

# Build Kansas Fund | Fiscal Year 2025 Application Package | Memo



To: Representative Troy Waymaster, Chair, Build Kansas Advisory Committee  
Chardae Caine, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Shauna Wake, Office of the Kansas State Treasurer

From: Matthew A. Volz, PE, Executive Director, Kansas Infrastructure Hub

RE: Build Kansas Fund Application #2025-072-GPDA

Date: September 13, 2024

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Attached, please find an application made to the Build Kansas Fund by the City of Liberal. The application packet includes the following items:

- Coversheet – provides a high-level overview of the application including a unique identification number, page 1 of 13 of the Build Kansas Fund Application Package.
- Build Kansas Fund Application – includes information submitted with the Build Kansas Fund Application, pages 2-8. Page 8 provides the table of funding sources.
- Attachments – executive summary, pages 9-10. Liberal CARES Crossing site photos, pages 11-13.

## **Project Overview**

The City of Liberal seeks funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation for funding available through the Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) grant program for their Liberal Crossing Analysis for Routes Enhancing Safety (Liberal CARES) project. This funding will support project development activities to identify an at-grade railroad closure location and the development of grade separation.

This opportunity is a discretionary BIL program with a local match requirement of 20% of the total project cost. The entity is requesting \$305,000.00 from the Build Kansas Fund, contributing \$50,800.00 in local cash match, and \$54,080.00 of in-kind match. This request has the potential to unlock \$1,639,520.00 in federal funds.

The deadline is September 23, 2024, and this Build Kansas Fund application was received on August 27, 2024.

## **Build Kansas Fund Steering Committee Recommendation**

The Build Kansas Fund Steering Committee reviewed this application on September 11, 2024, following a successful completeness check. The Steering Committee **RECOMMENDS APPROVAL** of Build Kansas Funding to the Build Kansas Advisory Committee for final advice.

# Build Kansas Fund | Fiscal Year 2025 Application Package | Coversheet



Build Kansas Fund Application Number	2025-072-GPDA
Applicant Name	City of Liberal
Project Name	Liberal Crossing Analysis for Routes Enhancing Safety (Liberal CARES)
Entity Type	Local Government
Economic Development District (EDD) Planning Commission	GPDA – Great Plains Development Authority
Infrastructure Sector(s)	Transportation
BIL Program	Railroad Crossing Elimination Program (RCE)
BIL Program Type	Discretionary
BIL Application Deadline	9/23/2024
Build Kansas Fund Request	\$305,000.00
Technical Assistance Received	General <span style="float: right;">No</span>
	BIL Application <span style="float: right;">Yes</span>
	Build Kansas Fund Application <span style="float: right;">Yes</span>
	Other (Brief Description): Provided budget assistance for BIL and BKF application.
Application Notes	Build Kansas Fund contribution of \$305,000.00 will unlock \$1,639,520.00 in federal BIL funding, with a local contribution of \$50,800.00. An In-Kind match contribution of \$54,080.00.

**Steering Committee  
Funding Recommendation** **September 11, 2024 | Recommend**

**Advisory Committee  
Funding Recommendation** **DATE | Recommend or Decline**

### Completeness Review Data

Date Build Kansas Application Received:	8/27/2024
Date Of Completeness Check:	8/27/2024
Date Forwarded to Steering Committee:	9/9/2024

Title **City of Liberal** 08/27/2024

by **Keeley Moree** in **Build Kansas Fund Application** id. 47319050

324 N. Kansas Ave  
 Liberal, Kansas  
 67901  
 KS  
 United States  
 6206262257  
 keeley.moree@cityofliberal.org

**Original Submission** 09/12/2024

Score	n/a
Part 1: Applicant Information	
The name of the entity applying for the Build Kansas Fund:	City of Liberal
Project Name:	Liberal Crossing Analysis for Routes Enhancing Safety (Liberal CARES)
Entity type:	Local Government
Applicant Contact Name:	Keeley Moree
Applicant Contact Position/Title:	Chief Communications Officer
Applicant Contact Telephone Number:	+16206262257
Applicant Contact Email Address:	keeley.moree@cityofliberal.org
Applicant Contact Address:	324 N. Kansas Ave
Applicant Contact Address Line 2 (optional):	
Applicant Contact City:	Liberal
Applicant Contact State:	Kansas

Applicant Contact Zip 67901  
Code:

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Is the Project Contact the same as the Applicant Contact? Yes

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Part 2: Build Kansas Fund - Eligibility Criteria

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Certify that you are pursuing a viable Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunity for which your entity is eligible: Yes

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Certify that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunity you are pursuing has a required non-federal match component: Yes

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What is the primary county that the project will occur in? Seward County

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The Build Kansas Fund is intended to support Kansas-based infrastructure projects. Please provide a list of all the zip codes this project will be located in, along with an estimated percent [%] of the project located in that zip code. For example, if seeking funding for road infrastructure, provide a rough percent of the roads expected in each zip code:

[Zip Code Percentage.xlsx](#)

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Part 3: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) - Grant Application Information  
Please Note: This information is related to the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunity to which you will apply. This is NOT information for the Build Kansas Match Fund.

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Please enter the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunity title that the entity is applying for: Railroad Crossing Elimination Program (RCE)

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What is the funding agency for this Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunity? U.S. Department of Transportation

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What is the Assistance Listing Number (ALN) for this Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunity? 20.327

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What is the application due date for this Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunity? 9/23/2024

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What is the federal fiscal year for this Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunity? 2024

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Enter the amount of funding being applied for, from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunity: \$1,639,520.00

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Enter the total project cost: \$2,049,400.00

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Enter the required non-federal match percentage: 20%

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Part 4: Build Kansas Fund - Match Application Information Beginning in July 2024 and moving forward, eligible applicants are expected to contribute a portion of the non-Federal match requirement. This contribution can be in the form of cash and/or in-kind contributions. The goal is to demonstrate the applicant's commitment to the project. The contribution should be significant enough relative to the Build Kansas Fund request. For a local public entity, 5% of the non-federal match is a good guideline, but not a requirement

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Enter the non-federal cash match amount being provided by the eligible applicant, if applicable: \$50,800.00

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Enter the estimated value of the non-federal in-kind match amount being provided by the eligible applicant, if applicable: \$54,080.00

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Enter the non-federal cash match amount being requested from the Build Kansas Fund: \$305,000.00

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Expected breakdown of funding sources to support the project: Enter the funding source and projected amount from each source to support this project:

[Kansas+DOT+table\\_V2.xlsx](#)

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#### Part 5: Build Kansas Fund - Means Test and Eligible Applicant Match

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What other available funding sources that are currently planned to go unused by your entity will be leveraged for this project? N/A.

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What other available American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) or Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Fund monies will be used for this match? N/A.

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What other sources of in-kind match will be leveraged for this project? Please list and include the actual or estimated value of each. N/A.

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What other funding sources (local, federal or non-federal) will to be used for this match? N/A.

Describe your efforts to find other available funding sources for this project: The City of Liberal reached out to the Union Pacific Railroad Company for additional project funding. Because this development project does not involve construction activity with mandated railway owner contributions under CFR 23 Section 646.210(b)(3), Union Pacific opted not to extend any funding.

Part 6: Additional Information

Please upload a copy of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) program application associated with this request OR a 2-page executive summary providing an overview of the project:

[KS\\_Build\\_Fund\\_Exec\\_Summary.pdf](#)

[Attachment\\_10\\_Project\\_Map.pdf](#)

[Attachment\\_11\\_S.\\_Pershing\\_Avenue\\_Concept\\_Drawing.pdf](#)

[Attachment\\_12\\_S.\\_Western\\_Avenue\\_Concept\\_Drawing.pdf](#)

Provide any additional information about this project (optional): A project map, site photos, and concept drawings for potential grade separation have been provided as additional attachments.  
This project application has received review and a letter of support from the Kansas Department of Transportation.

Part 7: Terms and Conditions

Understanding of Fund Release Requirements: checked

Understanding of Use of Funds: checked

Understanding of Reporting Requirements: checked

Authority to Make Grant Application: checked

Persons and Titles: The following persons are responsible for making this Build Kansas Fund application. Keeley Moree

Position/Title: Chief Communications Officer

Additional:

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Position/Title:

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Additional:

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Position/Title:

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Additional:

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Position/Title:

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## Internal Form

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Score	n/a
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Pre-Award Information:

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Post-Award Information:

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Deviation Report:

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<b>Source</b>	<b>Amount</b>
BIL Federal Funds (applied for)	\$ 1,639,520.00
Build Kansas Funds (non-federal match)	\$ 305,000.00
Eligible Applicant Cash Match	\$ 50,800.00
Eligible Applicant In-Kind Match (estimated value)	\$ 54,080.00
Additional Project Contribution (if applicable)	\$ -
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>	<b>\$ 2,049,400.00</b>

<b>Zip Code</b>	<b>% of project in zip code</b>	<b>State</b>
67901	100	KS

# **Liberal Crossing Analysis for Routes Enhancing Safety (Liberal CARES)**

## **Executive Summary**

More than 3.75 miles of railroad tracks bisect the city of Liberal, Kansas (2020 census: 19,825). While rail infrastructure is critical for local freight reliant industries, blocked crossings create significant challenges for residents and commuters. The Liberal Crossing Analysis for Routes Enhancing Safety (Liberal CARES) grant application supports project development activities to identify an at-grade railroad crossing closure location and development of grade separation through the Federal Railroad Administration's Railroad Crossing Elimination program.

The Federal Railroad Administration's most recent train count from 2019 recorded an estimated 13 daily train movements through Liberal. More frequently, trains in excess of 4 miles long stopping in Liberal have resulted in all at-grade crossings in the city being blocked simultaneously. Railroad crossings blocked for more than an hour at a time have created emergency response delays, harms to public safety, decreased mobility for active transportation users, traffic congestion, business impacts, and adverse environmental and social impacts for residents. Approximately 86 percent of 858 participants surveyed have reported making lifestyle changes - such as departing for their destination earlier or taking longer routes - in order to accommodate anticipated delays caused by blocked crossings.

The only railroad grade separation in Liberal is the "Mike Hayden Overpass Bridge" on Country Estates/U.S. Highway 83. This two-lane bridge is located within a half mile of the high-traffic U.S. Highway 54/U.S. Highway 83 intersection near a large meat packing plant. More than 10,200 vehicles, including approximately 2,000 heavy commercial vehicles, use this overpass bridge daily. Lengthy delays across multiple at-grade crossings have resulted in drivers detouring to this overpass crossing when they encounter a blocked railroad crossing, rather than idling or finding another at-grade crossing. This influx of traffic results in heavy congestion, where vehicles and heavy commercial vehicles idle through multiple traffic signal cycles and exhibit risky driving behaviors to reach their destinations on time. The overpass is not safely equipped for pedestrians or active transportation users due to lack of paved pathways, overgrown vegetation, and the loose surface of the steep embankments.

Five schools, approximately 2,000 households, hundreds of businesses, and the heavily traveled U.S. 54 highway corridor are located in the southern half of the community. Residents in South Liberal live in historically disadvantaged neighborhoods, and a portion of these neighborhoods are also classified as areas of persistent poverty. Approximately 12 percent of households in South Liberal do not own a vehicle, leaving residents to rely on active transportation, taxi, or public transit services to reach medical care, secondary education opportunities, social assistance services, and jobs at Liberal's largest employers located north of the train tracks.

Businesses on both sides of the railroad tracks are affected by traffic congestion and trips not taken due to anticipated travel delays. Among 858 public surveys received, 89 percent of respondents stated they would be more likely to visit locations on the other side of the railroad tracks if a second overpass railroad crossing were available. Public support for a railroad crossing overpass project is high, with 94% of survey respondents reporting they believe a secondary grade separated crossing is needed in Liberal.

With no projected adjustments to regional railway operations, the City of Liberal began evaluating options for an additional grade-separated crossing to meet transportation needs and improve

community safety and accessibility. Due to floodplain conditions, stormwater retention pond locations, and clearance requirements for heavy commercial loads, underpass concepts were not pursued. Instead, alternatives were considered for railroad overpass placement locations with space to safely accommodate vehicle and active transportation users.

Project concepts, scale design drawings, construction estimates, and environmental inventories were created during project planning for two potential grade separation locations: S. Pershing Avenue in Central Liberal and S. Western Avenue in West Liberal. These crossing locations are on arterial roadways and have the most feasible potential to be closed through grade separation due to their adjacent land areas available. Public engagement activities have included a communitywide survey, a town hall meeting, and multiple public listening sessions which began in July 2024 and are expected to be completed in September 2024.

The goal of the Liberal CARES grant application is to support project development activities which identify the preferred alternative for at-grade crossing elimination through the Federal Railroad Administration's Railroad Crossing Elimination program. Funds will support development activities including site surveys, further public engagement activities, and environmental assessments for the S. Pershing Avenue and S. Western Avenue crossing sites. Upon identifying a preferred grade separation site meeting community needs and grant criteria, preliminary engineering, project management planning, project scheduling, capital cost estimation, and financial planning activities will be conducted using this federal grant.

The expected outcome of grant activities is to have a well-developed project which can be used to pursue further federal grant funding for final design, right of way acquisition, crossing closure, and construction of a grade separated crossing to ensure safe multimodal transportation, improve emergency response efforts, reduce traffic congestion, and improve access to community resources.

Development activities will be carried out in collaboration with project consultants from Professional Engineering Consultants. Partners in this project will include the Union Pacific Railroad Company, Federal Railroad Administration, the Kansas Department of Transportation, and the City of Liberal.

A total project budget of \$2,049,400 has been established in our grant application for project development activities. Our federal dollar request from the Railroad Crossing Elimination program is \$1,639,520, representing 80% of the total project expenses. Our total combined local match is 20%, meeting federal grant requirements. The City of Liberal is providing \$104,880 in local match funds, supporting 5.1% of the total project cost. Within this total, \$54,080 consists of in-kind support for project management and the remaining \$50,800 will be cash contributions. The City of Liberal is requesting 14.9% of the total project cost from the Build Kansas fund in the amount of \$305,000.












# LIBERAL, KS

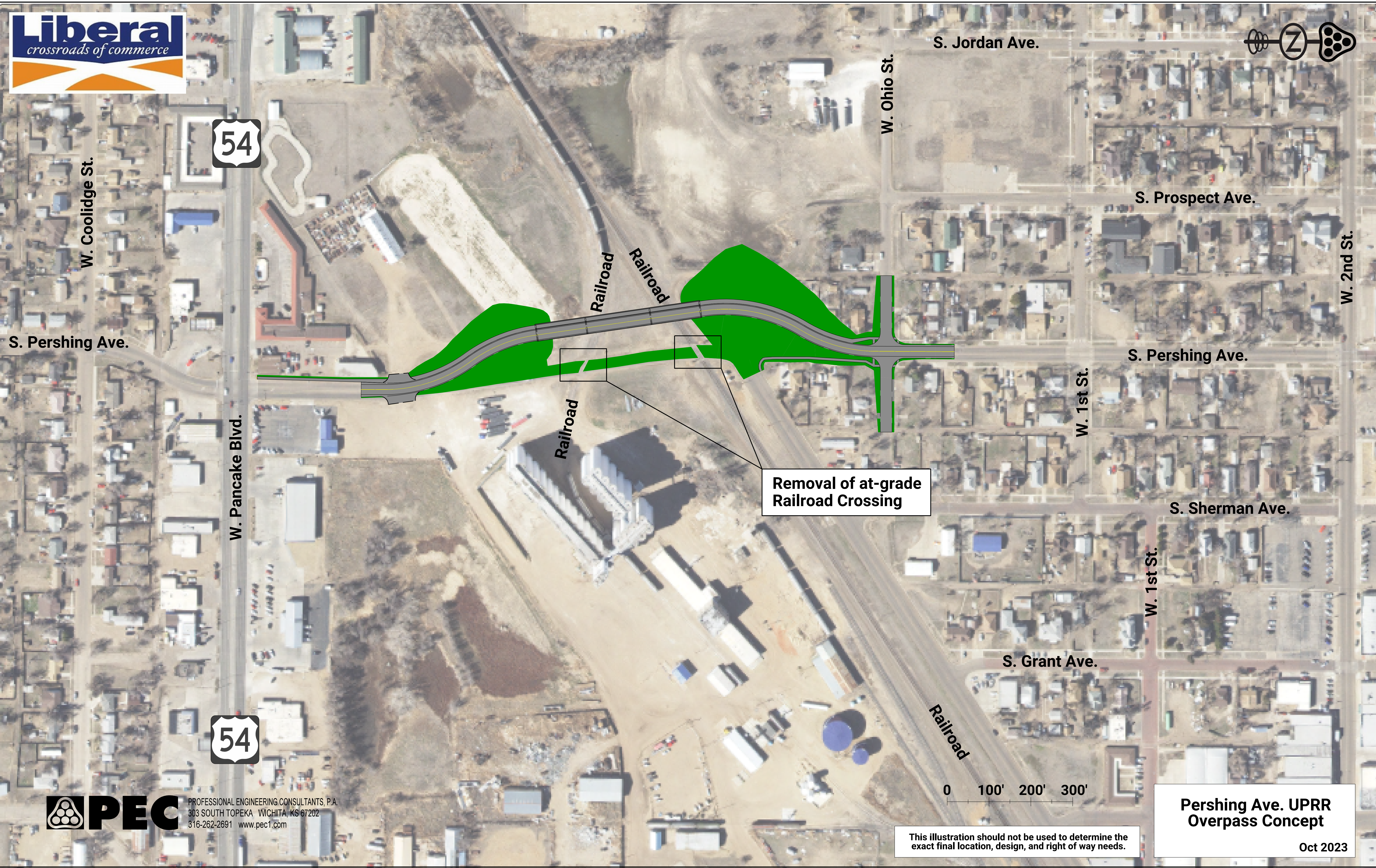


**S. Western Ave.  
Proposed Crossing  
Closure w/Separation**

**S. Pershing Ave.  
Proposed Crossing  
Closure w/Separation**

### MAP LEGEND

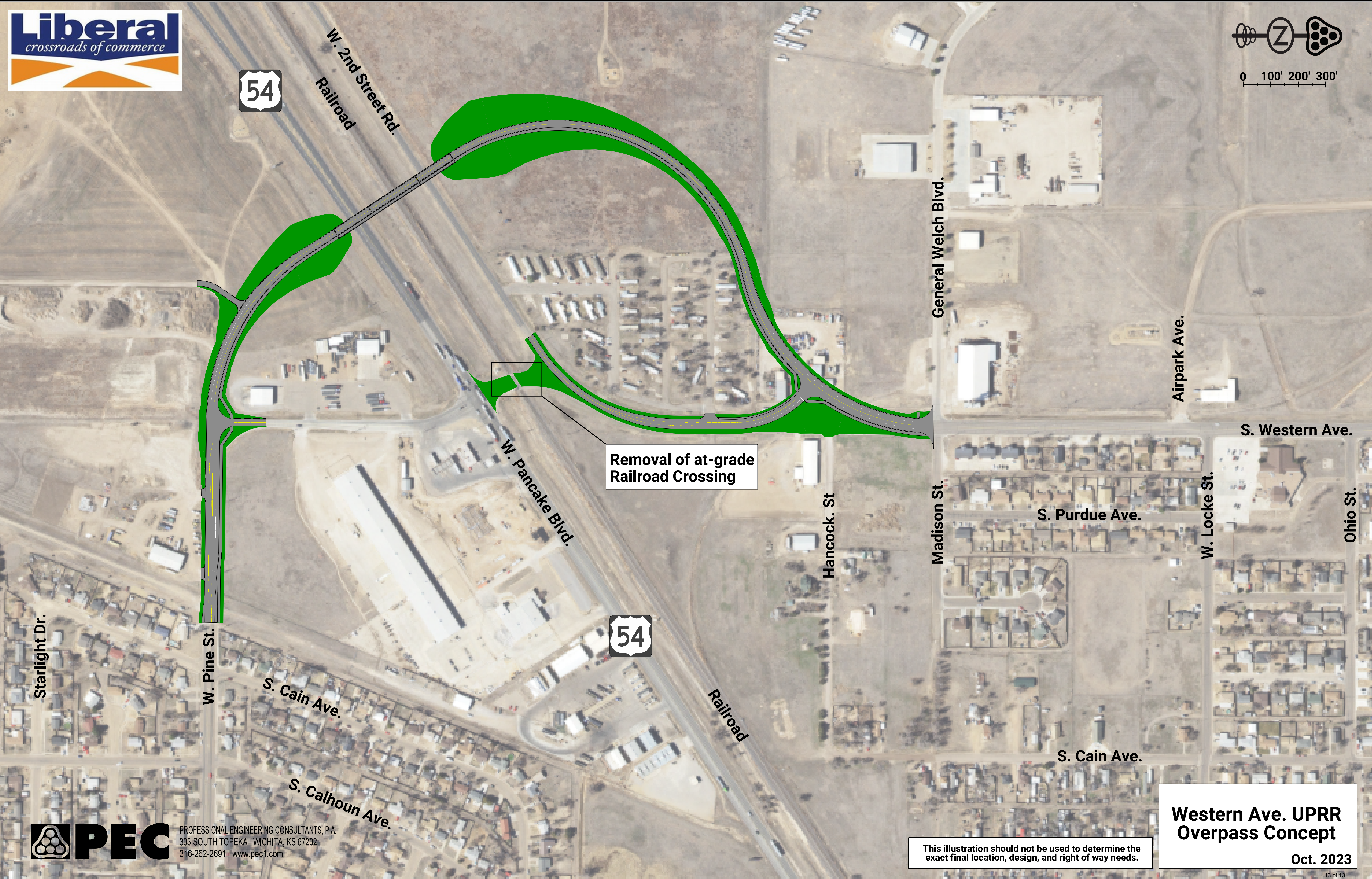
-  At-grade crossing
-  Grade-separated crossing
-  Railroad
-  U.S. Highway
-  Hospital
-  Emergency Medical
-  Fire Station
-  School
-  Airport
-  Park
-  Historical Property



Removal of at-grade  
Railroad Crossing

This illustration should not be used to determine the exact final location, design, and right of way needs.

**Pershing Ave. UPRR  
Overpass Concept**  
Oct 2023



Removal of at-grade  
Railroad Crossing

**Western Ave. UPRR  
Overpass Concept**  
Oct. 2023

This illustration should not be used to determine the exact final location, design, and right of way needs.