PROPEL US 30

Smarter Transportation. Stronger Communities.

US 30 East

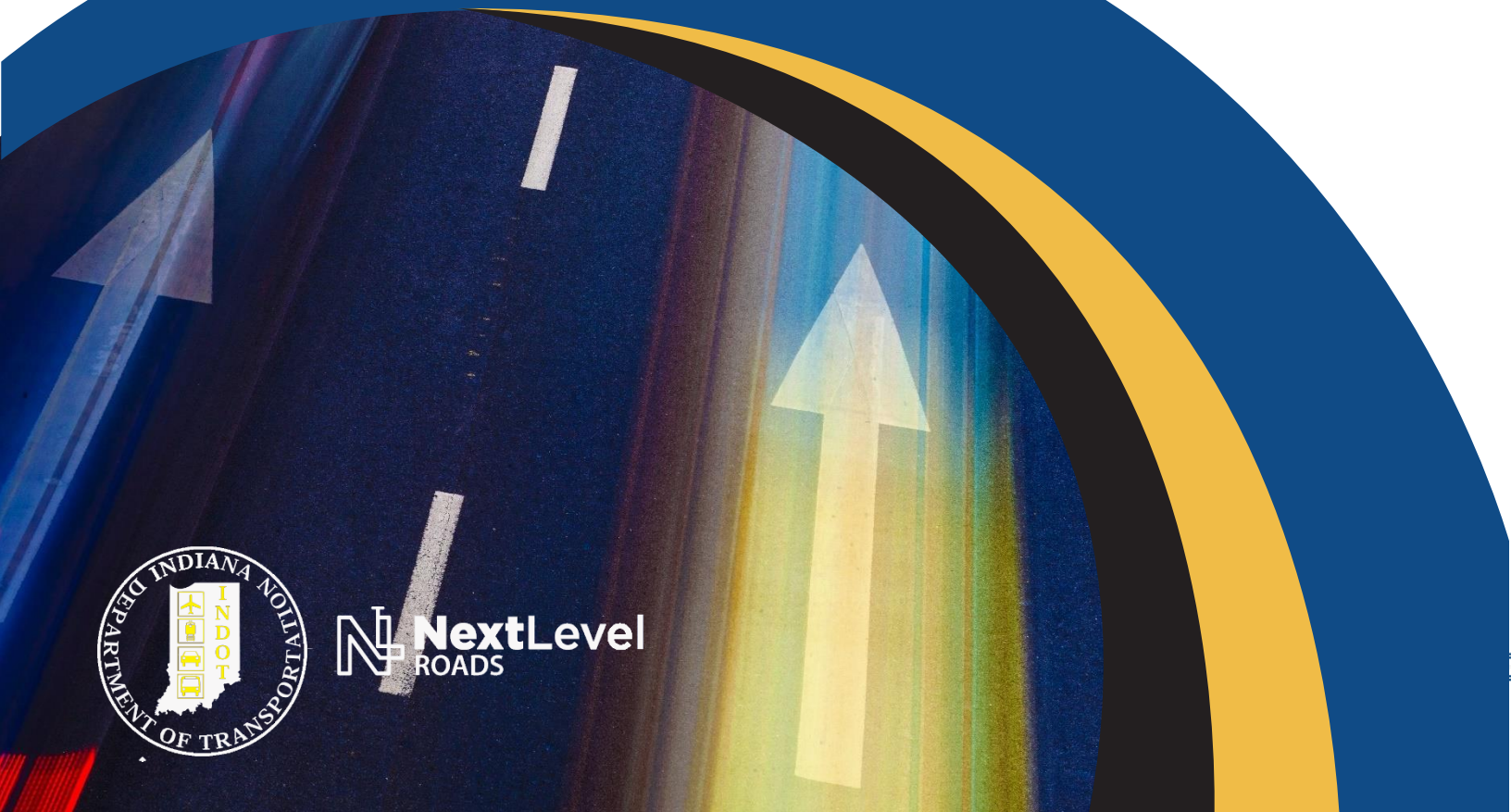
PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT LINKAGES (PEL) STUDY REPORT

FINAL

Revision 1 – October 2025

Prepared By

wsp



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION INDOT

NextLevel ROADS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NOTE: Minor edits made to the report in October 2025. The edits included the following:

- Table 1-2 updated to correct/update plan titles and adoption dates.
- Revised Section 1.6.3 plan titles to indicate most current document title.
- Added Appendix K to include Addendum 1 for RASPI #3, which documents outreach efforts and comments received through August 1, 2025. References to this document were added on pages 18 and 40, as well as pages 1, 7, and 8 of the Completed FHWA PEL Questionnaire (Appendix A).

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

APPENDICES

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND STUDY OBJECTIVES

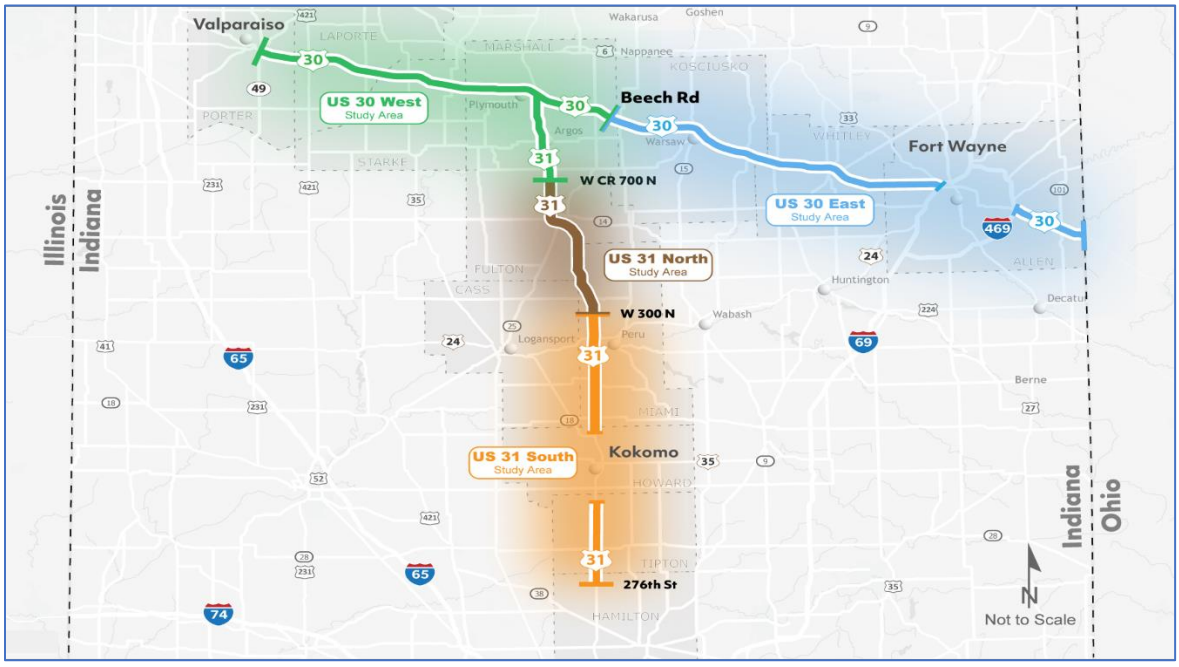
ProPEL is an INDOT initiative for transportation planning using collaborative Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) studies to consider environmental, community, and economic goals early in the planning process. ProPEL studies use collaboration, data-driven analysis, and public engagement to help shape the future of transportation infrastructure.

The ProPEL US 30 and 31 studies span 180 miles across 12 counties. The overall study area, which was established as a direct result of stakeholder input, includes[1]:

- US 30 from Valparaiso to the Indiana/Ohio state line (excluding the I-69/I-469 section around the north side of Fort Wayne).
- US 31 between Hamilton County and US 30 (excluding the US 31 Kokomo bypass).

Within the overall study limits, INDOT designated four smaller study areas for conducting individual PEL studies (see **Figure 1-1**). This approach enabled each of the study teams to more closely consider community needs and goals. The limits of the four study areas were defined to optimize engagement by keeping communities that associate with each other in the same study area. The four PEL studies were closely coordinated to make sure that potential solutions were integrated and work together across study area boundaries.

Figure 1-1 - ProPEL US 30 and US 31 Study Areas



[1] The US 31 Kokomo bypass and the portions of I-69/I-469 around the north side of Fort Wayne were excluded from the overall study limits because they are currently freeway facilities. Therefore, the long-term vision of those portions of US 30 and US 31 has been decided.

The ProPEL US 30 and US 31 studies were intended to help guide transportation investments over the next twenty years, creating transportation facilities that meet the needs of all users. Planning products from the PEL studies will inform subsequent project-specific environmental reviews conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

A goal of the ProPEL US 30 and US 31 studies is to identify a reasonable range of alternatives for the study area. The studies included several objectives to achieve this goal:

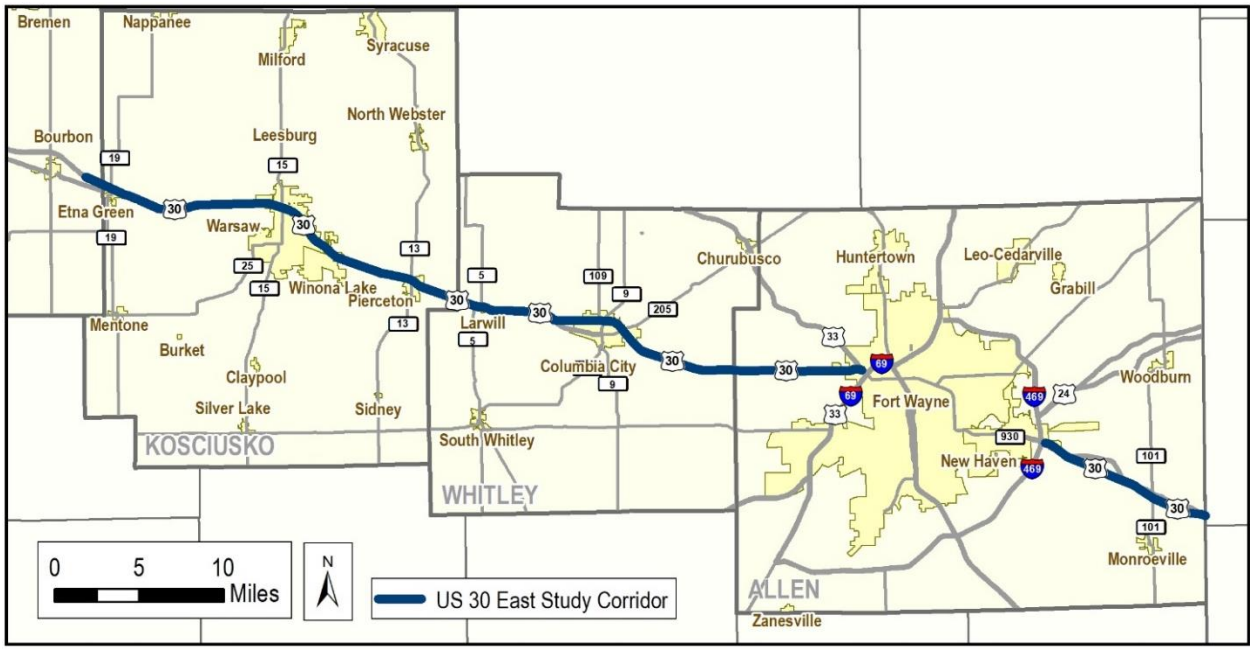
- Engage the public, study stakeholders, and resource agencies throughout the study.
- Identify community goals for the study area.
- Identify transportation needs within the study area.
- Develop the purpose and need for improvements in the study area.
- Identify and develop alternatives that meet the identified needs and consider community goals.
- Evaluate alternatives and eliminate unreasonable alternatives
- Carry forward a smaller number of alternatives for further consideration in future planning and/or NEPA.
- Document the study process.

This PEL Study Report was prepared for the ProPEL US 30 East study area.

1.2 PROPEL US 30 EAST STUDY AREA

The ProPEL US 30 East study area extends for approximately 58 miles from Beech Road in Marshall County to the Indiana/Ohio state line in Allen County, with portions within I-69 and I-469 around the north side of Fort Wayne excluded from the study.

Figure 1-2 - ProPEL US 30 East Study Area



1.3 INDOT STUDY TEAM

The ProPEL US 30 East study team included subject matter experts from several different INDOT groups, including Major Projects, Traffic Engineering, Environmental Services, and Technical Planning.

1.4 FHWA COORDINATION

The ProPEL US 30 East study team coordinated with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on a regular basis throughout the study. Coordination included monthly meetings with FHWA to discuss study progress, recap activities, discuss technical approaches, and address any potential questions or concerns identified by FHWA. FHWA also reviewed and commented on the following technical reports developed during the ProPEL US 30 East study:

- ProPEL US 30 East Environmental Constraints Report.
- ProPEL US 30 East Purpose and Need Report.
- ProPEL US 30 East Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) Screening Report.
- ProPEL US 30 East Level 2 Screening Report.
- ProPEL US 30 East Level 3 Screening Report.

1.5 PEL STUDY PROCESS FRAMEWORK

The ProPEL US 30 East study included four distinct steps, which are identified below along with a summary of work tasks included in each step:

1. **Vision & Scoping / Data Collection**
   - Identify stakeholders and develop a plan to engage them in the study.
   - Review corridor history and study area context.
   - Identify baseline environmental conditions.
   - Identify baseline transportation conditions.
2. **Purpose and Need Statement & Study Area Goals**
   - Identify the transportation needs.
   - Identify community goals.
3. **Alternatives Development and Evaluation**
   - Develop performance measures and screening criteria to evaluate alternatives.
   - Develop a range of alternatives.
   - Evaluate alternatives in terms of ability to meet purpose and need and practicality (Level 1 screening).
   - Develop and evaluate alternatives at primary intersections in terms of ability to meet purpose and need, benefits, costs, and impacts (Level 2 screening).
   - Develop and evaluate improvement packages in terms of benefits, costs, and impacts (Level 3 screening).
   - Document the evaluation process described above.
4. **PEL Study Documentation**
   - Prepare and distribute the study report to document the process.

1.6 PLANNING CONTEXT

1.6.1 PEL PROCESS AUTHORITY

The ProPEL US 30 East study was conducted in accordance with the regulations found at 23 CFR Part 450 (i.e., the Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Regulations). The ProPEL US 30 East study process was intentionally structured to meet these requirements. See **Table 1-1** for further information regarding the requirements and where they are addressed in the PEL study report.

Table 1-1 - PEL Study Requirements and Relevant PEL Study Sections

Requirement	Addressed by PEL Study?	How addressed?	Where to find further information?
1 Involvement of interested state, local, tribal, and federal agencies	YES	- Resource agency and tribal coordination meetings held at multiple points during study. - Draft technical reports distributed via email for agency and tribal review in advance of coordination meetings.	- Section 1.6.4 - Section 2.7 - Section 3.5 - Sections 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 - Section 5
2 Public review	YES	- Draft technical reports, including purpose & need and alternatives screening reports published for public review and comment. - Extensive public involvement and stakeholder coordination efforts throughout study to keep study stakeholders informed and to discuss their relevant questions and concerns.	- Section 2.7 - Section 3.5 - Sections 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 - Section 5
3 Reasonable opportunity to comment during the development of the planning study	YES	- A robust public involvement program was implemented during the study. These efforts included eblasts, social media platforms, Community Office Hours events, attendance local community fairs and festivals, Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) meetings, individual stakeholder meetings, as well as in-person and virtual public meetings. - In general, a minimum 30-day comment period was provided on all draft technical reports published for public review and comment. - Draft technical reports published in electronic and hard copy format. Hard copies were placed at public venues within or near the study area during the public comment periods. - Individual responses to public comments were provided as part of the alternatives development and screening reports.	- Section 2.7 - Section 3.5 - Sections 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 - Section 5
4 Documentation of relevant decisions in a form that is identifiable and available for review during the NEPA scoping process and can be appended to or referenced in the NEPA document (future step)	YES	- All planning analyses and relevant decisions published in multiple technical reports and included in PEL study appendices as supporting documentation. These reports were available on the study website, as well as at multiple locations within or near the study area.	- Section 2 - Section 4 - Section 5 - Section 6

Requirement	Addressed by PEL Study?	How addressed?	Where to find further information?
5 Review of the FHWA	YES	- Regular coordination meetings held with FHWA during the duration of the study. - Draft technical reports provided to FHWA for review and comment (See Section 1.4). - Updates made to the technical reports to address FHWA review comments, including responses to all FHWA comments.	- Section 1.4 - Section 5.1

ProPEL US 30 East relied on information and data from current and previous planning efforts in the study area with the intention of integrating any future projects resulting from the PEL study into the regional and statewide transportation planning processes.

Coordination with the Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC), which is the metropolitan planning organization for the Fort Wayne, Indiana urbanized area, occurred throughout the study. Specifically, NIRCC participated as a member of the ProPEL US 30 East SAC, hosted coordination meetings with transportation officials of local agencies, and maintained a hard copy of each report for public review. Additionally, coordination with the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG), which is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the South Bend, Indiana urbanized area including Warsaw, Indiana, occurred throughout the study. Specifically, the study team presented information from various reports to the Policy Committee, received feedback from the members, and answered questions about the study process.

1.6.2 STUDY AREA PLANNING CONTEXT

As one of the first steps in the study, the study team collected and reviewed previously completed land use plans and transportation plans that are related to the study area (see **Table 1-2**). The purpose of this effort was to:

- Establish a planning context for the corridor.
- Provide background for creating a public and stakeholder outreach process.
- Support the development of the study area purpose and need statement.
- Inform the development of study area goals.
- Assist with the early phases of the alternatives development and evaluation.

Table 1-2 - Previously Completed Studies Reviewed by the ProPEL US 30 East Study Team

Study Name	US 30 History & Background	Purpose & Need Info	Potential Alternatives Info	Environmental Info
1. INDOT Long-Range Transportation Plan: 2018 – 2045 Future Transportation Needs Report	X	X	X	
2. Indiana State Transportation Improvement Program (2022-2026) & Next Level Roads	X	X	X	
3. INDOT Free Flow Treatments for US 30 In Columbia City (2015)	X	X	X	
4. INDOT US 30 Intersection Improvements (Mini-Scope) (2016)	X	X	X	
5. INDOT US 30 Intersection Improvements	X	X	X	
6. INDOT Abbreviated Engineer's Assessment (2018)			X	
7. Indiana Multimodal Freight Plan Update (2018)	X	X		
8. 2045 Transportation Plan Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (2023)	X	X	X	X
9. 2050 Michiana On The Move Plan Transportation Plan (2023)	X	X	X	
10. Marshall County, Indiana Comprehensive Plan (2004)		X		
11. Forward Kosciusko, County-Wide Comprehensive Plan (2022)		X		
12. City of Warsaw Comprehensive Plan (2015)		X	X	
13. Etna Green Comprehensive Plan (2022)		X		
14. Town Of Pierceton Comprehensive Plan (2022)		X		
15. Warsaw 5-Year Parks & Recreation Plan (2022)		X	X	
16. Whitley County, Indiana Comprehensive Plan (2022)		X	X	
17. Columbia City, Indiana Comprehensive Plan (2015-2035)		X		
18. All In Allen County Comprehensive Plan (2023)		X		
19. Allen County Together Economic Development Plan (2022)		X		
20. New Haven Comprehensive Plan & Strategic Economic Plan (2002)		X		
21. Indiana Blue Ribbon Panel on Transportation Infrastructure (2014)	X	X	X	

1.6.3 REGIONAL AND STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLANS

Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council 2045 Transportation Plan

The 2045 Transportation Plan includes both long- and short-range policies and projects integrating highway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. The Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC) is a Regional Planning Organization (RPO) working in Adams, Allen, DeKalb, and Wells County, as well as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) responsible for conducting transportation planning in the Fort Wayne-New Haven-Allen County Metropolitan Planning Area. The 2045 Transportation Plan identifies US 30 as a high-priority corridor for improvement, focusing on enhancing safety, reducing congestion, and modernizing infrastructure. Key objectives include addressing crash-prone areas, especially at intersections, improving traffic flow to support local and regional mobility, and upgrading the corridor to accommodate increasing freight volumes and future travel demand. These improvements are intended to ensure US 30 remains a safe, efficient, and reliable route that supports the region's economic growth and long-range transportation goals. Regionally significant projects, such as capacity increasing projects, must be identified in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Any regionally significant projects recommended from the ProPEL US 30 East study that move forward into project development will require coordination with NIRCC to include in the MTP once funding has been identified. Recommendations from this study will also be provided to NIRCC to inform future updates/amendments to the MTP.

Michiana on the Move: 2050 Transportation Plan

This 2023 plan is a regional transportation plan for the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MPO) that serves Marshall, Kosciusko, Elkhart, and St. Joseph Counties. This plan identifies several transportation investment goals that include addressing long term transportation needs, preserving and improving existing infrastructure, supporting economic development, improving safety, reducing congestion, planning for emerging technologies, and maintaining fiscal constraint. Regionally significant projects, such as capacity increasing projects, must be identified in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Any regionally significant projects recommended from the ProPEL US 30 East study that move forward into project development will require coordination with MACOG to include in the MTP once funding has been identified. Recommendations from this study will also be provided to MACOG to inform future updates/amendments to the MTP.

NIRCC and MACOG Transportation Improvement Plans (TIP)

The TIPs developed by both MACOG and NIRCC translate the long-range goals of their respective Metropolitan Transportation Plans into fiscally constrained, short-term capital investment strategies. Each TIP identifies transportation projects programmed for implementation over a four-year horizon, including those supported by federal, state, and local funds.

Within the MACOG region the TIP supports efforts to improve safety, pavement condition, and traffic operations along US 30. Although no major capacity-increasing projects are currently programmed, the TIP includes resurfacing, signal modernization, and intersection improvements consistent with the corridor's long-range needs. In the NIRCC region improvements are programmed along US 30, including intersection upgrades, access management strategies, and bridge replacements aimed at enhancing corridor safety and freight mobility.

As recommendations from the ProPEL US 30 East study are refined and prioritized, both MPOs will play a critical role in advancing those improvements into future TIP cycles. Regionally significant projects will require coordination with MACOG and NIRCC for inclusion in their respective TIPs and to ensure eligibility for federal funding. This coordination

provides the mechanism for advancing US 30 improvements from planning to implementation, ensuring they align with regional priorities and support long-term transportation, economic, and safety goals.

Long-Range Transportation Plan

INDOT's Long-range Transportation Plan (LRTP) (2018-2045 Transportation Needs Report) was adopted in June 2019. This plan is not project specific, rather it identifies priorities over the next 30 years. The LRTP identifies goals to guide improvements to Indiana's transportation system. These goals are safe and secure travel, system preservation, economic vitality, multimodal mobility, environmental responsibility, new technology, and strategic policy actions. The LRTP identifies potential improvements to US 30 from Valparaiso to Ft. Wayne to improve mobility and support economic activity in Indiana. The US 30 corridor is identified as major corridor in the LRTP because it is a critical component of the state's transportation infrastructure, emphasizing its significance for both passenger and freight mobility across northern Indiana. At the time of this report, INDOT is in the process of updating the Long-Range Transportation Plan. INDOT Technical Planning and Programming, which is leading the LRTP updates, was part of the ProPEL US 31 South study team.

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

INDOT's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is a planning document that lists all projects to be financed in whole or in part with federal funds as well as all state-funded projects that are regionally significant. This document covers all such projects that are funded within five years. The current STIP document covers fiscal years 2024-2028 and was approved on September 1, 2023. The current STIP and previous STIP documents (fiscal years 2020-2024 and 2022-2026) were reviewed for this study. A draft STIP covering fiscal years 2026–2030 has been posted online and may include additional programmed projects not reflected in this planning study.

As with the TIP, the STIP is used in the ProPEL US 30 East study to define the future existing roadway network. Projects listed in the STIP are expected to be completed within five years; and therefore, will become existing conditions of the future conditions analysis of this PEL study.

Some programmed projects listed in the TIP and STIP address short-term infrastructure condition needs. This approach is consistent with the ProPEL US 30 East study, which did not complete a detailed analysis of transportation asset conditions in the study area. That assessment will take place as part of future project scoping to develop a more detailed scope of work and budget prior to identifying funding for inclusion in the STIP.

Any recommendations from the ProPEL US 30 East study that move forward into project development will be included in the STIP once INDOT identifies funding.

Table 1-3 - Summary of STIP Projects (2022-2026) within the ProPEL US 30 East Study Corridor

Contract No. / Des No.	Construction Funding Year	Location	Work Type
41079 / 1901890	2024	Flaugh Rd	New Interchange Construction
41641 / 1801807	2023	Whitley/Allen County Line	New Interchange Construction
41642 / 1801809	2023	Silveus Crossing Rd	Other Intersection Improvement
42153 / 1601012	2022	US 30 from SR19 to 3mi E of SR15	HMA Overlay Minor Structural

Contract No. / Des No.	Construction Funding Year	Location	Work Type
43319 / 2002011	2025	US 30 - 0.12mi E of SR15	Bridge Deck Overlay
43870 / 2100889	2023	US 30 - 9.12mi W of SR13	Substructure Repair and Rehabilitation
42461 / 1900625	2022	US 30 - SR5 to 0.23mi E of SR9	HMA Overlay, Preventative Maintenance

Subsequent to the development of the STIP information for the PEL study, INDOT has progressed two projects forward into development along the study corridor. First, a new interchange is proposed to be constructed on US 30 at Leesburg / Felger Road in Allen County in Construction Funding Year 2028. Second, a new interchange is proposed to be constructed on US 30 at CR 700E in Whitley County, with a preliminary design completion timeframe within Construction Funding Year 2028. Other minor maintenance projects may also be identified and added to the STIP prior to the completion of the PEL study.

Coordination with Local Planning Agencies

Regular coordination with local transportation and planning agencies occurred throughout the PEL study. These agencies, which participated as members of the SAC, included:

- Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG)
- Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC)
- Allen County Planning Department
- New Haven Public Works

See **Section 5** of this report for further details on the coordination completed with the SAC members.

2 PURPOSE AND NEED

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose and need statement establishes "why" a study or project is being proposed and sets the foundation for alternatives development and evaluation. The statement identifies specific transportation problems (needs) to be addressed and describes specific desired outcomes (purposes). The purpose and need statement helps determine a reasonable range of alternatives. Potential alternatives determined not to meet the purpose and need are eliminated from further consideration. Additionally, project goals that are desirable, but not required outcomes, can guide the development and screening of potential alternatives along with other factors, such as transportation performance, environmental impacts, benefits, and cost.

The information contained in this section is summarized from the following documents, which are included as appendices to the PEL study report:

- Appendix C: *ProPEL US 30 East Existing Transportation Conditions Report*
- Appendix D: *ProPEL US 30 East Final Purpose and Need Report*
- Appendix H: *ProPEL US 30 East Resource Agency, Stakeholder & Public Involvement Summary #1 (RASPI #1)*
- Appendix I: *ProPEL US 30 East Resource Agency, Stakeholder & Public Involvement Summary #2 (RASPI #2)*

2.2 CORRIDOR VISON

The following vision[2] was established for the US 30 corridor during development of the study area purpose and need statement:

> The US 30 corridor will continue to serve local, regional, and national travelers by balancing mobility and access considerations in a way that:
>
> - Enhances **safety** for all users,
> - Provides transportation solutions for all, and
> - Complements **local community goals and objectives**, including maintaining the character of the study area.

The corridor vision, which was collaboratively developed for both the ProPEL US 30 West and US 30 East studies, is separate from and does not take the place of the purpose and need statement.

During the Level 3 screening process, INDOT supplemented the corridor vision based on the analysis completed throughout the study. More specifically, INDOT identified **a long-term vision of upgrading US 30 in the study area to a free-flow facility**, which is a road without traffic signals, stop signs, or yield signs for mainline traffic. There are varying types of free-flow facilities, ranging from freeways – which have full control of access – to free-flow facilities that have no or partial control of access. The ProPEL US 30 East study found achieving this long-term vision was feasible; however, there are tradeoffs to consider and uncertainties that would impact the implementation timeline.

Tradeoffs to consider include:

- Higher costs;
- Higher community and environmental impacts; and
- Potentially severe impacts to local communities and businesses due to the loss of access to/from US 30, as well as reduced mobility across US 30.

Uncertainties impacting the implementation timeline include:

- Policy decisions of elected officials and agency leaders;
- Statewide transportation priorities; and
- Transportation funding.

Given these tradeoffs and uncertainties, the ProPEL US 30 East study considered a range of improvements that provide INDOT with the flexibility needed to incrementally move toward a long-term vision of a free-flow facility through a series of improvements over time to address the identified transportation needs. The improvements include more immediate, lower-cost improvements, as well as higher-cost improvements that require funding beyond what is currently available.

[2] The corridor vision was refined based on the passage of several federal and state Executive Orders (EOs), as well as one USDOT order. See **Section** Error! Reference source not found. for additional information.

Due to the identified uncertainties, the study concludes that implementation of an entirely free-flow facility on US 30 in the study area will likely extend beyond the study's planning horizon of 2045. In the interim, the study provides INDOT with a flexible guide to incrementally upgrade US 30 in the study area to a free-flow facility.

2.3 TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

The following transportation needs were identified for the ProPEL US 30 East study area:

- **Safety for all users:** Many locations along the US 30 East study corridor are experiencing a higher-than-average severity and frequency of crashes which is not in line with INDOT's goal of reducing the number of serious and fatal injuries on Indiana's roads.
- **Local Mobility:** Growth in the corridor is anticipated to increase traffic and negatively affect the movement of people, goods, and services crossing, accessing and turning left off of US 30, increasing mobility challenges that impact local residents and business' ability to commute, conduct business, and support recreation.
- **Regional and Statewide Mobility:** Provide safe, high-quality mobility for long-distance passenger and freight trips through and beyond the study corridor.

2.4 PURPOSE

Guided by the vision statement and driven by the identified safety and mobility issues, the purpose of this study is to further enhance US 30's role as a primary passenger and commerce corridor across northern Indiana by identifying future transportation improvements that:

- Improve roadway safety in the corridor for all users;
- Improve mobility for local users along and across the corridor; and
- Enhance the efficiency and reliability of US 30 as a regional and statewide corridor.

2.5 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures are quantifiable criteria used to measure how well an alternative functions with respect to planning objectives. The study team identified the performance measures shown in **Table 2-1** to guide the development and evaluation of alternatives during the PEL study.

Table 2-1 - ProPEL US 30 East Study Performance Measures

Study Purpose	Performance Measure	Methodology
Improve roadway safety for all users	Reduce intersection conflict points	Conflict points are where two or more road users (such as vehicles, pedestrians, or bicyclists) cross each other's paths creating a potential crash hazard. Reducing the number of conflicts, particularly higher speed and right-angle conflict points can improve safety performance
	Apply crash reduction measures that improve safety	Identify and evaluate safety countermeasures that may reduce the likelihood of severe crashes. Countermeasures are design improvements that can be implemented to prevent or reduce potential crashes, injuries, or fatalities.
	Address multimodal safety	Identify and evaluate safety countermeasures aimed at safeguarding vulnerable road users including pedestrians, cyclists, and special-use vehicles.

Study Purpose	Performance Measure	Methodology
Improve mobility for local users along and across the corridor	Maintain or improve operations for north and south trips at intersections within the study corridor	Reduce intersection delay and improve level of service where unacceptable operations are forecasted for north-south approaches at intersections with US 30 and traffic exiting US 30 onto local roads. Maintain operations at other intersections that are forecasted to have acceptable operations.
Enhance the efficiency and reliability of US 30 as a regional and statewide corridor	Improve operations along US 30	Identify improvements that contribute to overall corridor reduction in delay and improve efficiency of longer distance passenger and freight trips along the study corridor.

2.6 STUDY AREA GOALS

Goals represent overarching outcomes that are desirable, but not specifically required since they are not measurable with respect to identified study area needs. Goals were not the sole basis for eliminating or carrying forward a solution or alternative; they were considered alongside other factors such as transportation performance, benefits, impacts, and costs. The study team identified the following goals for the ProPEL US 30 East study area:

- **Economic Development** – Provide transportation infrastructure to support local economies and economic development goals.
- **Transportation for All** – Provide fair solutions that consider the needs of all communities, including sensitive communities.[3]
- **Multimodal Access & Connections** – Accommodate non-motorized, transit, and active modes of travel in and across the study area.
- **Emerging Technologies** – Support emerging technologies and related infrastructure, including alternative fuel, and autonomous or connected vehicles.
- **Fiscal & Environmental Practicality** – Identify fiscally responsible improvements and avoid/minimize impacts to the human and natural environment.
- **Driver Expectations** – Consider roadway enhancements that provide smoother and more predictable transitions between rural and urban segments of US 30 East**.**

2.7 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT & AGENCY COORDINATION

Two public information meetings were held during the Vision and Scoping phase of the study. These meetings were used to solicit input from the public regarding the fit and function of the study corridor, including location-specific concerns regarding safety and/or operations. The input collected from these meetings was used to develop the corridor vision articulated in the study area purpose and need statement.

[3] This goal was refined in the *Final Level 3 Screening Report* based on the issuance of several federal and state Executive Orders (EOs), as well as one USDOT order. See **Section 3.2** for additional information.

The study team published the Draft Purpose and Need Report for public and agency review on June 5, 2023, and the public comment period extended through July 31, 2023. Additionally, the report was distributed to federal, state, and local resources agencies as well as the tribal nations for review and comment. Two in-person public information meetings were held in the study area during the public comment period. A virtual public information meeting, which included the meeting materials and a recording of the presentation from the in-person public meetings, was made available online at the ProPEL US 30 website the day following the second public information meeting.

A virtual resource agency and cultural resources stakeholder coordination meeting was held on September 15, 2023. Comments from resource agencies and cultural resources stakeholders were requested on or before September 29, 2023.

After considering the comments received from the public, agencies, and tribes, the Final Purpose and Need Report was published in December 2023 and amended in March 2024. The March 2024 amendment, which was minor in nature, updated the Fiscal & Environmental Practicality goal to specifically reference resources important to Tribal nations.

Please see **Section 5** of this report for further information regarding public involvement and agency coordination efforts related to purpose and need development.

3 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section summarizes the likely environmental resources within the ProPEL US 30 East study area. An environmental constraints report was prepared early in the study to identify key resources, avoid fatal flaws, and account for sensitive environmental areas during alternatives development and evaluation. To identify social, economic, and environmental constraints, data was gathered through online databases, aerial imagery, Google Maps, geographic information system (GIS) GIS analysis, limited field reviews, and coordination with local planning agencies. Environmental resources were generally identified within a 0.5-mile buffer from the corridor centerline; exceptions to the half-mile study area included airports (2.8-mile buffer), demographic data (5-mile buffer); and noise sensitive areas (500-foot buffer from the edge of travel lanes per INDOT policy).

The information contained in this section is summarized from the ProPEL US 30 East Environmental Constraints Report (**Appendix B**). Additional details and mapping of environmental resources can be found in the environmental constraints report in **Appendix B**. All resources identified in the report will be revisited during subsequent National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews for any future project(s) that may result from the ProPEL US 30 East study.

3.2 SOCIOECONOMIC RESOURCES

Socioeconomic data outlines trends and projections related to population, households, and employment within the study area. This data serves as the baseline for analyzing and recommending future transportation improvements. It also includes information about current and future land use to help show where growth and development are expected.

Between 1990 and 2020, population increased in each of the four US 30 East study area counties. Allen County grew by 28.1%, Whitley by 23.7%, Kosciusko by 22.9%, and Marshall by 9.3%. Looking ahead, forecasts project continued moderate growth in Allen and Kosciusko Counties—13.5% and 7.0% respectively—by 2050, while Marshall and Whitley Counties are projected to grow more modestly (1.8% each). Educational attainment is generally in line with state averages, and median household income in the study area counties ranges from $58,296 (Marshall) to $67,716 (Whitley), slightly higher than the Indiana state median of $60,794.

Since the publication of the environmental constraints report, the socioeconomic impact analysis was updated to consider the issuance of several federal and state Executive Orders (EOs), as well as one US Department of Transportation (USDOT) order, including:

- Federal EOs: EO 14154, EO 14148, EO 14173, and EO 14281;
- State EOs: EO 25-49, EO 25-37, EO 25-14; and
- USDOT Order 2100.7.

Land use within the ProPEL US 30 East study area is predominantly agricultural, with commercial, residential, and industrial development located near Pierceton, Warsaw, Columbia City, and Fort Wayne. Notable industrial land uses along the corridor include the Steel Dynamics facility east of Columbia City, the Amazon warehouse near Flaugh Road in Allen County, and the Johnson & Johnson facility (formerly DePuy Synthes) in Warsaw. Comprehensive plans for Allen County and New Haven also identify future warehousing, distribution, and heavy industrial uses along US 30. Future land use plans from communities and counties along the corridor reflect a focus on industrial growth,

business park development, and suburban residential expansion. Several comprehensive plans identify US 30 as a critical economic development corridor. Approximately 74% of land within five miles of the corridor is designated as Prime Farmland, and about 30,000 acres within the study area are currently used for agricultural production.

Several community facilities are located within or adjacent to the corridor. These include public libraries in Columbia City and Pierceton, schools, post offices, and government offices. Medical services, parks, social services, and places of worship are also dispersed along the corridor. In total, 550 community resources were identified within the 0.5-mile study buffer. In addition, three cemeteries—Oakwood Cemetery (Warsaw), Hillcrest Cemetery (Pierceton), and Nolt Cemetery (east of Columbia City)—were identified near US 30 in the study area.

Potential Section 4(f) resources were identified within the study area and will require formal evaluation to determine eligibility and use. These include publicly owned parks and recreational areas as well as potentially eligible historic properties. Notably, Section 6(f) resources were confirmed within the study area, including Morsches Park in Columbia City, which contains Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) protections and will require coordination with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) during future NEPA efforts.

3.3 NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural resources within the study area include wetlands, streams, groundwater features, floodplains, forested lands, and wildlife habitats. These resources are protected under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and Executive Order 11990, which addresses wetland protection. Under Section 404, impacts to jurisdictional waters of the United States—including wetlands and other aquatic features—must be avoided, minimized, or mitigated to prevent a net loss of their functions and values. Some non-jurisdictional waters may still require compensatory mitigation depending on project scope and funding. Detailed delineations and field verifications will be required during subsequent NEPA reviews for any future project(s) resulting from the ProPEL US 30 East study.

The following summarizes natural resources identified within the study area:

- Two hundred forty-six (246) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) wetlands are mapped within the 0.5-mile study buffer. Wetlands are most concentrated in Allen and Kosciusko counties. Wetland types include freshwater emergent, forested, scrub-shrub, and ponds.
- One hundred forty-four (144) stream segments are mapped in the study area, totaling 142.2 miles. Of these, 36 stream segments intersect or parallel US 30. Notable stream systems include Flatrock Creek, Willow Creek, Yellow River, and Tippecanoe River. Coordination with Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) identified Pole Run Ditch as a water resource of specific concern.
- Two bridges over Flatrock Creek were highlighted by the Maumee River Basin Commission as contributing to drainage issues and were recommended for study in future alternatives development.
- Groundwater recharge areas and mapped wet spots are present along the corridor, including areas of shallow groundwater and tile outlet locations, which may influence drainage design and water quality treatment requirements.
- Forty-nine (49) floodplain polygons are mapped within the study area. Approximately 17 of these intersect or run adjacent to US 30. These include 100-year floodplains mapped by FEMA across all four study counties.
- Forested areas were identified using aerial imagery, with approximately 9,700 acres of dense, contiguous forest mapped within the study area. These areas provide valuable wildlife habitat, particularly for protected bat species. Indiana Natural Heritage data identified 3.0 acres of Northern Lakes Mesic Upland Forest habitat type in Kosciusko County.

The study area is within range of several federally listed species. The official USFWS IPaC species list (as of January 25, 2024) includes:

- Endangered Indiana bat (Myotis sodalis)
- Threatened northern long-eared bat (Myotis septentrionalis)
- Proposed endangered tricolored bat (Perimyotis subflavus)
- Threatened mussels: rabbitsfoot (Quadrula cylindrica cylindrica) and round hickorynut (Obovaria subrotunda)
- Proposed endangered mussel: salamander mussel (Simpsonaias ambigua)
- Experimental population: whooping crane (Grus americana)
- Candidate species: monarch butterfly (Danaus plexippus)
    - Since finalization of the Environmental Constraints Report, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service proposed listing the monarch butterfly as a federally threatened species.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources provided additional coordination regarding the presence of Blanding's turtle and freshwater mussels. Avoidance and mitigation measures for these species will be considered in future project development.

All of these natural resources will require further coordination and site-specific studies during NEPA for any future projects advancing from the ProPEL US 30 East study.

3.4 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Federal law requires agencies to evaluate the potential impacts of their actions on cultural resources before granting approval. This legislation establishes a regulatory framework for identifying, evaluating, protecting, and managing cultural resources, which include both archaeological sites and historic properties such as buildings, structures, and other elements of the built environment.

The ProPEL US 30 East study identified a range of aboveground cultural resources within the 0.5-mile study area, including cemeteries, historic buildings, and potential districts. Three cemeteries—Oakwood Cemetery in Warsaw, Hillcrest Cemetery in Pierceton, and Nolt Cemetery east of Columbia City—were identified as potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Several other resources within the study area may also be eligible for listing on the NRHP, though formal determinations will occur during future NEPA studies. A letter from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) dated September 27, 2023 provided initial input regarding these and other potentially historic sites.

No NRHP-listed properties were specifically identified in the study area; however, multiple potentially eligible historic resources, including cemeteries and other aboveground structures, were noted during coordination with SHPO and may require further evaluation during future NEPA phases.

In addition to the aboveground resources, Hoosier Homestead/Centennial Farms were reviewed as a measure of agricultural heritage. The four counties within the study area have collectively received 366 Hoosier Homestead Awards since 1976. This includes 114 in Allen County, 90 in Kosciusko County, 66 in Whitley County, and 62 in Marshall County. These awards recognize family farms with at least 100 years of continuous ownership and are considered during alternatives development to avoid impacting historically significant agricultural properties.

Numerous archaeological resource sites are known or suspected throughout the study area; however, in accordance with 54 USC 307103 and Indiana Code 14-21-1, which provide protection for archaeological and burial sites, specific information related to such resources is not publicly disclosed in this report.

3.5 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT & AGENCY COORDINATION

The study team published the Draft Environmental Constraints Report to the study website on in early August 2023. Additionally, the report was distributed to federal, state, and local resources agencies for review and comment. A virtual resource agency and cultural resources stakeholder coordination meeting was held on November 30, 2023. Comments from resource agencies and cultural resources stakeholders were requested on or before December 22, 2023. After considering the comments received, a Final Environmental Constraints Report was prepared dated April 2024.

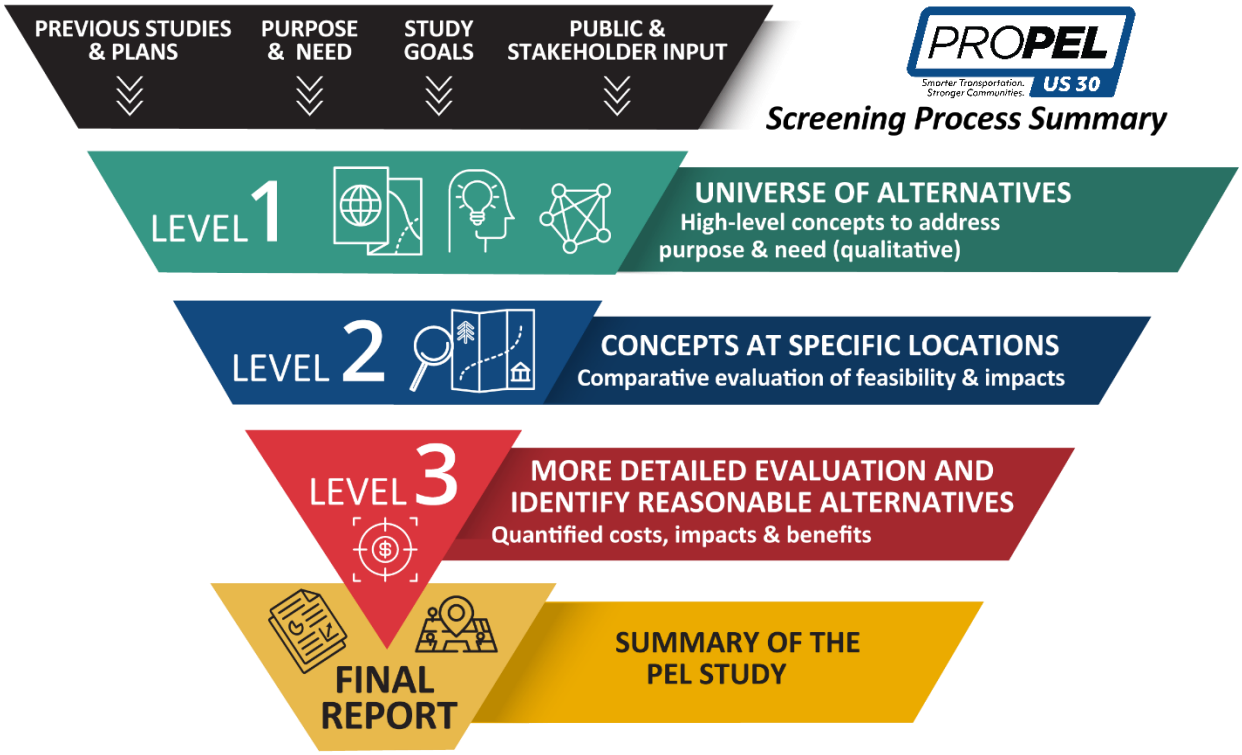
Please see **Section 5** of this report for further information regarding public involvement and agency coordination efforts related to the development of the environmental constraints report.

4 ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT & EVALUATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The ProPEL US 30 East study used a three-level screening process, depicted in **Figure 4-1**, to identify reasonable alternatives that address the identified transportation needs and goals of the study area.

Figure 4-1 - ProPEL US 30 East Alternatives Development and Screening Process



The following sub-sections summarize each screening report, including alternatives considered, evaluation process, results, as well as the associated public involvement and agency coordination completed with each screening step. The information contained in these sub-sections is summarized from the following documents, which are included as appendices to the PEL study report:

- Appendix E: ProPEL US 30 East Final Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) Screening Report
- Appendix F: ProPEL US 30 East Final Level 2 Screening Report
- Appendix G: ProPEL US 30 East Final Level 3 Screening Report
- Appendix H: ProPEL US 30 East Resource Agency, Stakeholder & Public Involvement Summary #1 (RASPI #1)
- Appendix I: ProPEL US 30 East Resource Agency, Stakeholder & Public Involvement Summary #2 (RASPI #2)
- Appendix J: ProPEL US 30 East Resource Agency, Stakeholder & Public Involvement Summary #3 (RASPI #3)
- Appendix K: ProPEL US 30 East Resource Agency, Stakeholder & Public Involvement Summary #3 (RASPI #3) – Addendum 1

4.2 SUMMARY OF LEVEL 1 SCREENING

The purpose of the Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) screening was to identify concepts meeting the purpose and need for the study area. Concepts that met the purpose and need were carried forward and further evaluated in the Level 2 screening process. A qualitative screening process was used to evaluate the improvement concepts contained in the Level 1 screening. This process focused on the ability of each concept to meet the purpose and need for the study area, as well as an assessment of the practicality of each concept. Concepts that did not meet one or more study area needs and/or were not practical were eliminated from further consideration and were not evaluated in the Level 2 screening process.

The Level 1 screening considered a set of 55 transportation improvement concepts for the ProPEL US 30 East study area. The concepts included:

- The No-Build Alternative;
- Ten corridor improvement concepts;
- Two off-corridor improvement concepts;
- Nine intersection improvement concepts;
- Four interchange improvement concepts;
- Ten spot improvement concepts;
- Five traffic systems management and operations (TSMO) improvement concepts;
- Eight policy considerations; and
- Six transit and non-motorized improvement concepts.

The Level 1 screening resulted in the following:

- Five **Primary Concepts** that met a majority of transportation needs and were carried forward to the Level 2 screening for evaluation as stand-alone alternatives.
- Nine **Complementary Concepts** that met some transportation needs but could not function as a stand-alone alternative. These concepts were carried forward to the Level 2 screening for location-specific application as part of a Primary Concept.
- Thirteen **Design Elements** that did not meet any transportation needs but were considered practical as they provided some benefit to the study area. These concepts were carried forward to the Level 2 screening for incorporation where applicable.
- The **No-Build alternative** met one transportation need, but it would not address the substantive safety issues identified throughout the study area. The No-Build alternative was advanced to the Level 2 screening to serve as a baseline for comparison to build alternatives.

Table 4-1 lists the practical concepts advanced from the Level 1 screening process.

Table 4-1 - ProPEL US 30 East Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) Screening Summary

UNIVERSE OF ALTERNATIVES
Screening Results Summary

Primary Concepts (7)

- **No Build Alternative**
- **Corridor Improvements**
  - Access Management
  - Freeway (Free-Flow Facility w/Full Control of Access)
- **Intersection Improvements**
  - Add or Lengthen Turn Lanes
  - Convert to Interchange
  - Signalized Improvements
  - Unsignalized Improvements

Complementary Concepts (11)

- **Off-Corridor Improvements**
  - Adjacent Intersection Improvements
- **Corridor Improvements**
  - Auxiliary Lanes
  - Signal Timing Updates/Coordination
- **Intersection Improvements**
  - Realign Skewed Intersections
  - Add/Extend Acceleration/deceleration Lanes
  - Cross Road Underpass/Overpass
- **TSMO**
  - Traveler Information Systems
  - Warning Systems
  - Freight Priority System
- **Policy**
  - Roadside Assistance Services
  - Incident Management

Design Elements (20)

- **Corridor Improvements**
  - Roadway Shoulder Improvements
  - Continuous Roadway Lighting
  - Median Safety Improvements
- **Off-Corridor Improvements**
  - Parallel Route Improvements
- **Intersection Improvements**
  - Intersection Sight Distance Improvements
  - Traffic Control Visibility Upgrades
- **Interchange Improvements**
  - Add Capacity to Movement(s)
  - Ramp Terminal Intersection Improvements
  - Collector-Distributor System
- **Spot Improvements**
  - Pavement Marking Improvement
  - Geometric Improvements
  - Roadway Signage Improvements
  - Accommodate Wildlife Crossing
  - Spot Roadway Lighting
  - Roadway Drainage Improvements
  - Gateway/Corridor Treatments
- **TSMO**
  - Speed Management
- **Policy**
  - Alternative Fuel/Electric Vehicle Considerations
- **Transit & Non-Motorized Improvements**
  - Non-Motorized User Accommodations
  - Bike/Pedestrian Facilities

The *Draft Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) Screening Report* was published for public review and comment on November 13, 2023, and the public comment period extended through December 22, 2023. Additionally, the report was distributed to federal, state, and local resource agencies as well as the tribal nations for review and comment. After considering the comments received from the public, agencies and the tribes, the Level 1 screening report was finalized on March 27, 2023.

For further information on the Level 1 screening, including details on methodology, screening results, as well as comments received during the public comment period and responses to them, please see the *Final Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) Screening Report* in **Appendix F**. Please see **Section 5** of this report for further information regarding public involvement and agency coordination efforts related to the Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) screening.

4.3 SUMMARY OF LEVEL 2 SCREENING

The purpose of the Level 2 screening analysis was to qualitatively evaluate location-specific improvements carried forward from the Final Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) Screening Report for reasonability and potential impacts. In Level 2, the 16 potential solutions that were identified as Primary and Complementary Concepts were qualitatively evaluated at the primary intersections in the study area. These intersections largely control roadway operations in the study area. Therefore, the intersection alternatives considered at them influence what can be constructed upstream or downstream and set the foundation for improvements between them. Thus, the Level 2 screening identified the building blocks for the Level 3 screening.

A 5-step evaluation process was applied to each of the 31 primary intersections within the ProPEL US 30 East study area. This process is summarized as follows:

Step 1 - Identification of Concepts for Level 2 or Level 3 Evaluation: Concepts that are applicable to *specific locations* were identified and progressed for further evaluation in Step 2. Any concept that involved multiple intersections, or would be applied between intersections, was set-aside for consideration in Level 3 screening and was not evaluated.

Step 2 - Identification Of Traffic Control & Access Concepts: Step 2 identified those concepts that *control flow of traffic* and thus passed directly to Step 3 for a traffic control assessment at each intersection location. The concepts skip step 3 and are considered in Step 4 of the evaluation process.

Step 3 - Traffic Control & Access Decision Tree: In Step 3, given the impact of the method of traffic control on an intersection, a standardized decision tree was developed and applied at each intersection for the concepts that would impact traffic control. This identifies a range of concepts that may meet the transportation needs of the primary intersections.

Step 4 - Locational Applicability Assessment: The locational applicability assessment step evaluated which of the concepts would best meet the needs at each intersection. This assessment considered the context of each intersection, the level of benefit to future operations compared to existing conditions, and a qualitative assessment of why concepts should or should not be progressed to Step 5 for conceptual design and evaluation.

Step 5 - Conceptual Design of Intersection Alternatives: In the final step, the identified concepts were conceptually applied at each location to provide an overall footprint of the improvement. A comparison table was provided for each intersection that summarized the high-level qualitative assessment impacts of each alternative footprint which was subsequently used to inform further development of alternatives in Level 3.

The Level 2 Screening identified a range of alternatives to improve operations and safety at the 31 primary intersections. These alternatives were screened qualitatively based on their ability to meet study area needs, relative cost, and social, economic, and environmental impacts. Alternatives not able to substantially meet study area needs and/or with substantial environmental impacts that could not be avoided or minimized were eliminated from further consideration.

The Level 2 screening resulted in the following:

- A freeway concept was carried forward as a Primary Concept. A freeway is one example of a free-flow facility. There are varying types of free-flow facilities, ranging from freeways – which have full control of access[4] – to free-flow facilities that have no or partial control of access5 (e.g., unsignalized arterial, expressway). The Level 2 screening report indicated the potential options for facility types in the US 30 East study area would be evaluated in the Level 3 screening.
    - Note: A freeway may be designated an interstate if certain conditions are met; however, not all freeways are interstates. INDOT is not including or considering applying interstate design standards along the US 30 East study corridor.
- Eleven Primary concepts were carried forward to the level 3 screening for further study: Roundabouts, two variations of Reduced Conflict Intersections (RCI), Traffic, Traffic Signal Improvements, Green-T Intersections, Partial Median U-Turns, Restricted Crossing U-Turns (RCUT), Boulevard Left, Interchanges, Access Management, and Add or Lengthen Turn Lanes.
- Five Complementary Concepts were carried forward to the Level 3 screening for location-specific application: Overpass/Underpass, Adjacent Intersection Improvements, Realign Skewed Intersections, Add/Extend Accelerations/Deceleration Lanes, and Warning Systems.
- The No-Build Alternative was advanced to the Level 3 screening to serve as a baseline for comparison to build alternatives.

The results of the Level 2 screening are summarized in **Table 4-2.**

The *Draft Level 2 Screening Report* was published for public review and comment on March 27, 2024, and the public comment period extended through April 30, 2024. Additionally, the report was distributed to federal, state, and local resource agencies as well as tribal nations for review and comment. After considering the comments received from the public agencies and tribes, the Level 2 screening report was finalized on November 12, 2024.

For further information on the Level 2 screening, including details on methodology, screening results, as well as comments received during the public comment period and responses to them, please see the *Final Level 2 Screening Report* in **Appendix G**. Please see **Section 5** of this report for further information regarding public involvement and agency coordination efforts related to the Level 2 screening.

[4] Full control of access = Connections are provided only with select public roads through interchanges. Driveway connections (residential and commercial) are not permitted.

[5] Partial control of access = Connections are provided with public roads via interchanges and/or at-grade intersections. The number of roadway connections and/or driveway connections (residential and commercial) may be reduced in number and/or limited to right-in/right-out movements. The number of median openings may also be reduced.

Table 4-2 - ProPEL US 30 East Level 2 Screening Results

		Primary Intersection	Beech Rd	SR 19	CR 800W	Fox Farm Rd	CR 150W	SR 15 North Jct	SR 15 South Jct	CR 200N	Meijer Rd	Springhill Rd	Parker St	Center St	Old Route 30	Commerce Dr	CR 250E	SR 13	SR 5	Van Buren St	Lincolnway	Armstrong Dr	SR 109	SR 9	SR 205	CR 300E	CR 600E	CR 800E	Doyle Rd	Ryan Rd	Webster Rd	SR 101	State Line Rd
		Existing Traffic Control	STOP		STOP	STOP														STOP										STOP	STOP	YIELD	STOP
Primary Concepts	Unsignalized Improvements	Roundabout						●	●	●							●				●				●								
		RCI - Reduced Conflict Intersection	●	●	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
		RCI - Variant				●													●	●										●	●		●
	Signalized Improvements	Traffic Signal Improvements		●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
		Green-T Intersection						●	●		●	●										●											
		Partial Median U-Turn			●		●			●			●	●	●	●	●				●		●	●	●	●	●	●					
		RCUT - Restricted Crossing U-turn		●	●		●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●				
		Boulevard Left								●			●	●	●	●	●				●		●	●	●	●	●	●					
	Other	Interchange		●	●	●						●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●			●	●	
		Access Management	●		●	●	●			●	●	●			●	●				●		●	●				●		●	●			●
		Add or Lengthen Turn Lanes								●			●		●									●									
Complementary Concepts		Overpass/Underpass	●			●	●			●			●	●							●		●		●		●		●	●			●
		Adjacent Intersection Improvements		●									●	●			●	●	●		●		●	●		●			●				
		Realign Skewed Intersection	●	●	●													●			●										●		
		Add / Extend Accel. / Decel. Lanes	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●			●	●				●		●	●							●			●
		Warning Systems	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

4.4 SUMMARY OF LEVEL 3 SCREENING

The purpose of the Level 3 screening was to develop and analyze Improvement Packages for sections of the study area. These sections, called planning segments, considered improvements at all study area intersections as well as the roadway sections between them. The improvements considered in the Level 3 screening were identified from the Level 2 screening, previous studies, current plans, and public and stakeholder input as well as industry guidelines and solutions for safety and operations for highways like US 30.

The Level 3 screening included both qualitative and quantitative factors to enable a relative assessment of costs, benefits, and impacts to eliminate unreasonable alternatives. It also included a detailed analysis of varied access management strategies for the planning segments in the study area. The purpose of this analysis was to better understand relative costs, benefits, and impacts of different access management strategies along the study corridor for all users.

As discussed in Section 1, the goal of the ProPEL US 30 East study was to identify a reasonable range of alternatives; therefore, the ProPEL US 30 East study does not result in a single recommended alternative. The Level 3 screening evaluated a range of Improvement Packages for each Planning Segment, including some with more access control (e.g. a freeway) and some with less access control on US 30 that would maintain public access points more in line with existing conditions. The improvement packages considered in the Level 3 screening represent different facility types that could be applied to the US 30 East study area.

The Level 3 screening applied an eight-step evaluation process which is summarized as follows:

- **Step 1 – Define Planning Segments**. The study corridor was divided into sections called planning segments. This approach helped to avoid potential negative impacts from focusing only on a single intersection without analyzing the impacts the intersection improvements could have upstream and downstream within the planning segment. Planning segments were named based on their geographic area. The planning segments for the US 30 East study area are depicted in **Figure 4-2**.
- **Step 2 – Alternatives Pre-Screening**. The Level 2 screening did not consider combinations of different intersection improvements together within a planning segment. In Step 2, some alternatives carried forward from Level 2 were dismissed from further consideration at specific locations when included as part of a package of improvements.
- **Step 3 – Define Improvement Packages**. For each planning segment, comprehensive sets of intersection improvements were combined as Improvement Packages. Multiple Improvement Packages were developed for each planning segment. The following criteria were considered when forming the Improvement Packages: Influence on adjacent intersections, interchange spacing guidelines, access management principles, and improvements at secondary intersections.
- **Step 4 – Evaluate Safety and Mobility**. The safety and mobility performance of each Improvement Package was determined through a multi-step evaluation process that considered twelve different criteria. The criteria included:
    - Total number of conflict points,
    - Number of crossing conflict points
    - Percent reduction in crossing conflict points Estimate of crossing crashes prevented over 20-year life cycle
    - Cost-effectiveness index

- Average travel time along US 31
- Average distance between US 31 access points
- Average distance between US 31 crossing points
- East-west mobility compared to No-Build
- Number and type of residential driveways
- Number and type of commercial driveways
- Number and type of field access points.

- **Step 5 – Refine Conceptual Design and Estimate Costs**. The conceptual designs from the Level 2 screening were refined during the Level 3 screening process to:
  - Consider results of the safety and mobility analysis, as well as the overall context of each Improvement Package;
  - Detail improvements at secondary intersections;
  - Avoid and minimize adverse impacts to the human and natural environment; and
  - Minimize costs.

  Planning-level construction and right-of-way acquisition costs were then estimated for each of the Improvement Packages using the refined the conceptual designs.
- **Step 6 – Evaluate Environmental Resource Impacts.** Each package was analyzed against known environmental constraints within each planning segment to determine the potential impacts.
- **Step 7 – Evaluate Study Goals**. Study area goals were considered as part of the Level 3 screening using the measures of effectiveness to comparatively evaluate Improvement Packages.
- **Step 8 – Evaluate Improvement Packages**. The different measures for safety and mobility, impacts to environmental resources, and costs were collectively considered for each Improvement Package within each planning segment. Unreasonable alternatives were eliminated from further consideration.

The results of the Level 3 screening are summarized in **Figure 4-3** through **Figure 4-15.**

Cohesive Improvement Packages based on certain access management strategies were evaluated in the Level 3 screening to show potential interoperability between intersections and to be able to assess potential impacts relative to each other. Improvement Packages are not intended to be completely rigid and improvements from different packages could be mixed and matched in future studies.

A stated goal of the PEL process is the identification of a range of reasonable alternatives. Given the needs identified within the study area, a reasonable alternative could consist of improvements at a single intersection; it could also consist of improvements at multiple intersections and/or the roadway sections in between them (i.e., access management). Depending on multiple factors, including statewide priorities and funding availability, improvements considered as part of this PEL study could be combined in different ways in the future to address the identified transportation needs and support the goals of the study area.

It is possible that Improvement Packages could be mixed and matched across planning segments in the future. This means that access management strategies could vary throughout the study area; however, as part of that decision-making process (which may occur after this PEL study), an assessment will be completed to consider

factors such as driver expectation and continuity across the planning segments, as well as the relationship and potential impacts upon other intersections and/or planning segments.

The *Draft Level 3 Screening Report* was published for public review and comment on November 12, 2024, and the public comment period extended through December 13, 2024. Additionally, the report was distributed to federal, state, and local resource agencies, as well as the tribal nations, for review and comment. Two in-person public information meetings were held within the study area during the public comment period, on November 19 and 20, 2024. A virtual resource agency and cultural resources stakeholder coordination meeting was held on December 5, 2024. After considering the comments received from the public, agencies, and tribes, the Level 3 screening report was updated, finalized and made available on June 23, 2025.

For further information on the Level 3 screening, including details on methodology, screening results, as well as comments received during the public comment period and responses to them, please see the *Final Level 3 Screening Report* in **Appendix H**. Please see **Section 5** of this report for further information regarding public involvement and agency coordination efforts related to the Level 3 screening.

Figure 4-2 - ProPEL US 30 East Level 3 Planning Segments

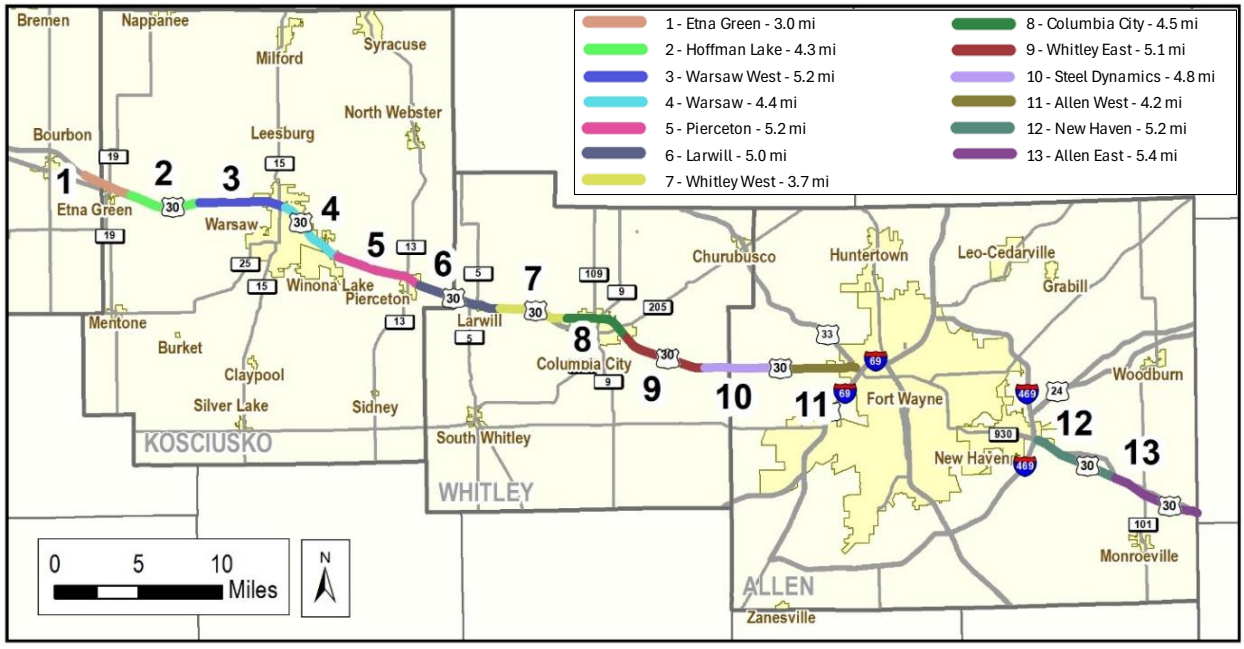


Figure 4-3 - Planning Segment 1: Etna Green - Improvement Package Diagrams

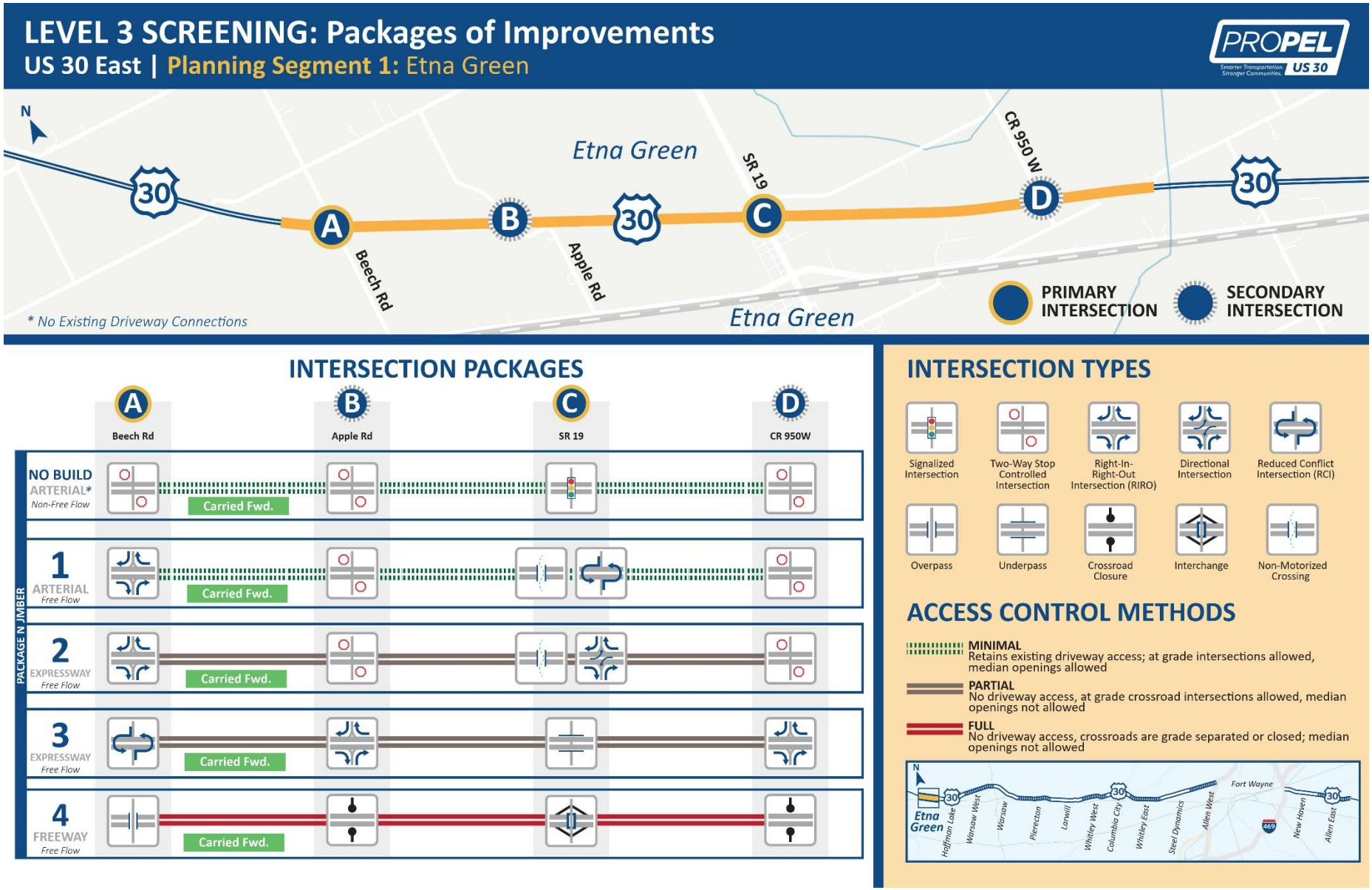


Figure 4-4 - Planning Segment 2: Hoffman Lake - Improvement Package Diagrams

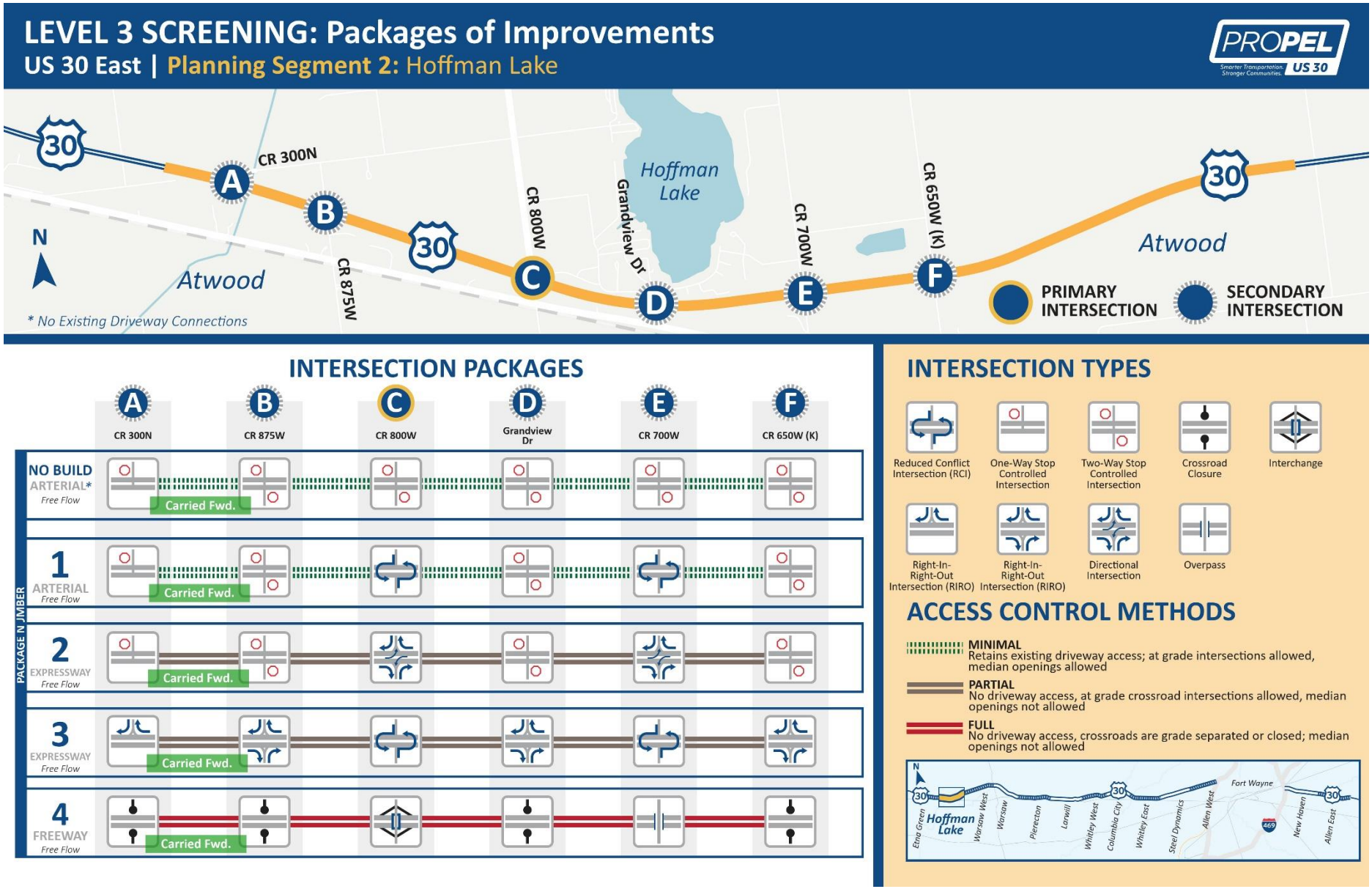


Figure 4-5 - Planning Segment 3: Warsaw West - Improvement Package Diagrams

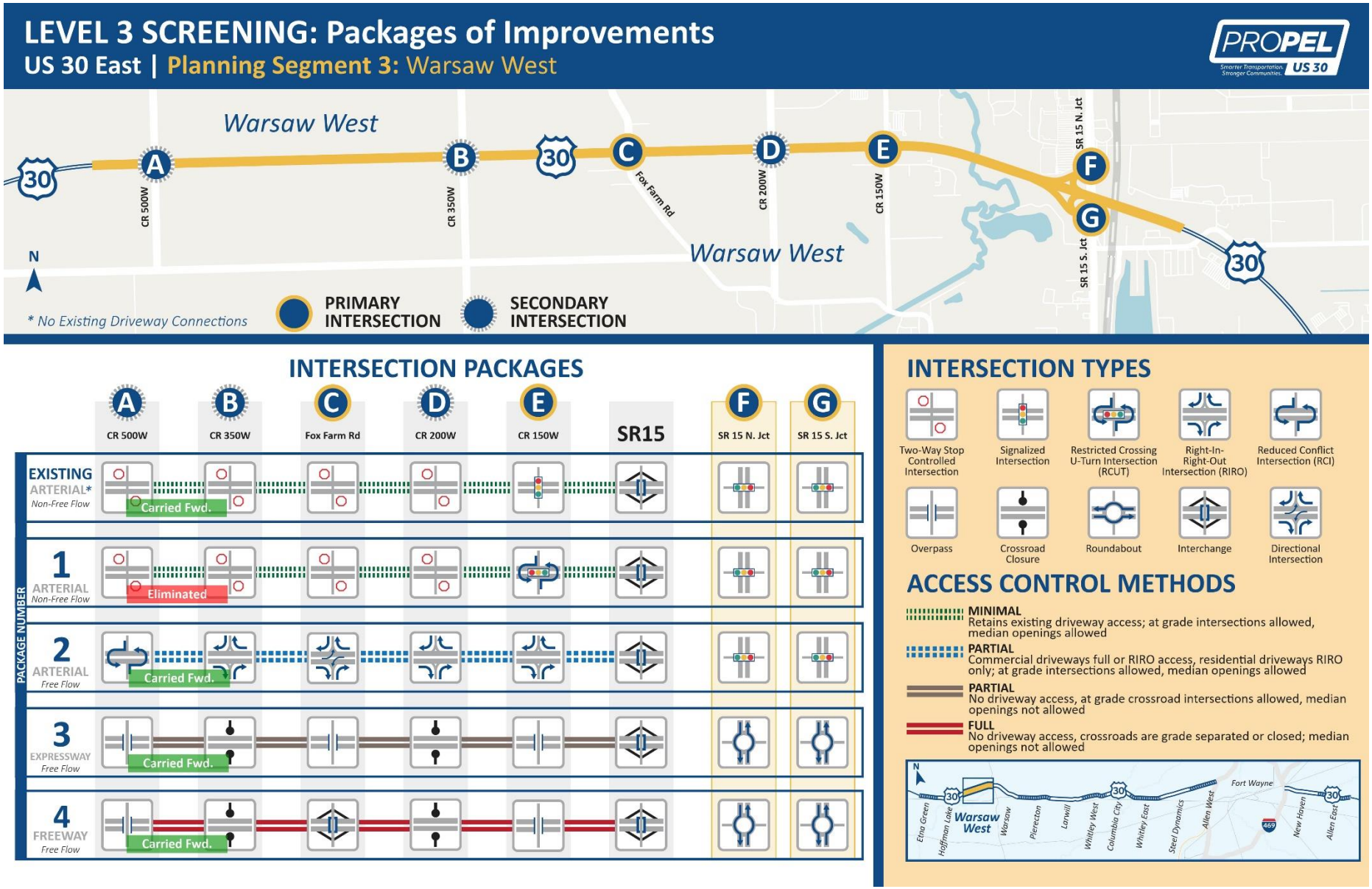


Figure 4-6 - Planning Segment 4: Warsaw - Improvement Package Diagrams

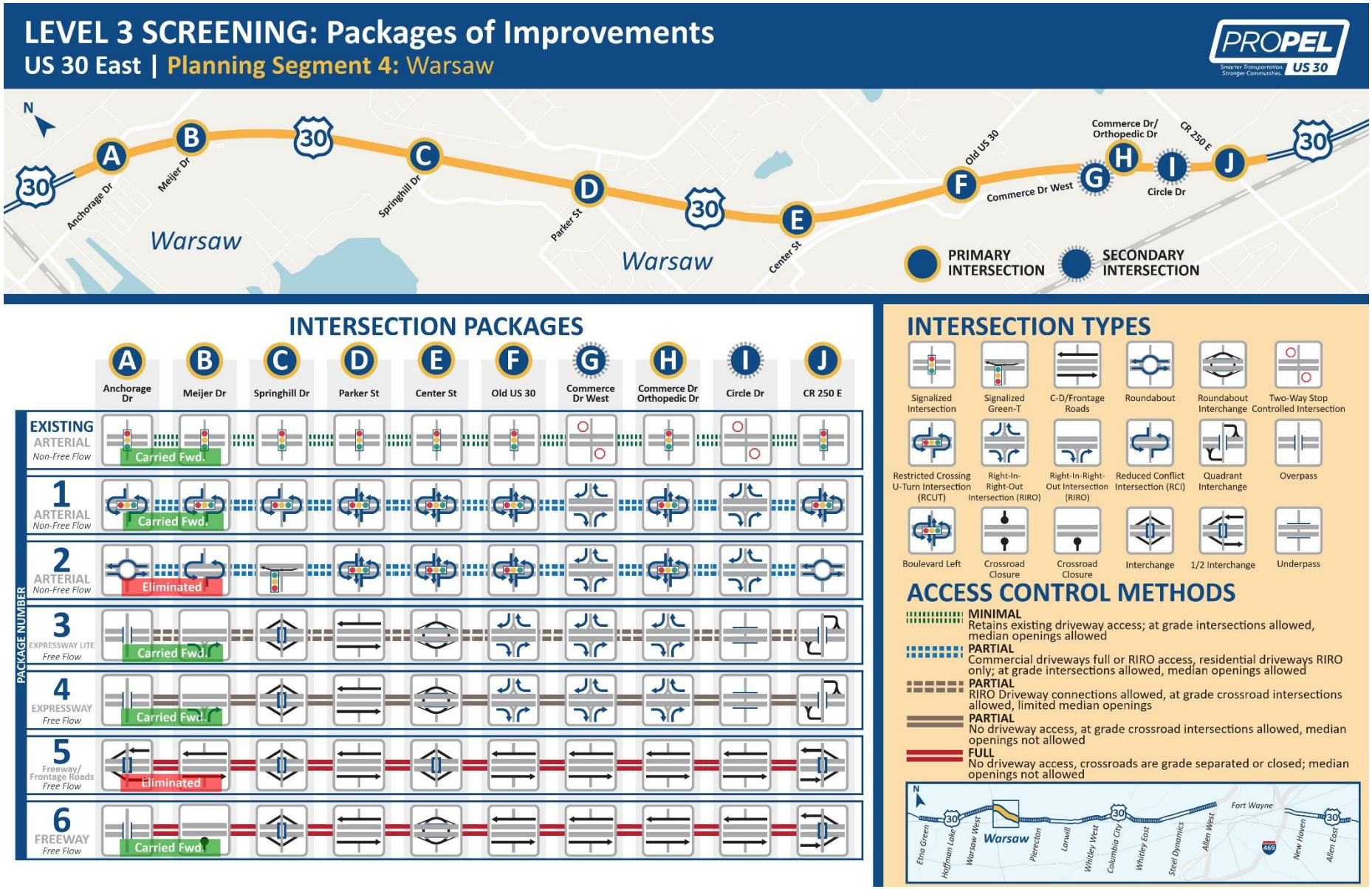


Figure 4-7 - Planning Segment 5: Pierceton - Improvement Package Diagrams

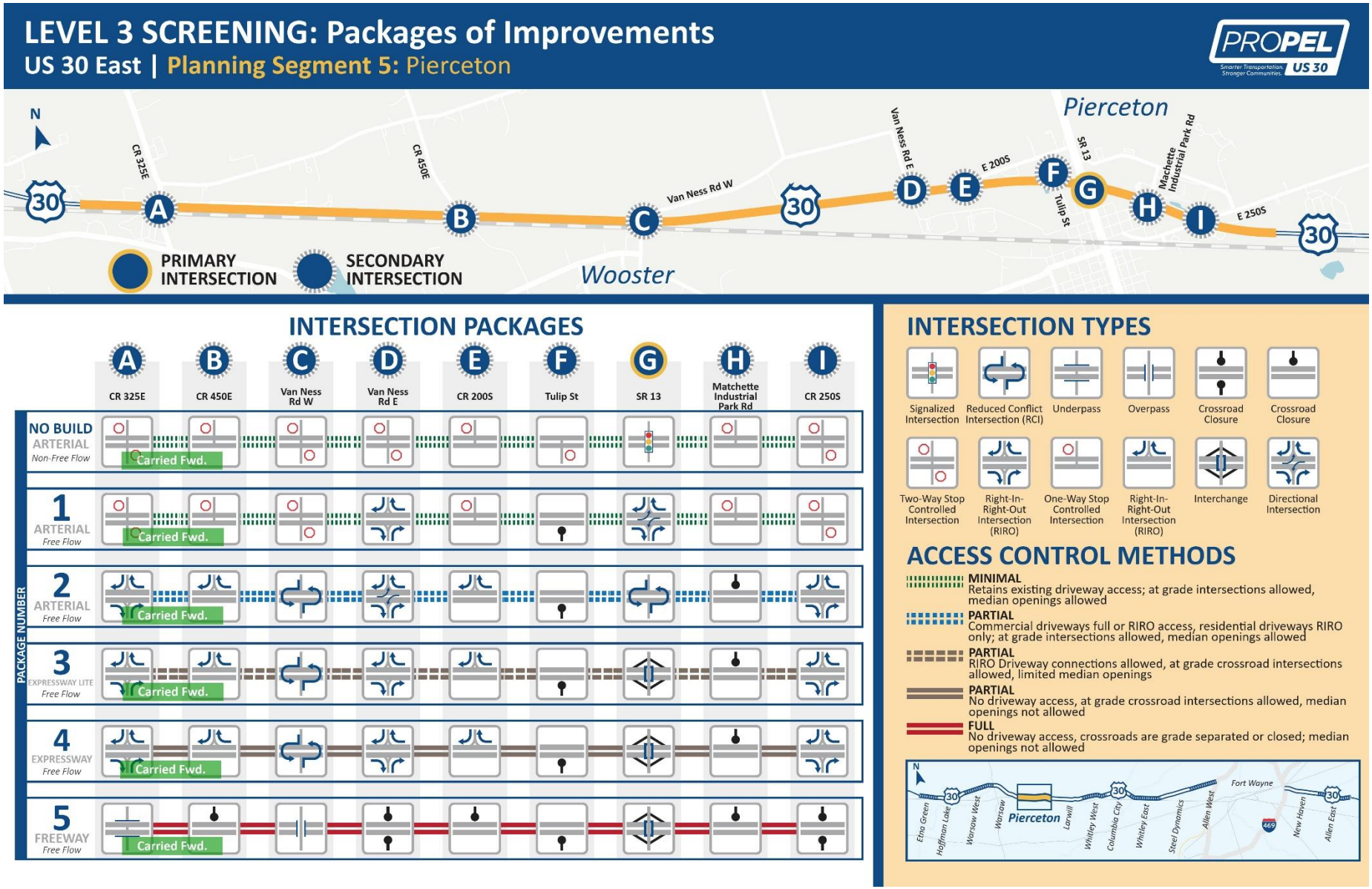


Figure 4-8 - Planning Segment 6: Larwill - Improvement Package Diagrams

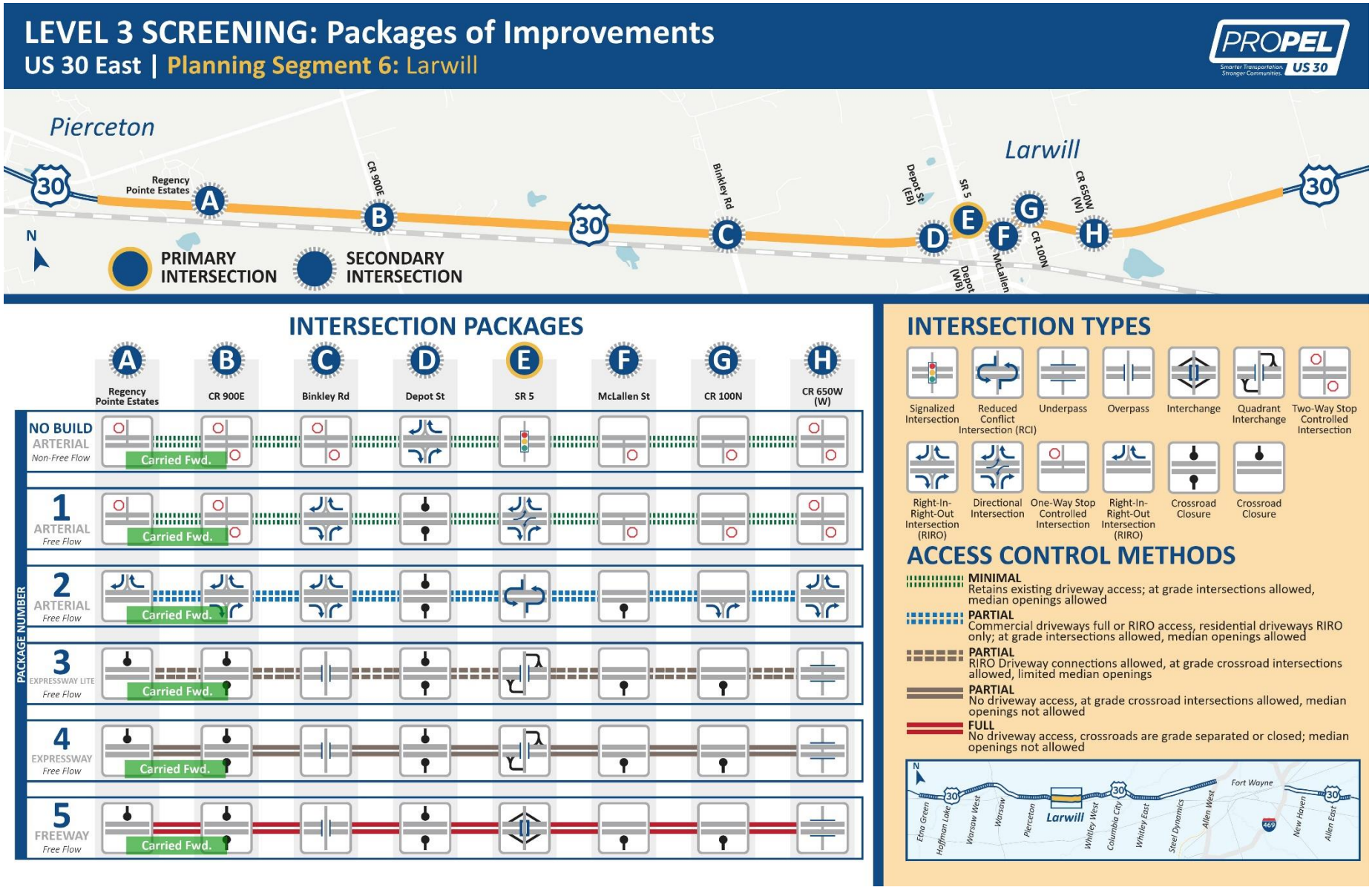


Figure 4-9 - Planning Segment 7: Whitley West - Improvement Package Diagrams

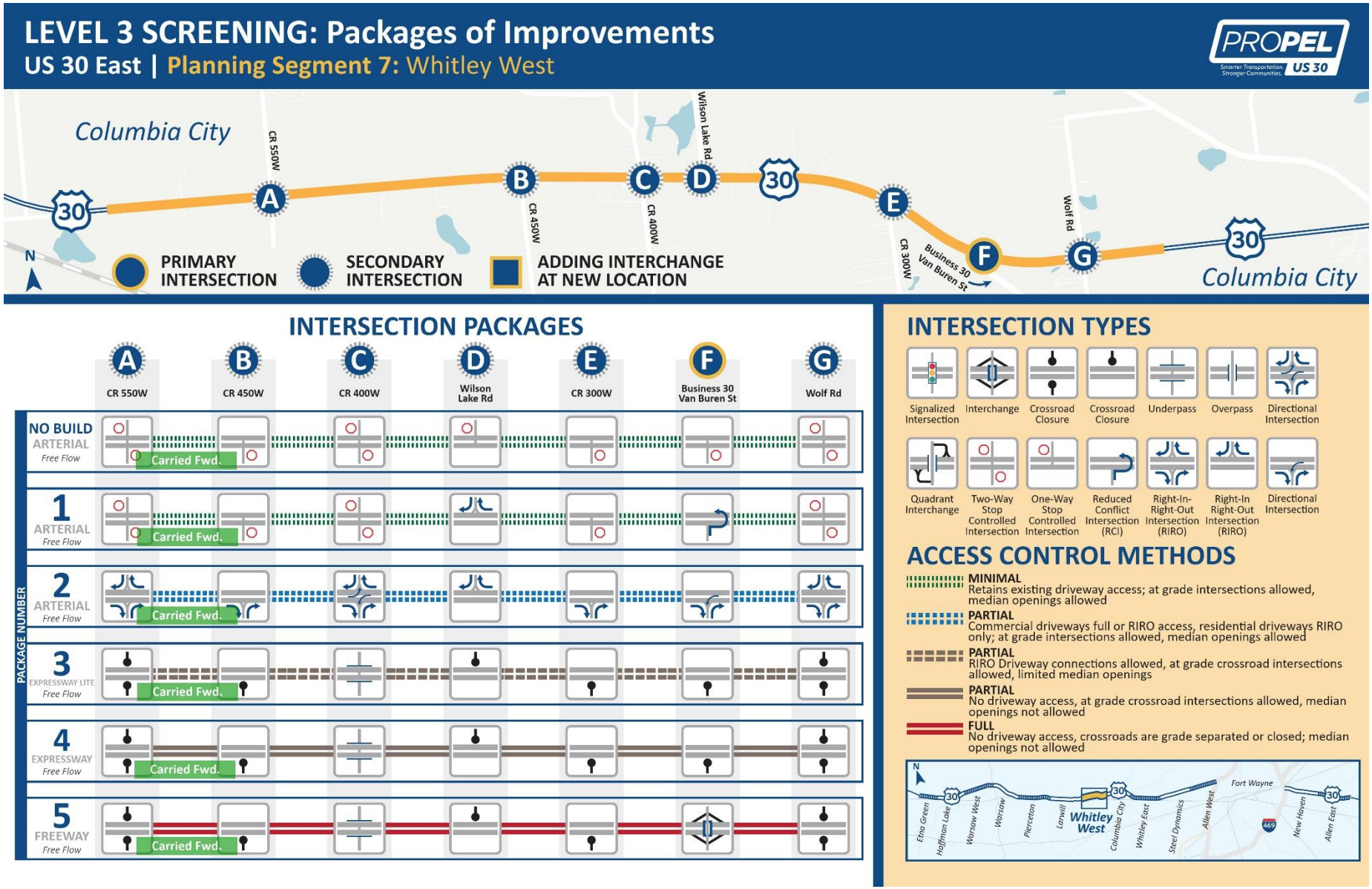


Figure 4-10 - Planning Segment 8: Columbia City - Improvement Package Diagrams

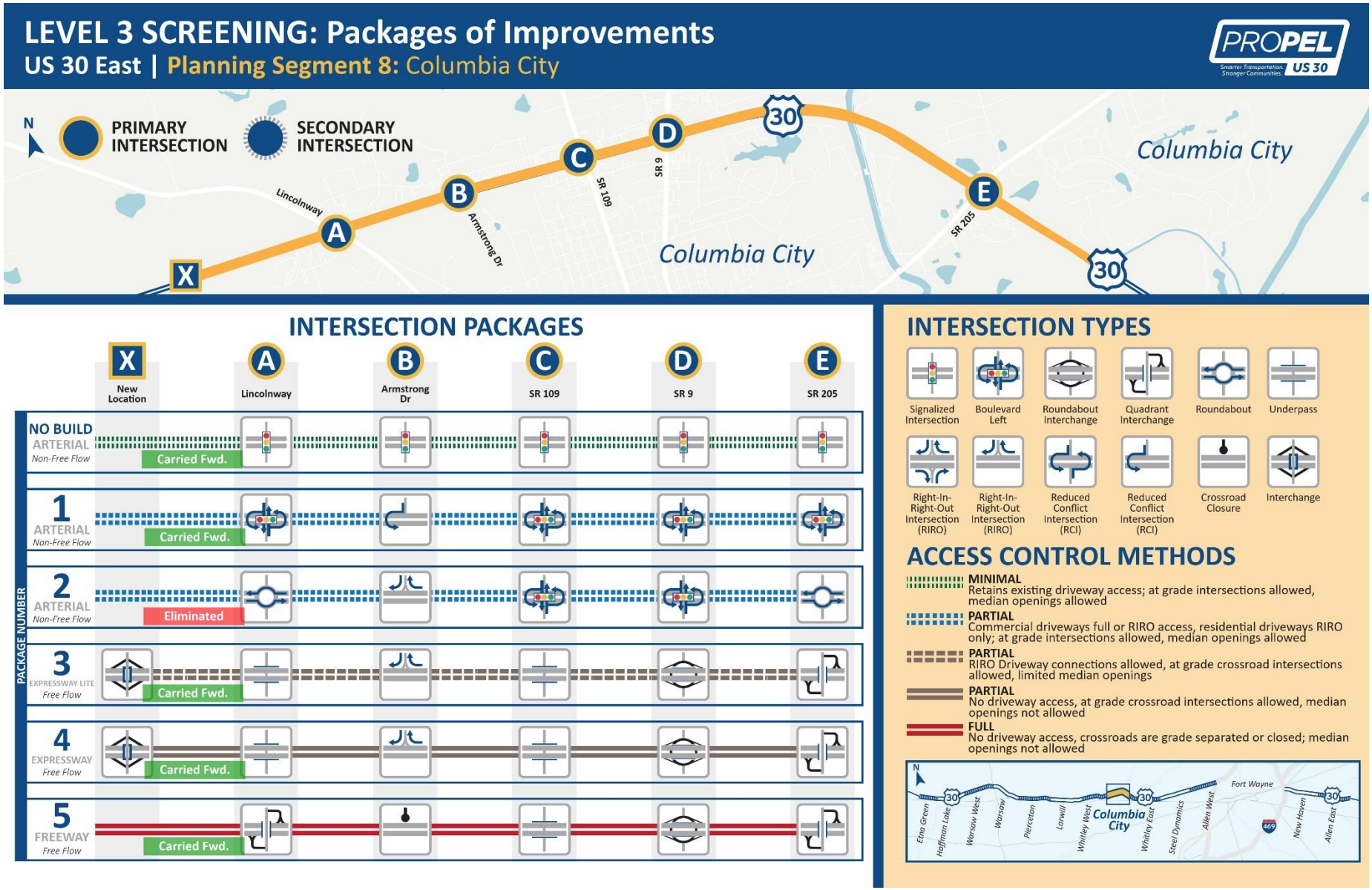


Figure 4-11 - Planning Segment 9: Whitley East - Improvement Package Diagrams

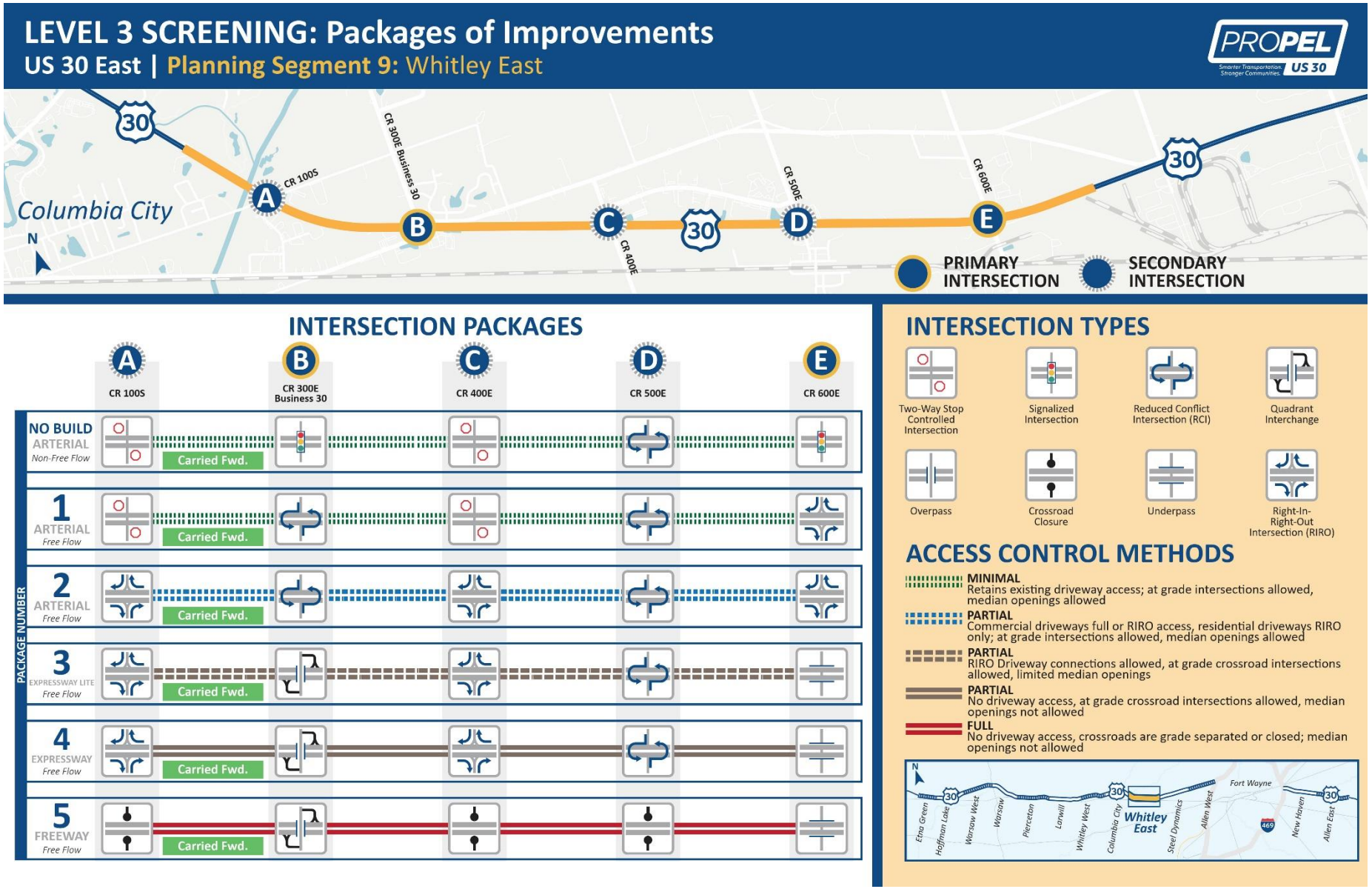


Figure 4-12 - Planning Segment 10: Steel Dynamics - Improvement Package Diagrams

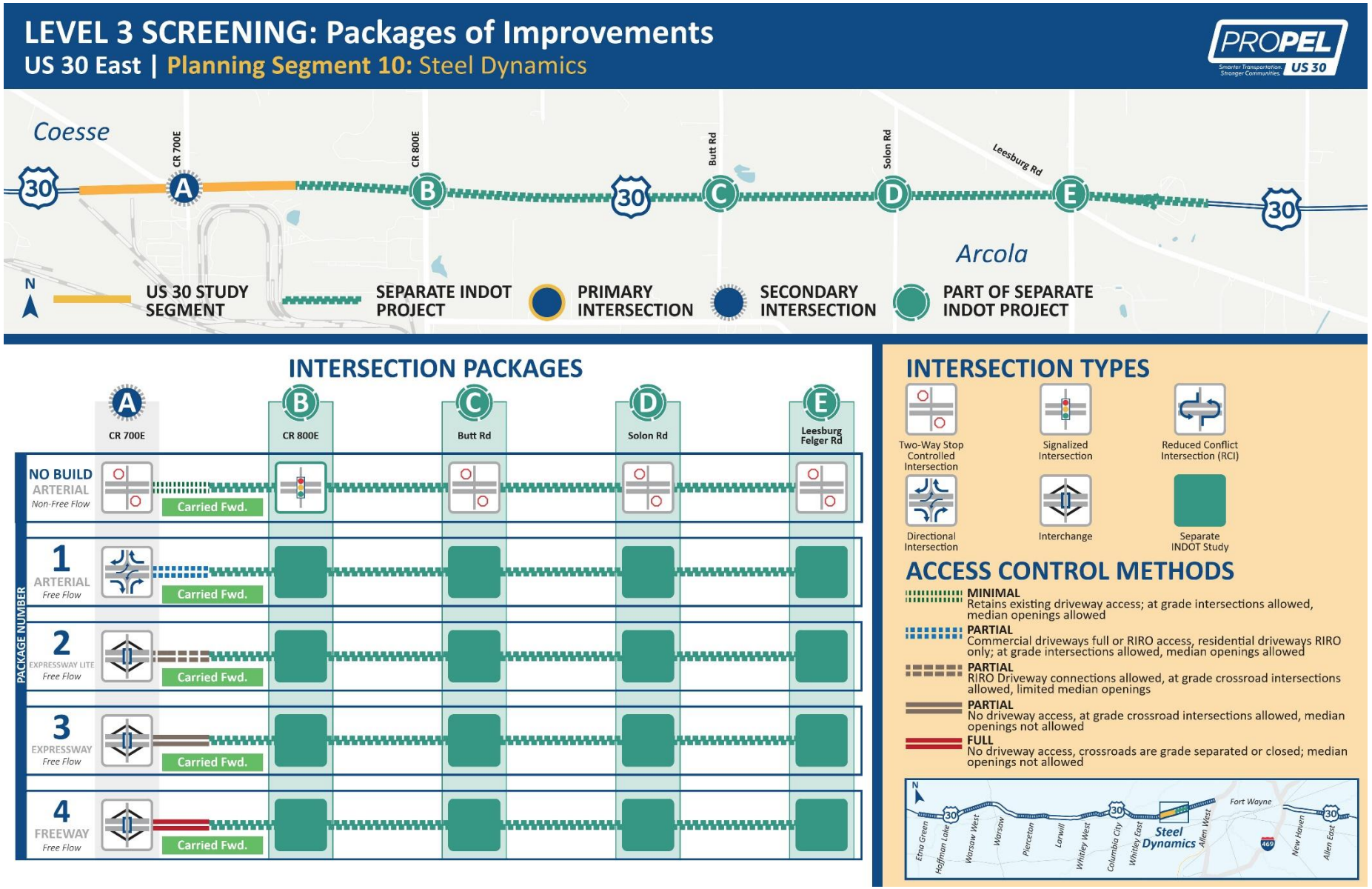


Figure 4-13 - Planning Segment 11: Allen West - Improvement Package Diagrams

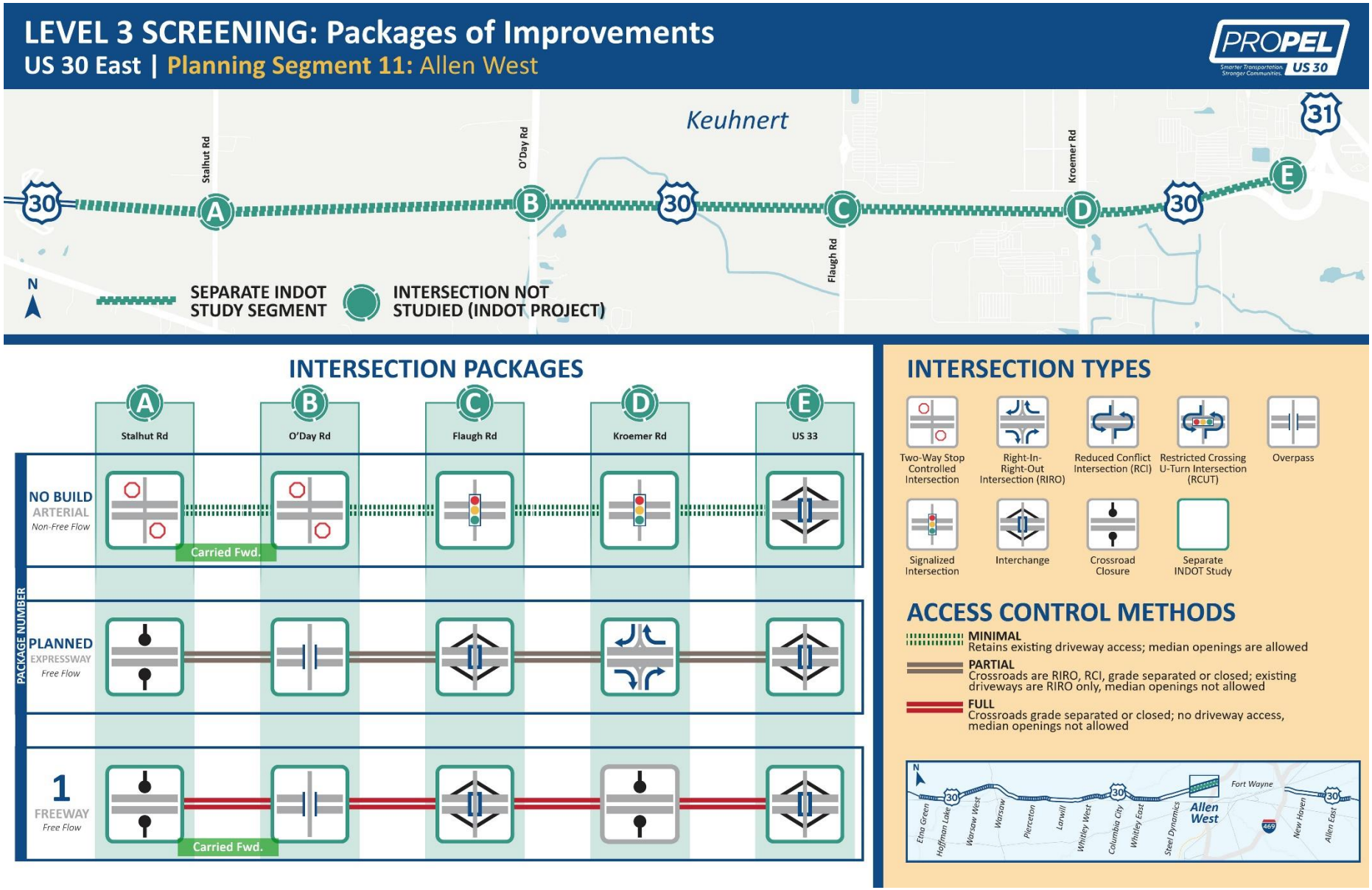


Figure 4-14 - Planning Segment 12: New Haven - Improvement Package Diagrams

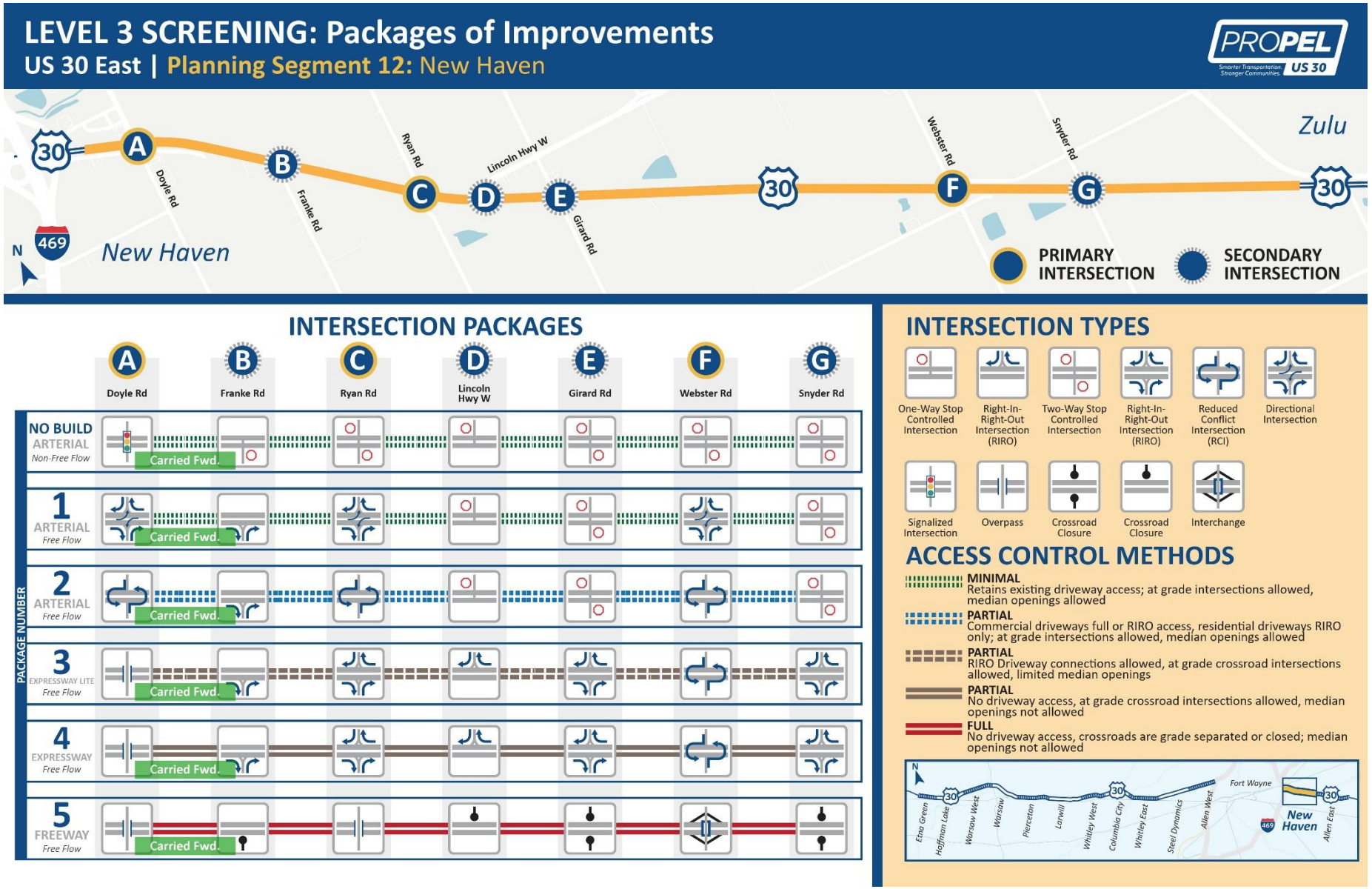
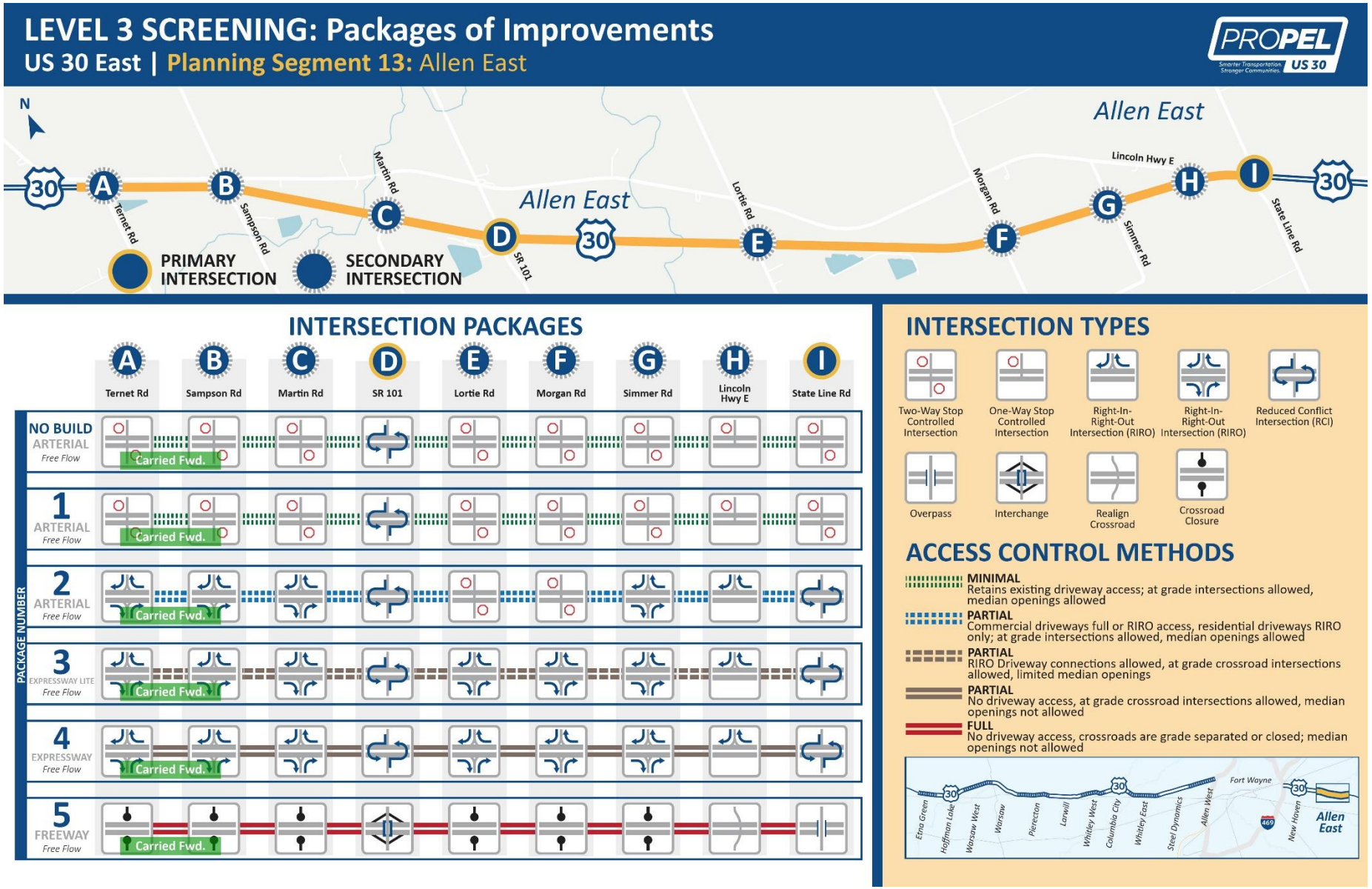


Figure 4-15 - Planning Segment 13: Allen East - Improvement Package Diagrams



5 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT & AGENCY COORDINATION

As an INDOT planning initiative, the ProPEL US 30 and US 31 studies are data driven and fueled by feedback. Feedback from residents, motorists, businesses, and others was vital to the success of the studies. Engagement efforts included resource agency and tribal coordination, Stakeholder Advisory Committees, targeted stakeholder meetings, community office hours, community outreach events (such as fairs and festivals), and public information meetings. The ProPEL US 30 East study team gathered and considered feedback throughout the study process. Outreach and formal comment periods were organized around key milestones of the study, including:

- **Vision and Scoping:** The purpose of this outreach was to introduce and define the PEL study process; kick off the ProPEL US 30 and US 31 studies (all four studies); identify specific goals of the US 30 East study; discuss proposed analysis methodologies; and solicit input on the fit and function of the study corridor. Fit and function discussions included future corridor vision, specific transportation concerns, and environmental resources of concern, as well as community goals.
- **Purpose and Need:** The engagement efforts during this phase reported on insights gained during the Vision and Scoping phase; shared data gathered from engineering and technical assessments; provided an overview of the transportation issues (needs) and desired outcomes (purpose) identified for the US 30 East study area; solicited input on study goals and the draft purpose and need statement; and previewed next steps.
- **Alternatives Analysis:** This phase included three distinct alternatives analysis and screening steps:
    - **Universe of Alternatives:** The study team identified a range of improvement concepts that met the purpose and need for potential improvements in the study area and were considered practical in the Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) screening.
    - **Level 2 Alternatives Analysis:** In this phase, the study team identified and evaluated location-specific improvements for reasonability and potential impacts at 31 primary intersections in the US 30 East study area.
    - **Level 3 Alternatives Analysis:** The study team identified and evaluated improvement packages for multiple sections, or planning segments, within the study area. Packages included improvements at the primary intersections, the secondary intersections, and the roadway sections between them.

The information contained in this section is summarized from the following documents, which are included as appendices to the PEL study report:

- Appendix H: ProPEL US 30 East Resource Agency, Stakeholder and Public Involvement Summary #1 (*RASPI #1*);
- Appendix I: ProPEL US 30 East Resource Agency, Stakeholder and Public Involvement Summary #2 (RASPI #2);
- Appendix J: ProPEL US 30 East Resource Agency, Stakeholder and Public Involvement Summary #3 (RASPI #3); and
- Appendix K: ProPEL US 30 East Resource Agency, Stakeholder & Public Involvement Summary #3 (RASPI #3) – Addendum 1.

5.1 INDOT AND FHWA COORDINATION

The ProPEL US 30 East study team coordinated with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on a regular basis throughout the study. Coordination included monthly meetings with FHWA to discuss study progress, recap

activities, discuss technical approaches, and address any potential questions or concerns identified by FHWA. FHWA also reviewed and provided comments for study team consideration on the following technical reports developed during the ProPEL US 30 East study:

- ProPEL US 30 East Environmental Constraints Report.
- ProPEL US 30 East Purpose and Need Report.
- ProPEL US 30 East Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) Screening Report.
- ProPEL US 30 East Level 2 Screening Report.
- ProPEL US 30 East Level 3 Screening Report.

5.2 RESOURCE AGENCY AND TRIBAL COORDINATION

During the Vision and Scoping phase of the study, three coordination meetings were conducted with resource agencies, cultural resource stakeholders, and federally recognized tribes. Each meeting addressed all four study areas. Meeting materials and summaries are provided in Appendix H of RASPI #1 for the US 30 East Study.

These meetings included:

- November 30, 2022: Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology Coordination Meeting
- January 27, 2023: Resource Agency Meeting & Cultural Resource Stakeholder Meeting (Virtual)
- February 23, 2023: Tribal Partner Coordination Meeting (Virtual)

During the Purpose and Need phase of the study, a coordination meeting was held with resource agencies, cultural resource stakeholders and federally recognized tribes. Meeting materials and summaries are included in US 30 East RASPI #2 Appendix I for the US 30 East Study.

Meeting details included:

- July 17, 2023: Tribal Partner Coordination Meeting #2 (Virtual): Transmitted the Archaeological Resources Identification Memorandum and the Draft Purpose and Need for review and comment via email on August 30, 2023.

During the Alternatives Analysis phase of the study, coordination with resource agencies and cultural resources stakeholders was completed via email, as well as two virtual meetings and one in-person meeting. Meeting materials and summaries are included in US 30 East RASPI #3 Appendices 3.1-J and 3.3-J. Note that RASPI #3's appendices have been organized into three parts for each of the three Alternatives Analysis phases.

These meetings included:

- November 30, 2023: Resource Agency & Cultural Resource Stakeholder Meeting (Virtual): The draft Purpose and Need and the Aboveground Cultural Resources Memorandum were transmitted for review and comment via the meeting invite sent on July 27, 2023.
- December 5, 2024: Tribal Partner Coordination Meeting #3 to summarize the Level 1 and Level 2 screening steps, to introduce the Draft Level 3 Screening Reports, and to familiarize attendees with content and resources available to learn more.
- December 11, 2024: MACOG's Policy Board Meeting in Mishawaka, Indiana. The presentation provided an overview of the Level 3 Screening Report, outlining how improvement packages were developed and evaluated to support members in their review of the document. It also highlighted the various ways the study teams were engaging with the public for the Level 3.

The following summarizes further coordination efforts:

- Draft Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) Screening Report
  - Federal/State/Local Resource Agencies: Transmitted for review and comment via email on November 20, 2023. A hard copy was also mailed to the Indiana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).
  - Tribal Nations: Transmitted for review and comment via email on December 8, 2023.
- Draft Level 2 Screening Report:
  - Federal/State/Local Resource Agencies: Transmitted for review and comment via email on March 27, 2024. A hard copy was also mailed to the Indiana SHPO.
  - Tribal Nations: Transmitted for review and comment via email on April 2, 2024.
- Draft Level 3 Screening Report:
  - Federal/State/Local Resource Agencies & Cultural Resources Stakeholders: Transmitted for review and comment via email on November 13, 2024; Virtual coordination meeting held on December 5, 2024.
  - Tribal Nations: Transmitted for review and comment via email on December 5, 2024.

5.3 STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The study team established two Stakeholder Advisory Committees, which included representatives from local agencies, residents, community organizations, churches, social service providers, emergency service providers, businesses, and community organizations. One Stakeholder Advisory Committee included individuals from the western portion of the study area (from just west of Etna Green in Marshall County to I-69 on the west side of Ft. Wayne in Allen County). The second included representatives from the eastern portion of the study area in Allen County (from I-469 in New Haven to the Indiana/Ohio state line).

Virtual meetings with each occurred:

- November 14 and 15, 2022 - The purpose of these meetings was to introduce the committee to the study, discuss expected roles, and facilitate feedback from the community stakeholders. The study team also encouraged the committee members to assist in raising community awareness about the study and its feedback opportunities. Meeting materials and summaries are included in Appendix F of RASPI #1.
- May 22 and 23, 2023 - The purpose of these meetings was to report on insights gained from the public during the Vision and Scoping phase, share additional data gathered by the study teams, provide an overview of the study area issues (needs) and desired outcomes (purposes), and preview next steps. The study team also encouraged the committee members to assist in raising community awareness about the study and its feedback opportunities, and to identify sensitive communities within the study area. Meeting materials and summaries are included in Appendix G in RASPI #2.
- November 14 and 16, 2023 (Universe of Alternatives), April 9 and 11, 2024 (Level 2), and November 12, 2024 (Level 3) - The purpose of these meetings was to introduce the Draft Universe of Alternatives (Level 1), Draft Level 2, and Draft Level 3 Screening Reports and familiarize attendees with the resources available to learn more. The study team also encouraged the committee members to ask questions and share information out to colleagues and/or constituents. Meeting materials and summaries are included in Appendix G in RASPI #3.1, 3.2, and 3.3.

5.4 STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION

Elected officials, the US 30 Coalition, study stakeholders (including residents, businesses, schools, and emergency service providers), and the public have been engaged along the study corridor. Outreach efforts included community

office hours, public information meetings, community outreach events, resource agency coordination, and targeted stakeholder meetings.

On November 21, 2022, members of the US 30 and US 31 Coalitions received an update on the studies, discussed community and stakeholder engagement activities, provided information on next steps, and answered questions from attendees. Meeting materials and summaries are included in Appendix G in RASPI #1.

On May 18, 2023, the ProPEL US 30 study teams (US 30 West and US 30 East) met virtually with members of the US 30 Coalition to report on insights gained from the public during the Vision and Scoping phase, share additional data gathered by the study teams, provide an overview of the study area issues (needs) and desired outcomes (purposes), preview next steps, and answer any questions from attendees. Meeting materials and summaries are included in Appendix H in RASPI #2.

The ProPEL US 30 study teams (US 30 West and US 30 East)met virtually with members of the US 30 Coalition to discuss the alternatives development and screening process. These meetings occurred on November 13, 2023, to review the draft Universe of Alternatives Screening, April 11, 2024, for the draft Level 2 Screening, and November 12, 2024, for the draft Level 3 Screening. Meeting materials and summaries are included in Appendix I of RASPIs #3.1 and 3.3, and Appendix H of RASPI #3.2.

Local Elected Officials, Farm Bureaus, Local Economic Development Organizations

In addition to Stakeholder Advisory Committee and US 30 Coalition outreach, members of the US 30 East study team coordinated and/or conducted outreach with the following stakeholder groups:

- Indiana state legislators (coordinated with all study teams)
- Local media representatives (coordinated with all study teams)
- US 30 East Local Economic Development Organizations (LEDOs)
- Indiana Farm Bureau
- Local elected officials
- Local (non-resource) agencies
- Johnson & Johnson (DePuy Synthes)
- Steel Dynamics
- Amish Community

5.5 OFFICE HOURS AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

The US 30 East study team visited stakeholder communities within the study area regularly to build awareness around the study, provide an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to engage with the study team, and receive public comments related to the study and study milestones. These outreach efforts included Community Office Hours (COHs) and participation at fairs, festivals, and other community events (pop-up events). During this time, study team members engaged with community members in informal, one-on-one conversations where they could ask questions, provide input, and receive regular updates at times and locations convenient for local residents. Community Office Hours were held at least twice per month at varying locations and times. Community members were also able to schedule an appointment to speak with the study team.

Due to the presence of sensitive communities in the study area, additional targeted outreach was completed, including: small group events with the Amish communities; Spanish-speaking community events; and promotional

materials delivered to low-income and mobile home communities that have direct access to US 30. The study team conducted this strategic outreach to solicit public feedback during Purpose and Need, and at each of the three alternatives development and screening steps. Details of this outreach are as follows:

- To connect with the Amish community – A community event on Saturday, May 11, 2024, in Fort Wayne; a community meeting on Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at a private residence in Etna Green.
- To connect with the Spanish-speaking community – A community event on Saturday, August 12, 2023, at Fiesta Fort Wayne in Fort Wayne; a community event on Saturday, August 10, 2024, at Festival of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Warsaw; translation services were provided, such as translating the direct mail postcard, legal public notices, and other study information into Spanish during each of the public comment periods throughout the study; and interpretation services were provided during the above Spanish-speaking events.
- To connect with lower-income, mobile home communities, and those with barriers to internet access – Distribution of promotional postcards leading up to the launch of public comment periods:
    - 500 distributed in June 2023
    - 11,000 distributed in December 2023
    - 11,000 distributed in April 2024
    - 11,000 distributed in November 2024

The study team coordinated and staffed a total of **84 Community Office Hours** events at a variety of times and locations across the corridor from October 2022 to June 2025. Office hours were typically held twice a month in different parts of the study area to accommodate stakeholders across the entire study area. In addition, the US 30 East study team coordinated participation at **18 community events,** such as fairs and festivals, in various counties within the study area.

5.6 PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS

The study team held public information meetings in both in-person and virtual/on-demand formats. The in-person public information meetings took place:

Vision and Scoping:

- December 5, 2022, at Sweetwater Sound in Fort Wayne from 5 to 7 p.m.
- December 6, 2022, Lincoln Elementary School in Warsaw from 5 to 7 p.m.

Purpose and Need:

- June 8, 2023, at the New Haven Community Center from 5 to 7 p.m.
- June 13, 2023, at Indian Springs Middle School in Columbia City from 5 to 7 p.m.

Level 3 Screening:

- November 19, 2024, at Indian Springs Middle School in Columbia City from 5 to 7 p.m.
- November 20, 2024, at Lincoln Elementary School in Warsaw from 5 to 7 p.m.

Each public meeting was held in an open house format, featuring live presentations by study team members. The presentations were recorded and posted on the ProPEL US 30 East study website as part of a virtual public information meeting. Informational boards, digital displays, and feedback stations were set up throughout the venues to engage attendees.

To provide further engagement opportunities, a virtual meeting experience was created to closely replicate the in-person format. Participants could navigate digital displays and provide feedback in the same way as at the physical events. The on-demand virtual meetings were posted to the study website within two days of each round of in-person meetings and made available through the end of the public comment period. Video recordings of the presentations, and display board graphics for each public meeting, remain available on the study website for continued reference.

5.7 PUBLIC COMMENTS

Vision and Scoping Phase

Public comments were received from a variety of sources. All public comments received prior to January 1, 2023, were considered as part of the first Resource Agency, Stakeholder, and Public Involvement (RASPI) Summary report. During the first public comment period, the ProPEL US 30 East study team received:

- Approximately **313** comments from the in-person and virtual public information meetings
- Approximately **296** additional comments were received via the Community Office Hours and online comment form
- A total of **609** public comments were received during the open comment period

The study team grouped the comments by general type of concern into one of the following categories: Local Mobility, Regional Mobility, Safety, Redevelopment, Environmental, Bike and Pedestrian, Economic Development, and Other.

Purpose and Need Phase

All public comments received between January 1 and July 31, 2023, were considered as part of the second RASPI Summary report. During the second public comment period, outreach efforts generated:

- Approximately **89** comments from the in-person and virtual public information meetings
- Approximately **146** additional comments were received via Community Office Hours, community outreach events and the online comment form
- A total of **196** public comments were received during the open comment period (May 22-July 31, 2023)

Alternatives Analysis Phase

All public comments received from August 1, 2023, through December 13, 2024, were considered as part of third RASPI Summary report. This phase of the study included the Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) Screening, the Level 2 Screening, and the Level 3 Screening.

Public comments on the Draft Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) Screening Report were accepted from November 13, 2023, to December 22, 2023. During the third public comment period, outreach efforts generated a total of approximately **96 public comments**. Individual replies were provided to all public comments received as part of the Final Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) Screening Report.

- Approximately **75** comments gathered via the online comment form
- **18** comments received during Community Office Hours

Public comments on the Draft Level 2 Screening Report were accepted from March 27, 2024, to April 30, 2024. During the fourth public comment period, outreach efforts generated a total of approximately **93 public comments.** Individual replies were provided to all public comments received as part of the Final Level 2 Screening Report.

- Approximately **73** comments gathered via the online comment form
- Approximately **15** comments received during Community Office Hours

Public comments on the Draft Level 3 Screening Report were accepted from November 12, 2024, to December 13, 2024. Feedback exercises were integrated into the public information meetings that included planning segment stations and structured comment cards for attendees to provide specific input for alternatives for each planning segment. During this public comment period, outreach efforts generated:

- More than **70** comments were collected using customized comment cards
- Approximately **66** comments from the in-person and virtual public information meetings
- Approximately **11** additional comments were received via community office hours, community outreach events, and the online comment form
- A total of approximately **156 public comments** were received during the open comment period (November 12-December 13)

Individual replies were provided to all public comments received as part of the Final Level 3 Screening Report.

During the ProPEL US 30 East study, approximately **1,383 stakeholders** engaged with the study and approximately **1,414 public comments** were received.

6 NEXT STEPS AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Recommendations from the ProPEL US 30 East study will be evaluated for implementation as part of INDOT's call for projects. The call for projects is an annual process through which proposals to resolve transportation needs compete for funding. Proposals for projects can originate from cities, towns, Regional and/or Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). As part of the process, INDOT evaluates proposals for new projects and identifies priorities based on cost-effective resolution of needs to ensure that the correct improvements are constructed at the greatest number of locations possible. The call for projects covers a five-year period, which means that a selected project typically has at least a five-year timeline to implementation.

The following summarizes key considerations for future project teams.

6.2 ALTERNATIVES

The Level 3 screening, which was the final step in the alternatives development and evaluation, considered cohesive Improvement Packages based on certain access management strategies to show potential interoperability between intersections and to be able to assess potential impacts. Improvement Packages are not intended to be completely rigid, and improvements from different packages could be mixed and matched in future studies.

A stated goal of the ProPEL US 30 study is the identification of a range of reasonable alternatives. Given the needs identified within the study area, a reasonable alternative could consist of improvements at a single intersection; it could also consist of improvements at multiple intersections and/or the roadway sections in between them (i.e., access management). Depending on multiple factors, including statewide priorities and funding availability, improvements considered as part of this PEL study could be combined in different ways in the future to address the identified transportation needs and support the goals of the study area.

It is possible that Improvement Packages could be mixed and matched across planning segments. This means that access management strategies could vary throughout the study area; however, as part of that decision-making process (which will occur after this PEL study), an assessment should be completed to consider factors such as driver expectation and continuity across the planning segments, as well as the relationship and potential impacts upon other intersections and/or planning segments.

The ProPEL US 30 East study considered a range of improvements that provide INDOT with the flexibility needed to incrementally move toward a long-term vision of a free-flow facility. The improvements include more immediate, lower-cost improvements, as well as higher-cost improvements that require funding beyond what is currently available.

The study concludes that implementation of an entirely free-flow facility on US 30 in the study area will likely extend beyond the study's planning horizon of 2045. In the interim, the study provides INDOT with a flexible guide to incrementally upgrade US 30 in the study area to a free-flow facility.

As noted in the Level 2 and Level 3 screening reports, all design concepts evaluated during the ProPEL US 30 East study are considered preliminary and subject to change. Future project development studies will determine the actual configuration, right-of-way acquisition needs, and impacts to resources in the study area.

6.3 KEY STAKEHOLDER CONCERNS

More than 1,400 comments were received from stakeholders over the course of this study. The study team carefully considered this feedback and it informed the analysis and recommendations summarized in this PEL Study Report. There were several themes in those comments that warrant further coordination and consideration as part of any future projects in the study corridor, including:

- Many stakeholders expressed concern about potential loss of direct access to/from and across US 30, especially for local roads serving residences, businesses, and schools.
    - Note: In response to these concerns, INDOT developed and evaluated the expressway lite facility type in the Level 3 screening. The expressway lite facility type was developed to combine the driveway access aspects of arterial without signals (free flow) with the increased access management of expressway (free flow). The expressway lite facility would have properly designed median U-turn opening(s) at select locations to reduce how far drivers must travel when turning movements are limited to right-in/right-out and/or directional medians
- Maintaining north-south connectivity for rural roads and emergency services was emphasized, particularly in Whitley and Kosciusko Counties.
- Numerous comments cited high traffic volumes and speeding along US 30 as major safety concerns.
- Stakeholders identified problematic intersections, especially at SR 205, Parker Street, Anchorage Road, and SR 15, where congestion and crash risk are elevated.
- Multiple concerns were expressed regarding the implementation of Reduced Conflict Intersections (RCIs) as a potential solution for the identified transportation issues. The concerns included:
    - The perceived inability of RCIs to accommodate semi-trailers, large farming equipment, and horse drawn buggies.
    - Traffic required to complete a U-turn movement at the RCI will not be able to find a gap in the opposing traffic and will experience delays.
    - Traffic required to complete a U-turn movement at the RCI will not be able to safely merge into high-speed traffic.
- The US 30 Coalition was an active and engaged study stakeholder. The US 30 Coalition was formed to promote an upgrade of the US 30 corridor in Indiana to a freeway from Valparaiso to the Ohio State line. Throughout the study, the US 30 Coalition provided comments for consideration, including requests to further consider the safety and economic benefits of upgrading US 30 to a freeway.
- Requests for enhanced pedestrian and bicycle accommodations were made, particularly in the Warsaw and Columbia City areas.
- Local leaders emphasized the importance of improving the efficient and reliable access to Warsaw's orthopedic industry hub. Stakeholders, particularly from the Warsaw area, emphasized that US 30 should be upgraded to a freeway to support the continued growth and competitiveness of the region's orthopedic industry. They expressed concern that current congestion and safety issues hinder employee commutes, logistics operations, and the long-term economic growth of this industry.

6.4 CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE NEPA & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

- Air Quality – Prior to approval of any future NEPA document, the applicable regional/state planning and conformity documents – Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Statewide TIP (STIP), and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) – must be updated to

reflect the anticipated scope and cost of any improvements. Coordination with the Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC), the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG), and INDOT will occur during NEPA.

- Noise – A noise analysis will be required for any Type I projects.
- Reasonably Foreseeable Effects – The ProPEL US 30 East considers potential impacts to the human and natural environment – specifically those effects that occur at the same time and place as the alternatives evaluated. During subsequent NEPA reviews, consideration may be warranted for impacts that have a reasonably foreseeable close causal relationship to the alternatives evaluated.
- Section 106 – The ProPEL US 30 East study included a review of existing literature and documentation related to potential above-ground and archaeological resources within the study area. Formal determinations of National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility will occur, as needed, as part of the Section 106 process in future NEPA environmental reviews.
- Wetlands, Streams, and other Natural Resources – Field surveys and formal delineations of water resources will be required in all areas of potential disturbance to confirm the presence of any sensitive natural resources.
- Two bridges over Flatrock Creek were highlighted by the Maumee River Basin Commission as contributing to drainage issues and were recommended for study in future alternatives development.
- Agency Coordination – As part of the NEPA process for any future projects resulting from the study, coordination with agencies will be completed to ensure that all potential impacts and procedural requirements are addressed.
- Access Management – Should improvements to US 30 increase the level of access control in the study area, future project development studies should consider whether alternative access is feasible and cost-effective for impacted properties.
- Design Elements – As part of the Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) screening, improvement concepts were identified as Primary Concepts, Complementary Concepts, or Design Elements. Design elements were concepts that did not meet the transportation needs of the study area but were considered practical and provided some benefit to the study area. Although some design elements were not considered in detail as part of the PEL study, they are recommended for consideration as part of any future projects that result from the study.

6.5 ANTICIPATED PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS

The need for the following permits will be evaluated during the NEPA for any potential projects resulting from this PEL study:

- Section 404 Permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM)
- Section 10 Permit from the USACE
- Section 9 Permit from the US Coast Guard (USCG)
- Construction in a Floodway Permit from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
- Construction Stormwater General Permit from IDEM
- Indiana Tall Structures Permit from the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)
- Obstruction Evaluation/Airport Airspace Analysis from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)