

# Municipal Development Plan







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# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Local Context & Purpose

Woodlands County is located 180 km northwest of Edmonton. The municipality is approximately 7,600 km<sup>2</sup> in area and is located within Treaty 6 and Treaty 8 territories (see **Map 1 — Location**). Woodlands County features a large variety of landscapes including large forest reserves, rivers, resource extraction areas, agriculture, recreational areas, wildlife habitats, and settlement areas.

The Woodlands County MDP is intended to provide a long-term land use planning policy framework for the future growth of the municipality, and achieve the **Municipal Government Act's (MGA's)** land use planning regulations, which are:

1. to achieve the orderly, economical and beneficial development, use of land and patterns of human settlement; and
2. to maintain and improve the quality of the physical environment within which patterns of human settlement are situated in Alberta, without infringing on the rights of individuals for any public interest except to the extent necessary for the overall greater public interest.





The MDP also reflects the contributions of the county residents, will assist Council and Administration in decision making, and will help mitigate conflicts between resource-based industries and other land uses. The MDP addresses hamlet growth and servicing options, the accommodation of industrial commercial development, and the acquisition and use of reserve land for park, environmental and school purposes.

Although this plan is primarily a land use planning document, it also addresses a number of related municipal activities. The intent of the County is to coordinate activities in a manner that encourages consistency with the goals of this plan.

## 1.2 Legislative Context

This plan has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the ***Municipal Government Act R.S.A 2000*** and amendments thereto and is consistent with the Minister of Municipal Affairs Land Use Policies.

A municipal development plan ***must*** address the following:

1. the future land use within the municipality,
2. the manner of and the proposals for future development in the municipality,
3. the co-ordination of land use, future growth patterns and other infrastructure with adjacent municipalities if there is no intermunicipal development plan with respect to those matters in those municipalities,
4. the provision of the required transportation systems either generally or specifically within the municipality and in relation to adjacent municipalities, and
5. the provision of municipal services and facilities either generally or specifically.

A municipal development plan **may** address the following:

1. proposals for the financing and programming of municipal infrastructure,
2. the co-ordination of municipal programs relating to the physical, social and economic development of the municipality,
3. environmental matters within the municipality,
4. the financial resources of the municipality,
5. the economic development of the municipality, and
6. any other matter relating to the physical, social or economic development of the municipality,

Additionally, a municipal development plan **must** have policies:

1. compatible with the subdivision and development regulations to provide guidance on the type and location of land uses adjacent to sour gas facilities, must contain policies respecting the provision of municipal, school, or municipal and school reserves, including but not limited to the need for, amount of and allocation of those reserves and the identification of school requirements in consultation with affected school boards, and
2. respecting the protection of agricultural operations;

and **may** contain statements and policies:

1. regarding the municipality's development constraints, including the results of any development studies and impact analysis, and goals, objectives, targets, planning policies and corporate strategies, and
2. respecting the provision of conservation reserve.

Council recognizes that other provincial and federal statutes will have a role to play in the future development of the county.

In 1998, Woodlands County and the Town of Whitecourt entered into an Intermunicipal Development Plan to coordinate growth in the fringe area surrounding the town's municipal boundary, which was updated in 2013. With continued growth, the Intermunicipal Development Plan and the Municipal Development Plan are reviewed regularly and are consistent with each other pursuant to the Act.



## 1.3 Vision & Principles

The **vision** for this MDP is:

*Woodlands County promotes community spirit and a quality of life that reflects our rural heritage and agricultural way of life. It enhances and protects agricultural land, natural areas, and natural resources. The County provides sustainable levels of services and infrastructure for the benefit of all.*

The MDP vision is supported by nine guiding principles developed to ensure that all aspects of this plan work towards achieving the vision.

The **guiding principles** of the MDP are:

01

**Reconciliation** is an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The County participates in reconciliation by responding to the Calls to Action related to its role as a local government.

02

Better agricultural lands require **protection** from premature fragmentation by subdivision and land use conflict.

03

A **balance** between protecting better agricultural land and capitalizing on the economic opportunities inherent in the County's natural resources is important to promote economic diversity. The County recognizes the agricultural land base and its water systems as resources to the county and its residents.

04

**Agriculture**, including food production, is recognized as a primary economic driver in the County and requires primary consideration in land use decision making. However, carbon sequestration and alternative energy generation are emerging industries that may offer economic opportunity in the County if located away from better agricultural lands.

05

**Sustainable** agricultural practices can preserve and restore critical natural habitats, protect watersheds, improve soil health and water quality, and support rural livelihoods and food security.

06

The complex and sensitive **relationship** between development and natural areas requires careful application of environmental due diligence and sustainable development principles to protect the intrinsic, aesthetic, ecological, and financial value of natural areas in the County.

07

Directing **growth** to existing development areas, including hamlets and named areas, which offer the amenities of daily life, will support the agricultural way of life, support food security through protection of better agricultural land, and demonstrate fiscal responsibility through efficient use of existing infrastructure.

08

**Vibrant** communities have a diversity of engaged citizens whose contributions are recognized, whose values are reflected in meaningful ways, and who are included in community building and decision-making.

09

**Healthy** communities offer equitable access to recreational opportunities, both year-round and seasonal, and including passive and active/programmed options. In the County, proximity to wildlands and Crown Land offers additional recreational adventure options that warrant some level of management to protect sensitive ecosystems and private landowner property rights.





# 2.0

## Reconciliation & Relationship–Building

The County recognizes the ongoing impacts of colonialism on Indigenous Peoples. The County acknowledges that current relationships and perceptions between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people could be improved. The County is committed to learning and working in earnest to strengthen existing connections and build new relationships with its Indigenous neighbours.

### OBJECTIVES

- To strengthen the relationship between the County and local Indigenous Peoples.
- To recognize and promote the mutual benefits of reconciliation.
- To celebrate Indigenous culture.

### POLICIES

- 2.1.1** The County shall pursue reconciliation and collaborative relations with local Indigenous communities.
- 2.1.2** The County should support efforts to celebrate the languages, cultures, and traditions of the Indigenous Peoples of the area.
- 2.1.3** The County should explore opportunities for collaboration and partnerships with local Indigenous communities.



# --- 3.0

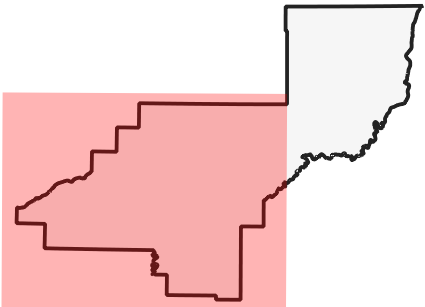
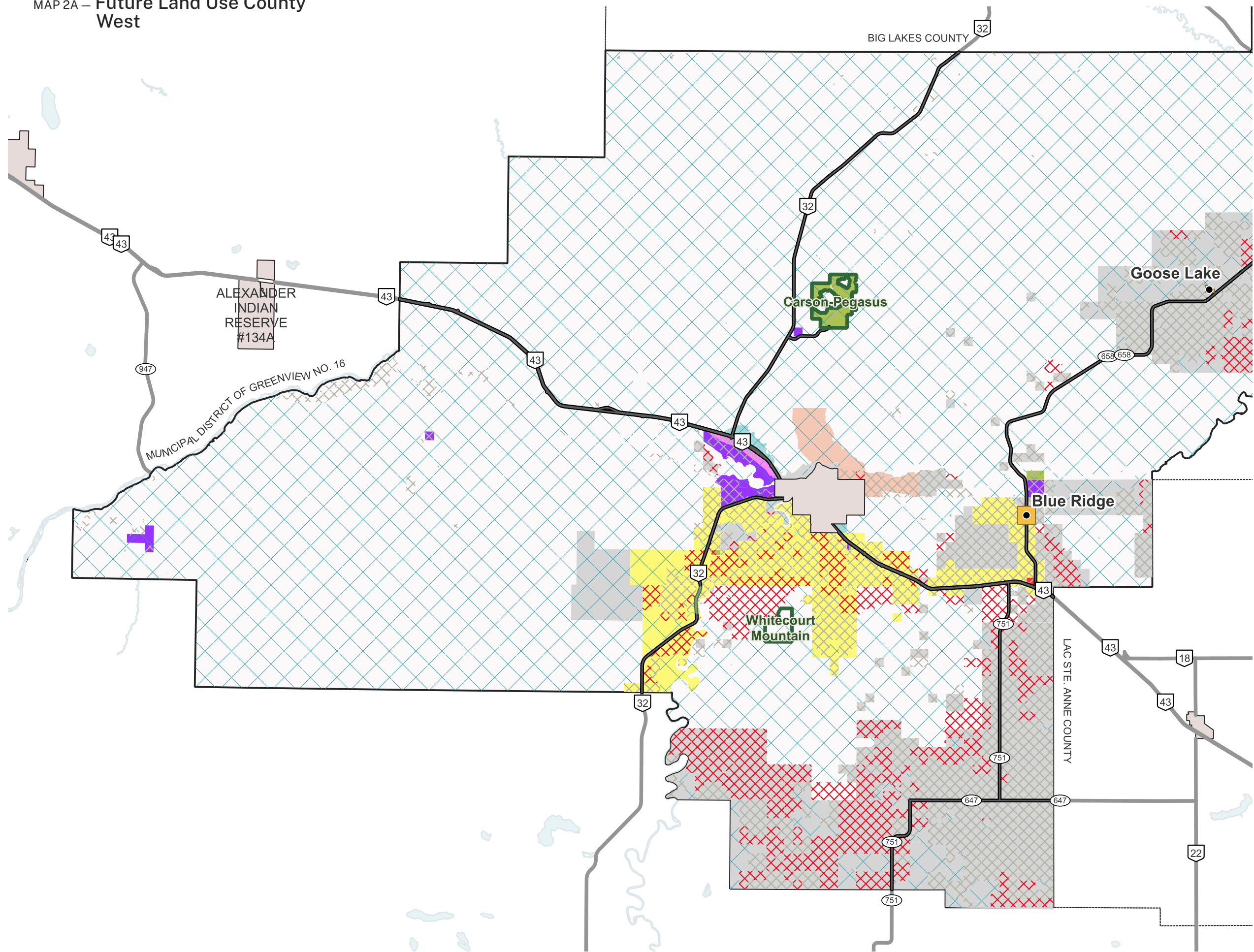
## Future Land Use Concept & Policy Areas

Managing future growth and land use in Woodlands County requires that the existing settlement patterns and current development rights be recognized while providing for new initiatives through policy direction that will encourage growth to be sustainable. It also requires applying development principles and policies that promote efficient use of land, enhance quality of life, protect the natural environment, build relationships, and support communities to be fiscally responsible. The following sections facilitate growth and development by providing the policy framework to achieve the above conditions.

The Future Land Use Concept is depicted in a series of maps, **Maps 2A — 2E**, illustrating broad land use classifications, or designations, assigned across the entire County. The dominant designation is Agricultural, however Residential, Hamlets, Commercial, Industrial and Institutional designations are also applied. The designations give guidance to where certain categories of land uses are best located within the County; however, they do not convey development rights to landowners. Only the land use bylaw can convey development rights through the application of land use districts. In other words, a designation shown on private land in the Future Land Use Concept does not automatically allow or require a landowner to develop.

In addition to the discussion about the broad land use classifications, this section discusses related land uses and topic areas that support the MDP's guiding principles.



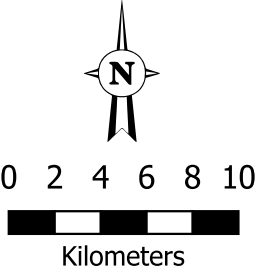


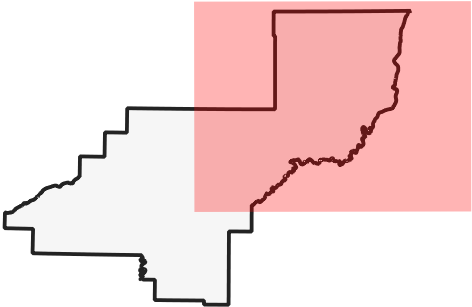
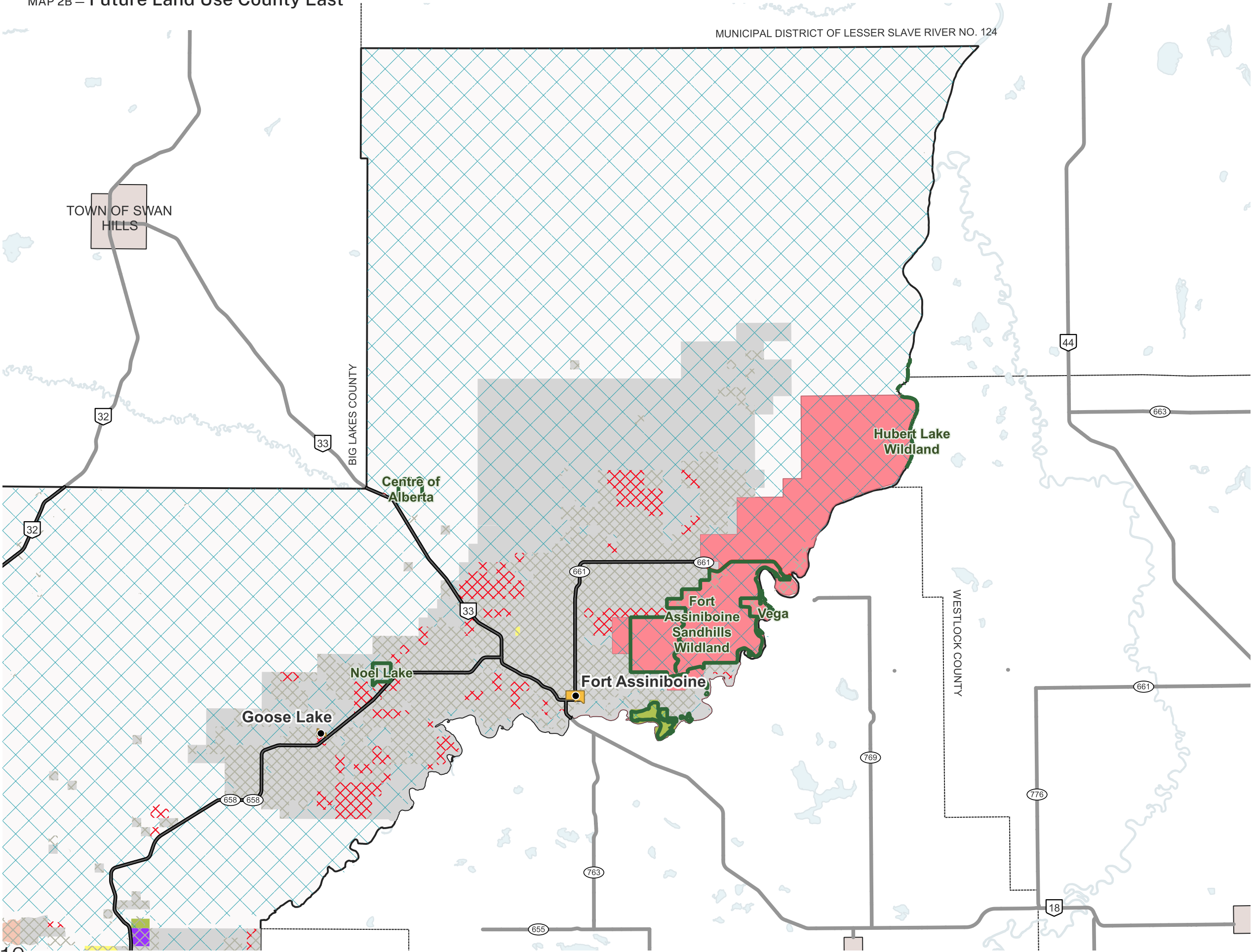
Future Land Use

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Hamlet
- Highway Corridor
- Industrial
- Natural Resource
- Recreational
- Residential
- Urban Reserve

Land Classification

- Crown Land
- Crown Leased Land
- Park
- Parkland
- Parcels



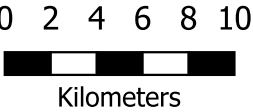


Future Land Use

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Hamlet
- Highway Corridor
- Industrial
- Natural Resource
- Recreational
- Residential
- Urban Reserve

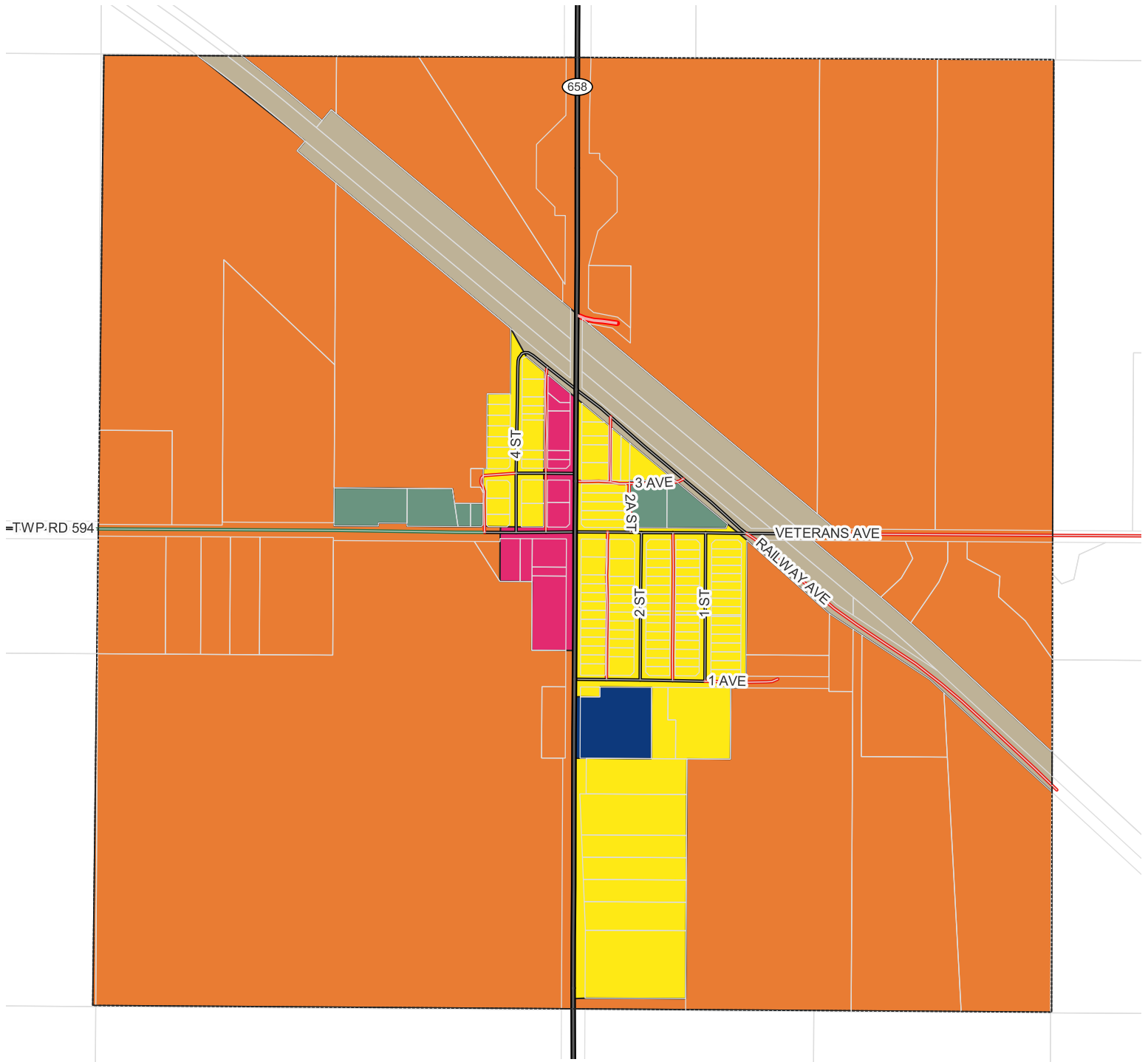
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- Crown Land
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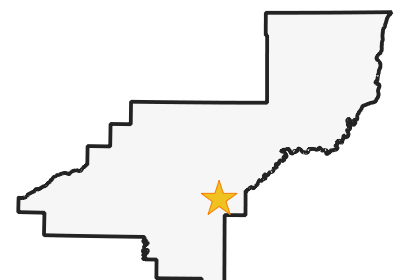
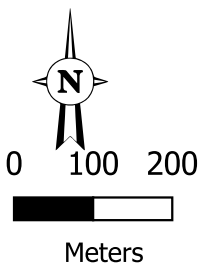


# MAP 2C – Future Land Use – Hamlet of Blue Ridge

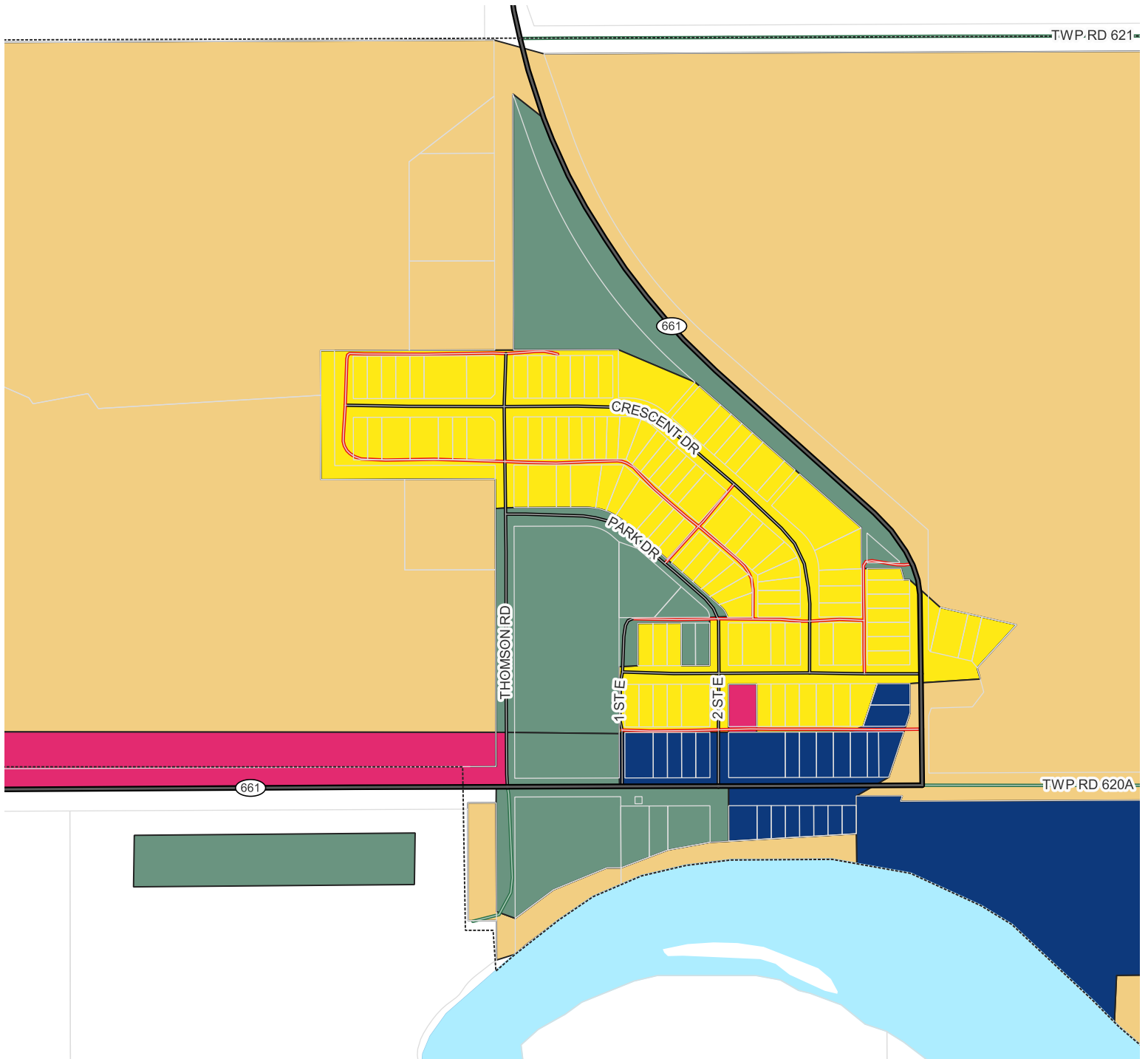


## Legend

- Commercial
- Direct Control
- Institutional/Park
- Residential
- Urban Reserve
- Industrial

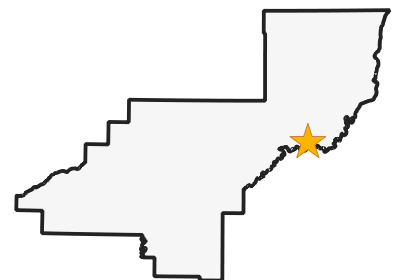
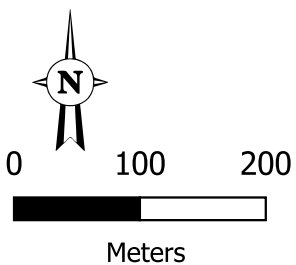


# MAP 2D – Future Land Use – Hamlet of Fort Assiniboine

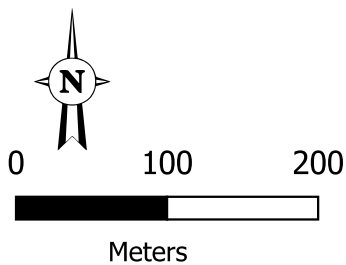
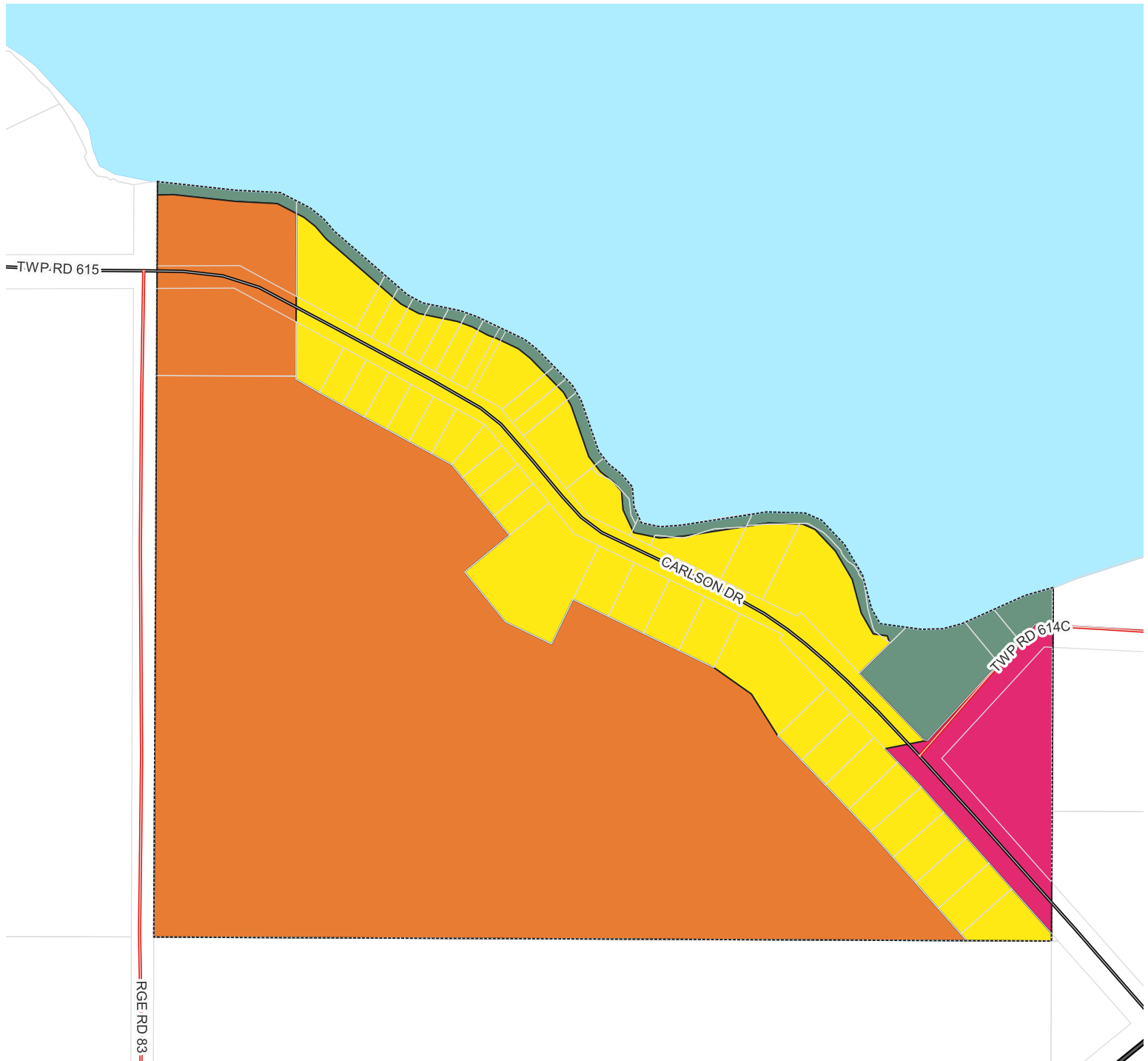


## Legend

- Commercial
- Direct Control
- Institutional/Park
- Reserve
- Residential

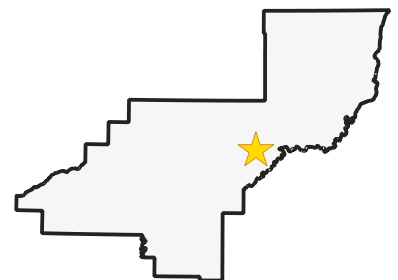


MAP 2E – Future Land Use –  
Hamlet of Goose Lake



Legend

- Commercial
- Institutional/Park
- Residential
- Urban Reserve



## 3.1 Adaptive Development Considerations

The following section discusses approaches for adapting to and mitigating impacts or constraints on development, such as the risk of wildfire, flooding, and steep or unstable slopes.

### **FireSmart & Fire Prevention**

The county is a large rural municipality with a vast forest reserve. Within the county is a significant amount of development that is in forested areas and in some cases, too far away from emergency services that can effectively service the development when required.

The County and Developers should apply FireSmart techniques and refer to and apply the recommendations and mitigation strategies found in the most recent version of the Woodlands County Wildfire Mitigation Strategy.

### **Flood Prone Lands**

The county includes a number of flood prone areas within the flood plain and flood fringe of the Athabasca River, McLeod River and the Freeman River. The affects of climate change may influence the frequency and severity of flood events in the future, and development decisions should take into consideration approaches to avoid flood damage to structures.

### **Steep Slopes**

Steep slopes may be suitable for development with appropriate risk mitigation measures. The suitability of steep slopes for development will need to be determined by a qualified professional through the completion of an in-field analysis and subsequent report, such as a geotechnical analysis report.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To reduce the risk of property damage, loss of life and loss of habitat that can result from wildfires in areas that are too remote to be effectively serviced by public emergency response services.
- To reduce the risk of flood damage to development.
- To reduce the risk associated with developing in areas with steep slopes or with unstable soil conditions.

## POLICIES

### General

- 3.1.1** The County shall require that subdivision and development proposals that involve hazard lands as defined by the **MGA** be supported by a geotechnical assessment conducted by a qualified professional that demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the County, that slopes are stable, flood hazard areas are defined, safe building elevations exist and the potential for near surface groundwater, flood damage or erosion to existing or new developments is mitigated.
- 3.1.2** The County may require the hazard lands as defined by the **MGA** are designated at the time of subdivision as environmental reserve pursuant to the **MGA**.

### FireSmart & Fire Prevention

- 3.1.3** The County may obtain input from Alberta Environment & Protected Areas, or its successor, and the local fire department when evaluating development and subdivision proposals.
- 3.1.4** The County may require the Developer to provide a Fire Hazard Assessment and plan to address wildfire mitigation guidelines as outlined in the FireSmart program.
- 3.1.5** The County shall consider the recommendations of the most recent Woodlands County Wildfire Mitigation Strategy, when evaluating development and subdivision proposals and when preparing land management plans.
- 3.1.6** The County shall require that commercial and industrial development proposing to locate in areas too remote to be effectively serviced by public emergency response services to provide on-site fire fighting supports, such as ponds, firewater cisterns, dry fire suppression systems, and the like.
- 3.1.7** The County shall encourage subdivision and/or development practices within hamlets, settlements, and residential subdivisions that are located within the forested areas to minimize the potential for wildfire damage through:
- a. the provision of a fire guard which shall serve as a buffer between communities and the surrounding forested area.
  - b. the development of walking trails between residential developments and surrounding forested lands which may be used in an emergency for emergency personnel access.



- c. consideration of the following as conditions of approval for residential development in remote areas that are too remote to be serviced by existing firefighting services. These include, but are not limited to:
  - i. the provision of an adequate water supply for firefighting purposes;
  - ii. the use of fire-resistant building methods;
  - iii. the installation of spark arrestors on all chimneys; and
  - iv. the removal of trees, shrubs and fine fuels in accordance with FireSmart practices.

**3.1.8** The County shall encourage the provision of an additional emergency access to developments with limited primary access or a single access road.

**3.1.9** The County shall discourage the location of development in remote areas that, in the opinion of the County, may be deemed an excessive wildfire hazard.

### **Flood Prone Lands**

**3.1.10** The County may consider flood prone lands for extensive agriculture, public works, or passive recreational purposes, such as birding, walking trails, etc. Other development in flood prone lands shall be prohibited unless adequate flood proofing measures, as recommended by a qualified professional, are adopted.

**3.1.11** The County may support in-filling of existing subdivisions on flood prone lands providing that the proposed development conforms to the flood-proofing standards approved by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the infill is outside of the flood way and is supported by an engineering study identifying the suitability of the site for development and/or mitigation measures.

**3.1.12** The County shall not permit any permanent structures within the 1:100-year flood hazard of any river, stream or lake shore unless flood proofing techniques are applied as recommended by a qualified professional in a supporting technical analysis report, such as a geotechnical assessment or hydrogeological assessment report.

- 3.1.13** The County shall require that all roads and approaches be built to a 1:100-year design flood level so that roads and accesses within flood prone areas will be sufficient for travel in the event of a flood.
- 3.1.14** The Developer shall determine by way of an in-field survey and supporting technical analysis by way of geotechnical and/or hydrological investigation whether adequate building sites exist on land that may be subject to flooding and what additional structural requirements may be required to support construction. Further, all primary buildings shall be located a minimum of 0.5 m (1.64 ft.) above the flood plain level.

### **Steep Slopes**

- 3.1.15** The County shall require that a development proposed within 30 m of the top-of-bank, unless a lesser distance is specified within a land use district in the Land Use Bylaw, of a water body be supported by engineering and geotechnical analyses conducted by qualified persons addressing but not limited to flood plain and bank stability. Site specific conditions may indicate additional development setbacks.
- 3.1.16** The County shall require the Developer to provide a geotechnical study for any permanent structure, as determined by the Development Authority, on slopes greater than 15% and to implement any measures required by the study to address slope stability.
- 3.1.17** The County may require that the Developer, in the case of structural development proposal, identify soil type during preliminary planning and, if required, have a geotechnical assessment prepared that identifies measures to mitigate any substandard soils to ensure a safe building site.

## 3.2 Agricultural

The pursuit of agricultural activities is a prime land use in the county that continues to play an important role in the economy and character of the municipality. The purpose of this section is to provide a set of objectives and policies intended to conserve existing agricultural areas, protect better agricultural lands from incompatible non-agricultural uses, and to identify areas for future agricultural expansion. Although agricultural practices are essential to the County's economic viability, they can change the existing state of the land, which may impact a sensitive landscape. Therefore, negative impacts on the environment resulting from agricultural practices need to be mitigated.

### Right to Farm

Applicants proposing a country residential subdivision in an agricultural district must recognize that, because of the "right to farm", in accordance with the ***Agricultural Operation Practices Act RSA 2000, c. A-7***, or its successor, the primary purpose of Agricultural designation is to support agriculture and that agricultural operations have precedence over any other land use.

### Soils & Better Agricultural Land

The county is generally limited for field crops due to a limited amount of land suitable for crop production. The constraints that exist for field crops, however, have minimal impact on the production of livestock and forage crops. For this reason, it is important to the county to preserve certain areas of better agricultural land for long term agricultural use.

In the MDP, better agricultural land is defined as having a Farmland Assessment Value (FAV) of \$114.46 or greater as assessed by the County's assessment department. Better agricultural land's highest and best use is for agricultural pursuits and therefore subdivision and other land uses which could fragment the land or otherwise make it more challenging to farm are not supported. Lands with a FAV of \$114.45 or less may be suitable for certain non-agricultural uses.

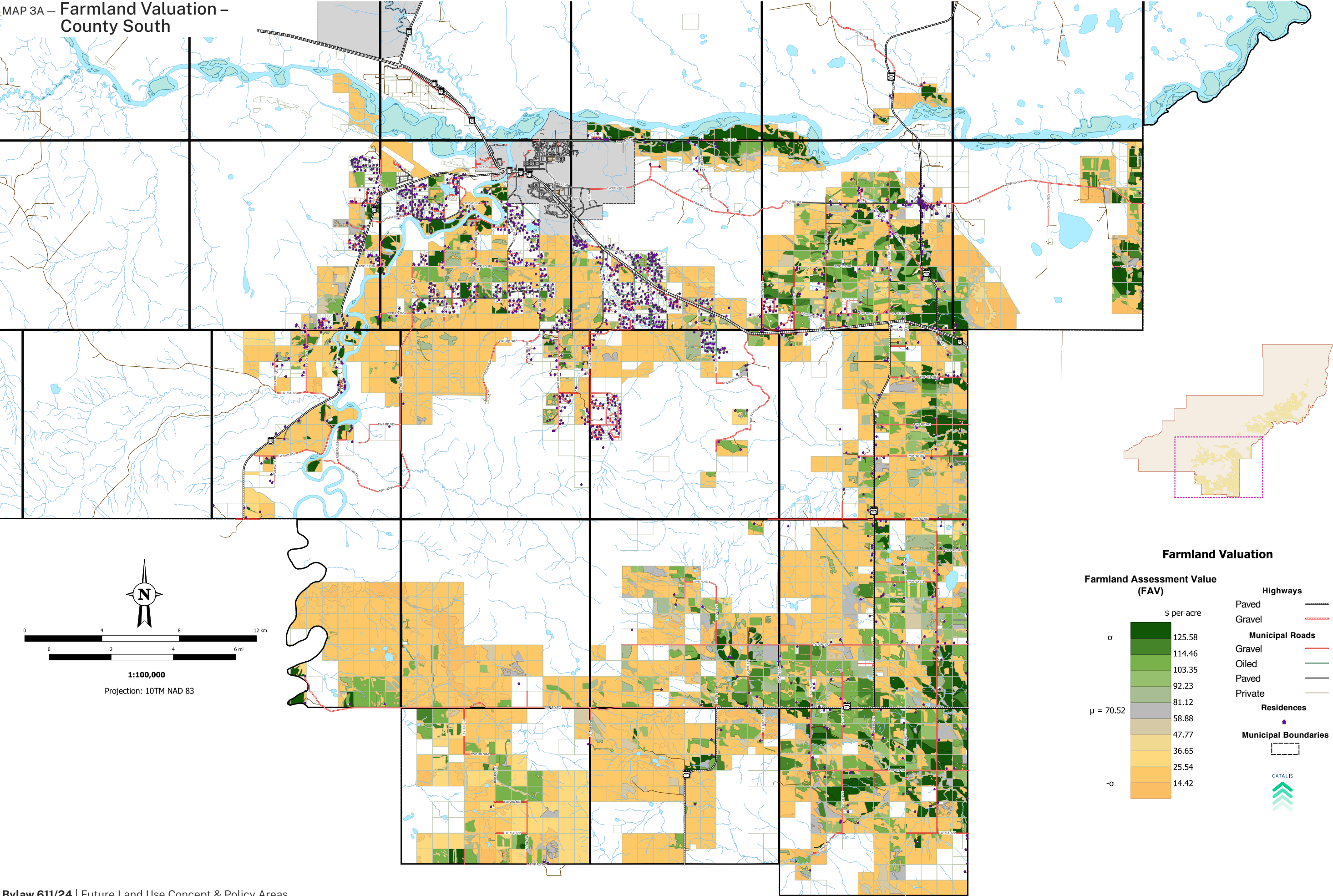
As shown on **Maps 3A – 3B Farmland Assessment Value**, which is further defined in **Appendix A**, the lands within the county are broadly shown as being better agricultural land or not. For specific parcel classifications, see the assessment report for the parcel. Parcels with 65% or more land with a FAV of \$114.46 are considered as being better agricultural land.

### Grazing Lands

As shown on **Map 4 – Crown-Owned Lease Land**, grazing lease can be found on Crown-owned land, and in some areas, these leases are bounded by privately-owned lands which are used for agricultural or country residential purposes.

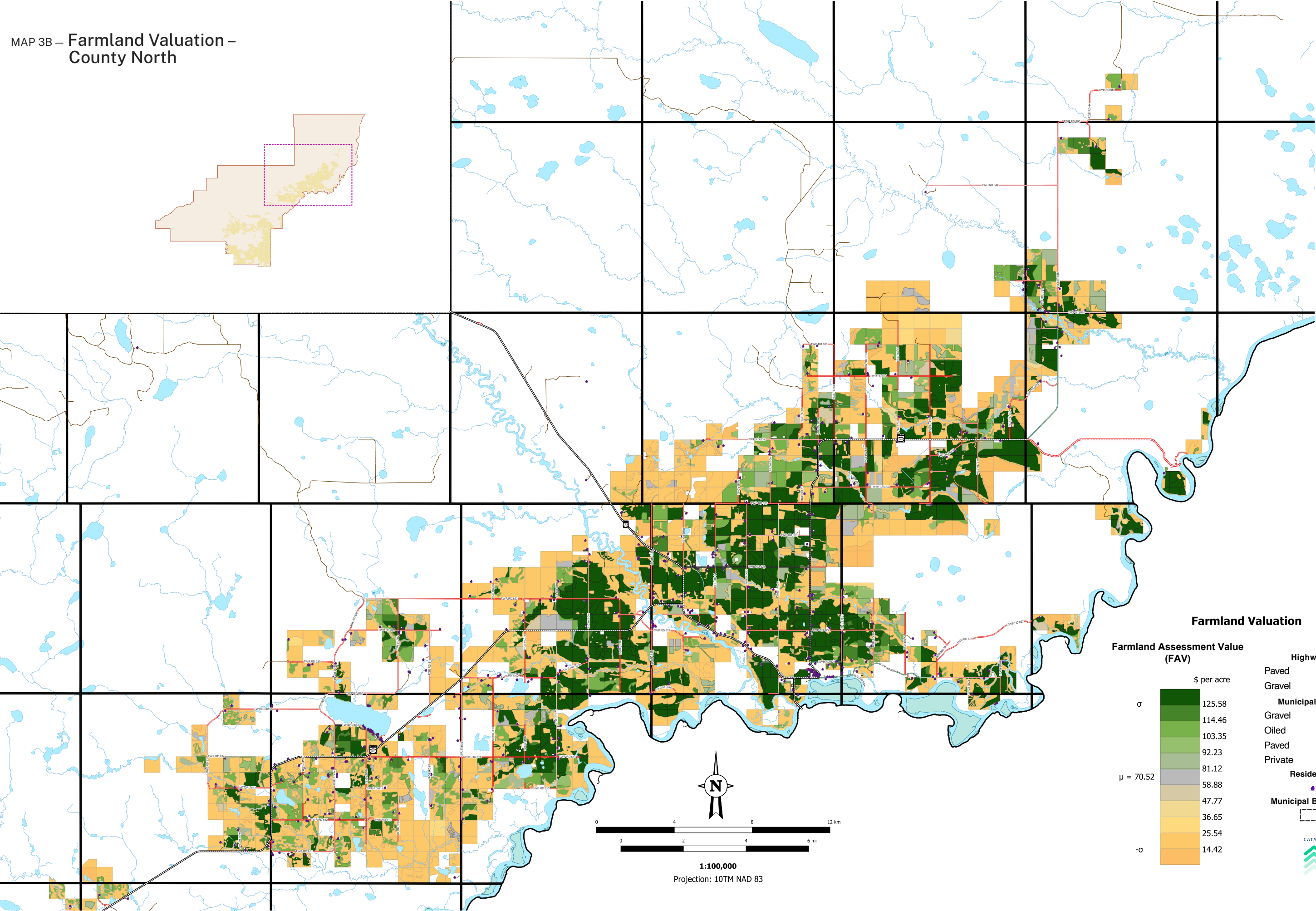
Extensive agriculture in the form of cattle farming is a very important aspect of the local economy. It is important to ensure that new development in the plan area is conducted with consideration to the agricultural economy so that conflicts can be minimized.

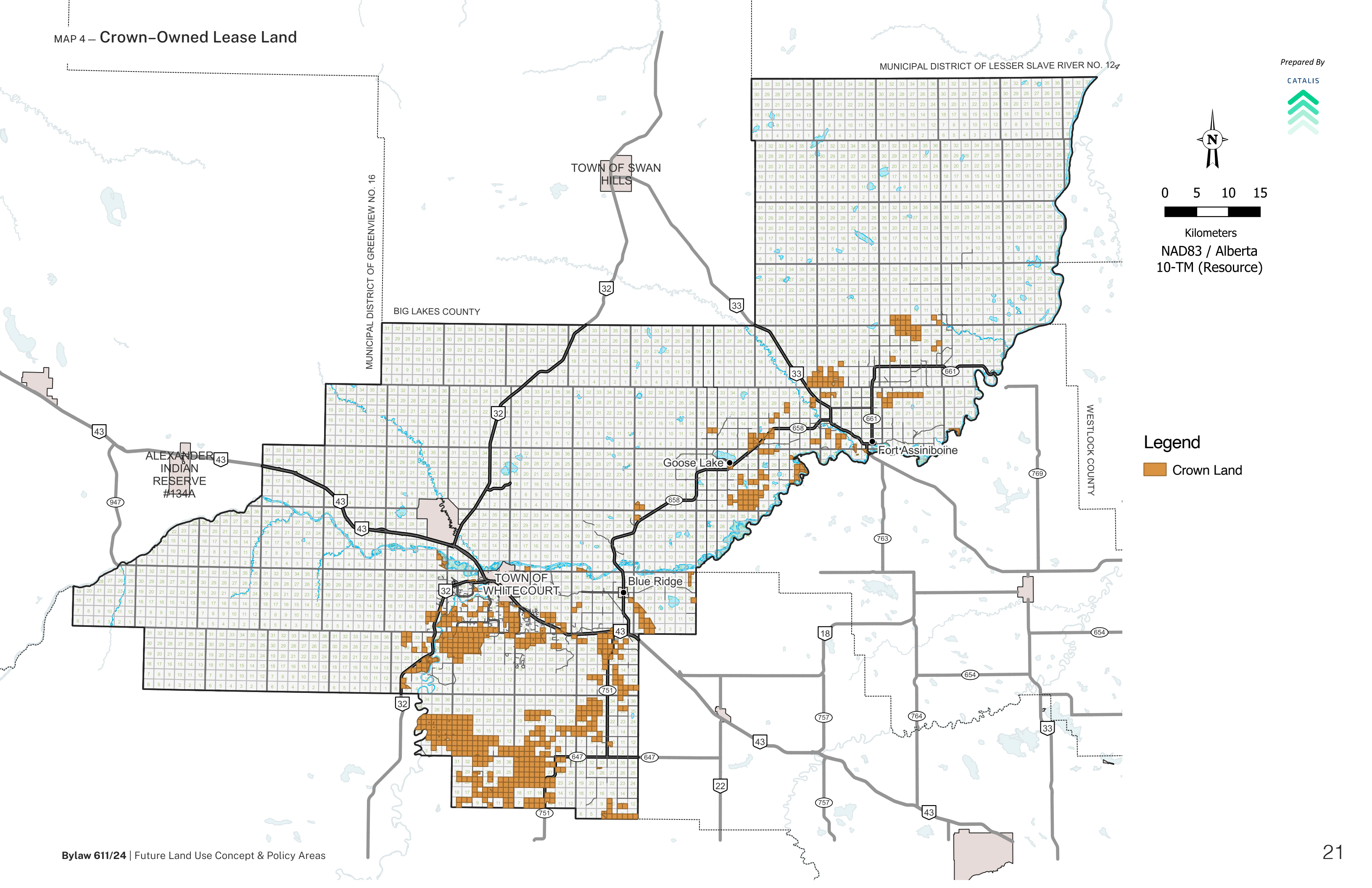
MAP 3A – Farmland Valuation –  
County South





MAP 3B – Farmland Valuation –  
County North





Prepared By



0 5 10 15

Kilometers  
NAD83 / Alberta  
10-TM (Resource)

Legend

 Crown Land





## **Agricultural Expansion**

The County recognizes that there are a number of constraints which must be considered when examining the potential for agricultural expansion. Among these constraints to agricultural expansion, but not limited to, are the following:

- the disruption to lands which may be environmentally sensitive, or which may affect wildlife management areas;
- the loss of land which may have a potential for forestry or private woodlot development;
- the limitation of expansion into the Green Area which encompasses a very large portion of the county; and
- the cost of providing municipal services to the proposed development area, such as roadway maintenance.

## **Confined Feeding Operations**

As of January 1, 2002, the mandate of the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) was expanded to assume the responsibility for siting, monitoring, and enforcing new and expanding Confined Feeding Operations (CFOs). Confined Feeding Operations and manure storage facilities for which approval is required are not regulated by this plan. Rather, they are regulated through the ***Agricultural Operations Practices Act (AOPA)***.

Although the NRCB has now assumed responsibility for CFOs, the municipality will continue to play a key role in siting new and expanding existing CFOs. As such, municipalities are mandated to develop land use plans to identify where new and expanding CFOs would not be compatible with current or future land uses. The municipal requirements and recommendations below are important considerations in NRCB decisions for siting and expanding CFOs.

The following areas within the County are restricted from having new or expanded CFO developments. Each area has been graphically defined on **Map 5 – Confined Feeding Operations – Restricted Areas**.

- **Urban Fringe** – The county will encourage development in the urban fringe areas of towns and hamlets that will complement the urban community. Confined Feed Operations (CFO) will be prohibited in urban fringe areas.
- **Residential** – In order to minimize the conflict between areas of country residential growth and confined feeding operations, all areas identified as country residential within the Land Use Bylaw, the Town of Whitecourt and Woodlands County Intermunicipal Development Plan, and the County Municipal Development Plan have been restricted from new or expanding CFO development. A buffer shall also be added, as per the Act, around these residential areas to help minimize any potential conflicts.

- **Parks and Open Space** – In order to promote and accommodate recreation and tourism while discouraging development that might have an adverse impact on these lands, the county will restrict all CFO development within, and on the fringe of, parks and wild land areas.
- **Rivers, Creeks and Drainage Basins** – To help ensure the health of residents of Woodlands County and the groundwater aquifer, it is important that the potential for pollutants to enter rivers, creeks and drainage basins is kept to a minimum. **Map 5 – Confined Feeding Operations – Restricted Areas** identifies all significant rivers, creeks, floodways and drainage basins within the county, and restricts new or expanding CFO developments from locating adjacent to these areas, as per the Act.
- **Lakes** – Woodlands County has numerous lakes within its borders, and in order to protect the health of the lake ecosystems, residents and the groundwater aquifer, these lakes shall be buffered from CFO. In addition to the environmental concerns, the lakes are also a source of tourism and recreation, and without protection it will be difficult to maintain the long-term viability of these sectors. **Map 5 – Confined Feeding Operations – Restricted Areas** attempts to identify significant water bodies within the county and restricts new or expanding CFO developments from locating adjacent to these areas, as per the Act.
- **Environmentally Sensitive Areas** – Several areas within the county have been designated as "environmentally sensitive". These areas are a combination of wildlife habitats and wetlands. CFO development in and around these areas could have an adverse impact on their viability; therefore, it is important that these lands are managed responsibly. One measure the County is taking to protect these areas is preventing new and expanding CFO development within and adjacent to these lands.
- **Risk of Groundwater Contamination** – The County had a regional groundwater assessment of potable groundwater study completed by the **Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA)** in 2002. This report outlined areas within the study region that had medium to very high risks of groundwater contamination. To protect the groundwater of the region, the county is restricting the development of new or expanding CFOs within areas of high to very high risk. Development of new or expanding CFOs in areas of medium risk will be considered, provided that a groundwater assessment indicates that there is adequate water supply to sustain the operation and that there is no risk of groundwater contamination.

## OBJECTIVES

- To protect the right to farm on agricultural land and minimize the impacts of non-agricultural uses on agricultural lands.



- To protect, conserve, and enhance agricultural development and uses on lands classified as “better agricultural land.”
- To encourage the growth and expansion of value added agricultural or industrial agricultural uses such as, but not limited to, food processing, hemp processing, mead production, etc., but which does not include uses that takes agricultural land out of production, such as solar farms.
- To encourage the improvement of vacant and unimproved pasture lands for agricultural expansion.
- To minimize the conflict between new or expanding CFOs and incompatible land uses.
- To provide opportunities for new or expanding CFOs.
- To provide local land use and infrastructure guidance to the NRCB in consideration of applications for new or expanding CFOs.
- To mitigate environmental impacts arising from agricultural practices.

## POLICIES

### General

- 3.2.1** The County shall encourage the maintenance of the entire quarter-section as a basic farming unit.
- 3.2.2** The County shall encourage value-added agricultural pursuits where appropriate.
- 3.2.3** The County shall endeavor to protect land suitable for field crops, grazing and forage crops to support long term agricultural use.

### Right to Farm

- 3.2.4** The County shall ensure that non-agricultural uses respect the existing agricultural operations, including their hours of operation, the odours and noises emanating from an agricultural operation and traffic movements.

### Soils & Better Agricultural Land

- 3.2.5** The County shall define ‘better agricultural land’ as land having a Farmland Assessment Value (FAV) of \$114.46 or greater as assessed by the County’s assessment department. Further, parcels with 65% or more land with a FAV of \$114.46 or greater are considered ‘better agricultural land.’

- 3.2.6** The County shall not consider cut-off parcels and fragmented parcels which are determined to be unsuitable for extensive agriculture due to size, slope, configuration, or surrounding land use as better agricultural land.
- 3.2.7** The County shall reserve better agricultural land for agricultural purposes over other land uses.
- 3.2.8** The County shall limit the development of better agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes to:
- a. agricultural industries which directly benefit and serve the surrounding agricultural area;
  - b. natural resource extraction industries;
  - c. public and quasi-public uses;
  - d. farm accessory uses and farm home occupations; and
  - e. small scale commercial operations directly related to or that support the agriculture sector.
- 3.2.9** The County shall not support the subdivision of better agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes.
- 3.2.10** The County shall discourage fragmentation of better agricultural land by directing non-agricultural subdivision proposals to lower-quality agricultural land.
- 3.2.11** The Development Authority shall consider the following when reviewing non-agricultural land use proposals in agricultural areas:
- a. the potential for the creation of weed problems;
  - b. conflicts between the proposed use and the sights, sounds, odours, and other characteristics of the agricultural community, and
  - c. conflicts over the use of municipal roads.
- 3.2.12** The County shall encourage non-agricultural land uses to locate or be concentrated away from areas of higher agricultural potential.
- 3.2.13** The County shall prohibit the development of intensive agricultural land uses in areas identified for urban expansion.



## **Agricultural Expansion**

- 3.2.14** The County shall work together with the Province of Alberta to review areas where it is considered feasible to convert Crown Land to patented land for agricultural purposes.
- 3.2.15** The County shall encourage the expansion of agricultural land where infrastructure can be provided in an economical and efficient manner.
- 3.2.16** The county shall encourage the conversion of unimproved land for agricultural expansion where the conversion will not adversely impact the natural environment or adjacent land uses.

## **Confined Feeding Operations**

- 3.2.17** The County shall, in the event of an application to the NRCB regarding a Confined Feed Operation, in the context of a recommendation to the NRCB, provide the comments that might constitute conditions to apply to the application for development. These may include but are not limited to the following:
- a. construct or pay for the construction of a road required to give access to the development,
  - b. provide or upgrade any access that might be required;
  - c. install or pay for the installation of public utilities, other than telecommunications systems or works, that are necessary to serve the development;
  - d. construct or pay for the construction of:
    - i. off-street or other parking facilities, and
    - ii. loading and unloading facilities;
  - e. pay an off-site levy or redevelopment levy; and
  - f. provide security to ensure that the terms of the agreement under this section are carried out.
- 3.2.18** The County may recommend other conditions to the NRCB specific to the details of any individual application for a new or expanded CFO, such as confirmation of potential for groundwater contamination.

## Environment

- 3.2.19** The County shall promote land and environmental stewardship in agricultural areas to reduce impacts on existing natural systems, including natural grassland and wetland areas.

## 3.3 Residential

Residential development in the county encompasses many forms including multiple parcel country residential, single lot rural residential (including farmsteads), and manufactured home developments.

The demand for traditional county residential subdivisions as a lifestyle option is expected to remain strong. However, traditional subdivisions with on-site services are becoming increasingly unsustainable, particularly with respect to water supply, groundwater contamination from private sewage systems and long-term road maintenance. There are areas in Woodlands County with physical limitations that may be appropriate for the consideration of conservation subdivision design and compact rural residential development. Contemporary planning principles advocate for using creative, more compact land-use planning techniques to preserve open space and agricultural land.

Although some areas of the county can support an increase in traditional acreage type development, more compact subdivision design should be considered in designing new county residential subdivision.

The policies below give guidance to residential subdivision and development outside of hamlets.

### OBJECTIVES

- To ensure residential subdivision and development occur in an orderly manner that allow for efficient and effective servicing.
- To respond to changing environmental and social needs of the community through thoughtful rural residential subdivision design.
- To direct residential subdivision and development to areas of the county less suitable for agricultural production.
- To minimize land use conflicts between residential development and other land uses.
- To allow for an additional residence(s) on a parcel in accordance with the Land Use Bylaw.

## POLICIES

### General

- 3.3.1** The County shall encourage country residential developments to locate in areas where municipal services can be effectively provided by the municipality.
- 3.3.2** The County shall encourage on-site water supply or the provision of access to rivers and other water sources that can aid in residential firefighting.
- 3.3.3** The County shall consider transportation access, including for school busses, for all residential subdivision applications.
- 3.3.4** The County shall require evidence of the following prior to issuing subdivision or development approval:
- a. suitable on-site potable water source and sewage disposal system;
  - b. servicing options that do not negatively impact groundwater;
  - c. legal access to the satisfaction of the County;
  - d. the site is suitable for the proposed residential use;
  - e. there is an adequate building site; and
  - f. the proposal conforms to other land use planning criteria as specified by the Subdivision and Development Approving Authority.
- 3.3.5** The County should encourage lot infilling and development of existing country residential areas prior to designating additional land for country residential development, and support more compact rural residential subdivision design that considers:
- use of environmentally friendly construction materials that conform to the Alberta Safety Codes Act, as amended,
  - re-use or recycling of potable water and greywater within the development,
  - advanced treatment and disposal of wastewater within a development,

- site development standards that minimize the development footprint through:
  - building on lower quality agricultural land,
  - use of innovative road design and construction standards,
  - use of wet ponds for storm water retention, and
  - use of environmental reserve easements and restrictive covenants as a means to protect significant natural areas,
- incorporation of energy efficiency through application of improved construction techniques, materials used, and use of alternative energy systems,
- encouragement of more efficient residential subdivision design,
- use of communal water and sanitary sewer systems,
- use of green spaces and buffering techniques to maintain rural separation and minimize visual impact of the residential development from surrounding uses, and
- offering significant green space amenities for residents in lieu of larger acreage lot sizes; compact serviced subdivisions also meet the increasing demand for rural living but with reliable sewer and water services and reduced house and yard maintenance.

**3.3.6** The County shall not allow new residential development within the minimum separation distance of an existing, approved confined feeding operation, industrial, or resource extraction development.

**3.3.7** The County should not allow new residential development in areas where the development would have a significant adverse impact on surrounding land uses or natural environment.

## **Parcel Density**

- 3.3.8** The maximum parcel density for Agricultural parcels with a Farmland Assessment Value of \$114.46 or greater is EITHER one (1), being the first parcel out of an existing, unsubdivided quarter section comprising the homestead, OR two (2) comprising two approximately 32 ha parcels from a previously unsubdivided quarter section.
- 3.3.9** The maximum parcel density for Agricultural parcels with a Farmland Assessment Value of \$114.45 or less is four (4), consisting of two (2) approximately 32 ha parcels AND one 2 ha rural residential parcel on each of the 32 ha parcels to facilitate either the subdivision out of an existing homestead or the development of a new home.
- 3.3.10** The County shall not include subdivisions for public use such as community halls, cemeteries, fair grounds, municipal reserve, municipal and school reserve, school reserve and environmental reserve lots in parcel density calculations.

## **Dwelling Density**

- 3.3.11** The County shall limit the number of dwellings on a parcel to one, unless otherwise allowed for in the Land Use Bylaw.

## **Rural Residential**

- 3.3.12** The County shall approve the subdivision of a farmstead from an unsubdivided quarter section provided it has a satisfactory legal access, an adequate building site, and can be supplied with the necessary on-site and municipal services.
- 3.3.13** The County shall review proposals for an abandoned farmstead separation with consideration of if there is a satisfactory legal access, an adequate building site, and if it can be supplied with the necessary on-site and municipal services.
- 3.3.14** The County shall encourage farmstead/abandoned farmstead separations to be kept to a minimum size necessary to accommodate the proposed use, and where practical, parcel size should not exceed 2 ha in area.
- 3.3.15** The County should consider required private sewage disposal setbacks, existing shelterbelts, accessory buildings, and other features that may complement the proposed use if included within the proposed subdivision when reviewing proposals for a farmstead/abandoned farmstead separation.

- 3.3.16** The County shall direct applicants of undeveloped single parcel rural residential subdivision to locate the proposed parcel on that portion of the quarter-section where there is an adequate building site, a suitable on-site potable water source and sewage disposal system, satisfactory access to the local road network, and the proposed subdivision shall have minimal impact on surrounding agricultural lands.
- 3.3.17** The County may consider, at the discretion of the Development Authority, the development of minor agricultural uses, commercial, or industrial storage as secondary uses on large rural residential parcels created prior to the adoption of this Bylaw.

### **Multi-Parcel Country Residential**

- 3.3.18** The County shall require the Developer to prepare an area structure plan in support of multi-parcel country residential subdivision proposals.
- 3.3.19** The Developer shall design and construct internal subdivision roads in accordance with the County's engineering standards and in a manner that minimizes the infrastructure and maintenance costs associated with municipal roads.
- 3.3.20** The County should notify all adjacent landowners where a proposed subdivision will result in the re-subdivision of an existing residential multi-parcel subdivision and advise the adjacent landowners of the proposed re-subdivision and invite them to submit comments on the proposal.
- 3.3.21** The County may consider a multi-lot country residential development on agricultural land if the design conserves the majority of the subdivision area for agricultural uses.

### **Rural Manufactured Home Parks**

- 3.3.22** The County shall only consider manufactured home communities outside of hamlets on land that is districted Rural Manufactured Home Park (RMHP) District.
- 3.3.23** The County shall require the developer of a rural manufactured home community to prepare an area structure plan in support of an application to redistrict land to the Rural Manufactured Home Park (RMHP) District.



## 3.4 Hamlets

Hamlets play an important role as the centre for activities such as community centres and the provision of commercial services to rural residents in the county. The Hamlet of Blue Ridge serves as a service and community centre for the surrounding industrial, agricultural and residential land uses. Goose Lake, in comparison, has developed as a primarily recreational hamlet which provides minimal local commercial and community services to the Hamlet and the surrounding area. The Hamlet of Fort Assiniboine provides a wide range of services to the traveling public and area residents.

To maintain and strengthen the function and role of the Hamlets of Blue Ridge, Fort Assiniboine, and Goose Lake, the following objectives and policies are presented to guide existing and future hamlet development.

### OBJECTIVES

- To encourage well planned, efficient, and economical residential settlement within the county.
- To support and strengthen the role of Blue Ridge as a service, community and growth centre for the surrounding industries and residents.
- To support the role of Goose Lake as a residential/recreational community that provides commercial and community services.
- To support the maintenance and further growth of the Hamlet of Fort Assiniboine as a service centre for the traveling public and the surrounding area and as a gateway to the recreational opportunities in the Fort Assiniboine Sandhills area.

### POLICIES

#### General

- 3.4.1** The County shall require area structure plans for all hamlets.
- 3.4.2** The County shall require that all development in hamlets is consistent with the approved hamlet area structure plan.

### **Hamlet of Blue Ridge**

- 3.4.3** The County shall encourage development which contributes to the economic base of the Hamlet of Blue Ridge, and which enhances the quality of life in the community.
- 3.4.4** The County should require that future subdivision growth within the Hamlet of Blue Ridge takes place in accordance with **Map 2C — Future Land Use – Hamlet of Blue Ridge.**
- 3.4.5** The Developer shall buffer industrial and commercial development from residential areas by landscaping, screening, fencing, or other means to ensure that conflicts between adjacent land uses are minimized, to the satisfaction of the County.
- 3.4.6** The County may require that all development within the hamlet is serviced with municipal water and sewer services.

### **Hamlet of Fort Assiniboine**

- 3.4.7** The County should allow low density residential to be the primary housing form in the community.
- 3.4.8** The County shall direct medium density housing per the approved area structure plan.
- 3.4.9** The County shall encourage commercial development which will benefit the community and surrounding area.
- 3.4.10** The County shall encourage commercial development within the community to locate in a centrally located commercial business district and to adhere to the architectural theme in the area.
- 3.4.11** The County should maintain and enhance institutional and recreational facilities where required to maintain the quality of life for the residents of the Hamlet of Fort Assiniboine and area.
- 3.4.12** The County should require that future subdivision growth within the Hamlet of Fort Assiniboine takes place in accordance with **Map 2D — Future Land Use – Hamlet of Fort Assiniboine.**

### **Hamlet of Goose Lake**

- 3.4.13** The County should encourage commercial development within the Hamlet of Goose Lake which do not adversely impact existing and future residential areas.
- 3.4.14** The County shall require that all residential parcels are of sufficient size to accommodate on-site servicing and associated setbacks.
- 3.4.15** The County shall require new development on lake front properties use holding tanks for on-site sewage disposal systems.
- 3.4.16** The County should require that future subdivision growth within the Hamlet of Goose Lake takes place in accordance with **Map 2E — Future Land Use – Hamlet of Goose Lake.**
- 3.4.17** The County shall encourage landowners to restrict livestock from direct lake access or direct access to watercourses in close proximity to Goose Lake.
- 3.4.18** The County should encourage appropriate recreational activities around Goose Lake.

### **Hamlet Manufactured Home Parks**

- 3.4.19** The County shall only consider manufactured home communities inside of hamlets on land that is districted Manufactured Home Park (MHP) District.
- 3.4.20** The County shall require the developer of a manufactured home community to prepare an area structure plan in support of an application to redistrict land to the Manufactured Home Park (RMHP) District if the land is not within an existing Area Structure Plan that identifies the subject land for a manufactured home park.

### **Hamlet Commercial**

- 3.4.21** The County should require hamlet commercial development to be of a type and scale such that they are compatible with adjacent residential uses and serve the local rural and hamlet residents as well as the traveling public.
- 3.4.22** The County may permit commercial development dependent on water and sewer services in areas with soil limitations for effluent disposal or in areas of inadequate water supply with the use of septic holding tanks and water cisterns.

## 3.5 Commercial

Commercial development within the county is presently located primarily in the Hamlets of Blue Ridge and Fort Assiniboine, and to a lesser extent in the Hamlet of Goose Lake.

Commercial development also exists along highway corridors. Examples of highway commercial uses that may be suitable for the county include truck stops, commercial bulk storage facilities that require highway access but are not appropriate in urban areas due to safety reasons, highway related uses that require a large parking area and that do not require a full range of urban municipal services.

The purpose of this section is to provide direction for the continued growth of commercial activities to meet the needs of the residents of the county, the traveling public and industry.

### OBJECTIVES

- To promote and accommodate commercial development in appropriate locations.
- To direct commercial development away from better agricultural land.
- To direct highway commercial to identified commercial locations such as Cottonwood, Highway 33 or Highway 32 frontage lots in Woodlands Business Park.
- To direct retail commercial development to hamlet communities.
- To allow for a diverse range of economic development and employment opportunities in the rural areas.

### POLICIES

#### General

- 3.5.1** The County may require an area structure plan to be prepared, to its satisfaction, in support of commercial development in greenfield areas.
- 3.5.2** The County may require an area redevelopment plan to be prepared, to its satisfaction, in support of commercial redevelopment of existing developed areas.
- 3.5.3** The Developer shall bear all subdivision and development costs.

Further, the Developer shall also be responsible for costs incurred by the County such as:

- a. all reasonable legal fees and disbursements incurred by the County in the negotiation, preparation and execution of any required agreement(s) and all reasonable legal fees and disbursements, engineering fees, planning fees and any other consulting fees incurred by the County in the preparation, performance and enforcement of the terms and conditions of an agreement;
- b. all costs and expenses reasonably incurred by the County in testing any work performed or material supplied by the Developer pursuant to an agreement;
- c. cost of all work and materials required for the work repaired or re-done by reason of orders and directions of the County;
- d. additional costs incurred by reason of the County requiring additional workers, machinery and equipment; and,
- e. all costs and charges incurred by the County for the work to be performed and carried out by the County and its staff pursuant to an agreement along with the reasonable charges by the County for the time spent by the County in performing the obligations to be performed or carried out by the County under an agreement.

### **Highway Commercial**

- 3.5.4** The County shall encourage highway commercial uses to locate in identified highway commercial areas.
- 3.5.5** The County shall encourage highway commercial development that requires services which are more effectively provided in urban areas to locate in hamlet communities.
- 3.5.6** The County shall require that Developers of highway commercial obtain all necessary permits and approvals from Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors, or its successor.



## 3.6 Industrial

Most of the industrial development in the county is related to forestry, agriculture, oil, gas and natural resource extraction industries. It is anticipated that this type of industrial development will continue and be supported by the County. The purpose of this section is to provide policies and guidelines for industrial land uses within the municipality.

### OBJECTIVES

- To accommodate industrial land uses which are beneficial and well-suited to the municipality while minimizing conflicts with rural or hamlet land uses.
- To encourage new industrial development to employ best management practices and mitigate negative environmental impacts.
- To direct Industrial development away from better agricultural land.

### POLICIES

#### General

- 3.6.1** The County may require an area structure plan to be prepared, to its satisfaction, in support of industrial development in greenfield areas.
- 3.6.2** The County may require an area redevelopment plan to be prepared, to its satisfaction, in support of industrial redevelopment of existing developed areas.
- 3.6.3** The Developer of rural industry shall enter into a development agreement and/or road use agreement to the satisfaction of the County.
- 3.6.4** The Developer shall bear all subdivision and development costs. Further, the Developer shall also be responsible for costs incurred by the County such as:
  - a. all reasonable legal fees and disbursements incurred by the County in the negotiation, preparation and execution of any required agreement(s) and all reasonable legal fees and disbursements, engineering fees, planning fees and any other consulting fees incurred by the County in the preparation, performance and enforcement of the terms and conditions of an agreement;

- b. all costs and expenses reasonably incurred by the County in testing any work performed or material supplied by the Developer pursuant to an agreement;
- c. cost of all work and materials required for the work repaired or re-done by reason of orders and directions of the County;
- d. additional costs incurred by reason of the County requiring additional workers, machinery and equipment;
- e. all costs and charges incurred by the County for the work to be performed and carried out by the County and its staff pursuant to an agreement along with the reasonable charges by the County for the time spent by the County in performing the obligations to be performed or carried out by the County under an agreement.

### **Airport**

- 3.6.5** The County shall require that all development proposals comply with the Airport Development Process and Development Guidelines.
- 3.6.6** The County may permit commercial uses that use large lots and are entirely wholesale-based to locate within a commercial park development area near the Whitecourt Municipal Airport.
- 3.6.7** The County shall encourage lots which can benefit from proximity to the Whitecourt Municipal Airport to be reserved for airport related industrial or commercial development.

### **Siting & Compatibility of Use**

- 3.6.8** The County shall direct industrial development to lands designated for rural industrial uses, or within hamlet industrial districts in the Hamlets of Blue Ridge and Fort Assiniboine, unless an alternate location is desired and required due to site specific circumstances as outlined below:
  - a. farm home occupations or industries, which by their nature are associated with or are part of the farming operation, and are required to be located on or in close proximity to farm markets;
  - b. natural resource extraction industries requiring a location to access raw materials on-site;

- c. industries with unique siting requirements which require large tracts of land, transportation considerations, or which by their nature, should be located away from populated areas or other buildings due to emissions and other negative effects; and
- d. home occupations or industries which are small scale in nature and are secondary to the primary function of the parcel.

**3.6.9** The County should direct industrial development away from country residential development and better agricultural land (with the exceptions considered in **3.6.8** above).

**3.6.10** The County shall use the following site criteria in determining rural industrial site suitability for the intended use:

- a. has stable, well drained soils;
- b. has (or will have) safe and convenient access to public roads built to County standards;
- c. located where rail access exists or could be provided, if required;
- d. has necessary services and utilities available, if required;
- e. has suitable local climate conditions, especially for noxious industries; and,
- f. has low risk for conflict with adjacent land uses.

**3.6.11** The County shall ensure that industrial development in the hamlets is of a scale or type which will not negatively affect the use and enjoyment of adjacent residential uses and is screened from residential uses to the satisfaction of the County.

**3.6.12** The County shall encourage industrial development which is considered more appropriate in an urban setting to locate within the hamlet communities, subject to land availability and the ability to provide all required services.

**3.6.13** The County should give special consideration to the impacts on rural infrastructure, including local roads, bridges, traffic flows, and other related issues when siting large industrial development.

**3.6.14** The County may permit natural resource extraction industries to locate outside designated industrial areas where it can be shown that the impacts on other land uses can be adequately mitigated.

**3.6.15** The County shall encourage industrial development which requires large lots and a minimum level of municipal services to locate in a rural industrial park.

### **Supporting Reports**

**3.6.16** The County may require the Developer to provide additional reports in support of an area structure plan, redistricting, subdivision or development, including but not limited to, a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment, a Biophysical Assessment, a Geotechnical Assessment, a Financial Impact Assessment, and a Traffic Impact Assessment.

## **3.7 Recreation & Open Spaces**

The county features an abundance of opportunities for outdoor recreation and sporting activities, and for discovering through tourism, the history of the region. The intent of this section is to provide a framework for guiding the development and, generally, the better utilization of recreation and tourism potential of the county.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To promote and accommodate recreation and tourism land uses in appropriate locations to enhance the well-being and quality of life for Woodlands County residents and visitors.
- To support local groups in maintaining the existing trail networks and facilitate the development of new trails.
- To use recreation services to ensure sustainable recreation spaces and places that will serve the current and future populations.

## POLICIES

- 3.7.1** The County should encourage industry to develop industrial facility tours as a tourist and educational resource.
- 3.7.2** The County should require that subdivision and development proposals in areas that have a high capability for recreation:
  - a. incorporate access to recreation opportunities;
  - b. are compatible with and complement the natural characteristics of the site; and,
  - c. minimize conflicts with existing and proposed future land uses.
- 3.7.3** The County may develop a recreation and tourism strategy to identify areas that can be developed and/or promoted for recreational and tourism purposes.
- 3.7.4** The County should discourage development which shall have an adverse impact on identified historical, tourism, and recreational areas and refer all applications to Alberta Arts, Culture and Status of Women, or its successor, for review if near historical areas.
- 3.7.5** The County shall require that development near historical sites is undertaken in a manner that is compatible with the historical site.
- 3.7.6** The County shall support Provincial initiatives to reduce camping and off-trail vehicle use in Environmentally Sensitive Areas.
- 3.7.7** The County shall encourage compatible tourism and recreational development where historical, tourism and recreational areas exist.
- 3.7.8** The County should utilize Public Utility Lots and Municipal Reserves to complement parks, new and existing pathway networks.



## 3.8 Resource Extraction

Natural resource extraction is quickly becoming an economic driver and key resource commodity within Woodlands County. In the past, much of this extraction occurred on public land significantly away from built up areas. However, depletions elsewhere in the province, ease of access to the resources within Woodlands County, and proximity to market are driving extraction closer to built-up areas in the municipality where land use conflicts are likely.

Given the provincial approval requirements prior to extraction, Woodlands County works with Alberta Environment & Protected Areas, or its successor, to site future extraction sites and haul routes to minimize potential land use conflicts. Municipal approvals will allow county residents the opportunity to comment on the location of future extraction areas and express concerns to be considered in decision making and mitigation.

### OBJECTIVES

- To promote that natural resource extraction activities are carried out under Best Management Practices as recognized by the industry leaders and approval authorities.
- To ensure transparency in the municipal permitting process for Natural Resource Extraction developments.
- To mitigate the social and environmental impacts of gravel extraction activities.
- To avoid or mitigate potential land use conflicts between extraction and existing residents and/or businesses.
- To facilitate the incorporation of local knowledge and interests in natural resource extraction plans.
- To require full and responsible reclamation of former resource extraction sites by the Developer at the Developer's cost.

## POLICIES

- 3.8.1** The County should require preparation of an area structure plan in areas where there are potential conflicts between existing uses and extraction proposals to provide certainty to residents and industry (for example Pride Valley ASP east of Fort Assiniboine).
- 3.8.2** The County shall address review of Class 1 and Class 2 pits applications equally. Regardless of other approval authority's separation of extraction pit due to size, the County reserves the right to request any technical information required to ensure municipal goals and objectives are met.
- 3.8.3** The County shall require extraction pit operators to develop new roads and/or plan haul routes that have the least impact possible on residents and existing roads.
- 3.8.4** The County shall support the accepted air quality standards recognized by the appropriate Federal and Provincial regulatory bodies.
- 3.8.5** The Developer of a Class 2 pit shall be required to provide security in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit for 100% of the estimated costs of site reclamation to be held by the County until reclamation has been completed to the satisfaction of the County.

## 3.9 Environment

The county has a wide variety of natural features which make certain areas scenic and attractive for development. The County is committed to environmental stewardship that balances the needs of the community with the inherent value of the natural environment.

### OBJECTIVES

- To support the protection of environmentally sensitive areas, in particular, to support maintaining the environmental integrity of the county's rivers, streams and lakes.
- To protect and direct land use and development away from environmentally sensitive lands.
- To ensure that the subdivision and development proposals within the County mitigate adverse impact on the surrounding environment or proposed site.

- To manage wetlands in a manner that achieves no net loss, and where possible, creates a net gain.

## **POLICIES**

### **General**

- 3.9.1** The County shall direct land uses that may adversely impact the environmentally sensitive areas to be directed to more appropriate and less impactful locations.
- 3.9.2** The County should consult Alberta Environment & Protected Areas, or its successor, prior to the approval of development on lands which may have significant environmental impacts.
- 3.9.3** The County shall ensure that opportunities for access to natural features, rivers, and other potential public use areas be maintained through reserve allocation.
- 3.9.4** The Developer may be required to prepare, by a qualified professional, a biophysical assessment as part of the review process for a subdivision application or development permit.
- 3.9.5** The County should not approve development that will have negative impacts on local groundwater supplies, significant wildlife habitats, watercourses, or other environmentally significant features.
- 3.9.6** The County should require Developers to minimize impacts of development on municipally identified wildlife management areas, environmentally sensitive areas, scenic areas, or any other types of environmentally significant area.

### **Environmentally Sensitive**

- 3.9.7** The County should endeavor to protect lands deemed to be environmentally sensitive using a variety of legislative and voluntary techniques with particular emphasis on protecting the integrity of the county's rivers, streams and lakes.
- 3.9.8** The County shall discourage development on land which is deemed environmentally sensitive unless the development can demonstrate mitigation measures that prevent or effectively reduce the potential impacts of the proposed development on the natural environment.
- 3.9.9** The County shall ensure that development proposals within or adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas:

- a. complement and be compatible with the natural characteristics of the site;
- b. do not lead to overuse or deterioration of the natural surroundings;
- c. are accompanied by a biophysical assessment that identifies the extent of potential impacts of the proposed development on the surrounding natural environment, as required by the County; and
- d. provide for adequate setbacks and rehabilitation of the site as may be recommended or required by provincial departments or other agencies.

### **Wildlife Habitat**

**3.9.10** The County may take measures to identify and protect certain areas that are deemed by a qualified professional to be particularly important to wildlife and/or waterfowl as habitat areas.

### **Waterbodies**

**3.9.11** The County shall not support development which is known to have adverse impacts on the water quality of the river systems, and which would not be permitted by Alberta Environment & Protected Areas, or its successor.

**3.9.12** The County shall encourage development to avoid impact on natural wetlands and to protect areas of groundwater recharge.

**3.9.13** The County shall promote the use of the Province's wetland assessment, mitigation and replacement policy requirements and tools during the development process.

## **3.10 Reserve Land**

The Municipal Government Act specifies that a Subdivision Authority may, under certain circumstances require the owner of land that is subject to an application for subdivision to provide land for any or all the following:

- Environmental Reserve (ER);
- School Reserve (SR);
- Municipal Reserve (MR);
- Municipal and School Reserve (MSR);

- Conservation Reserve (CR); and,
- Roads & utilities

The total amount of land that may be required for Municipal and/or Municipal and School Reserve may not exceed 10% of the area, value, or a combination of the area and value of the land remaining in the proposed subdivision after deducting the land, if any, provided for Environmental Reserve, Environmental Reserve Easement or Conservation Reserve.

Land taken for roads and utilities may not exceed 30% of the area of the parcel of land, less any Environmental Reserve and or Environmental Reserve Easement.

Reserves may not be taken in four situations:

1. One lot is to be created from an intact quarter section of land;
2. The land is being subdivided to create a parcel of land 16 ha in area or greater, and which is to be used for agricultural purposes;
3. The land to be subdivided is 0.8 ha in area or less; or,
4. Reserve land, Environmental Reserve Easement or money in place of it was provided in respect of the land that is subject of the proposed subdivision already.

Reserve may be taken as land, as cash-in-lieu of land (except in the case of Environmental Reserve) or may be deferred pending further subdivision.

In all cases, the amounts, types, and disposition of reserve must be specified. Environmental Reserve is to be used as green space and left in its natural state; Municipal and School Reserve is to be used for school purposes, and Municipal Reserve is to be used for park, recreation area or to separate incompatible land uses.

Most reserve lands are intended to service residential areas. For this reason, reserves in commercial or industrial areas are more likely to be taken as cash in lieu.

Land subject to Municipal, School, or Municipal and School Reserve allocations includes all land on the parcel which is subject to subdivision less land that is to be taken for Environmental Reserve. Environmental Reserve Easement may be used as an alternative to Environmental Reserve.

The Subdivision Authority may require the owner of a parcel of land that is the subject of a proposed subdivision to provide part of that parcel of land to the municipality as conservation reserve. The owner must be compensated at fair market value for the land, per the **MGA**.



## OBJECTIVES

- To ensure the County obtains adequate supply of land to meet its Environmental, Municipal, Municipal and School, and School Reserve Requirements.
- To allocate cash-in-lieu of reserve land dedication to such uses as described in the **MGA**.
- To conserve and protect lands that in the option of the County warrant conservation due to significant environmental features.

## POLICIES

### Land for Roads & Utilities

- 3.10.1** The County shall not take more than 30% of the area of the parcel of land, less any environmental reserve and or environmental reserve easement, for roads and utilities.

### Municipal & School Reserve

- 3.10.2** The County shall take the maximum amount of reserve allocation pursuant to the **MGA**.
- 3.10.3** The County should take reserves in the form of land in residential development areas.
- 3.10.4** The County may take reserves in the form of cash in lieu of land in commercial or industrial development areas.
- 3.10.5** The County should take reserves in rural areas in the form of cash-in-lieu of land unless site specific circumstances warrant reserves in the form of land.
- 3.10.6** The County should not accept reserve allocation deferral in rural areas where further subdivision and allocation of reserves in the future is unlikely. Rather, in these circumstances, the County should take reserves in the form of cash-in-lieu of land.

### Environmental Reserve

- 3.10.7** The County shall take Environmental Reserve for the following purposes only:
- a. to preserve the natural features of land, including
    - i. a swamp, gully, ravine, coulee or natural drainage course;

- ii. land that is subject to flooding or is, in the opinion of the Subdivision Authority, unstable;
  - iii. a strip of land, not less than 6 m in width, abutting the bed and shore of any body of water that in the opinion of the Subdivision Authority should be preserved;
- b. to prevent pollution of the land or of the bed and shore of an adjacent body of water;
- c. to ensure public access to and beside the bed and shore of a body of water lying on or adjacent to the land; and
- d. to prevent development of the land where, in the opinion of the Subdivision Authority, the natural features of the land would present a significant risk of personal injury or property damage occurring during development or use of the land.

**3.10.8** Environmental Reserve shall be allocated prior to the determination of other forms of reserve and shall be in accordance with the policies contained in this plan.

### **Environmental Reserve Easement**

**3.10.9** The County may, with agreement from the landowner, identify land for an Environmental Reserve Easement to be registered against the land in favour of the municipality.

### **Conservation Reserve**

**3.10.10** The County may take land for Conservation Reserve if

- a. in the opinion of the Subdivision Authority, the land has environmentally significant features,
- b. the land is not land that could be required to be provided as environmental reserve,
- c. the purpose of taking the Conservation Reserve is to enable the municipality to protect and conserve the land, and
- d. the taking of the land as Conservation Reserve is consistent with the municipality's municipal development plan and area structure plan.

**3.10.11** The County shall, within 30 days of a new certificate of title being issued for the conservation reserve, pay compensation to the landowner in an amount equal to the market value of the land at the time the application for subdivision approval was received by the Subdivision Authority.

## 3.11 Sour Gas

The county has a number of installations that could have an adverse impact on adjacent lands due to the potential for hazardous emissions and other factors which make these developments a health risk for residents within the county. The following policies reflect the intent of the municipality to reduce the risk of public exposure to sour gas facilities.

### OBJECTIVES

- To minimize the risk of exposure to sour gas and other potentially hazardous compounds.
- To ensure that development in proximity to sour gas facilities takes place in a safe manner.
- To ensure that appropriate development standards are maintained to effectively reduce the risk to residents from potentially hazardous development.

### POLICIES

- 3.11.1** The County shall not permit the development of any land use in close proximity to existing sour gas facilities unless it conforms to the setback standards established by the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER).
- 3.11.2** The County shall refer, when required or deemed necessary, all subdivision and development permit applications affecting land near existing or proposed sour gas facilities to the AER for review and comment.
- 3.11.3** The County may increase the minimum setback required by the **MGA**, based upon relevant land use planning and safety considerations, where warranted.
- 3.11.4** The County may require as part of the approval process the submission of an emergency response plan in a form acceptable to the municipality.
- 3.11.5** The County shall refer all emergency response plans to area emergency services such as the local ambulance and firefighting authority for their review and comment.

## 3.12 Transportation

The future development of the county is greatly dependent on the transportation network of the area, depicted in Map 6. Transportation Network, including roads, railways, and air travel. The purpose of this section is to provide direction to ensure that the functions of the transportation network are not compromised by adjacent land uses, and that utility systems are provided economically and with a minimum of conflict with other land uses.

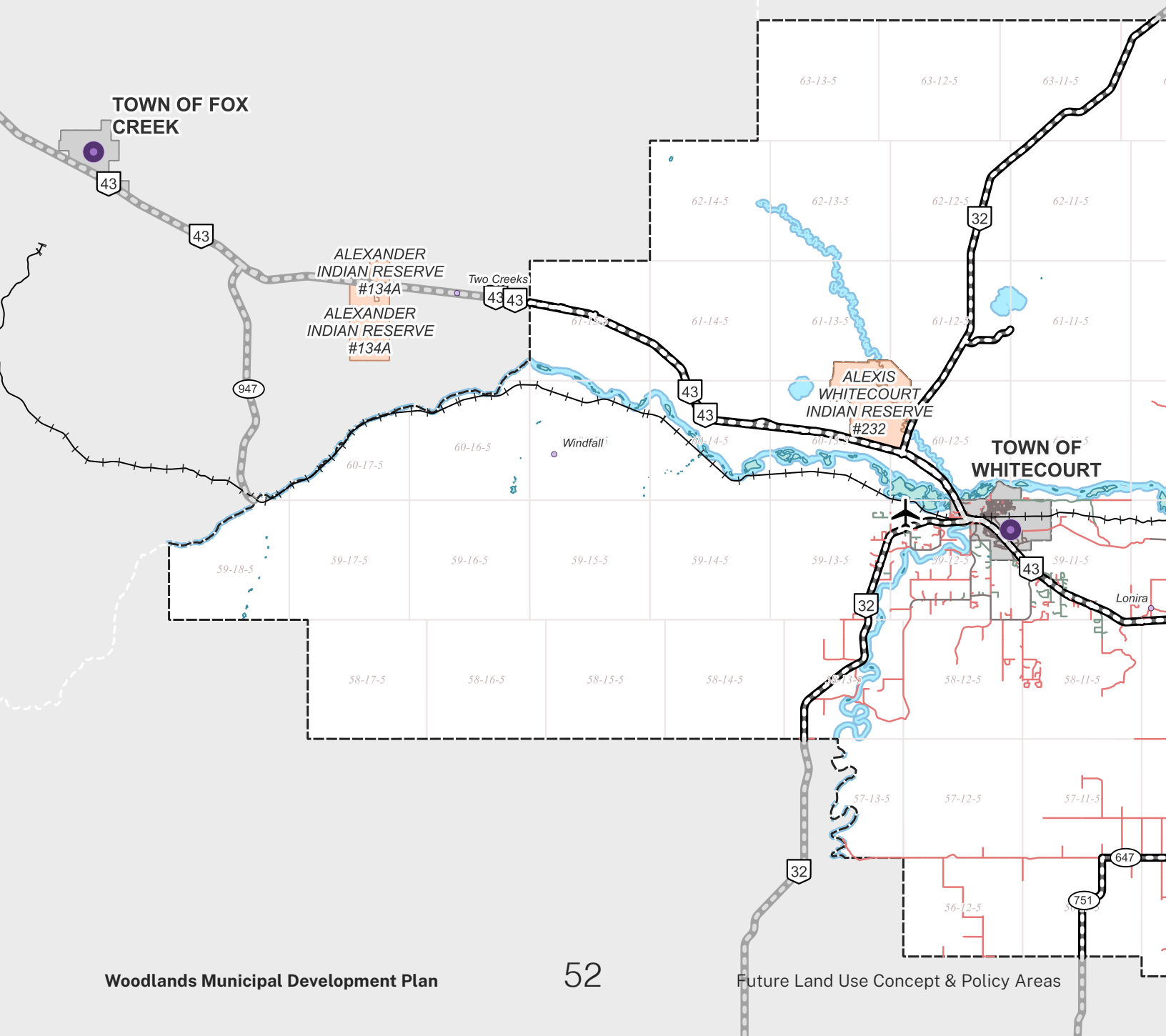
### OBJECTIVES

- To cooperate with federal, provincial and intermunicipal agencies to coordinate the planning of transportation facilities and rights-of-way.
- To provide for an efficient and safe transportation system capable of meeting the needs of the county's residents, industry and the traveling public.
- To ensure that land uses adjacent to the railway and the Whitecourt Municipal Airport are compatible with their safe operation.

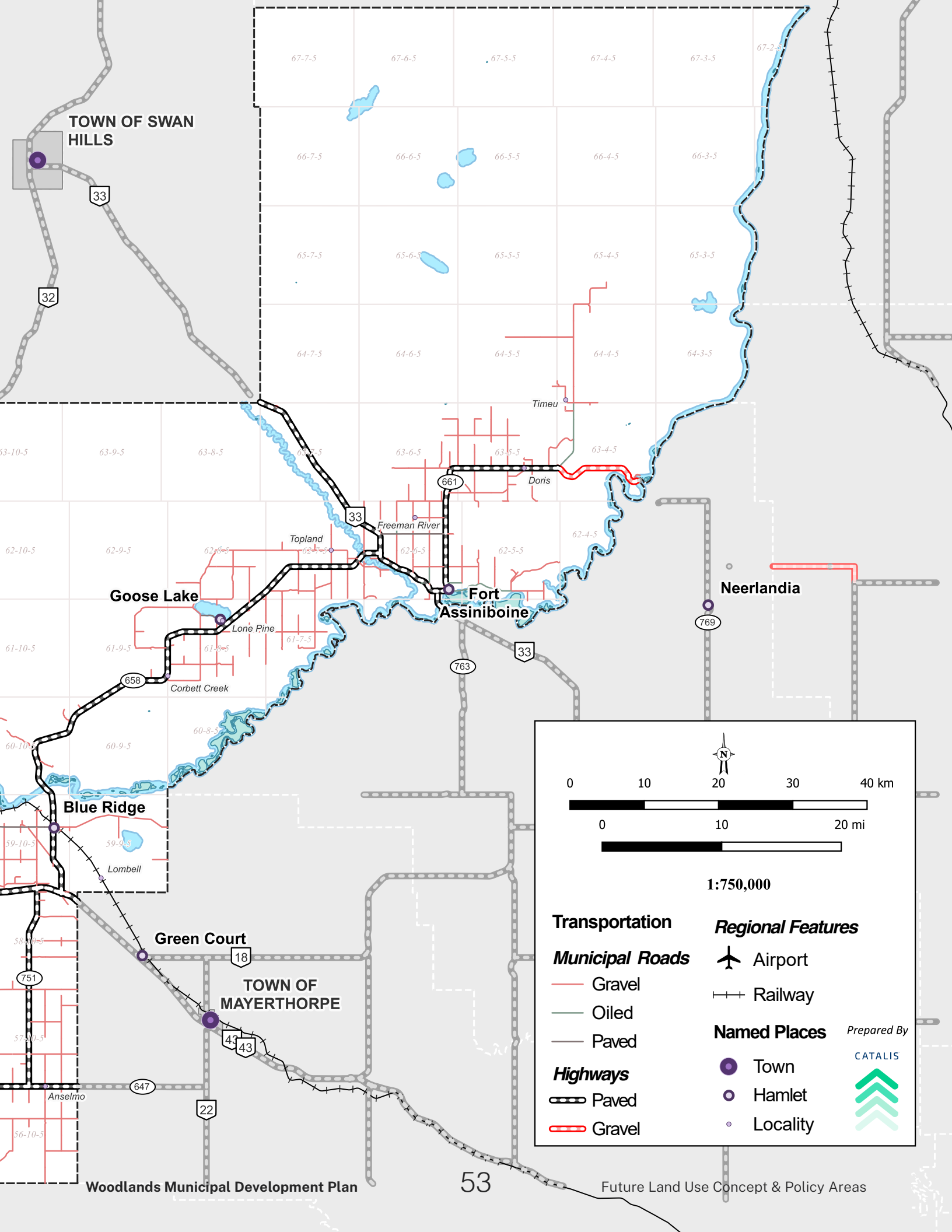
### POLICIES

#### General

- 3.12.1** The County shall encourage a co-operative effort with industry, provincial agencies, and neighbouring municipalities to address long term planning issues and to determine effective ways to service the needs of the traveling public.
- 3.12.2** The County should ensure that new development accommodates the future growth plans for affected transportation corridors and discourages the creation of fragmented parcels of land between rights-of-way.
- 3.12.3** The County should direct noise sensitive land uses such as residences, schools, and medical facilities away from major roadways, airports, and railways. Setbacks, buffers and other measures may be required where no alternatives exist for these types of development.
- 3.12.4** The Developer shall be required to contribute towards improvements to local infrastructure that are necessary to support the proposed development.







## **Roads**

- 3.12.5** The County shall require, as part of the subdivision approval process, road widening dedications as per the requirements of the respective road authority under the **MGA**.
- 3.12.6** The County should plan future road widenings and transportation routes in a manner that will minimize the reduction of setbacks from existing development to the public road or highway.
- 3.12.7** The Developer shall construct county roads to Woodlands County Design Guidelines and Construction Standards where the road is to be used for public use.
- 3.12.8** The County shall require that highway development be constructed in a manner that achieves safe and efficient access to the public roadway.
- 3.12.9** The County should require that all public roadways within a flood prone area be constructed/reconstructed to withstand a minimum 1:100-year flood.

## **Rails**

- 3.12.10** The County should reserve land featuring railway sidings and locations suitable for siding development for development requiring access to the railway line.

## **Air**

- 3.12.11** The County shall not permit uses which are deemed incompatible with the operation of the airport on adjacent lands or within the Airport Management area as established by Council, or which are considered to have an adverse impact on the airport property or the operation of the airport.
- 3.12.12** The County shall require that further development on or adjacent to the airport property follow the Airport Vicinity Protection Area requirements and related Development Guidelines, as well as consider the future growth opportunities of the airport facility and be compatible with them.

## 3.13 Servicing & Utilities

It is the intention of the County to ensure that all development is adequately serviced, either privately or with municipal services. Additionally, the County desires to reduce land fragmentation by utility services.

### OBJECTIVES

- To provide a cost effective high standard municipal utility system for residents in areas that are provided with municipal utilities.
- To require that all development is provided with adequate servicing.
- To support the development of utility facilities that provide technological advances for residents.
- To reduce land fragmentation by utility services.

### POLICIES

#### General

- 3.13.1** The County shall require that Developers connect to municipal servicing (i.e. water and sewer) where those services are available, unless otherwise directed by an approved Area Structure Plan, to the satisfaction of the County.
- 3.13.2** The Developer shall be responsible for all work and related costs to connect to on-site and municipal services from the property line.
- 3.13.3** The County shall require that where private on-site servicing (i.e., non-municipally supplied water and sanitary services) is allowed in urban communities, water supply is limited to well or cistern servicing and sewage disposal is limited to an approved holding tank.
- 3.13.4** The County prohibits individual, privately-owned water wells and septic systems where municipal water and/or sewage services are available, or where existing privately service development intensifies or redevelops.
- 3.13.5** To County shall encourage the integration of transportation routes and utility lines within defined corridors and, as much as possible, in government road allowances.

- 3.13.6** 3.13.6 The County shall require where practical that underground utility infrastructure be co-located within the same right-of-way to reduce fragmentation of land.

#### **Water**

- 3.13.7** The Developer shall provide suitable water and sewer service in accordance with Woodlands County Design Guidelines and Construction Standards for each new multi-lot residential development without municipal water service, at time of subdivision.

#### **Wastewater**

- 3.13.8** The County shall prohibit on-site sewage disposal systems that would adversely impact the natural environment or groundwater aquifers.
- 3.13.9** The County shall require a soils analysis in support of subdivision or development application, to be done by a qualified professional and to the satisfaction of the County, on undeveloped land to determine the types of on-site sewage systems that may be used to service the site.
- 3.13.10** The County should encourage the use of on-site wastewater collection and disposal systems in rural areas.
- 3.13.11** The County may adjust lot lines at the time of subdivision to accommodate an existing sewage system's required setback.

#### **Stormwater Management**

- 3.13.12** The County may require subdivision and development proposals to provide stormwater management plans. Any site grading/drainage plans for individual development sites subsequent to subdivision shall be in conformance with the stormwater management plan.
- 3.13.13** The County shall encourage development to incorporate natural drainage courses or natural water features, such as bio-swales or ditches, for stormwater management as opposed to installing piped systems, where appropriate and as permitted by the Province.
- 3.13.14** The County shall require that all development be graded and landscaped appropriately to ensure that surface runoff is contained to the subject property and directed off the lot in a manner that shall not result in soil erosion or adversely impact on surrounding lands, as per the Design Guidelines and Construction Standards.

### **Communication Facilities**

- 3.13.15** The County shall promote the introduction or extension of wireless communication facilities that consider good planning and design; that will have the least impact on the natural environment.
- 3.13.16** The County shall work with Industry Canada to provide policies for locating communication facilities.
- 3.13.17** The County shall encourage communication facility development to reduce visual impact on nearby residents.
- 3.13.18** The County shall encourage the co-location of communication facilities.

## **3.14 Historical Resources**

Heritage sites, historic buildings, and culturally significant areas are important considerations for development and provide opportunities for community gathering, celebration of cultures and heritage, and tourism.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To conserve, protect and celebrate characteristics of the county that reflect Woodland's pre-settlement and post-settlement histories.

### **POLICIES**

#### **General**

- 3.14.1** The County supports the selection and protection of historic resources with Provincial historic site designations.
- 3.14.2** The County should develop a central listing such as a website and/or brochure for visitors and new residents to access and obtain information on local sites of interest.
- 3.14.3** The County should consider promoting select historic resources as tourism and opportunities to raise awareness and promote their preservation and the county's heritage.

## Historic Resources

- 3.14.4** The County should explore partnerships and multiple avenues of funding heritage preservation in order to identify, recognize, maintain and preserve cultural sites.
- 3.14.5** The County shall encourage owners of significant historical buildings and/or building sites to restore these buildings on their original sites, and to register with available historic resource listings.
- 3.14.6** The county should explore grant programs that would enable the development and maintenance of an inventory survey of current historic resources, which can help coordinate preservation efforts and mitigate future development impacts.
- 3.14.7** The County shall carefully consider the merits and potential implications of subdivision and development proposals that involve potential or actual Provincially designation historic resource.

## 3.15 Crown Land

Much of land in the plan area is still under the administrative control of the Province of Alberta. The intent of the County is to complement the work of the Province and to encourage the appropriate use of these lands.

### OBJECTIVES

- To encourage the appropriate use of Crown Land within Woodlands County.
- To facilitate a balance where industrial users can continue to access Crown Lands while minimizing the impact that industry may have on the natural environment.
- To encourage the maintenance of access to Crown Land areas for recreational purposes.
- To facilitate public access to Crown Land areas, when suitable, desirable and economically feasible.



## POLICIES

- 3.15.1** The County may support the conversion of Crown Lands to agricultural land where the subject land can be effectively serviced by roads and where the Developer is fully responsible for all associated costs including that of servicing and developing public road access.
- 3.15.2** The County shall reserve the right to refer any development or subdivision application, at the County's sole discretion, to the Province for comment. Any recommendations that arise from such a referral shall be applied to the development or subdivision, and may form part of the conditions of approval, at the sole discretion of the County.
- 3.15.3** The County should support the use of Crown Land for public recreational purposes and other uses which would not conflict with agricultural pursuits such as grazing or have adverse impact on the natural environment.
- 3.15.4** The County shall encourage the preparation of an integrated resource management plan between the municipality and Alberta Environment & Protected Areas, or its successor.
- 3.15.5** The County should encourage the preparation of a public access strategy for Crown Land by the appropriate agencies.
- 3.15.6** The County shall encourage multi-use activities on Crown Land where the use is practical and adverse impacts on other land uses are effectively reduced.
- 3.15.7** The County shall encourage Crown Land leaseholders to prepare and adopt land use management plans with the Government of Alberta.
- 3.15.8** The County shall not support the transfer of more Crown Land to private ownership unless it can be shown to the satisfaction of the County that there is merit in the transfer. When considering future land transfer referrals from the Crown, the following criteria may be used:
- a. access by developed county roads,
  - b. suitability for development,
  - c. demonstratable need,
  - d. existing use of land by endangered or threatened species as habitat or as part of a wildlife corridor.

## 3.16 Economic Development

The County's land base drives economic activity from industry and commercial to recreation and tourism. Economic diversity will support the long term financial viability of the county and the region.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To consider the breadth of interested parties during economic development.
- To broaden the economic diversity of the county.
- To retain existing industry and businesses.
- To attract new investment.

### POLICIES:

- 3.16.1** The County shall create an economic development strategy and implement its recommendations.
- 3.16.2** The County should continue to play an active role in regional economic development partnerships.
- 3.16.3** The County should consider adopting Area Structure Plans for land it has identified for future industrial and/or commercial development to enhance development certainty, improve Developer confidence and attract investment.



# 4.0

## Intermunicipal Policies

Future urban growth, and the evolving pattern of rural development, makes strong intermunicipal relationships and good planning practices in fringe areas vital. These areas along municipal boundaries, or ‘fringe areas’, require special attention and planning consideration to encourage mutual benefits, avoid or mitigate conflicts, and support intermunicipal relationships.

There is a need for cooperation and consultation between municipal neighbours, and those needs differ slightly in the urban fringe areas versus the rural fringe areas. Ongoing intermunicipal cooperation will improve the quality of life, economic strength and diversity of the region, which benefits all regional communities and residents.

### 4.1 Municipal Government Act Requirements for Intermunicipal Planning

*Part 17 and Part 17.2 of the MGA* contains sections that refer to formalizing intermunicipal relationships: ***§631 Intermunicipal Development Plans of Part 17*** and ***§708.28 of Part 17.2 for Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks***.

## 4.2 Intermunicipal Development Plans

Municipalities that share a common boundary and which are not members of a growth region as defined by the Act must adopt an intermunicipal development plan, unless both parties agree that they do not require one. However, if one party revokes its agreement to not require an IDP, then an IDP must be adopted within one year from the date the party revoked its agreement.

An intermunicipal development plan

- (a) must address
  - (i) the future land use within the area,
  - (ii) the manner of and the proposals for future development in the area,
  - (iii) the provision of transportation systems for the area, either generally or specifically,
  - (iv) the co-ordination of intermunicipal programs relating to the physical, social and economic development of the area,
  - (v) environmental matters within the area, either generally or specifically, and (vi) any other matter related to the physical, social or economic development of the area that the councils consider necessary, and
- (b) must include
  - (i) a procedure to be used to resolve or attempt to resolve any conflict between the municipalities that have adopted the plan,
  - (ii) a procedure to be used, by one or more municipalities, to amend or repeal the plan, and
  - (iii) provisions relating to the administration of the plan.

Despite the above, to the extent that a matter is dealt with in an intermunicipal collaboration framework under Part 17.2, the matter does not need to be included in an intermunicipal development plan.

## 4.3 Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework

Municipalities that have common boundaries must create a framework with each other by April 1, 2020, unless they are members of the same growth management board. However, the Minister may, by order, exempt, on any terms and conditions the Minister considers necessary, one or more municipalities from the requirement to create a framework.

The purpose of an intermunicipal collaboration framework is to provide integrated and strategic planning, delivery, and funding of intermunicipal services, to steward scarce resources efficiently in providing local services, and to ensure municipalities contribute funding to services that benefit their residents.

The Act states:

- (1) A framework must describe the services to be provided under it that benefit residents in more than one of the municipalities that are parties to the framework.
- (2) In developing the content of the framework required by subsection (1), the municipalities must identify which municipality is responsible for providing which services and outline how the services will be delivered and funded.
- (3) Nothing in this Part prevents a framework from enabling an intermunicipal service to be provided in only part of a municipality.
- (3.1) Every framework must contain provisions establishing a process for resolving disputes that occur while the framework is in effect, other than during a review under section 708.32, with respect to
  - (a) the interpretation, implementation or application of the framework, and
  - (b) any contravention or alleged contravention of the framework.
- (4) No framework may contain a provision that conflicts or is inconsistent with a growth plan established under Part 17.1 or with an Alberta Land Stewardship Act regional plan.
- (5) The existence of a framework relating to a service constitutes agreement among the municipalities that are parties to the framework for the purposes of section 54.

## 4.4 Fringe Areas

### Urban Fringe

The urban fringe area around the Town of Whitecourt has experienced the most development activity within the County. The type of development in this area has usually been residential although some commercial development has taken place.

To properly address growth in the Whitecourt area, the County and the Town have both adopted an Intermunicipal Development Plan which addresses land use planning issues of mutual concern for each community.

### Rural Fringe

Rural fringe areas are those that are within 800 m of the corporate boundary of the rural municipalities in the County.

## OBJECTIVES

- To encourage development in municipal fringe areas in a manner that does not conflict with the long-term planning goals of the either municipality.
- To preserve better agricultural land within the urban fringe areas until the land is required for urban development.
- To facilitate cooperation, consultation, and communication on land use issues within the fringe areas of municipalities.

## POLICIES

### General

- 4.4.1 The County shall pursue an Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework with the Town of Whitecourt.
- 4.4.2 The County shall ensure that where a conflict exists between an intermunicipal development plan which is adopted by Council, and this Municipal Development Plan, the respective IDP policies prevail.
- 4.4.3 The County shall refer proposals to a respective municipality where a subdivision or development proposal is deemed to have an impact on that municipality, notwithstanding any fringe boundary referral policies to the contrary.
- 4.4.4 The County should refer redistricting, subdivision, and development proposals within the fringe area to the respective municipality for review and comment.



### **Urban Fringe**

- 4.4.5** The County shall carefully review and evaluate proposals to ensure compatibility with present and future land uses in the urban fringe area.
- 4.4.6** The County may establish joint-use agreements with urban neighbours to provide the economies of scale necessary to develop and operate major recreational and other mutually beneficial facilities.

### **Rural Fringe**

- 4.4.7** The County should refer subdivision proposals in accordance with the Intermunicipal Development Plan.
- 4.4.8** The County should consider opportunities to negotiate transportation and servicing agreements with the adjacent urban and rural municipalities.

## **4.5 Urban Growth**

The County recognizes the need for adjacent urban municipalities to occasionally expand their municipal boundaries to accommodate growth. However, premature annexation can have negative impacts on the rural municipality. Therefore, careful consideration and examination of actual growth needs should accompany the discussion of urban expansion.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To avoid premature expansion of urban boundaries.
- To promote thoughtful consideration of all options to support urban growth.
- To identify growth needs prior to annexation discussion.

## **POLICIES**

- 4.5.1** The County shall encourage all urban municipalities within its boundaries to identify future urban expansion requirements based on demonstrated need to help guide and coordinate the future growth and development of the region.
- 4.5.2** The County shall encourage urban municipalities to accommodate growth in the following general order: in-filling of vacant lots, rehabilitation, restoration or replacement of deteriorating buildings, relocation and redevelopment of inappropriate uses, expansion into the unsubdivided and undeveloped areas and, lastly, expansion of the boundaries.
- 4.5.3** The County shall support comprehensive annexation applications if it concurs with underlying growth, planning and engineering servicing analysis, while recognizing that urban municipalities should contain sufficient land to allow for expansion in the foreseeable future. For clarity, piecemeal annexation proposals shall not be supported.
- 4.5.4** Further to the above, the County shall give preferential consideration to comprehensive annexation proposals that are in accordance with a formally adopted intermunicipal development plan.
- 4.5.5** The County shall protect lands identified for future urban expansion as specified in an adopted intermunicipal development plan.
- 4.5.6** The County shall prefer that urban expansion avoid better agricultural land, environmentally sensitive areas and areas of significant natural resources, unless no alternative exists.
- 4.5.7** The County shall recommend and support urban development that is a logical extension of the present land use patterns and does not result in urban development leapfrogging areas of farmland.



## 5.0

# Interpretation, Monitoring & Review

The boundaries of the land use designations described in this plan's Future Land Use Map are approximate and are not intended to follow legal surveyed boundaries. Minor adjustments to land use designation, the location of future roads, quantities or figures, shall not require an amendment to this plan.

The following directions are intended when interpreting the goals, objectives, and policies of this plan:

- “**should**” means that the statement is an expression of desire by Council. It refers to what they would like to achieve but does not necessarily mean that the county shall be responsible for the action;
- “**shall**” means that the action is mandatory; and,
- “**may**” means that the action is discretionary.

The MDP should be monitored regularly for compliance with higher-order plans and for consistency with current policy direction. At a minimum the MDP should receive annual or semi-annual ‘housekeeping’ amendments to address typos, grammatical issues or to clarify misinterpretations. The MDP should be thoroughly reviewed and updated at least every 5-10 years.



# --- 6.0 Implementation

The policies of the MDP are implemented through municipal decision-making, but also through future work including preparing studies, developing new plans and undertaking new initiatives. Some of the future work identified in this MDP will help to implement the vision and principles of the plan. A list of implementation tasks, including some of the future work discussed herein, is found in Appendix B, which does not form part of the MDP bylaw. It is recommended the implementation task list is reviewed annually as part of the County's regular MDP monitoring and used as a guide in the annual budgeting process.





# 7.0

## Glossary of Terms

### 1

**“1:100 Year Flood”** means a flood that has a one percent chance of occurring in any given year. A 100-year flood occurs, on average, once every 100 years because it has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year.

### A

**“Abandoned Farmstead”** means a farmyard which was once established that may contain some evidence a farmstead existing at one time. There may be remnants of an abandoned residence, a well, a sewage collection system or shelterbelts.

**“Act”** means the Municipal Government Act, SA 2000, Chapter M-26 as amended.

**“Agricultural Parcel”** means a parcel where the principal use is for agricultural purposes.

**“Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP)”** means a statutory plan prepared pursuant to the Act, similar in structure to an ASP but specific to a designated area identified for preservation, rehabilitating, construction or replacement of buildings a long-range land use and servicing plan adopted by bylaw and prepared in accordance with the Act for a defined land base, typically with a longer than five-year anticipated build out. It provides a high-level framework for future land use patterns and infrastructure provision.

**“Area Structure Plan (ASP)”** is a statutory plan pursuant to the MGA adopted by bylaw which provides a framework for the land use, density, infrastructure requirements and subsequent stages of subdivision and/or development of an area.

## B

**“Better Agricultural Land”** means Agriculturally districted land that has a Farmland Assessment Value of \$114.46 or greater.

**“Biophysical Assessment”** means technical analysis of the physical and biological aspects of an area proposed for subdivision or development. The review must be prepared by qualified professional, and include analysis, conclusions and recommendations related to the proposed development.

## C

**“Class I Pit”** means a gravel pit that is 5 hectares or greater in area and is on private land. Operators must register with the Alberta government before constructing, operating or reclaiming a Class I pit. Woodlands County can provide input on Class I pits.

**“Class II Pit”** means a gravel pit less than 5 hectares in size and are on private land. Class II pits in the Woodlands County are regulated by the County.

**“Confined Feeding Operation (CFO)”** means a facility, as defined by the Agricultural Operation Practices Act, fenced or enclosed land or buildings, where livestock are confined for the purpose of growing, sustaining, finishing or breeding, by means other than grazing and any other building or structure directly related to that purpose but does not include residences, livestock seasonal feeding and bedding sites, equestrian stables, auction markets, race track, or exhibition grounds;

**“Conservation Easement (CE)”** means a voluntary legal agreement defined in the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act between a landowner and government or conservation agency. The easement agreement is intended to protect the natural values of the land by giving up all or some of the rights to develop the land.

**“County”** means the corporation of Woodlands County, whereas “county” means the land area within the municipal boundary of Woodlands County.

## D

**“Density”** means the number of units of an item (lots, parcels, persons, families, dwellings, dwelling units, etc.) per unit of area.

**“Designated Officer”** means a person authorized to exercise development authority powers on behalf of the municipality, pursuant to the Municipal Government Act.

**“Development Authority”** means a development authority established pursuant to Section 624 of the Municipal Government Act and may include one or more of the following: a Designated Officer, a Municipal Planning Commission, an Inter-Municipal Planning Commission, Council or any other person or organization that has been authorized to exercise development powers on behalf of the municipality.



## E

**“Environmental Reserve (ER)”** means land considered, in accordance with the Act, to be undevelopable because of its natural features or location (e.g. unstable slopes or flood prone); or, a strip of land abutting the bed and shore of a body of water or water course, that a Developer may be required to dedicate at the time of subdivision. Environmental reserve must be maintained in its natural state or used as park. Environmental reserve may be dedicated to the county or secured by easement agreement satisfactory to the county.

**“Environmentally Sensitive Land”** means an area in which plant or animal life or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem and which would be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities and developments, or which may present significant challenges to development due to steep slopes, presence of surface water, riparian areas, etc.

## F

**“Farm”** means any land, buildings, or structures on or in which agriculture and farming operations are carried out and shall include the residence, or residence of owners, occupants or employees located on such land.

**“Farmland Assessment Value”** means is the assessed value of unimproved farmland in the local context, as assessed by the County’s assessor and documented on a property assessment report.

**“Farmstead”** means a developed residential portion of a parcel used in connection with the raising or production of crops, livestock or poultry and situated on the same land used in conjunction with the above farming operations.

**“FireSmart”** is a framework designed to mitigate the risk of and educate residents and stakeholders regarding the potential for large uncontrollable wildfires near communities and critical infrastructure.

## H

**“Hamlet”** means any named unincorporated community declared by an Order of the Minister, or by Bylaw or the Municipality, to be a hamlet.

**“Hazard”** means a natural feature or manmade facility that creates a potentially negative impediment to development, and may include poor soils, landfill sites, sewage lagoons, flood plains, high water tables, water courses susceptible to flooding, sour gas sites, high pressure pipelines, rail rights-of-way, steep slopes (e.g. over 15%), unstable slopes and others.

**“Highway Commercial”** is the designation applied to land in Map 2 upon which commercial development may be located along major arterial roadways and highways, and which development is intended to primarily serve the travelling public, and includes such uses as motor vehicle dealerships, gas stations, hotels, and similar uses.

## I

**“Infill”** means the development of vacant land within an otherwise built-up area, or the redevelopment of an existing site to a higher density than was originally accommodated on the site.

**“Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP)”** means a plan applying to parts of two or more municipalities and adopted by bylaw, in accordance with the Municipal Government Act.

## L

**“Land Use Bylaw (LUB)”** means a statutory document pursuant to the Act that provides for matters such as land use districts, permitted and discretionary uses, site development regulations, landscaping and parking standards, signage, and the development application process.

## M

**“Municipal Development Plan (MDP)”** means the plan adopted by council as a Municipal Development Plan pursuant to the Municipal Government Act.

**“Municipal Reserve (MR)”** means land (or money-in-lieu of land) required in accordance with the Act at the time of subdivision for park and/or school purposes.

**“Municipal Services”** means piped water and sanitary sewer systems that are under the ownership of the county or other regional authority, are developed in accordance with county standards, and are licensed by the province. This definition also includes communal water and sewer systems if the development in question is to be registered as a condominium development and the services are defined as common property.

## P

**“Public Utility Lot”** means a parcel used to provide one or more of the following for public consumption, benefit, convenience or use: (a) water, wastewater, or storm water, (b) public transportation operated by on or behalf of the County; (c) communication (d) drainage (e) natural gas, power, telephone or any other facility or use as defined in the Municipal Government Act. A Public Utility Lot does not count as a parcel when determining densities of development or subdivisions.

## Q

**“Qualified Professional”** means a person educated, trained and certified/accredited in the undertaking of their profession.

## R

**“Reconciliation”** means an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships.

**“Regulation”** means the Subdivision and Development Regulation.

**“Rural Fringe”** means those areas that are 800 m (0.5 mi) to the corporate boundary of the rural municipality surrounding the county.

## S

**“Serviced”** means having water, storm and sanitary services and sometimes refers to fire and transportation services.

**“Statutory Plan”** means an Intermunicipal Development Plan, Municipal Development Plan, Area Structure Plan, or Area Redevelopment Plan that is adopted by bylaw in accordance with the Act.

## U

**“Unsubdivided Quarter Section”** means a parcel of land 64.7 ha, more or less, in area that has not previously been subdivided.

**“Urban Fringe”** means those areas that are 800 m (0.5 mi) to the corporate boundary of the urban centres located within the county.

## V

**“Value Added Agriculture”** means changes made to primary agriculture products (crops and livestock) that increase the product's value, thereby creating new economic activity and jobs in one of three ways:

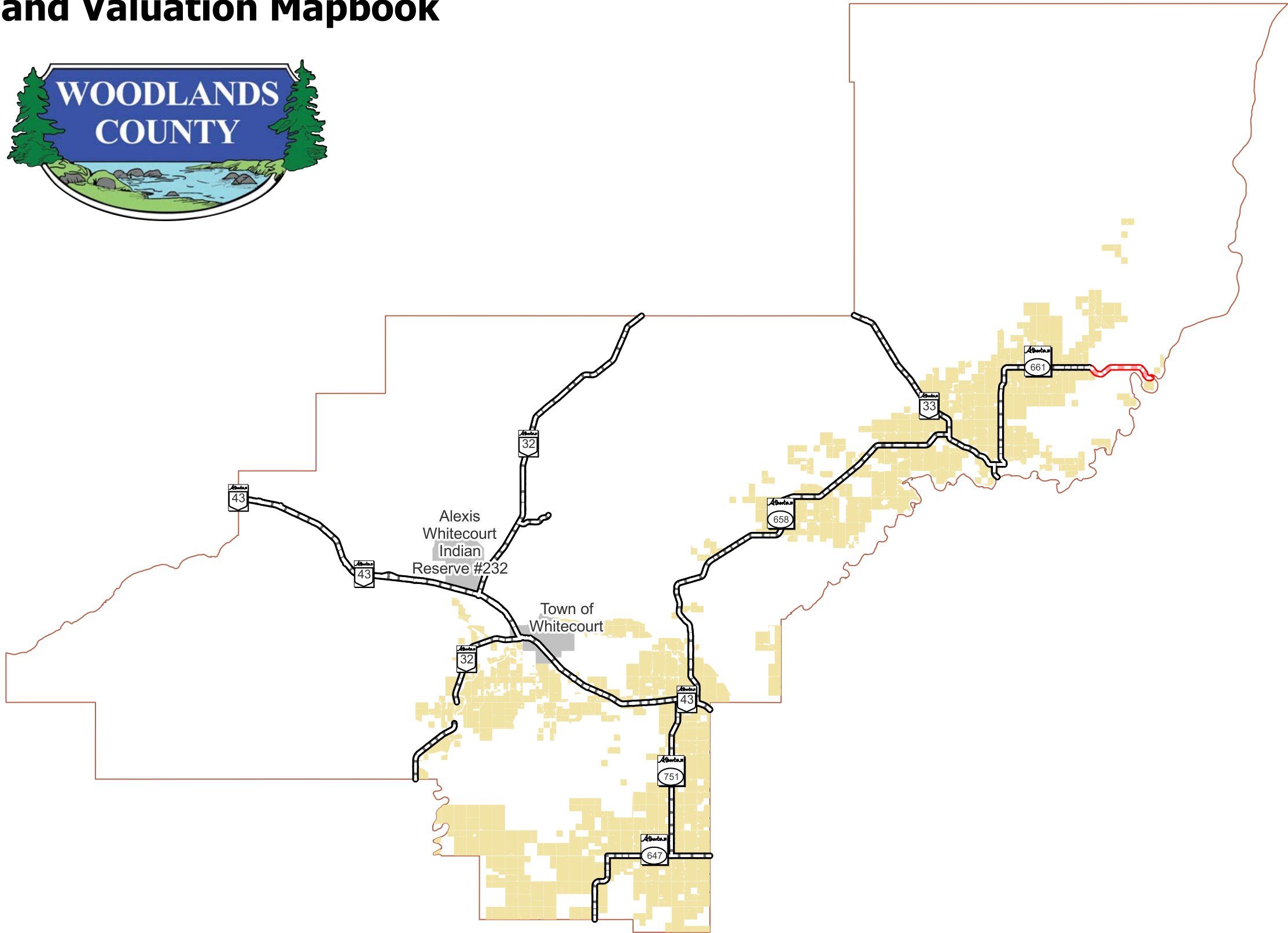
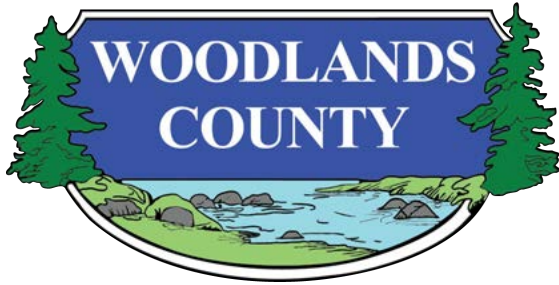
- Process activities that create value for the product and/or introduce the product to new markets.
- Diversification and/or modification of primary agriculture products.
- Pre-production modifications that increase yields, quality and uses.

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# **Appendix A**

## Farmland Assessment Value Maps

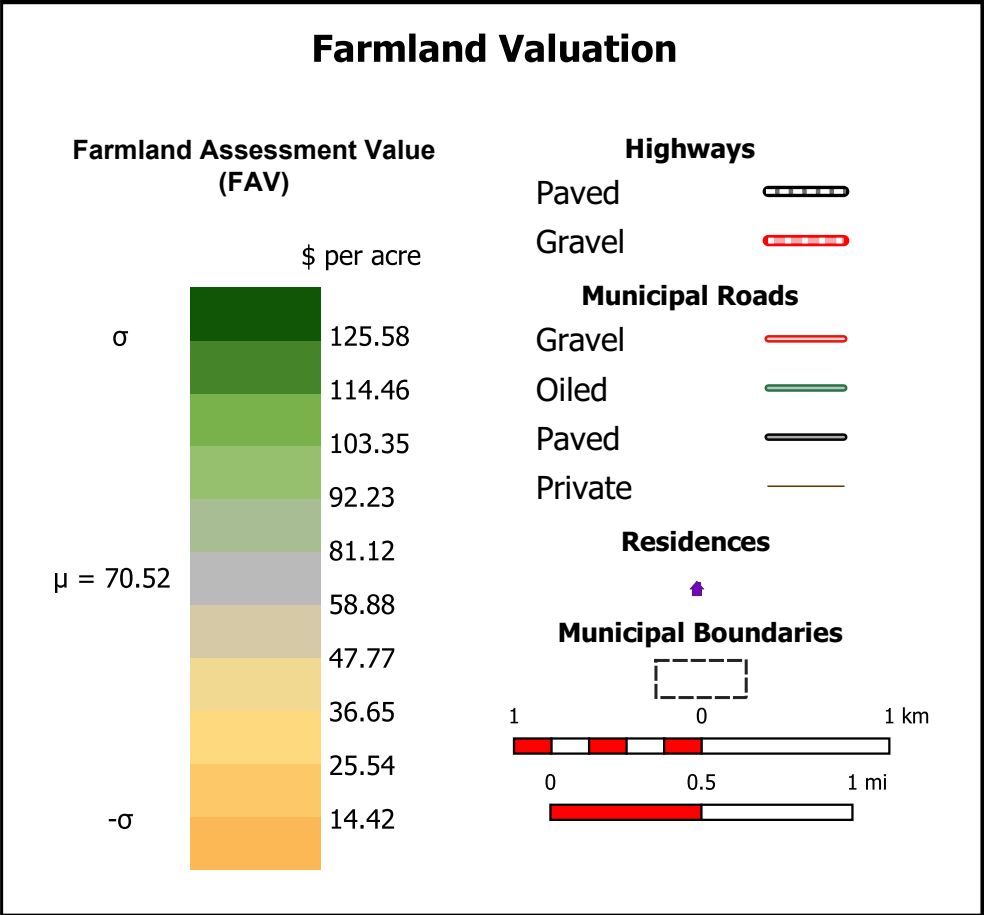
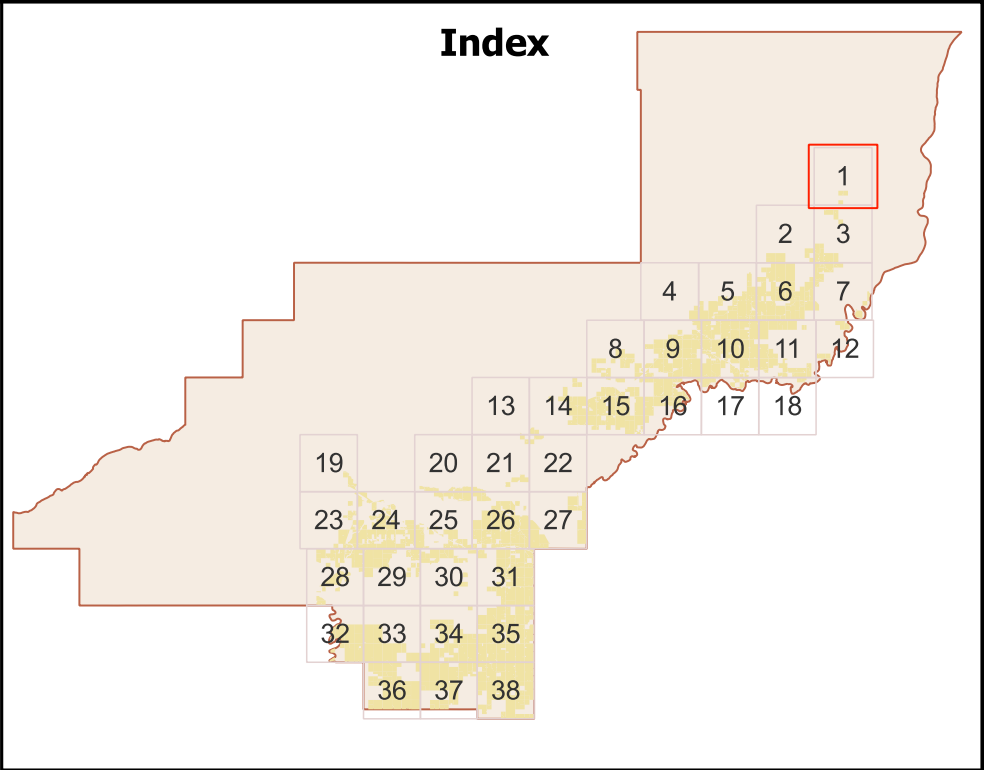
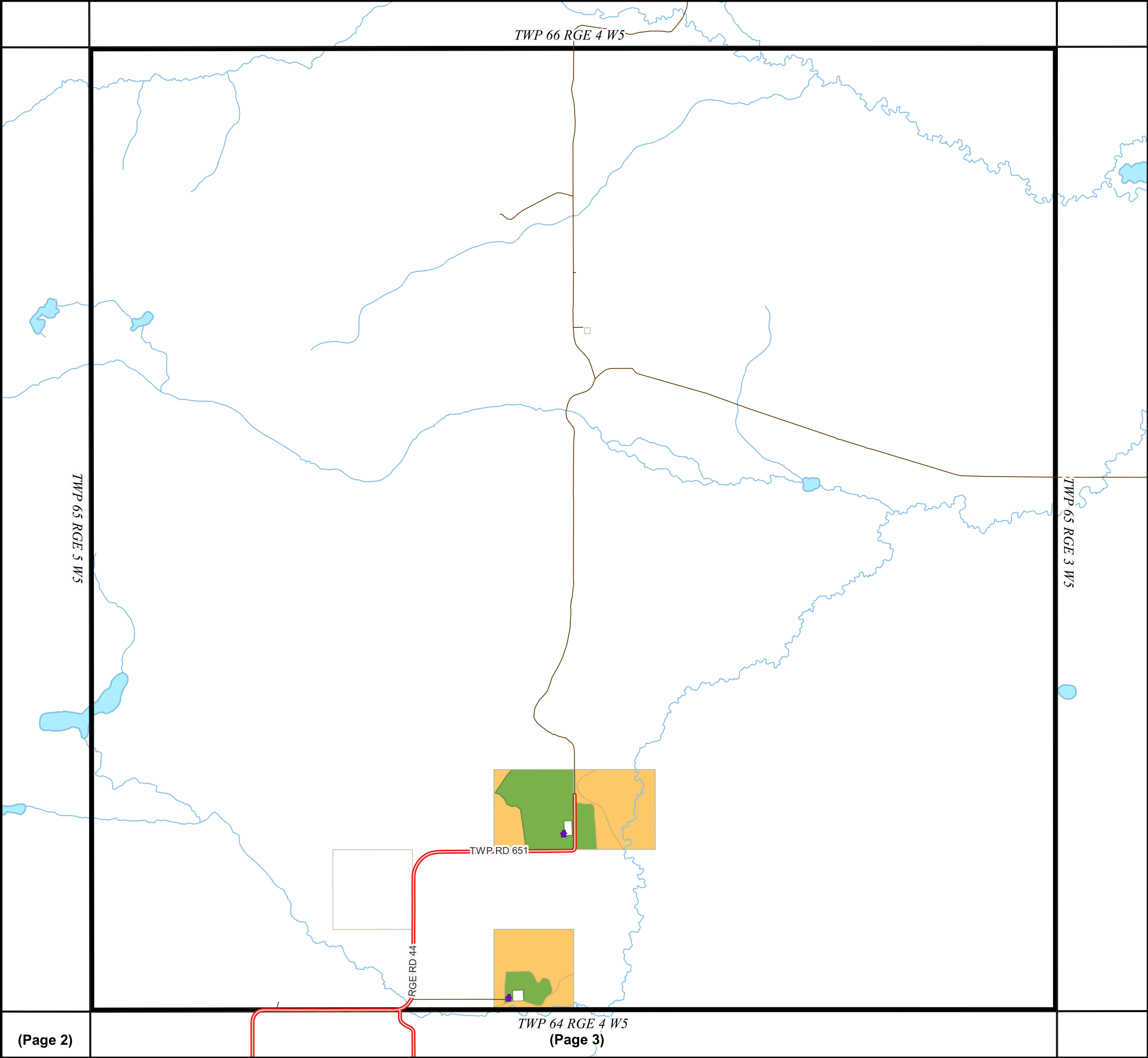
# Woodlands County Farmland Valuation Mapbook



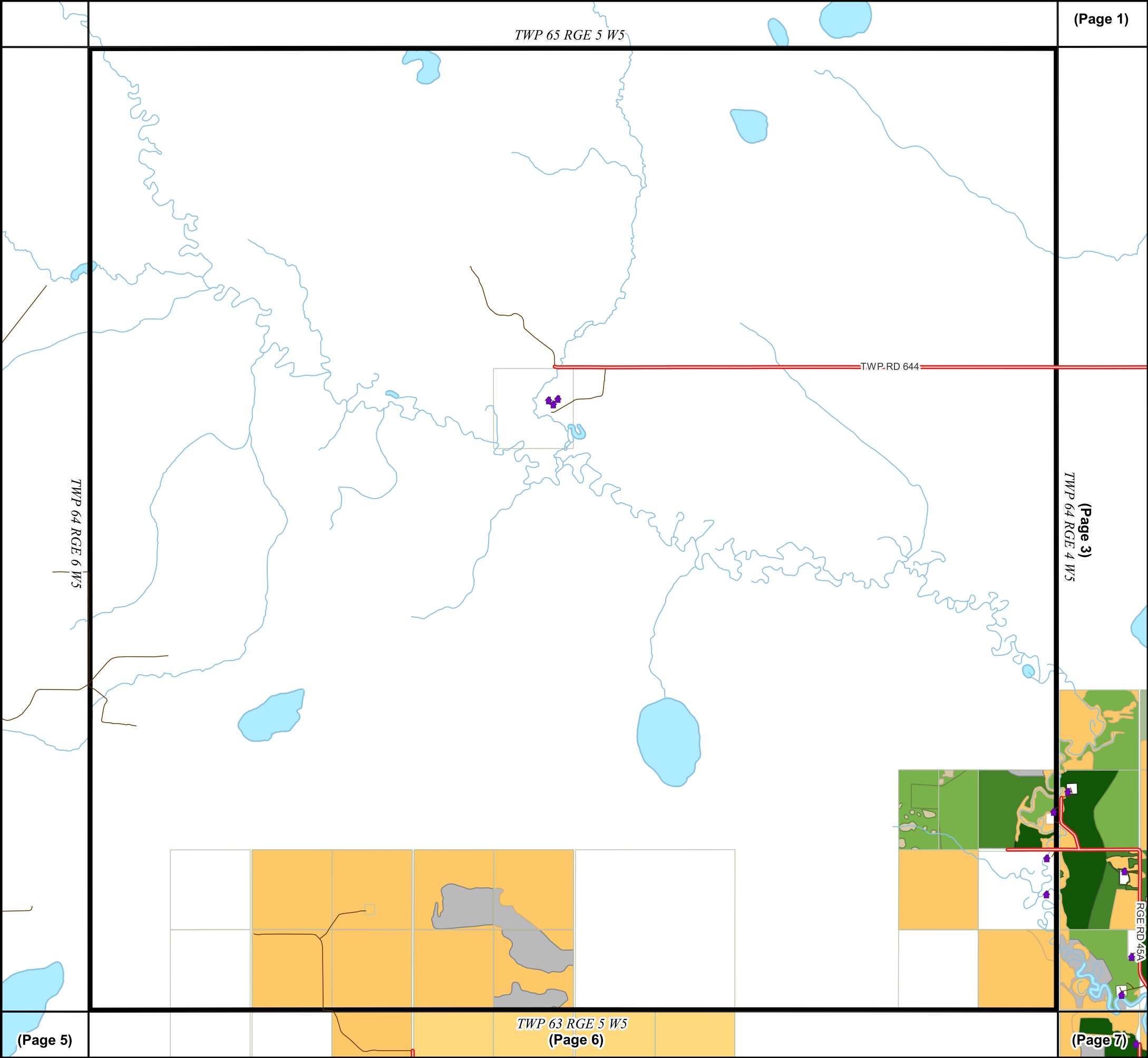
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May 24, 2023

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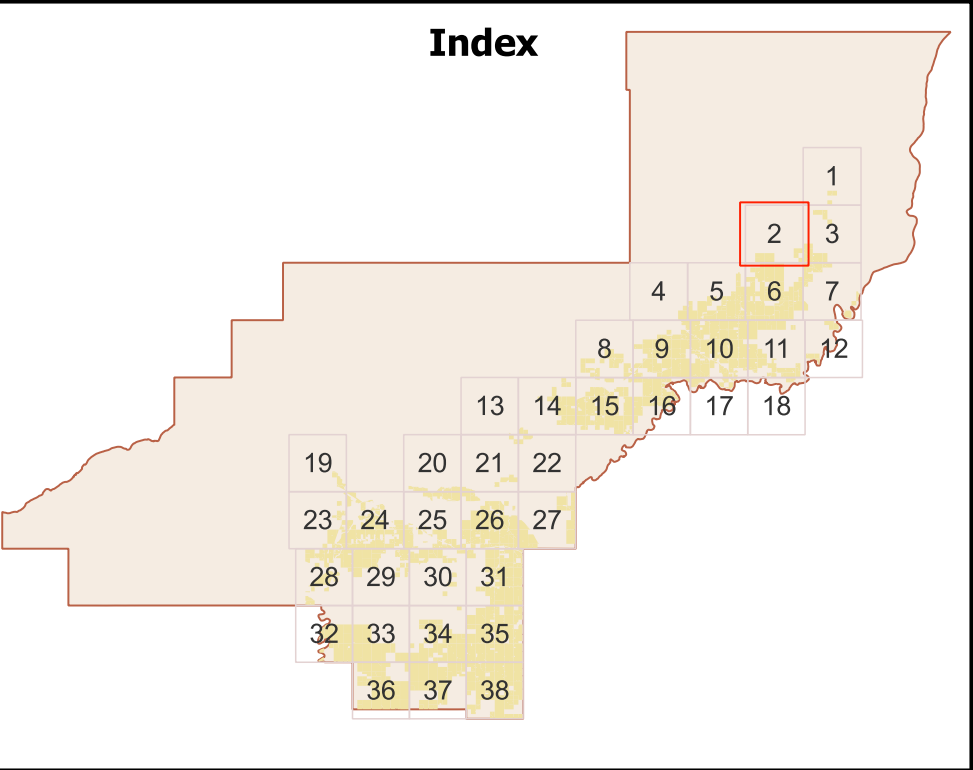








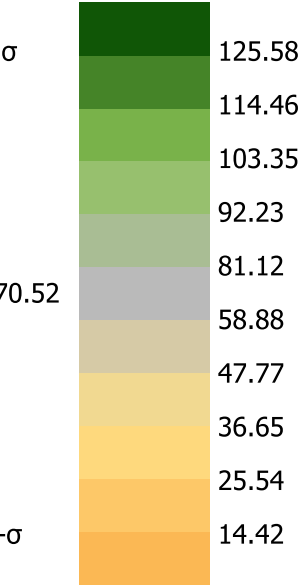
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### Farmland Valuation

#### Farmland Assessment Value (FAV)

\$ per acre



#### Highways

Paved

Gravel

#### Municipal Roads

Gravel

Oiled

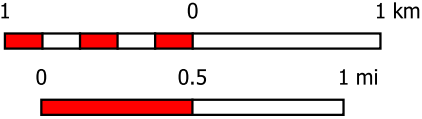
Paved

Private

#### Residences



#### Municipal Boundaries



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May 24, 2023

#### Page Name:

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#### Projection:

WGS 84 /  
Pseudo-Mercator

Prepared By

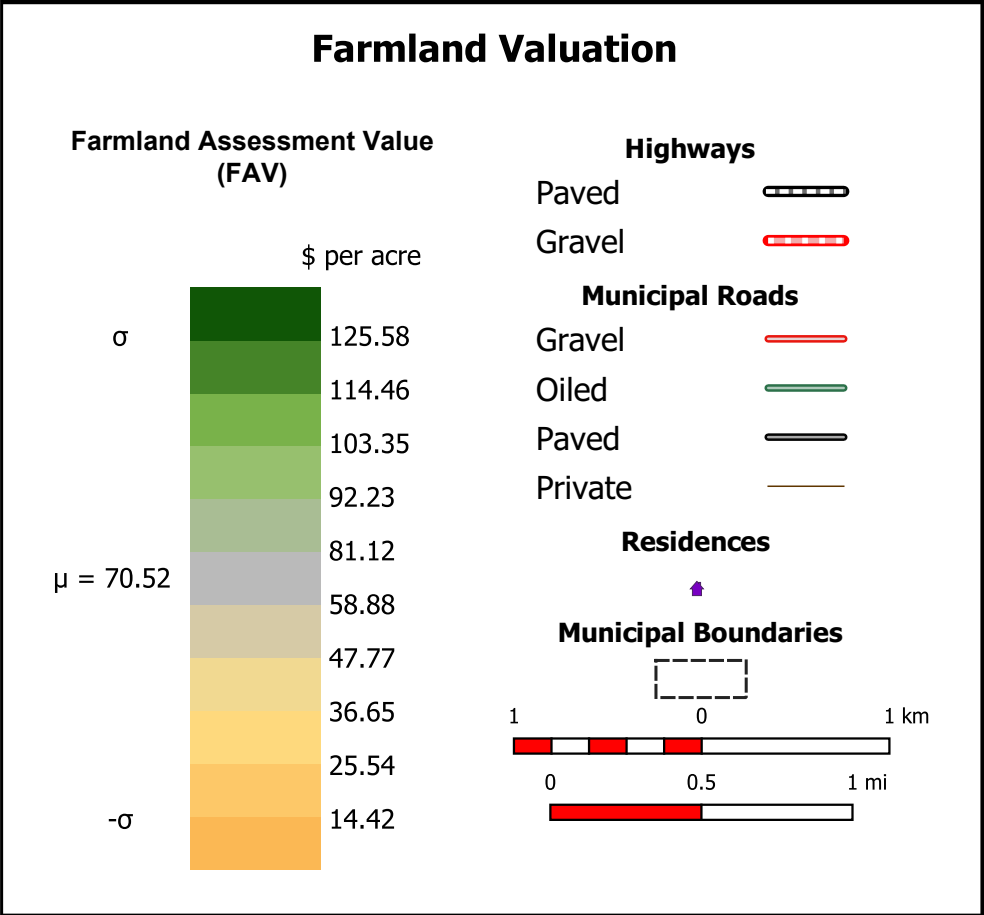
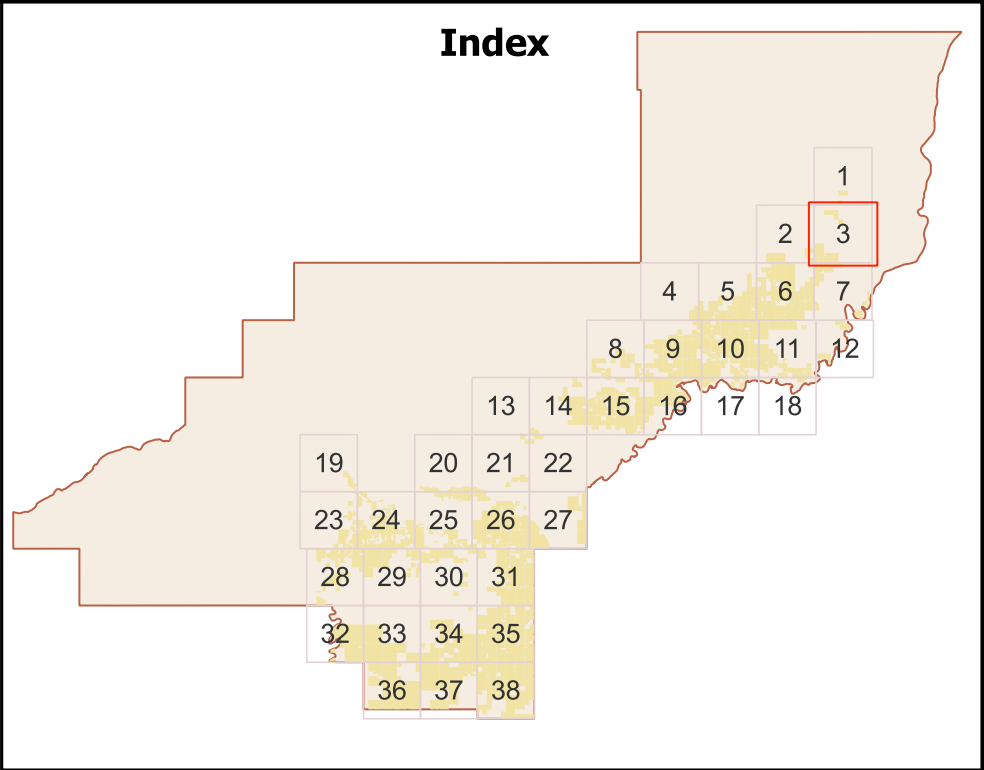
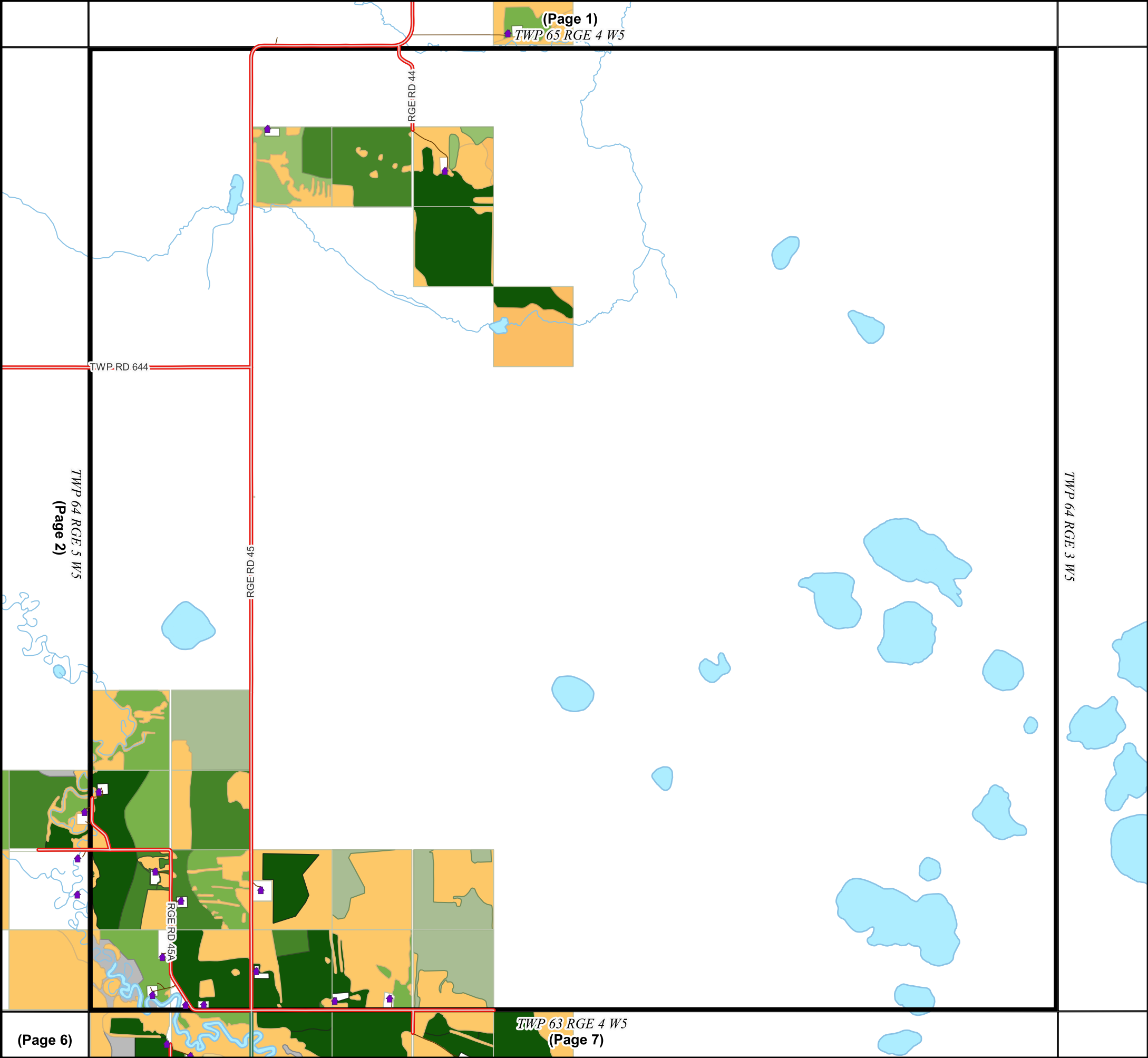
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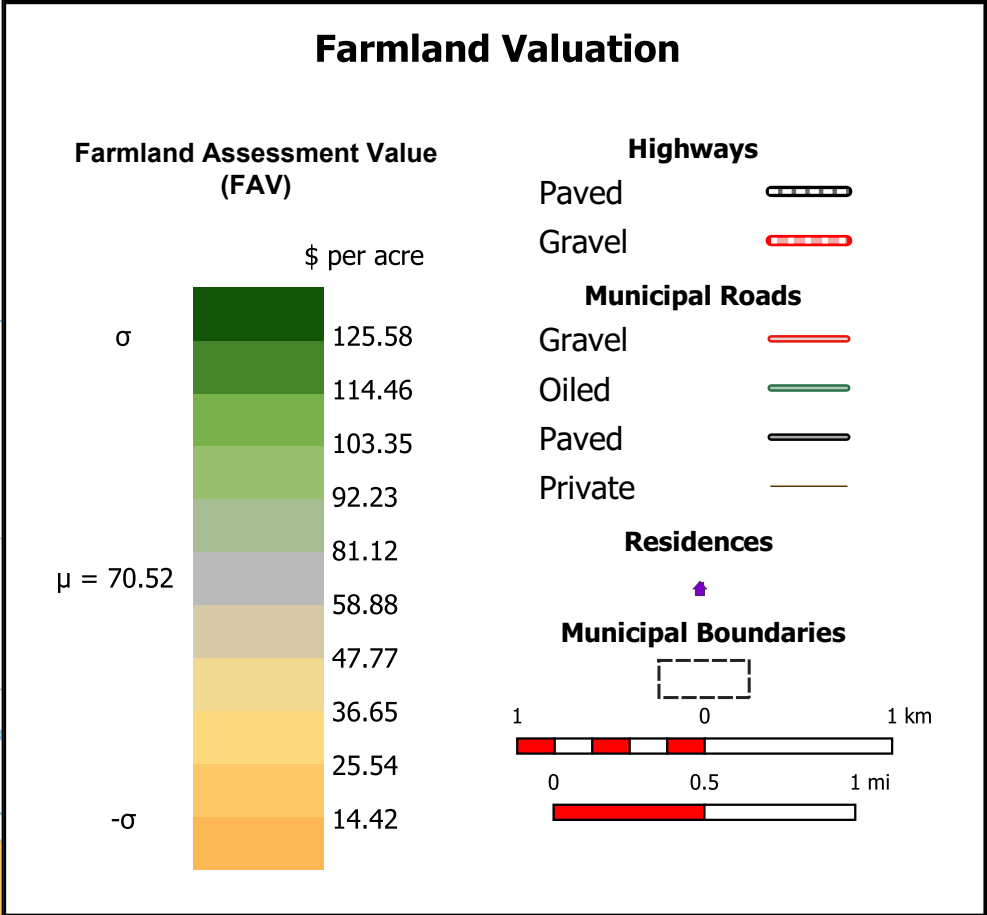
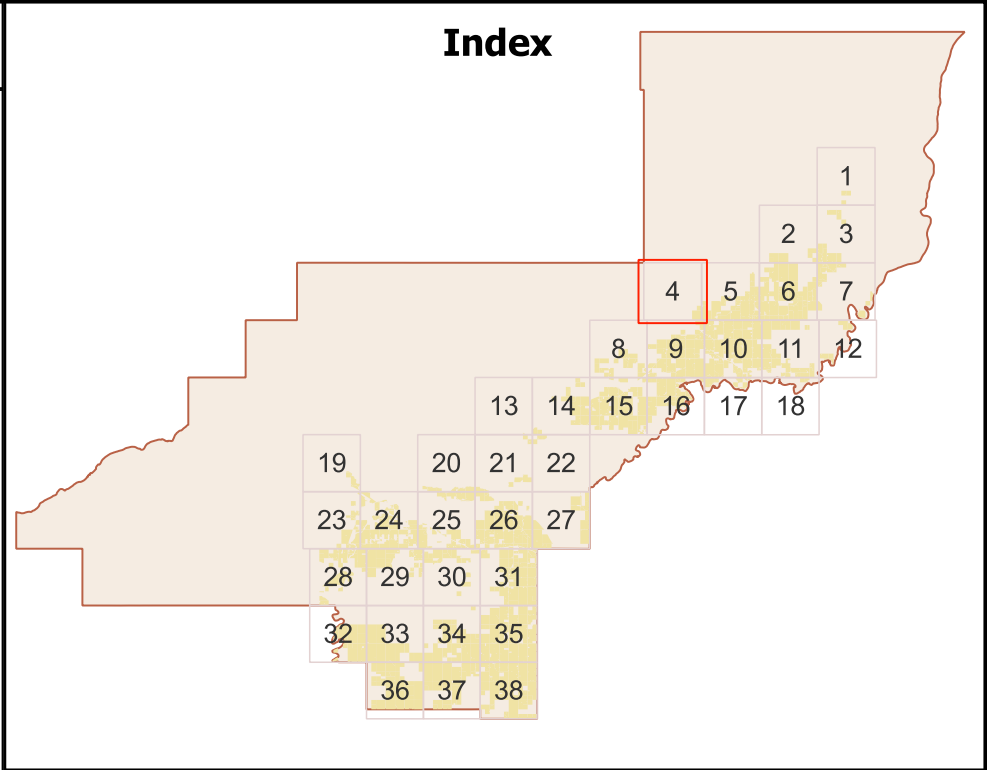
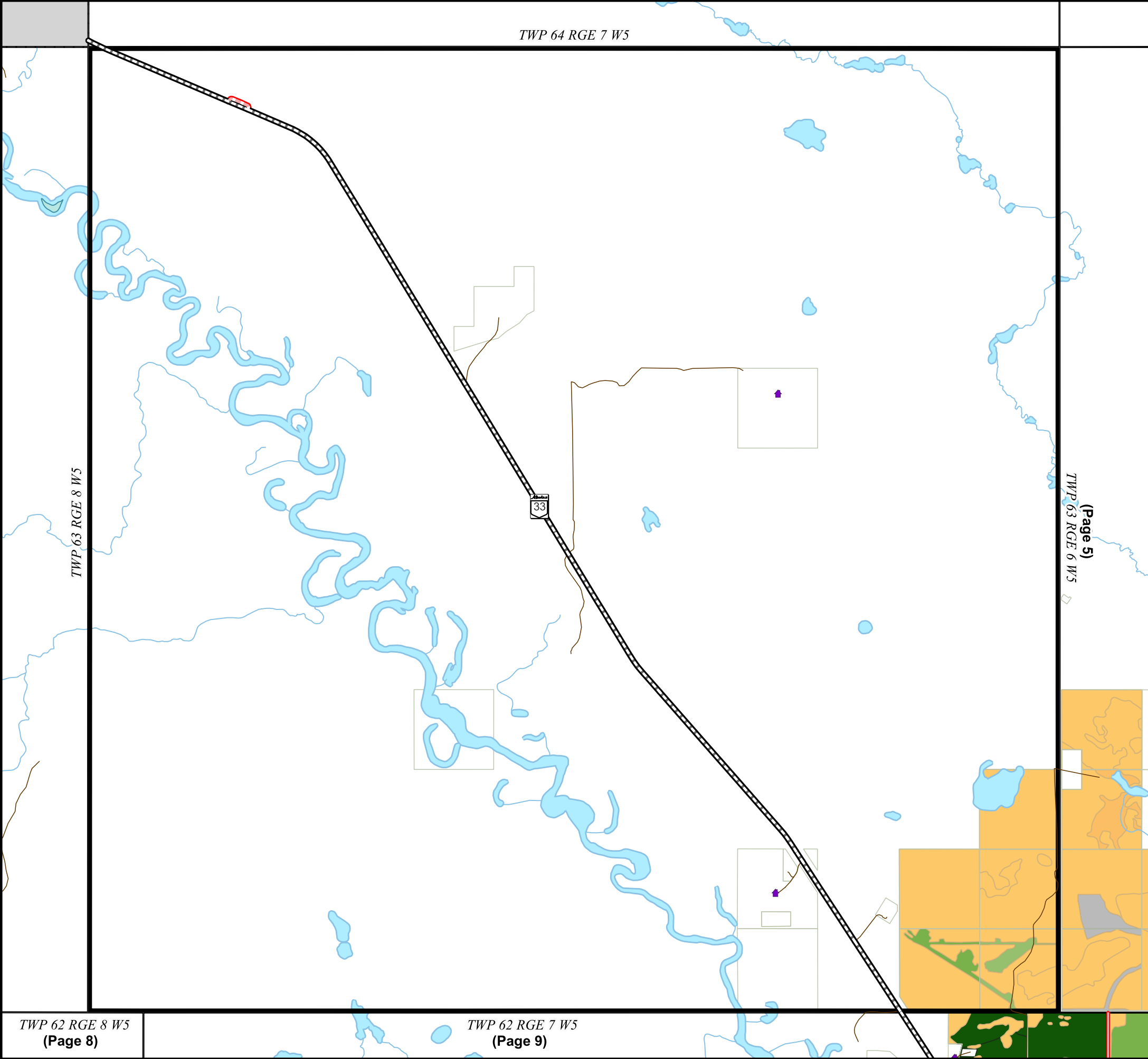
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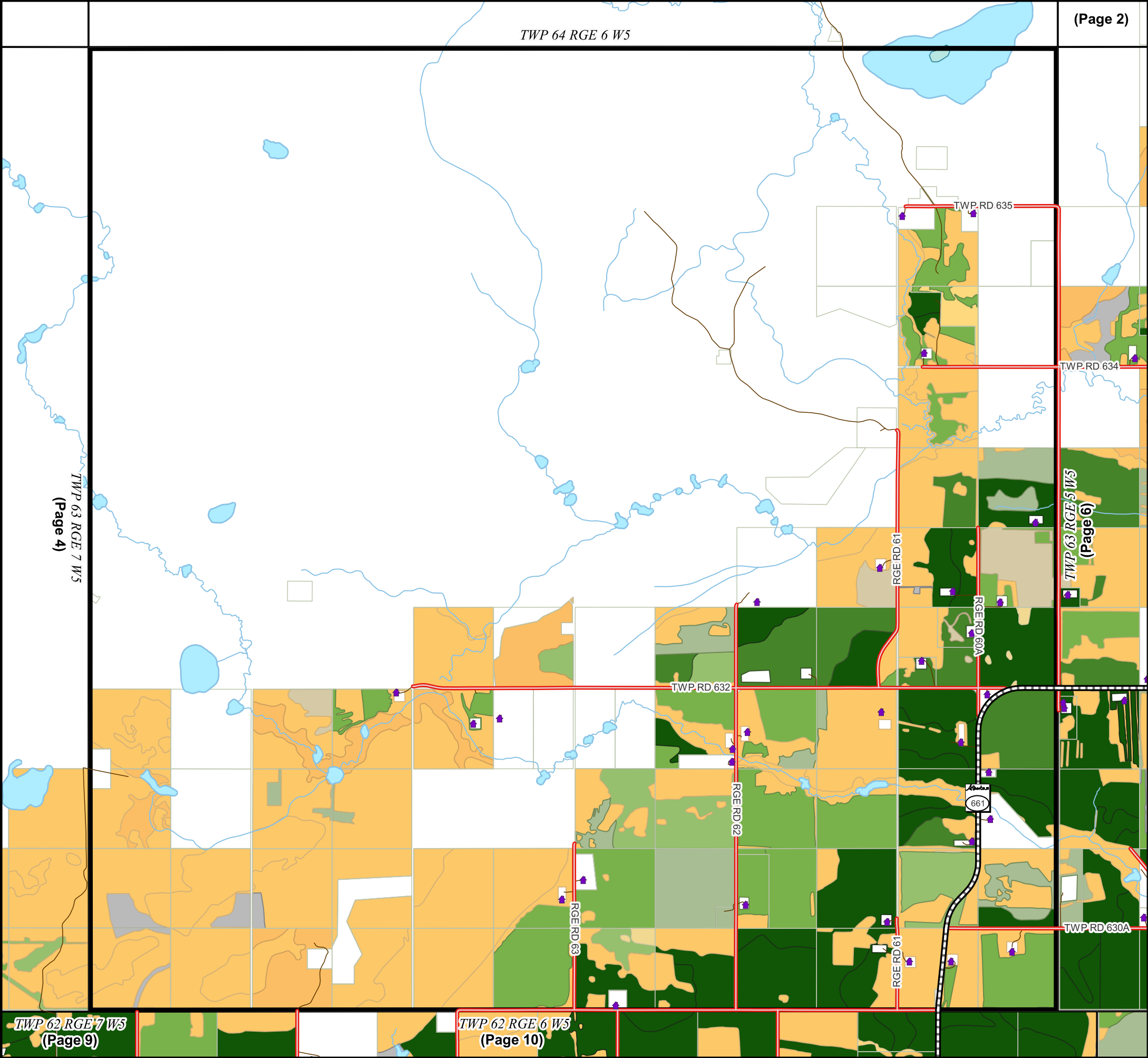
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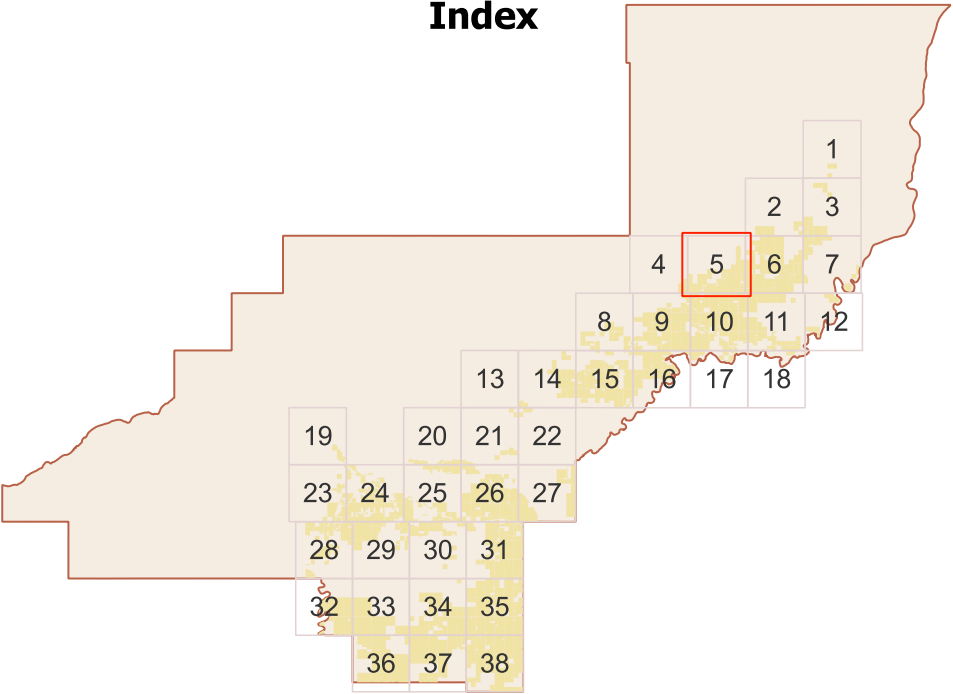


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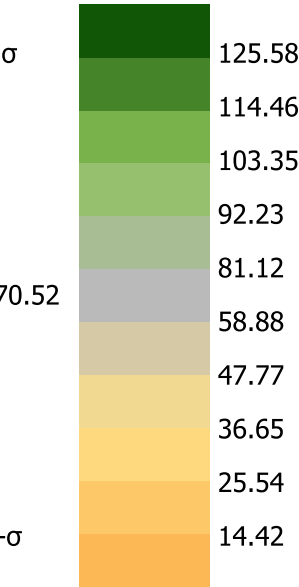
Index



Farmland Valuation

Farmland Assessment Value (FAV)

\$ per acre



Highways

Paved



Gravel



Municipal Roads

Gravel



Oiled



Paved



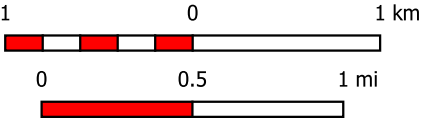
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Residences



Municipal Boundaries



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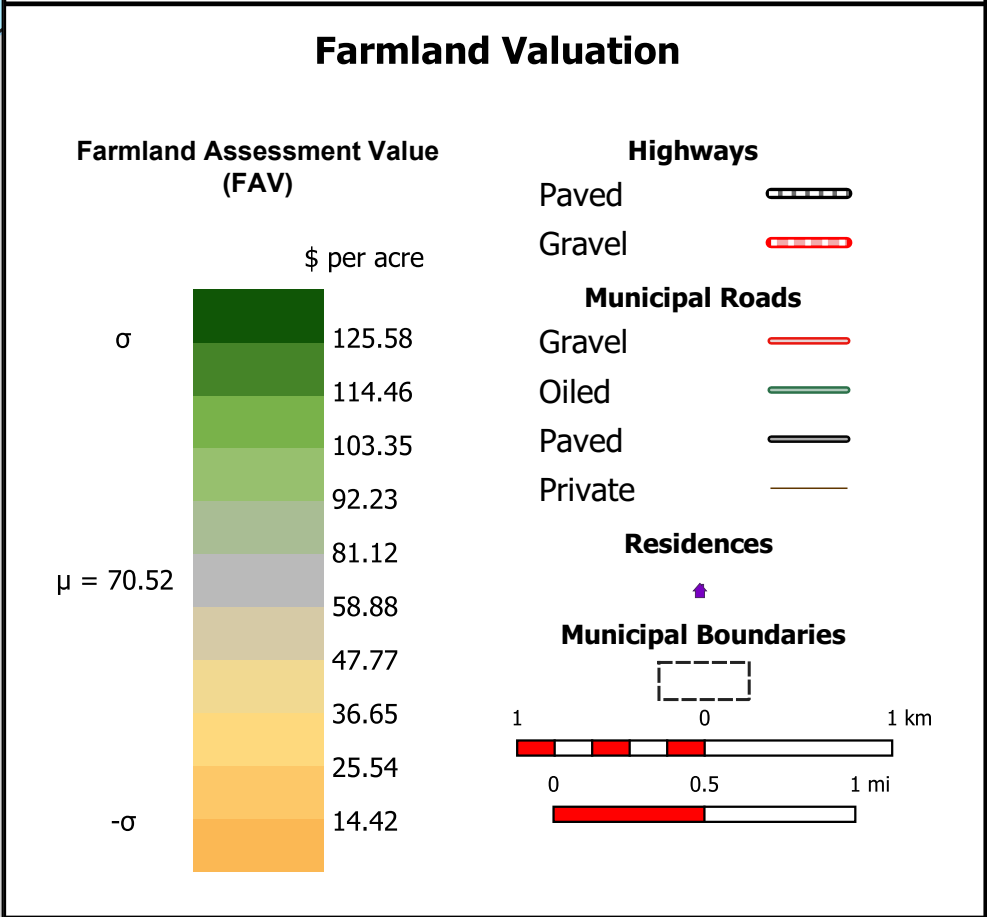
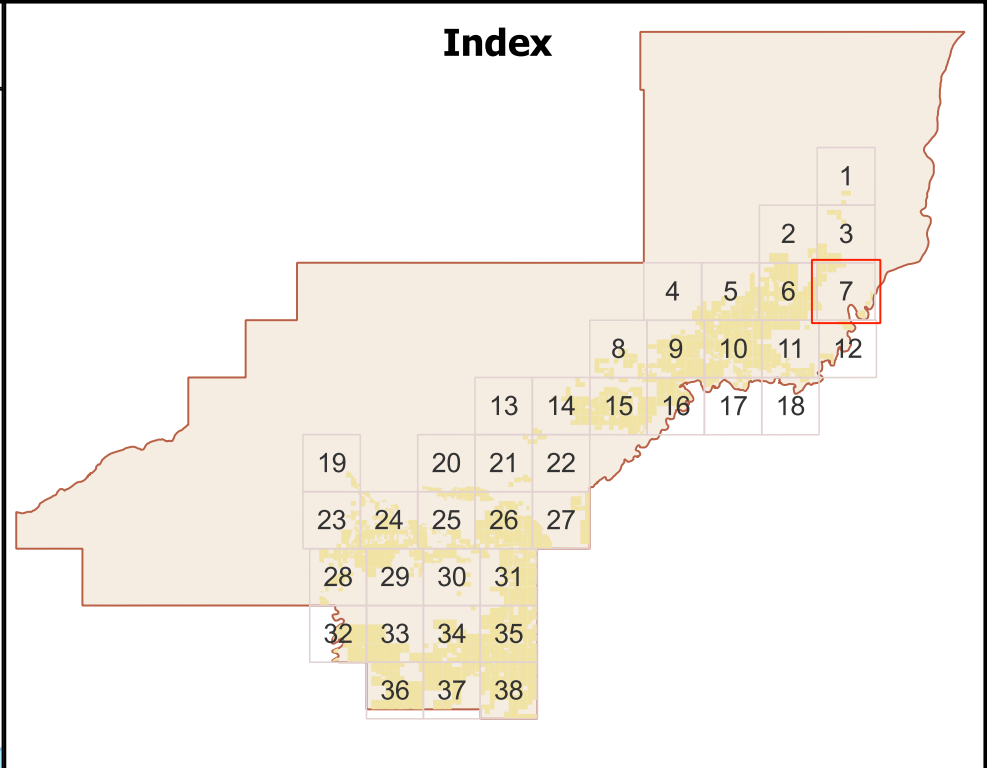
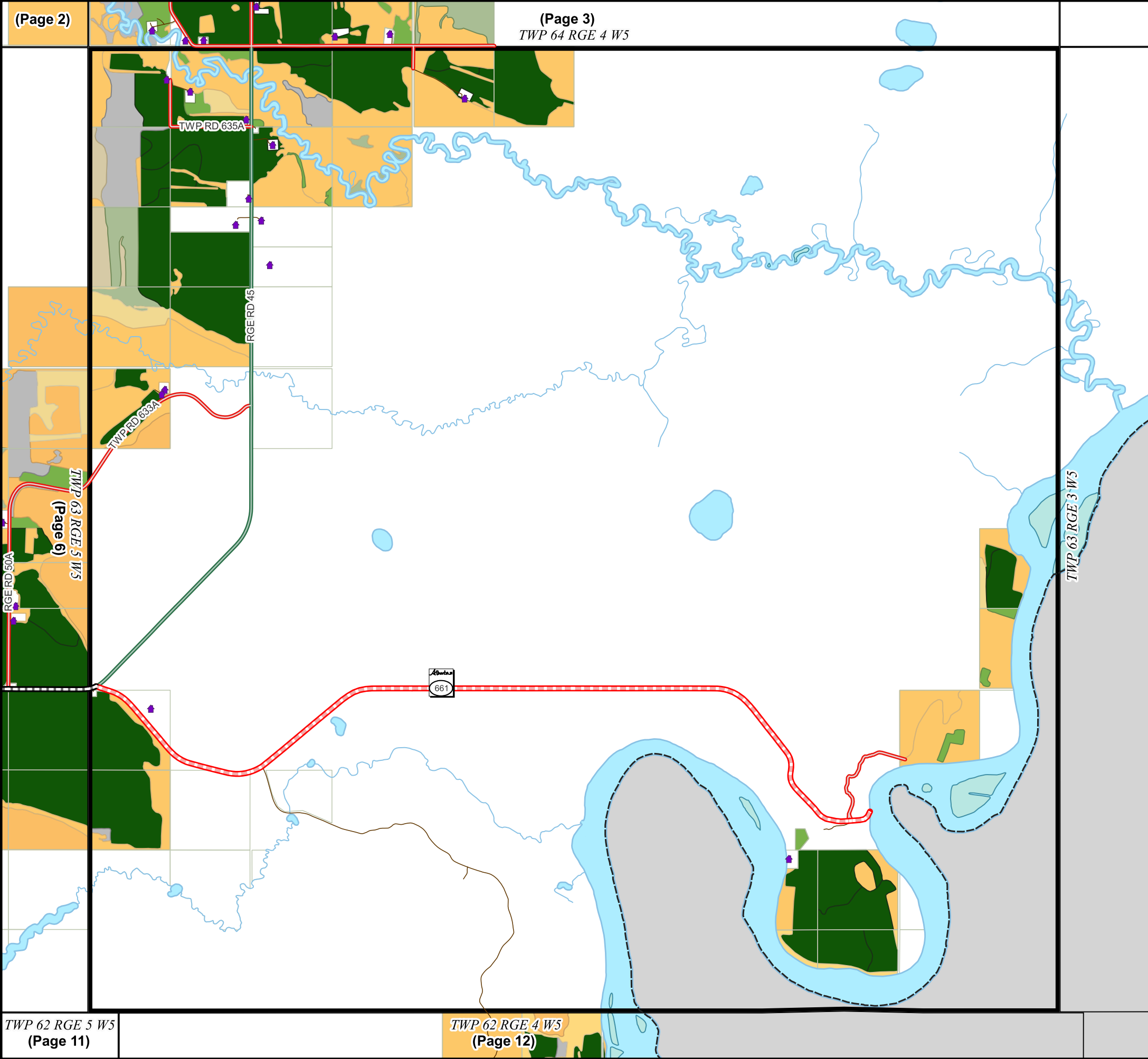
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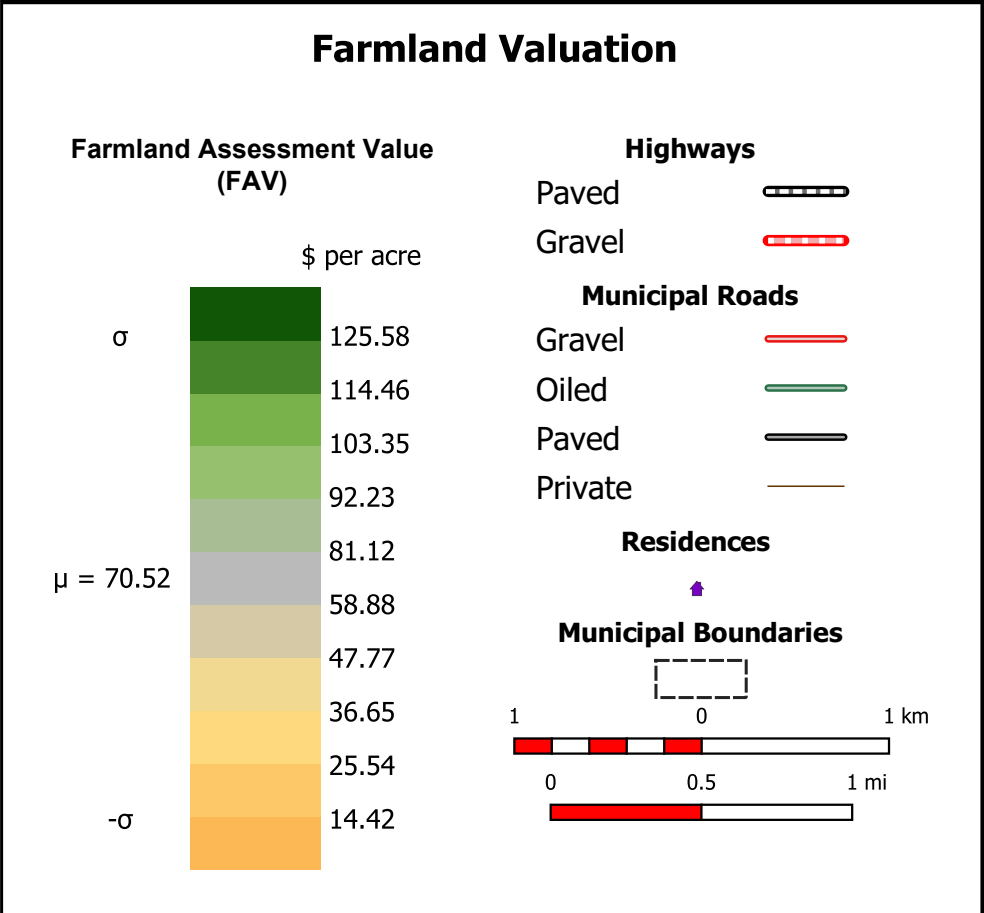
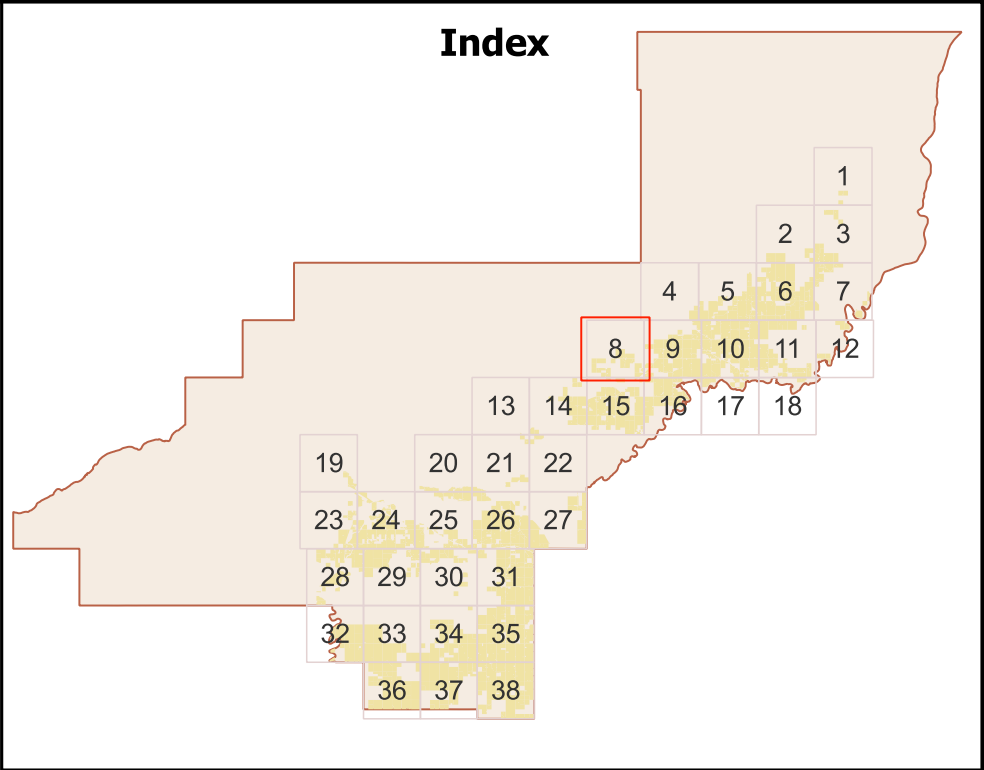
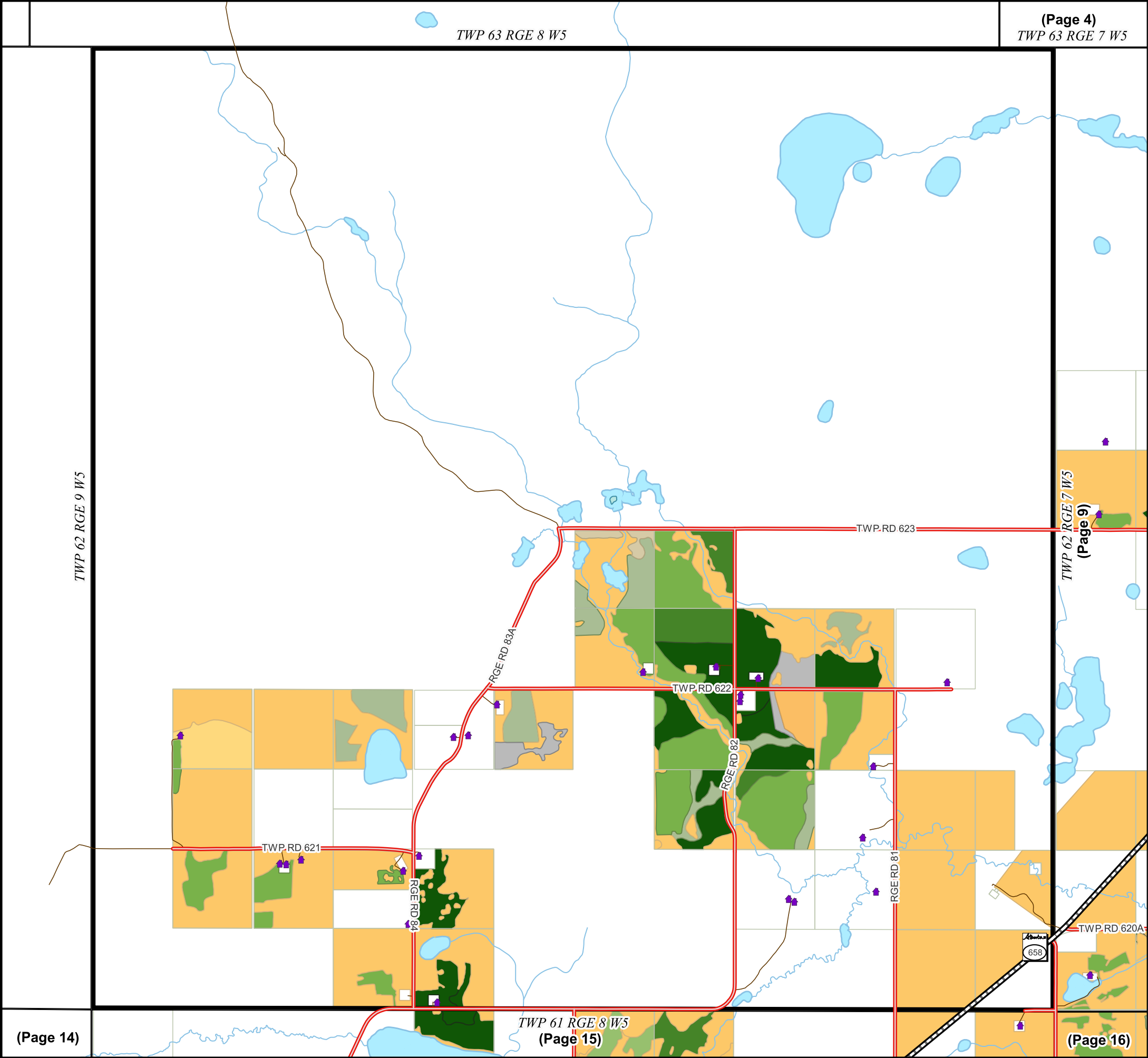
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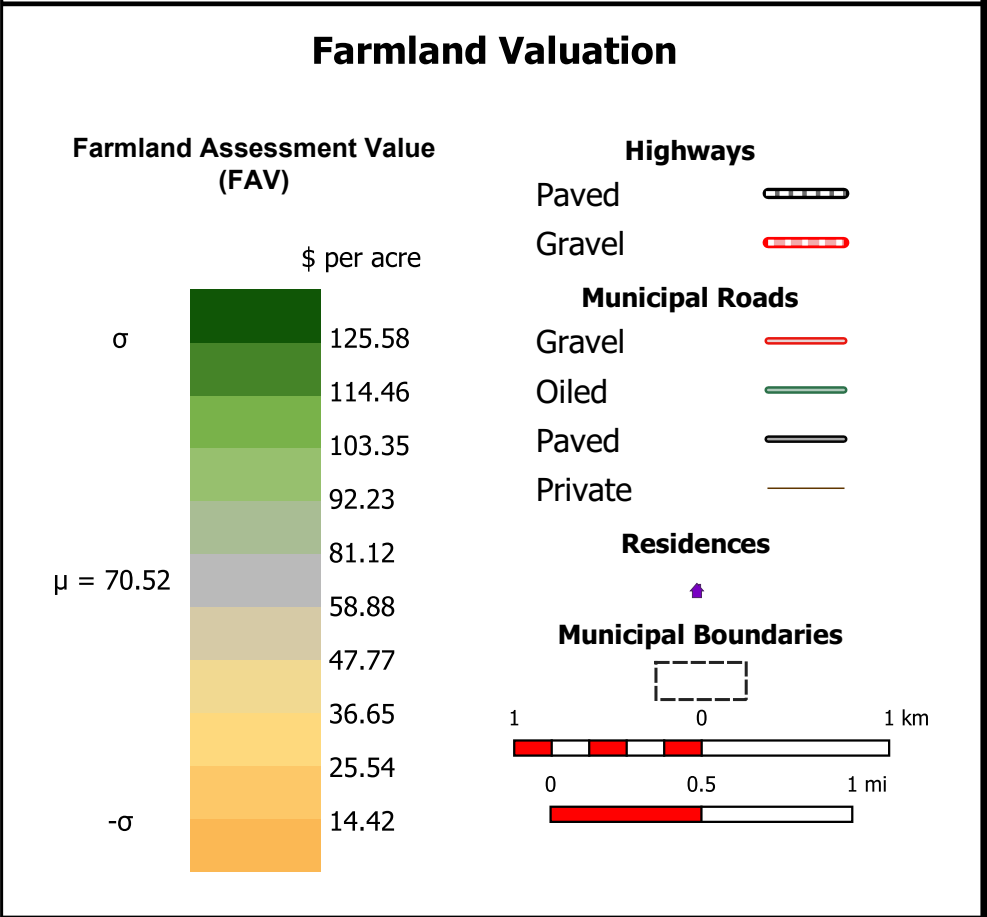
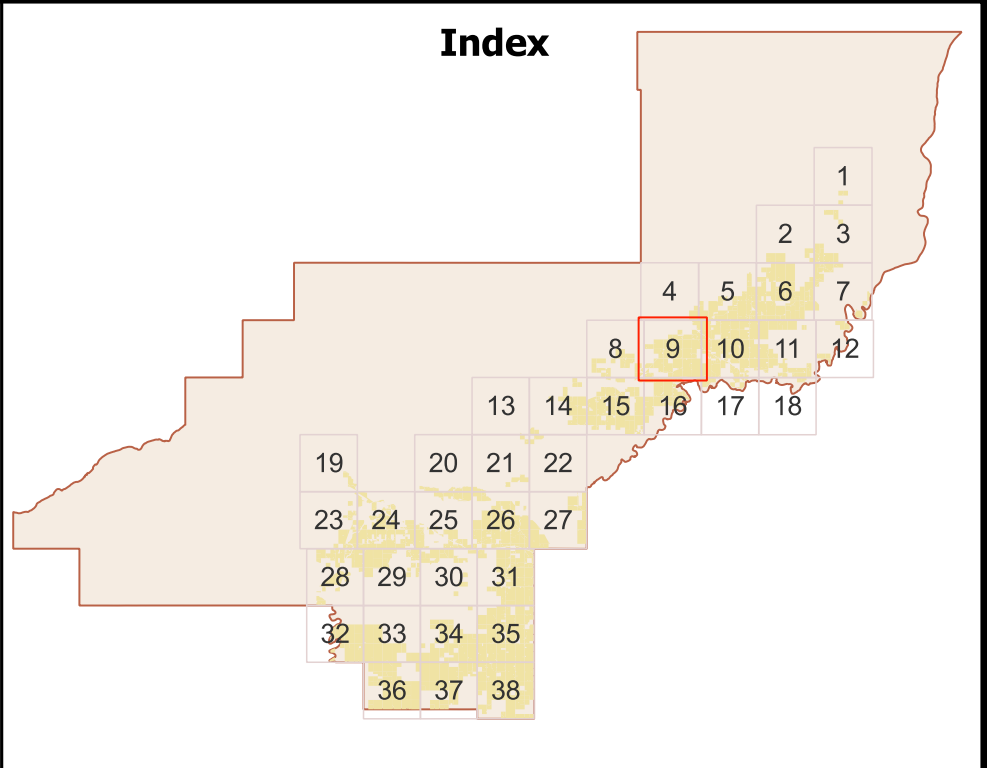
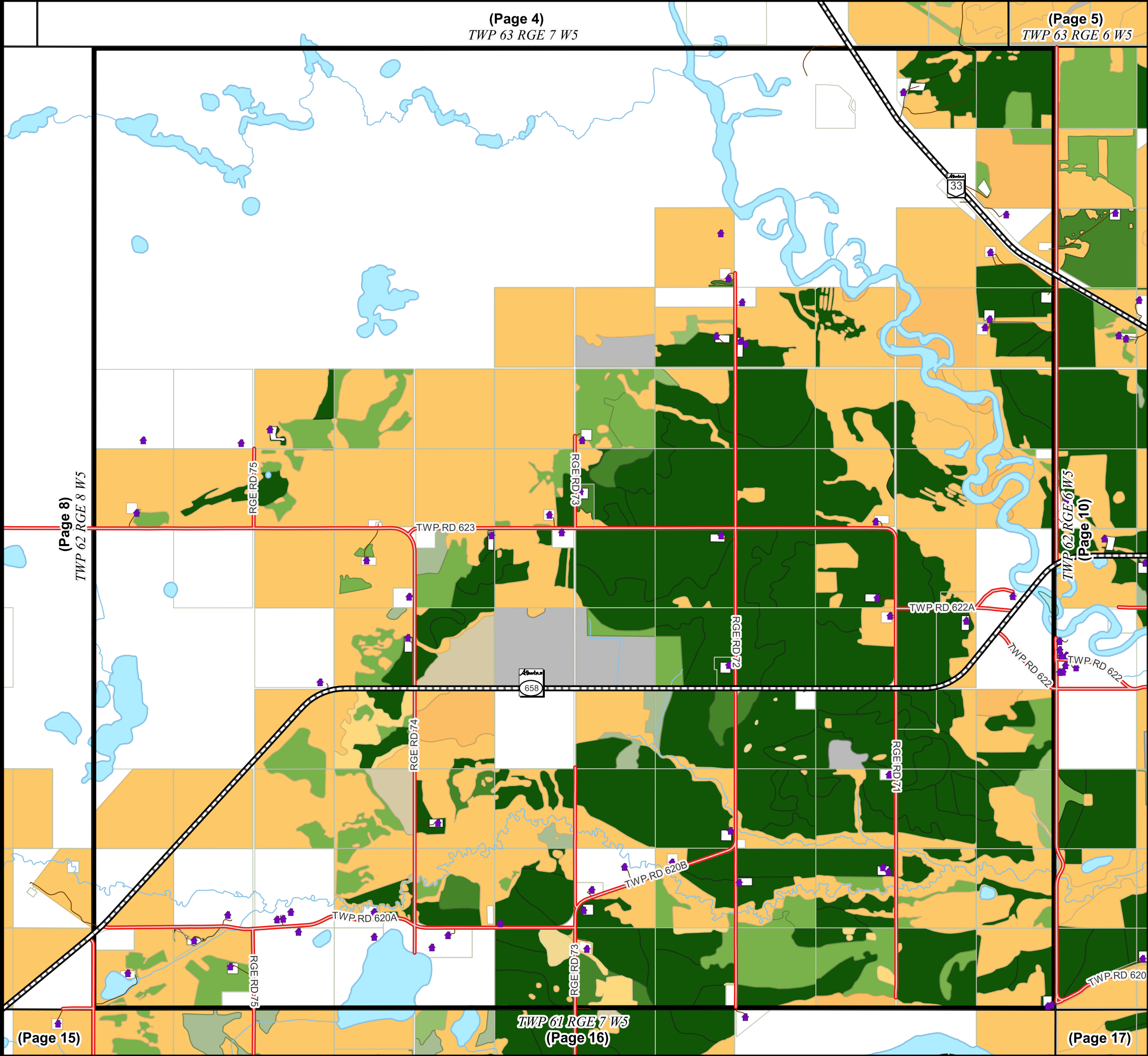


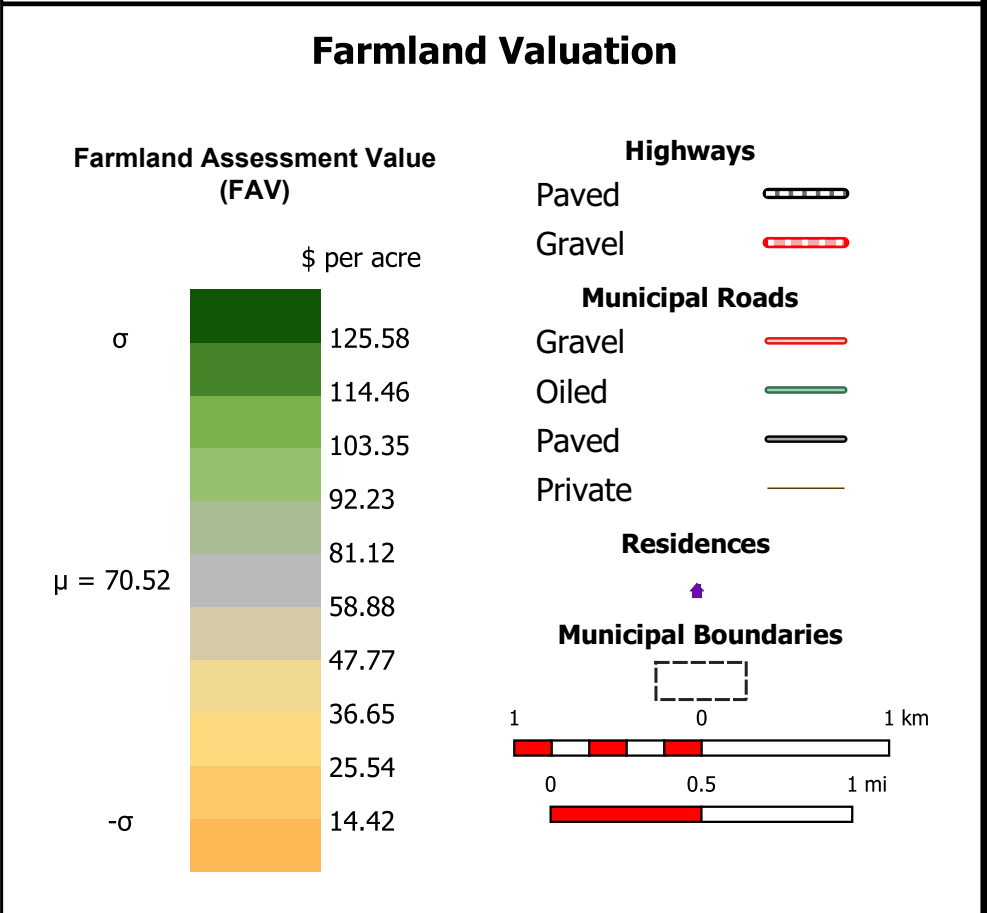
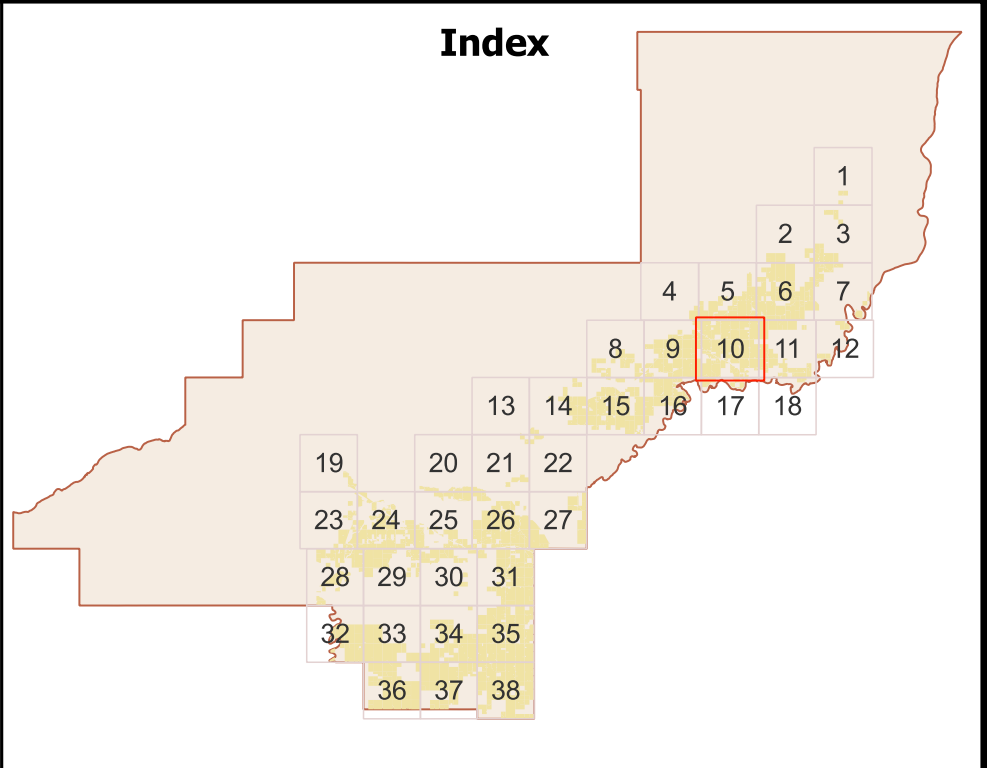
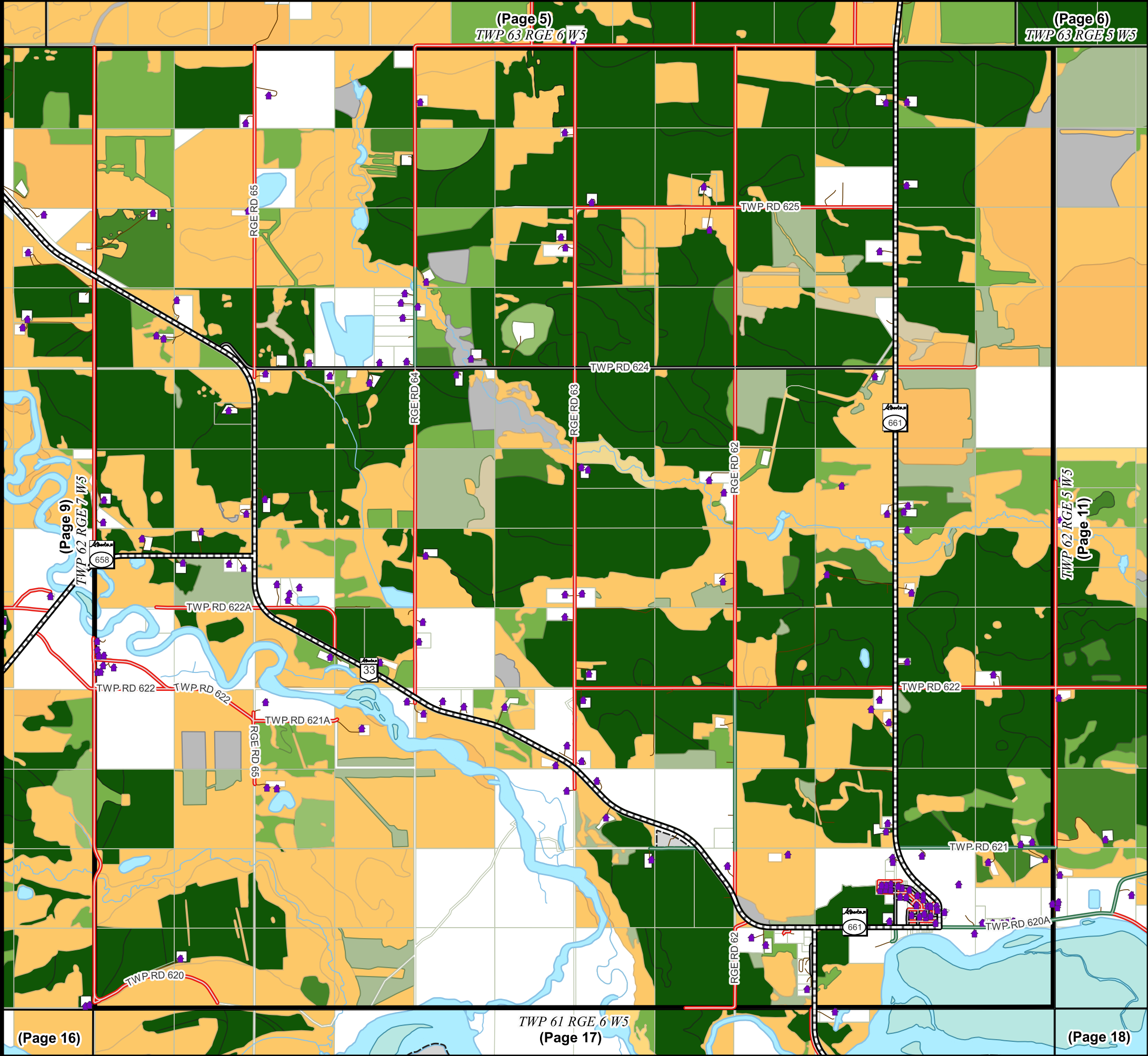







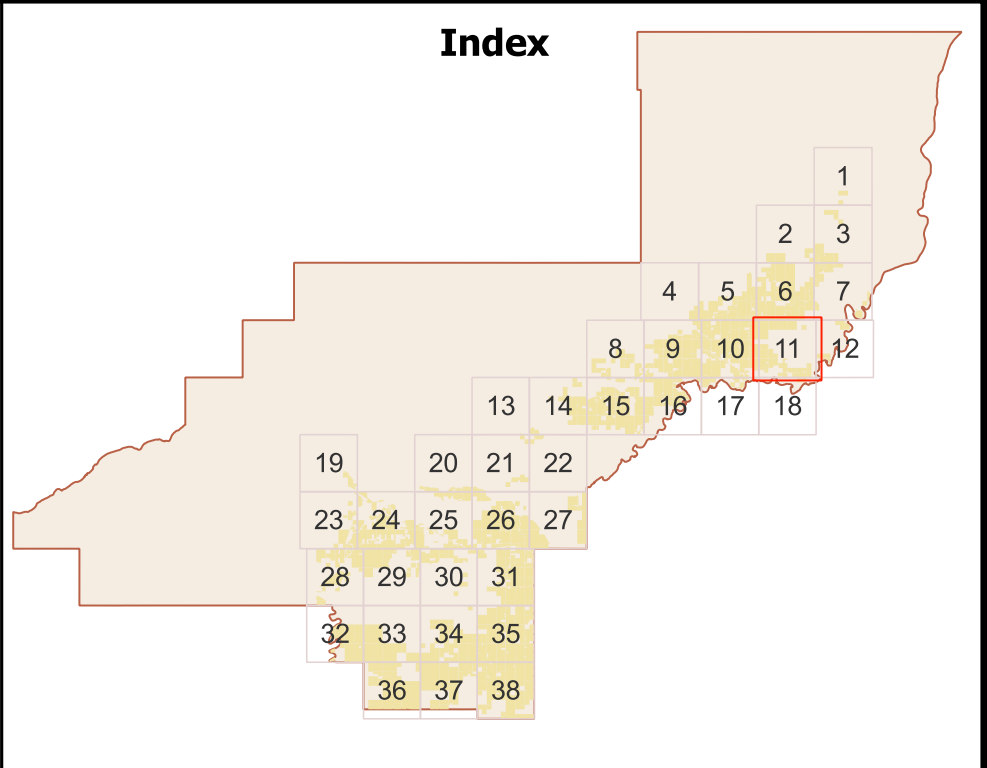
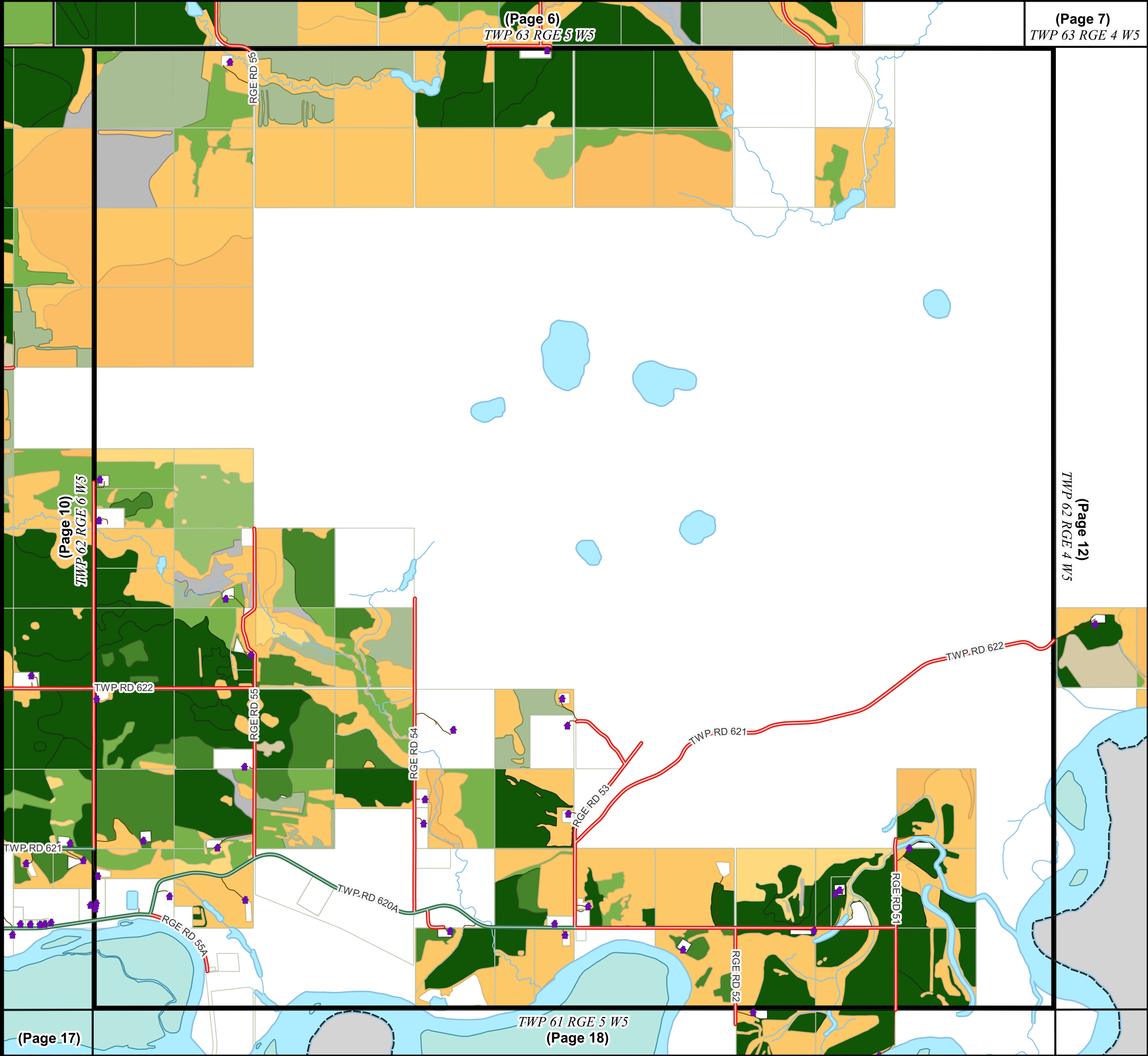






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### Farmland Valuation

**Farmland Assessment Value (FAV)**

\$ per acre

$\sigma$

$\mu = 70.52$

$-\sigma$

|        |
|--------|
| 125.58 |
| 114.46 |
| 103.35 |
| 92.23  |
| 81.12  |
| 58.88  |
| 47.77  |
| 36.65  |
| 25.54  |
| 14.42  |

**Highways**

Paved

Gravel

**Municipal Roads**

Gravel

Oiled

Paved

Private

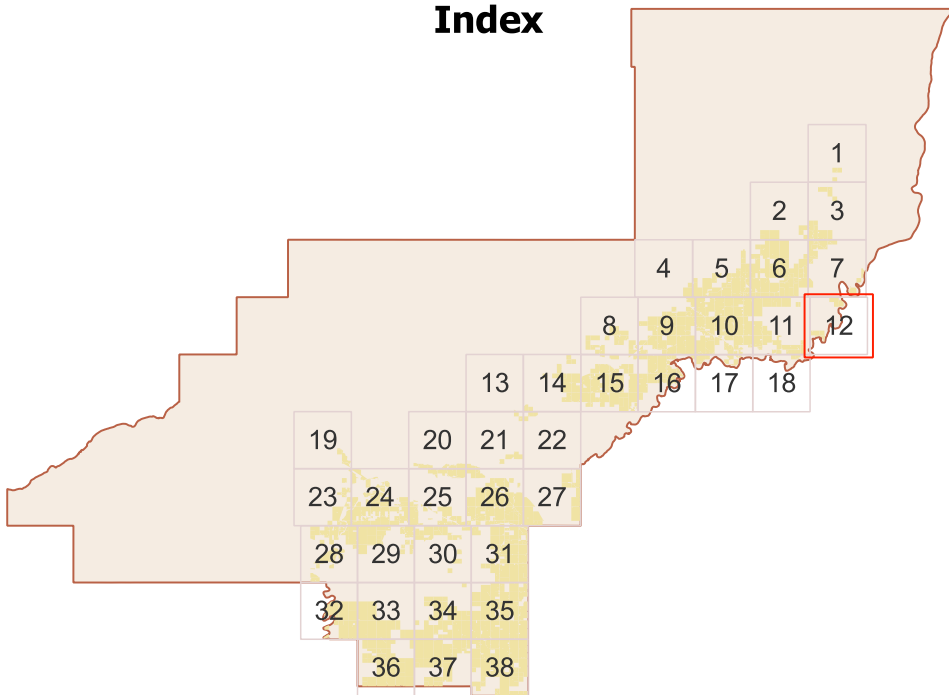
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**Municipal Boundaries**

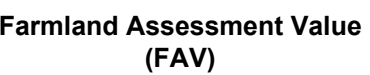
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0 0.5 1 mi

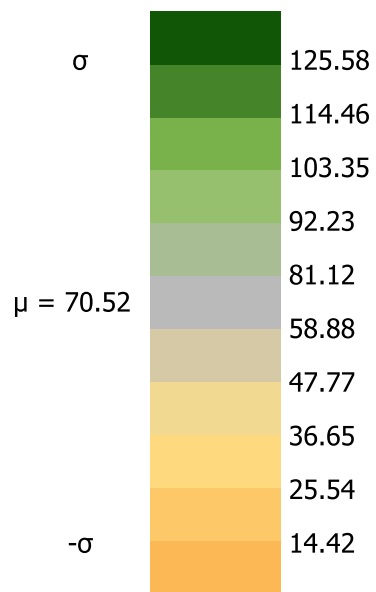
# Index



## Farmland Valuation



\$ per acre



## Highways

Paved



Gravel



## Municipal Roads

Gravel



Oiled



Paved



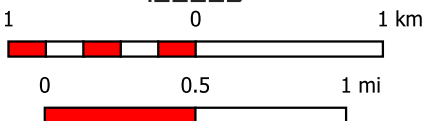
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## Residences



## Municipal Boundaries



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## Projection

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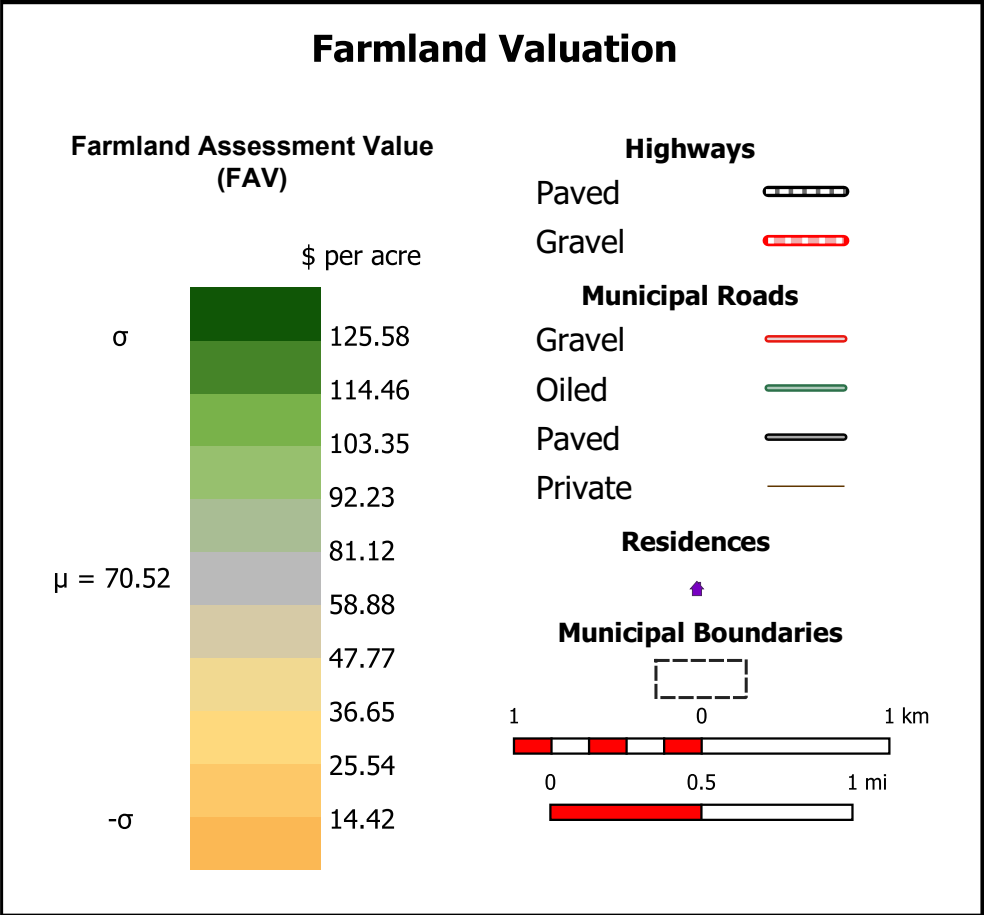
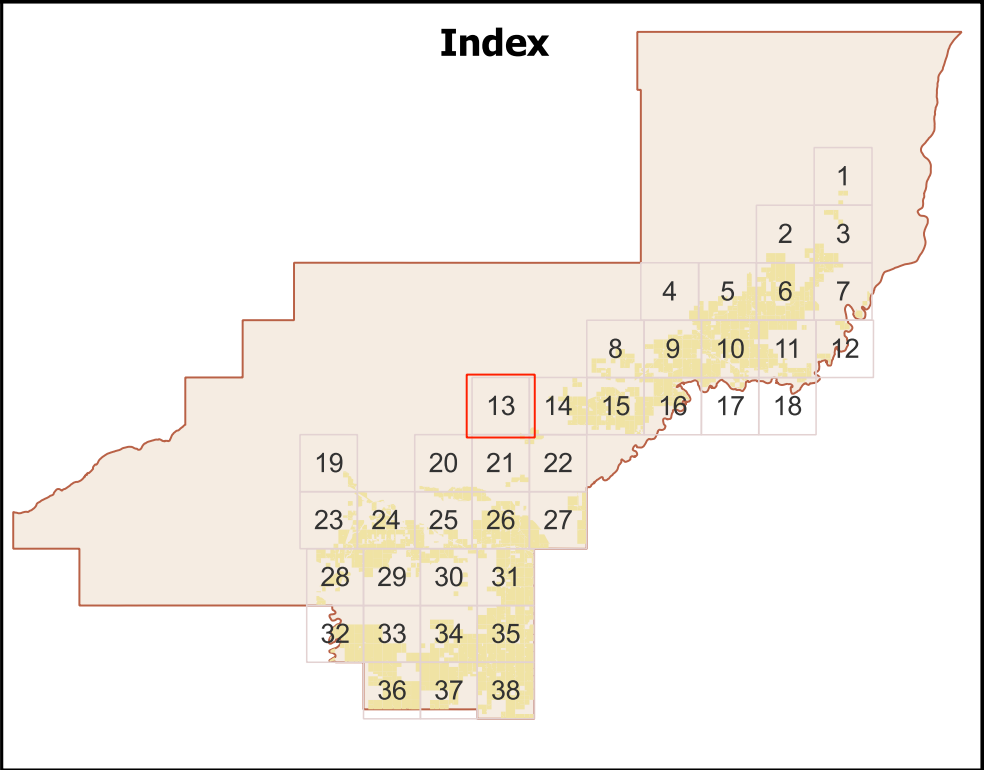
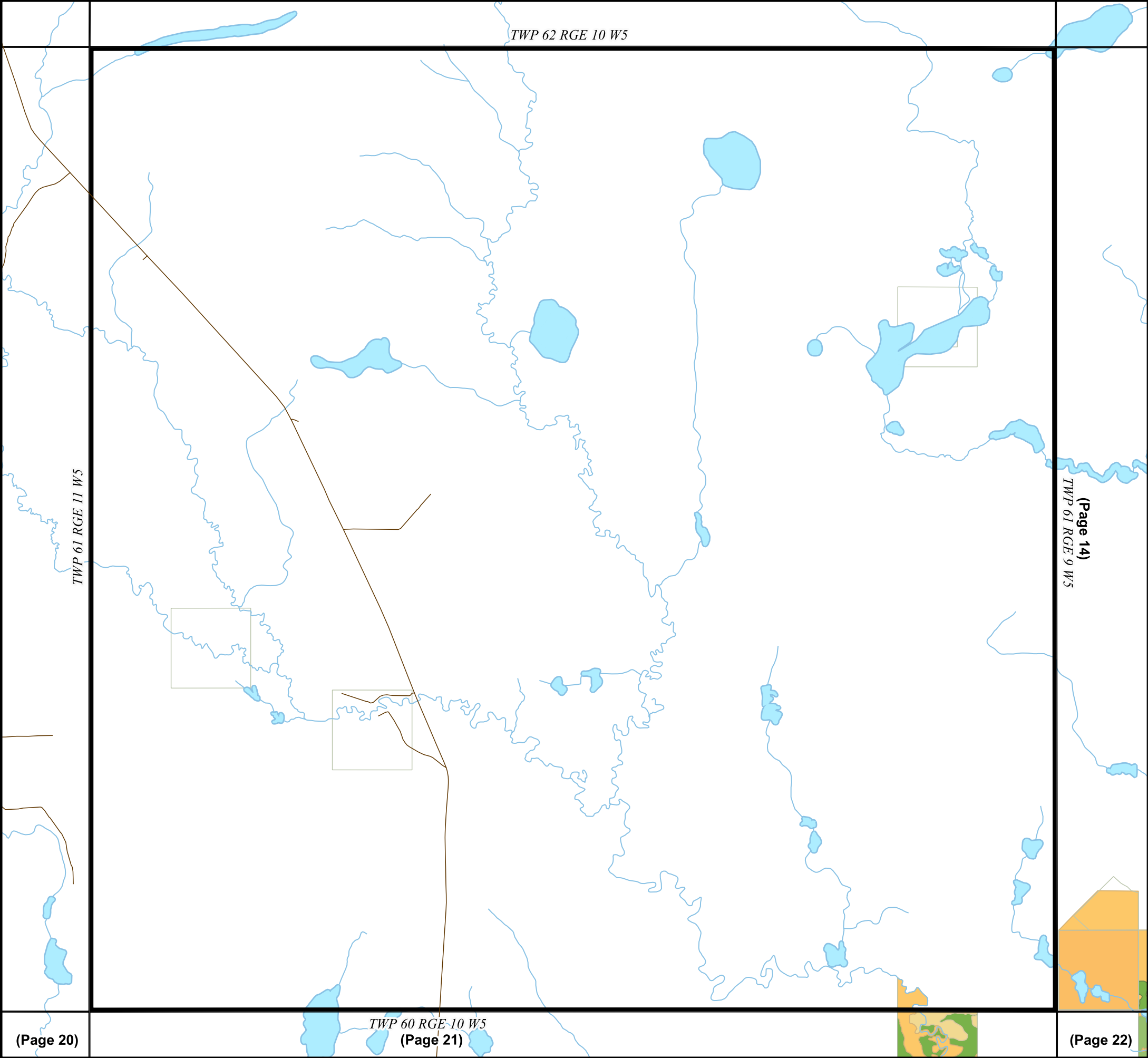
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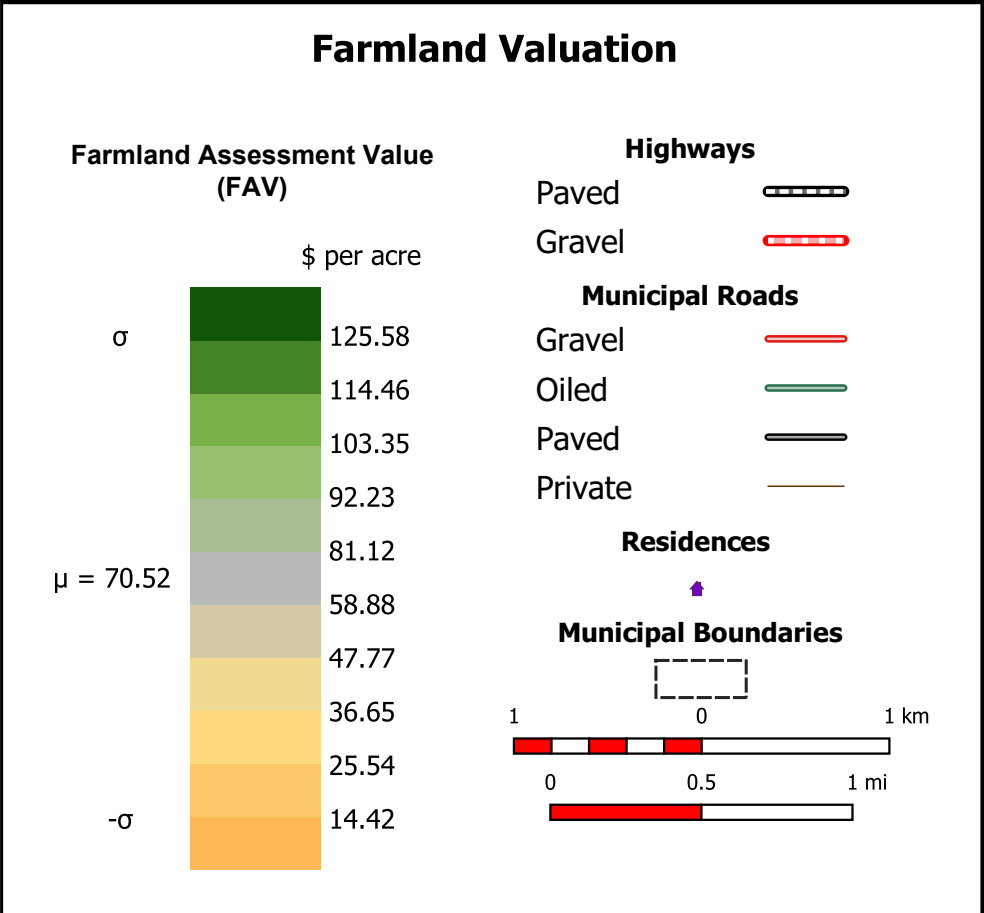
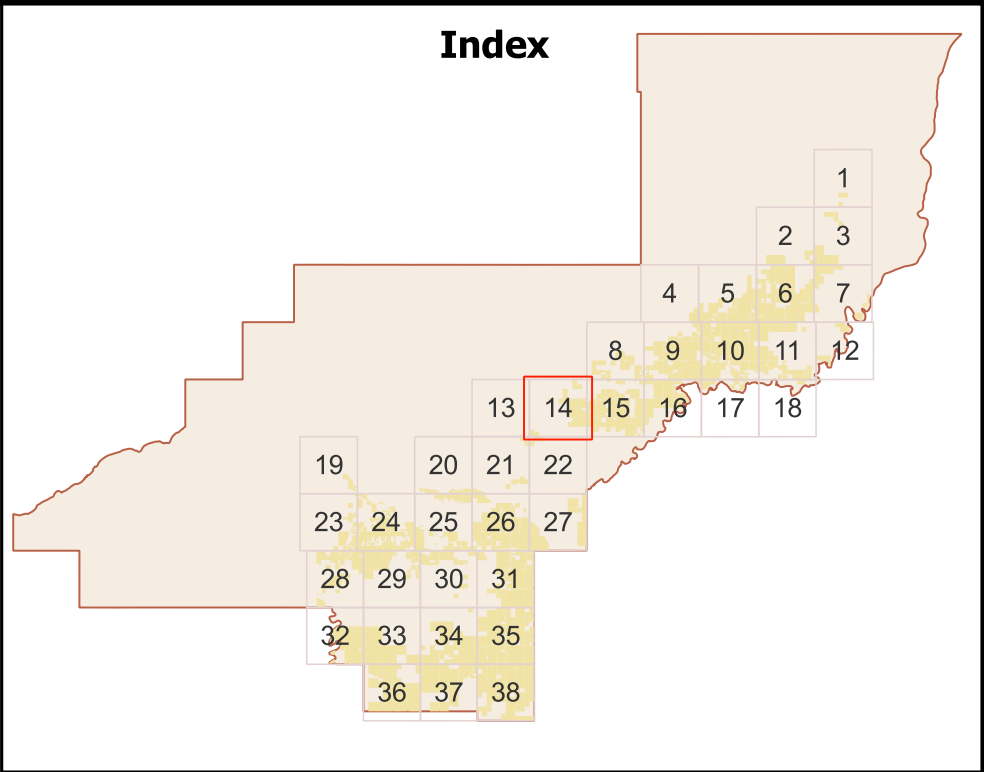
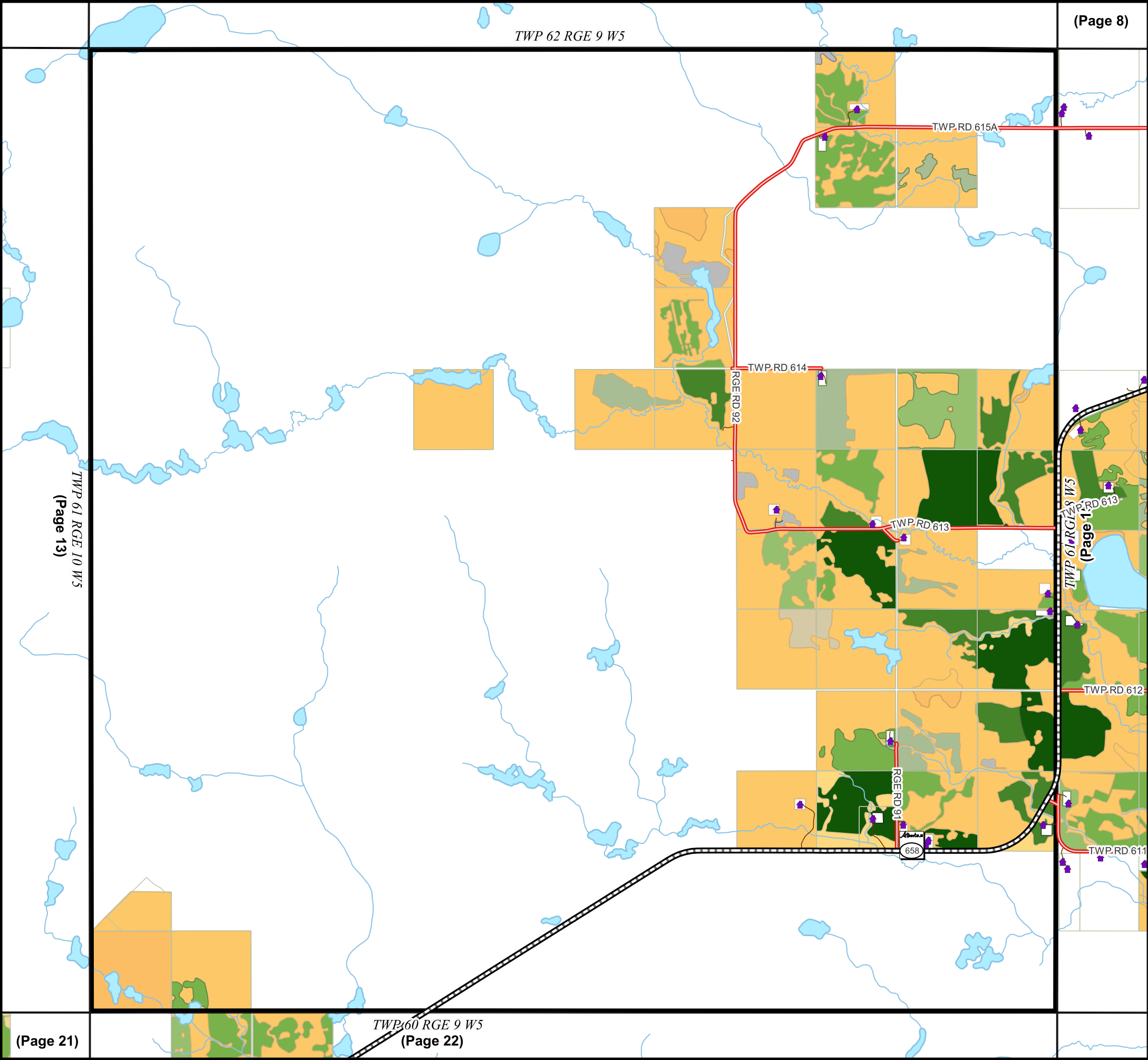
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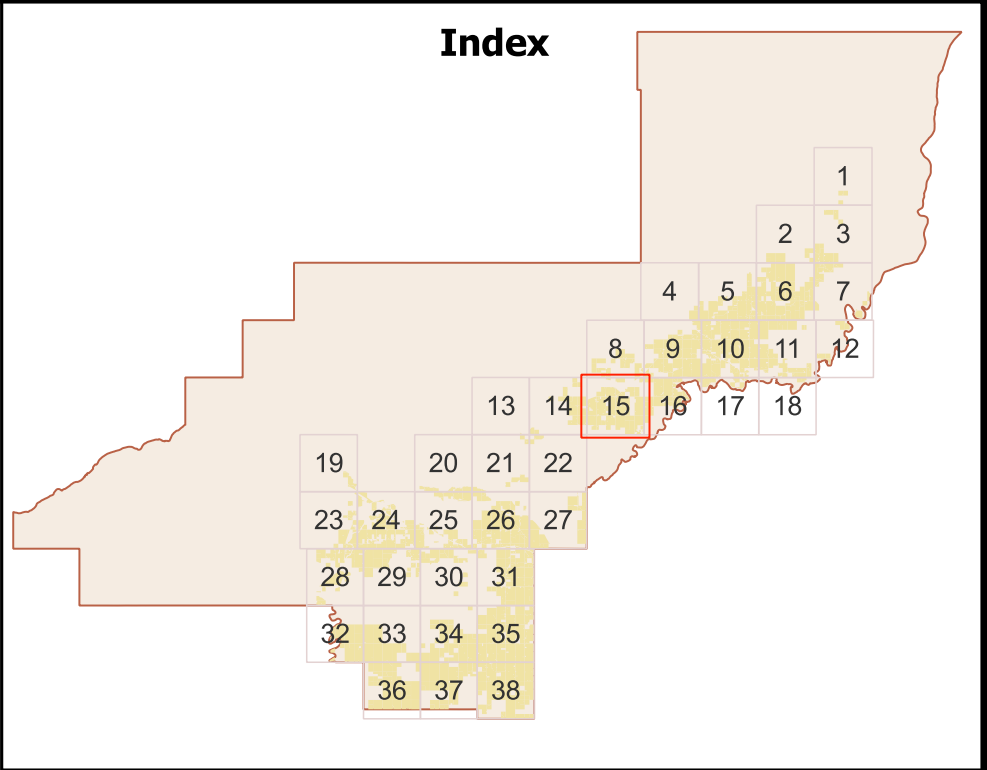
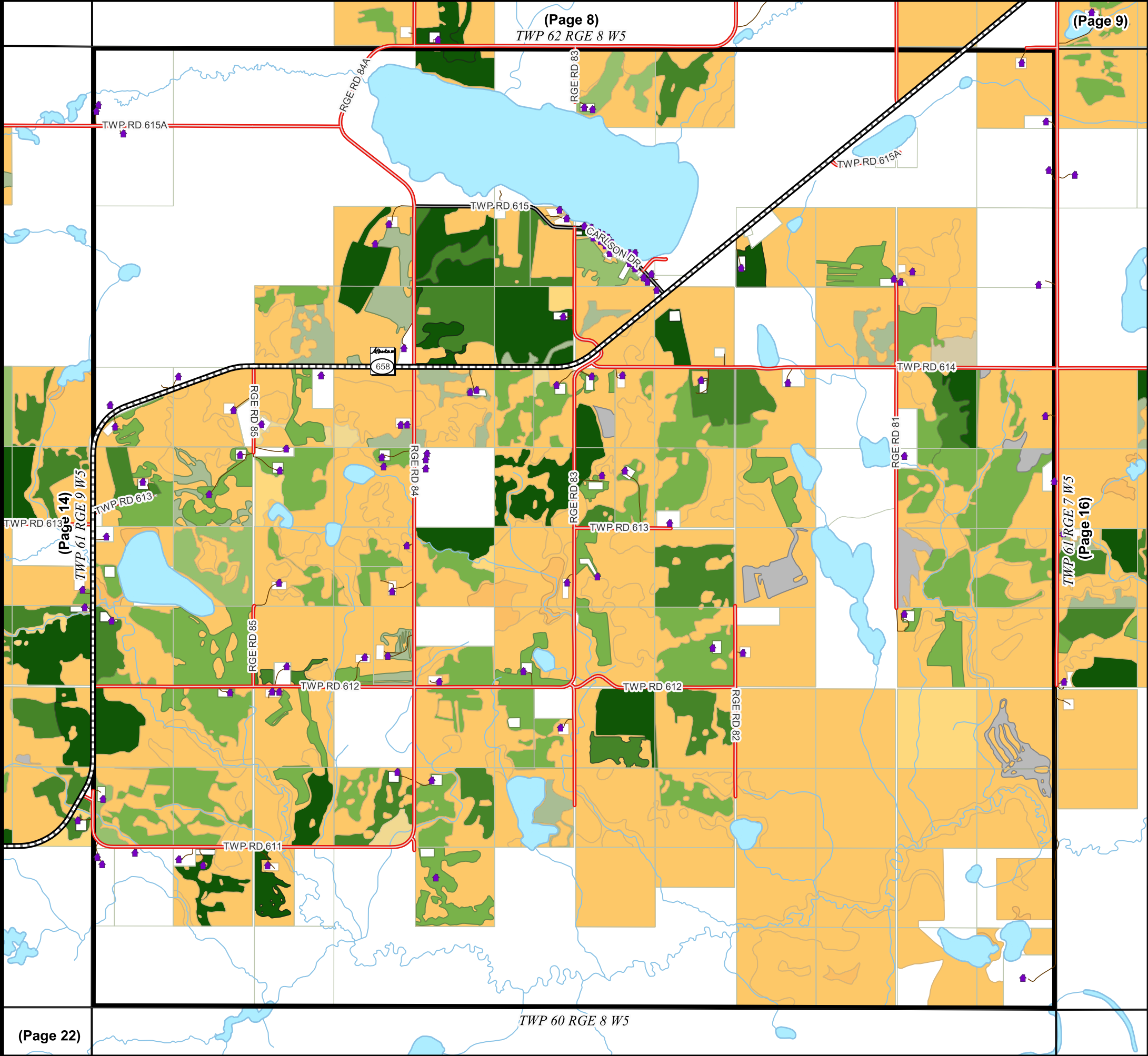
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**Farmland Valuation**

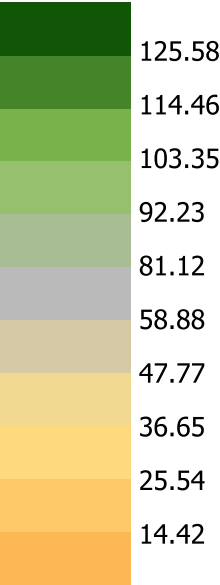
**Farmland Assessment Value (FAV)**

\$ per acre

$\sigma$

$\mu = 70.52$

$-\sigma$



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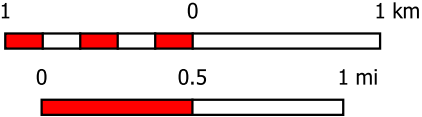
- Paved
- Gravel

**Municipal Roads**

- Gravel
- Oiled
- Paved
- Private

**Residences**

**Municipal Boundaries**



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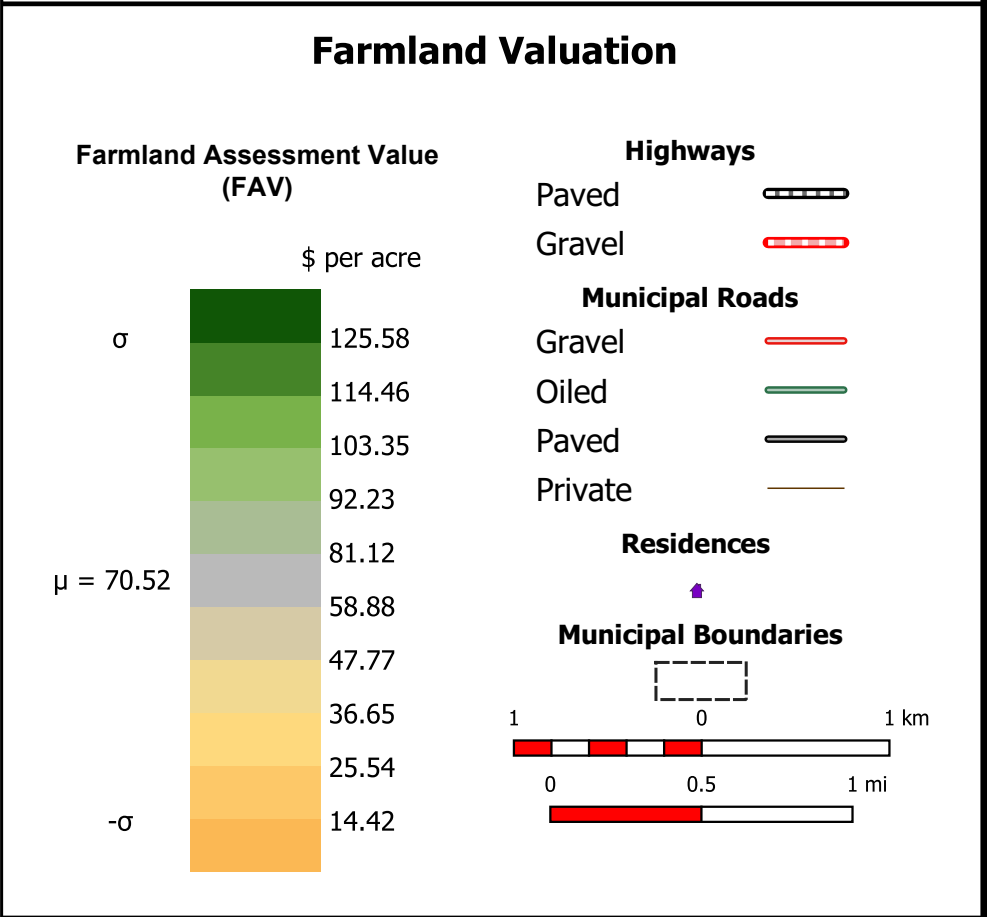
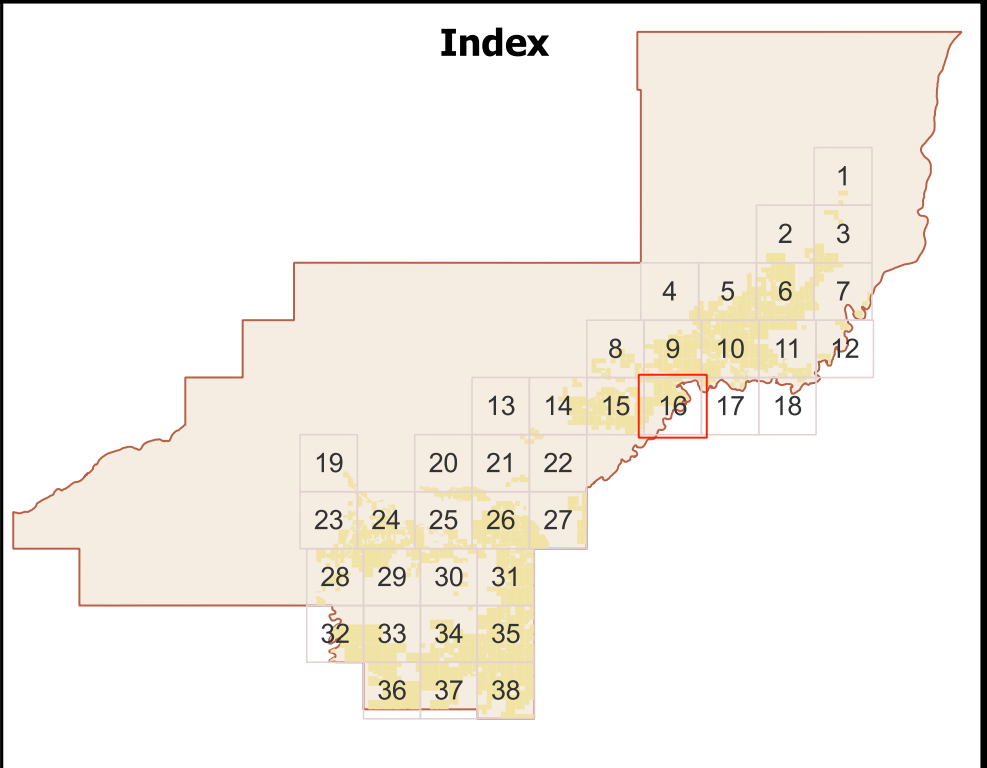
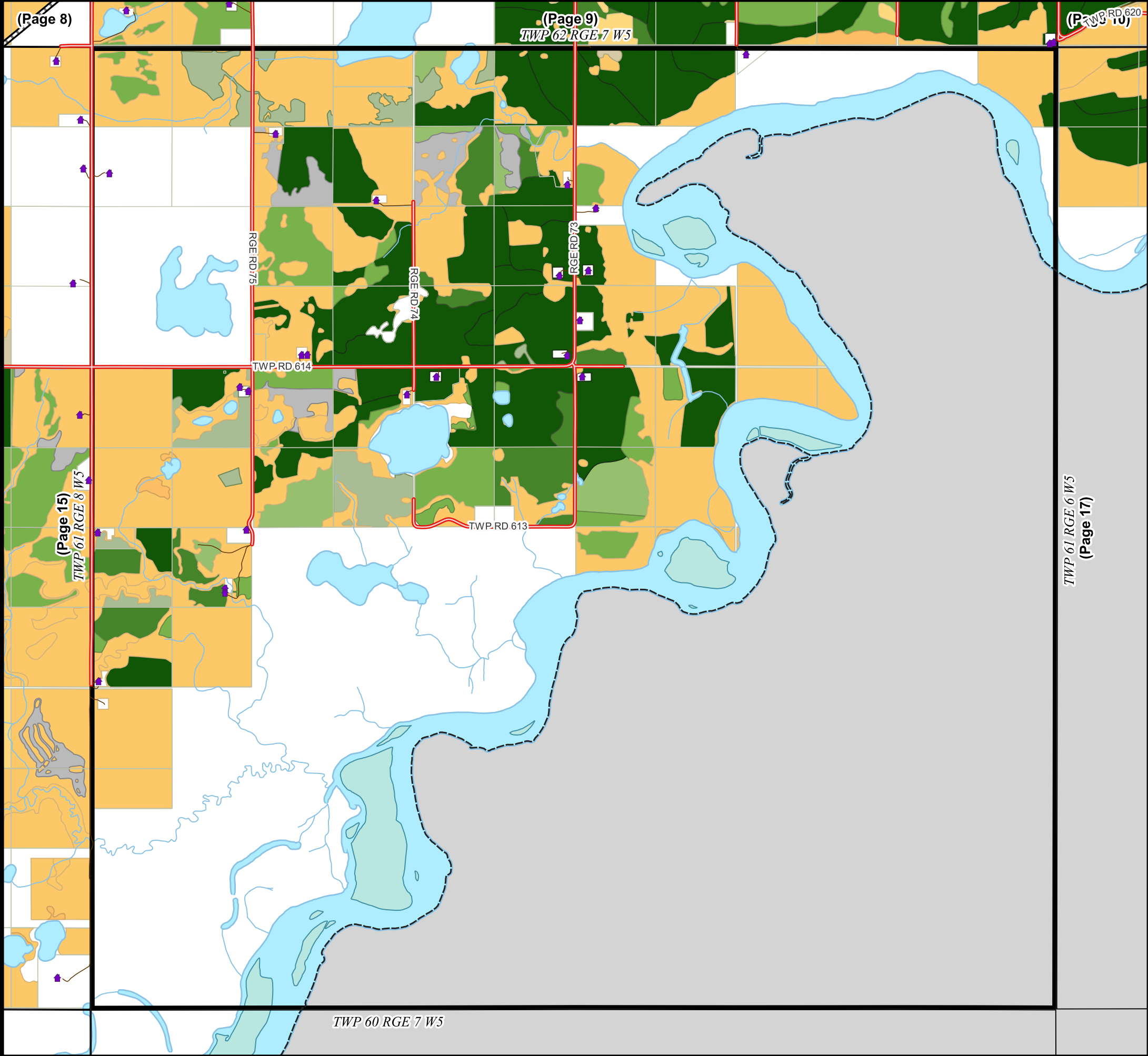
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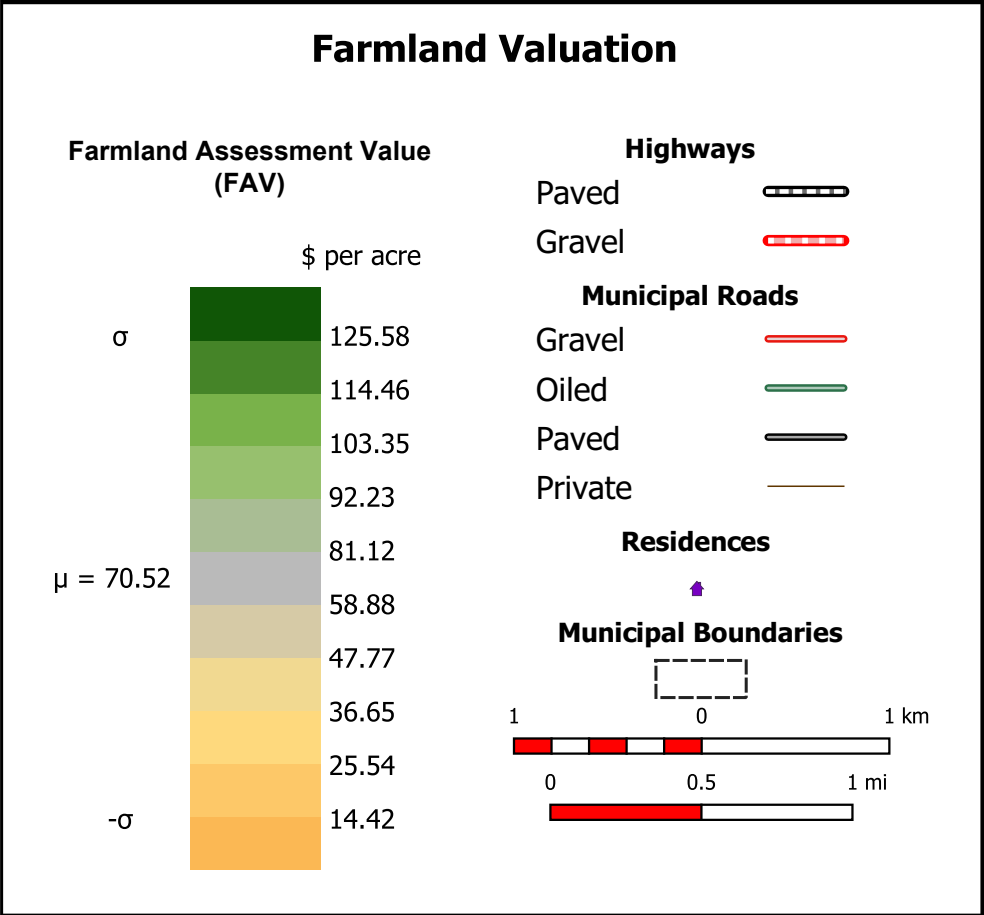
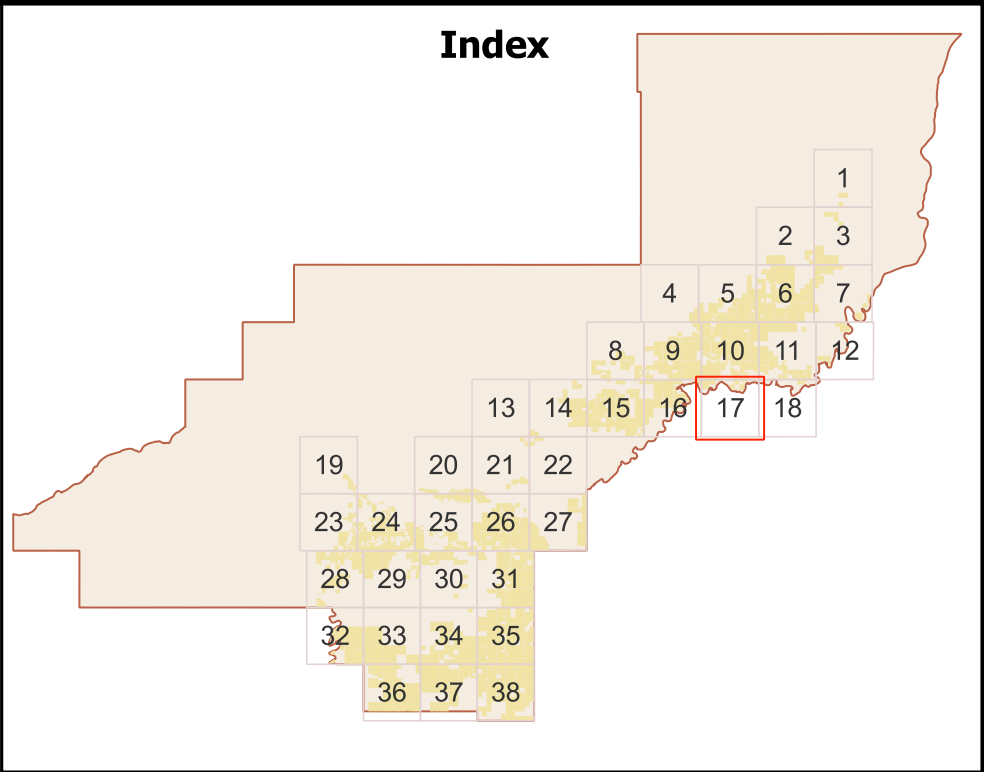
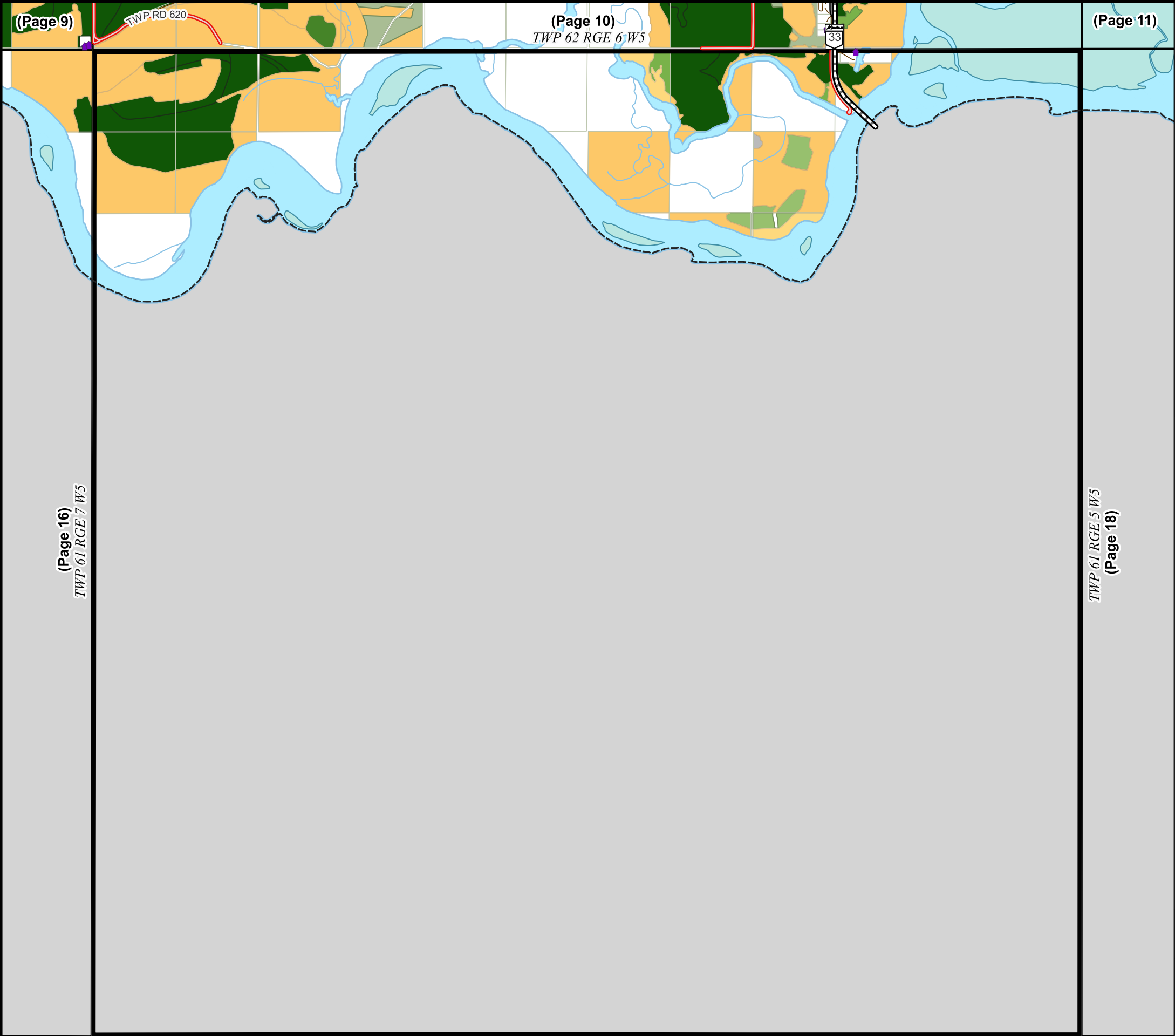
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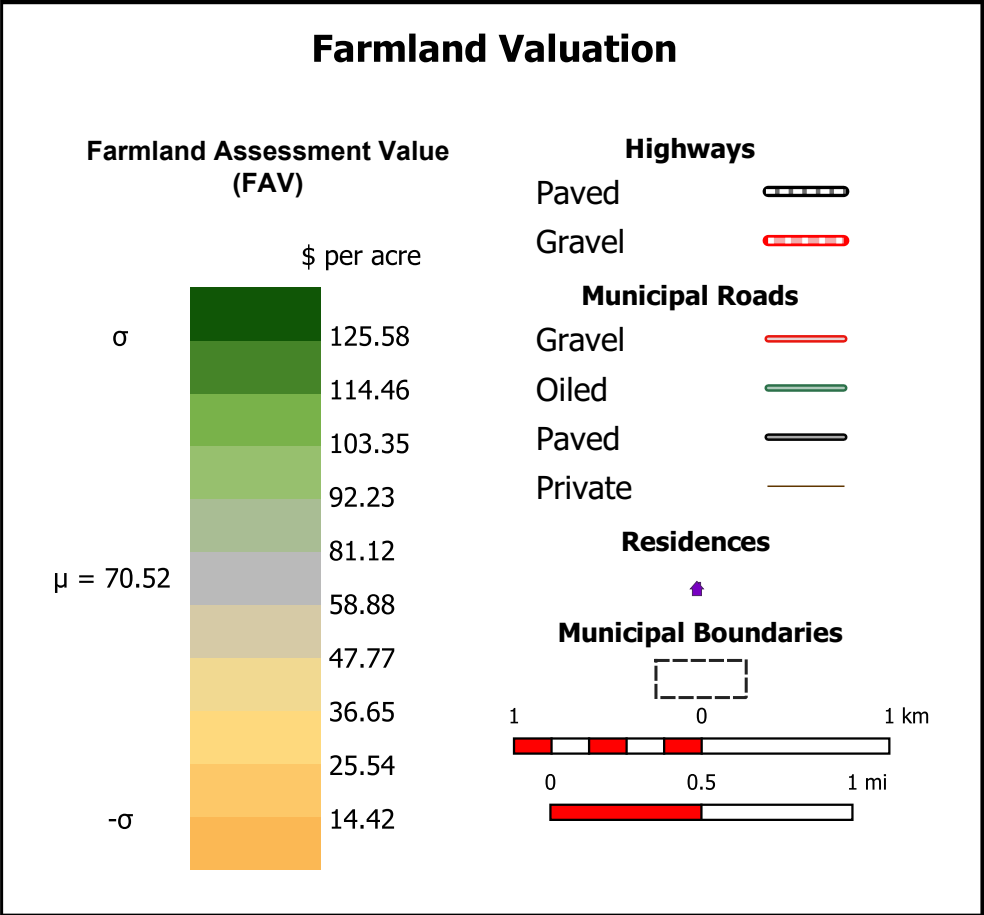
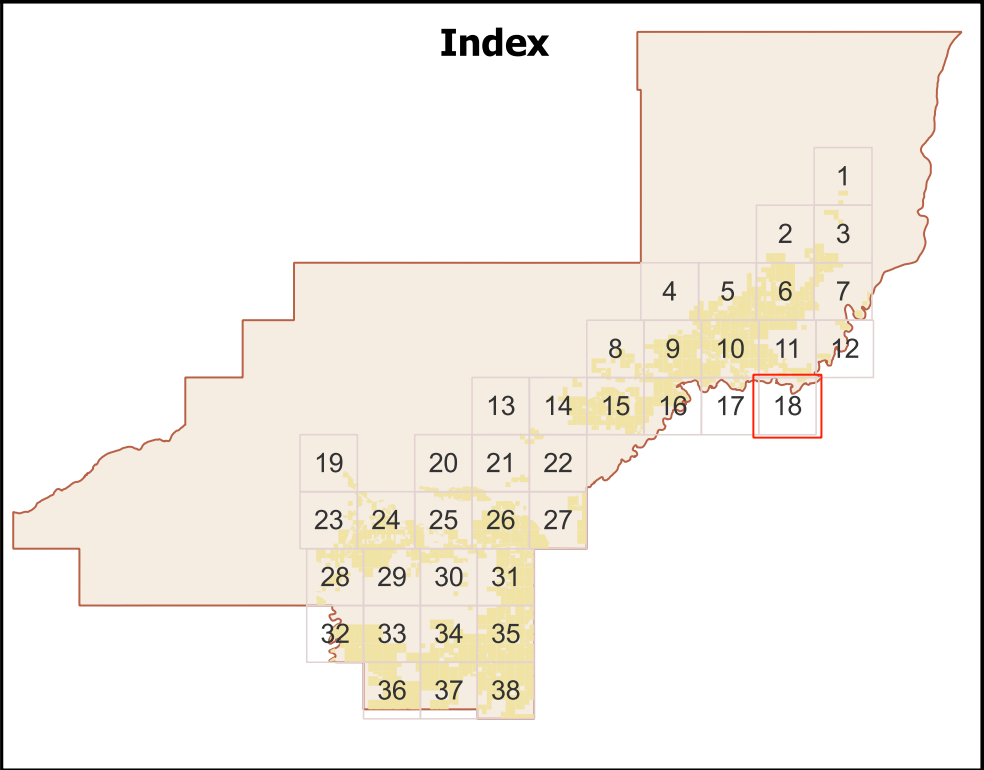
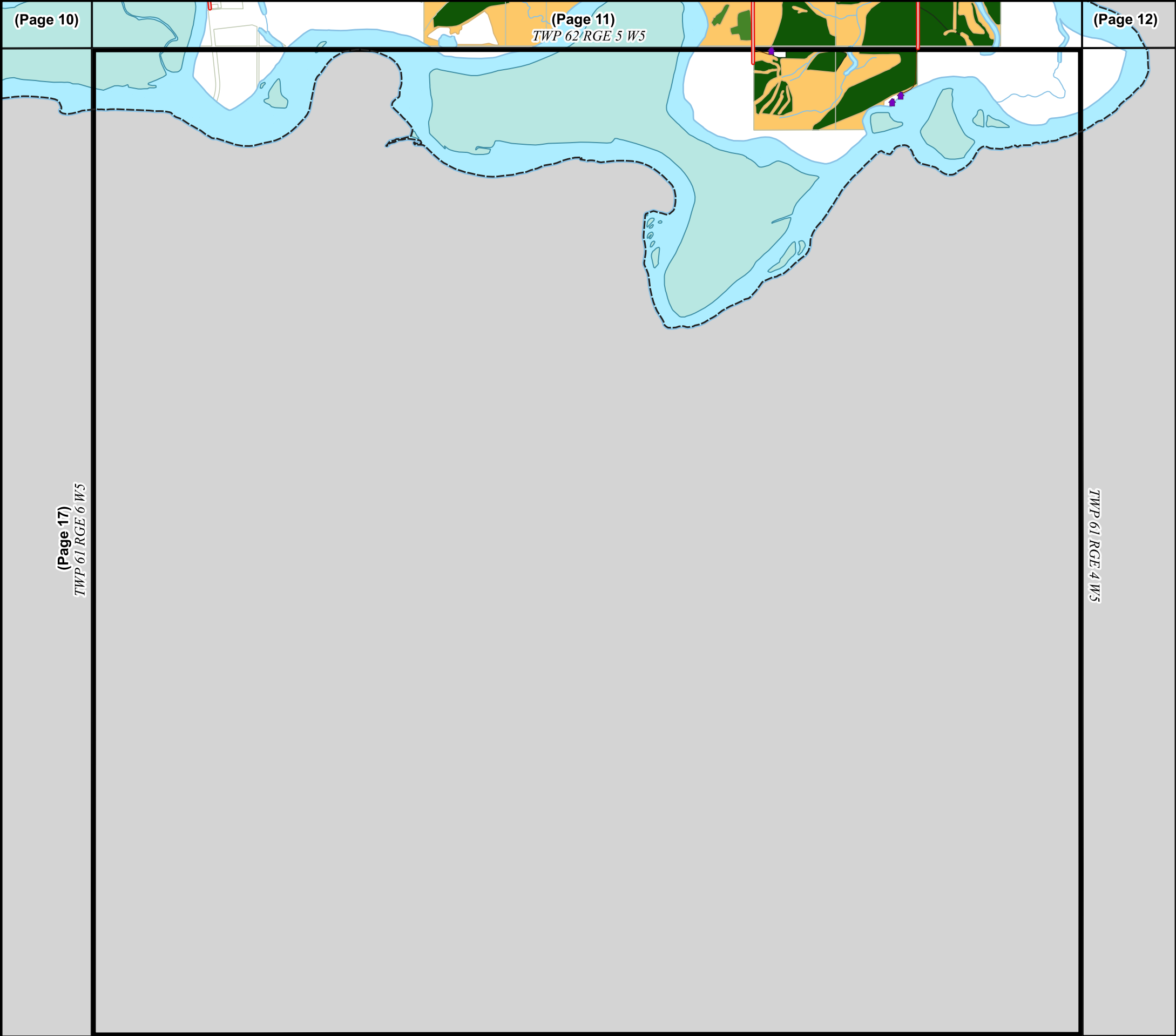
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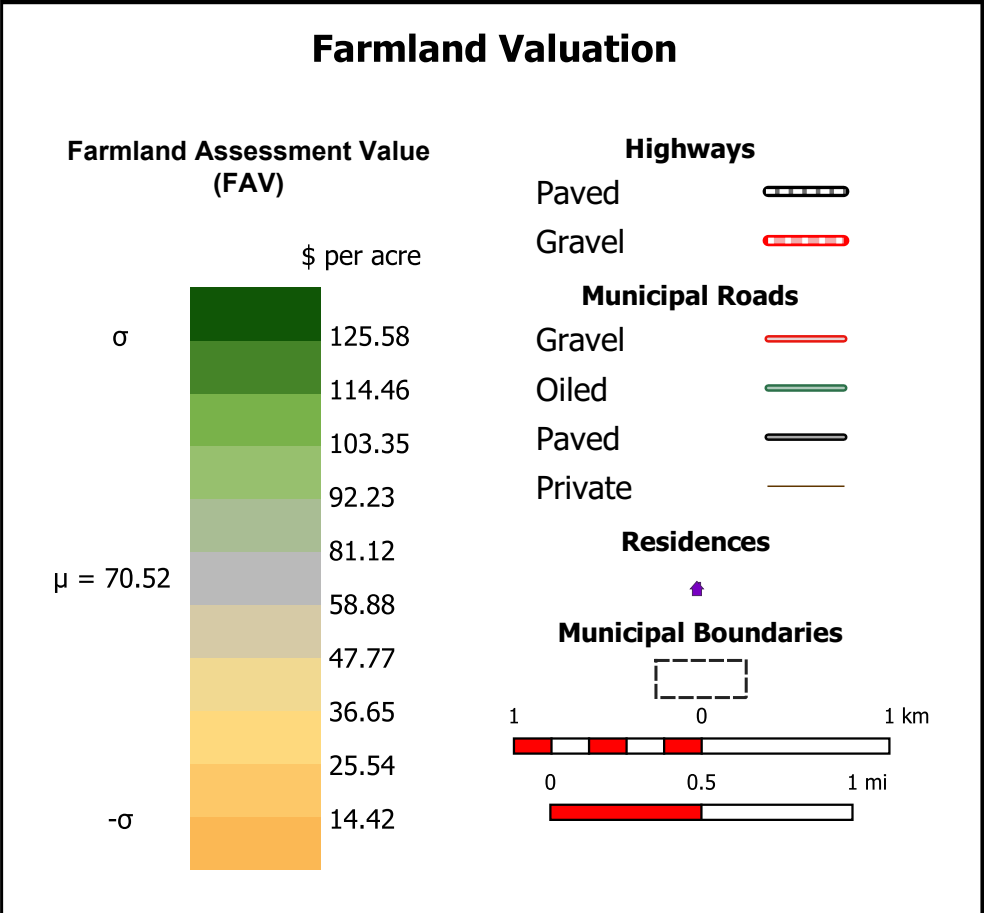
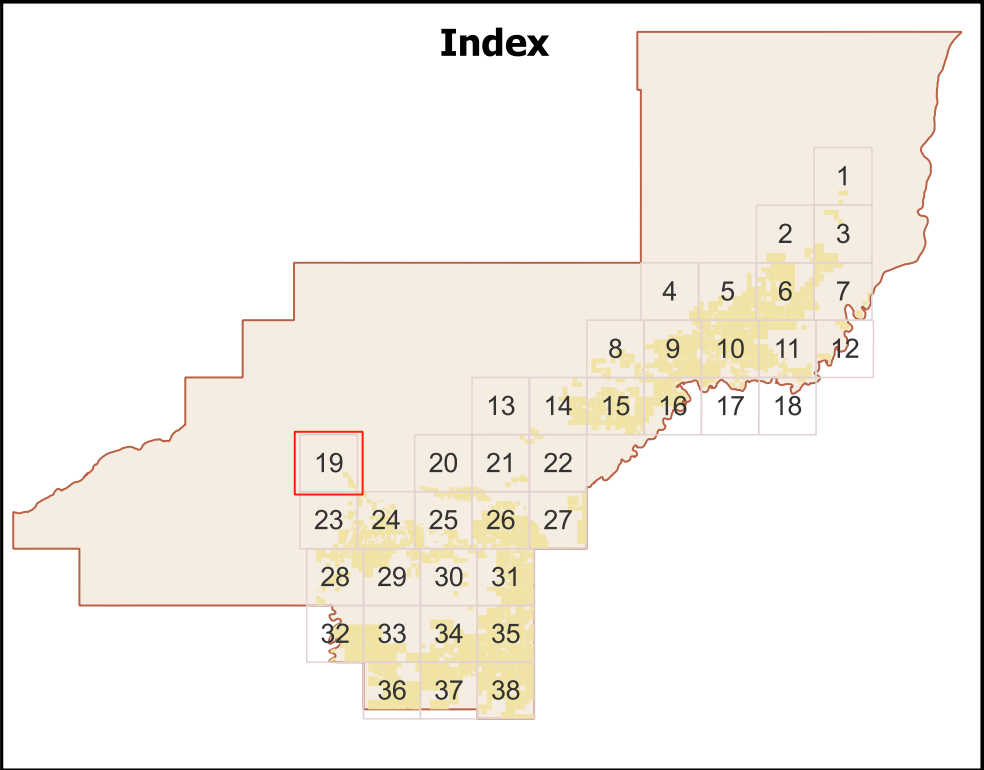
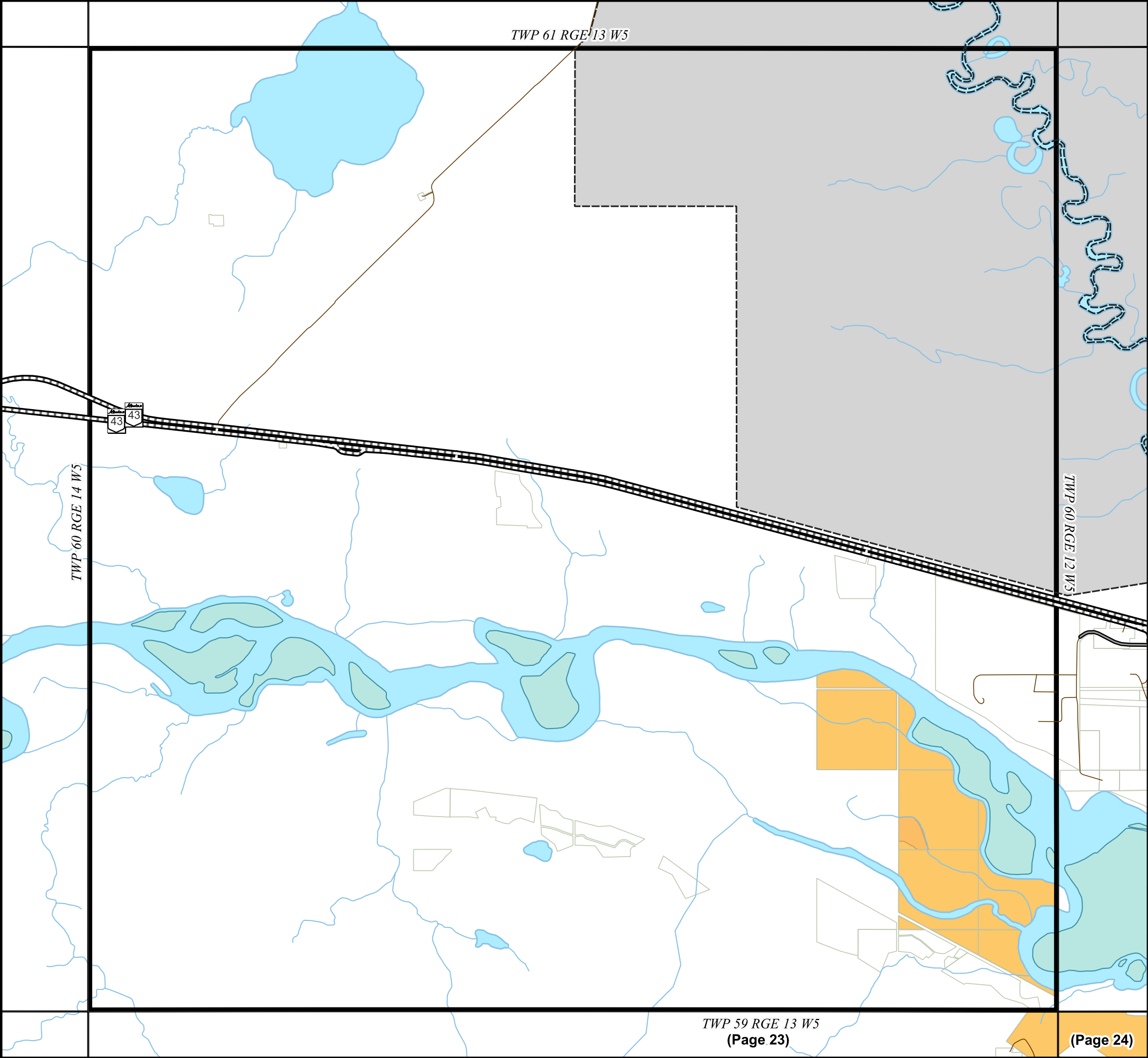
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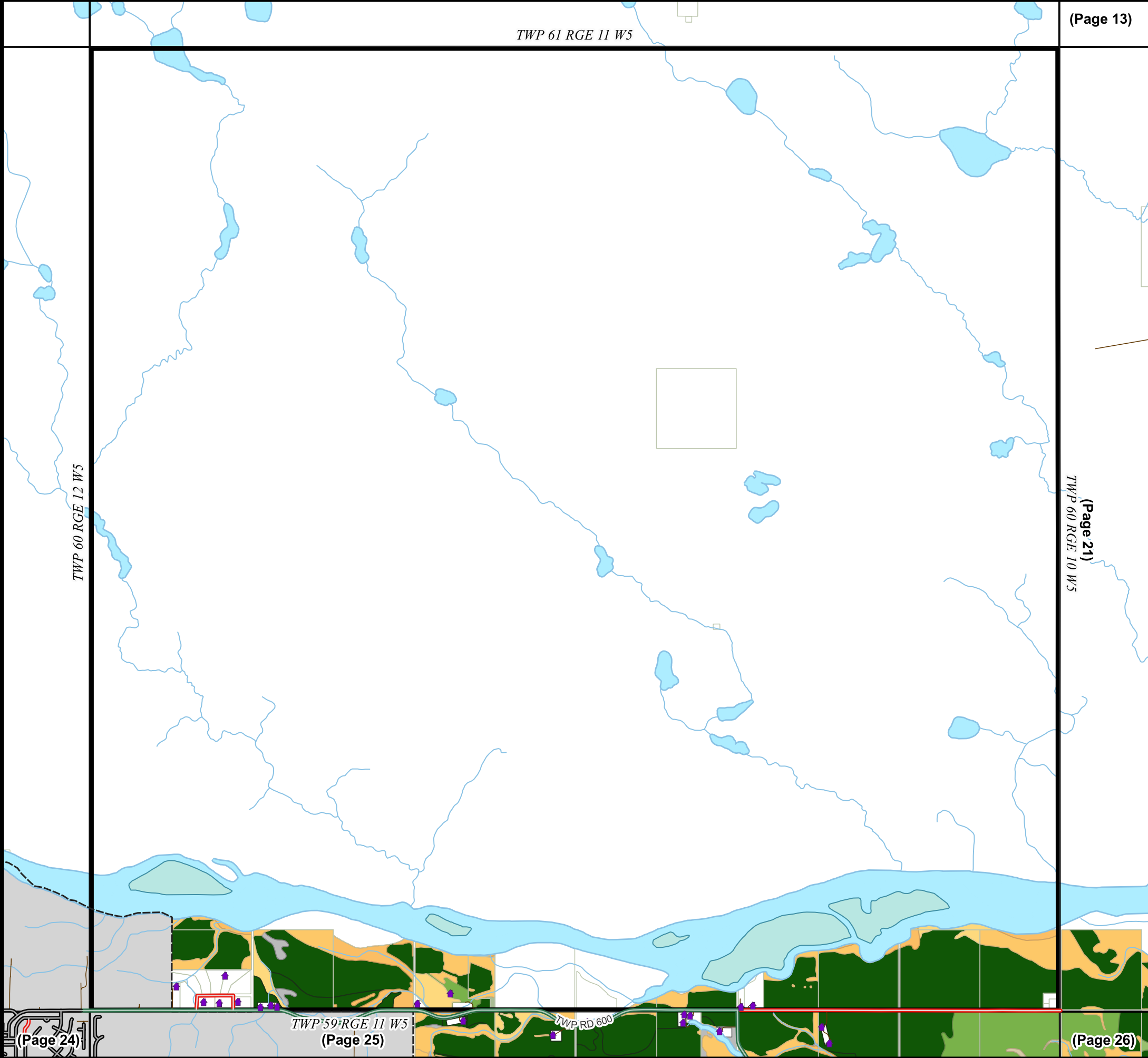




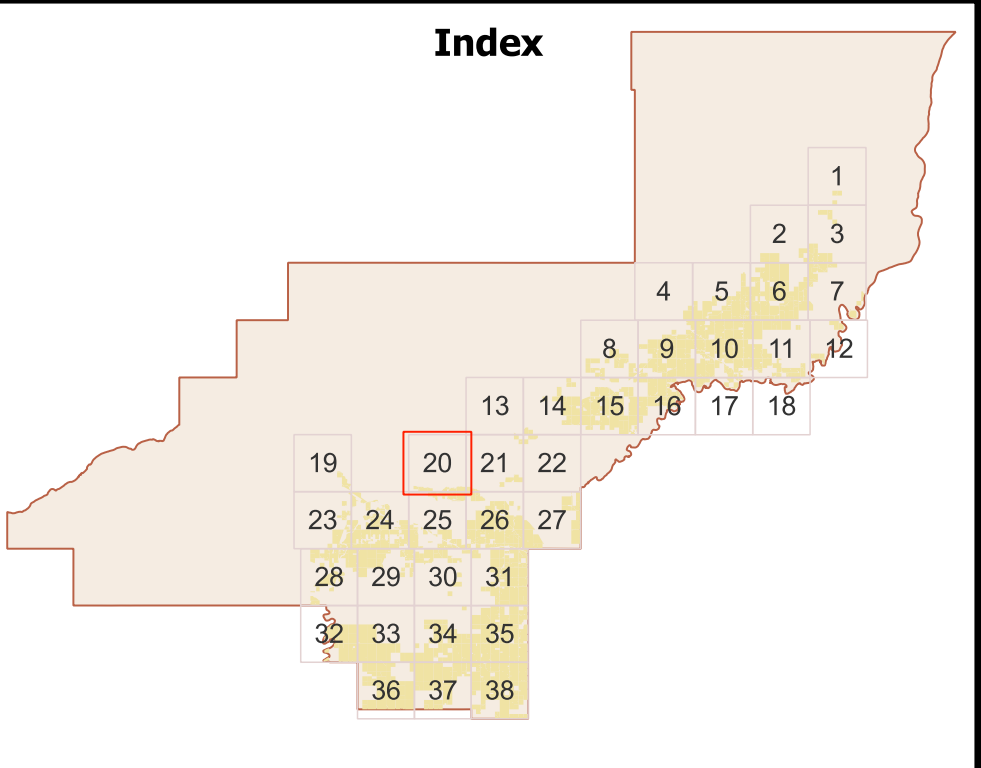








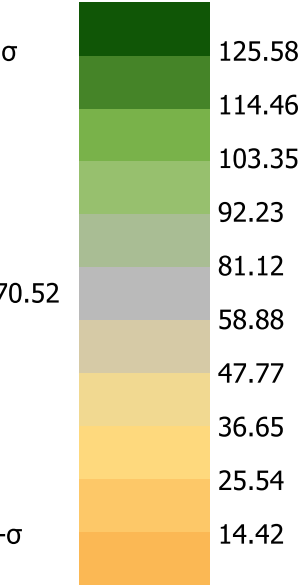
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### Farmland Valuation

#### Farmland Assessment Value (FAV)

\$ per acre



$\sigma$

$\mu = 70.52$

$-\sigma$

#### Highways

Paved

Gravel

#### Municipal Roads

Gravel

Oiled

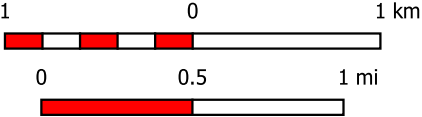
Paved

Private

#### Residences



#### Municipal Boundaries



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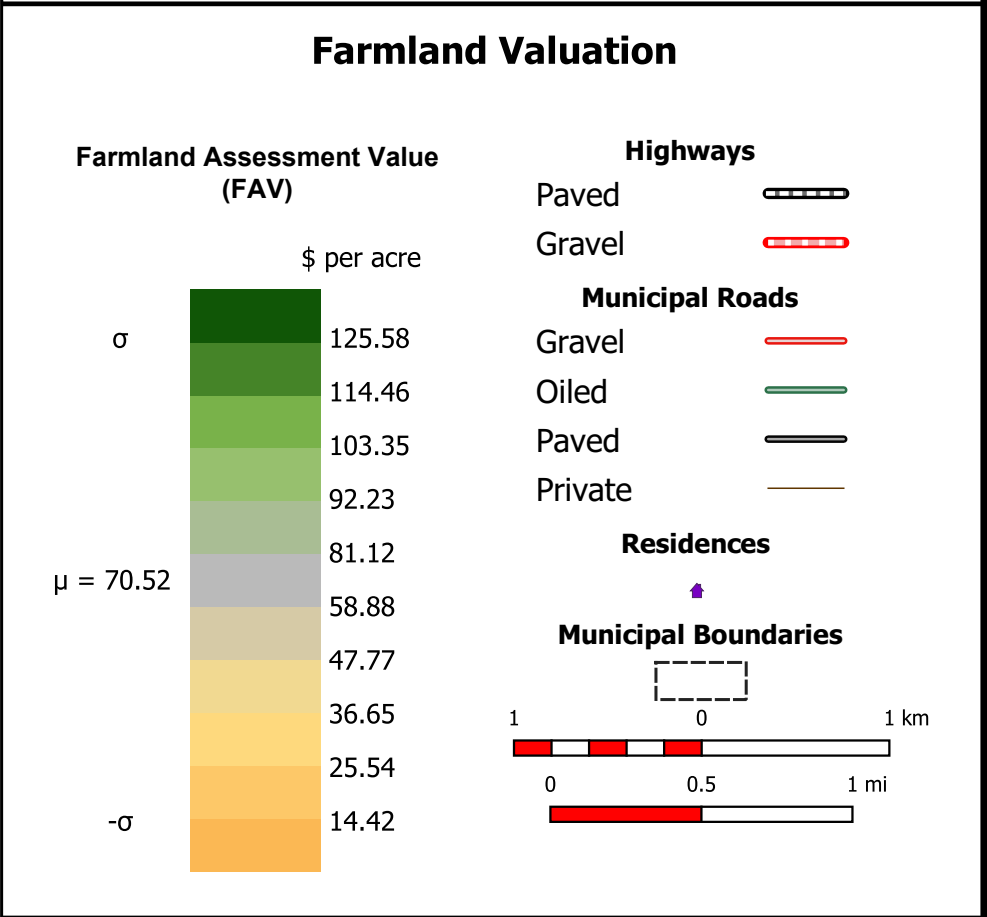
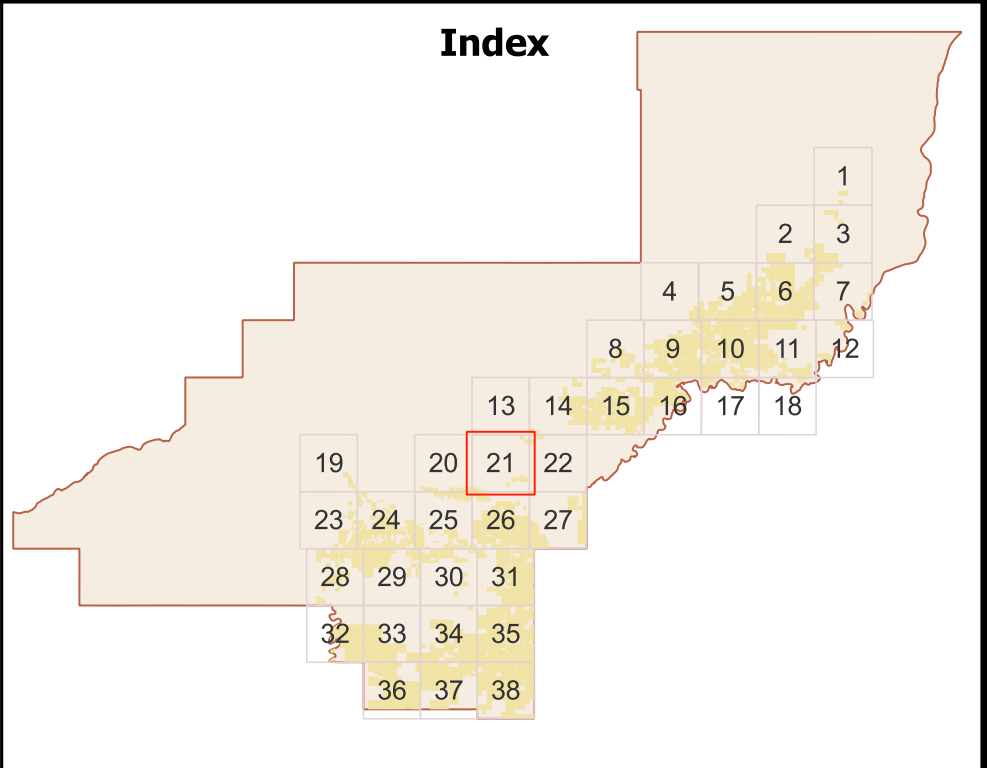
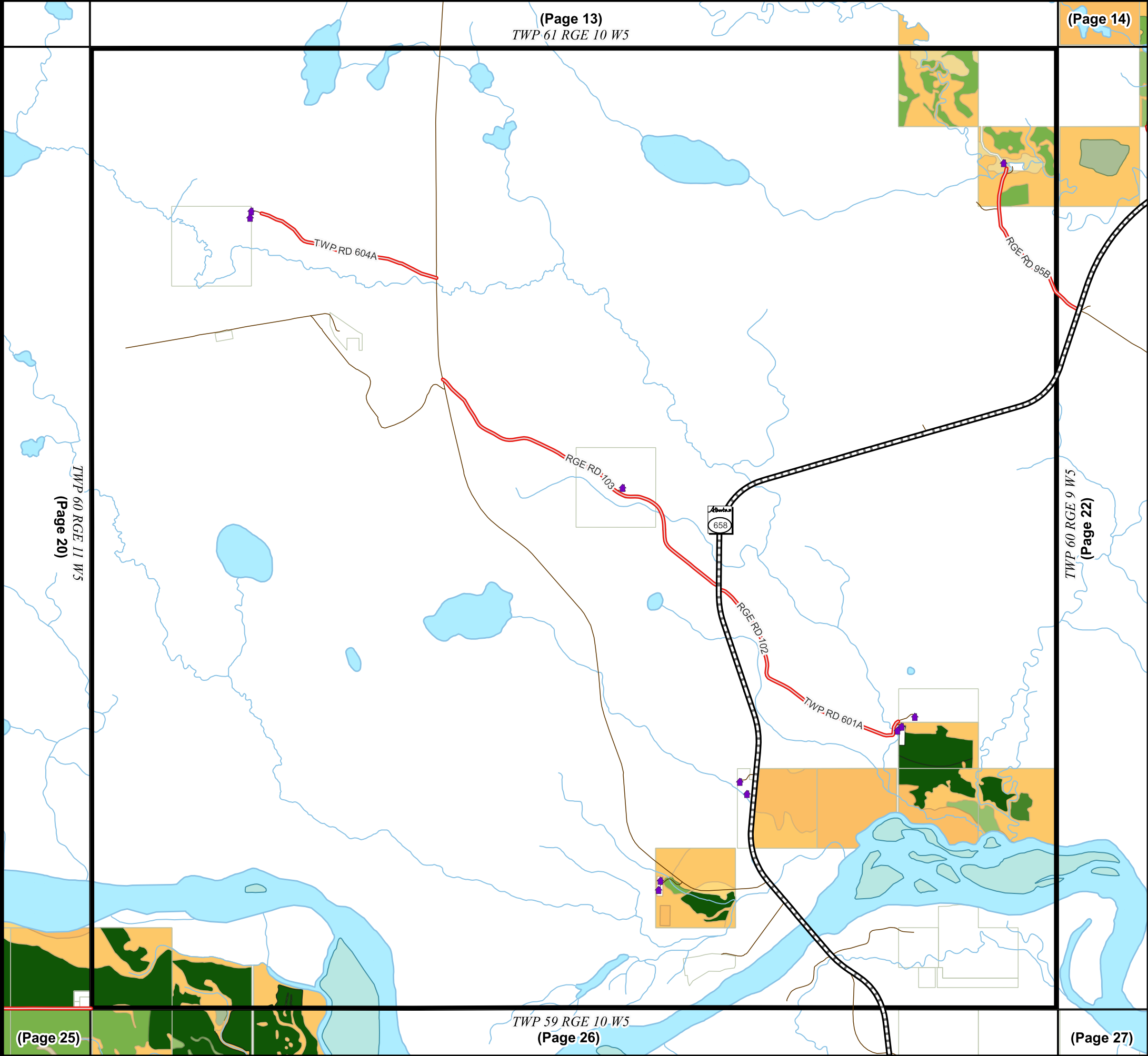
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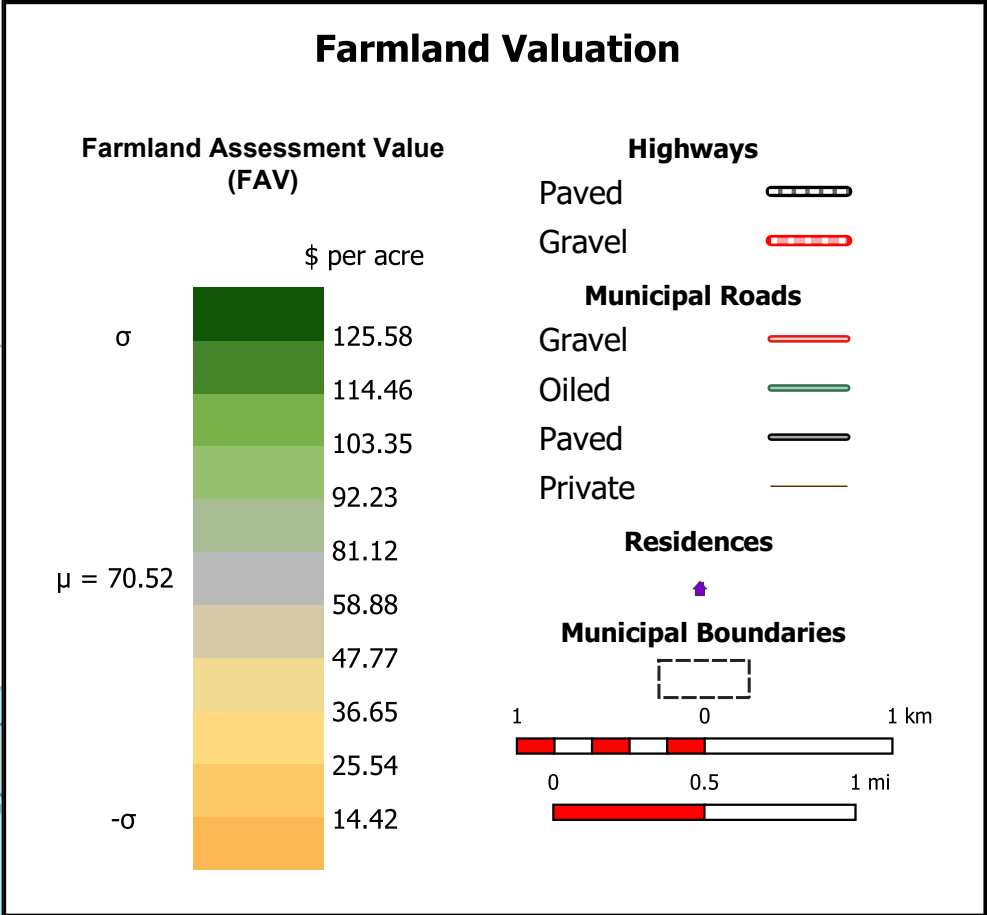
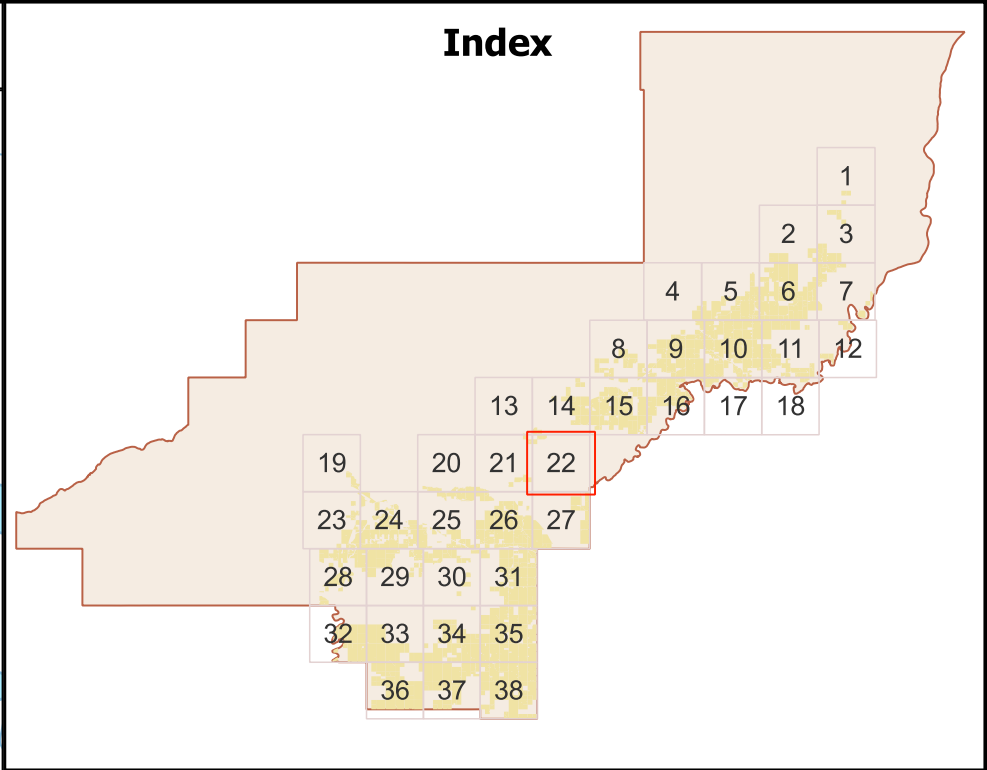
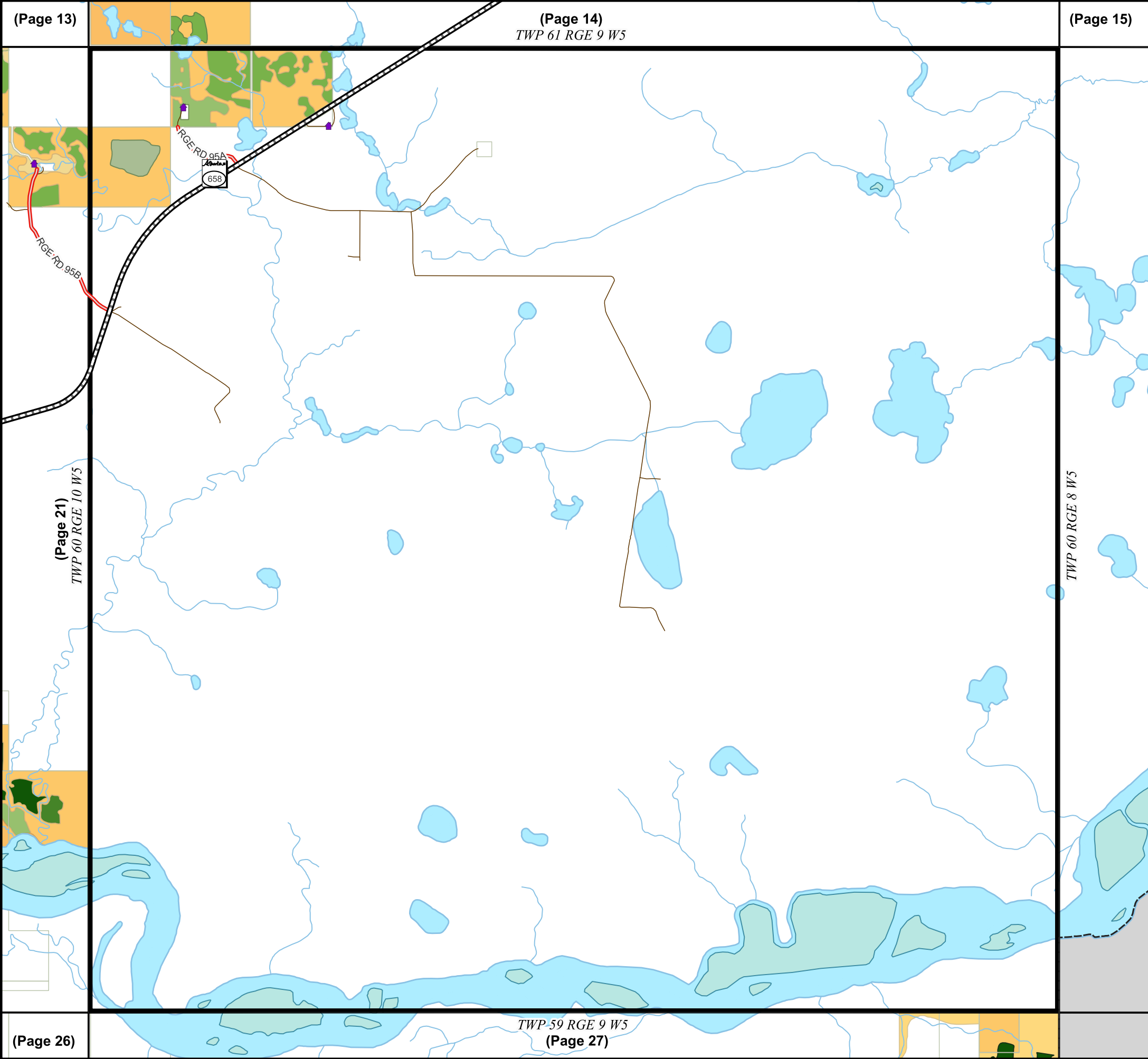
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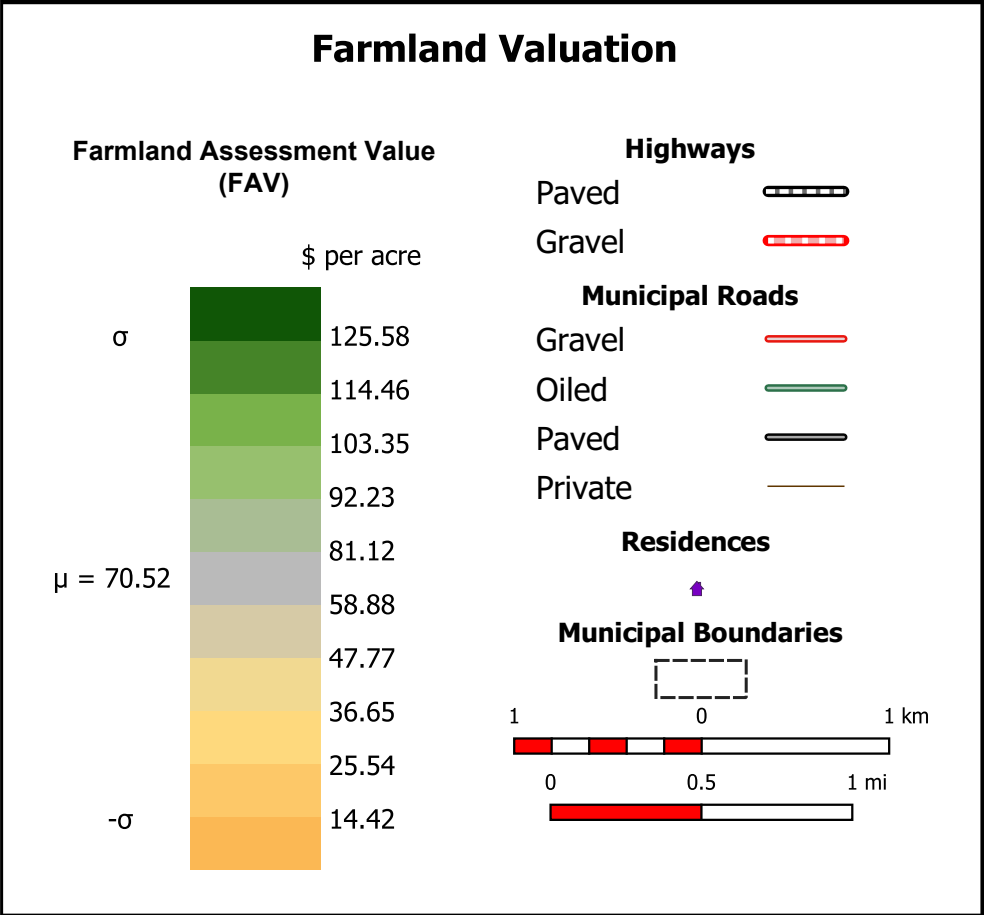
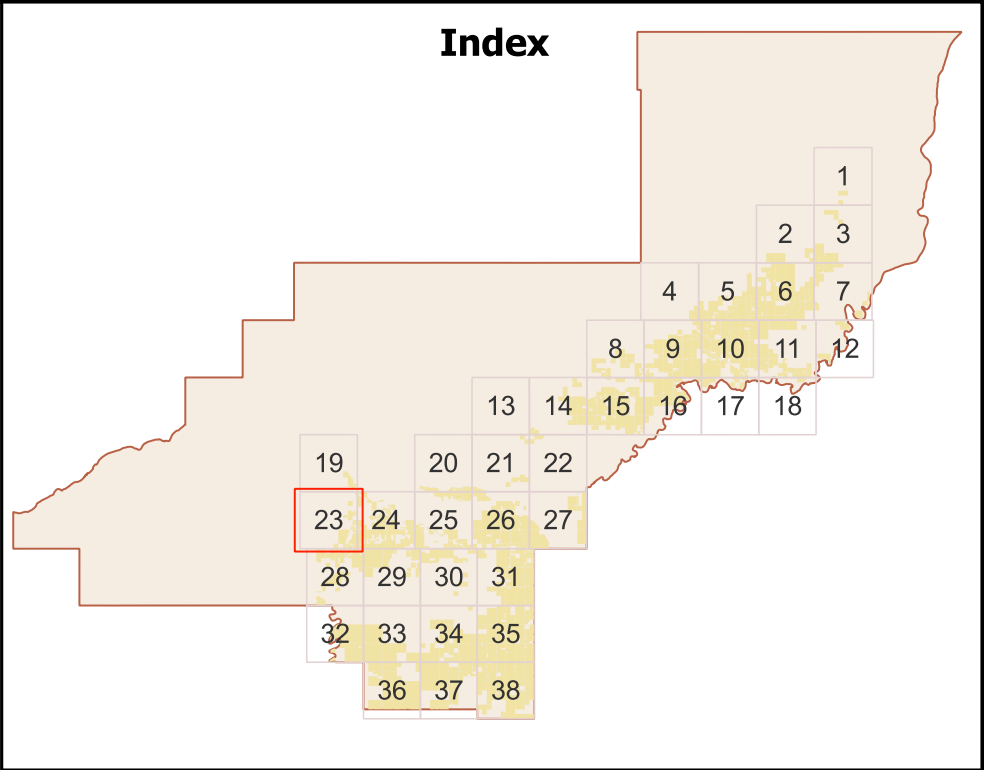
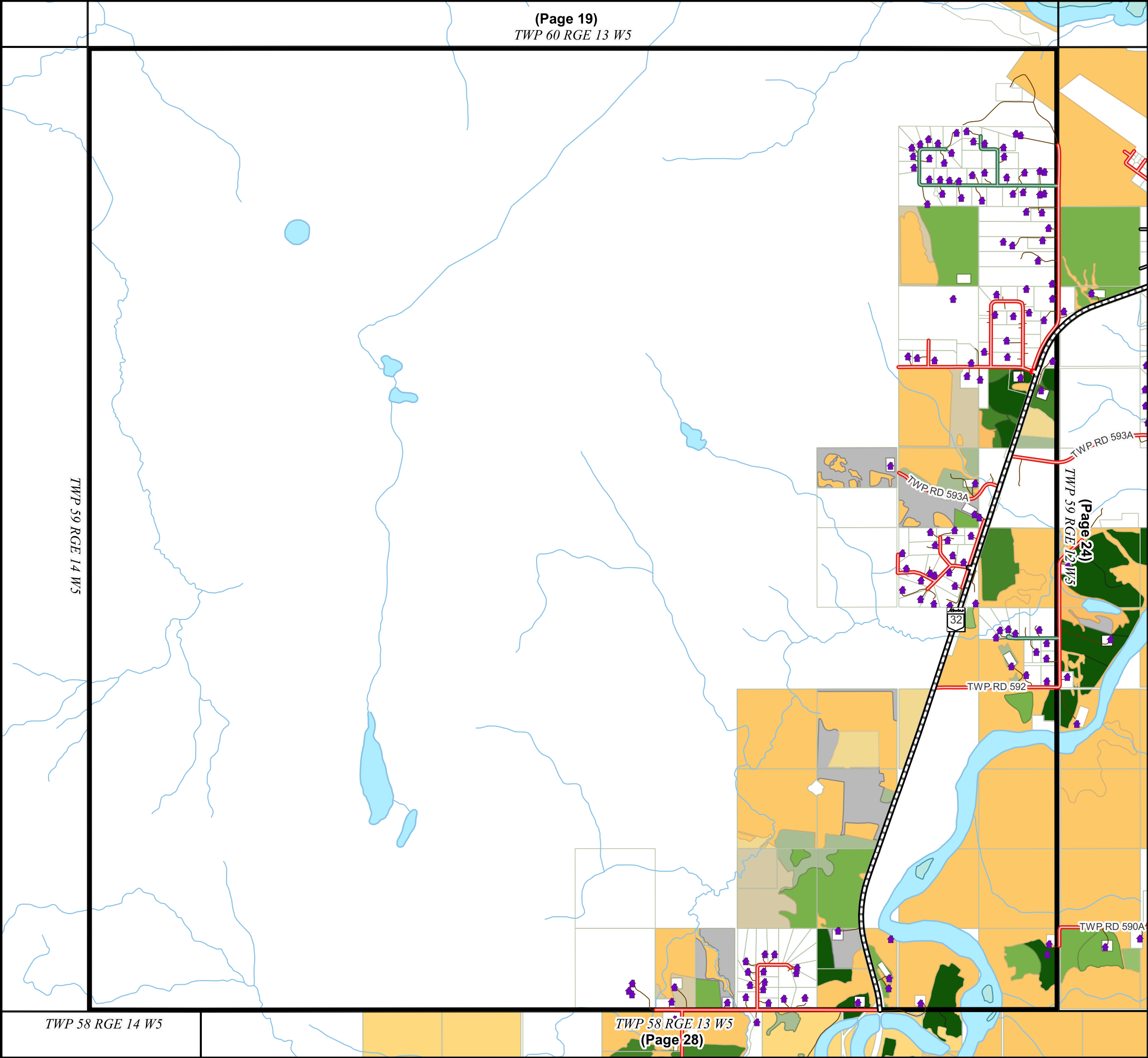
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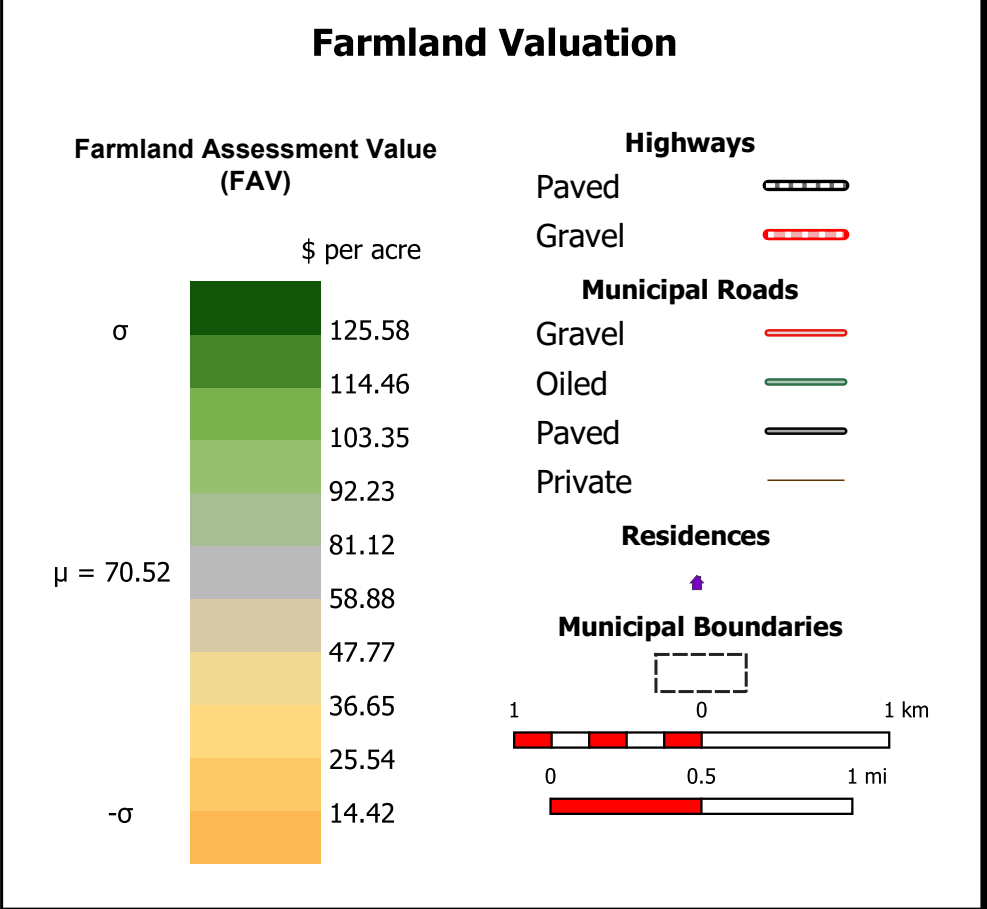
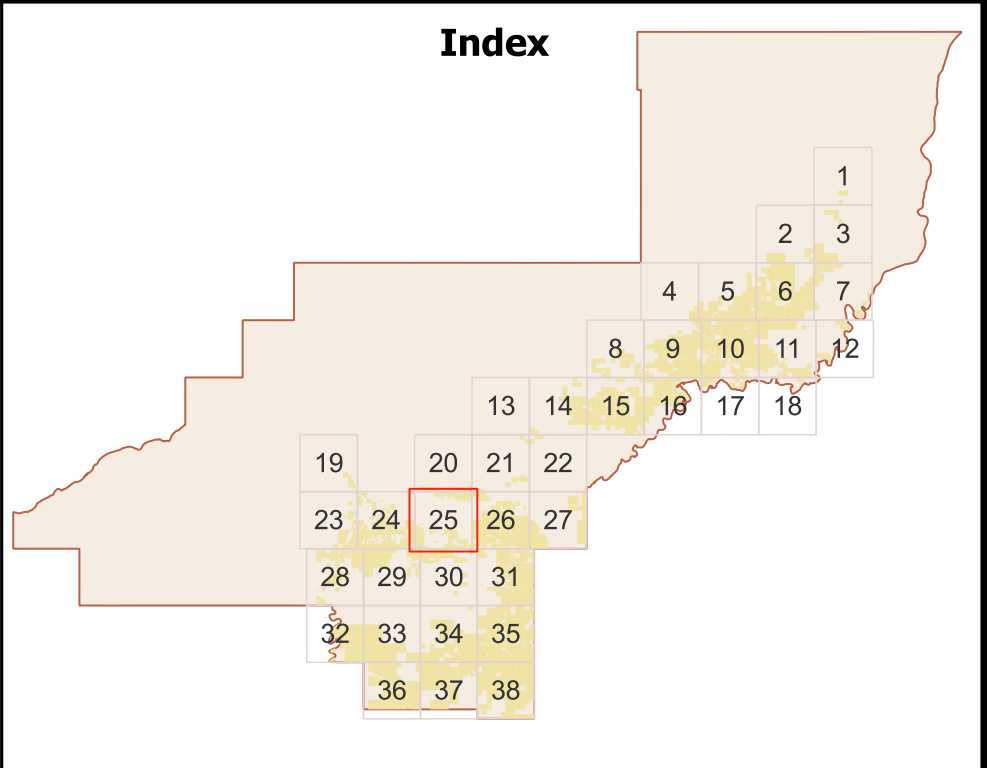
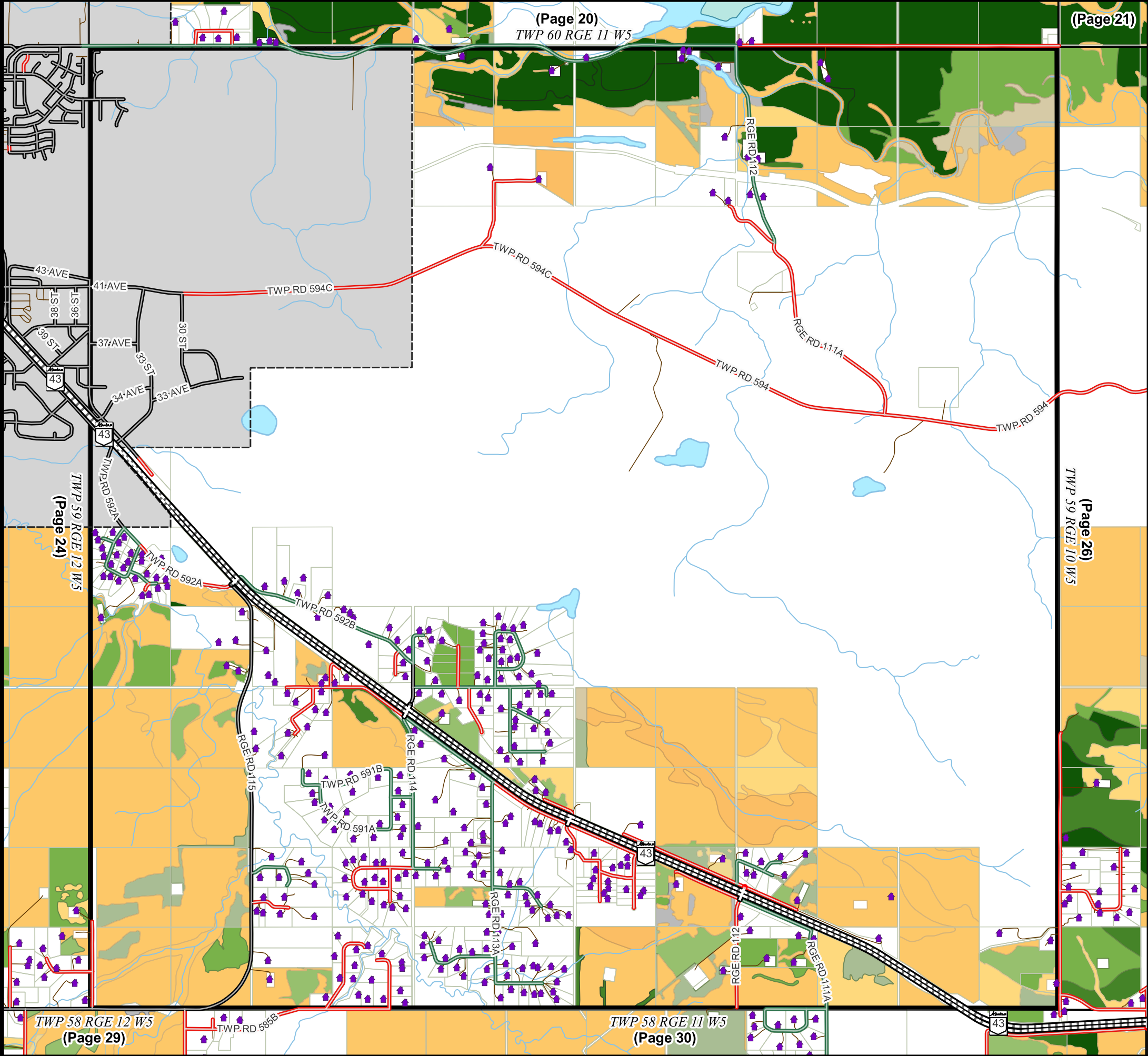


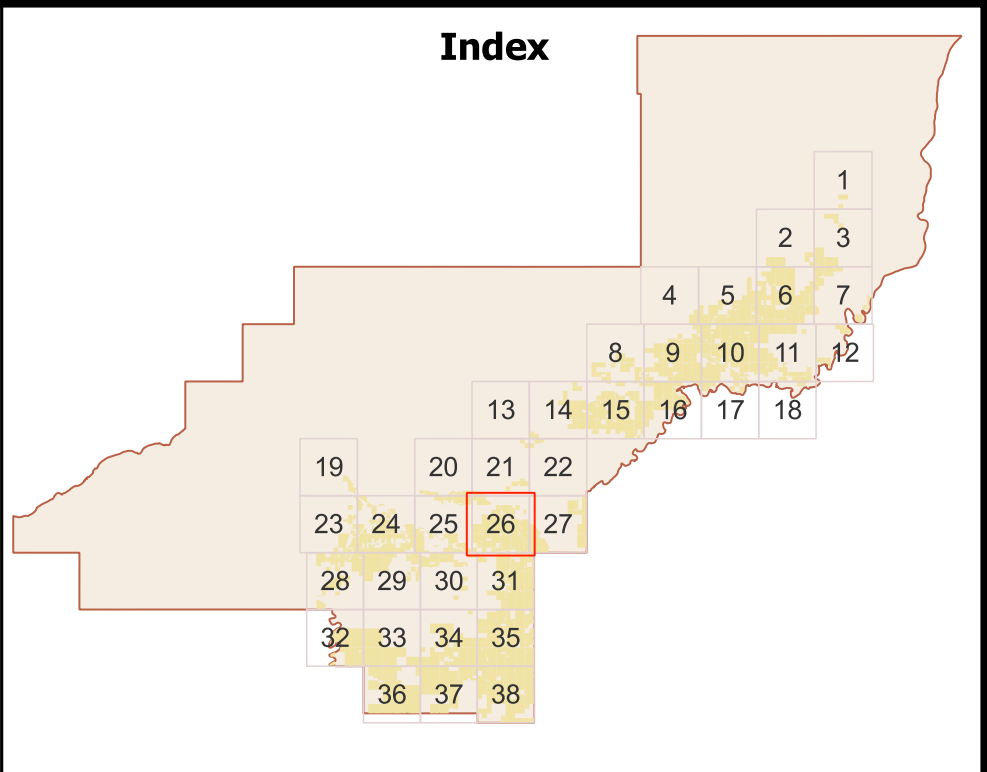
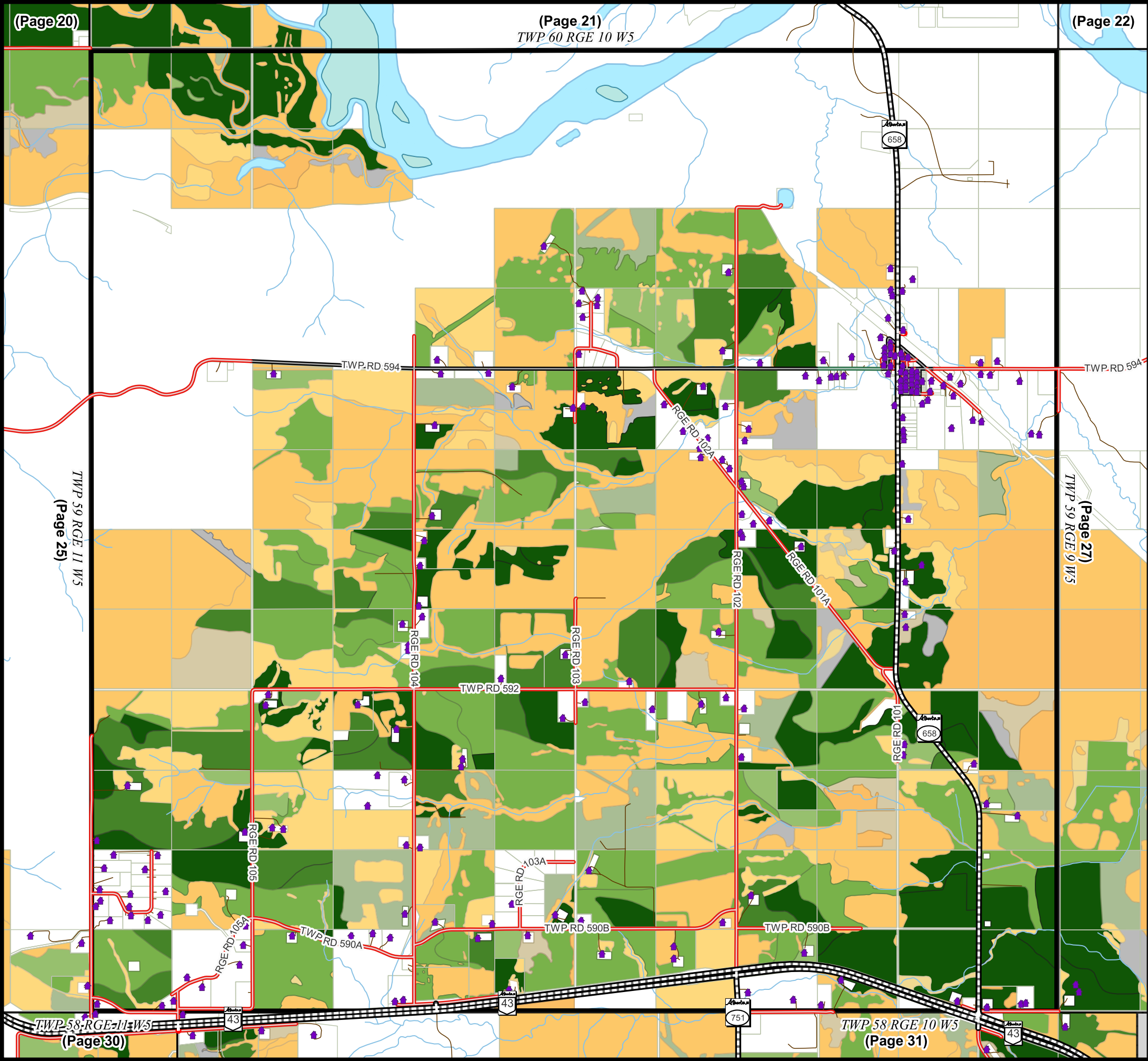




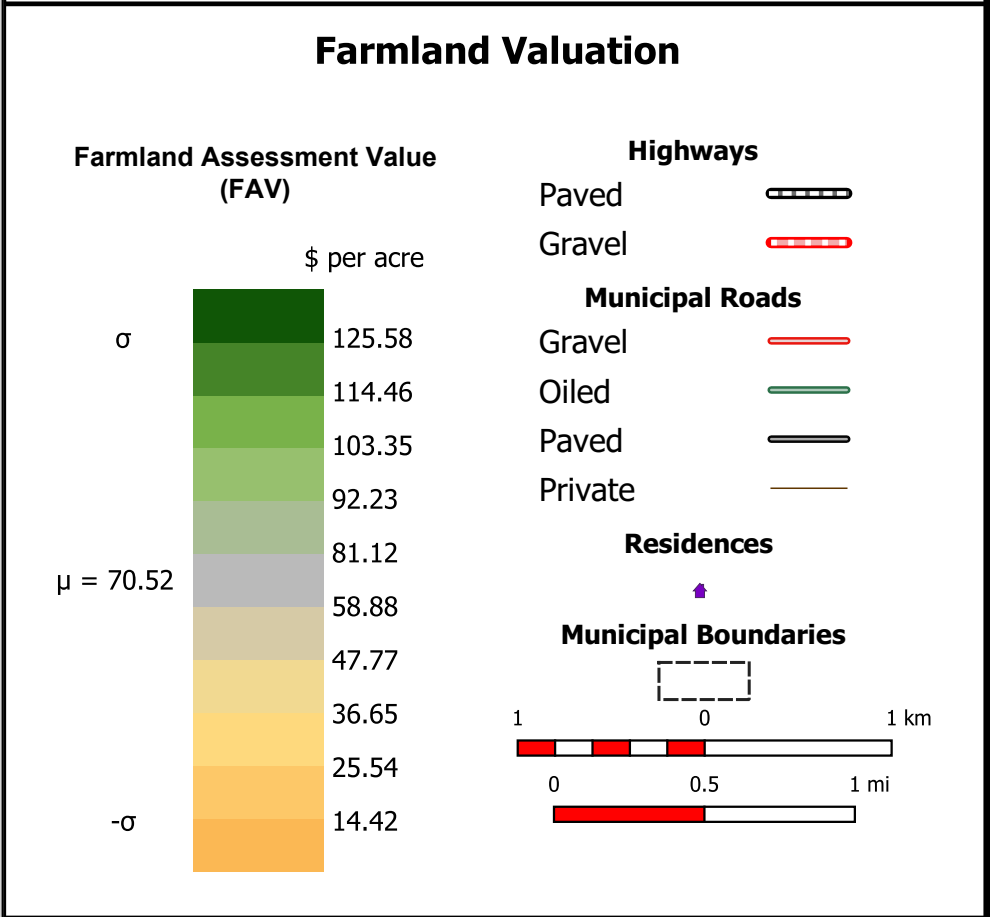
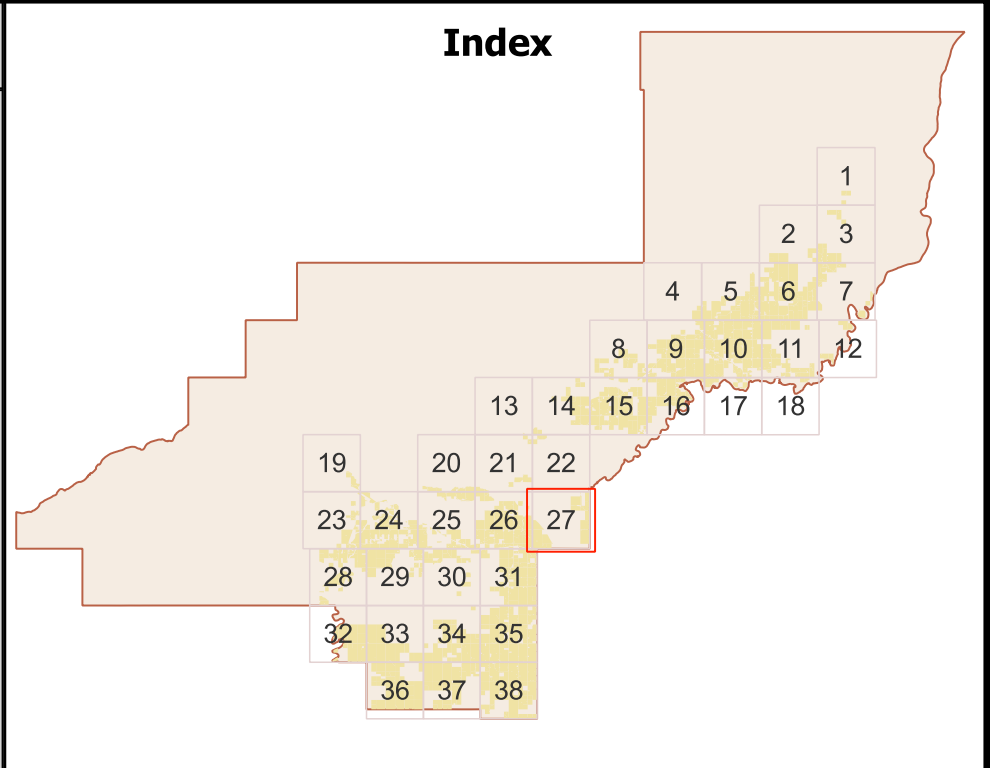
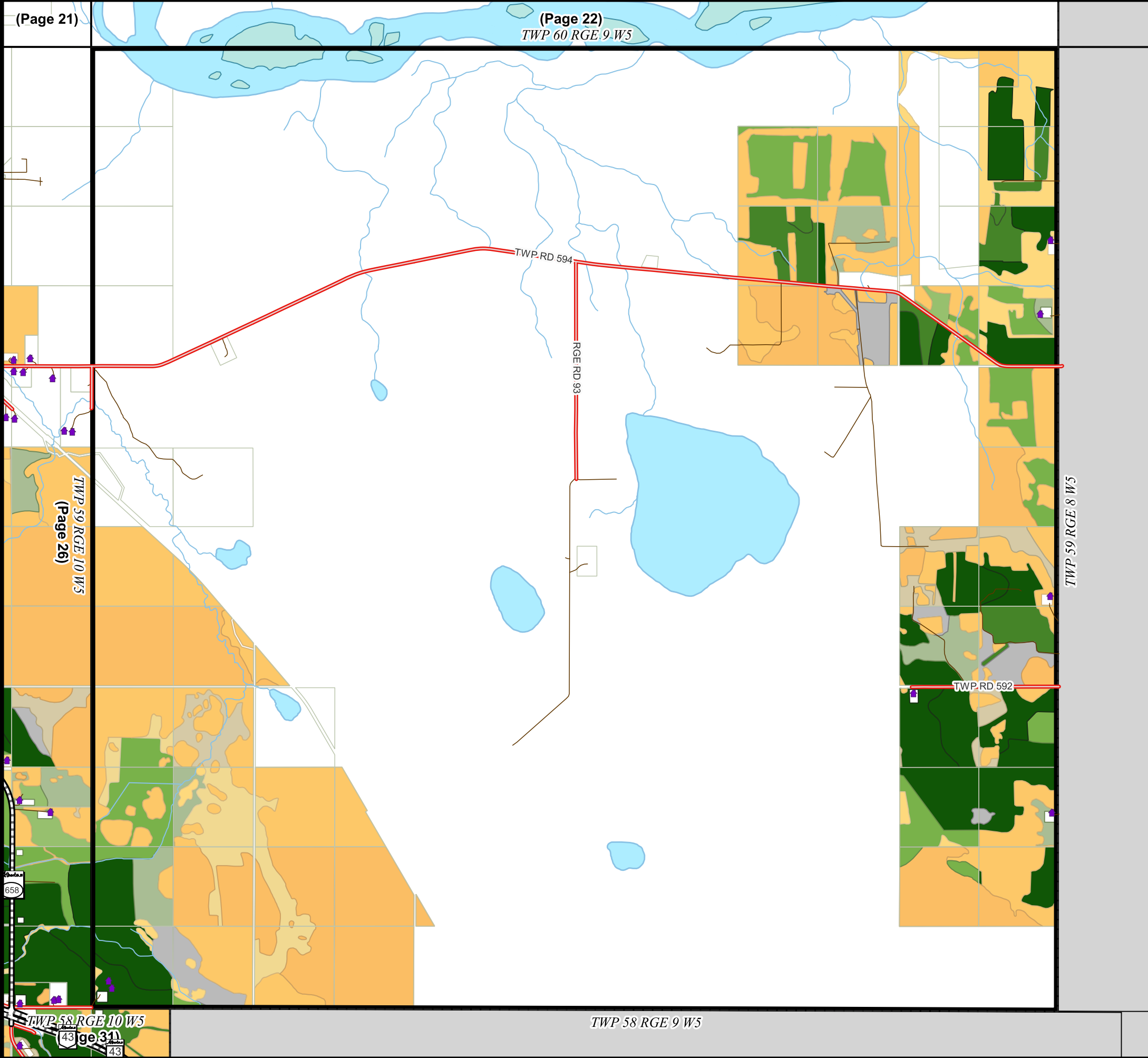





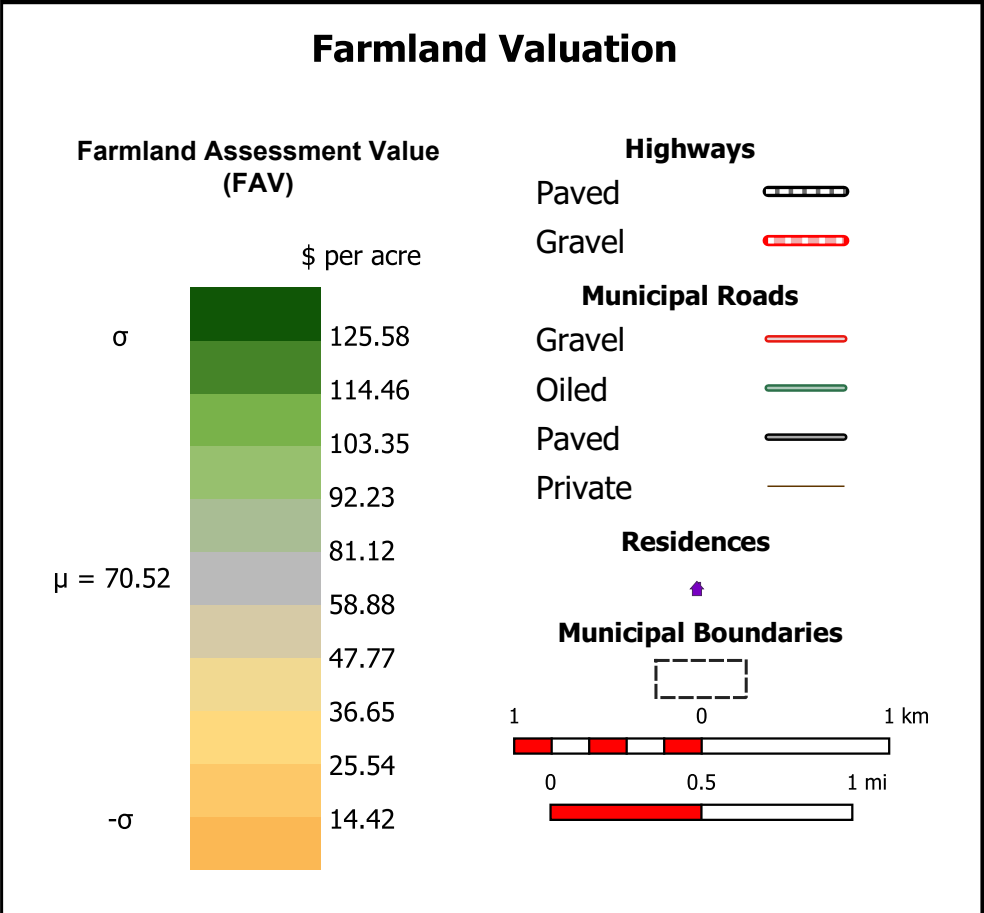
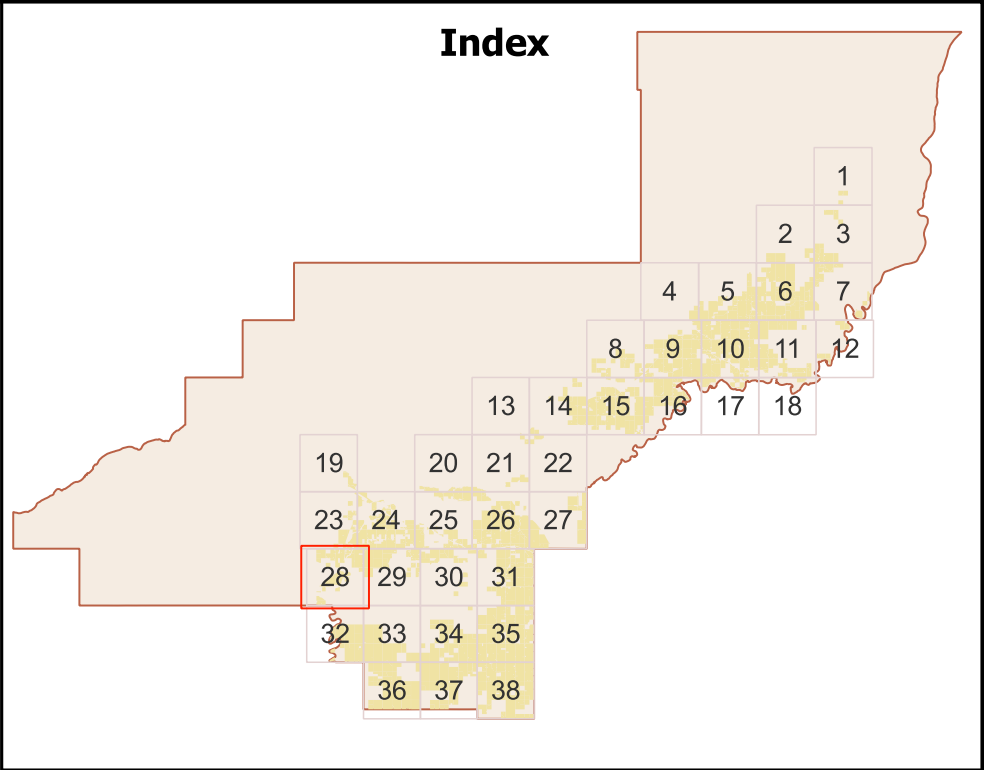
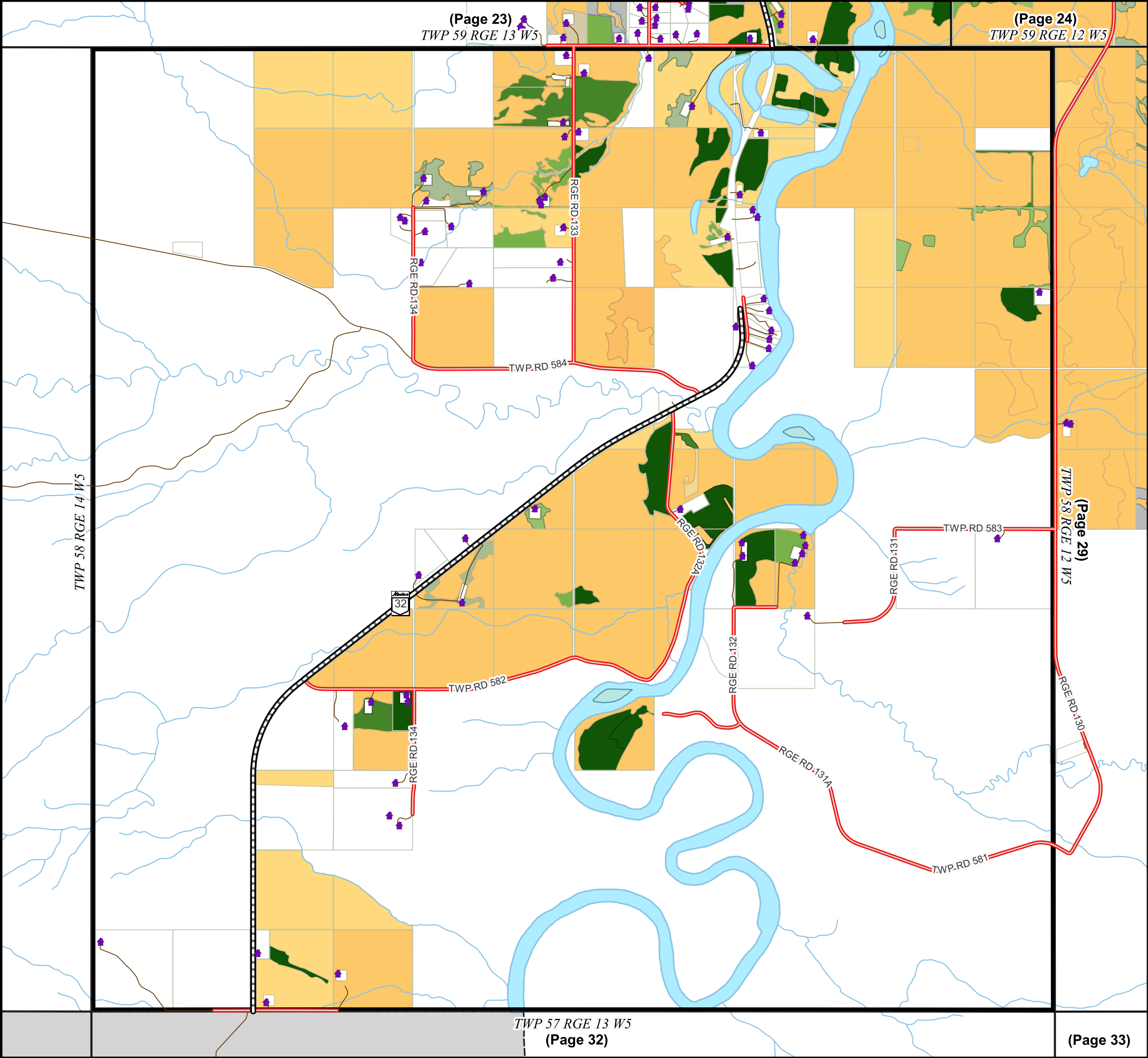





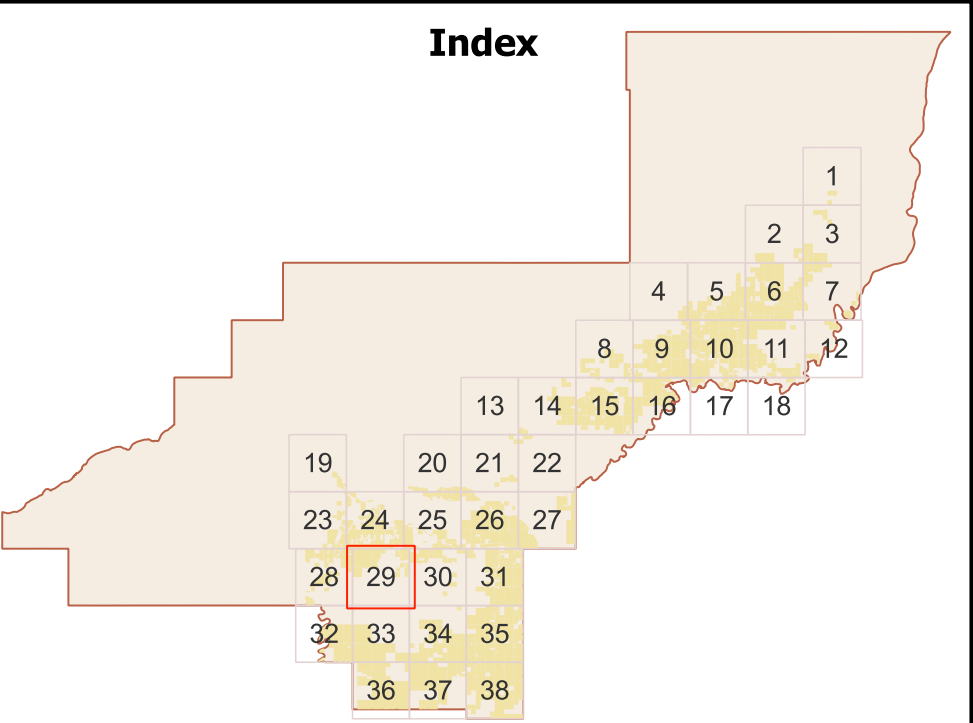
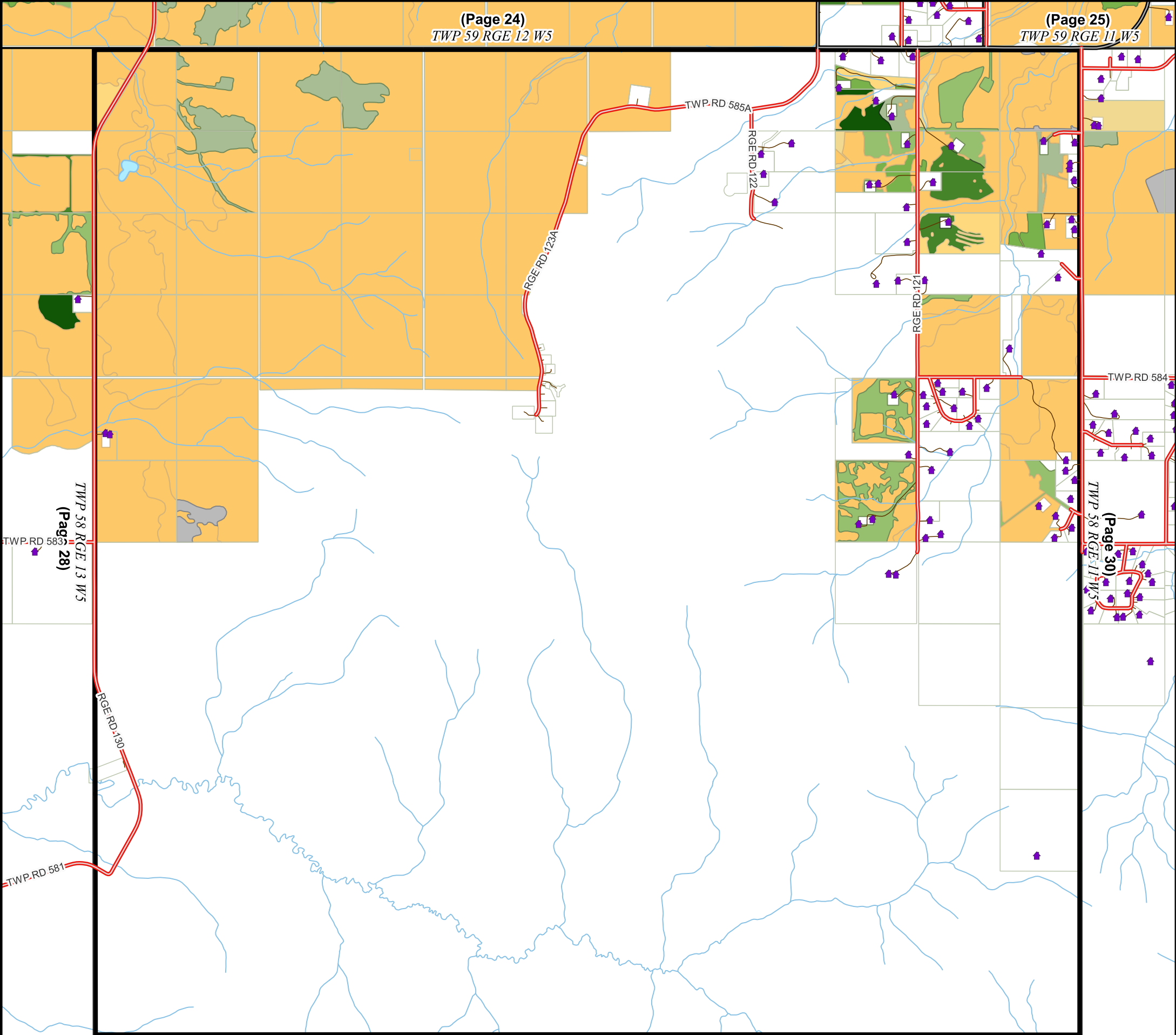




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**Farmland Valuation**

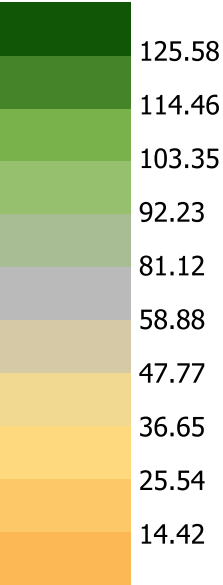
**Farmland Assessment Value (FAV)**

\$ per acre

$\sigma$

$\mu = 70.52$

$-\sigma$



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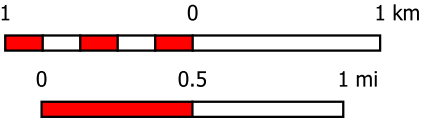
- Paved
- Gravel

**Municipal Roads**

- Gravel
- Oiled
- Paved
- Private

**Residences**

**Municipal Boundaries**



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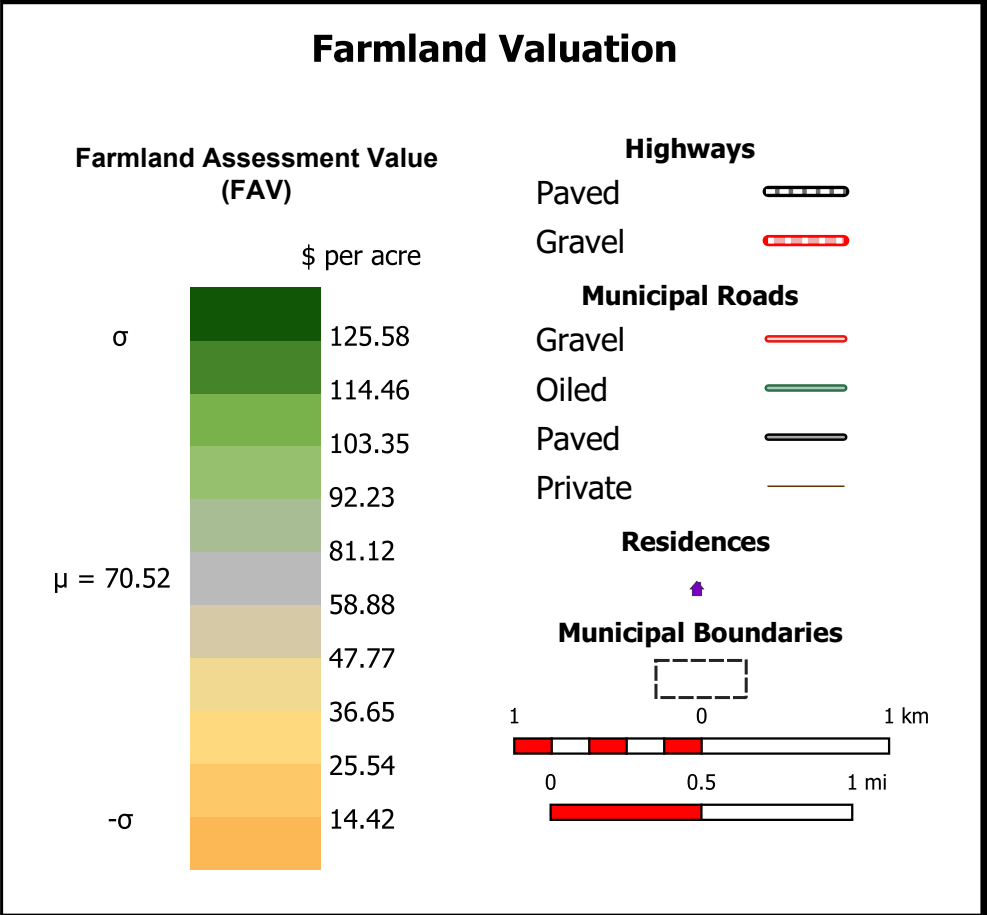
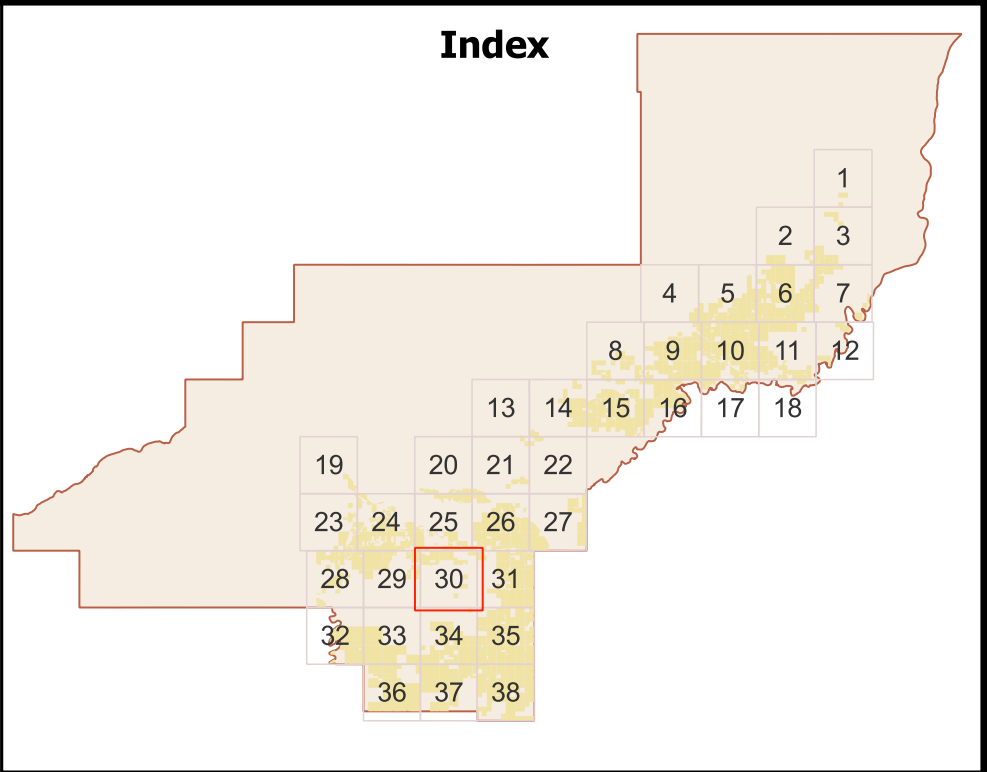
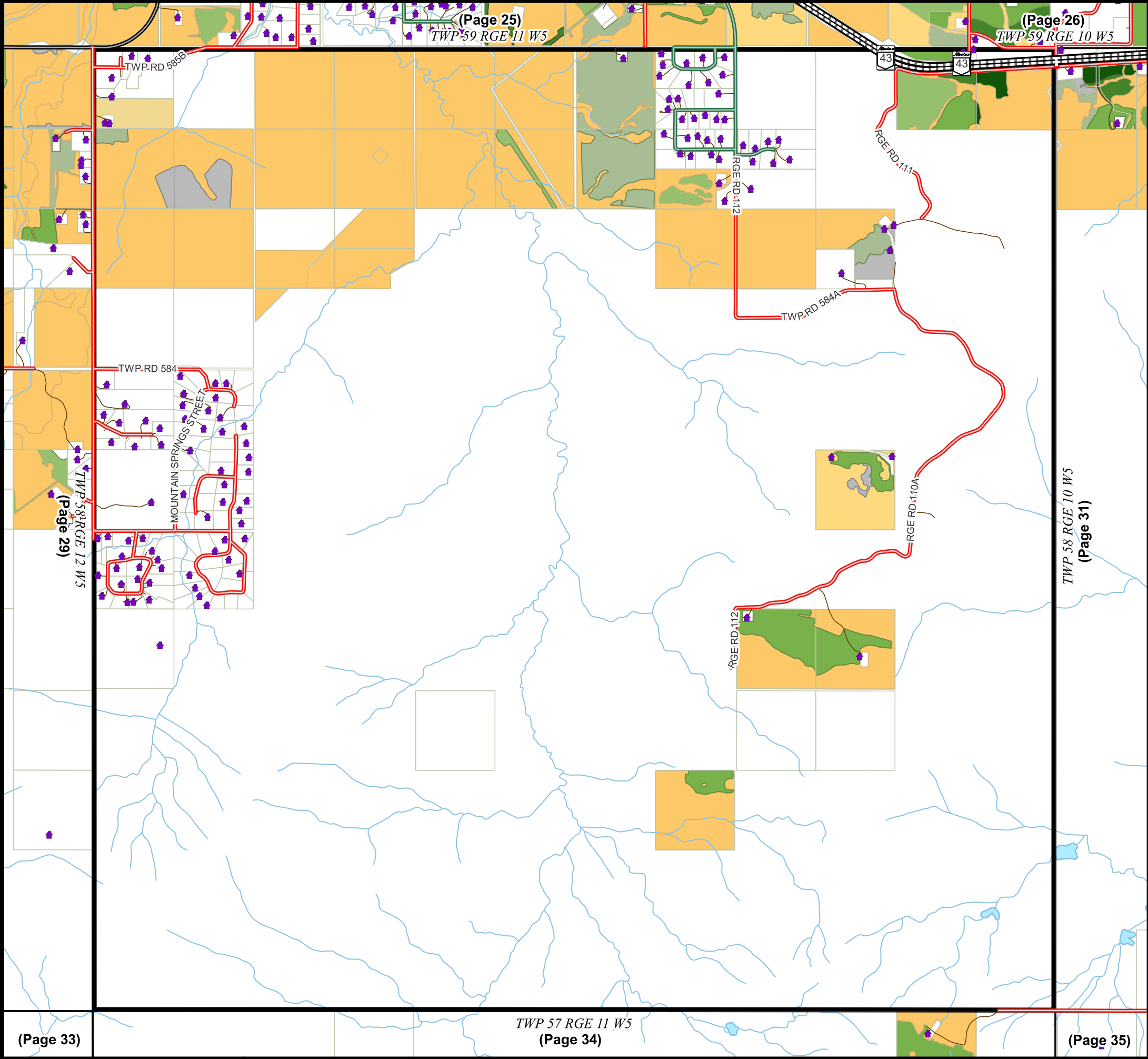



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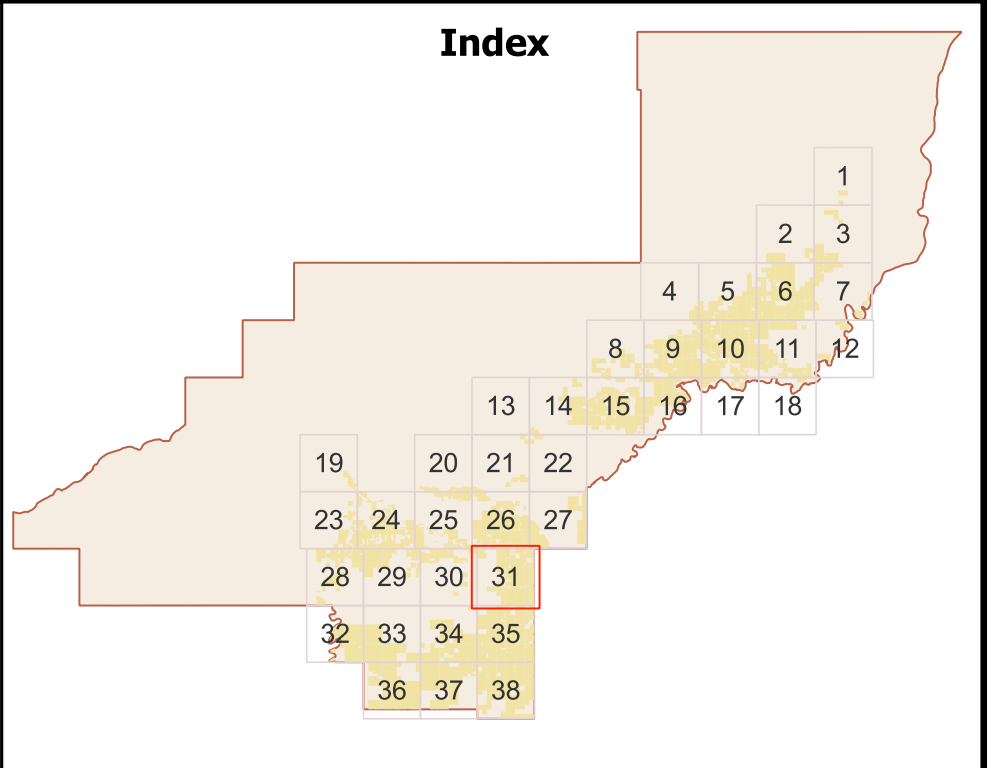
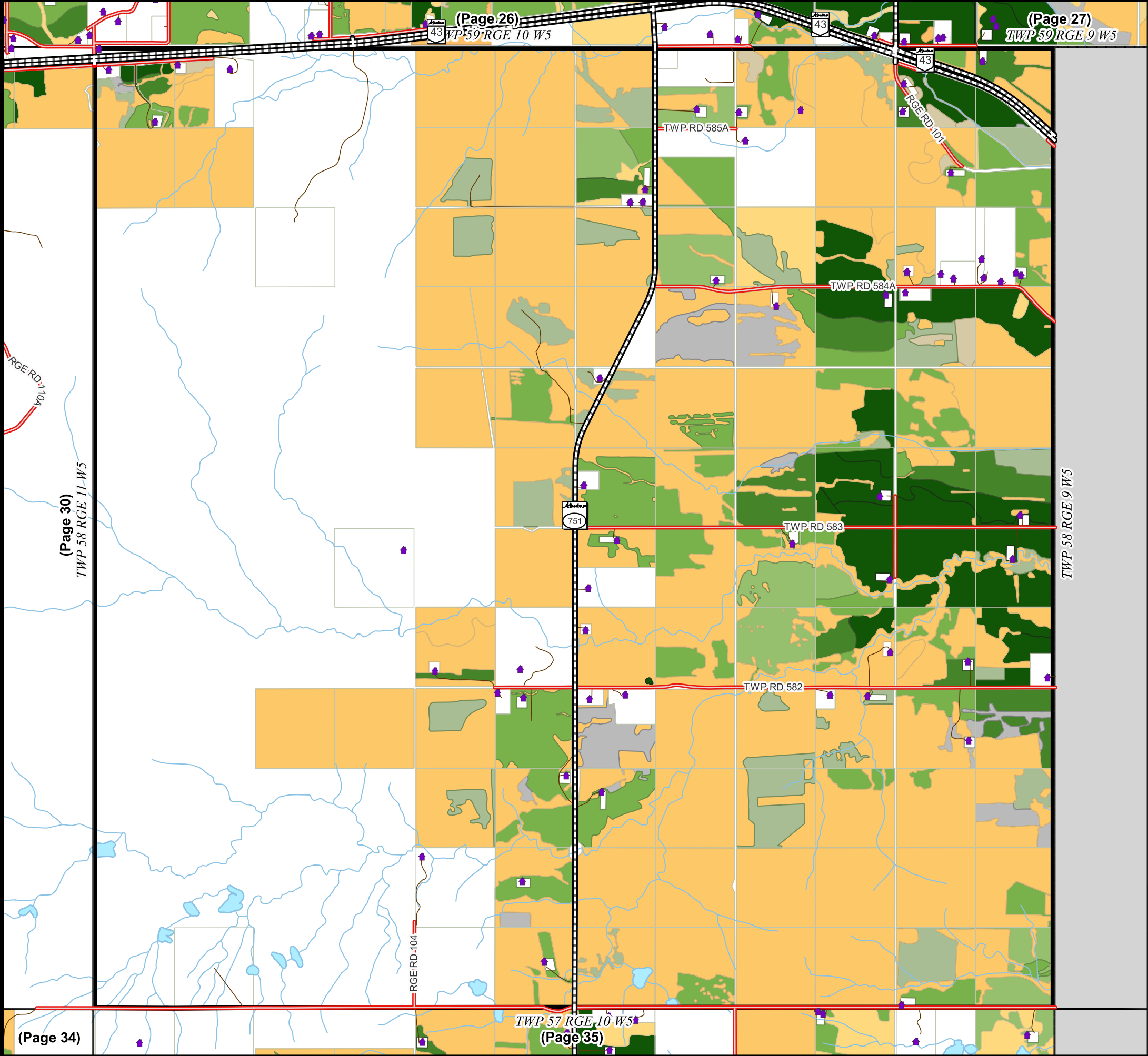
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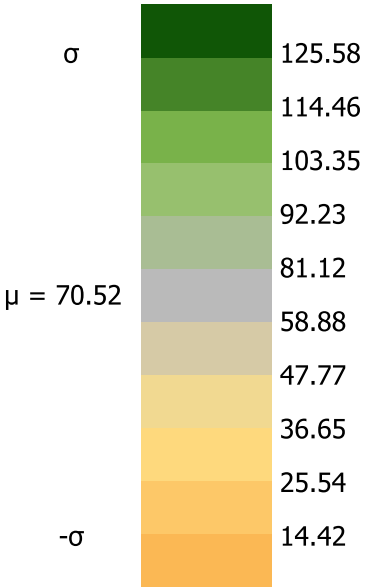
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**Farmland Valuation**

**Farmland Assessment Value (FAV)**

\$ per acre



**Highways**

Paved

Gravel

**Municipal Roads**

Gravel

Oiled

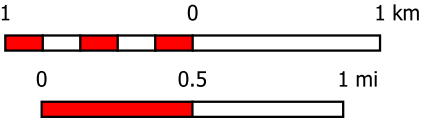
Paved

Private

**Residences**



**Municipal Boundaries**



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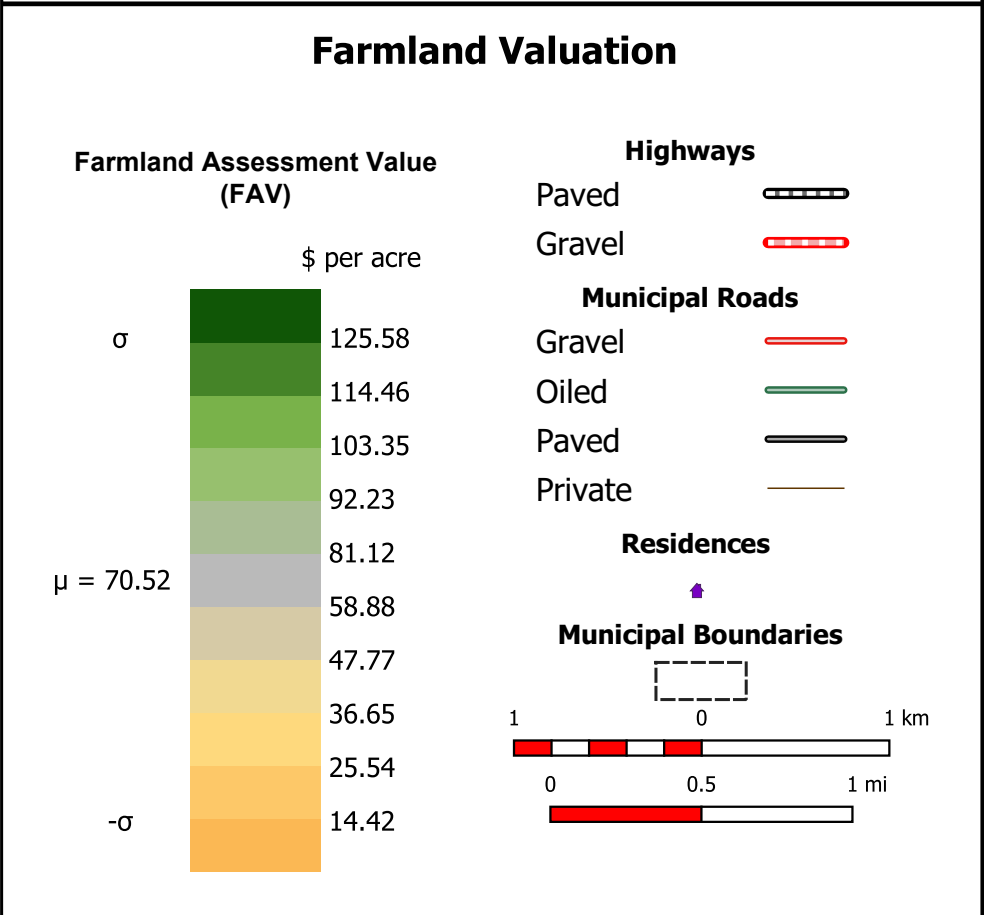
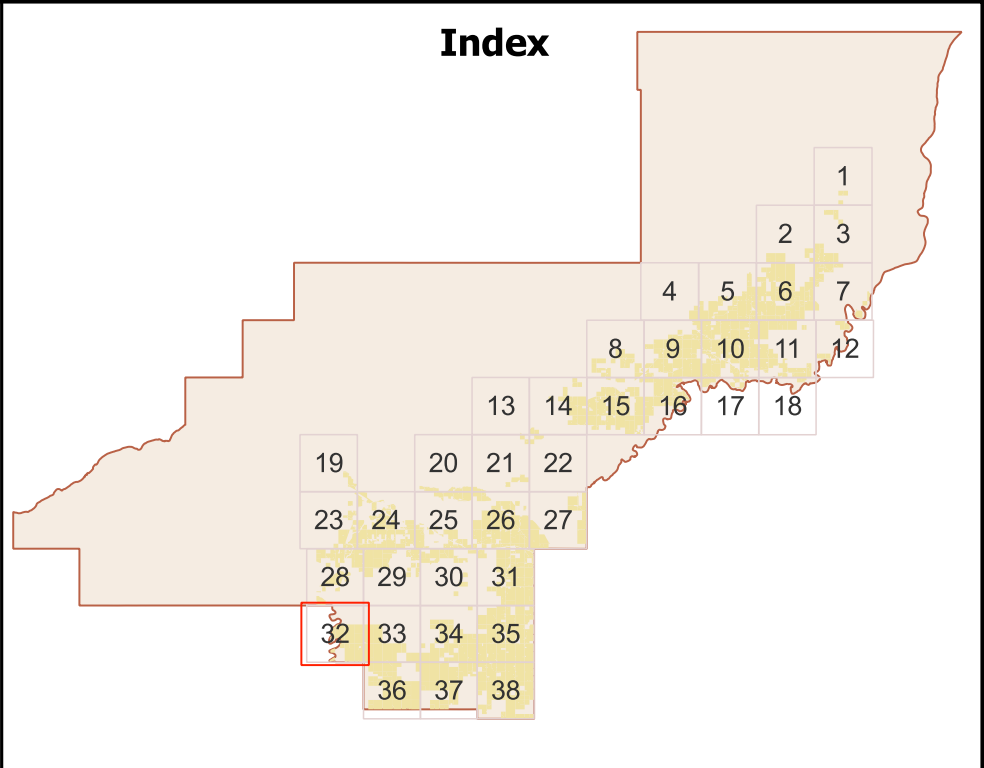
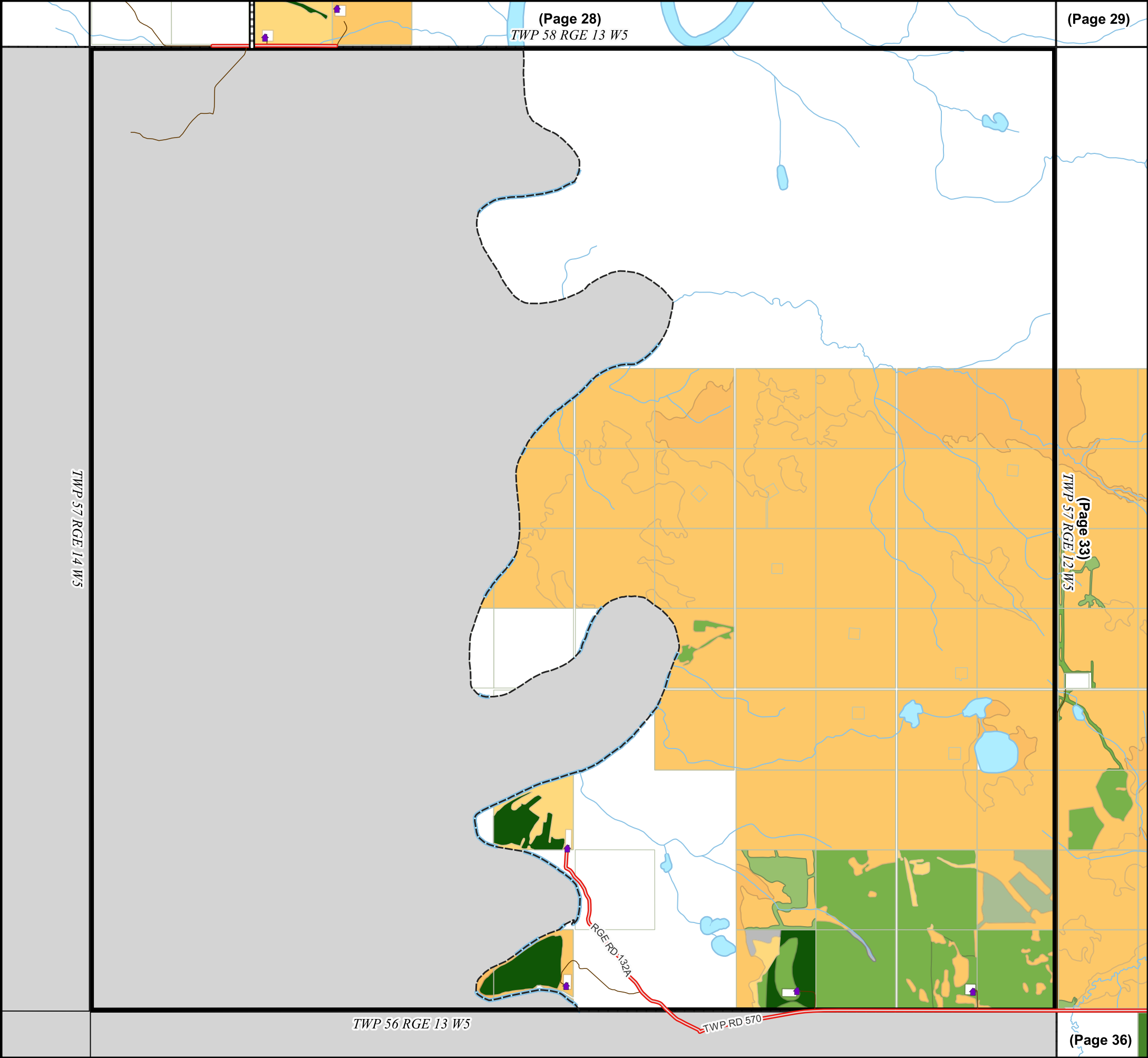
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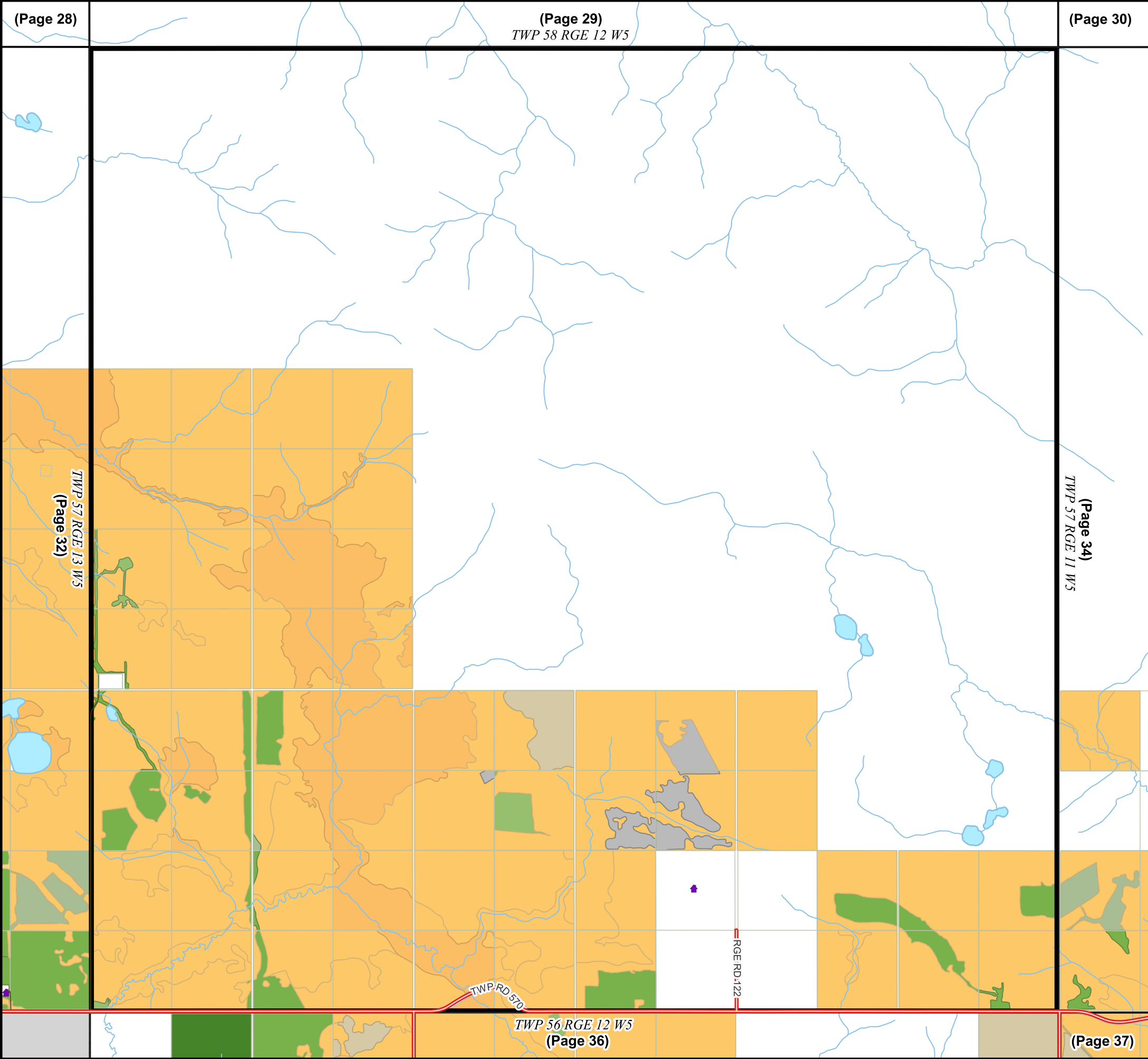
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Index

Farmland Valuation

Farmland Assessment Value (FAV)

\$ per acre

$\sigma$

$\mu = 70.52$

$-\sigma$

125.58

114.46

103.35

92.23

81.12

58.88

47.77

36.65

25.54

14.42

Highways

Paved

Gravel

Municipal Roads

Gravel

Oiled

Paved

Private

Residences

Municipal Boundaries

1

0

1 km

0

0.5

1 mi

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# Farmland Valuation

**Farmland Assessment Value (FAV)**

\$ per acre

$\sigma$

$\mu = 70.52$

$-\sigma$

|        |
|--------|
| 125.58 |
| 114.46 |
| 103.35 |
| 92.23  |
| 81.12  |
| 58.88  |
| 47.77  |
| 36.65  |
| 25.54  |
| 14.42  |

**Highways**

Paved

Gravel

**Municipal Roads**

Gravel

Oiled

Paved

Private

**Residences**

**Municipal Boundaries**

1 0 1 km

0 0.5 1 mi

\$ per acre

Paved 

Gravel 

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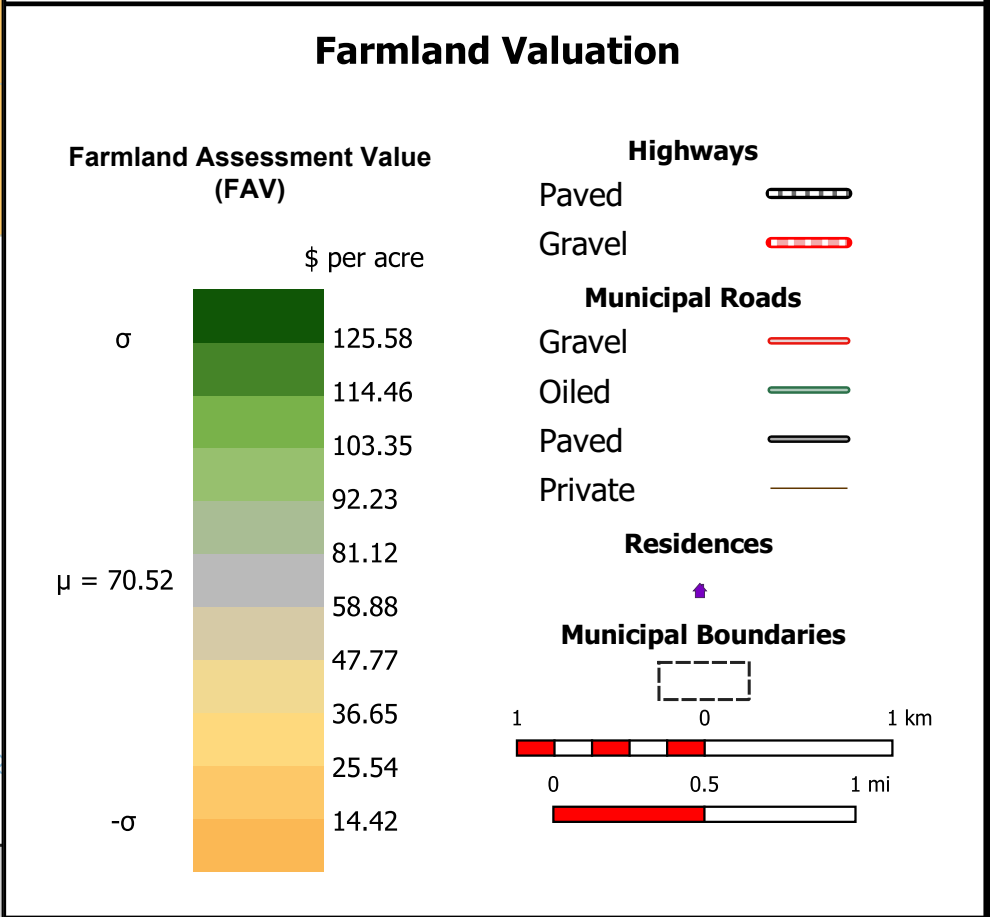
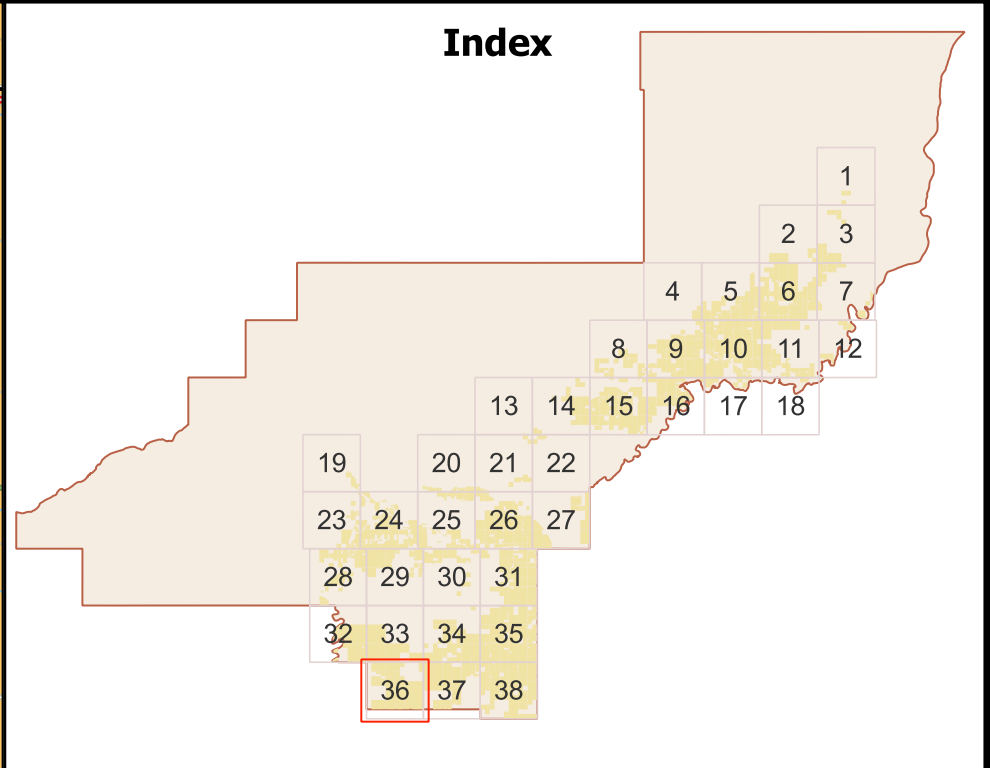
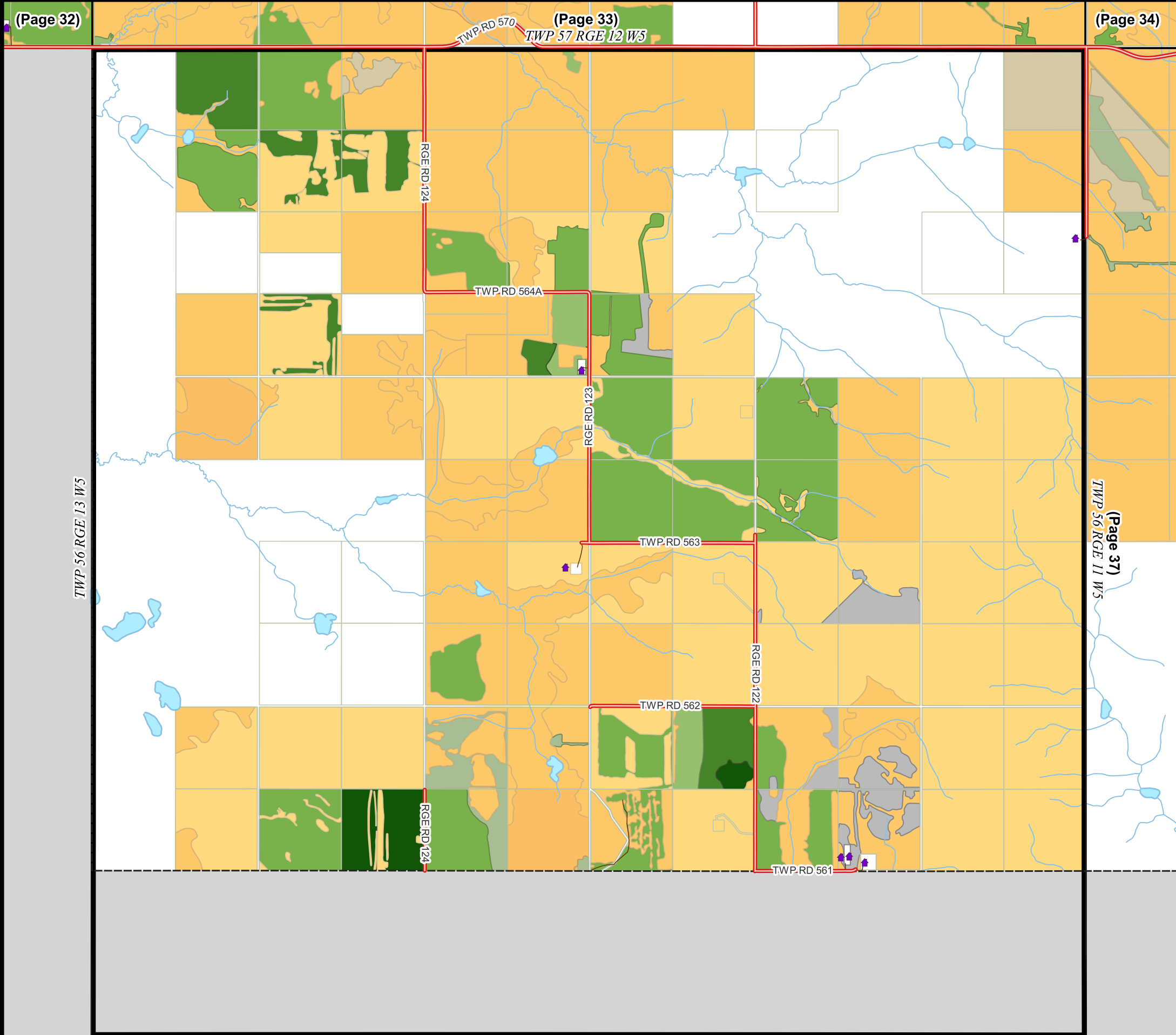


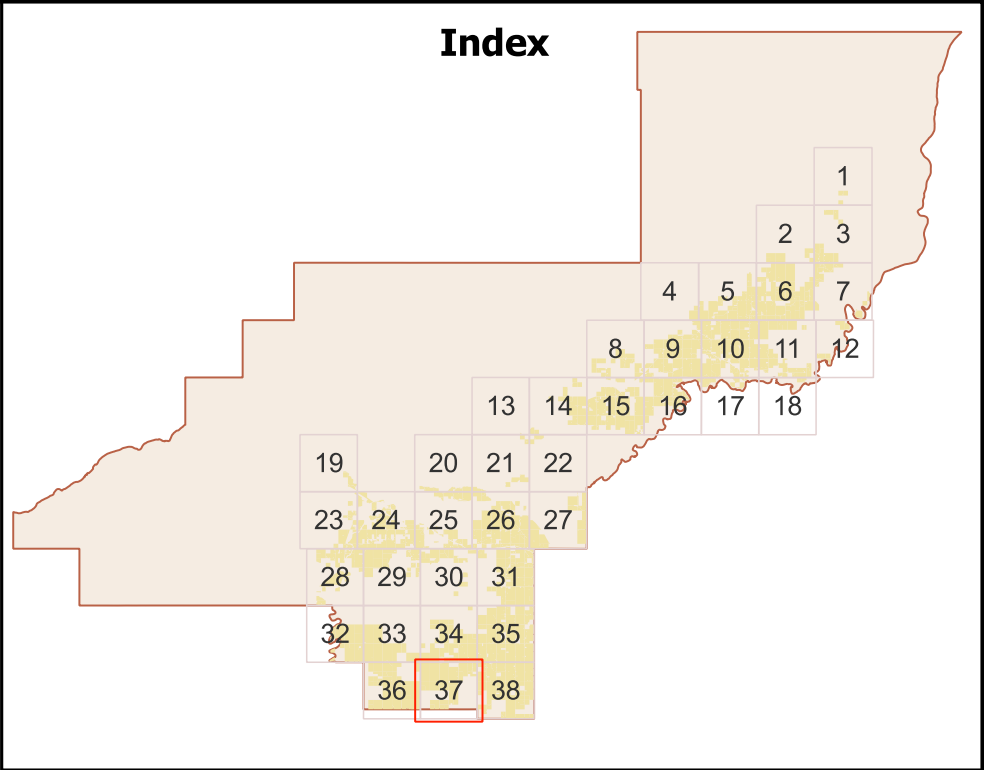
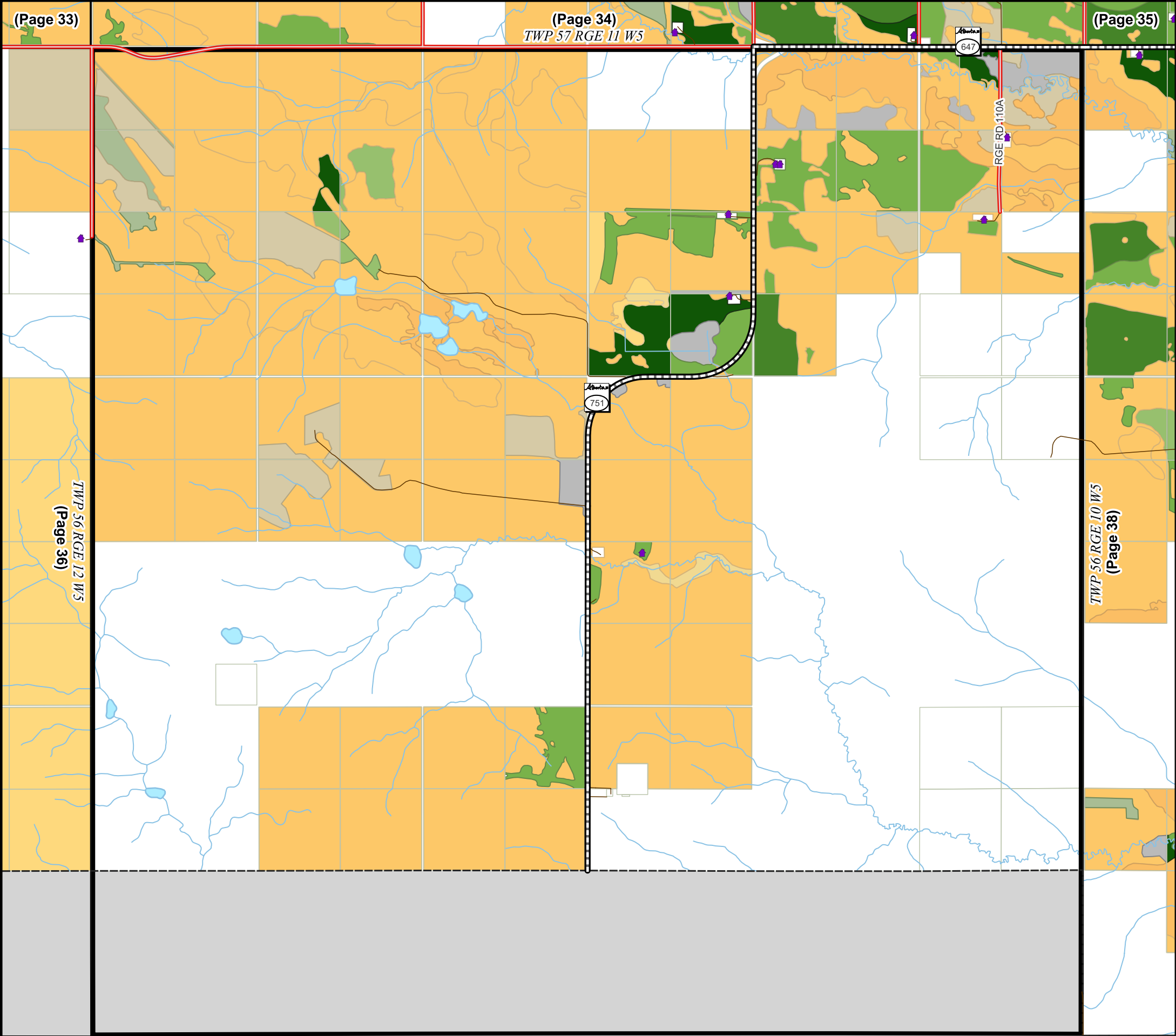
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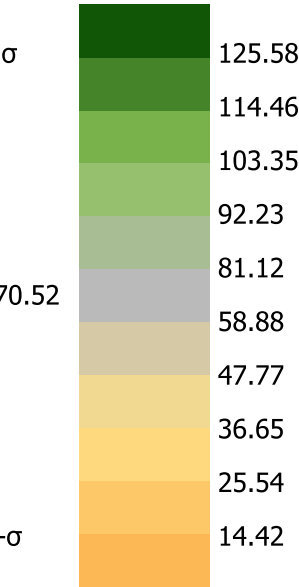




### Farmland Valuation

#### Farmland Assessment Value (FAV)

\$ per acre



#### Highways

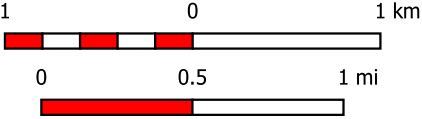
- Paved
- Gravel

#### Municipal Roads

- Gravel
- Oiled
- Paved
- Private

#### Residences

#### Municipal Boundaries



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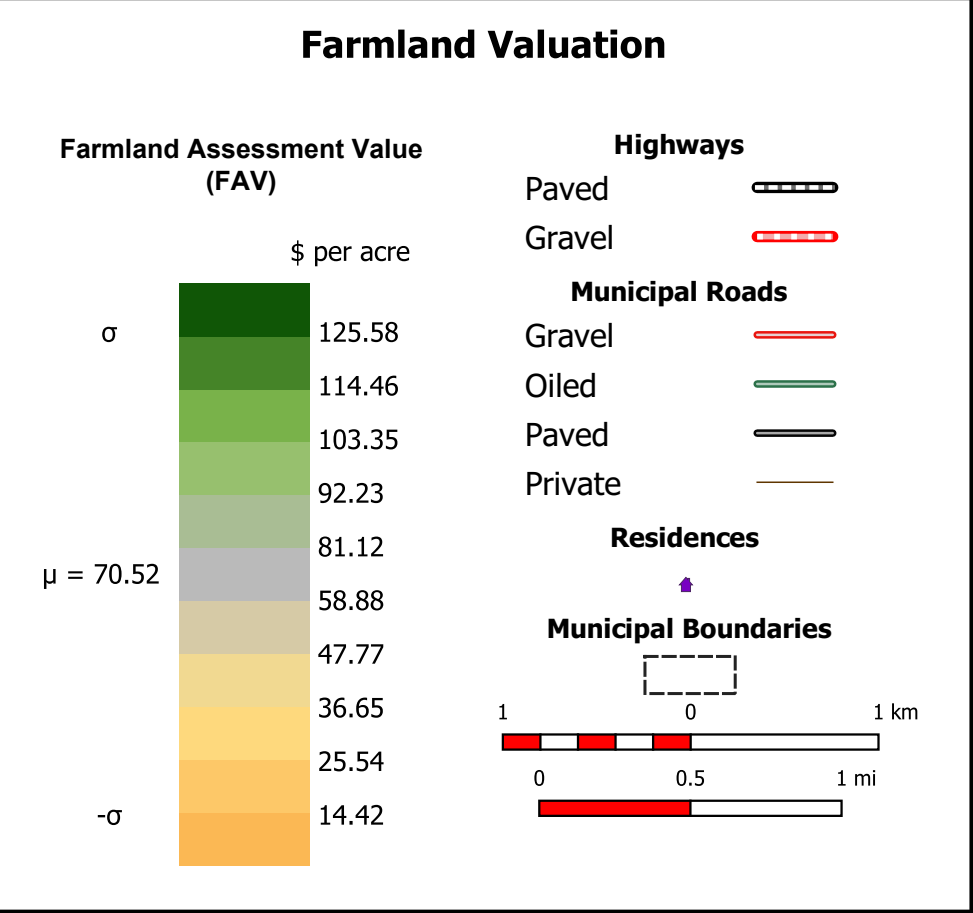
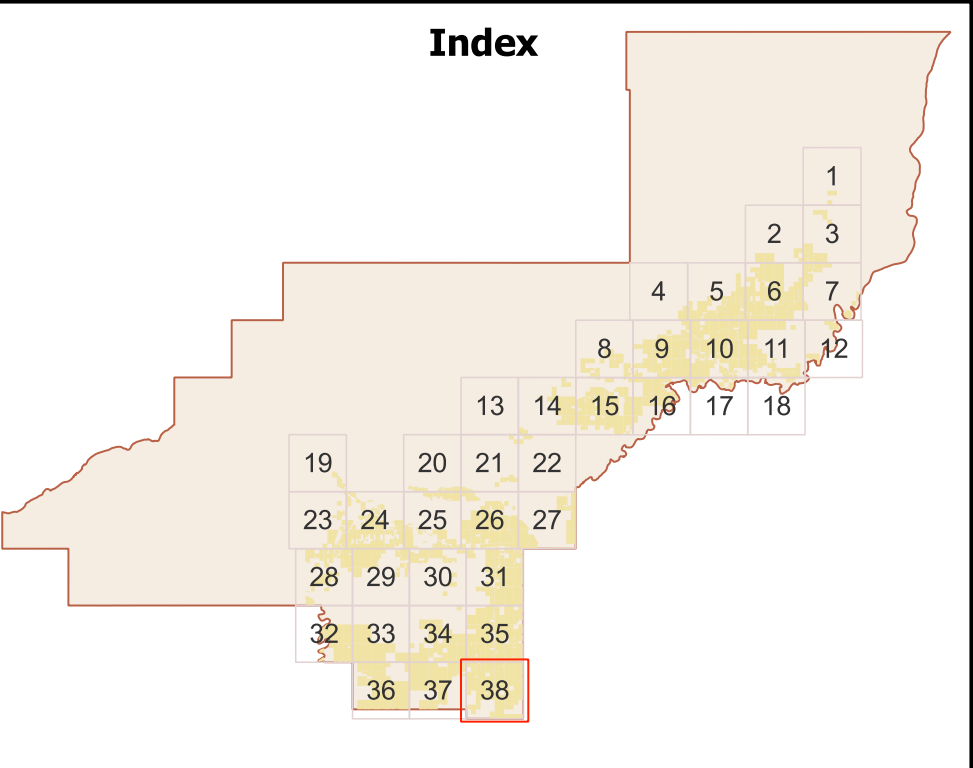
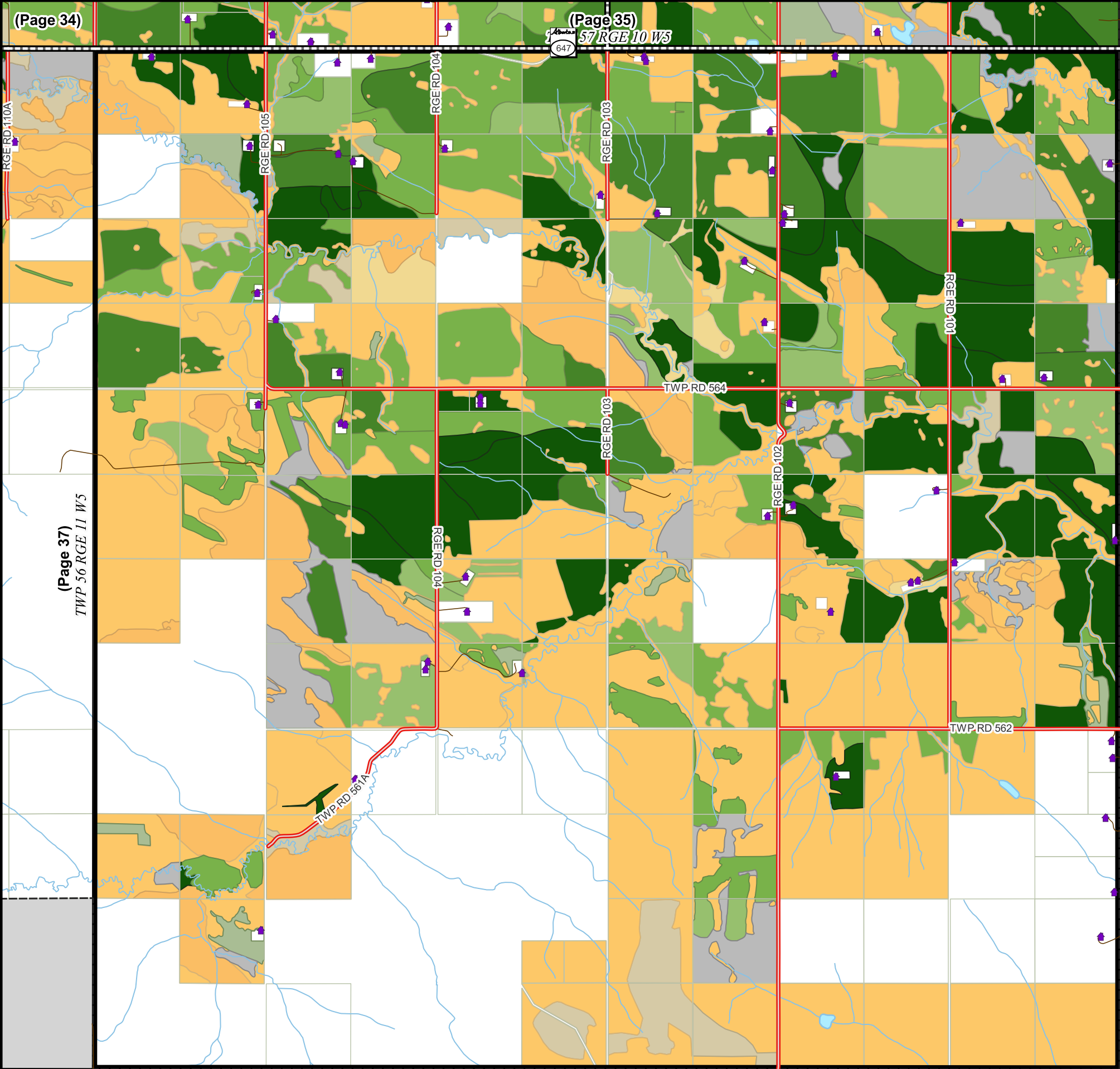



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# Appendix B

## Implementation Tasks

Table 1 below summarizes implementation tasks that will support the application of the policy direction found in the MDP. It is recommended the implementation task be reviewed annually and tasks incorporated in the annual budget process as appropriate to facilitate ongoing implementation of the MDP's direction.

For the Table below, the following abbreviations are defined:

|                |   |                                   |
|----------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>AG</b>      | — | Agricultural Services Department  |
| <b>CAO</b>     | — | Chief Administrative Officer      |
| <b>COM</b>     | — | Communications Department         |
| <b>ED</b>      | — | Economic Development Department   |
| <b>GIS</b>     | — | Geographic Information System     |
| <b>LS</b>      | — | Legislative Services              |
| <b>P&amp;D</b> | — | Planning & Development Department |
| <b>PS</b>      | — | Protective Services Department    |

Timeframes:

**Short** — 1 to 3 years

**Mid** — 4 to 7 years

**Long** — 8+ years



TABLE 1 — MDP Implementation Task Summary

| Implementation Task  | Responsible Department                      | Timeframe    |
|--|---|--------------|
| Create a Reconciliation Action Plan  | Office of the CAO                           | Short        |
| Provide FireSmart Literature at P&D Counter  | PS supported by P&D                         | Short        |
| Develop and host FireSmart workshops for the public  | PS supported by P&D                         | Short to mid |
| Update flood risk mapping  | GIS supported by P&D                        | Short to mid |
| Create flood risk development policies and evaluation criteria in the land use bylaw                                 | P&D supported by GIS and Emergency Services | Short to mid |
| Develop TOR for all technical reports (i.e., TIA, Geotech, Biophysical Assessment, etc.)                             | P&D supported by contracted services        | Short to mid |
| Seek funding to create a 1:500 flood map at regional scale with municipal neighbours                                 | P&D and municipal partners                  | Mid          |
| Create public awareness/education campaign regarding the 'better agricultural land' approach to farmland development | P&D supported by COM and GIS                | Short        |
| Integrate PFRA Study into GIS layer  | GIS with support from P&D                   | Short to mid |
| Create secondary dwelling regulations in the Land Use Bylaw  | P&D   | Short        |
| Create regulations and illustrative graphics for new subdivision regulations on Ag land in the Land Use Bylaw.       | P&D   | Short        |
| Reconcile Ag land use districts into one.  | P&D   | Short        |
| Create regulations in the Land Use Bylaw regarding non-residential uses on large ag holdings parcels                 | P&D   |              |
| Create TOR for preparation of an ASP in the County   | P&D   | Short        |
| Prepare an ASP for each Hamlet   | P&D   | Short to mid |
| Prepare and host "Cows & Fish" workshop on regular cycle   | AG with support from P&D                    | Mid to long  |
| Undertake lake health assessments studies for all recreational lakes in Woodlands County                             | P&D with support from contracted services   | Mid to long  |
| Create a recreation & tourism strategy   | ED with support from AG and P&D             | Short to mid |
| Commission an Environmental Significant Areas Report   | P&D with support from contracted services   | Mid          |
| Create a cash in lieu of reserve policy  | P&D with support from LS                    | Short        |
| Create an historic resources inventory   | P&D with support from contracted services   | Short to mid |
| Update the IDP with the Town of Whitecourt   | P&D   | Short        |
| Create an ICF with the Town of Whitecourt  | P&D   | Short        |
| Update the MDP every 5-10 years  | P&D   | Mid to long  |

# Contact

**Woodlands County  
Municipal  
Development Plan —  
Bylaw 611/24**

**Woodlands County**  
P.O. Box 60, #1 Woodlands Lane,  
Whitecourt, AB T7S 1N3  
780-778-8402  
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