substation
- GRE Transmission Line WH-PB
- Railroad

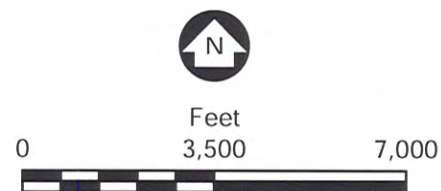
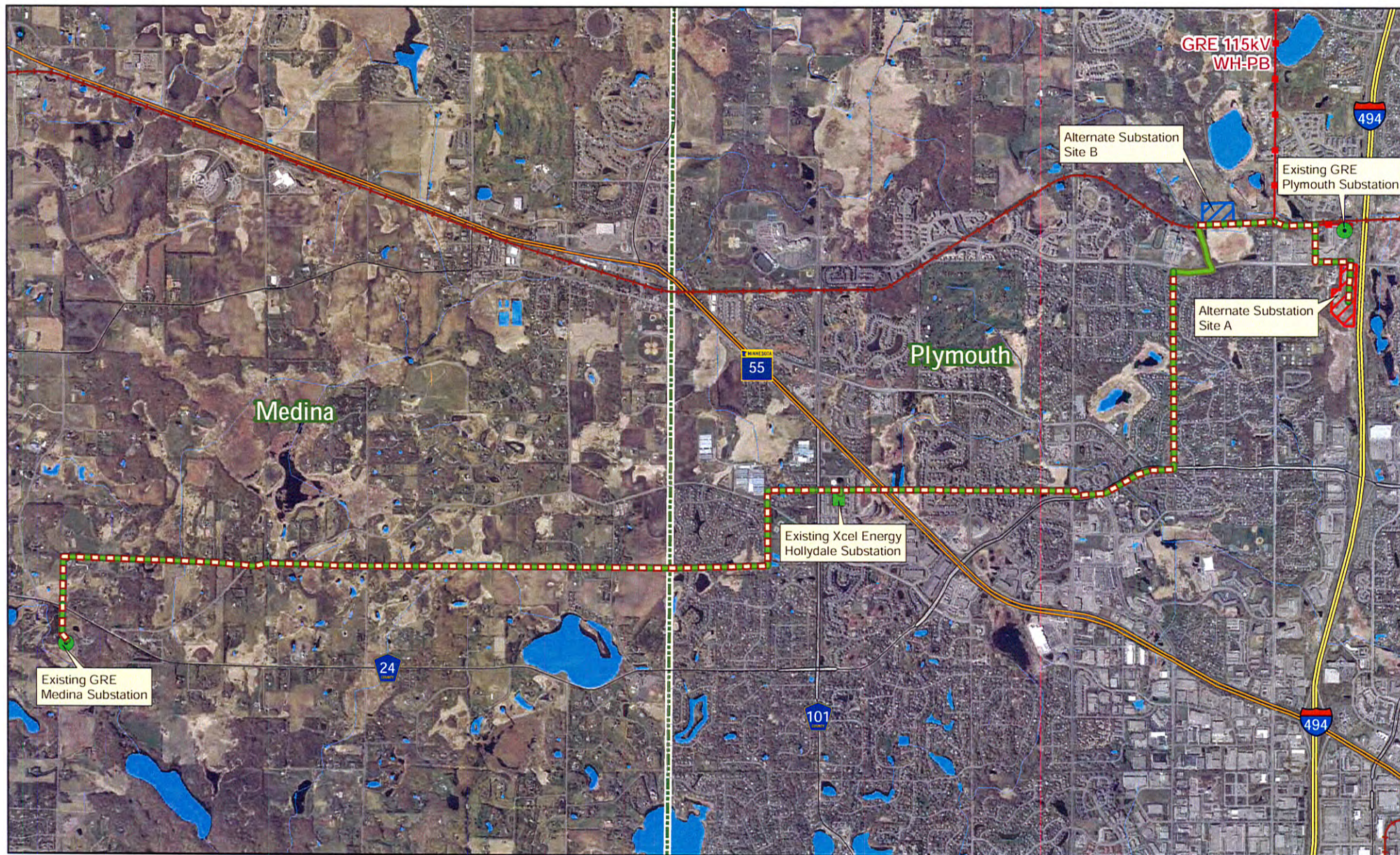











Figure 11

CSAH 24 ALTERNATIVE ROUTE
Hollydale Project





- | | |
|---|---|
|  Providence Academy
Alternative Route Segment |  Existing Xcel Energy Substation |
|  Portion of Alternative Route
Shared with Proposed Route |  Existing GRE Substation |
|  Proposed Route |  GRE Transmission Line WH-PB |
|  Substation Site A |  Railroad |
|  Substation Site B | |

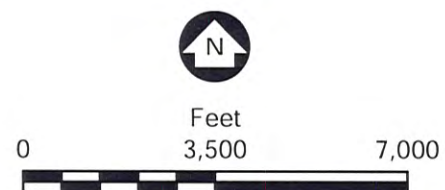


Figure 12

PROVIDENCE ACADEMY
ALTERNATIVE ROUTE
Hollydale Project

