

SECTION 2.0

Proposed Action and Alternatives

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PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose and need for the Proposed Action is to improve the Tribe's short-term and long-term economic condition and promote its self-sufficiency, both with respect to its government operations and its members.

The Tribe has immediate need for agency action because of its present financial situation. Steadily declining tribal revenues and shrinking tribal budgets against a backdrop of a rapidly growing and youthful tribal population with significant unmet social and economic needs including, but not limited to, health care, housing, education, employment, and job skills have resulted in the deteriorating financial condition. The situation is expected to continue as revenues continue to decline and tribal membership grows. The unmet governmental needs hinder the Tribe's ability to adequately support tribal self-sufficiency, tribal investment in its economic and social services infrastructure, or tribal government provision of benefits and services to tribal members or to otherwise support the health and well-being of the tribal community.

2.2 ALTERNATIVES IDENTIFIED BY THE PUBLIC

During the EIS scoping period, several issues were raised regarding the scope of alternatives that will be evaluated within the EIS. Specifically, comments suggested that the development alternatives should include entrance/exits on both Highway 2 and Craig Road and that adequate parking facilities to avoid disturbing the surrounding neighborhood should be provided. Each of the development alternatives described below and analyzed within the EIS include access points along both Craig Road and Highway 2, as well as sufficient parking facilities. Additionally, comments suggested that an expanded range of development alternatives should be included within the EIS, including a potential expansion of existing Spokane Tribal gaming establishments. As discussed in **Table 2-1** below, alternatives that included expansion of the Tribe's Two Rivers Casino and Chewelah Casino were considered, but eliminated from detailed evaluation within the EIS as they would not meet the purpose and need for the Proposed Action.

2.3 ALTERNATIVES TO BE ANALYZED WITHIN THE EIS

The project site is a 145-acre parcel of land currently held in federal trust for the Spokane Tribe located adjacent to the City of Airway Heights (CAWH) in the unincorporated West Plains area of Spokane County, Washington (**Figure 1 and 2**). The project site is located immediately northwest of the intersection of U.S. Highway 2 (US-2) and Craig Road and immediately west of the city limits of Airway Heights, Spokane County, Washington. The EIS will evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives to meet the purpose and need for the Proposed Action, which include the following: 1) Alternative 1 – Proposed Casino-Resort with Mixed Use Development; 2) Alternative 2 – Reduced Casino with Mixed Use

Development; Alternative 3 – Non-Gaming Mixed-Use Development, and Alternative 4 - No Action Alternative.

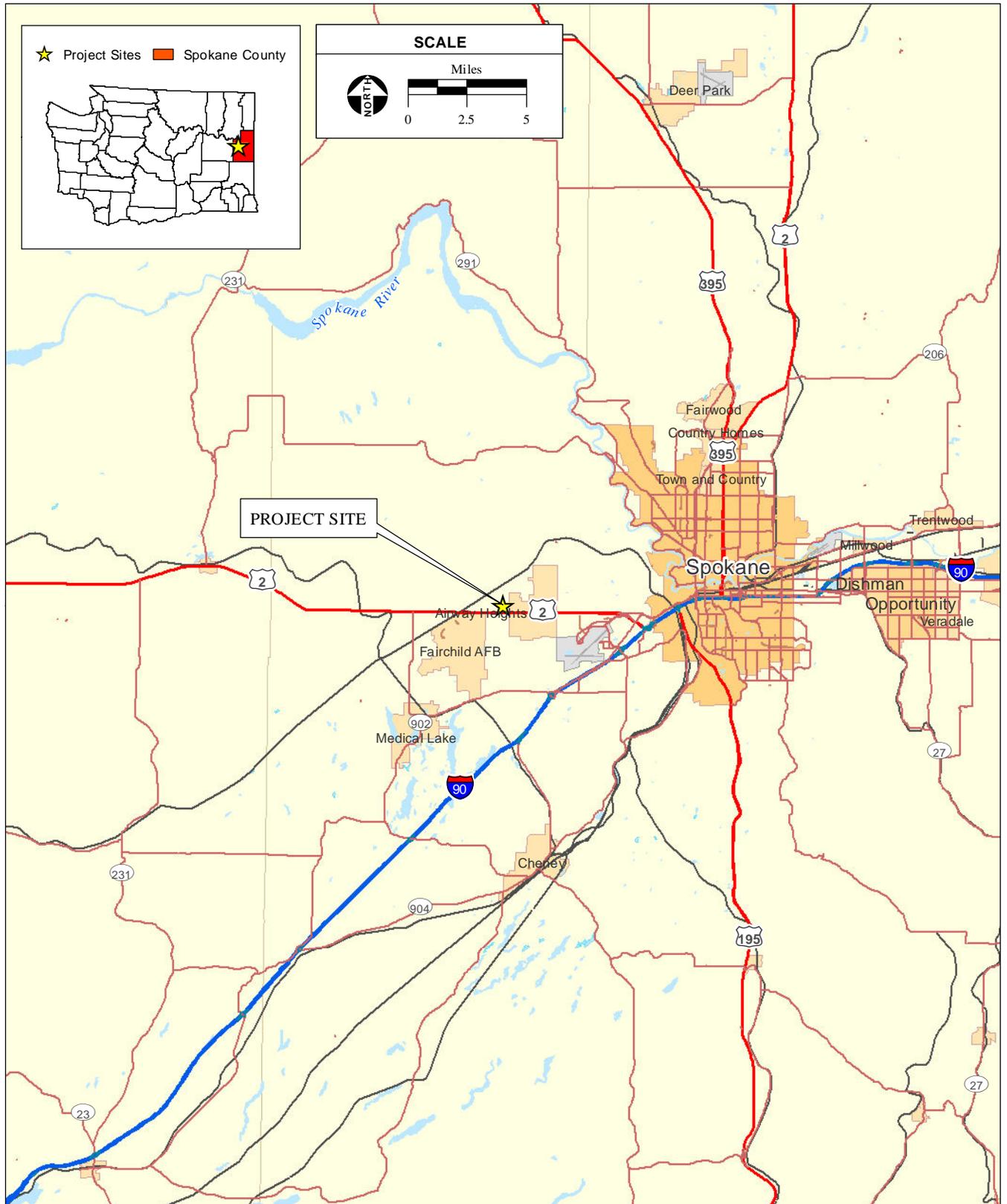
Table 2-1 identifies and summarizes development alternatives to be analyzed in detail and alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed analysis. The Spokane Tribe of Indians – West Plains Casino and Mixed-Use Development Project is considered the proposed action. The BIA (Lead Agency), however, may not document a Preferred Alternative until completion of the environmental analysis. If it is clearly known at the time, a Preferred Alternative may be identified in the Draft EIS; otherwise, BIA will do so in the Final EIS or Record of Decision (ROD). As described in NEPA Section 1502.14(e), a Preferred Alternative is the alternative that the agency believes would fulfill its statutory mission and responsibilities, considering economic, environmental, technical, and other factors.

TABLE 2-1
SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES

Alternative	Description
Alternatives to be Analyzed in Detail	
No Action	NEPA Section 1502.14(d) requires analysis of the No Action Alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, none of the three development alternatives considered within the EIS would be implemented. The No Action alternative assumes that existing uses on the 145-acre project site would not change in the near term.
Alternative 1 – Proposed Casino and Mixed Use Development	Alternative 1 would result in the development of an approximately 118,687 square foot gaming casino, 300-room hotel with an indoor pool and spa, restaurants and bars, convention/banquet areas, retail development, tribal cultural center, commercial building, police and fire station, and ancillary facilities on the 145-acre project site. This alternative would also include surface and structured parking, and internal roadways. Alternative 1 maximizes the economic development opportunities available to the Tribe.
Alternative 2 – Reduced Casino and Mixed Use Development	Alternative 2 consists of a mixed-use development similar to Alternative 1, but on a reduced scale. Alternative 2 would include a 73,000-square-foot casino, restaurants and bars, convention/banquet facilities, retail development, commercial building, tribal cultural center, fire and police station and ancillary facilities. Under Alternative 2, the casino and retail development would be reduced when compared to Alternative 1, and no hotel and spa facilities would be developed.
Alternative 3 – Non-Gaming Mixed-Use Development	Generally, under Alternative 3, the overall building program would be similar in size to that of Alternative 1, however, the central core portion of the project site would consist of a 93,500 square feet of convention/banquet facilities, 300-room hotel, 45,020-square-foot bowling alley, 55,850-square-feet children’s arcade/fun zone, indoor pool/water park and spa facilities, retail shops, and a variety of dining options and related surface and structured parking, and internal roadways.
Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Consideration	
Expanded Two Rivers Casino and Resort	This alternative would involve expanding the Tribe’s existing Two Rivers Casino, which is located within the southwestern-most corner of the Tribe’s Reservation, in Stevens County, Washington. Expansion could include additional gaming positions, additional entertainment venues, and additional recreational opportunities. The opening of Northern Quest in FY2001 resulted in a revenue decline of 21.4% at Two Rivers, and in recent years, this casino has been closed during the winter months due to a lack of business. In both 2008 and 2009, Two Rivers experienced operating losses, requiring a reverse transfer of funds from the Tribe to the Casino. Based on the current financial status of the Two Rivers Casino, an investment in an expanded casino facility would be insufficient to justify the expansion and would not satisfy the Tribal government needs and thus would not meet the purpose and need for the Proposed Action.

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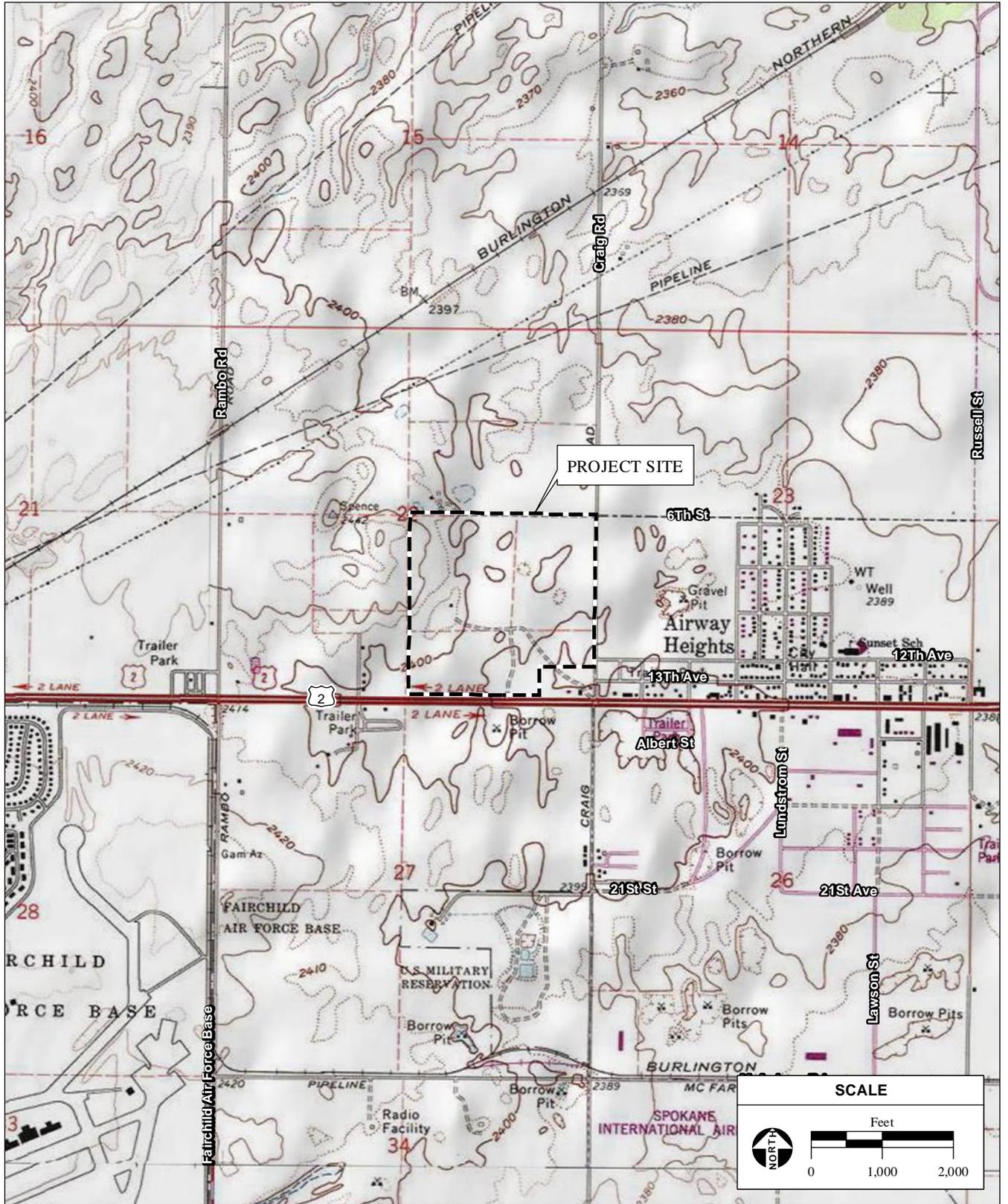
<p>Expanded Chewelah Casino</p>	<p>This alternative would involve expanding the Tribe’s existing Chewelah Casino, near Chewelah, Washington. A market assessment was completed to evaluate the feasibility of expanding the Chewelah Casino. The study concluded that given the limited population base and the competitive impact of Northern Quest, the marginal increase in operating income from an expansion would barely be sufficient to cover investment costs. An expansion of this facility may increase revenue but not to extent required to support the programs and services required by the Tribe. Therefore, this alternative would not meet the purpose and need for the Proposed Action.</p>
<p>Off-site locations for Proposed Gaming Facility.</p>	<p>Alternative properties owned by the Tribe were considered for development of a gaming facility within the Spokane Tribe’s aboriginal territory and closer to the Spokane gaming market. The Tribe owns two fee parcels in the City of Spokane, located at 1025 West Indiana Ave, Spokane, Washington 99205 and 232 East Lyons Avenue, Spokane, Washington 99208. The property on Indiana Avenue contains a tribal building. The property on Lyons contains the offices of the Spokane Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Since both of these sites are currently being utilized, are not held in federal trust, and are too small to accommodate a facility that would generate sufficient revenue. Neither of these sites are suitable for the proposed casino.</p>



SOURCE: StreetMap North America, 2009; AES, 2011

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Figure 1
Regional Location



SOURCE: "Airway Heights, WA" USGS 7.5 Minute Topographic Quadrangle, T25N, R41E, Section 22, Williamette Baseline and Meridian; AES, 2011

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Figure 2
Site and Vicinity