2026
BENTON COUNTY
SAFETY ACTION PLAN

wsp

Table of Contents

SAFETY ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW

The Benton County Safety Action Plan is a county-specific supplement to the KIRPC Comprehensive Safety Action Plan. It is designed to help translate regional safety goals into clear, locally relevant priorities that reflect Benton County's rural roadway network and travel patterns.

WHERE SHOULD BENTON COUNTY FOCUS TO REDUCE FATAL AND SEVERE INJURY CRASHES?

Benton County's transportation system is characterized by high-speed rural corridors, a limited number of routes carrying regional traffic, and long distances to emergency medical care. These conditions mean that while crashes may be less frequent than in urban areas, they are more likely to result in fatal or severe injuries. As a result, safety improvements must be targeted where they can have the greatest impact.

This plan is intended to support county-level decision-making by identifying where to focus first and what types of safety strategies are most appropriate for Benton County's context. It provides a practical framework for prioritizing projects, coordinating with partner agencies, and supporting future funding applications aimed at reducing fatal and severe injury crashes.

HOW TO **USE THIS PLAN**

This plan is designed to be used, not archived. Benton County should reference it to:

1. **Focus safety efforts where they matter most**
   Use the High Injury Network and emphasis areas to identify roadway segments, intersections, and communities where safety improvements are most likely to reduce fatal and severe injury crashes.

2. **Guide project planning and prioritization**
   Apply the plan's findings when evaluating capital projects, maintenance activities, and operational improvements, especially when resources are limited.

3. **Support coordination and funding**
   Reference this plan when working with INDOT, KIRPC, municipalities, and emergency response partners, and when preparing state or federal grant applications.

4. **Select context-appropriate solutions**
   Use the emphasis areas and prioritization framework to match the scale of safety improvements to Benton County's rural roadway conditions and needs.

COUNTY AT A GLANCE

Benton County is located next to the Indiana border with Illinois and the county seat is Fowler. Countywide, there are five public K-12 schools and no hospitals. US Routes 41 and 52 are the two major thoroughfares in the county. US 52 merges with US 41 in the county and continues north to Interstate 94. ***(Figure 1)***

On average, 47,100 daily trips occur on roadways in Benton county. Three out of four Benton County residents work outside the county with 28 percent residents working in the Lafayette area.

5
NUMBER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

0
NUMBER OF HOSPITALS

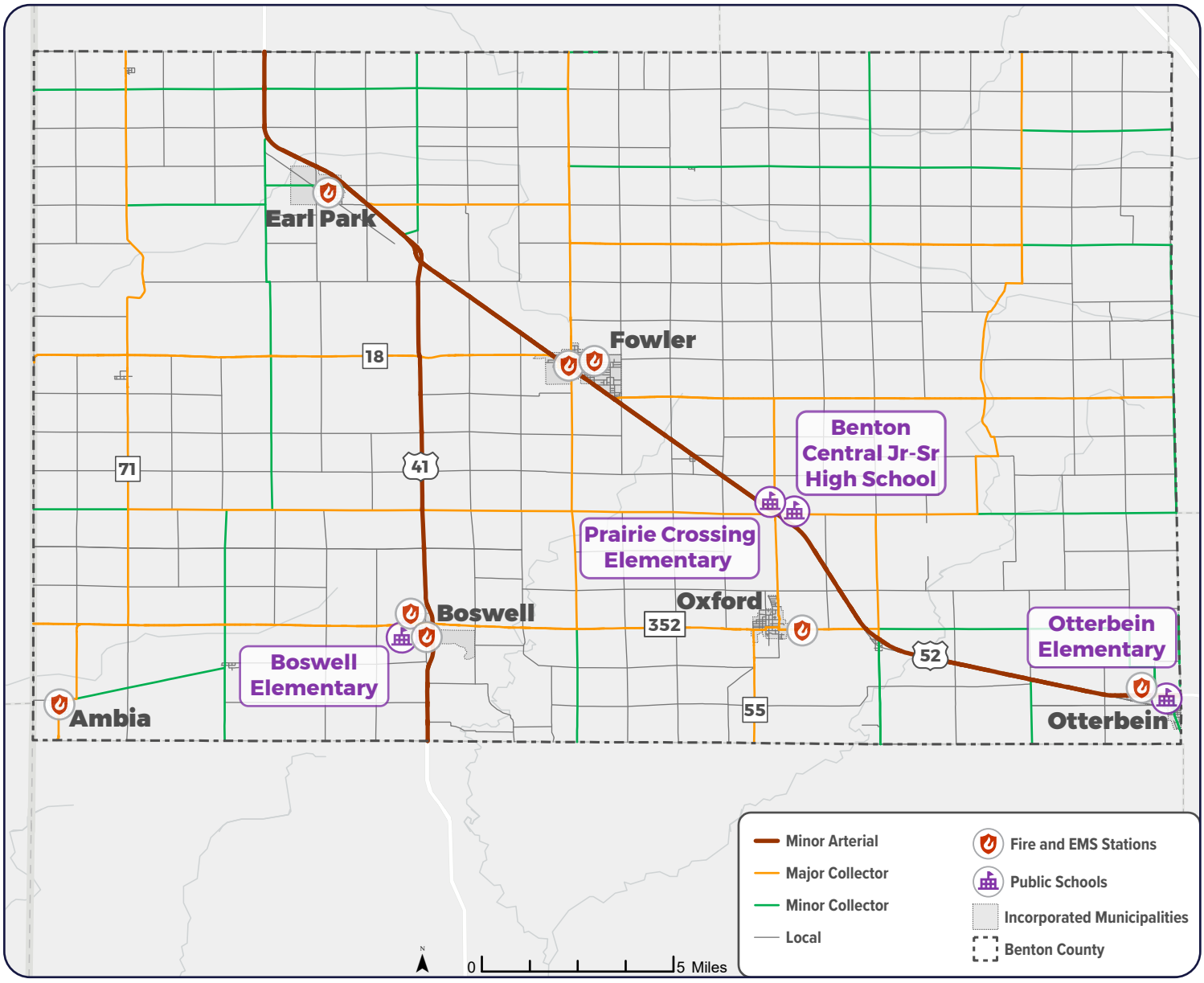


Figure 1. **Benton County Plan Study Area**

Benton County is a rural community where most daily travel happens by car. Residents regularly drive between small towns for work, school, and errands, and many people commute to nearby cities like Lafayette for jobs or services as shown in ***(Figure 2)*** ***(Table 2)***. Farm operations, local businesses, and regional highways all play a role in how traffic moves through the county throughout the year. Understanding these everyday travel patterns helps illustrate how people use the county's roads and why the transportation network is so important to daily life.

COUNTY BY THE NUMBERS

BENTON COUNTY **COMMUNITY PROFILE** IN 2024

8,853
TOTAL POPULATION (2024)[1]

2,312
TOTAL JOBS (2024)[2]

406.4
TOTAL AREA (Square Miles)

Image Source: Google Maps

Table 1. **Benton County Municipalities**

	Benton County Municipalities
1	Ambia
2	Boswell
3	Earl Park
4	Fowler (county seat)
5	Otterbein
6	Oxford
7	Templeton

BENTON COUNTY **ROADWAY NETWORK**

1,992
TOTAL ROADWAY (Miles)

165.4
TOTAL URBAN ROADWAY (Miles)

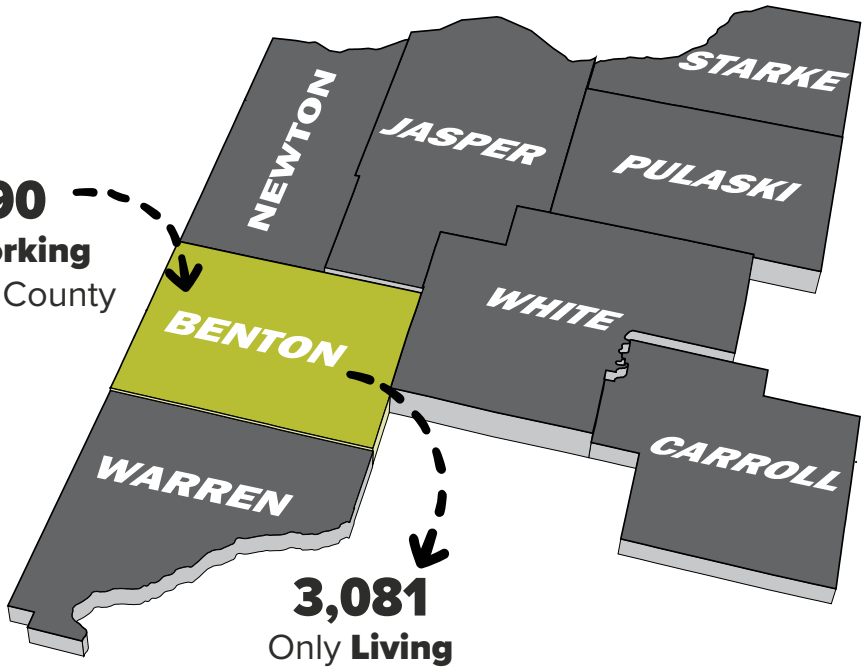
1,826.6
TOTAL RURAL ROADWAY (Miles)

SOURCE: [1] U.S CENSUS BUREAU, ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES SUBJECT TABLES
[2] U.S CENSUS BUREAU, ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES SUBJECT TABLES

BENTON COUNTY **COMMUTER TRENDS** IN 2024 [1]

Table 2. **Top 5 Commuting Destinations**

Rank	Commuting Destinations	% Of County Workforce
1	Lafayette, IN	18.8%
2	West Lafayette, IN	9.6%
3	Fowler, IN	9.5%
4	Indianapolis, IN	6.8%
5	Otterbein	2.9%
	All Other Locations	52.5%



1,090
Only **Working**
in Benton County

3,081
Only **Living**
in Benton County

980
Living and **Working**
in Benton County

1% (435)
Jobs filled by KIRPC Region Residents in other states

3% (2,038)
Jobs filled by KIRPC Region Residents in the state of Illinois

38% (24,767)
Jobs filled by KIRPC Region Residents in the state of Indiana

Figure 2. **Benton County Travel Patterns**

SOURCE: [1] U.S CENSUS BUREAU, ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES SUBJECT TABLES

CURRENT STATE OF SAFETY

SAFETY OVERVIEW

Crash safety analysis examined all crashes in Benton County that resulted in an injury or fatality from 2015 to 2023. In that nine-year period, of all crashes 11% involved fatalities, 48% resulted in incapacitating injuries, 27% were non-incapacitating injuries, and 14% were classified as possible injuries ***(Figure 3)***.

Rate of crash fatality measures the likelihood any crash that occurs results in a fatality. Benton County's rate is 2.3 fatalities per 10,000 crashes, higher than the state average (1.3) ***(Table 3)***. This combined with a high percentage of incapacitating injury crashes emphasizes the urgency to address traffic safety.

An analysis of state crash data shows that 59% of all reported crashes that result in a person being injured or killed occur on just 7% of Benton County's roads. The High Injury Network (HIN) identifies roadway segments and intersection locations with the highest concentrations of severe crashes. The HIN should be prioritized when considering crash countermeasures.

Table 3. **Crash Comparison**

Jurisdiction	Crash Fatality Rate (Per 10k Crashes)
Benton County	2.3
KIRPC Region	2.5
Indiana	1.3

UNDERSTANDING **CRASH SEVERITY**

For the purposes of this report, Crash severity can be identified as:

K **Fatal Injury** Any injury that results in death within a 30 day period after the crash occurred.

A **Incapacitating Injury** Any non-fatal injury that prevents the injured person from walking, driving or normally continuing the activities the person was capable of performing before the injury occurred. Hospitalization is usually required.

B **Non Incapacitating Injury** Any injury, other than a fatal or incapacitating injury, which is evident to the officer at the scene of the crash and may require medical treatment. Although, hospitalization is usually not required.

C **Possible Injury** Any injury reported or claimed which is not visible.

CRASH SEVERITY **BY THE NUMBERS**

	Angle	Backing	Head On	Non Collision	Object/ Animal	Ran Off Road	Rear End	Side Swipe	Other
K	6	0	2	0	0	6	3	0	2
A	29	1	2	3	2	33	7	2	3
B	16	1	2	1	0	15	3	3	5
C	1	0	1	0	0	15	2	3	2

Table 4. **Crash Type Totals by Severity**

CRASH SEVERITY HEATMAP

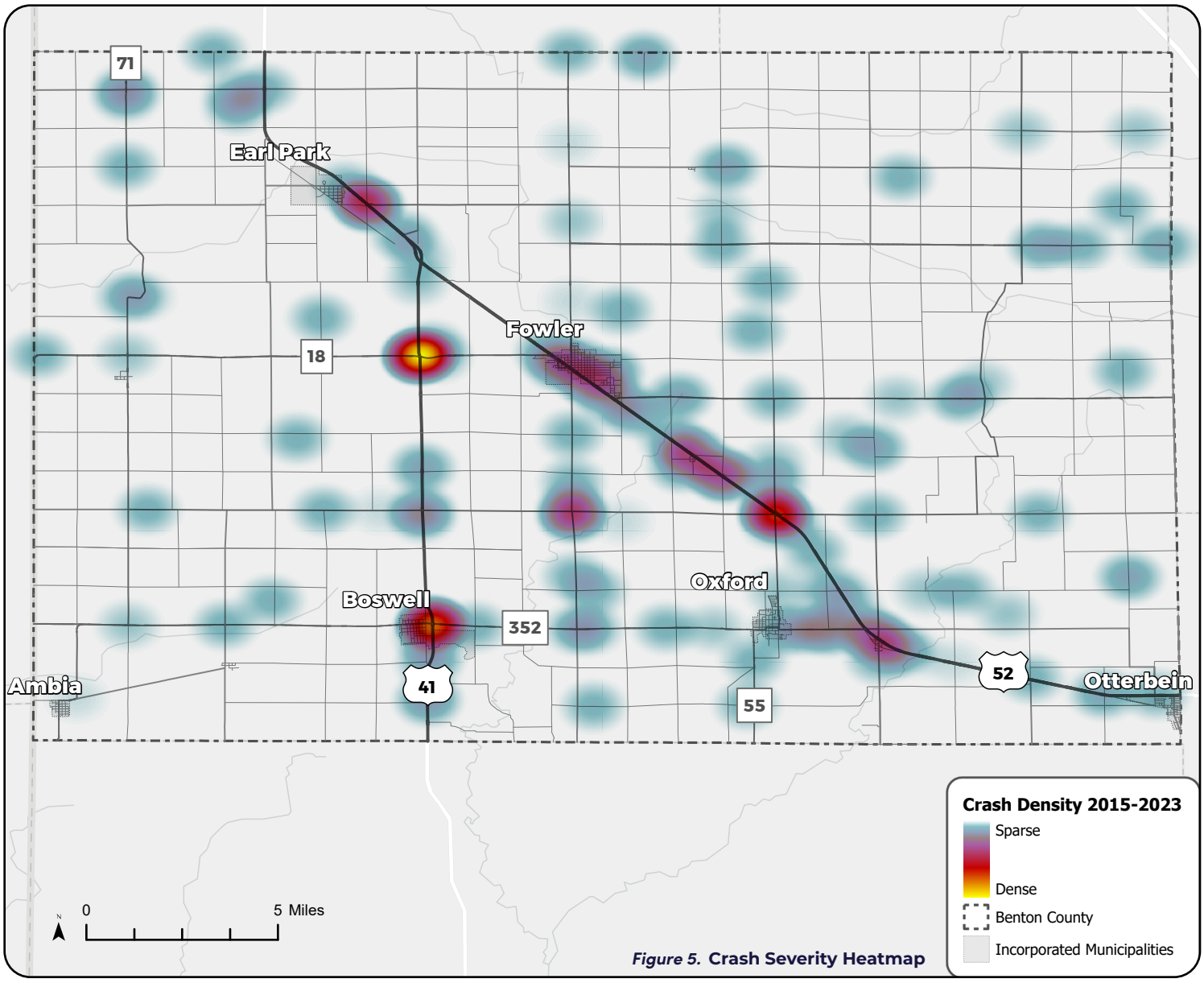


Figure 5. **Crash Severity Heatmap**

Figure 4. **Crash Types Resulting in Death or Severe Injury (%)**

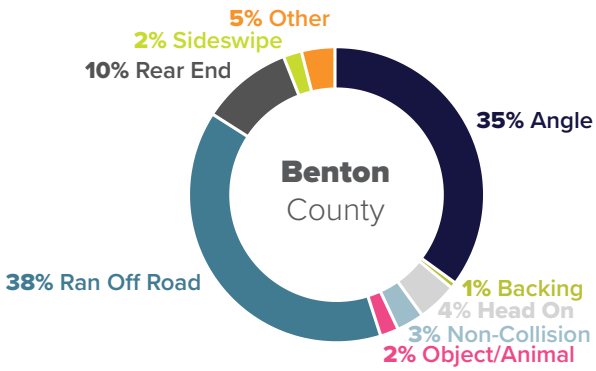
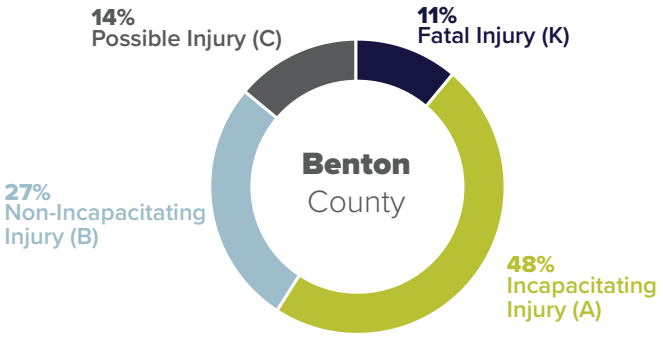


Figure 3. **Crash Severity (%)**



HIGH INJURY NETWORK

A High Injury Network is a selection of the roadways in an area with the highest incidences of fatal and severe injury crashes ***(Figure 6)***. To produce this high injury network, fatal and severe injury crashes from 2015 to 2023 were used. Intersection crashes were assigned to be half weight to identify the top 10 HIN Segments ***(Table 5)*** and Intersections ***(Table 6)***.

Crashes were averaged over a distance of 2,600 feet. Only corridors over a half mile were considered. HIN segments had a minimum length of 1,500 feet. Segments that were closer than 900 feet together were merged.

Each county has a different threshold of fatal and severe injury crashes, so that even if a county has fewer crashes, it still identify a robust set of priority corridors for targeted safety improvements.

TOP 10 HIN SEGMENTS

Rank	Primary Roadway	Segment Start	Segment End
1	S. Meridian Rd	W. CR 200 (S)	E. CR 400 (S)
2	W. CR 500 (N)	N. CR 300 W	E. 1st St
3	E. CR 400 (N)	N. CR 900 (E)	N. CR. 1200 (E)
4	W. CR 300 (S)	S. CR 200 (W)	S. CR 600 (W)
5	S. CR 600 (E)	E. CR 600 (S)	E. U.S. 52
6	S. CR 400 (E)	E. SR 18	E. CR 300 (S)
7	N. CR 150 (E)	E. CR 800 (S)	E. CR 900 (N)
8	S. CR 1100 (E)	E. CR 400 (S)	E. CR 550 (S)
9	S. CR 600 (E)	E. CR 100 (S)	E. CR 300 (S)
10	S. CR 300 (E)	E. CR 100 (S)	E. CR 300 (S)

See map on next page with all HIN segment locations.

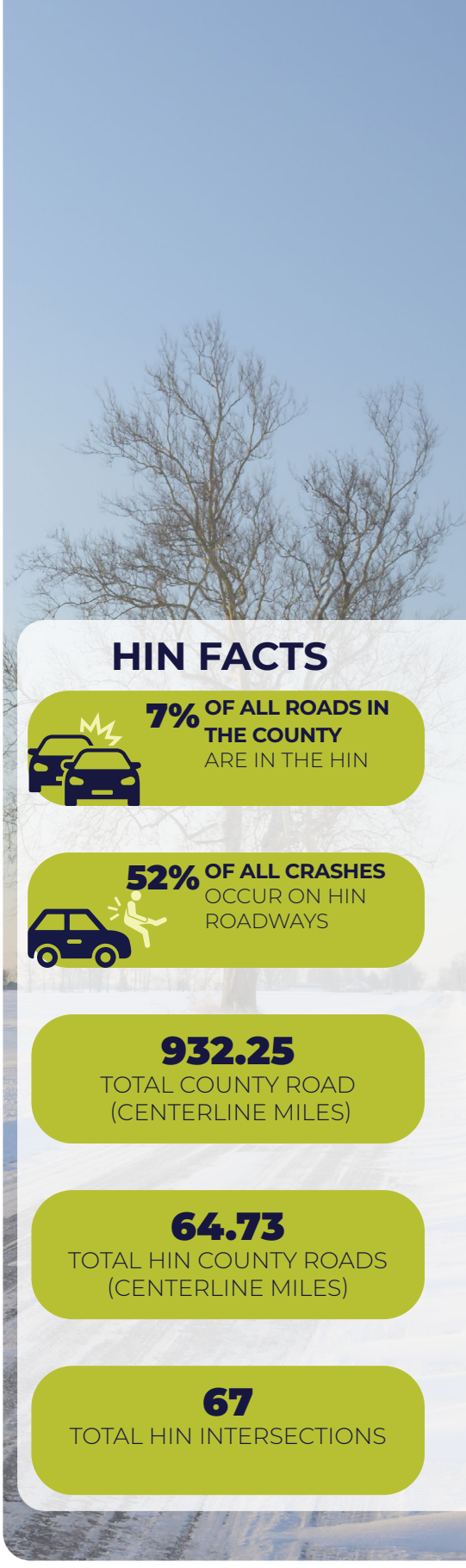
Table 5. **Top 10 High Crash Segments**

TOP 10 HIN INTERSECTIONS

Rank	Primary Roadway	Secondary Roadway
1	W. SR 352	S. U.S. 41
2	W. SR 18	N. U.S. 41
3	W. CR 500 (N)	N. U.S. 41
4	S. CR 600 (E)	E. U.S. 52
5	E. CR 300 (S)	S. CR 1200 (E)
6	S. CR 500 (E)	E. SR 352
7	N. CR 400 (W)	W. CR 900 (N)
8	W. CR 300 (S)	S. U.S. 41
9	S. Grant Ave	E. U.S. 52 BYPASS
10	W. 4th St	W-SR-18

See map on next page with corresponding numbers labeled.

Table 6. **Top 10 High Crash Intersections**



HIN FACTS

7% **OF ALL ROADS IN THE COUNTY** ARE IN THE HIN

52% **OF ALL CRASHES** OCCUR ON HIN ROADWAYS

932.25
TOTAL COUNTY ROAD (CENTERLINE MILES)

64.73
TOTAL HIN COUNTY ROADS (CENTERLINE MILES)

67
TOTAL HIN INTERSECTIONS

HIGH INJURY NETWORK MAP

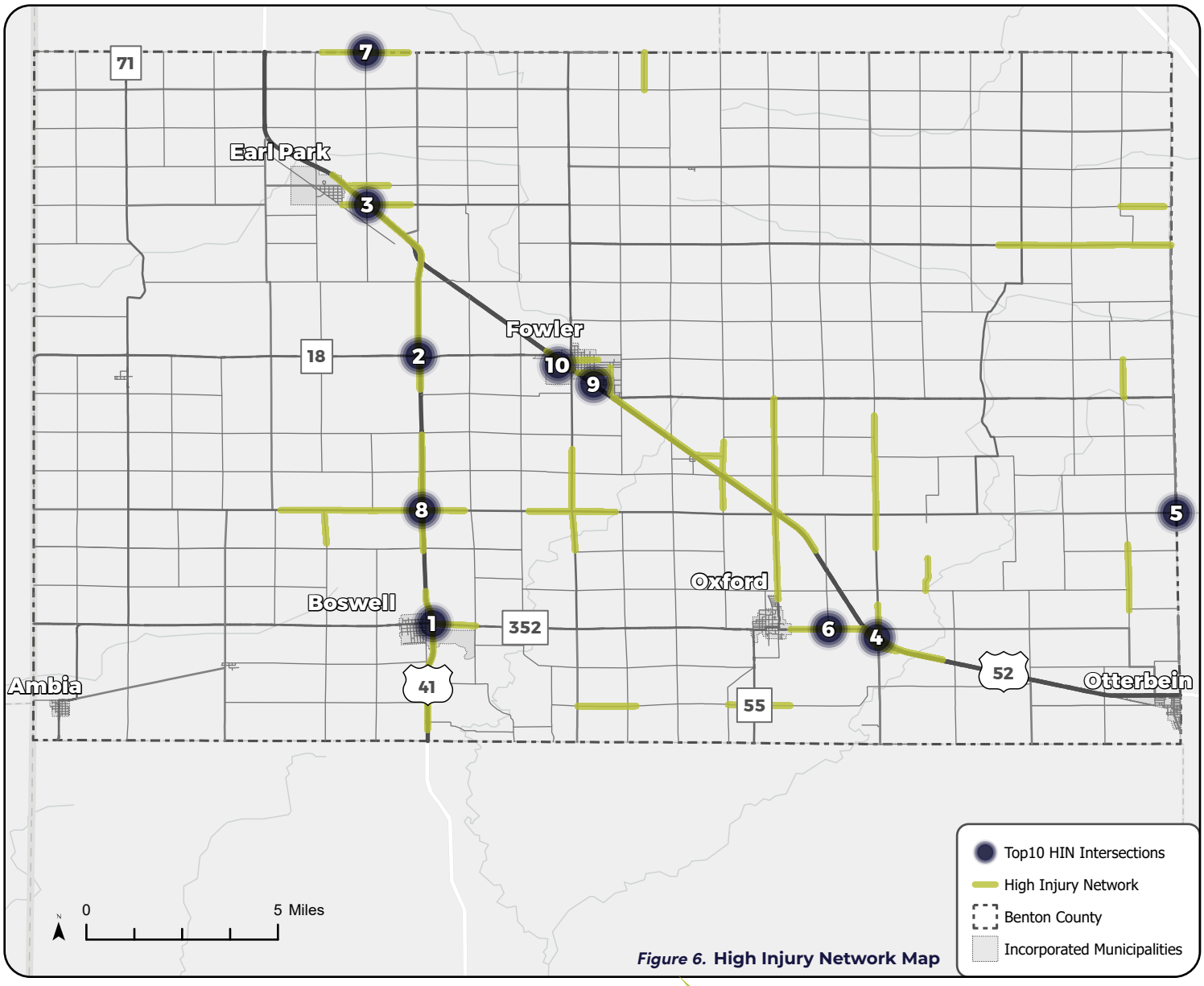


Figure 6. **High Injury Network Map**

CHECK THE REGIONAL PLAN TO SEE THE HIN FOR THE REST OF THE KIRPC REGION!

ROAD SAFETY AUDIT

CORRIDOR OVERVIEW

S. MERIDIAN ROAD:
Between CR 200 S and CR 400 S

CORRIDOR LENGTH:
2.0 miles

ADJACENT KIRPC COUNTIES:
Jasper Co., Newton Co., Warren Co., White CO.

ROADWAY DESIGN

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION:
Minor Collector (rural)

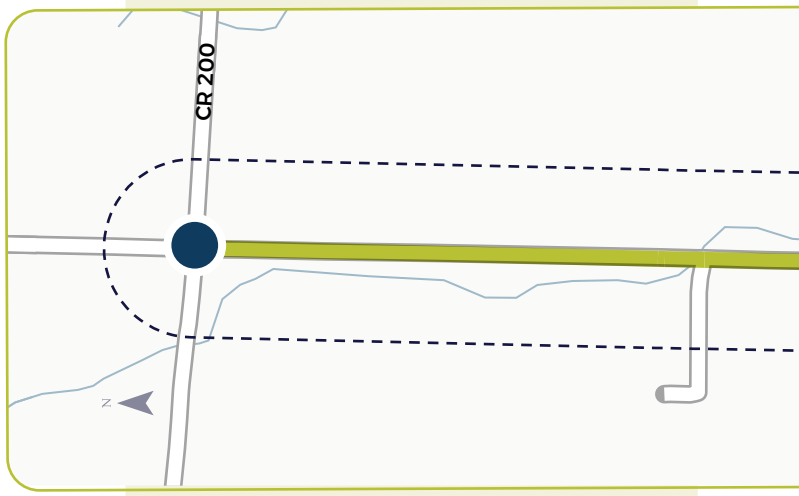
ROADWAY CHARACTERISTICS:
Narrow (22 ft.), no shoulders, no center or edge lines, with guard rail limited to stream crossings

NUMBER OF LANES:
Two-lane, undivided (no median)

POSTED SPEED LIMIT:
55 mph

TRAFFIC VOLUME:
487 AADT (2025)

S. MERIDIAN ROAD:



LEGEND:

- PRIORITY INTERSECTIONS
- CORRIDOR SEGMENT
- STUDY AREA

CRASHES BETWEEN 2015 AND 2023

6 Injury Crashes

1 Fatal Crashes

3 Severe Injury Crashes

TOP FACTOR

50% Disregard Signal

TOP CRASH TYPE

66% Right Angle

Figure 7. **Crash Percent by Primary Factor**

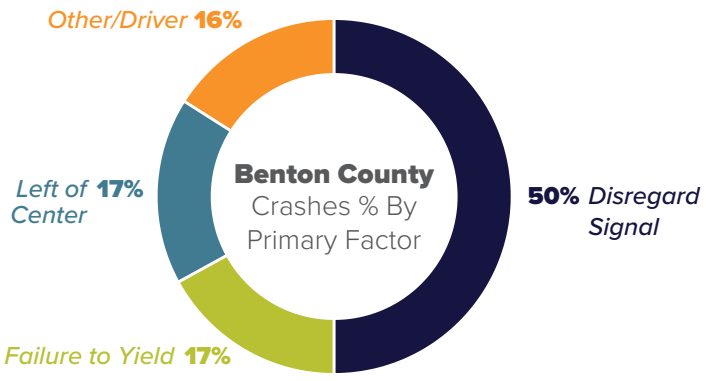
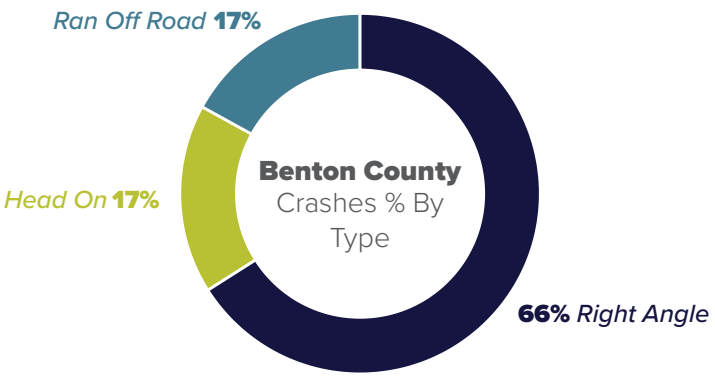


Figure 8. **Crash Percent by Type**



In Fall 2025, KIRPC launched a series of Road Safety Audits across the region, focusing attention at the highest priority location in each county. The following is a summary of the corridor selected for this county along with a set of short-term, mid-term, and long term recommendations for improving safety.

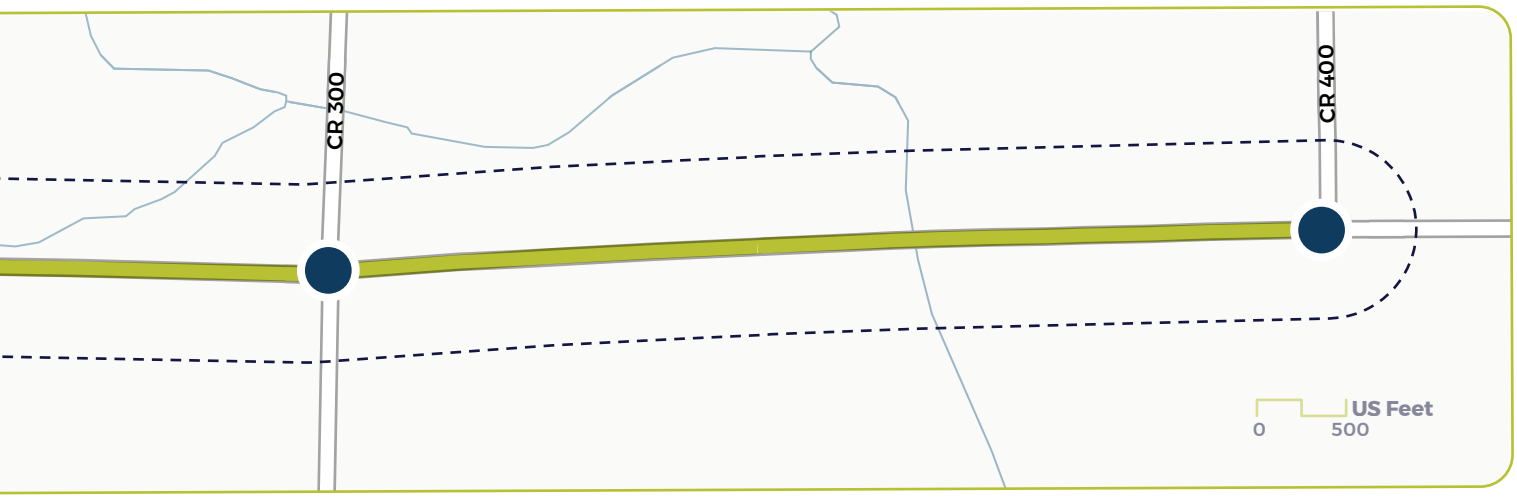


Figure 9. **Road Safety Audit Study Area**

COUNTERMEASURES RECOMMENDED:

SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENTS	
Clear vegetation / trees	Add "Stop" sign on left-side of road
"Stop Ahead" (W3-1) & "Cross Traffic Does Not Stop" (W4-4P) Signs	Remove "Dangerous Intersection" sign & raise the height of sign
Signpost reflectors on stop signposts	Increase size of "Stop" signs to 36" / 48"
Install transverse rumble strips	Add an LED border/flashing beacons on stop signs
Short-Term Improvements Total Cost: $35,000 - $55,000	
MID-TERM IMPROVEMENTS	
Complete pavement assessment	Upgrade guard rails
Stripe centerline and Edge Line	
Mid-Term Improvements Total Cost: $300,000 – $400,000	
LONG-TERM IMPROVEMENTS	
Realign South Meridian Road to eliminate skew	
Long-Term Improvements Total Cost: $2,500,000 – $3,000,000	

Table 7. **Countermeasures Recommended**

BENTON COUNTY EMPHASIS AREAS

EMPHASIS AREA OVERVIEW

As part of the KIRPC Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP), six emphasis areas were identified to address the most critical roadway safety challenges across the eight-county region: Benton, Carroll, Jasper, Newton, Pulaski, Starke, Warren, and White Counties.

These emphasis areas were selected through a comprehensive analysis of regional crash data and stakeholder input. These areas reflect the most pressing roadway safety concerns across the region and serve as the foundation for identifying appropriate countermeasures.

By examining the types and patterns of crashes associated with each emphasis area ***(Figure 10)***, the plan ensures that recommended interventions are both targeted and evidence-based. This approach supports the overarching goal of reducing severe injuries and fatalities.

Crashes By Emphasis Areas:

69 RUN-OFF-ROAD CRASHES

154 EMS RESPONSE HOSPITALIZATION CRASHES

4 INTERSECTION KSI RELATED CRASHES

6 HIN SEGMENT CRASHES NEAR SCHOOLS

BENTON COUNTY EMPHASIS AREAS

RURAL RUN-OFF-ROAD CRASHES

Run-of-road crashes involve a vehicle departing the roadway. Typically, a single vehicle collides with fixed objects or terrain beside the road. Of all crash types, run-off-road crashes are the most common in Benton County, accounting for 38 percent of all injury crash types. These crash types result in the most fatal and severe injury crashes at 59 percent of the time.

Majority of run-off-road crashes occur in rural areas. Roadways containing the highest concentration of rural run-off-road crashes in the county are US 52 and IN 352. Run-off-road crashes can be caused by a variety of things including unsafe roadway geometry, speed, distracted driving, vehicle defects, and swerving to avoid objects on the road.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE / POST-CRASH CARE

Post crash care is one of five components in the safe system approach, a holistic method for strategies to reduce traffic fatalities and injuries. Post crash care focuses on the activities that occur in the seconds, minutes, and hours immediately following a crash to find efficiencies in EMS response time, communication, and first responder safety, among other things.

Benton County has eight fire and EMS stations and zero hospitals with qualifying trauma centers. Areas on the west and east sides of the county are over 5 miles away from the nearest fire or EMS station. These areas had 20 crashes with injuries or fatalities from 2015-2023.

RURAL PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST SAFETY

In Benton County, there were 2 injury crashes involving a pedestrian or cyclist on rural roadways from 2015-2023. These crashes were severe: one caused a fatality while the other caused an incapacitating injury. The roads where these occur are often state and county roads with higher operating speeds, limited lighting, and no sidewalks or designated crossing facilities.

Common contributing factors included pedestrian actions -- such as walking along or crossing high-speed roads, driver failure to yield, and distraction. Several crashes happened at night or in low-light conditions, where visibility was poor and roadway design offered little margin of safety for non-motorized users.

BENTON COUNTY EMPHASIS AREAS CRASH MAP

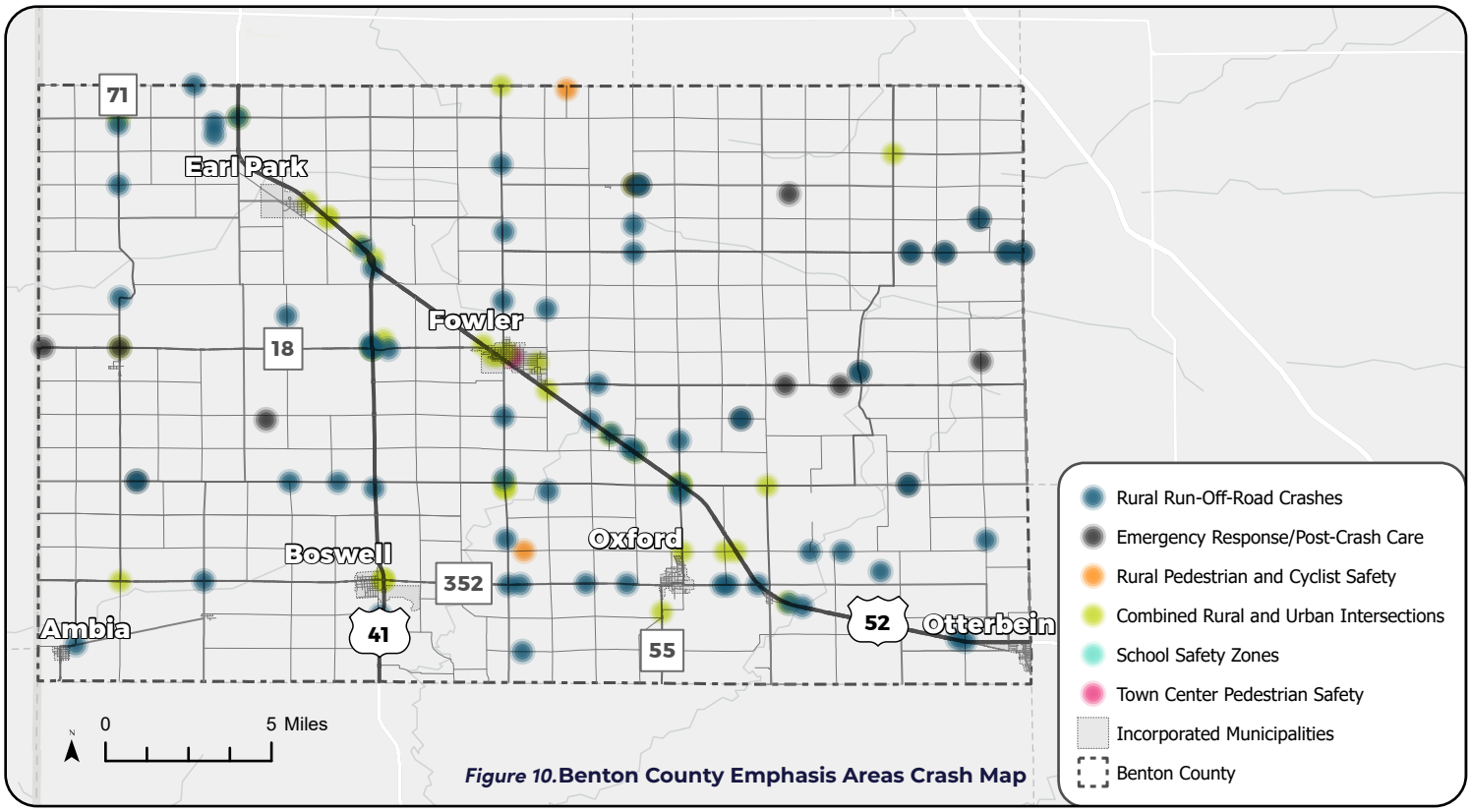


Figure 10. **Benton County Emphasis Areas Crash Map**

COMBINED RURAL AND URBAN INTERSECTIONS

In Benton County, 37 injury crashes occurred at intersections accounting for 22 percent of all crashes in the county. Intersections are a particular area of concern because of the high number of potential conflicts that can occur between vehicles.

Rural intersections often present unique risks, such as higher travel speeds, limited sight distances, and fewer traffic control devices, while urban intersections typically see greater pedestrian and cyclist activity alongside higher traffic volumes. Intersections are a smaller location compared to long road segments and can be targeted for specific interventions.

SCHOOL ZONE SAFETY

School zones have an elevated risk of crashes involving vulnerable road users, like children. From 2015-2023, however, there were no crashes within 1,000 feet from public schools in Benton County. Schools are still high-risk locations for crashes with many children and vehicles around the property during arrival and dismissal times.

Contributing factors for crashes in school zones include speeding, distracted driving, improper turning, and failure to yield right-of-way. Challenges include high-speed arterial roads near schools, low-density rural land use, insufficient pedestrian infrastructure, traffic congestion during drop-off/pick-up times, and inadequate lighting during early hours.

TOWN CENTER PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Town centers in Benton County, such as Fowler and Oxford, serve as community hubs concentrating schools, shops, services, and civic spaces within walkable distances. From 2015-2023 a single pedestrian crash occurred in Fowler.

The typical primary contributing factor in pedestrian crashes is the failure of vehicles to yield to pedestrian right of way, underscoring the need for improved driver awareness and pedestrian-priority infrastructure. Notably, the crash occurred in clear, dry, daylight conditions, indicating that environmental factors were not the primary cause and reinforcing the role of behavioral and design-related issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

EMPHASIS AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

RURAL RUN-OFF-ROAD CRASHES

1. Conduct RSAs at sites where multiple rural run-off-road crashes have occurred.
2. Consider adding edge lines or widening the shoulder where applicable.
3. Advocate to INDOT on behalf of KIRPC in support of safety improvements on rural roads under state control

EMERGENCY RESPONSE / POST-CRASH CARE

1. Convene a safety steering committee that includes representatives from the EMS community.
2. Look for opportunities to increase agency funding for supplies and life saving equipment.

RURAL PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST SAFETY

1. Identify areas along Benton County's rural road network that may be considered higher pedestrian and cyclist activity areas and implement low cost countermeasures such as reducing speed, narrowing lanes, and adding bicycle lanes or sidewalks.

COMBINED RURAL AND URBAN INTERSECTIONS

1. Intersection improvements are context sensitive. Conduct informal RSAs at the 10 high crash intersections defined earlier in this plan.
2. Implement high impact countermeasures that are contextually appropriate (examples at right).
3. Advocate to INDOT on behalf of KIRPC in support of safety improvements on rural roads under state control

SCHOOL ZONE SAFETY

1. Support KIRPC in developing a regional Safe Routes to School Plan.
2. Implement low-cost safety countermeasures within "school zones" such as pedestrian gateway treatments, RRFBs, and reduced speed limits.

TOWN CENTER PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

1. Crashes involving pedestrians should be investigated further for causation with the KIRPC leadership team.
2. Soon after an incident occurs, low-cost quick-build crash countermeasures such as lane narrowing, left-turn traffic calming, and restrict right on red should be deployed to address geometric deficiencies.

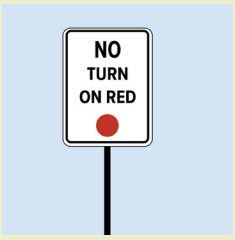
COUNTERMEASURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Low-Cost / Quick-Build

RESTRICT RIGHT ON RED

$$$$

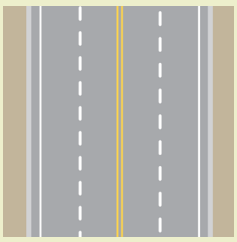
THIS TOOL COULD REDUCE CRASHES BY **40%**



EDGE LINES & PARKING LINES

$$$$

THIS TOOL COULD REDUCE CRASHES BY **52%**



PEDESTRIAN GATEWAY TREATMENT

$$$$

THIS TOOL RESULTS IN YIELD RATES UP TO **80%**

SLOW ZONES / REDUCED SPEED

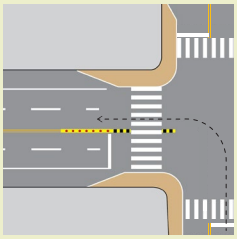
$$$$

THIS TOOL COULD REDUCE CRASHES BY **26%**

LEFT-TURNING TRAFFIC CALMING

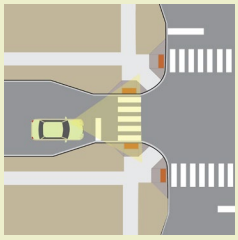
$$$$

THIS TOOL COULD REDUCE CRASHES BY **24%**



Higher-Cost

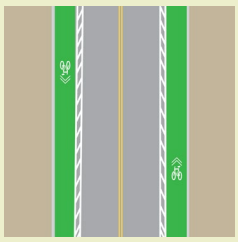
INTERSECTION DAYLIGHTING



$$$$

THIS TOOL COULD REDUCE CRASHES BY **49%**

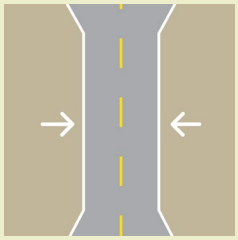
PROTECTED BIKE LANES



$$$$

THIS TOOL COULD REDUCE CRASHES BY **23%**

LANE NARROWING



$$$$

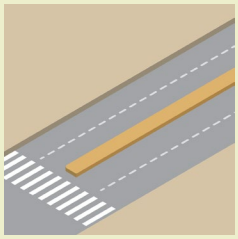
THIS TOOL COULD REDUCE CRASHES BY **42%**

INTERSECTION REALIGNMENT

$$$$

*BENEFITS VARY BASED ON DEGREE OF INTERSECTION SKEW

RAISED MEDIAN / LIMITED ACCESS CONTROL



$$$$

THIS TOOL COULD REDUCE CRASHES BY **71%**

Figure 11. **Countermeasure Recommendations**

BENTON COUNTY CAPITAL PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

BENTON COUNTY						
ID	**Street**	**Start**	**End**	**Short-Term**	**Mid-Term**	**Long-Term**
1	**S. Meridian Rd**	W. CR 200 S	E. CR 400 S	Follow RSA recommendations.	N/A	N/A
2	**W. CR 500 N***	N. CR 300 W	E. 1st St	Consider quick-built RIRO.	Advanced warning system along main route.	Convert intersection to R-Cut.
3	**E. CR 400 N***	N. CR 900 E	N. CR 1200 E	Edge line, center line.	Stone shoulder, safety edge, edge line rumble stripes.	Pavement widening and asphalt shoulders.
4	**W. CR 300 S***	S. CR 200 W	S. CR 600 W	Add new painted stop bars, consider quick-built RIRO.	Improve lighting, Advanced warning system along main route.	Convert intersection to R-Cut.
5	**S. CR 600 E***	E. CR 600 S	E. U.S. 52	Paint stop bars, transverse rumble strips, consider quick-built RIRO.	Advanced warning system along main route.	Convert intersection to R-Cut.
6	**S. CR 400 E***	E. SR 18	E. CR 300 S	Painted transverse rumble stripes at intersection with SR 18, stripe stop bar, add “crossing traffic doesn’t stop sign”, push back plantings.	N/A	Realign intersection from offset “t” to perpendicular.
7	**N. CR 150 E***	E. CR 800 N	E. CR 900 N	Relocate stop sign, stripe stop bar, add “crossing traffic doesn’t stop sign”, push back plantings.	Widen shoulder with aggregate.	N/A
8	**S. CR 1100 E***	E. CR 400 S	E. CR 550 S	Edge line, center line.	Stone shoulder, safety edge, edge line rumble stripes.	Pavement widening and asphalt shoulders.
9	**S. CR 600 E***	E. CR 100 S	E. CR 300 S	Edge line, center line.	Stone shoulder, safety edge, centerline rumble stripes.	Pavement widening and asphalt shoulders.
10	**S. CR 300 E***	E. CR 100 S	E. CR 300 S	N/A	Intersection lighting.	Excel/decel lanes, turn lanes off of US-52.

*** Non-Local Roads**

Table 8. **Benton County Capital Projects**

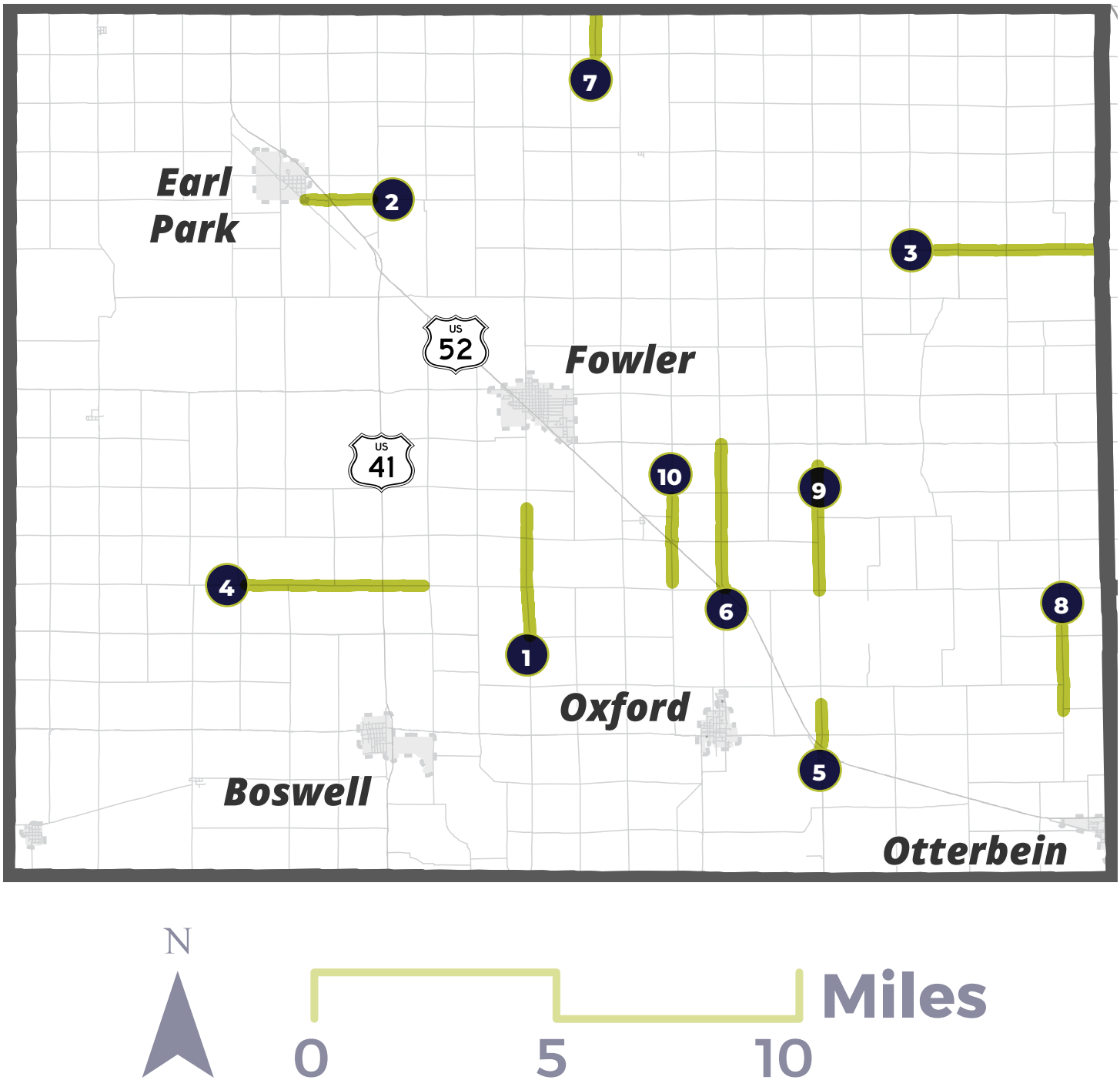


Figure 12. **Benton County Capital Project Recommendations Map**