

# U.S. 231 Intersection Improvement Project at Iowa Street in Lake County

Indiana Department of Transportation

Tuesday, June 24, 2025

6:00 p.m.



# Welcome

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- Introductions
- Purpose/explanation of public hearing
- Public hearing format
- Visit our sign-in table
- Informational handouts
- Participate during public comment session
- Submit written public comments
- Project display area



# U.S. 231 Intersection Improvement

- Introduction of INDOT Project Team
  - La Porte District Office
    - Project Management
    - Design
    - Environmental Services
    - Real Estate
    - Communications
  - Lawson-Fisher Associates
    - Engineering and Design Team
  - Metric Environmental
- Recognition of elected and local public officials
- Sign-in at attendance table to be added to project mailing list.
- A legal notice was mailed to known stakeholders within the project area.
- Announcement of this hearing was posted to INDOT website. A media release was also issued.
- A copy of presentation and project documentation is available on-line via INDOT website
- Legal notice publishing:
  - Northwest Indiana Times
    - June 10, 2025
    - June 17, 2025



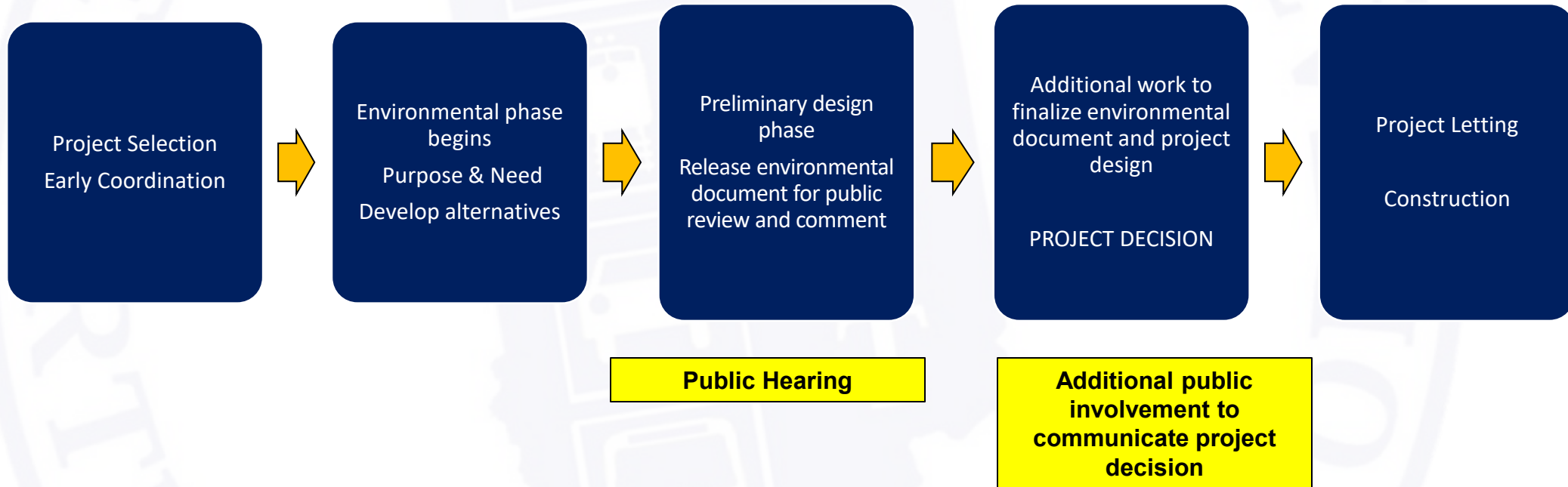
# Project Stakeholders

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- Indiana Department of Transportation
- Indiana Division Federal Highway Administration
- Lake County
- City of Crown Point
- Elected & Local officials
- Residents and citizens
- Commuters
- Businesses
- Emergency services
- Schools
- Community Organizations
- Churches



# Project Development





# U.S. 231 Intersection Improvement

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## Purpose and Need

- The need is based on the high crash rate, specifically the occurrence of right-angle crashes involving vehicles crossing US 231 on Iowa Street.
- The purpose is to improve intersection safety and provide a long-term solution to ensure safe and efficient operation of the intersection.



# U.S. 231 Intersection Improvement

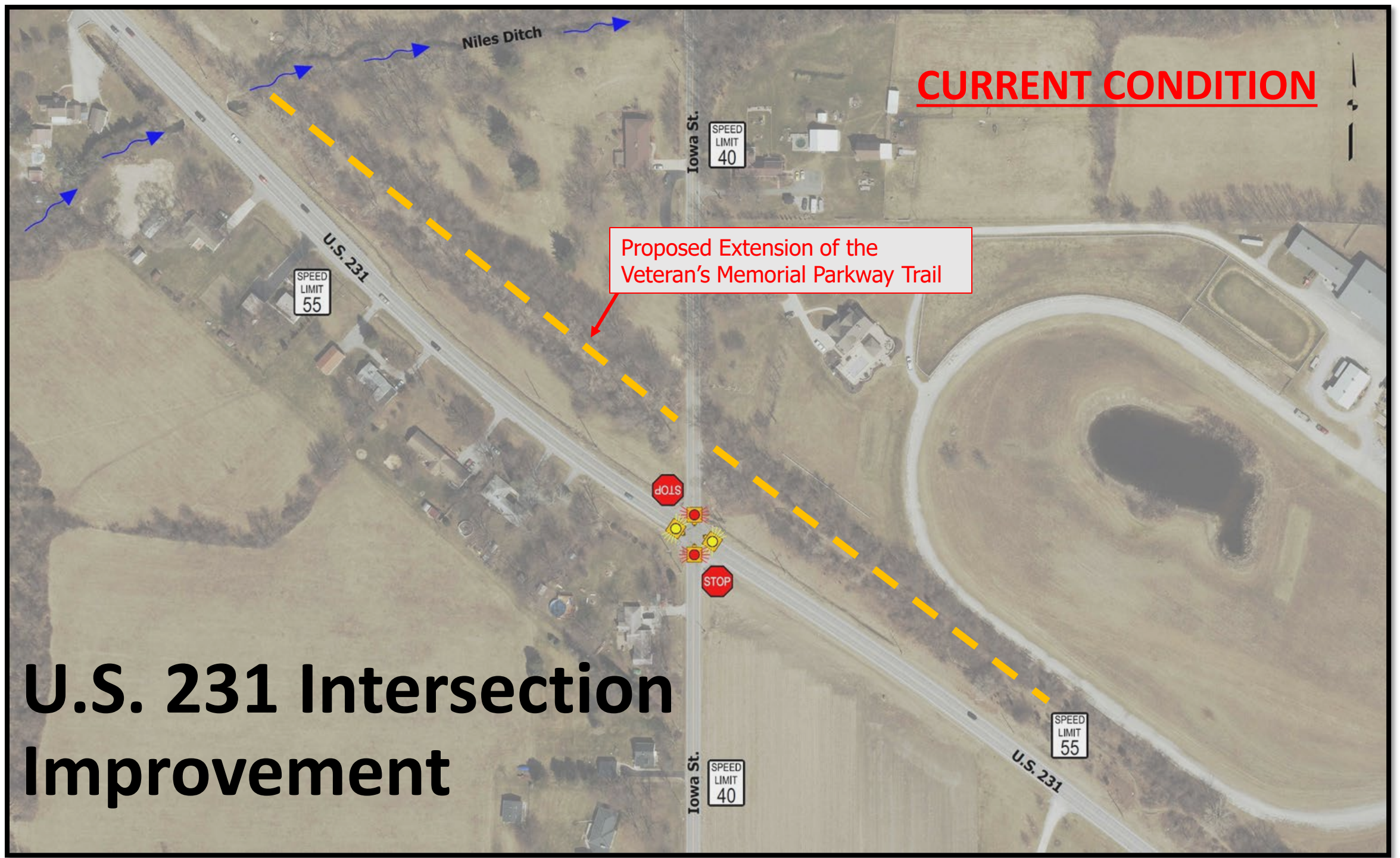
## CURRENT CONDITION

- Free flow with flashing yellow for US 231.
- Stop controlled with flashing red for Iowa Street.





# U.S. 231 Intersection Improvement





# Environmental Document

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## **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**

- Decision-making process, requiring INDOT to analyze and evaluate the impacts of proposed project to the natural and socio-economic environments
  - Purpose and Need
  - Alternatives Screening
  - Identifies Preferred Solution (Preferred Alternative)

## **Impacts analyzed, evaluated and described NEPA document**

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

## **Environmental document released for public involvement**

- Categorical Exclusion Level 4 Document – based on ROW and public recreational resource impacts
- Available for public review as a part of the hearing process



# Environmental Document

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- **Environmental Process**

- Establish Purpose and Need
- Develop possible alternatives
  - “No Build” alternative is baseline comparison
- Evaluate and screen alternatives
- Identify a preferred alternative
- Solicit public comment on environmental document and preliminary design plan
- Address and consider public comment as part of decision-making process
- Finalize and approve environmental document



# NEPA Items Evaluated

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- Right-of-way
- Streams, Wetlands, and Other Waters
- Floodplains
- Endangered Species
- Farmland
- Cultural Resources  
(Historic/Archaeological)
- Parks and Recreational Lands (Trails)
- Air Quality
- Community Impacts
- Public Involvement





# Project Impacts - Environmental

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## Anticipated Impacts

- Right-of-way – 2.54 acre permanent ROW, 0.026 acre temporary ROW, 0.281 acre re-acquired ROW
- Utilities
- Wetlands
- Terrestrial Impacts
- Farmland
- Cultural Resources (Historic/Archaeological)
- Section 4(f) *de minimis* finding



# Project Impacts - Environmental

## **Section 4(f) *de minimis* use of the Veteran's Memorial Parkway Trail**

Lake County Parks and Recreation Department owns land in northwest quadrant of US 231 and Iowa Street required for planned extension of Veteran's Memorial Parkway Trail.

- Planned trail is publicly owned recreational resource protected under Section 4(f) of the DOT Act of 1966.
- 0.871 acre of permanent ROW in the northwest quadrant
- Section 4(f) *de minimis* finding
  - Project will not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes of the planned trail
  - Planned trail incorporated into the design to accommodate future construction

Legal notice announcing the public hearing will include information on Section 4(f) *de minimis* finding for public comment



# Project Impacts - Environmental

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## **Wetland Impacts**

Permanent wetland impacts - Approximately 0.31 acre anticipated

- Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) Isolated Wetlands Permit / Waters of the State Permit and US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Regional General Permit

## Wetland Mitigation

- 0.732 acres of wetland mitigation credits from the IDNR Stream and Wetland Mitigation Program (INSWMP) Kankakee Service Area Wetland Mitigation
- IDEM and USACE determine final credits to be purchased during permitting

All efforts to avoid and minimize wetland impacts have been considered during the design process.



# Public Involvement

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- **Notice of Entry for Survey – June 2022**
  - Letters mailed to properties within general area
    - Gather data for environmental analysis
- **Public involvement process – June/July 2025**
  - Opportunity for public to provide input regarding the proposed project
- **Communicate project decision - Summer 2025**
  - INDOT seeking public comment and input regarding proposed project



# Project Resource Locations

- **INDOT La Porte District Office**

315 Boyd Boulevard, La Porte, IN 46350

- Planning, Project Development/Delivery, Construction, Maintenance for Northwest Indiana
- <http://www.in.gov/indot/2705.htm>

- **Crown Point Community Public Library**

122 N Main Street, Crown Point, IN 46307

- **INDOT Public Involvement Process**

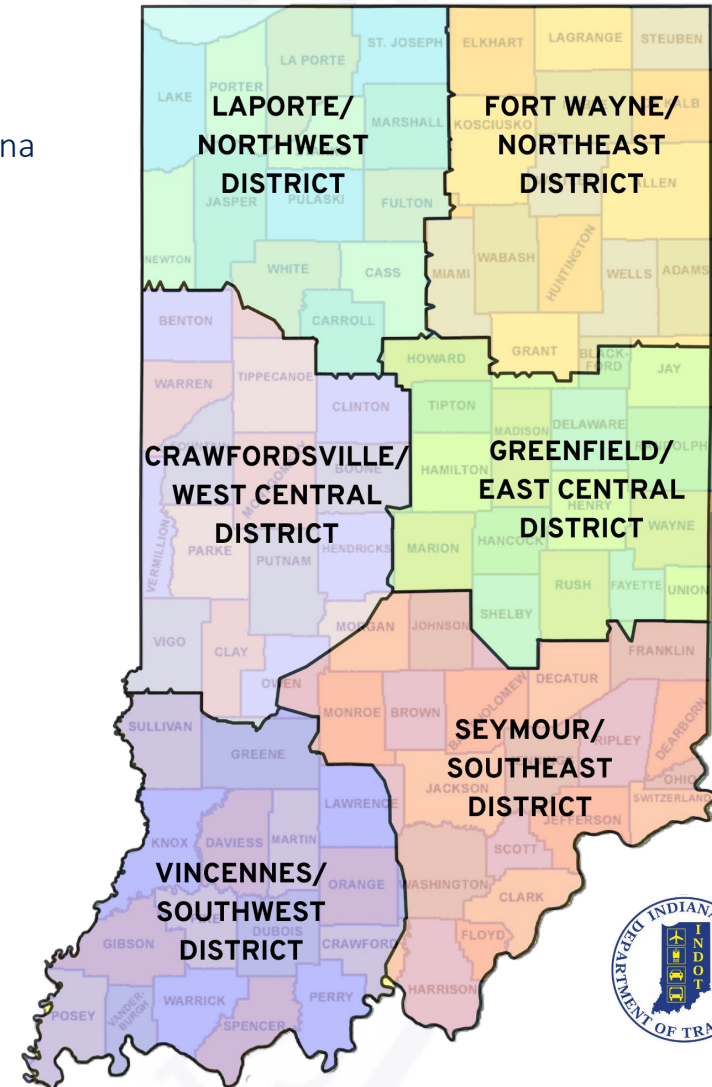
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Visit Project Web Page [bit.ly/US231IowaSt](http://bit.ly/US231IowaSt)

## Transportation Services Call Center

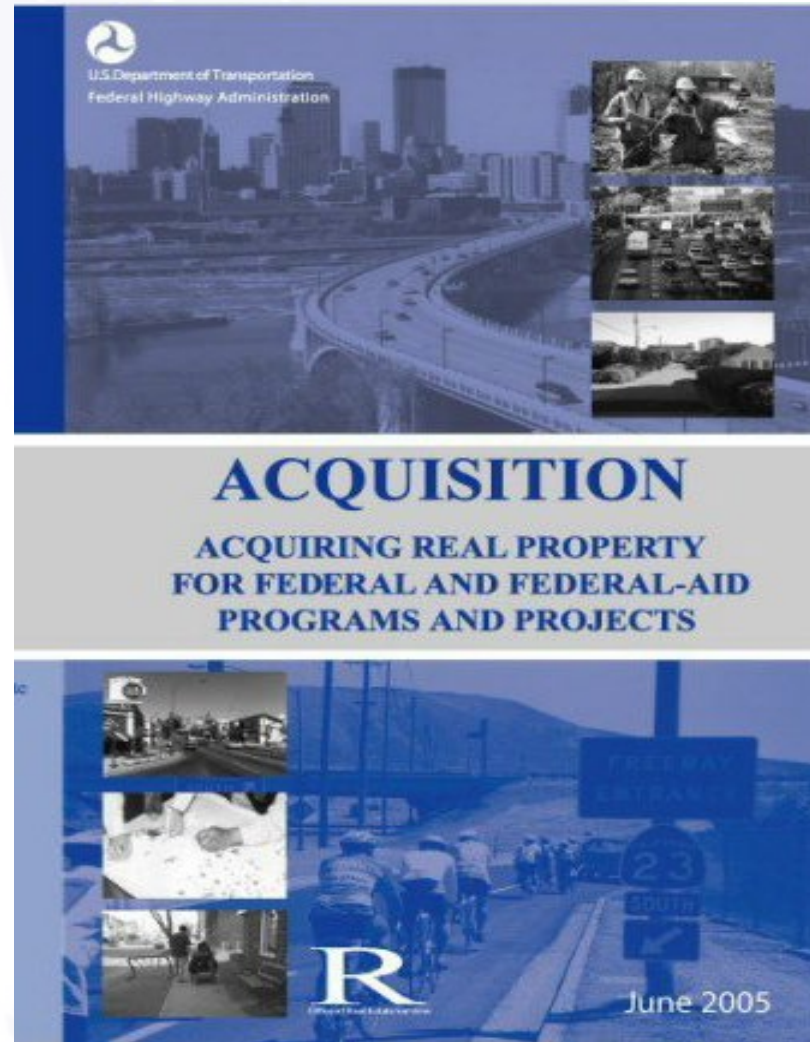
Provides citizen and business customers with a single point-of-contact to request transportation services, obtain information, or provide feedback through multiple channels of communications.

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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
  - Negotiation
  - Right-of-Way (ROW) needed for project
    - 2.54 acre of permanent new ROW (1.51 agricultural, 0.87 commercial, 0.16 residential)
    - 0.026 acre of temporary ROW needed
    - No permanent easements needed
  - INDOT Real Estate Team to work with impacted property owners
- Right-of-Way (ROW)
  - Permanent ROW
    - Land, once purchased by INDOT from legal land owner, becomes ROW owned by INDOT
  - Existing apparent ROW
    - Existing apparent ROW - INDOT acquired land by Highway Grant some years ago, transactions in some cases were not properly recorded, requires further action by INDOT
  - Temporary ROW
    - Land required during the construction of a project and is used for the purposes of construction-related activity
    - INDOT pays legal land owner a fee for land use during construction and/or as part of construction-related activities



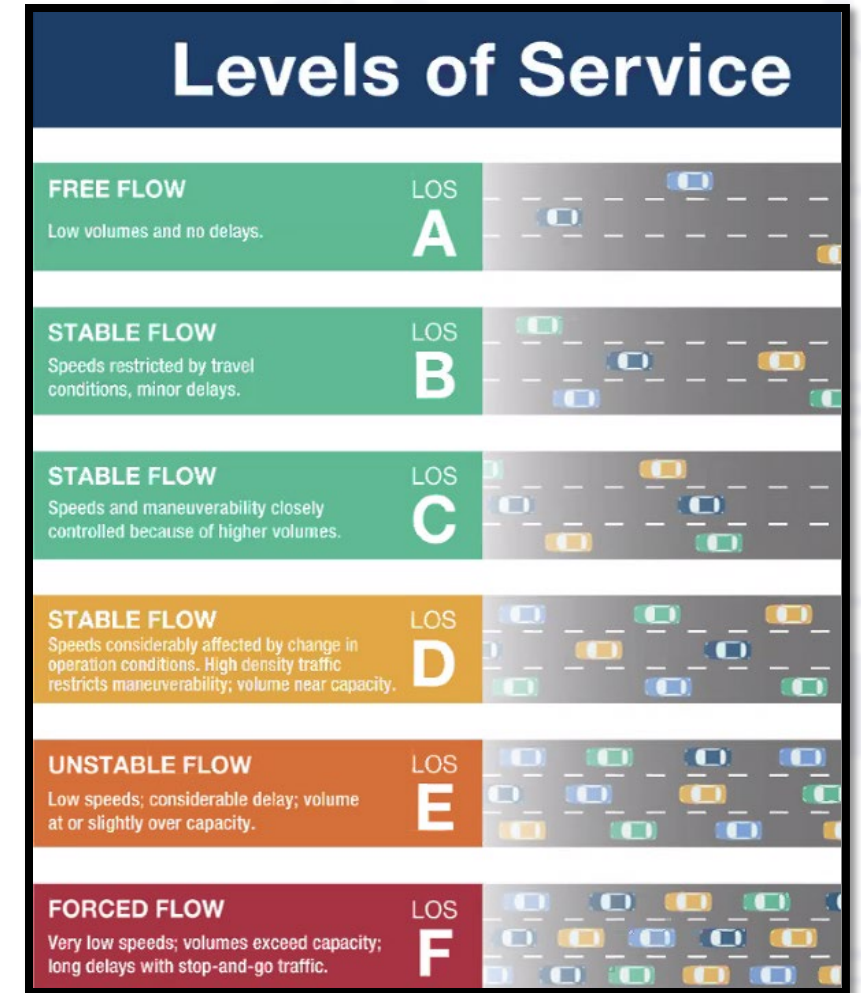
# Main Alternatives Considered

## No Build Alternative

- Baseline for comparison of build alternative
- Does not meet purpose and need of project
- Does not improve the mobility or safety of the intersection

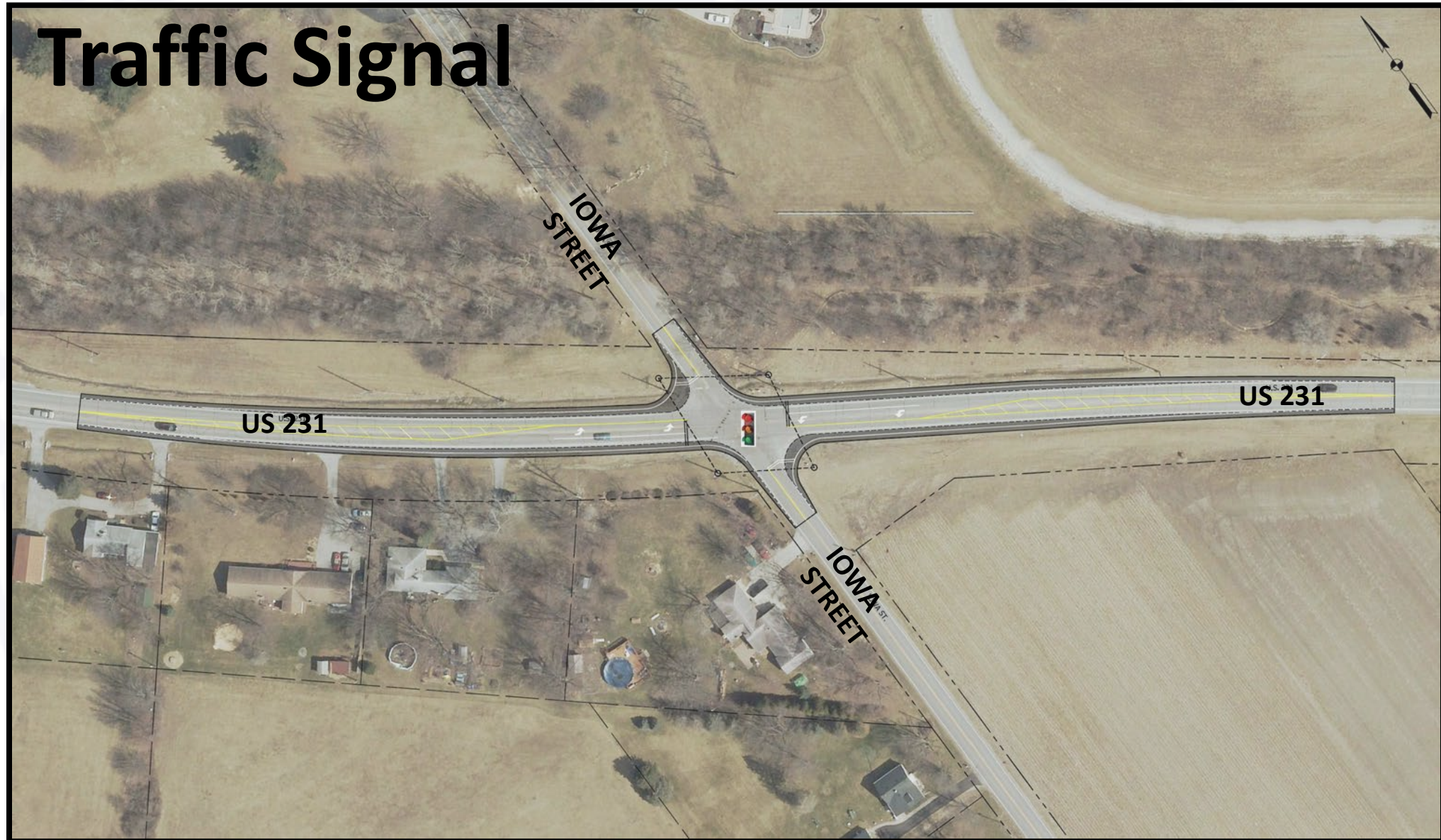
## Traffic Signal with Added Left Turn Lanes

- Left turn lanes required on US 231 for mobility and safety
- Signals are known to increase crashes due to rear-ends and red light running
- Does not reduce intersection conflict points or crashes
- Provides Level of Service B
- Does not fully meet the purpose and need of the project





# Main Alternatives Considered





# Main Alternatives Considered

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- Offset T Intersection
  - Typically utilized when major and minor roads have a skew
  - Crossing movement eliminated
  - Separate intersections by 700 ft
  - Lower construction cost
  - Reduces right angle crashes but could increase left turn, sideswipe and rear end crashes
  - Level of Service ranges from C to F
  - Does not fully meet the purpose and need of the project



# Main Alternatives Considered

## Offset T Intersection





# Main Alternatives Considered

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- Roundabout – **Preferred Alternative**
  - Reduces conflict points by 75% compared to typical 4-way intersection
  - Geometry reduces speeds, calms traffic and reduces congestion
  - Provides Level of Service A
  - Higher construction cost
  - More environmental impacts and larger construction limit footprint
  - Benefits as listed on INDOT's website:
    - Up to 90% reduction in fatalities
    - 76% reduction in injury crashes
    - 30-50% increase in traffic capacity
  - **Does** fully meet the purpose and need of the project



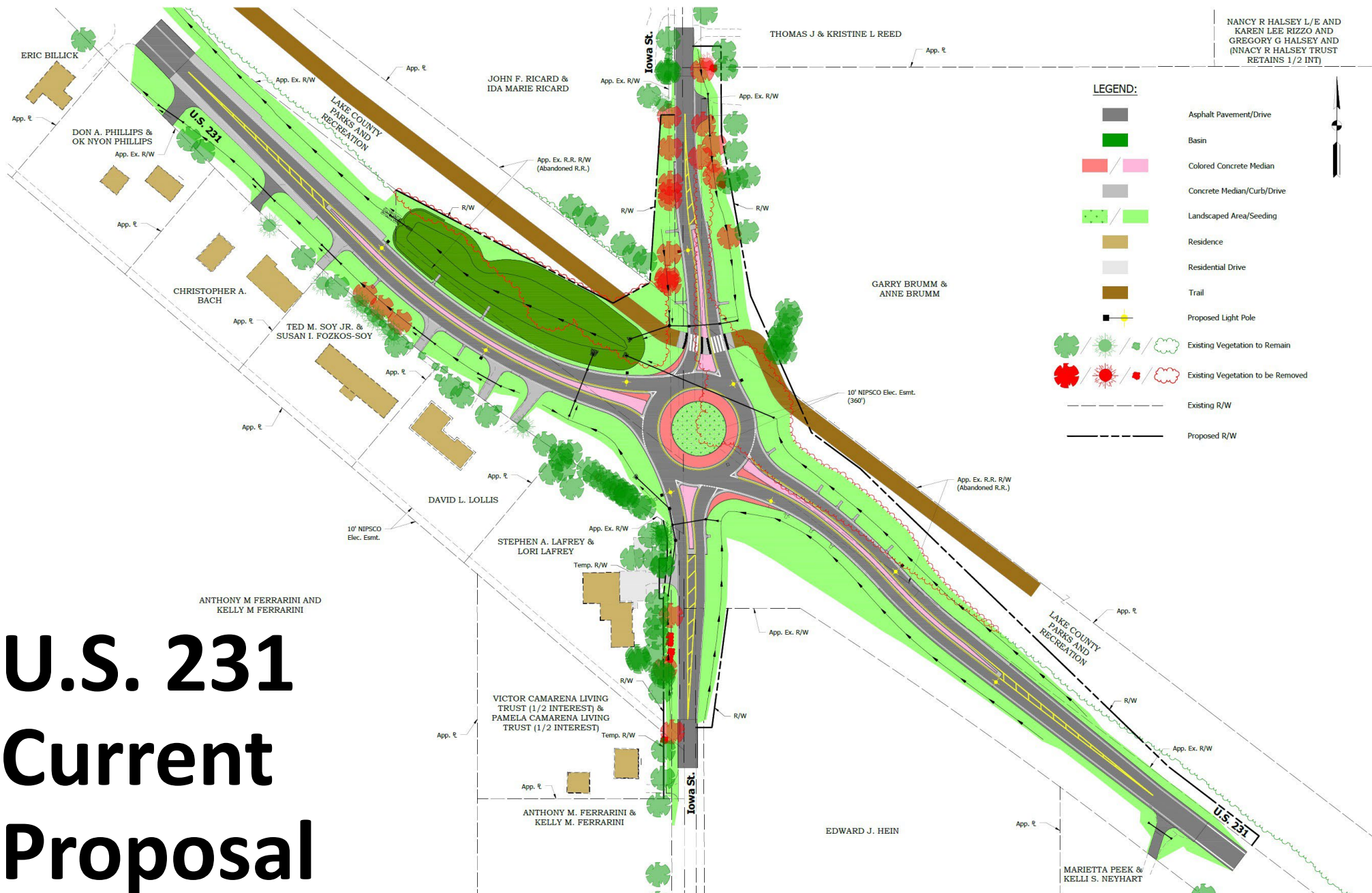
# U.S. 231

## Aerial with Overlay

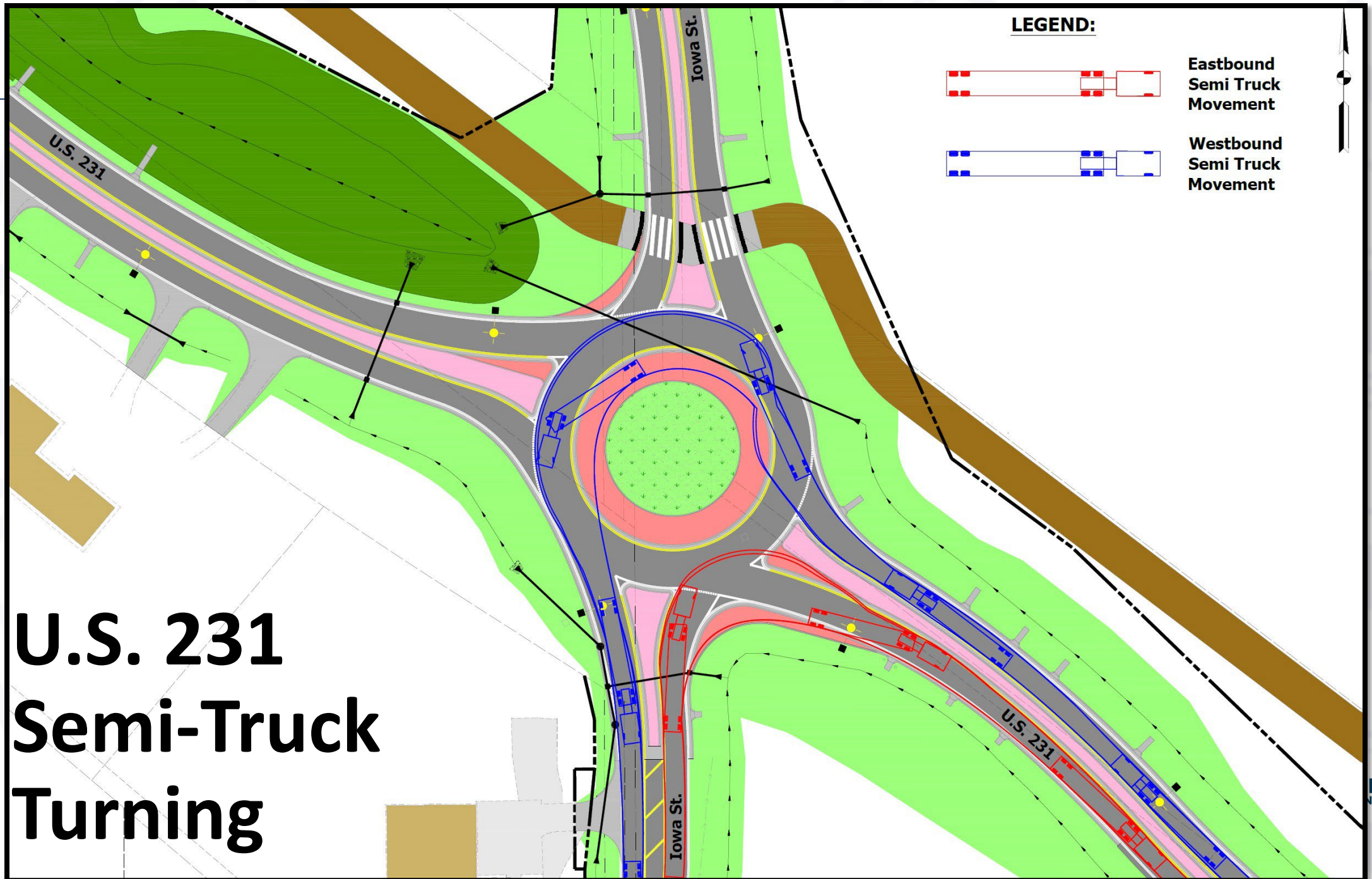




# U.S. 231 Current Proposal

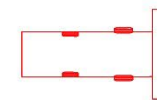




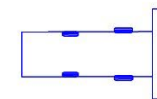




**LEGEND:**



**Eastbound  
Farm Combine  
Movement**



**Westbound  
Farm Combine  
Movement**

# U.S. 231 Farm Combine Turning



# Project Schedule

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- Public Hearing: June 24, 2025
- Public comments requested by Tuesday, July 8, 2025
- INDOT review and consideration of public comments – Summer 2025
  - Finalize environmental document
  - Reach project decision
  - Complete design
  - Inform community and project stakeholders of project decision
- Proposed construction: Spring 2026; Anticipate completion: Fall 2026



# Submit Public Comments

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- **Submit public comments using the options described in first page of information packet:**
  - Public Comment Form
  - Via e-mail
  - Participating during public comment session via microphone
  - Verbal comments recorded and transcribed for inclusion into public hearings transcript
- **INDOT respectfully requests comments be submitted by Tuesday, July 8, 2025**
- All comments submitted will become part of public record, entered into transcript, reviewed, evaluated and given full consideration during decision making process.



# Next Steps

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- **Public and project stakeholder input**
  - Submit comments via options described in project handout
- **INDOT review and evaluation**
  - All comments are given full consideration during decision-making process
  - Address comments, finalize/approve environmental document, complete project design
- **Communicate a decision**
  - INDOT will notify project stakeholders of decision
  - Work through local media, social media outlets; paid legal notice
  - Make project documents accessible via repositories
- **Questions? Contact Public Involvement Team**



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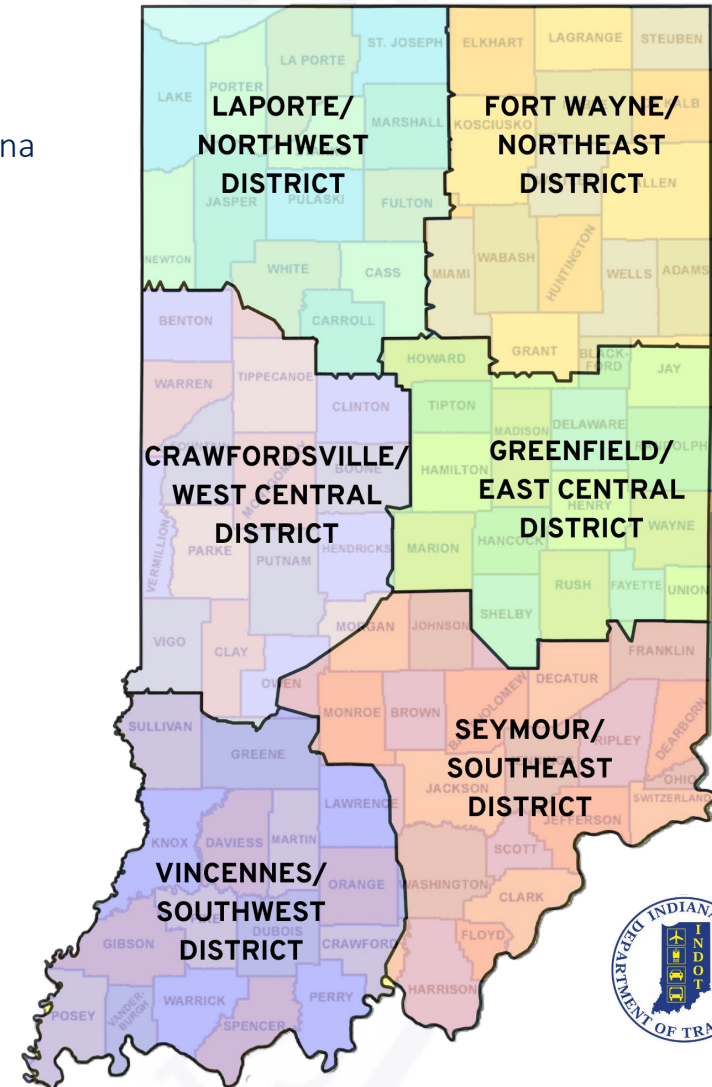
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# Public Comment Session

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- **Please visit with INDOT project officials following the public comment session**
- **Project Open House**
  - Project maps, displays, INDOT project team and informal Q & A
  - INDOT La Porte District page <http://www.in.gov/indot/2705.htm>
  - Comment forms may be turned in at the handout table