Connell Rail Interchange

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EASTERN WASHINGTON'S HARVESTLAND

PRESENTATION

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Project Update

Connell City Council

November 16, 2015

What is the CRI Project?

- Expansion and modernization of the existing Connell Rail Interchange (CRI), to:
  - Enhance the ability of the CBRR and BNSF to perform interchange of longer trains while minimizing effect on mainline operations and rail capacity.
  - Provide better service which would directly affect transit times for unit trains.
  - Reduce delays to auto traffic at grade crossings in Connell.

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The new Connell rail interchange will improve multi-modal safety and freight mobility resulting in greater regional economic development.

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Overview

Background

- Connell has a very important rail connection which impacts an entire region.
- The existing rail yard configuration is outdated, undersized, and inefficient and cannot accommodate today's modern rail service.
- Creates congestion at primary street crossings.
- Poses a critical "pinch point" for regional rail delivery.

Rail Growth Introduces . . . Challenges

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. . . Traffic Delays

. . . And Safety Concerns

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Overview

Local Action

- Connell Rail Interchange Coalition – linking massive rail construction investing all along the Great Northern Corridor.
- Matching funds pledged by 11 entities with proportional benefit and participation.
- CERB-funded Planning Study.
- Public infrastructure and private investment.
- Communication – Collaboration – Commitment - Community

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Overview

Local and Regional Benefit

- Improve rail connection issues and reduce at-grade rail crossing delays.
- Reduce roadway congestion, add cost-competitive advantages and options.
- Potentially add economic stability and year-round family–wage jobs.
- Advance economic development in a three county region.

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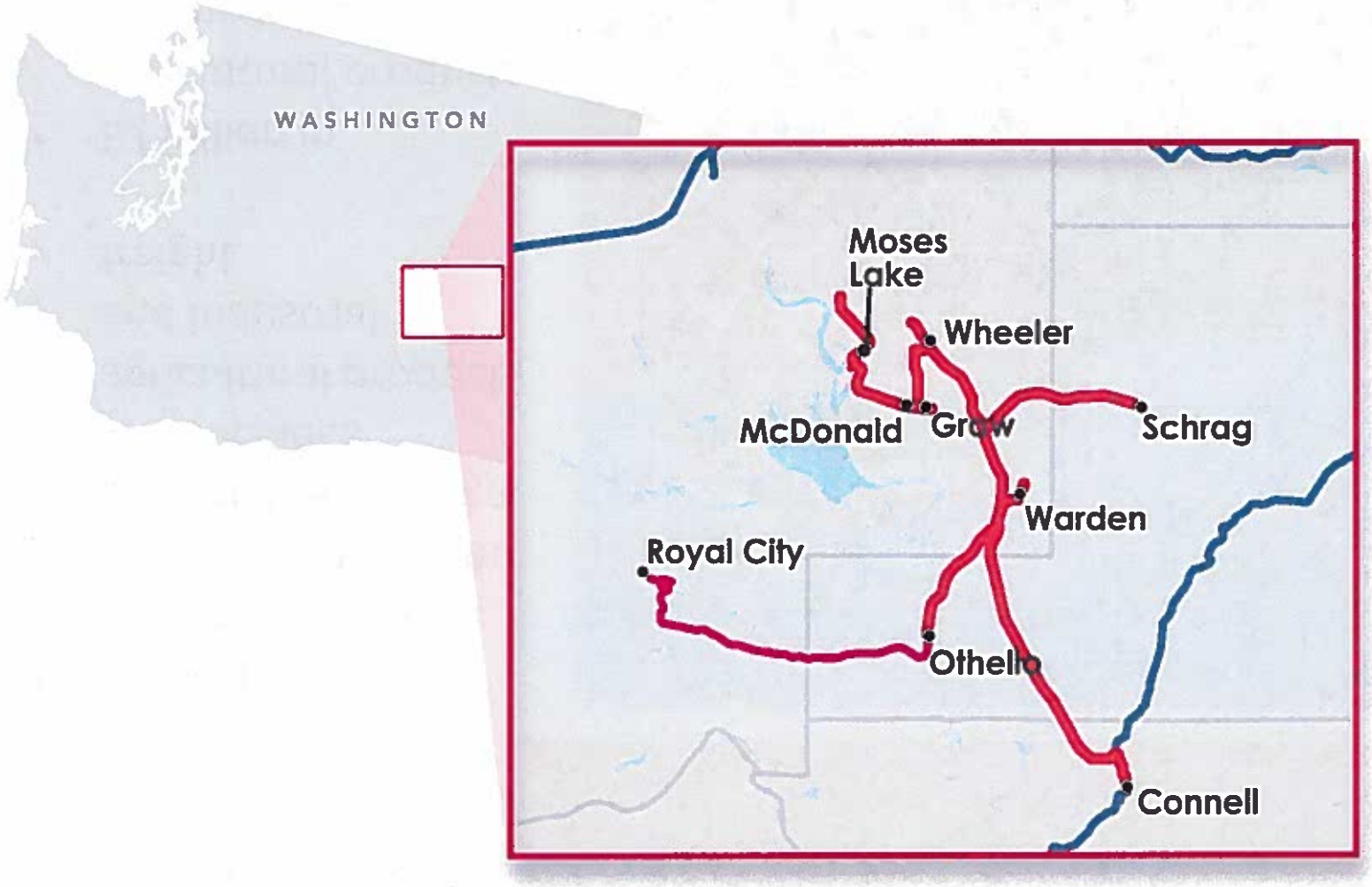
Economic Effects



- CBRR is the busiest short line railroad in Eastern Washington
- Serving: Bruce, Moses Lake, Othello, Schrag, Warden, and Wheeler

Economic Effects

- In 2014, CBRR hauled 10,000 rail cars to and from the Connell Interchange. This includes agricultural products and industrial freight.

- $2 billion in agricultural products are moved annually through the Connell Interchange by CBRR.

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Economic Effects

- The Connell Interchange directly and indirectly supports up to 7,000 jobs in Adams, Franklin and Grant Counties.

- CBRR serves up to 60 companies in the region that send and receive product via rail utilizing the Connell Interchange.

- The list of rail users includes Akzo Nobel, Basic American Foods, CHS, ConAgra Foods Lamb Weston, Gavilon Grain/Union Elevator, Lineage Logistics, McCain Foods USA, Pacific Coast Canola, REC Silicon, Simplot, SVZ, Western Polymer and Wolfkill Fertilizer.

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Project Schedule

- Garner Project Support and Funding – *ongoing*
- Coordination with CBRR and BNSF – *ongoing*
- Predesign – *August 2015/December 2015*
- Advocacy and Collaboration – *early 2016*
- Final Design – *Spring 2016/Spring 2017*
- Construction – *Spring 2017*
- Project Completion – *Fall of 2017*

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Progress Achieved to Date

Schedule Milestones

- **Garner Project Support and Funding** →
- Coordination with CBRR and BNSF
- Pre-Design
- Advocacy and Collaboration
- Final Design
- Construction
- Project Completion

- Support from 11 entities including 5 ports, 3 EDOs, CBRR, and BNSF.
- CERB grant funding for the initial planning study. *June 2015*
- State Transportation Bill allocated $10 million to proceed with design and construction of the rail improvements. *July 2015*

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Progress Achieved to Date

Schedule Milestones

- Garner Project Support and Funding
- **Coordination with CBRR and BNSF** ➡
- Pre-Design
- Advocacy and Collaboration
- Final Design
- Construction
- Project Completion

- Preliminary Coordination
- Conceptual Engineering Review *Sept 2015*
- Operations and Business Review *Fall 2015*

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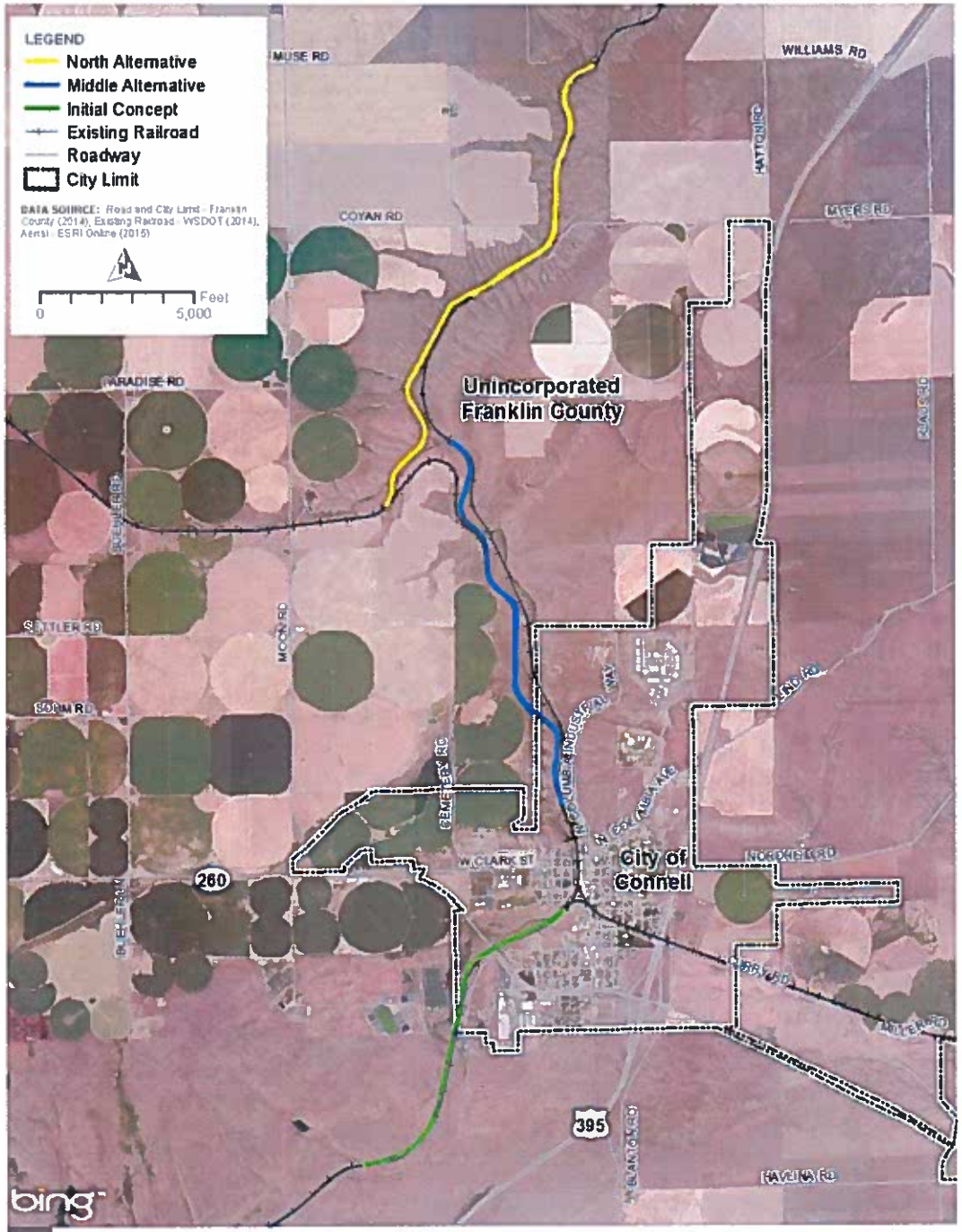
Progress Achieved to Date

Schedule Milestones

- Garner Project Support and Funding
- Coordination with BNSF
- **Pre-Design** ⟹
- Advocacy and Collaboration
- Final Design
- Construction
- Project Completion

Studies completed to date:

- Alternative Alignment Analysis
- Environmental Overview
- Operating Basis of Design
- Engineering Basis of Design
- Rail Freight Flow



Alternative Alignments Considered

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Alternative Alignment Analysis

The Alternative Alignment Analysis evaluated the conceptual design, technical aspects, and opinion of probably construction costs for three alternative interchange locations.

North Alternative

- Minimal interruptions to operations
- Constructed off of BNSF ROW
- Unit trains will avoid Connell
- Likely block crossings the least
- Most private land acquisition
- Highest anticipated cost
- Impact greatest number of drainages
- ~0.87% grade

Middle Alternative

- Constructed off of BNSF ROW
- Least amount of track to build
- Unit trains will avoid Connell
- Interruptions to operations
- Private land acquisition
- Higher anticipated cost than South
- Track grade of 1%

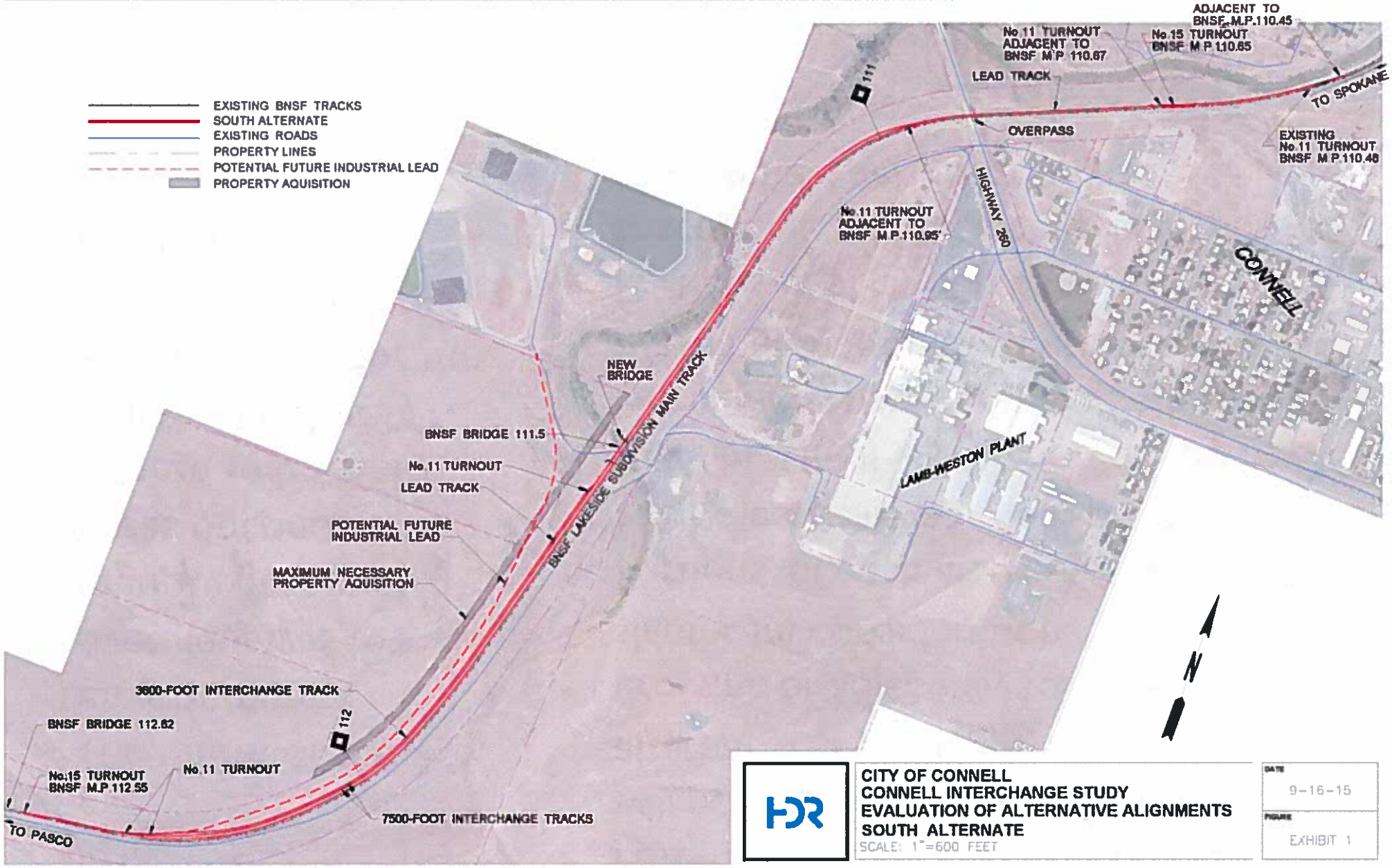
South Alternative

- Minimal interruptions to operations
- Least expensive
- Smallest disturbance footprint
- Access to future industrial area
- Least amount of land acquisition
- May require modification of 260 overpass
- Track grade of ~ 0.7%

Alternative Alignment Analysis
Recommendations

The proposed South Alternative Alignment is the most beneficial option related to cost, operations, and land impacts.

- Meets all minimum design criteria.
- Has the smallest overall footprint.
- Provides potential for future industrial rail access.
- Requires the least amount of land acquisition.
- Appears to be the least expensive based on preliminary cost estimates.



Recommended Proposed Concept (Initial Concept/South Alternative)

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Environmental Overview – *Summary*

The intent of the environmental overview was to identify potential areas of concern related to both the built and natural environments for the three alternative alignments.

- All alternatives would be consistent w/ applicable County or City zoning codes.
- Potential wetlands adjacent to coulees will need to be field verified once an alternative is selected.
- Crossing or adjacency to coulees a significant consideration.
- Portions of each alternative adjacent to or cross 100-year floodplain.
- Will need field verification of potential Ferruginous hawk breeding areas and Washington ground squirrel habitat.
- Portions of alignments may be susceptible to liquefaction and will require field verification.

Additional Reports/Studies Completed to Date

- Operating Basis of Design
  - Statement of functional and operating requirements of a railroad that influence engineering design decisions.
- Engineering Basis of Design
  - Defines the basis of design and standards that govern the design of the CRI Project.
- Rail Freight Flow
  - Identifies the existing and projected patterns of rail freight traffic at the CRI for a 10-year horizon.

What's Next?

- Advocacy and Collaboration
- CBRR and BNSF Coordination
  - Memorandum of Understanding *Spring 2016*
  - BNSF Work Estimate, Funding, Public/Private Partnership, and Agreements *Summer/Fall 2016*
- Phased Final Design *Spring 2016 through Spring 2017*
- Construction *Spring 2017*
- Project Completion *Fall 2017*

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Questions?

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