

The Nickel Plate Corridor: A Unique Regional Asset

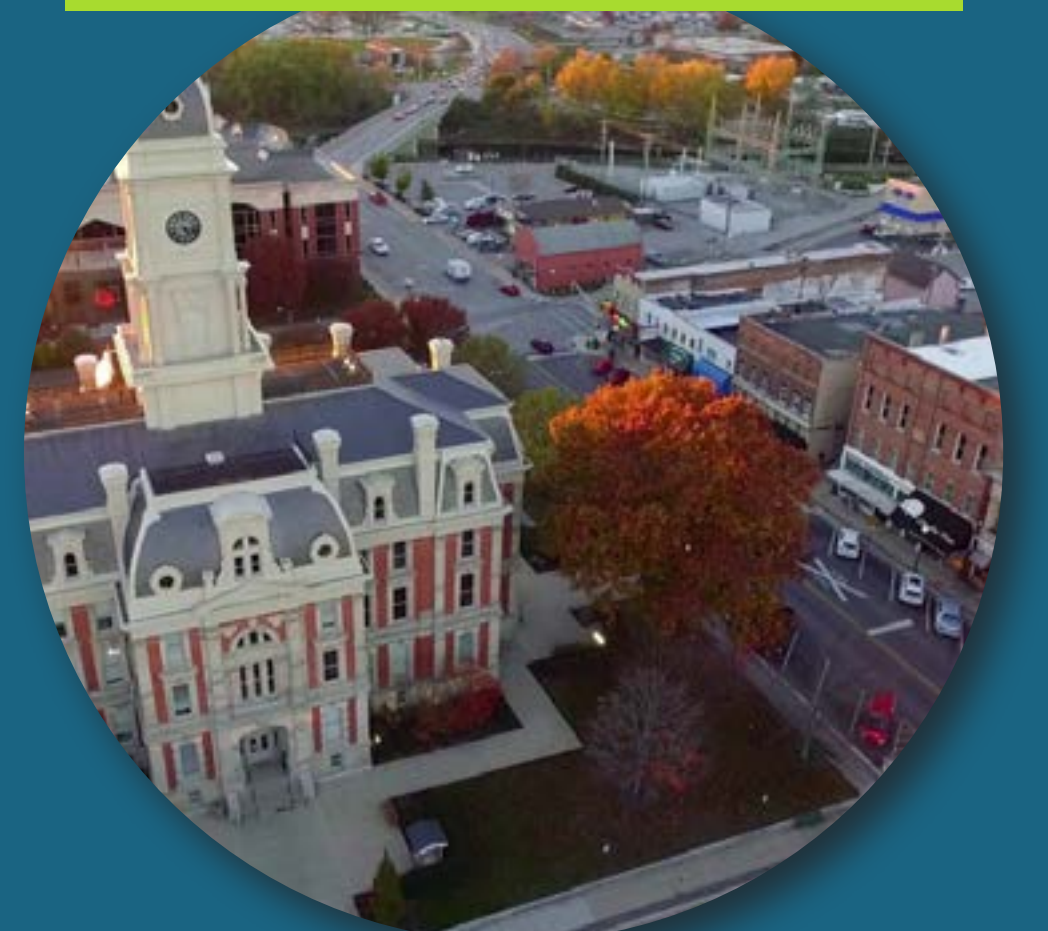
The Nickel Plate Corridor begins in Michigan City and is the only rail corridor **connecting Noblesville and Fishers to Union Station in Downtown Indianapolis**, with nearby destinations including major employers, the Indiana Convention Center, Lucas Oil Stadium, Bankers Life Fieldhouse, and the Indiana State Fair.



Indianapolis

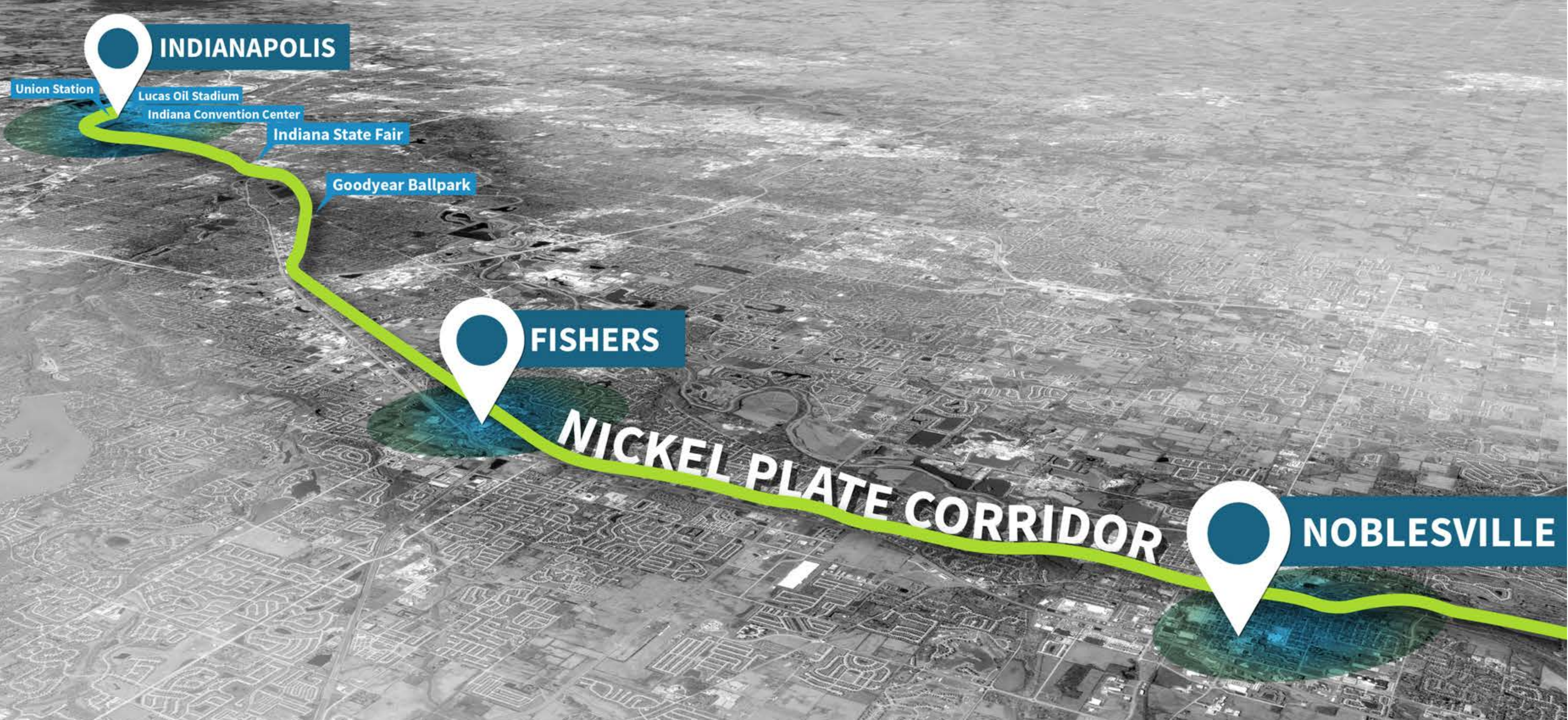


Fishers



Noblesville

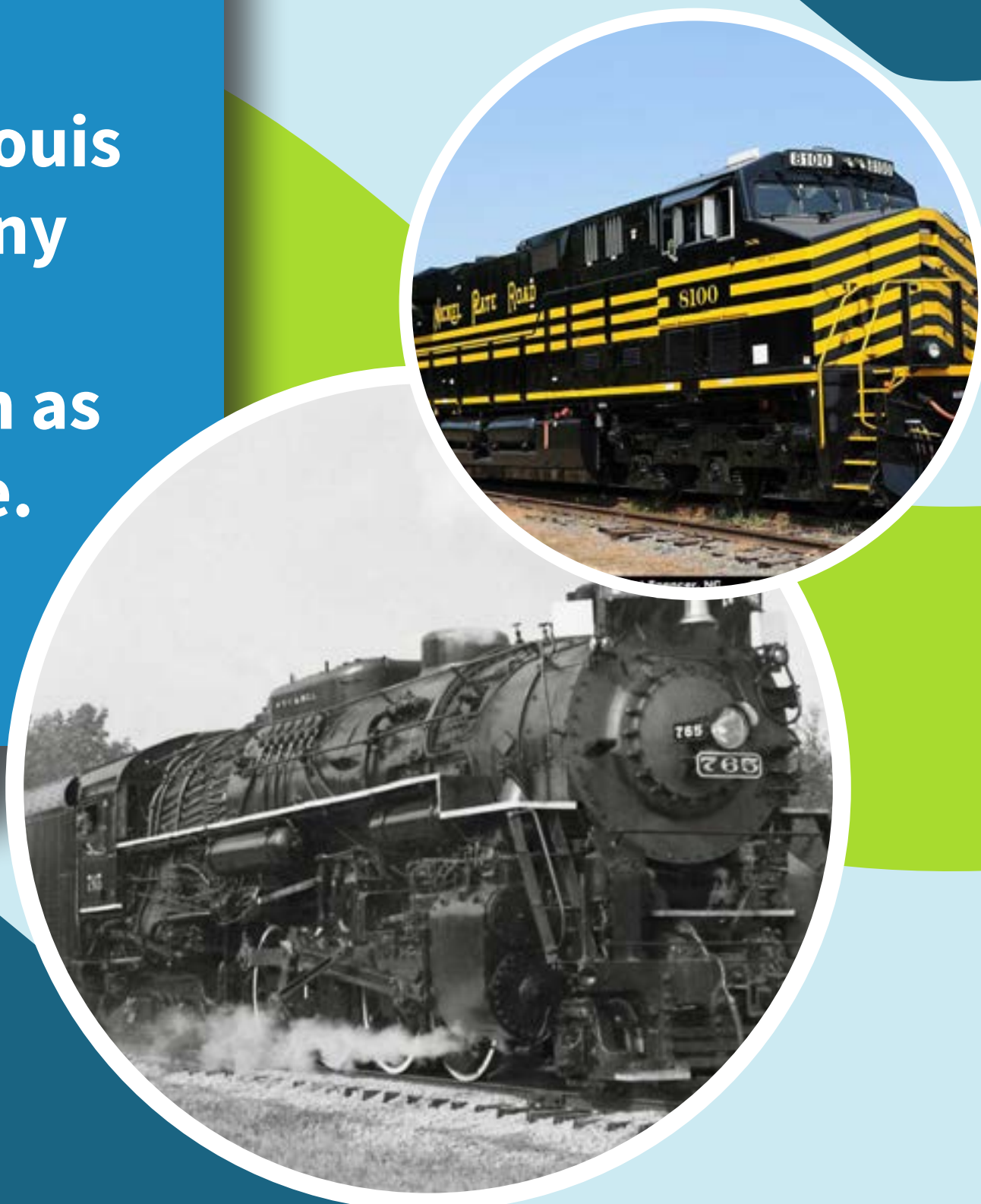
IT IS A CRITICAL REGIONAL CONNECTION.



History of the Nickel Plate

The New York, Chicago, and St. Louis Railroad Company was created, commonly known as the Nickel Plate.

1881



Norfolk Southern put the line up for abandonment with the Surface Transportation Board.

1992

The City of Noblesville and the Town of Fishers purchased 37 miles of the line and formed the Hoosier Heritage Port Authority (HHPA) to operate it.

1995

Central Indiana Transit Plan proposes rapid transit along the Nickel Plate Corridor, connecting Fishers and Noblesville to Downtown Indianapolis via the "Green Line."

2016



HHPA partnered with the Indiana Transportation Museum to operate excursion rail along the corridor.

1996

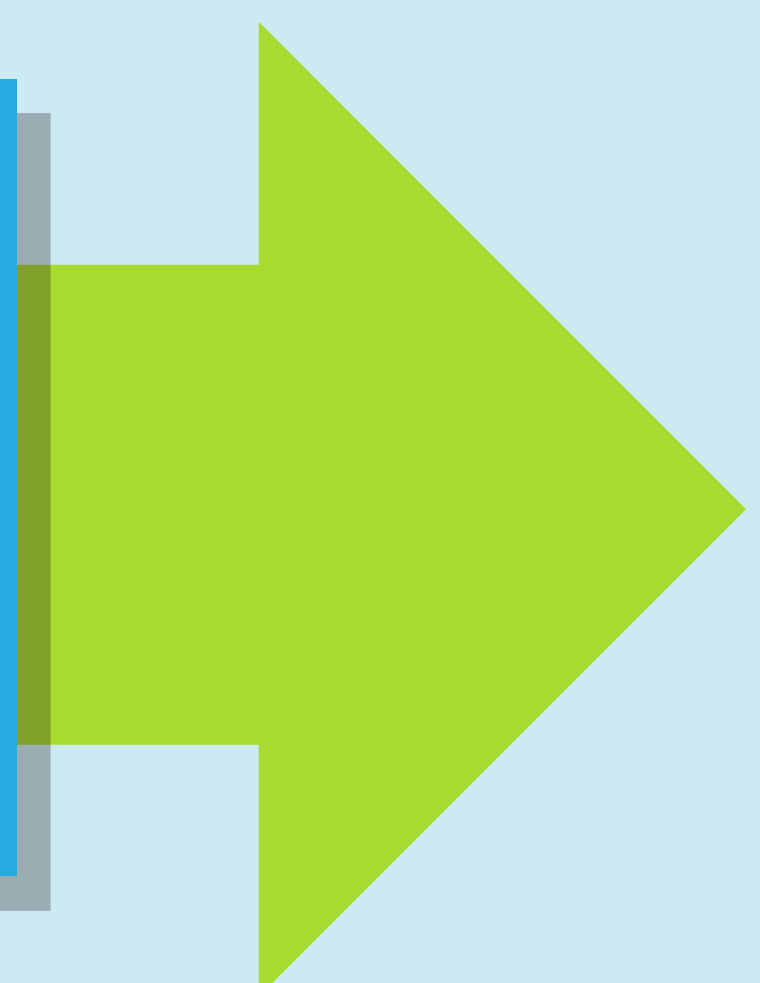


The City of Fishers released a draft master plan, which proposes converting the entire right-of-way for a 4.5-mile segment to a trail.

2019



What's next?
It's up to us!



What has the City of Fishers Proposed?

The City of Fishers released a **draft master plan for its 4.5-mile segment** of the Nickel Plate Corridor in February 2019. It stretches from 96th Street to 146th Street and the City **plans to break ground this fall.**

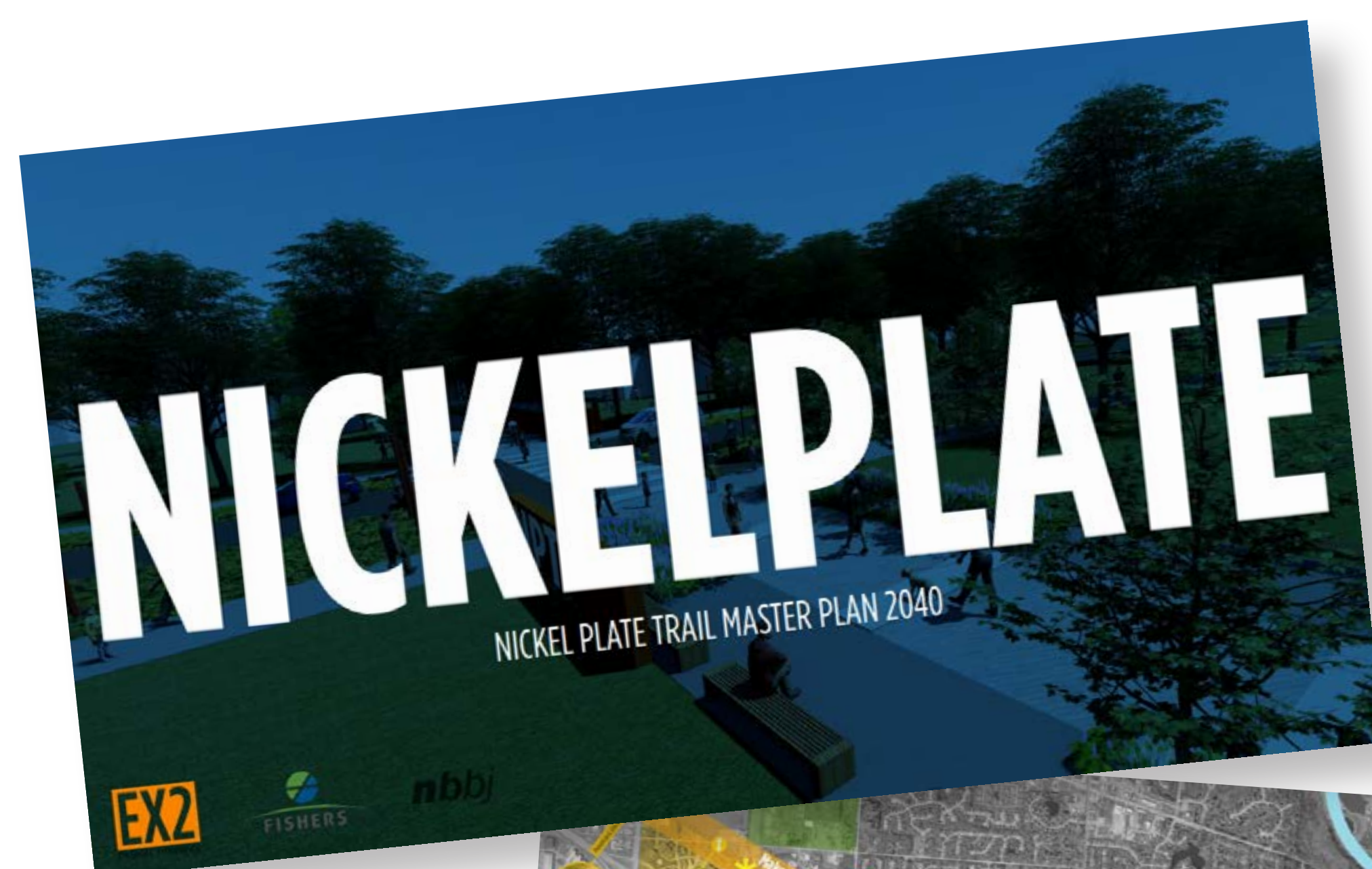
Many of the proposed features are great! **Creating more places for people to walk, bike, and play is a good thing.**

But it comes with a big tradeoff...

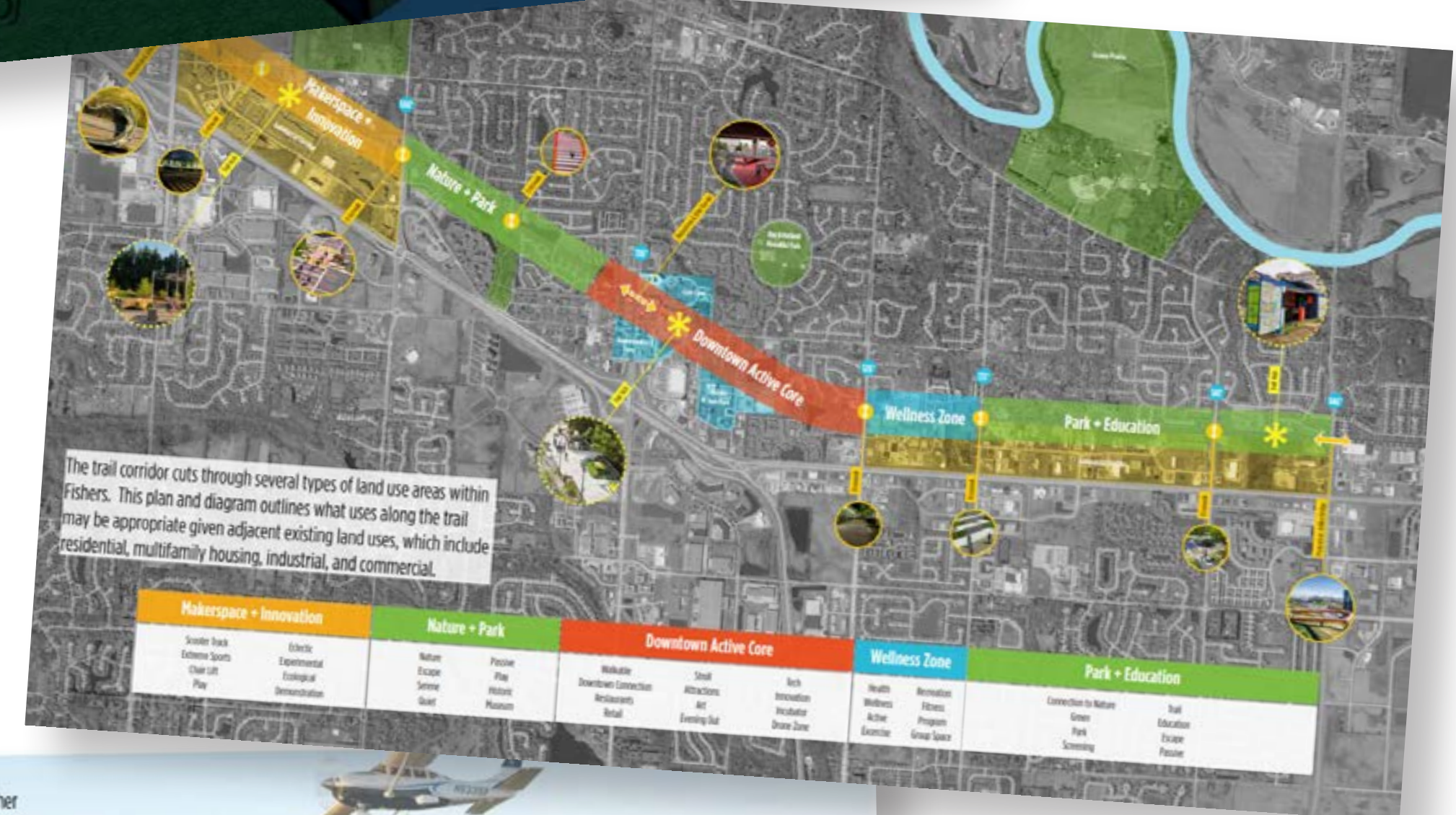
The proposed design **does not leave space for rail.**

Instead, the extra space outside of the 10-foot path is built out for activities, art, and other non-transportation functions.

If this version is approved, it will **prevent future rail** along the corridor.



Here are a few highlights from the City of Fishers' draft plan...



Given the proximity to the airport, the 96th Street gateway has a unique opportunity to be a functional crossing, but also a place where people gather as spectators to watch planes come and go. The space is designed to be more than a bridge; it can be a new attraction and destination within Fishers.



Rendering at 96th Street

Iconic Crossing and Viewing Deck

Draft Master Plan Meeting | February 18, 2019

Rendering of the "NPT Commons"



Draft Master Plan Meeting | February 18, 2019



Draft Master Plan Meeting | February 18, 2019

Rendering of typical section

A Path to Change the World

You can download their full plan at www.playfishers.com/tracktotrail

How Does This Fit with Our Regional Transportation Plan?

The Nickel Plate Corridor is a proposed rapid transit corridor (the “Green Line”) in the 2016 Central Indiana Transit Plan to connect Fishers and Noblesville to Downtown Indianapolis.

The plan was developed by CIRTA, IndyGo, and the Indianapolis MPO with input from the community.



CIRTA

Central Indiana Transportation Authority (CIRTA) is a quasi-governmental agency that provides transportation options to suburban and rural communities in Boone, Delaware, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Madison, Marion, Morgan, and Shelby counties. www.CIRTA.us

IndyGo

IndyGo is the region's largest transit provider, operating in the cities and towns of Indianapolis, Speedway, Beech Grove, Southport, and Greenwood. www.IndyGo.net

Indianapolis MPO

The Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a government agency mandated by the federal government to provide comprehensive transportation planning to large urban areas. The MPO's jurisdiction includes Marion County and portions of Boone, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Morgan, and Shelby Counties. www.IndyMPO.org

INDYCONNECT PARTNER AGENCIES



The proposed “rapid transit” along the Green Line could be either light rail or bus rapid transit (BRT). A preferred vehicle type has not been selected.

If the City of Fishers’ trail-only proposal is constructed, it will

obstruct the proposed Green Line route and eliminate the possibility of future rapid transit

along the corridor. This is a generational issue.

Plans for the Green Line are **on hold**, in large part because the trail conversion impedes potential transit.

The Green Line is a **long-term proposal**. IndyConnect estimates it could be operational within 10 years of the project being funded.

What are the Benefits of Rapid Transit?

Rapid transit helps MOVE PEOPLE QUICKLY AND CONVENIENTLY without personal vehicles. Studies have shown it can help attract employers, improve worker productivity, increase property values, and reduce traffic congestion.



Light rail and bus rapid transit (BRT) are both forms of rapid transit!



Attract Jobs

Nationally, major employers continue to choose transit accessible locations. The 2015 Indianapolis Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) survey noted **transit as the biggest challenge** as the Central Indiana region seeks to **grow quality jobs**.

Source: Indy Chamber, "Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), Indianapolis Region, Indiana," September 2015.



Remain Competitive

Metro areas across the country are investing in quality transit to attract jobs and people. Within the region, rapid transit service to Downtown Indianapolis is already being planned in nearby cities like Carmel and Westfield. High quality transit is needed for Fishers and Noblesville to maintain a competitive edge and attract both local and national talent.



Accommodate Growth

Hamilton County is projected to continue growing rapidly, increasing from 309,687 residents today to **550,000 residents by 2050**. That means we need to figure out how to move **78 percent more residents** through our community.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2017. IndyConnect, "Hamilton County Transit Forum Handout," June 2017.



Increase Output

Transit in Indiana typically **returns \$3 in economic output for every \$1 invested**, not including real estate development that good transit service can attract.

Source: Hicks, Michael J., Dagny Faulk, and Kevin Kroll. Center for Business and Economic Research, Ball State University, "Fixed-Route and Demand-Response Bus Systems: Financing Methods, Benefits, and Costs in Indiana," January 2013.



Strengthen Property Values

During the last recession, residential values performed 42% better if near high quality transit service. Walkable urban office space in the 30 largest U.S. metros commands a 74% rent per sf premium over rents in drivable suburban areas.

Sources: National Association of Realtors, "The New Real-Estate Mantra: Location Near Public Transportation," 2013. Leinberger, C. and Lynch, P. The George Washington University School of Business, "Foot Traffic Ahead: Ranking Walkable Urbanism in America's Largest Metros," 2014.



Sustainable Mobility

Transit is an environmentally-friendly and wallet-friendly way to get around. It helps reduce pollution and increases physical activity, which reduces healthcare costs and improves productivity. It also improves access to jobs and housing options for people of all income levels.

An Alternative:

What is a Rail-with-Trail?

Rail-with-Trail (RWT) describes any **shared use trail** located on, or adjacent to an **active rail line**. Although the **Nickel Plate Corridor** is not an active rail line, the trail could be built in a way that **accommodates future rapid transit** opportunities.

Flexible Design Solutions

Rail-with-Trail can be designed with multiple configurations. Both rail and trail can be within the rail ROW or the trail can be adjacent to the rail ROW. Accommodations can be made for all sites.

Safe Travel Alternative

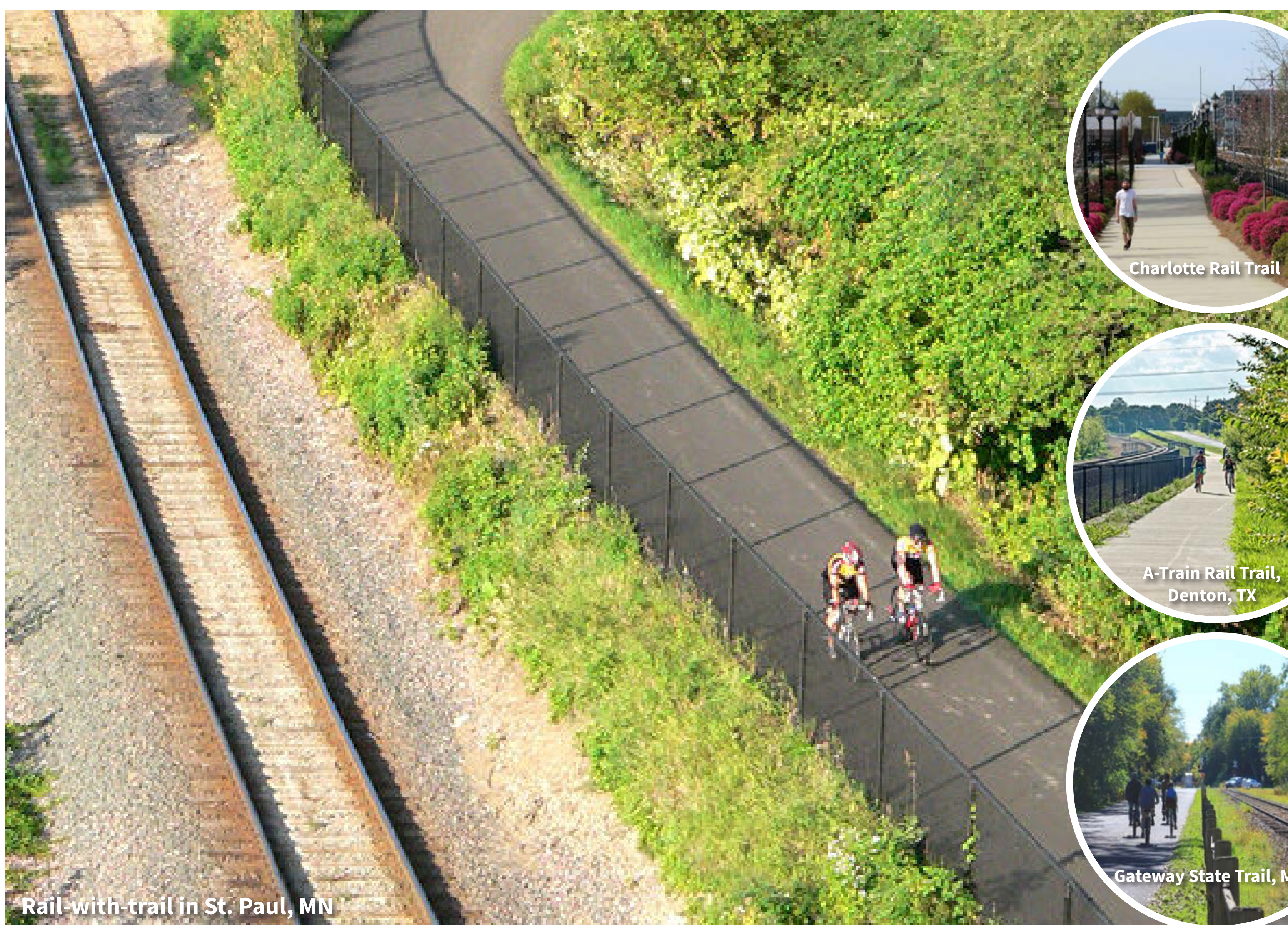
Providing a well-designed trail dedicated for cyclist and pedestrians provides a safe travel alternative and reduces the incentive to trespass or use the tracks as a shortcut.

Source: "America's Rails-with-Trails: A Resource for Planners, Agencies and Advocated on Trails Along Active Railroad Corridors." September 2013.

Common and Trending

Over 160 rails-with-trails exist in over 41 states. There is a growing trend of RWT development alongside local and regional transit corridors.

Source: "America's Rails-with-Trails: A Resource for Planners, Agencies and Advocated on Trails Along Active Railroad Corridors." September 2013.



Rail-with-trail in St. Paul, MN

Charlotte Rail Trail

A-Train Rail Trail, Denton, TX

Gateway State Trail, MN

We can work together with The City of Fishers' *Nickel Plate Trail Master Plan 2040* proposal by

Incorporating the great features of the trail with a zone for future rapid transit.

Non-transportation functions proposed in the plan can be placed adjacent to the corridor.

Rail-with-Trail Type 1:

Trail within the ROW

TRAIL TYPE

1A

Key Design Features:

- The trail is located within rail and road R.O.W.
- Public transportation runs along the center of the road.
- Pedestrians use the sidewalk and cyclist share the road with vehicles and public transit.
- Located where rail and road share a R.O.W., like 8th Street in Noblesville.

“ROW” stands for right-of-way. That’s the space between property lines for a transportation corridor.



BUILT TRAIL EXAMPLE

Tucson Street Car

Location:

Tucson, Arizona

Distance from rail centerline to edge of trail

N/A

Trail Width

Shared use lane w/ 10' sidewalk & amenity zone

Key Features

The approximate 75' ROW, along 4th Street includes a streetcar line, shared use lane, on-street parking and sidewalk with amenity zone traveling in both directions.



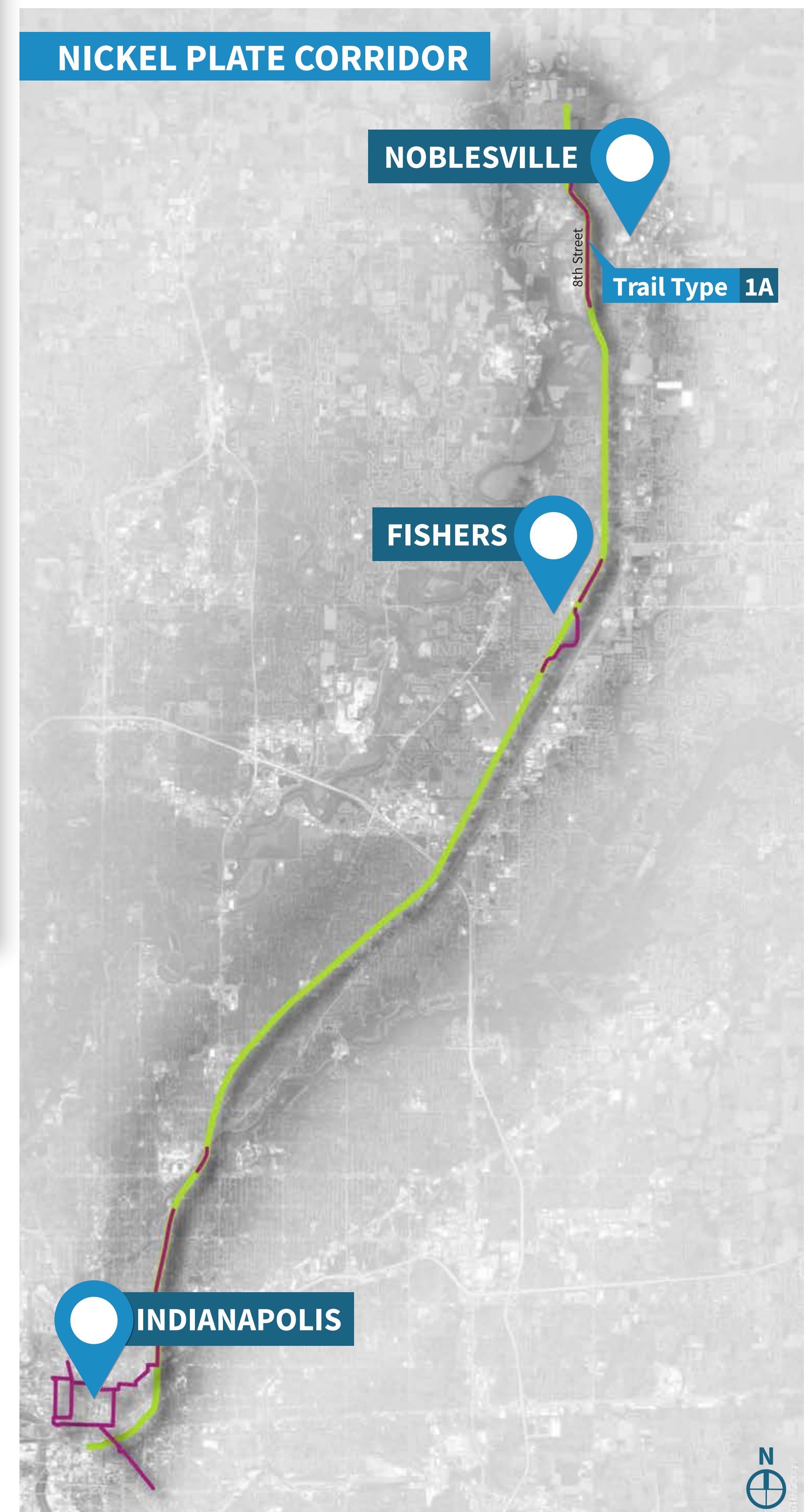
NICKEL PLATE CORRIDOR

NOBLESVILLE

Trail Type 1A

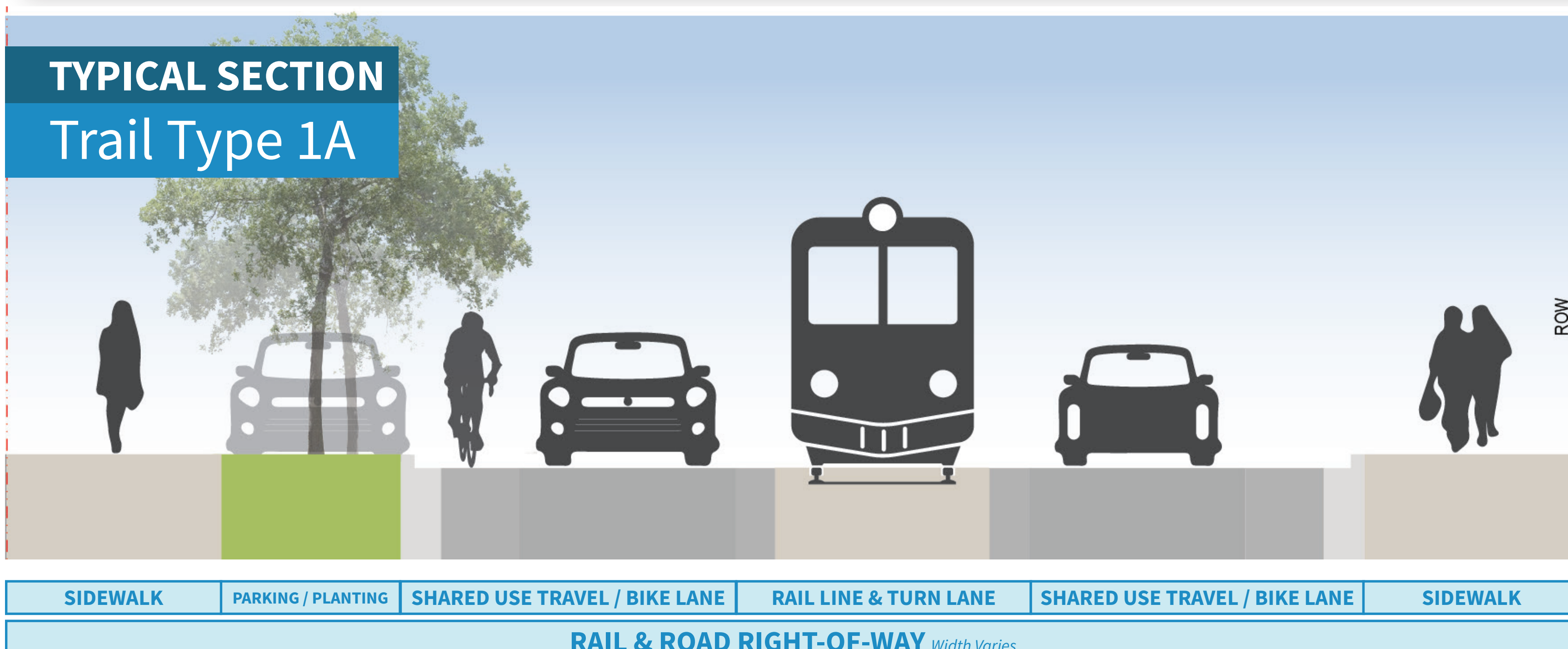
FISHERS

INDIANAPOLIS



TYPICAL SECTION

Trail Type 1A



Rail-with-Trail Type 1:

Trail within the ROW

TRAIL TYPE

1B

Key Design Features:

- Trail is located within rail R.O.W.
- Located where rail R.O.W width and topography are adequate.
- Rail and trail are separated by a small landscape buffer with fence or barrier for safety.

NICKEL PLATE CORRIDOR



BUILT TRAIL EXAMPLE

Charlotte Rail Trail

Location:

Charlotte, North Carolina

Distance from rail centerline to edge of trail

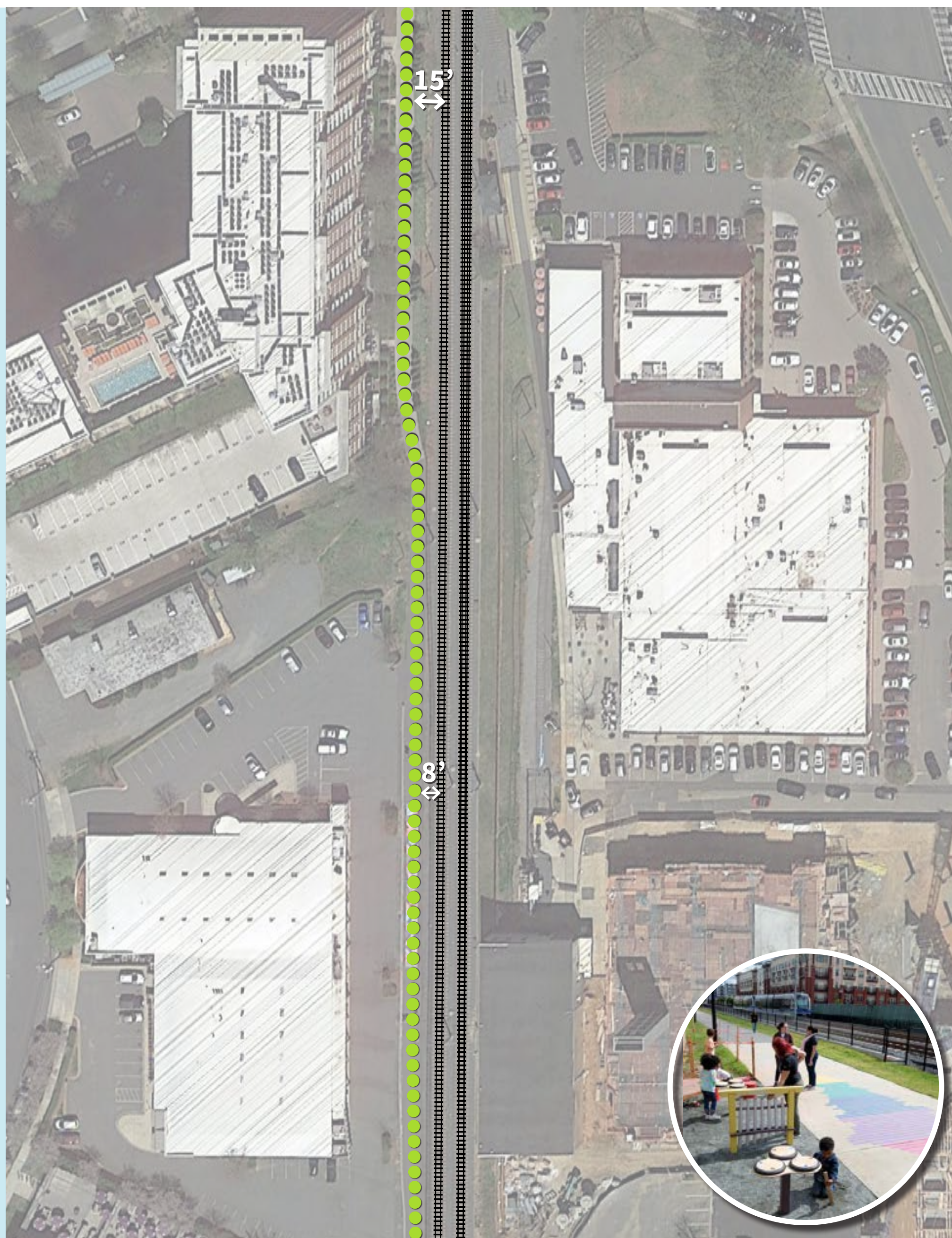
Min. 8'; 15' Avg.

Trail Width

12 Feet

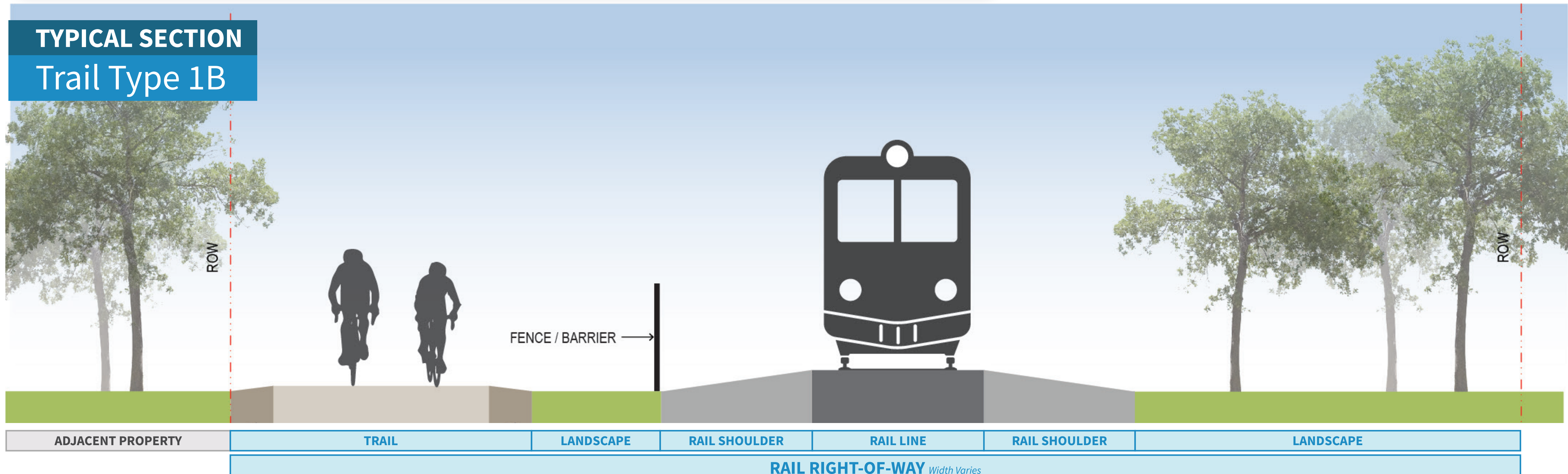
Key Features

Charlotte's Rail Trail spans 3.5 miles through the heart of the city along the light rail tracks. The trail is a mix of asphalt trail in less developed areas and concrete trails with enhanced features in more developed neighborhoods.



TYPICAL SECTION

Trail Type 1B



Rail-with-Trail Type 2:

Trail Next to ROW

TRAIL TYPE

2

Key Design Features:

- Trail is located immediately adjacent to the rail R.O.W.
- Located where rail R.O.W width or topography is not adequate or cost is prohibitive
- Rail and trail are separated by a landscape buffer for safety.

BUILT TRAIL EXAMPLE

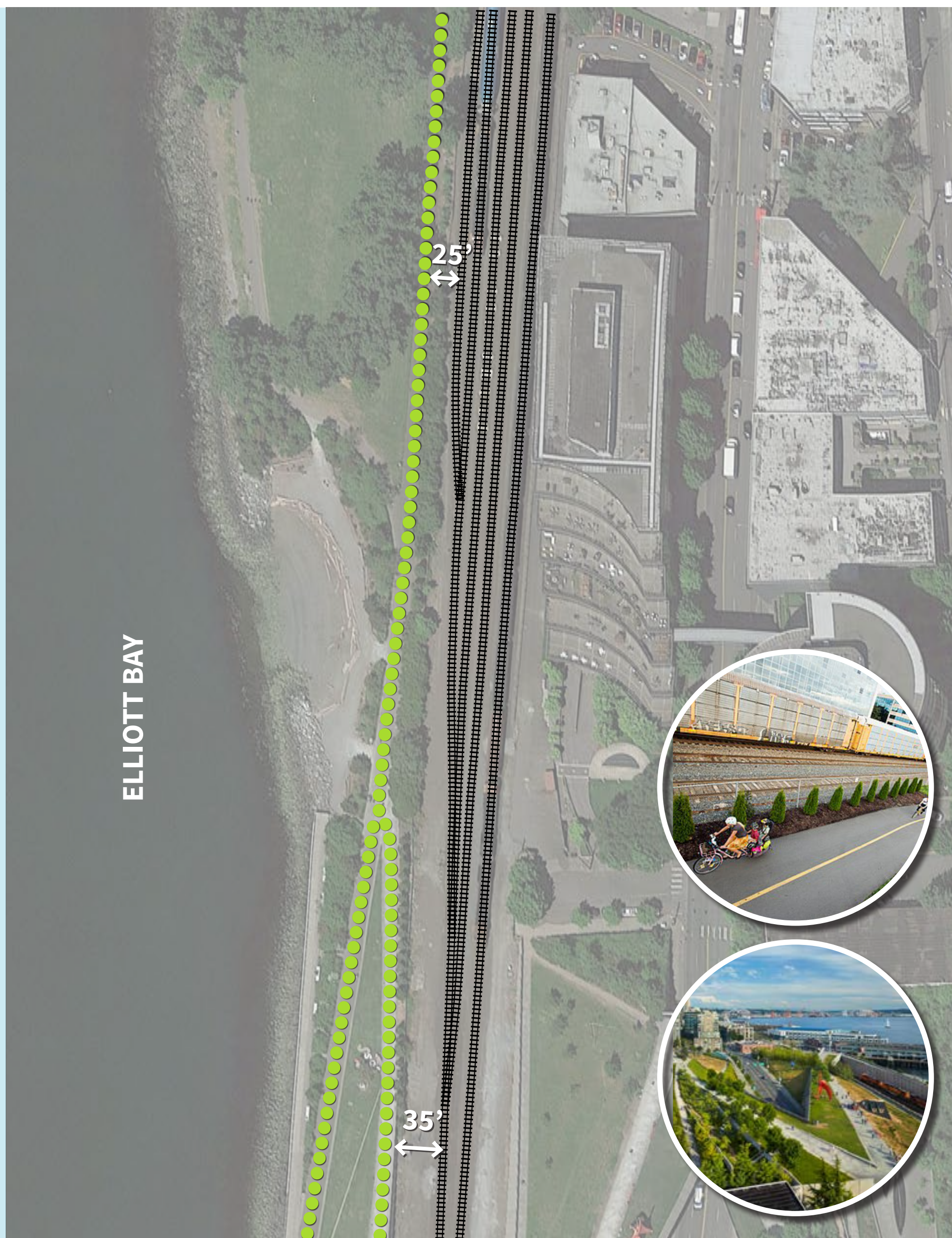
Elliott Bay Trail

Location
Seattle, Washington

Distance from rail centerline to edge of trail
Varies; Min. 12 Feet

Trail Width
12 Feet

Key Features
The trail goes through the highest urban density in Seattle with plenty of connections to downtown and continues to a wide open and industrial setting along the Elliott Bay shoreline.

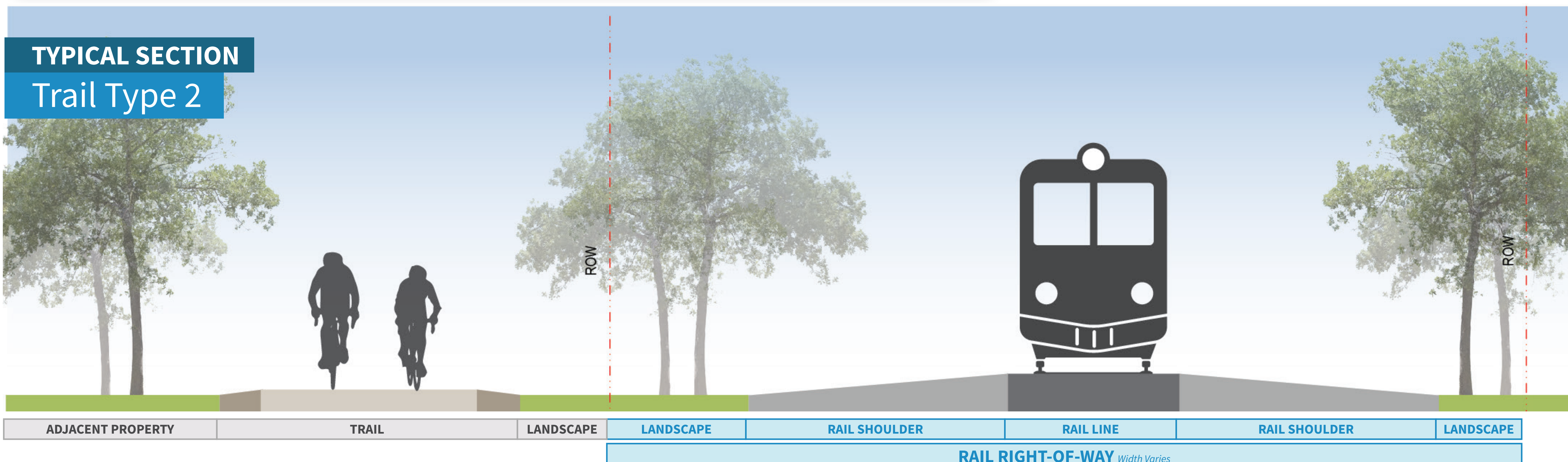


NICKEL PLATE CORRIDOR



TYPICAL SECTION

Trail Type 2



Rail-with-Trail Type 3:

Trail Offset from ROW

TRAIL TYPE

3

Typical Design Features:

- Trail is located outside of, but within sight of the rail R.O.W.
- Located where rail R.O.W width and topography are not adequate, cost is prohibitive or more scenic options are available.
- Rail and trail are separated by a large landscape buffer.

BUILT TRAIL EXAMPLE

Cardinal Greenway

Location:

From Marion to Richmond, Indiana

Distance from rail centerline to edge of trail

80' Avg.

Trail Width

10.5 Feet

Key Features

The Cardinal Greenway is the longest rail trail in Indiana and spans 62 miles. The trail will eventually link to Illinois and Ohio. It runs parallel to an active rail line, separated by a wide tree buffer.

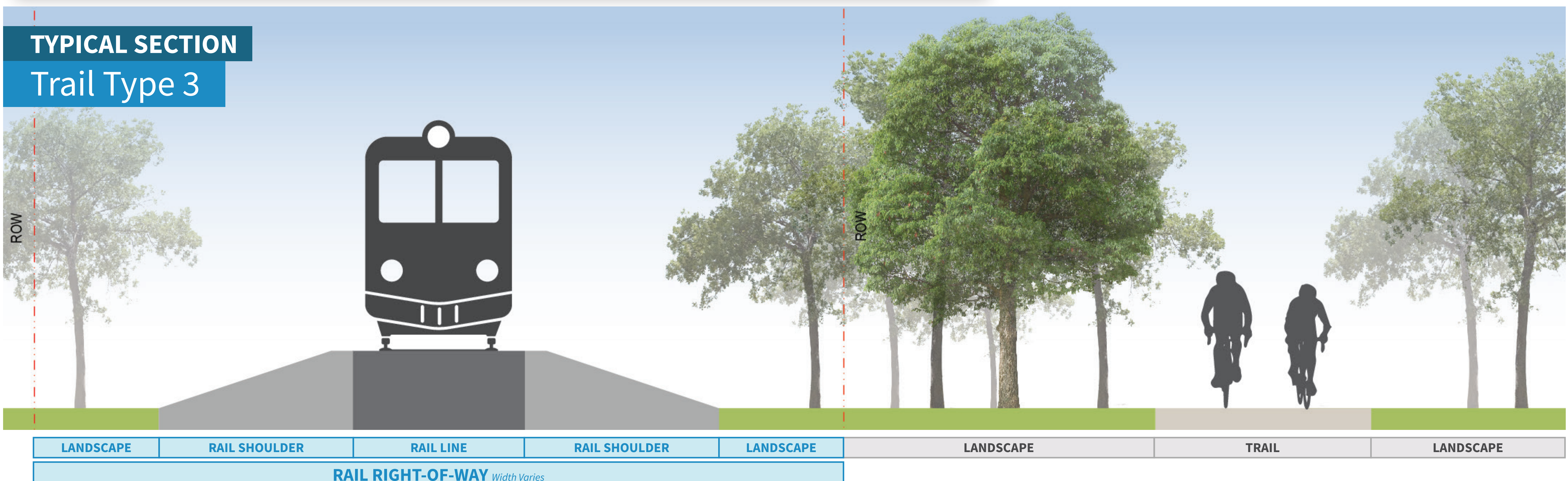


NICKEL PLATE CORRIDOR



TYPICAL SECTION

Trail Type 3



Rail-with-Trail Type 4:

Trail Detached from ROW

TRAIL TYPE

4

Key Design Features:

- Rail line and trail are separate by adjacent properties
- Located where rail R.O.W width and topography are not adequate, cost is prohibitive or more scenic options are available.
- Can be used to connect to existing trail infrastructure and reduce costs.

BUILT TRAIL EXAMPLE

Dearborn County Trail

Location:
Lawrenceville, KY

Distance from rail centerline to edge of trail:
155' - 750'

Trail Width
15 feet

Key Features

The Dearborn Trail splits away from the rail line to take advantage of the views and amenities along the Ohio River.

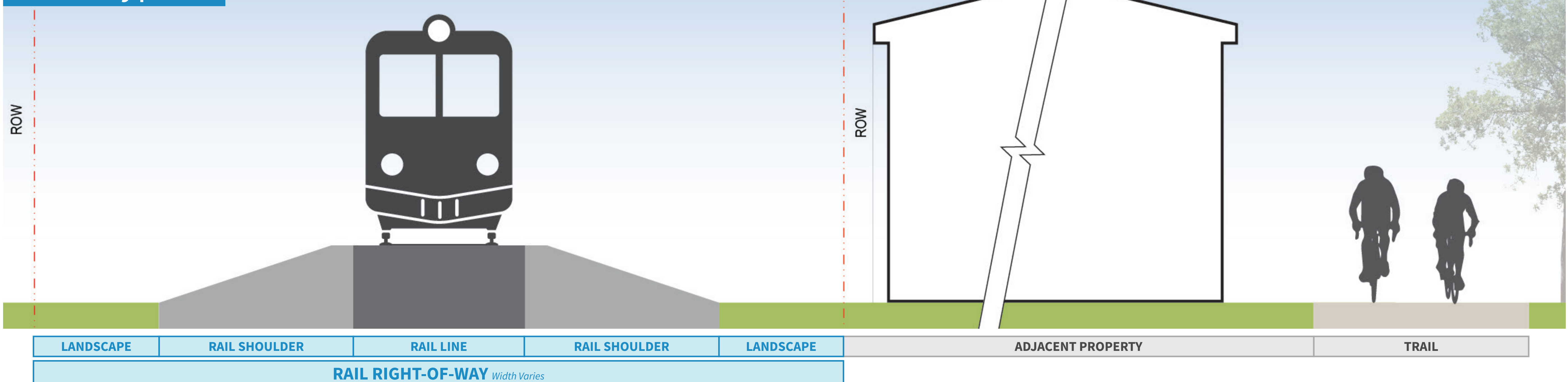


NICKEL PLATE CORRIDOR



TYPICAL SECTION

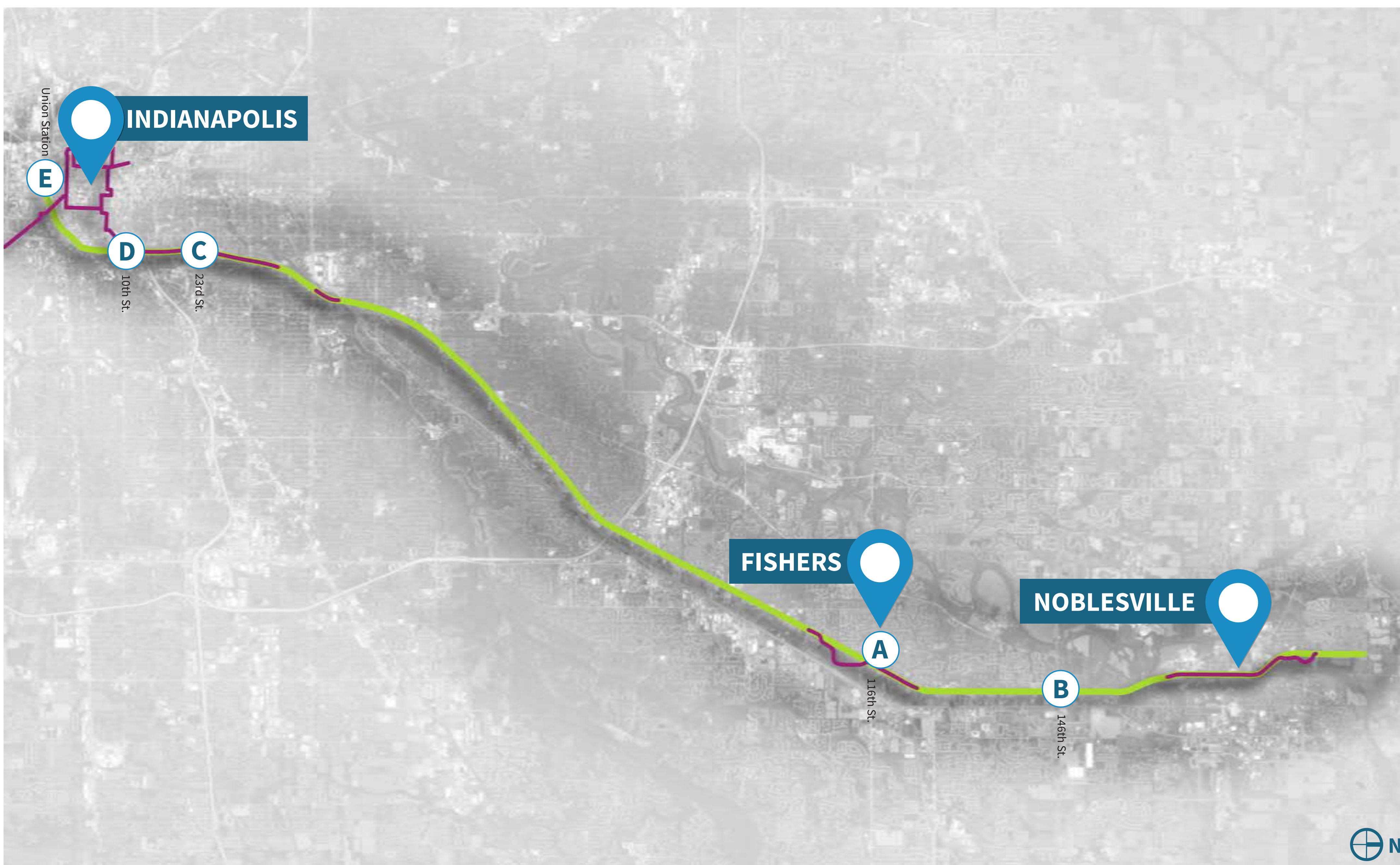
Trail Type 4



Let's Imagine More!

Nickel Plate Rail + Trail

The sketches below *illustrate what the corridor could look like* if it included both rail and a trail. Different designs would be applied to different segments, depending on context and constraints.



Five key locations were selected for vision sketches, shown on this and the following boards.

The map at left shows the location of each sketch:

- A. Fishers Station
- B. 146th Street Bridge
- C. 23rd Street and Monon Trail
- D. 10th Street and Monon Trail
- E. Union Station



A Fishers Station

Typical ROW Width: 55 feet

Special Considerations:

Utilize the existing Fishers platform as a rapid transit station location.

Key Design Features:

Enhanced landscaping, lighting, trail and rail barrier added to the existing Fishers platform.

Let's Imagine More!

Nickel Plate Rail + Trail

The sketches below *illustrate what the corridor could look like* if it included both rail and a trail. Different designs would be applied to different segments, depending on context and constraints.

146th Street

B

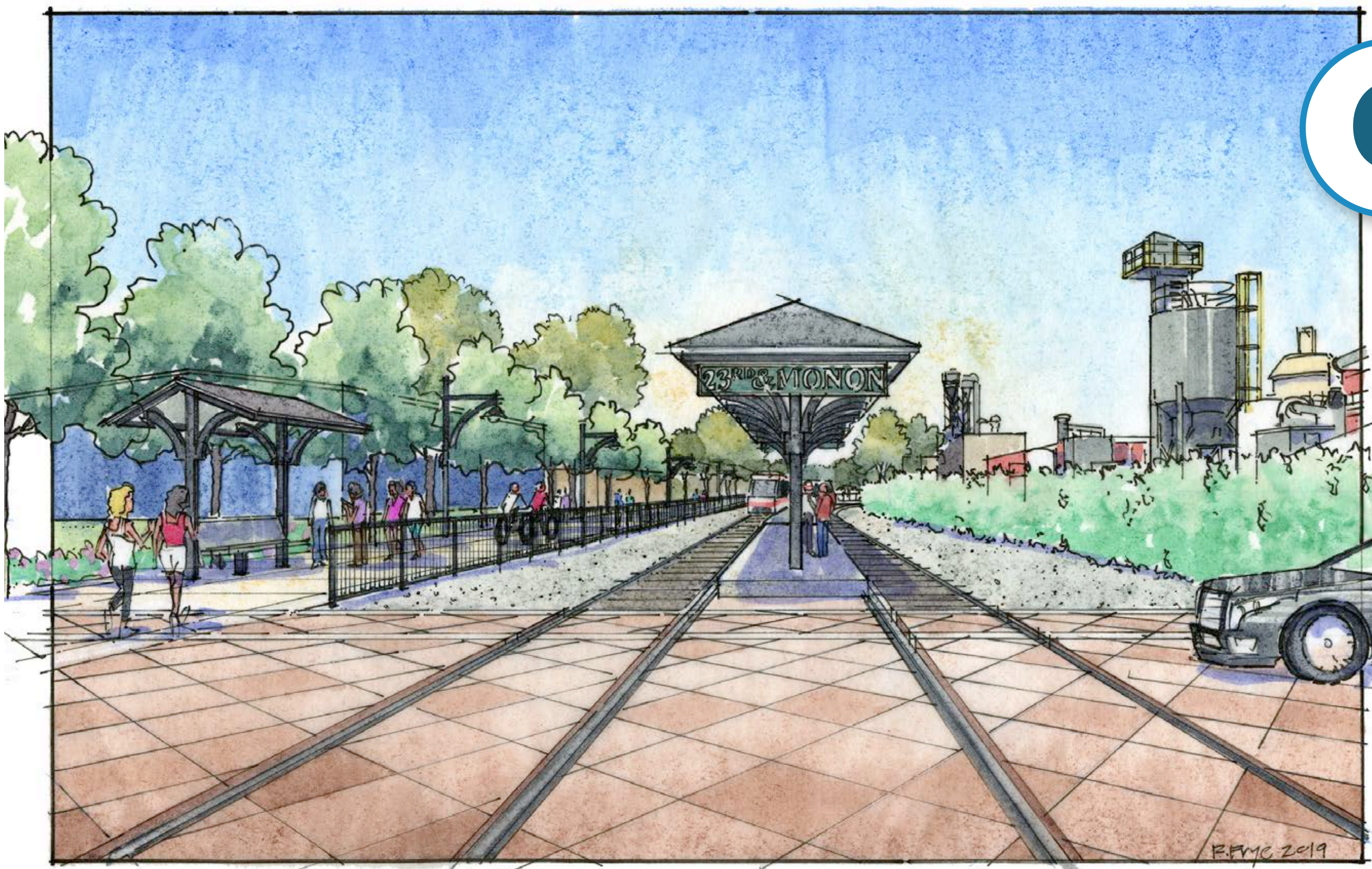
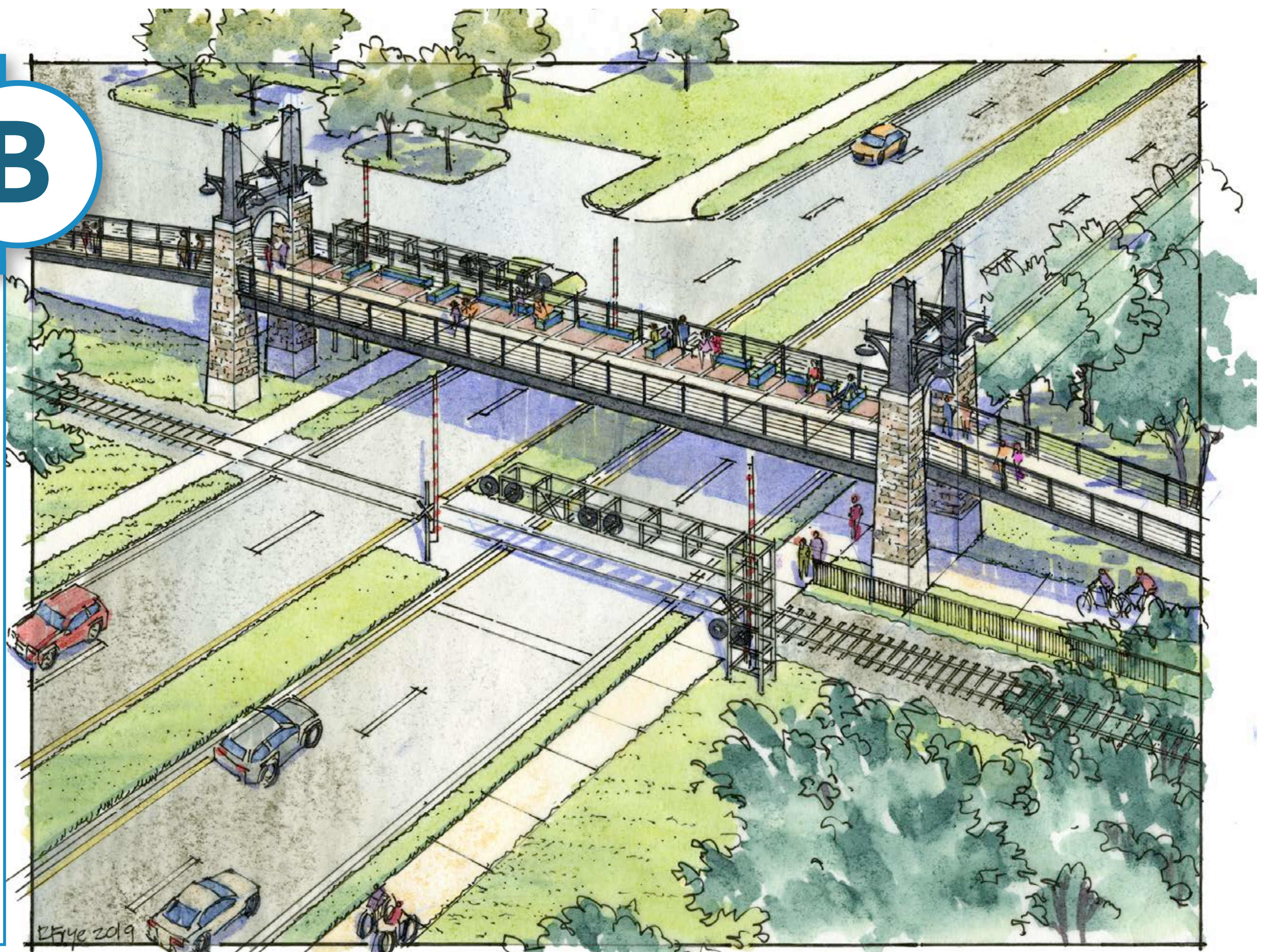
Typical ROW Width: 60 feet

Special Considerations:

A pedestrian bridge spans 146th Street to minimize disruptions to traffic.

Key Design Features:

Enhanced pedestrian bridge with lighting. Barrier along rail line at lower level.



C

23rd Street & Monon Trail

Typical ROW Width: 80 feet

Special Considerations:

Location for a station with shelter between the tracks

Key Design Features:

Enhanced shade structures with benches, trail lighting, enhanced paving opportunities and a barrier between trail and rail.

Let's Imagine More!

Nickel Plate Rail + Trail

The sketches below *illustrate what the corridor could look like* if it included both rail and a trail. Different designs would be applied to different segments, depending on context and constraints.



D 10th Street & Monon Trail

Typical ROW Width: 50 feet (Nickel Plate) + Existing Monon Trail

Special Considerations:

Key connection between the Monon, Nickel Plate and Cultural Trails with a bridge for future rapid transit.

Key Design Features:

Signage and public art and lighting will create an inviting and vibrant environment.

Union Station

E

Typical ROW Width: 80 feet

Special Considerations:

The trail would split off and join the Cultural Trail as it enters Downtown. The rapid transit line would continue on to the end of the line at Union Station.

Key Design Features:

Bringing multi-modal transportation options to Downtown Indianapolis.

