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NEWS RELEASE

PRAIRIE STREET OVERPASS TO PROCEED

Mayor Dick Moore announced today that the City is proceeding with the next step in the design of the Prairie Street Overpass.

The project which Mayor Moore mentioned in his State of the City will create an overpass across the Norfolk-Southern Railroad on Prairie Street from Main Street to Middlebury Street. The primary objective is to help the traveling public and emergency vehicles avoid the 100 trains that block Elkhart's crossings for a total of 8 hours each day. If these daily trains were connected, they would produce a continuous train extending for the nearly 150 miles from Elkhart to Indianapolis. Over the course of a year, this train would be 55,000 miles long and would circle the Earth two times.

Along with the improved public safety, the overpass will enhance the quality of life in Elkhart and support future economic development by helping eliminate train whistles that blow hundreds of times a day throughout downtown Elkhart. The enduring delays and continuous whistle blowing are extremely stressful to local residents, disruptive to the operation of local businesses, and irritating to visitors. Years of study quantified the negative effects of the associated delays on economic development, quality of life, and negative environmental impacts. Waiting for trains cost the traveling public over \$600,000 a year in fuel costs alone, while local employers had annual costs in excess of \$9 million due to lost time.

The preliminary design has been completed for this project, and American Structurepoint will begin the next steps of the design which will include an Environmental Assessment and land acquisition. Elkhart has already been awarded over \$8.5 million dollars in Federal transportation appropriations. The total estimated cost of the project is \$34 million dollars. While the final design is prepared and submitted, Elkhart continues to aggressively search for grants and other Stimulus money to fund the construction.