

Project Overview

The U.S. 75 corridor through Merrill is a key part of the transportation network through northwest Iowa. The active BNSF corridor, with up to 10 trains per day, intersects this important highway and cuts through the City of Merrill with several at-grade intersections, creating safety risks and traffic delays.

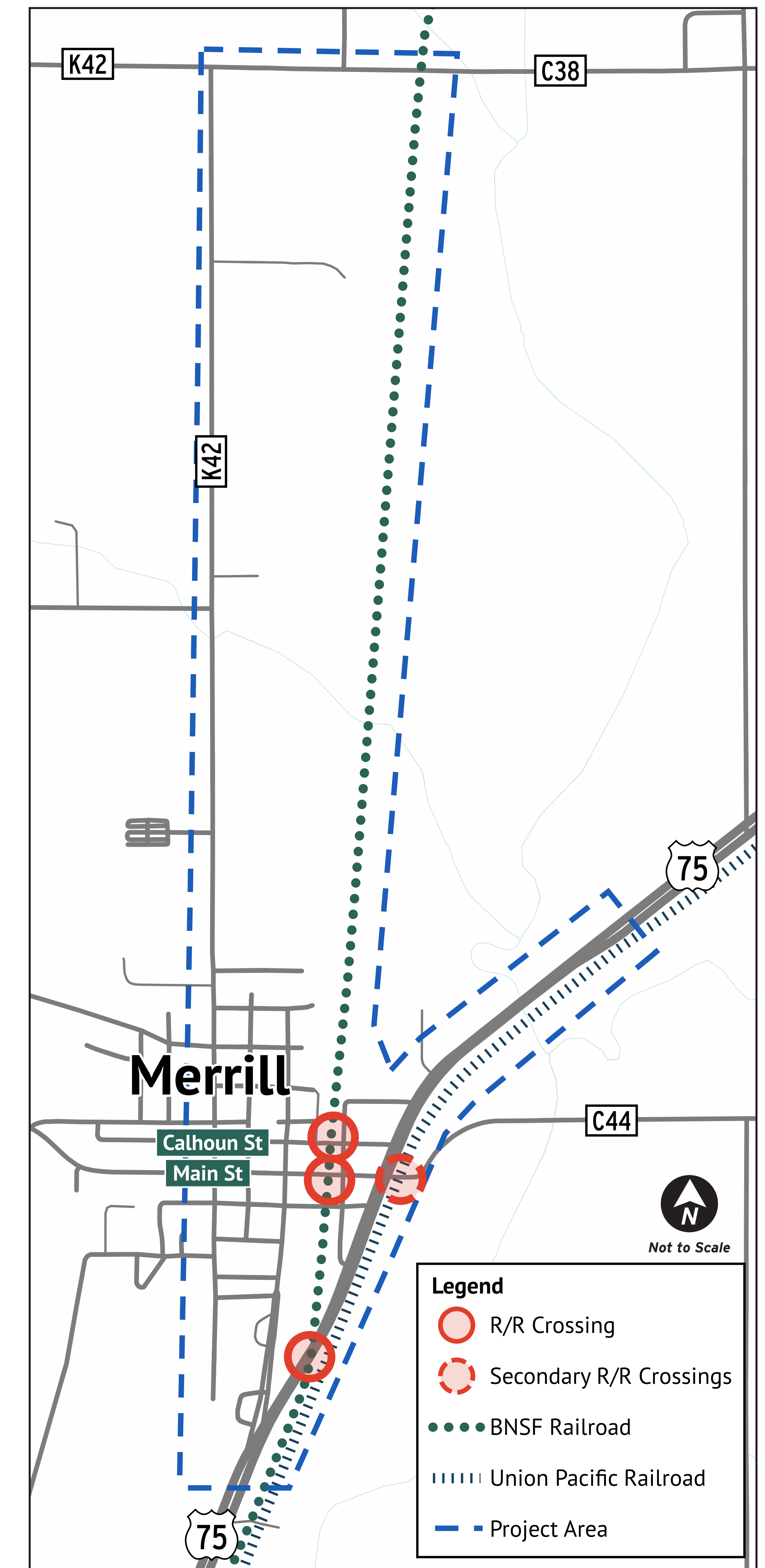
This Study will identify ways to:

- Improve highway safety and traffic flow in the Merrill area.
- Mitigate a physical barrier posed by the rail corridor in the community.
- Eliminate the risk of future highway-rail grade crossing crashes/incidents along this half-mile portion of the rail corridor through the elimination and/or improvement of three at-grade crossings.

The following existing highway-rail grade crossings will be examined in this study:

- U.S. 75
- Calhoun Street
- Main Street
- County Road C44*

**County Road C44 is being reviewed in conjunction with the Main Street rail-crossing and may be considered for improvements, if applicable.*



➤ Purpose & Need

Project Purpose Statement

The Study's purpose is to mitigate the challenges posed by the BNSF Marshall Subdivision railway in Merrill, Iowa with safety and traffic flow upgrades at the U.S. 75, Main Street (in conjunction with County Road C44), and Calhoun Street crossings.

Project Need

The Study is needed to:

- Improve the mobility of people and goods
- Correct rail and roadway geometric deficiencies
- Reduce the potential for rail crossing-related crashes



> Crash Data

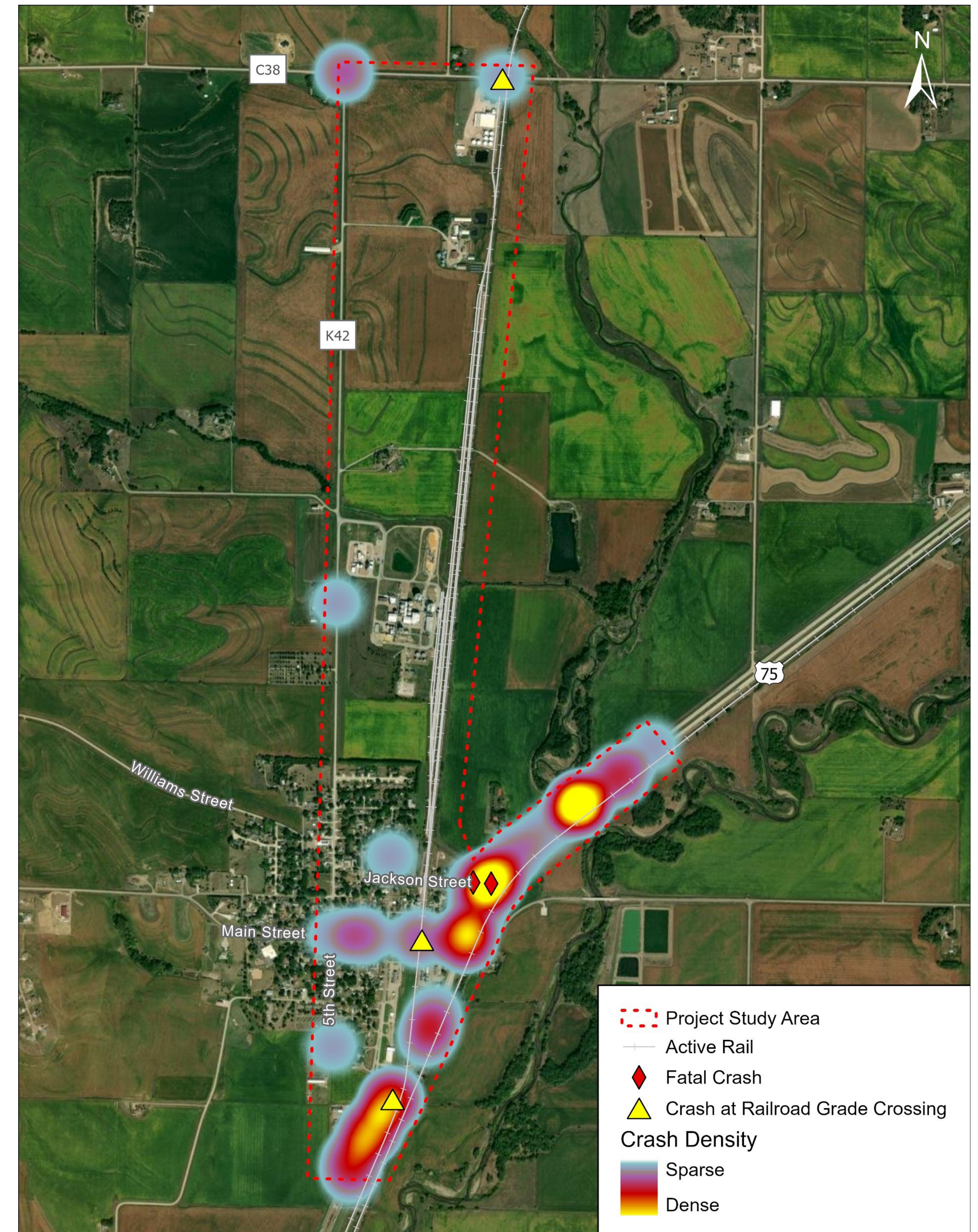
Project Area

- Project Area Safety Memo (2020-2024 data)
- 61 Crashes throughout the project area
- 10 injury crashes (including minor, serious and possible/unknown)
- 2 fatality crashes
- 3 crashes directly at the railroad crossing location on U.S. 75 and Main St.
- Crash clusters concentrated at and near the intersections with crossing locations. Clusters include higher-severity crashes such as overturn/rollover and head-on collisions.

Rail Crossings

Existing Conditions Rail Crossing Crash Analysis (2015-2024)

Crossing	Property Damage Only (PDO)	Injury/ Possible Unknown Injury	Fatal	Total
Calhoun St.	0	0	0	0
Main St.	2	0	0	2
U.S. 75	16	4	0	20
Total	18	4	0	22



➤ Recommended Draft Option For Further Study

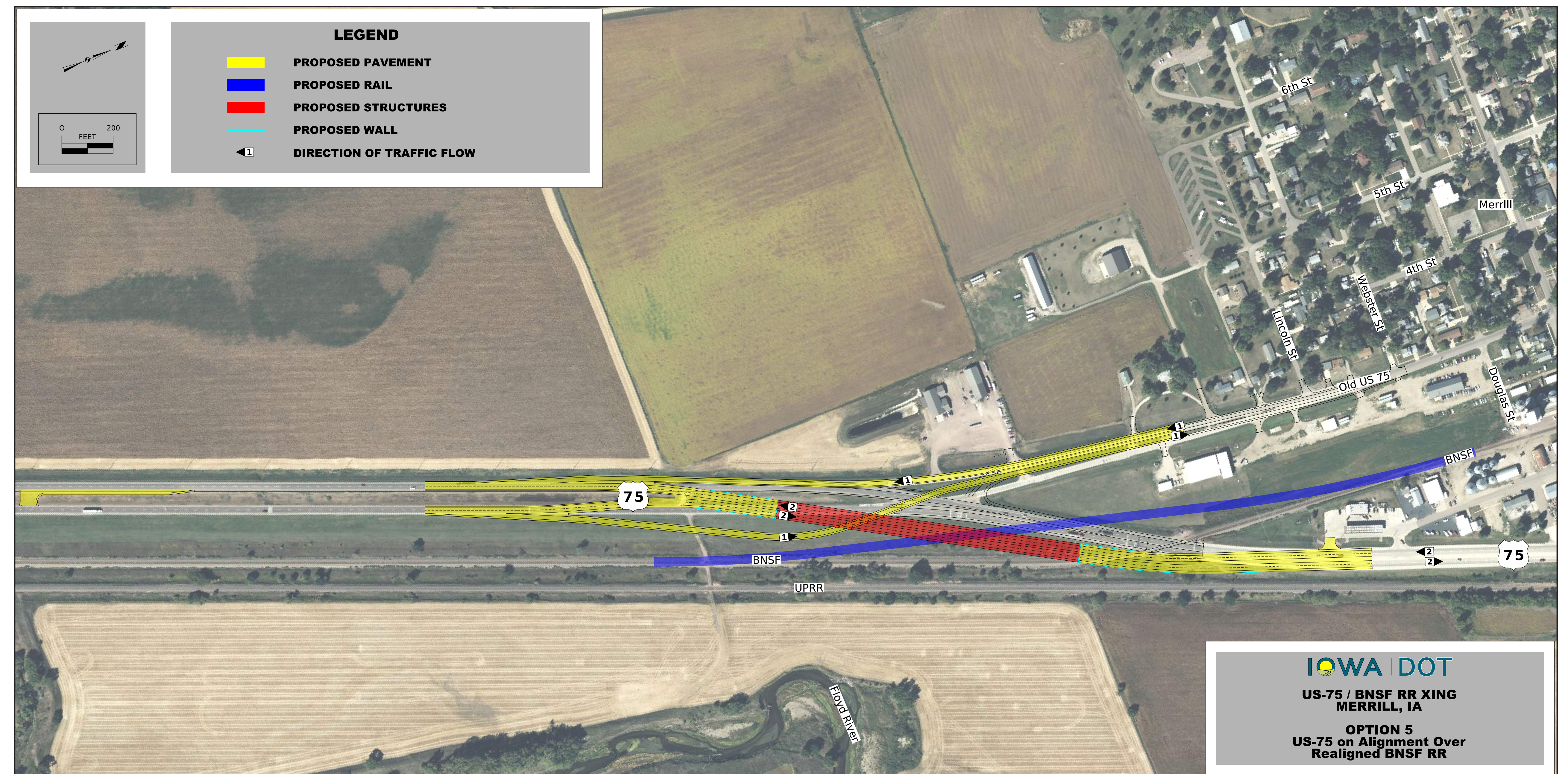
Draft Option 5

Based on engineering factors and community input, Draft Option 5 has been selected as the Recommended Option to move forward for further analysis in the NEPA* Phase.

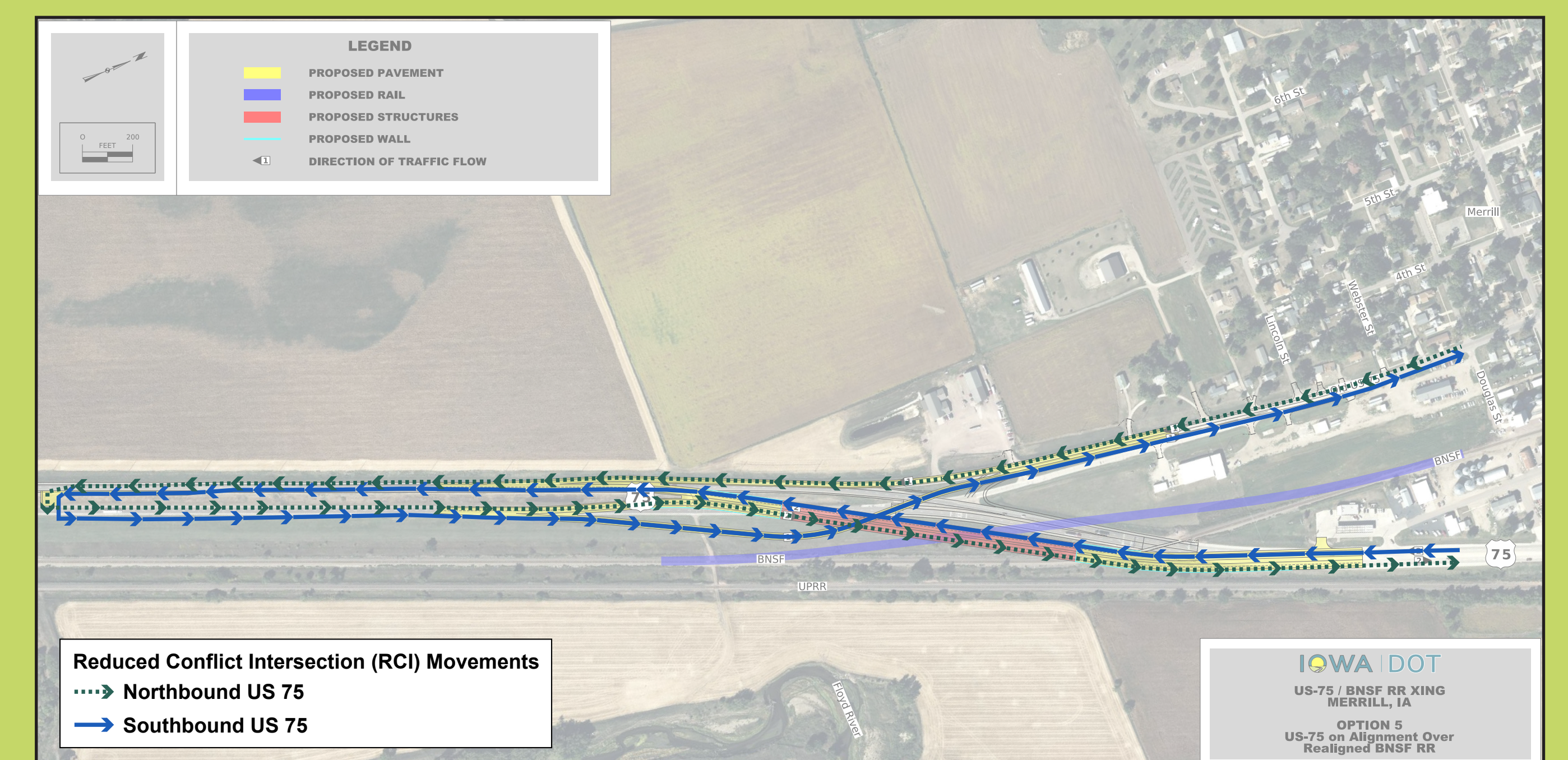
Benefits include:

- Grade-separated crossing at U.S. 75
- Maintains U.S. 75 traffic during construction
- Limited right-of-way impacts
- Maintains east/west traffic access to Merrill

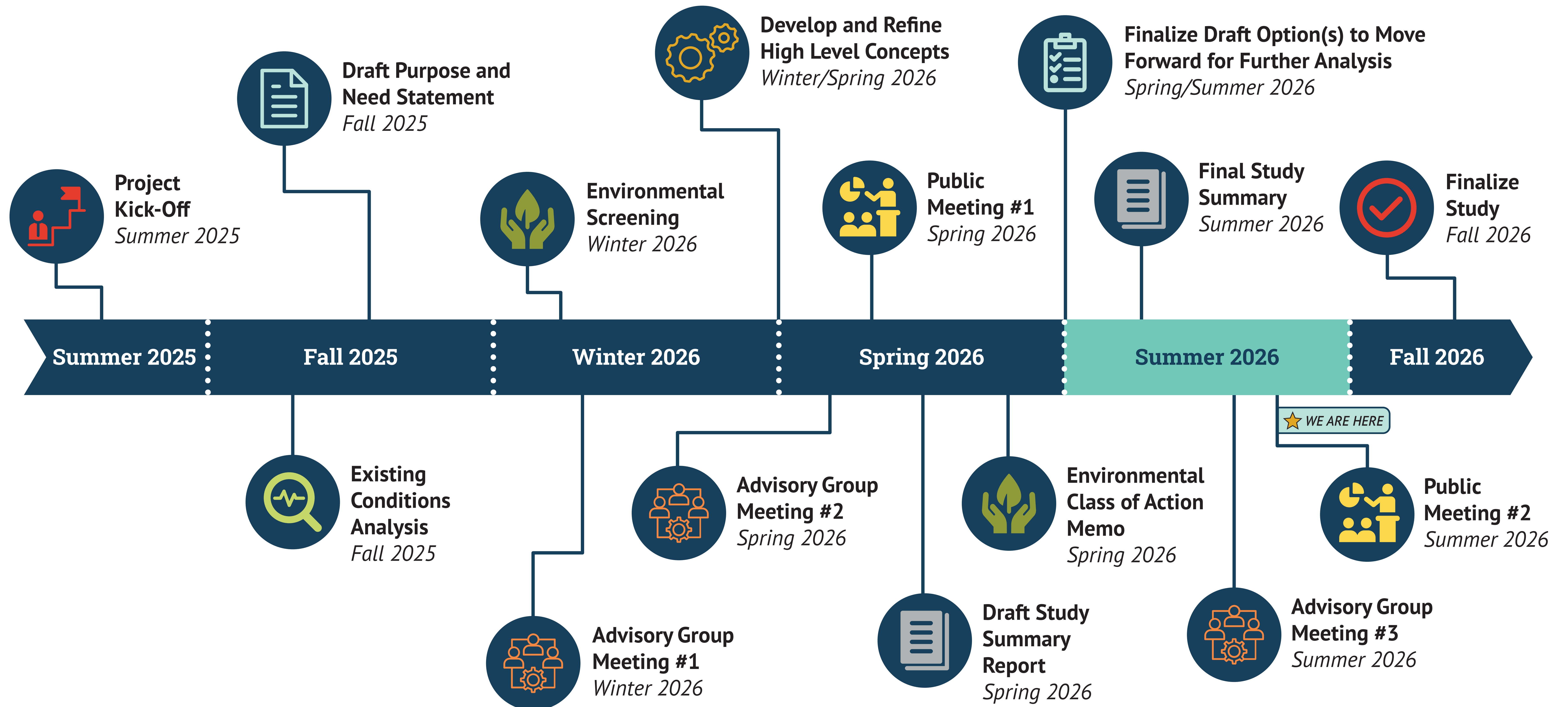
** Under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), a federal law, projects that involve federal funding or require a federal action must evaluate potential impacts to the natural and manmade environment.*



Reduced Conflict Intersection (RCI) Movements



Project Schedule



➤ Federal Railroad Administration(FRA) Development Project Lifecycle

