



LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Proposed Elkhart Local Trax Railroad Grade Separation, Sunnyside Avenue over Norfolk Southern Railroad (NSRR) in Elkhart County

Elkhart County and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) will host a public hearing on Wednesday, October 13, 2021 at Concord High School, 59117 Minuteman Way, Elkhart, IN 46517, the hearing will begin at 6:00 p.m. The purpose of the public hearing is to offer all interested persons an opportunity to comment on current preliminary design plans for the Elkhart Local Trax Railroad Grade Separation project at Sunnyside Avenue and County Road (CR) 13 in Elkhart County. Doors will open at 5:00 p.m. and project team members will be available before and following the formal hearing procedure.

Project limits are along Sunnyside Avenue from US 33/Main Street to CR 13; along Concord Mall Drive from CR 20/Mishawaka Road to US 33/Main Street; along CR 13 from Greenwood Boulevard to 280 feet north of US 33/Main Street; and, along Center Drive from CR 20/Mishawaka Road to Concord Mall Drive. The need for the project stems from safety and mobility issues for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and trains at two at-grade railroad crossings over NSRR, at Sunnyside Avenue and CR 13. Trains typically run through these crossings 80 to 90 times a day, and they regularly stop on the tracks. Crash data indicates a high rate of crashes for these types of crossings. Additionally, there are no pedestrian facilities on Sunnyside Avenue, CR 13, and Concord Mall Drive. The purpose of the project is to reduce the exposure of motorists and pedestrians to rail traffic, and to increase mobility in this area of Elkhart County.

The proposed project will eliminate the two existing at-grade railroad crossings at Sunnyside Avenue and CR 13, and provide a single, grade-separated crossing, as well as a roundabout near the existing Concord Mall Drive and Center Drive intersection. Sunnyside Avenue will be realigned to cross US 33/Main Street approximately 0.06 mile southeast of Concord Mall Drive. County Bridge 148, a new 4-span concrete beam bridge, will provide grade-separated access across US 33/Main Street, NSRR, and CR 45 (bypass bridge). The bypass bridge will be approximately 409.5 feet long, with a width of 43.1 feet, and a vertical clearance over the railroad of 23.5 feet. The bridge and roadway typical section will be similar, including two 12-foot wide travel lanes, one in each direction, and 6-foot wide sidewalks on both sides. Additionally, the existing Concord Mall Drive bridge over Yellow Creek will be replaced, and a second bridge will be constructed on Sunnyside Avenue over Yellow Creek.

East of the new bypass bridge, the re-aligned Sunnyside Avenue will tie into the existing alignment near the current intersection with Kendall Street. A two-way left turn lane is proposed from approximately Amy Street to the CR 13 intersection. A stop light will be added at the intersection of Sunnyside Avenue and CR 13. Several streets will terminate in cul-de-sacs: Sunnyside Avenue east of CR 45, Amy Avenue, Kendall Street, and John Street. Additionally, several private drives will be extended to continue access.

A four-way single lane roundabout is proposed to reconfigure the intersections of Concord Mall Drive with Center Drive and the re-aligned Sunnyside Avenue. The roundabout will have a diameter of 121 feet with a single 16-foot wide lane, roll curb, and a 12-foot wide truck apron. Concord Mall Drive, Center Drive, and the roundabout will have sidewalks and pedestrian crossings. The west side of the roundabout will connect to CR 20/Mishawaka Road at the existing Concord Mall Drive and Pineridge Parkway intersection. The south side of the roundabout will connect to CR 20/Mishawaka Road via the existing Center Drive intersection.

The CR 13 at-grade railroad crossing will be eliminated. South of the railroad, CR 13 will terminate at a cul-de-sac. North of the railroad, CR 13 will be realigned to create a 90-degree stop-controlled intersection with CR 45, approximately 400 feet northwest of the existing intersection. The CR 13 typical section includes two 12-foot wide travel lanes, a two-way left turn lane, and 6-foot wide sidewalks on each side.

Construction is anticipated to begin in Spring 2023 and occur year-round for at least two years. The proposed maintenance of traffic (MOT) will include full roadway closures, and detours will be provided. The proposed detours in the western project area will utilize CR 20/Mishawaka Road, Concord Mall Drive, and US 33/Main Street. The detours within the eastern project area will utilize CR 13, CR 45, and Cole Street. MOT details will be presented during the public hearing. Access to all properties will be maintained during construction. Elkhart County and INDOT will coordinate with emergency services, local school corporation officials and project stakeholders to ensure potential disruptions and impacts are minimized as much as possible.

The preferred alternative will require two commercial relocations, three residential relocations, approximately 13.83 acres of new permanent right-of-way, and approximately 0.91 acre of temporary right-of-way.

This project will permanently alter traffic patterns in this part of Elkhart County. This project will impact approximately 21.77 acres of the St. Joseph Sole Source Aquifer, approximately 145 linear feet of Yellow Creek, approximately 0.087 acre of wetlands, approximately 0.25 acre of forested floodplain, and approximately 8.92 acres of terrestrial habitat, including approximately 3.14 acres of trees plus maintained lawn. Additionally, there are temporary occupancy impacts to the abutting public park, the Mapleheart Trail, which will remain open as much as feasible during construction. No historic properties will be affected. Noise impacts will occur; however, noise abatement has not been found to be "feasible and reasonable".

Federal, state, and local funds are proposed to be used for construction of this project. INDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have agreed that this project poses minimal impact to natural environment. A Categorical Exclusion (CE) environmental document has been prepared for the project. The environmental documentation and preliminary design information is available to view prior at the following locations:

1. Elkhart Public Library, Pierre Moran Branch, 2400 Benham Avenue Elkhart, IN 46517
2. Elkhart County Highway Department, 610 Steury Ave, Goshen, IN 46528
3. INDOT District Office, 5333 Hatfield Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46808
4. Elkhart County website: www.elkcohwvy.org/projects/
5. Project documents can be mailed upon request. Call Dan Miller at (317) 616-4663 or call INDOT Toll Free at 855-INDOT4U (463-6848)

Project information, including a copy of the project boards and presentation, are available on Elkhart County Highway's website at www.elkcohwvy.org/projects/. An online presentation will be held prior to the hearing on Tuesday, October 12, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. online via WebEx Event; please register in advance here: <https://bit.ly/2XHwgA4>.

Public statements for the record will be taken as part of the public hearing procedure. All verbal statements recorded during the public hearing and all written comments submitted prior to, during and for a period of two (2) weeks following the hearing date, will be evaluated, considered and addressed in subsequent environmental documentation. Written comments may be submitted prior to the public hearing and within the comment period to: Dan Miller, Parsons, 101 W Ohio Street, Suite 2121, Indianapolis, IN 46204. E-Mail: daniel.j.miller@parsons.com. **INDOT respectfully requests comments be submitted by Thursday, October 28, 2021.**

With advance notice, INDOT will provide accommodations for persons with disabilities with regards to participation and access to project information as part of the hearings process including arranging auxiliary aids, interpretation services for the hearing impaired, services for the sight impaired and other services as needed. In addition, INDOT will provide accommodations for persons of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) requiring auxiliary aids including language interpretation services and document conversion. Should accommodation be required please contact Alex Lee, Parsons at (317) 616-1011, or email: alexander.lee@parsons.com.

This notice is published in compliance with: 1) Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Section 771 (CFR 771.111(h)(1) stating, "Each State must have procedures approved by the FHWA to carry out a public involvement/public hearing program."; 2) 23 CFR 450.210(a)(1)(ix) stating, "Provide for the periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that the process provides full and open access to all interested parties and revise the process, as appropriate."; and 3) The 2021 INDOT *Project Development Public Involvement Procedures Manual* approved by the FHWA.