

Willmar Rail Connector & Industrial Park Access (Wye) Project



Project Overview

The Minnesota Department of Transportation and its partners (City of Willmar, Kandiyohi County, the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission, and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway) will add a rail connection between two existing BNSF Railway lines and modify surrounding roadways to better move rail freight through the City of Willmar.

Currently delays to trains, motorized vehicles (including emergency responders), bicyclists and pedestrians occur when trains are moving from one BNSF rail line to the other via the downtown Willmar railyard.

To address the delays and mitigate their associated problems, MnDOT and its partners applied for and received federal TIGER funding.

Project Benefits

There are several benefits associated with railway improvements. These include:

- Reducing trains traversing downtown Willmar and the accompanying train horn noise, idling trains and blocked roadway crossings
- Reducing rail traffic congestion
- Providing an opportunity for rail service at the new industrial park (former airport site)
- Completing a key component of the City of Willmar's plans for growth and development in the southern and western ends of the community
- Supporting a better quality of life for the Willmar region as a whole

Project Components

- New railway track linking the two railroads on the city's western limits
- Bridges on state roadways going over the railroad tracks (reduces at-grade crossings)
- Roadway realignments on the state, county and local roadway network
- Rail spur into the industrial park



Project Costs

Project costs are currently estimated at approximately \$47 million.

A majority of the funding will be coming from a TIGER grant, MnDOT, BNSF Railway and other state funding sources. Kandiyohi County, the City of Willmar, and the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission are also contributing financially and through property donation.

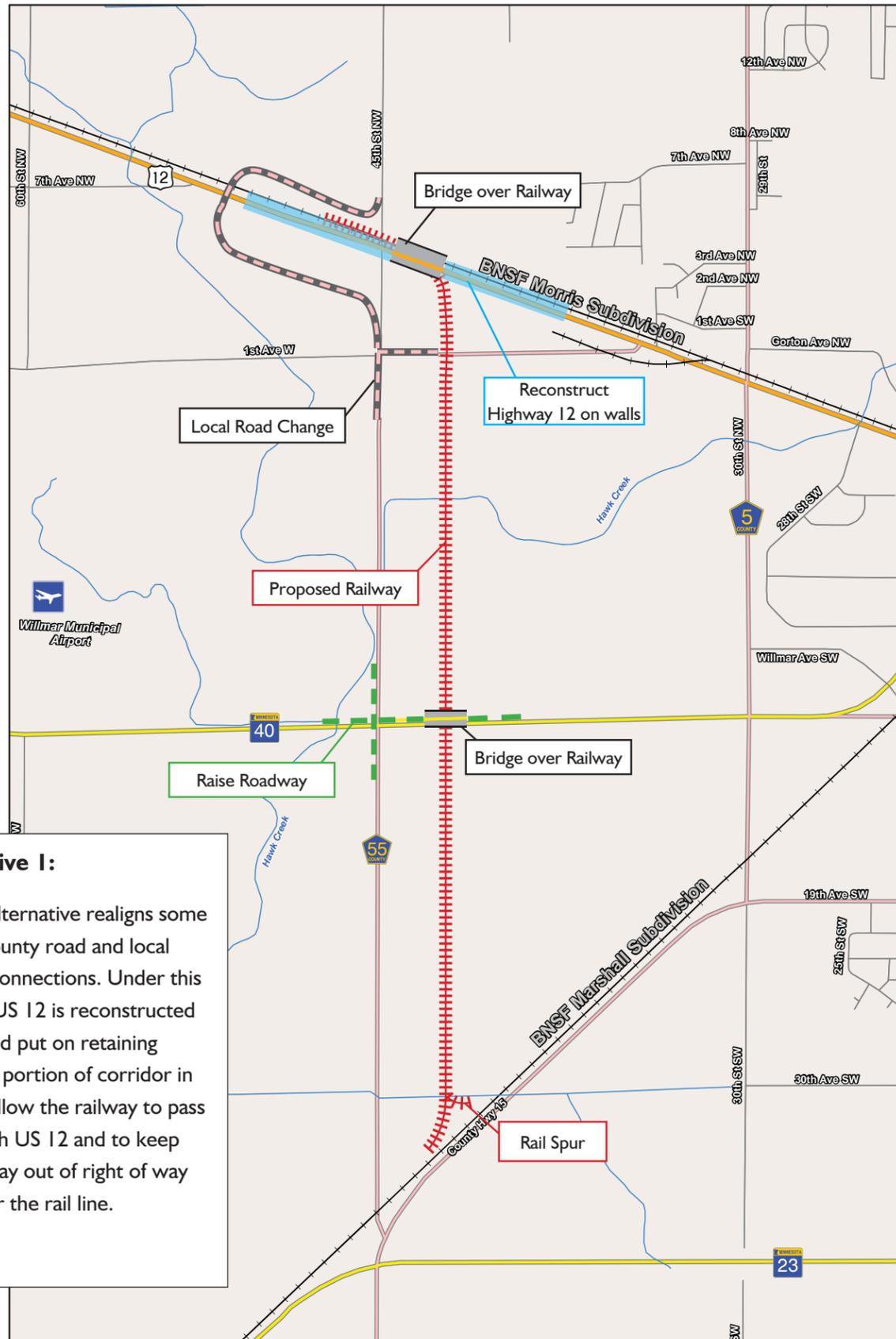
More Information

For more information, please visit MnDOT's Website at: www.dot.state.mn.us/d8/projects/wilmarwye or contact Paul Rasmussen – MnDOT Project Manager at 320-214-6320 or p.rasmussen@state.mn.us



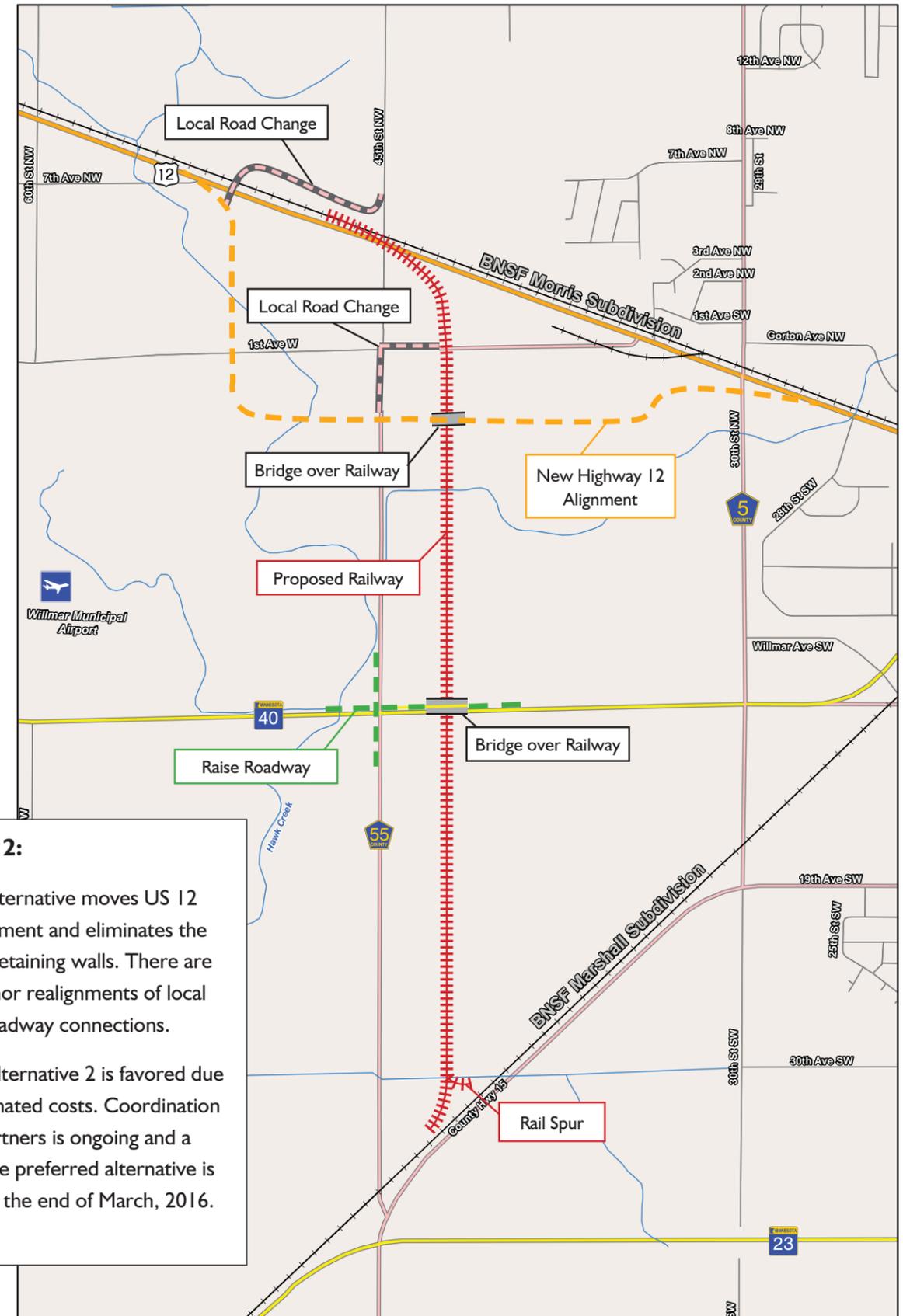
Alternatives Under Consideration

There are two primary alternatives under consideration. The railway alignment is the same for both alternatives, as are improvements on TH 40. The potential Kandiyohi County grade separation at the southern limits of the project area is optional under both alternatives. Please view the large layout for the Kandiyohi option. Work depicted herein reflects current concept. Some elements subject to change based on final design considerations.



Alternative 1:

The first alternative realigns some existing county road and local roadway connections. Under this scenario, US 12 is reconstructed in place and put on retaining walls for a portion of corridor in order to allow the railway to pass underneath US 12 and to keep the roadway out of right of way needed for the rail line.



Alternative 2:

The second alternative moves US 12 to a new alignment and eliminates the need for the retaining walls. There are also some minor realignments of local and county roadway connections.

At this time Alternative 2 is favored due to lower estimated costs. Coordination with study partners is ongoing and a decision on the preferred alternative is anticipated by the end of March, 2016.