

Elkhart Local Trax Railroad Grade Separation

DES. 1801913

Online Presentation

October 12, 2021



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Agenda

- Introductions
- Presentation

Public Comment Period Ends October 28, 2021.



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Welcome and Introductions

- Elkhart County
 - Charles McKenzie, Project Engineer
- Indiana Dept. of Transportation (INDOT)
 - Jason Springer, Project Manager
 - Jason Holder, Program Manager
- Parsons
 - Sean Porter, Project Manager
 - Cody Beucler, Roadway Lead
 - Dan Miller, Environmental Lead
- Handouts and Welcome Letter
 - Several ways to comment
 - **Public Comment Period Ends October 28, 2021.**
 - www.elkcohw.org/projects/
 - Email: Daniel.j.miller@parsons.com
 - Call INDOT at 855-INDOT4U (463-6848)



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Project Stakeholders and Outreach

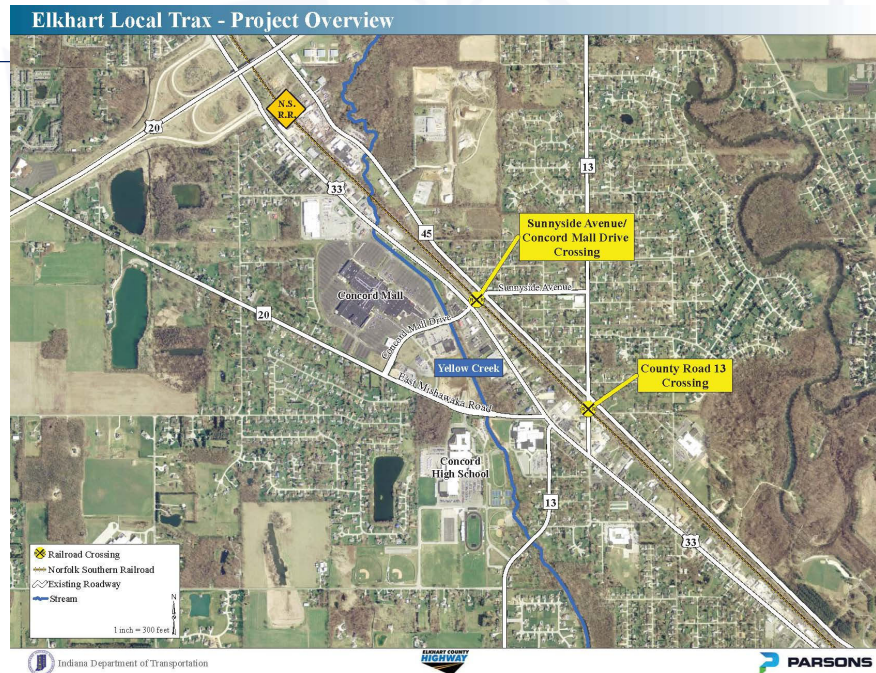
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Elected & Local officials
- Norfolk Southern Railroad (NSRR)
- Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG)
- Residents
- Businesses
- Emergency services
- Schools
- Transit (Interurban Trolley)
- Religious Institutions
- Community Organizations
- Virtual Public Open House: August 10, 2020
- In-Person Public Open House: August 25, 2020
- Public Notices, Section 106: "No Historic Properties Affected"
 - *Elkhart Truth* on June 24, 2021
 - *Goshen News* on June 26, 2021
- Notice of Public Hearing:
 - *Elkhart Truth* on Sept. 27 and Oct. 4, 2021
 - *Goshen News* on Sept. 27 and Oct. 4, 2021
 - Mailed to stakeholders
 - Postcard
 - <http://www.elkcohw.org/projects/>



Public Comment Period Ends October 28, 2021

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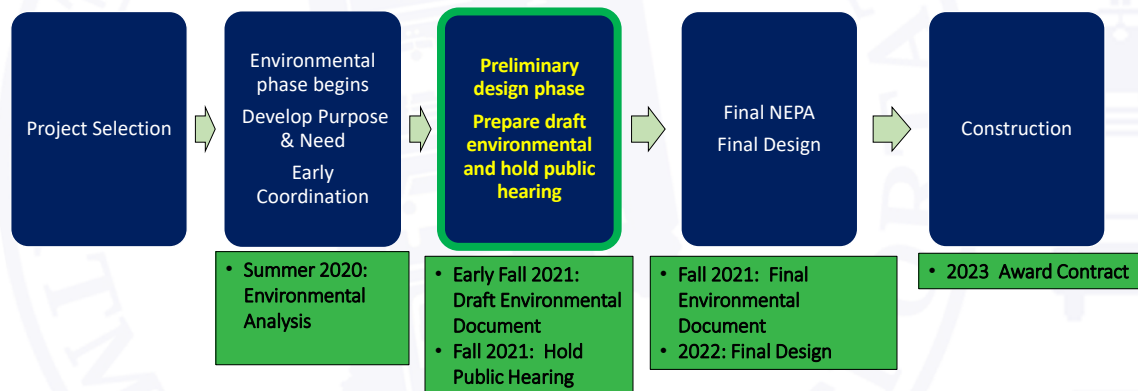
Study Area



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Project Development

Categorical Exclusion – Level 4 (CE-4) Project



Right-of-way acquisition follows final decision and approval of the final NEPA document.

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Purpose and Need (Summary)

- **Safety:** High rate of crashes
- **Mobility:** Trains typically run 80 to 90 times a day, and often stop on the tracks
- **Lack of Sidewalks:** Sunnyside Avenue, CR 13, Concord Mall Drive, and Center Drive do not have pedestrian facilities

The purpose of this project is to reduce the exposure of motorists and pedestrians to rail traffic, and to increase mobility in this area of Elkhart County.



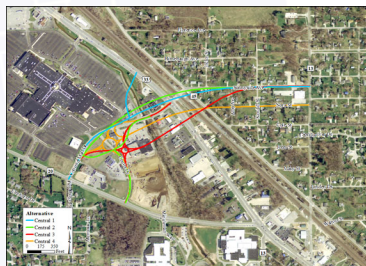
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Alternatives Considered

- Analyzed a variety of alternatives
- No Build does not address the purpose and need



North Alternatives



Central Alternatives



South Alternative



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Preferred Alternative

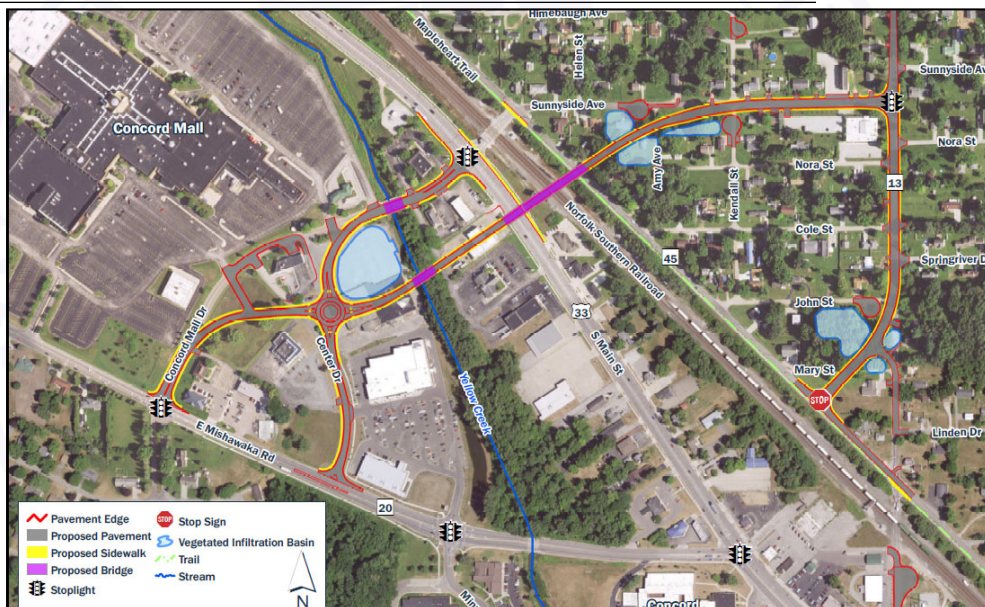
Key Features:

- New bypass bridge across US 33/Main St, Norfolk Southern Railroad, and CR 45/Mapleheart Trail
- Eliminates Sunnyside Ave and CR 13 at-grade crossings
- Re-aligns intersection of CR 13 and CR 45
- Roundabout
- Designed for first responders, school buses
- Sidewalks



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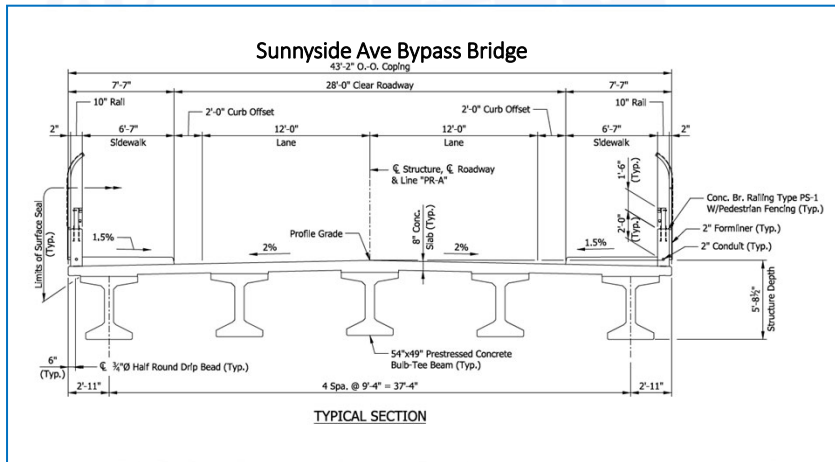
Preferred Alternative



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Bypass Bridge Typical Section

Two 12-ft travel lanes and 6-ft sidewalks



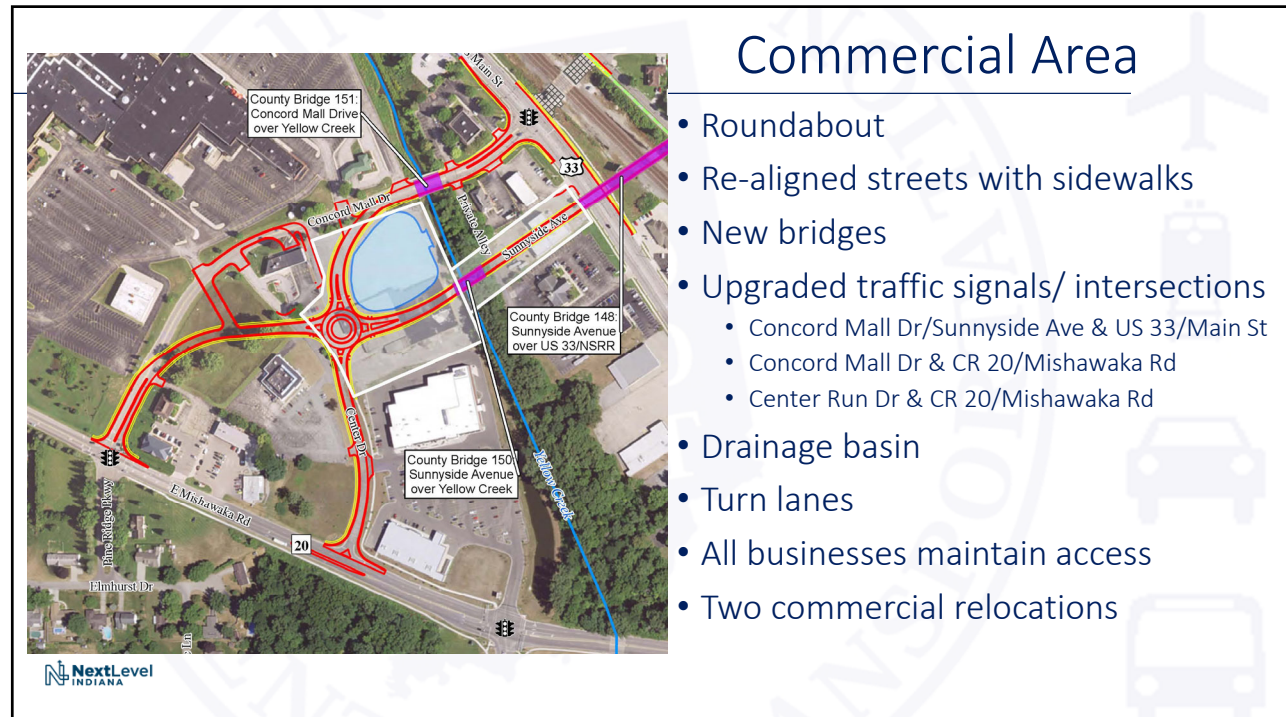
Capacity Analysis:

One lane in each direction is sufficient for the bridge.

- Volumes projected to future design year
- Traffic redistributed to revised street network
- Volumes coordinated with MACOG and their regional model
- Improved emergency access. (For emergencies, options at Hively Avenue/1.7 miles north)

NextLevel
INDIANA

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Commercial Area

- Roundabout
- Re-aligned streets with sidewalks
- New bridges
- Upgraded traffic signals/ intersections
 - Concord Mall Dr/Sunnyside Ave & US 33/Main St
 - Concord Mall Dr & CR 20/Mishawaka Rd
 - Center Run Dr & CR 20/Mishawaka Rd
- Drainage basin
- Turn lanes
- All businesses maintain access
- Two commercial relocations

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What is a Roundabout?

- One-way circular intersection
- Traffic flows counter-clockwise around a center island
- Yield at entrance
- No parking
- No “activity” in center island

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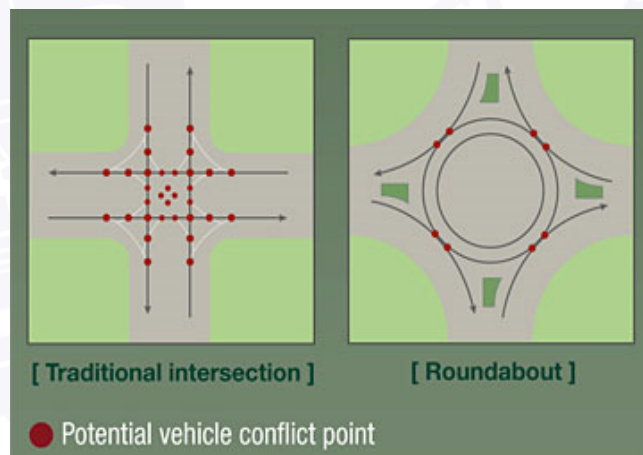


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Benefits of a Roundabout

- **Enhances Safety**
 - Roundabouts reduce the number of potential conflict points within an intersection
 - 75% fewer conflict points than four-way intersections
- **Slower vehicle speeds**
 - Reduces the severity of crashes
- **Efficient traffic flow**
 - Reduces need for turn lanes
 - Improves traffic flow
- **Community benefits**
 - Reduces congestion
 - Aesthetic landscaping

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Roundabouts Enhance Safety

U.S. DOT FHWA Statistics

- Compared to traditional intersections roundabouts:
 - Reduce fatalities and injuries by 82% – FHWA
 - Reduce total crashes by 44% – FHWA

[Link to RULES OF THE ROUNDABOUT video by FHWA](#)

For more information:

<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/intersection/innovative/roundabouts/>

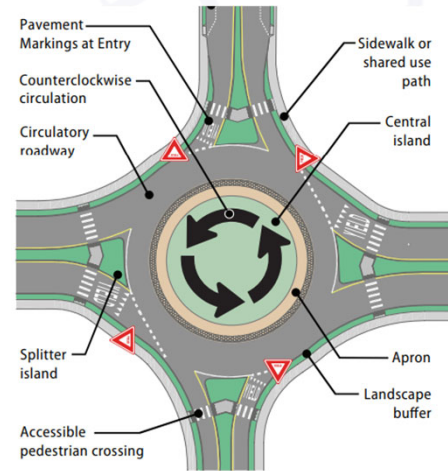
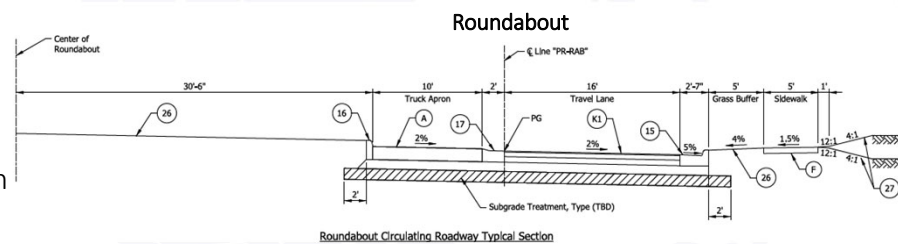


Figure 1. Modern Roundabout Schematic

Roundabout Typical Section

Roundabout

- One 16-ft travel lane
- Speed: 20-25 mph
- Truck apron for buses & trucks
- Sidewalk / crossings
- Lighting



Maintenance of Traffic (MOT)

- Transportation management plan (TMP) meetings with key stakeholders (schools, first responders, transit)
- 5 phases, expected to last 24 months
- Maintain access for all properties throughout construction
 - Includes one-lane traffic for residents only
 - Businesses, churches, homes: all will be accessible
 - MOT detours used to maintain one-way traffic
- Existing railroad crossings will remain open until bypass is open

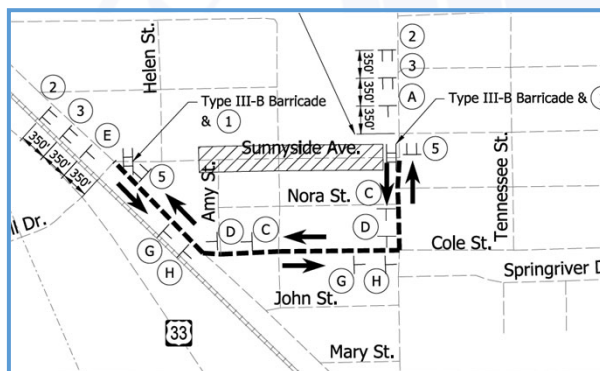


Photo credit: Roger W Schneider



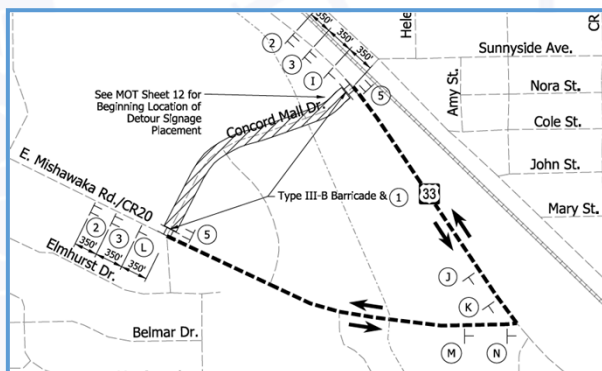
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MOT Detours



Detour Route: Sunnyside Avenue

CR 13, Cole St, CR 45

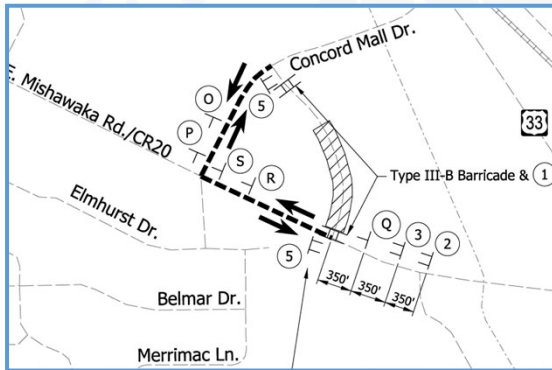


Detour Route: Concord Mall Drive

Mishawaka Road/CR 20 and US 33/Main St

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MOT (cont.)



Detour Route: Center Drive

Mishawaka Road/CR 20 and US 33/Main St



Mapleheart Trail along CR 45

Mapleheart Trail will remain open, except short-term closure (up to one month) will be required

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Environmental Analysis Phase

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

- Requires INDOT to analyze and evaluate the impacts of a proposed project
- NEPA is a decision-making process
 - Purpose and Need
 - Alternatives Screening
 - Preferred Alternative

NEPA Document, "CE-4", released for public involvement – September 22, 2021

Impacts analyzed, evaluated, and described in the CE-4 Document

- What are the impacts this project might have on the community?
- How can impacts be avoided?
- Can impacts be minimized?
- Mitigation for impacts?

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Environmental Impacts Summary

- Relocations: 2 commercial and 3 residential
- Right-of-way:
 - 13.83 acres of new permanent
 - 0.91 acre of temporary
- Permanent alteration of traffic patterns
- St. Joseph Sole Source Aquifer: 21.77 acres
 - Close coordination with USEPA to reduce and minimize potential impacts
- Section 106: No historic properties affected
- Section 4(f) Temporary Occupancy: Mapleheart Trail will remain open except for short-term closures



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Environmental Impacts (cont.)

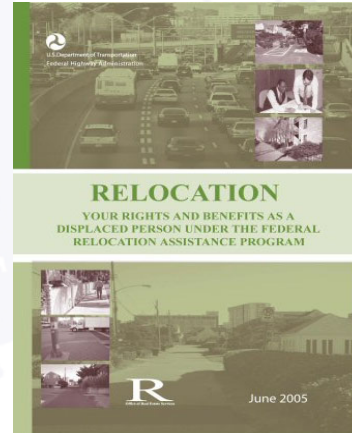
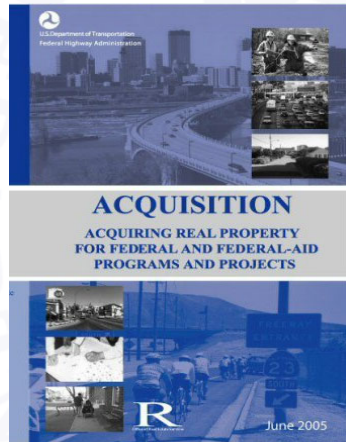


Yellow Creek from Concord Mall Dr

- Yellow Creek: 145 linear feet
- Wetlands: 0.087 acre
- Floodplain: 0.25 acre of forested
- Terrestrial habitat: 8.92 acres
 - 3.14 acres of trees plus maintained lawn
- Noise impacts/ no noise abatement is proposed
- Endangered/threatened bat species: "May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect – with Avoidance and Minimization Measures (AMMs)"
- Environmental Justice populations are present but no disproportionate impacts
- Also evaluated community impacts, public services, air quality, hazardous materials, etc.

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Real Estate



Real Estate Acquisition Process

"Uniform Act of 1970"

- All federal, state and local governments must comply
- Requires an offer for just compensation

Acquisition Process

- Appraisals
- Review Appraisals
- Negotiations

Project Real Estate Team is working with impacted property owners

- Kitchen Table Meetings

Right-of-way

- Permanent ROW: 13.83 Acres
 - Permanent ROW is land, once purchased from legal land owner, becomes land owned by County
- Temporary ROW 0.91 acre
 - Temporary ROW is land required during the construction of a project and is used for the purposes of construction related activity
 - INDOT/County pays legal landowner a fee for land use during construction

Next Steps

- **Public and project stakeholder input**
 - Submit comments
- **INDOT review of public comments**
 - All comments are given full consideration during decision-making process
 - Finalize/approve environmental process, complete project design
- **Communicate a decision**
 - The Project Team will notify project stakeholders of decision
 - Work through local media, social media outlets, paid legal notice
 - Make project documents accessible via repositories
- **Questions? INDOT Next Level Customer Service**

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Submit Public Comments

- **Submit public comments:**
 - Public Comment Form
 - Via e-mail (Daniel.j.miller@parsons.com) or postal mail (address on next slide)
 - Participate during public comment session following formal presentation at the hearing
 - Call 855-INDOT4U (855-463-6848)
- **Public comment period ends Thursday, October 28, 2021**
- All comments submitted are included in the public hearings transcript and made part of the public record
- Comments are reviewed, evaluated, and given full consideration during decision-making process

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Contact Us

- Comment form – send via email or postal mail.

Postal address: ATTN: INDOT, c/o Dan Miller
 Parsons
 101 W Ohio St, Suite 2121
 Indianapolis, IN 46204

Email: Daniel.J.Miller@parsons.com

Please mention “Elkhart Local Trax” in your comments.



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Thank You

Elkhart County Highway Department

www.elkcohw.org

eng@elkcohw.org

INDOT Next Level Customer Service

855-INDOT4U (855-463-6848)

www.indot4u.com

indot@indot.in.gov

Please mention “Elkhart Local Trax” in your comments.



If you would like to give a verbal comment; please come to the Public Hearing tomorrow night (6:00 pm) at Concord High School- 59117 Minuteman Way, Elkhart, IN 46517.



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