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STB Docket FD 35952

EI-24036

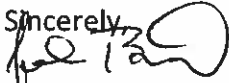
Mr. Davecky
Surface Transportation Board
Docket No. FD ~~38952~~ 35952
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423-001

The Lake County Indiana RAILED Group has attended the scoping meetings held by the STB and listened to the presentations made concerning the proposed Great Lakes Basin Transportation construction of a railroad through southern Lake and Porter County, Indiana. RAILED has strongly objected to the massive destruction of prime farm land for the construction of the railroad since Lake and Porter Counties already have an adequate freight rail system, as well as numerous abandoned lines.

RAILED has reviewed the GLBT plan and believes that there are Alternate Routes that can reach the same objectives stated by GLBT using existing rail lines and abandoned right of ways. Following this letter is a detailed presentation about an alternate route using the Norfolk Southern Kankakee Line that parallels US Route 41 in Lake County and the underutilized CSX Porter Branch through northern Lake and Porter County. This alternate proposal makes the same connections as proposed GLBT route, while preserving a vast amount of prime Indiana farm land.

- This alternate route from Belshaw, IN to connections with the eastern railroads can be accomplished by taking little or no additional private land.
- This alternate plan would double track sections of railroad lines that once had double track to provide the train capacity stated in the GLBT proposal.
- This alternate proposes highway grade separation projects to mitigate the impact on the public at locations that would improve rail-highway interface even with today's traffic.
- This alternate would put traffic through industrial corridors nearer the Lake and remove some traffic from the north side of Hammond and through East Chicago.
- This plan utilizes the increased capacity built on the Norfolk Southern line between Indiana Harbor and Chesterton, IN by the Federally funded Indiana Gateway Project.
- The plan could also reach a CSX Line into southern Michigan bypassed by the GLBT proposal.
- This plan directly accesses the heart of the Northwest Indiana steel industry bypassed by the GLBT proposal.

The RAILED Group requests that the STB carefully review this alternate plan in lieu of the plan proposed by the GLBT across Lake and Porter County.

Sincerely,

John Bryant

GREAT LAKES BASIN RAIL PROJECT

Belshaw Alternative

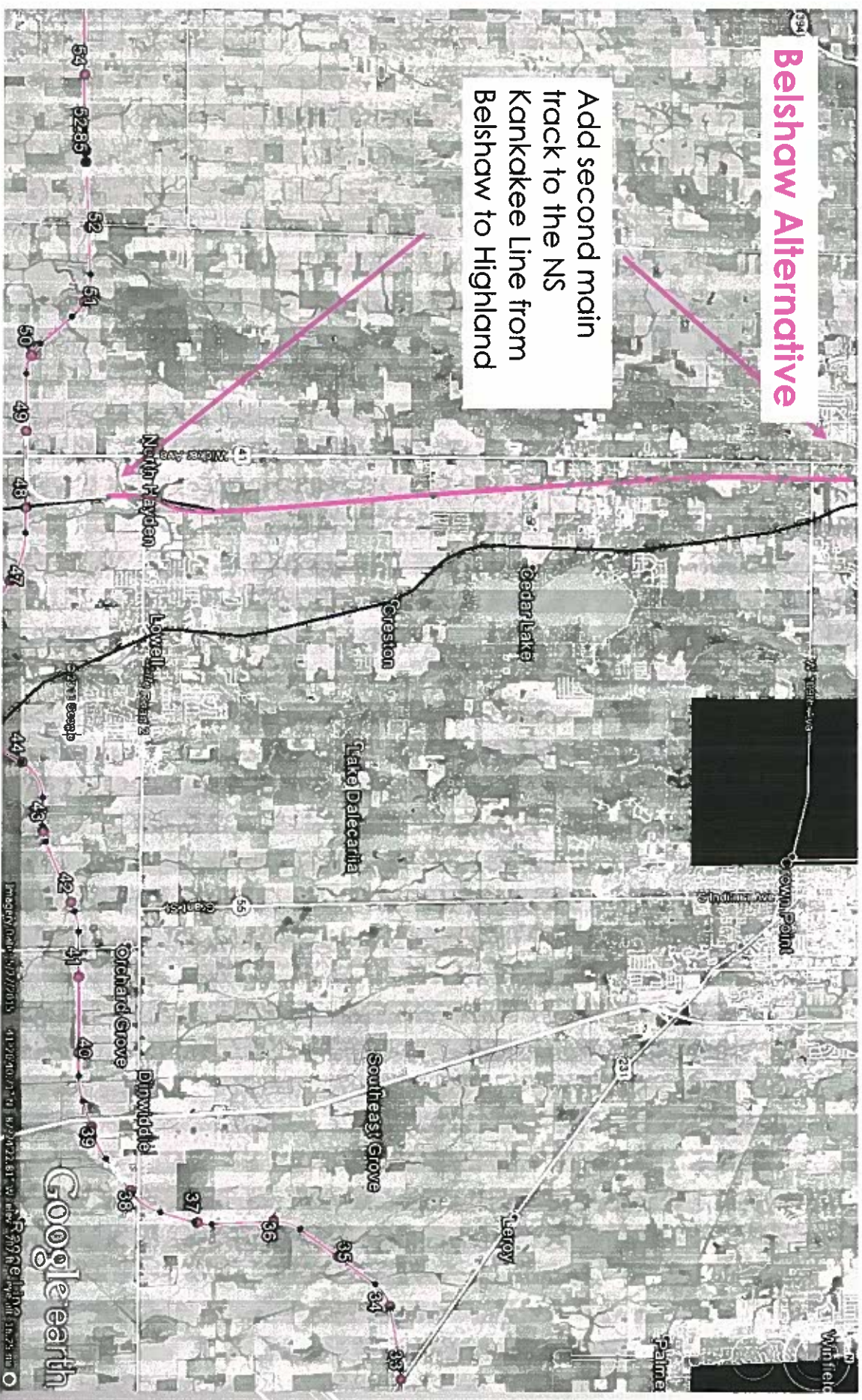
Belshaw Alternative

Over all route: connect to CN in Highland, CSX by an upgraded Porter Branch and NS by the CF&E or Porter Branch or NS by East Chicago



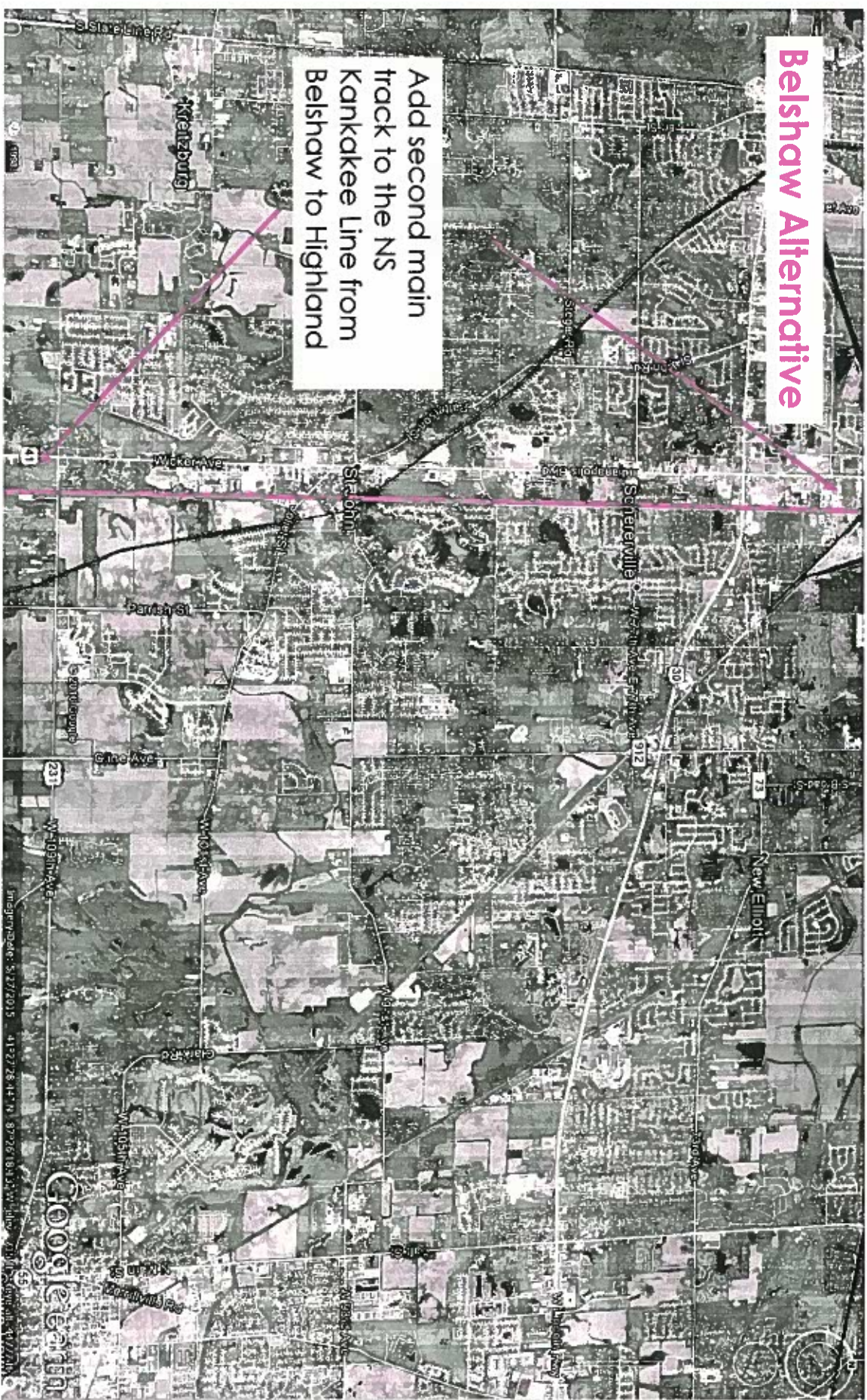
Belshaw Alternative

Add second main track to the NS Kankakee Line from Belshaw to Highland



Belshaw Alternative

Add second main track to the NS Kankakee Line from Belshaw to Highland



Belshaw Alternative

Add second main track to the NS Kankakee Line from Belshaw to Highland

Connection to CN at Hays

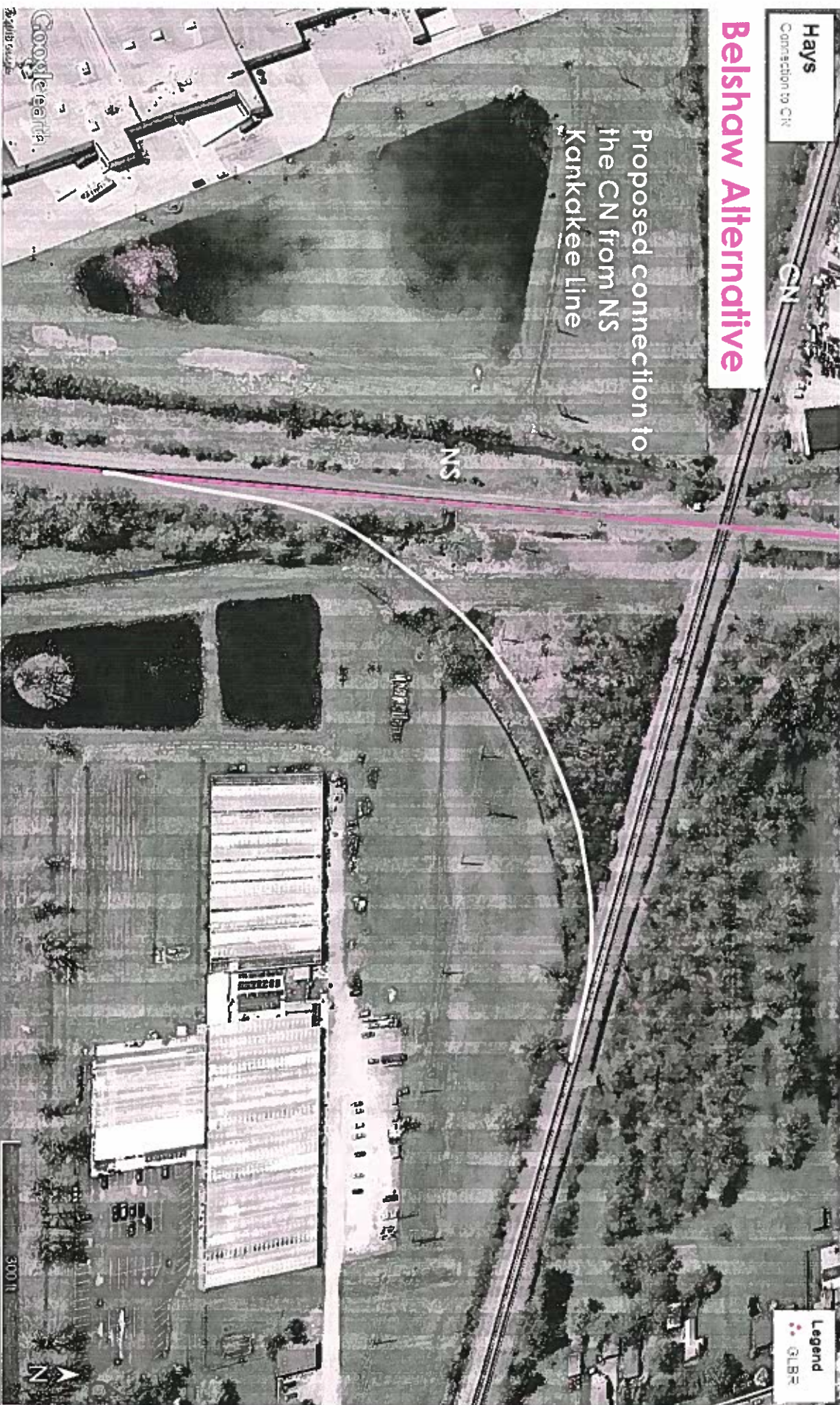


Google Earth

Hays
Connection to CN

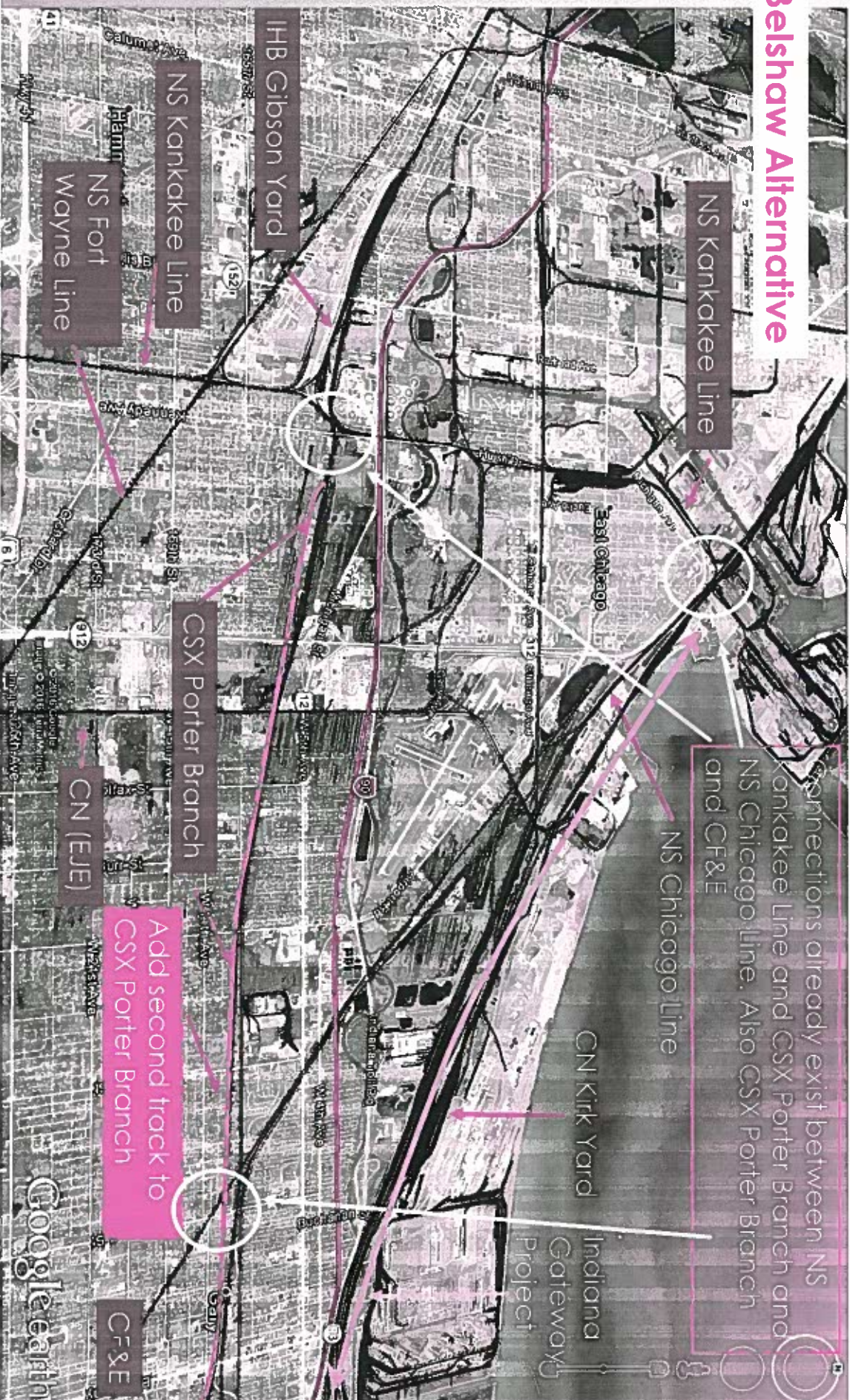
Belshaw Alternative

Proposed connection to
the CN from NS
Kankakee line





Belshaw Alternative



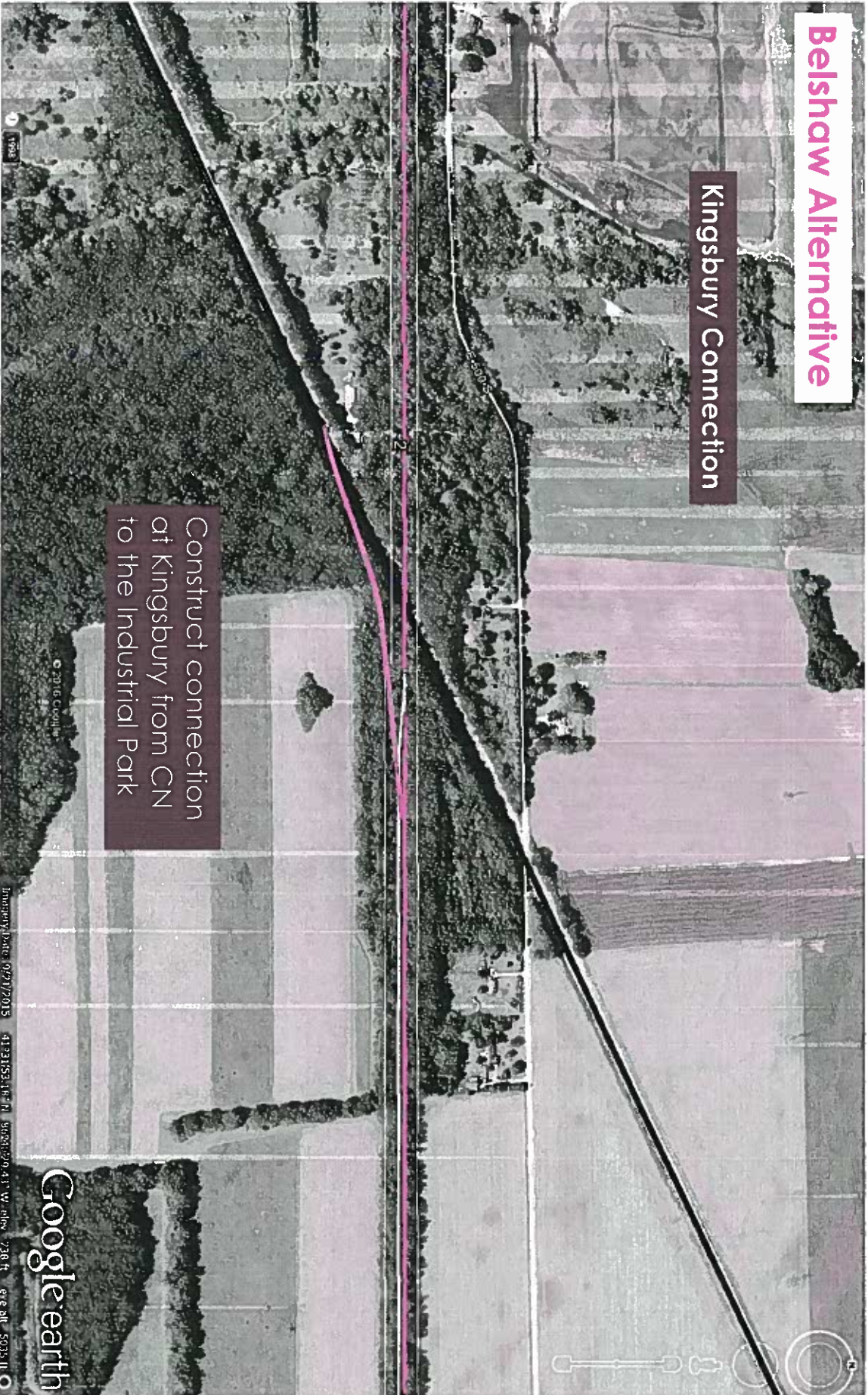
Belshaw Alternative



Belshaw Alternative

Kingsbury Connection

Construct connection
at Kingsbury from CN
to the Industrial Park



1988

© 2016 Google

Imagery date: 02/17/2015 41°31'53.16"N 108°12'04.3"W elev: 738 ft 67.6 dB - 503.11

Google earth

Belshaw Alternative

- **Use existing rail lines and rail capacity in Northwest Indiana to connect the GLBT to main rail routes to the east and south**
- **Rebuild the former double track NS Kankakee Line from Belshaw to existing double track at Highland**
- **Build a connection from the Kankakee Line to the CN Main Line at Hayes in Highland, IN**
- **Use the Kankakee Line route to connect to the CSX Porter Branch at Gibson in Hammond, IN and to the NS Chicago Line in East Chicago, IN**
- **Build a second main track on the former double track Porter Branch from Gibson to existing double track in Burns Harbor, IN**
- **Use the Porter Branch to connect to the CSX Garrett Sub at Willow Creek in Portage, IN and the NS Chicago Line in Porter, IN on existing connections**
- **Use the Porter Branch to connect to the CF&E in Gary, IN and the CF&E to connect to the NS Fort Wayne Line just west of Valparaiso, IN**

Belshaw Alternative (cont.)

- **Proposed Highway Grade Separations**
 - **93rd Avenue over Kankakee Line and CSX Indianapolis Line**
 - **53rd Avenue under the Kankakee Line in Highland, IN**
 - **45th Avenue over the Kankakee Line in Highland, IN**
 - **Grand Boulevard under the Kankakee Line in Highland, IN**
 - **165th Street over Kankakee line in Hammond, IN**
 - **Broadway over the Porter Branch in Gary, IN**
 - **Ripley Street (Rt 6) over Porter Branch in Lake Station, IN**
 - **Rt 149 over Porter Branch in Burns Harbor, IN**

Belshaw Alternative Advantages

- Eliminates construction of over 63 miles of rail line through fertile farm land
- Connects to all major rail lines to the east and south using existing right of way
- Connects to the NS Chicago Line so that the additional capacity built with the federally funded Indiana Gateway Project can be utilized between East Chicago and Porter, IN
- Connects with the CN so that CN trains could reach the newly rebuilt Kirk Yard in Gary
- The route reaches the IHB Gibson Yard, a major origin point for automobile trains going west through Chicago.
- The Alternative only requires four new connections (Belshaw south, Shelby, Hayes, and Kingsbury)
- Provides direct access for Powder River Basin coal to the NIPSCO power station at Wheatfield

Belshaw Alternative Advantages (cont.)

- **Allows Powder River Basin coal to avoid Chicago going to the CSX served power station at West Olive Michigan**

John H. Bryant
6317 E 181st Ave
Hebron IN 46341-9302



Dave Navechry
Environmental Analysis
San Jose Transportation Board
395 E. Street SW
Washington DC 20423-0001



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