RAIL READY SITES PROGRAM

FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS

Presented by:

IOWA INTERSTATE RAILROAD &
STRATA PLATFORMS



INTRODUCTIONS

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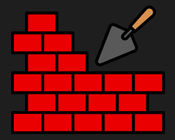
AMY WHITE

Strata Platforms Client Success & Product Operations Manager



WHAT WE WILL COVER

Purpose and methodology driving the program.
Skills learned can be applied to all development properties in your area.



FOUNDATION

Importance of Site Readiness

IAIS GOAL

STRATA PLATFORMS

LOIS, Lasso & Site Shepperd



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Machinery and tools for construction.



QUESTIONS

IMPORTANCE OF SITE READINESS

Experts from Area Development Article 2026 Annual Survey of Site Selection Consultants:

“Perhaps no finding in this year's survey is more striking than the near-universal elevation of speed as a primary project driver. Certainty of permitting registered among the top-tier factors for 94% of respondents. Site readiness and due diligence status — a factor that ranked at just 78% in last year's survey — surged to 98.5% in 2026, one of the most dramatic year-over-year gains recorded across the entire dataset.”

"Permitting speed and the absence of NIMBY activism have truly emerged as pivotal site selection factors here in 2026," says John Boyd, Principal at The Boyd Company. "In corporate location, 'timing is everything.' More and more of our engagements are prioritizing 'speed to market' as an overriding project goal.“

“The implication for economic developers is direct: communities that can demonstrate a genuine, documented path from site selection to shovel in the ground — not a marketing claim, but an engineered and legally verified timeline — will increasingly win the projects that matter most.”

Site Selector Screening Priorities

IMPORTANCE OF SITE READINESS

Site Selector Screening Priorities

Factor	Screening Stage	Why It Matters
Site Availability & Willing Seller	First screen	Sites with unclear ownership or no stated price are often skipped entirely
Rail Access Details	First screen	Vague rail claims ('near railroad') are insufficient — switch location and service details are required
Utility Capacity (Electric, Gas, Water, Sewer)	First screen	Missing utility data triggers elimination; confirmed capacity with provider contacts is expected
Zoning & Permitting Pathway	First screen	Consultants need to know if a project can be approved — unknown zoning is a red flag
Phase I Environmental Status	Early screen	Most projects require a clean Phase I; unknown environmental status signals risk
Acreage and Site Configuration	First screen	Sites must meet minimum acreage requirements; usable area matters, not just total parcel size
Infrastructure Buildout Timeline & Cost	Mid-screen	Projects need predictability; unknown utility buildout timelines create schedule risk
Workforce Availability	Mid-screen	Labor market data is required for most industrial decisions
Community Attractiveness	Late screen	Matters for employee recruitment and retention; supporting data strengthens final presentations



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Rail Ready Site Program is a no-cost, partnership-driven initiative from Iowa Interstate Railroad. Its purpose is straightforward: help EDOs along the IAIS network prepare their rail-adjacent sites to compete effectively for industrial investment, before a real opportunity is on the line.

Speed-to-market is the defining standard in today's industrial site selection process. Site selectors routinely narrow a field of dozens of candidates to a shortlist within days, and they eliminate sites quickly when data is incomplete, utilities are undocumented, or responses are slow. Rail access is a genuine competitive advantage, but only when the surrounding documentation and preparation are in place to support it.

The Rail Ready program is organized as a **progressive process.** Communities do not need perfect documentation before they begin. Each completed step increases a site's visibility, reduces perceived risk, and improves your team's ability to respond quickly and confidently when a real inquiry arrives.

Milestone	Timeframe	EDO Action Required	IAIS Provides
Step 1: Introductory Session	Week 1–2	Attend session, identify sites to enroll	Site selection education, program orientation
Step 2: LOIS & Lasso Training	Week 2–4	Complete platform training, set up accounts	Training coordination via Strata
Step 3: Populate LOIS Listing	Week 3–5	Enter all available site data into LOIS	Best-practice listing example, review support
Step 4: Submit Mock Lasso RFI	Days 1–30 post-training	Respond to mock RFI within 30 days	Issue mock RFI modeled on real inquiries
Step 5: Readiness Scorecard	Week 6–7	Review scorecard, ask questions	Structured evaluation report
Step 6: Action Plan Delivery	Week 7–8	Review priorities, assign internal tasks	Custom prioritized action plan
Step 7: Ongoing Improvement	Rolling / Ongoing	Implement improvements, update LOIS	Progress reviews, marketing plan upon readiness

PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

Note: Timelines above represent a typical progression and will vary based on your team's capacity, the number of sites enrolled, and documentation already in hand. IAIS will work with your schedule.

IOWA IAIS INTERSTATE RAILROAD

INTRODUCTORY SESSION

What to Expect - Step 1



How site selectors use screening tools & why **early elimination** happens quickly.



The **documentation** hierarchy: what gets checked first & why



Rail-specific site factors and how IAIS evaluates infrastructure for industrial use



An introduction to the **LOIS & Lasso** platforms and how they feeds into consultant workflows



What the **Rail Ready** program looks like from start to finish

LOIS LISTING & LASSO RFI TRAINING

What to Expect - Step 2

Training Format

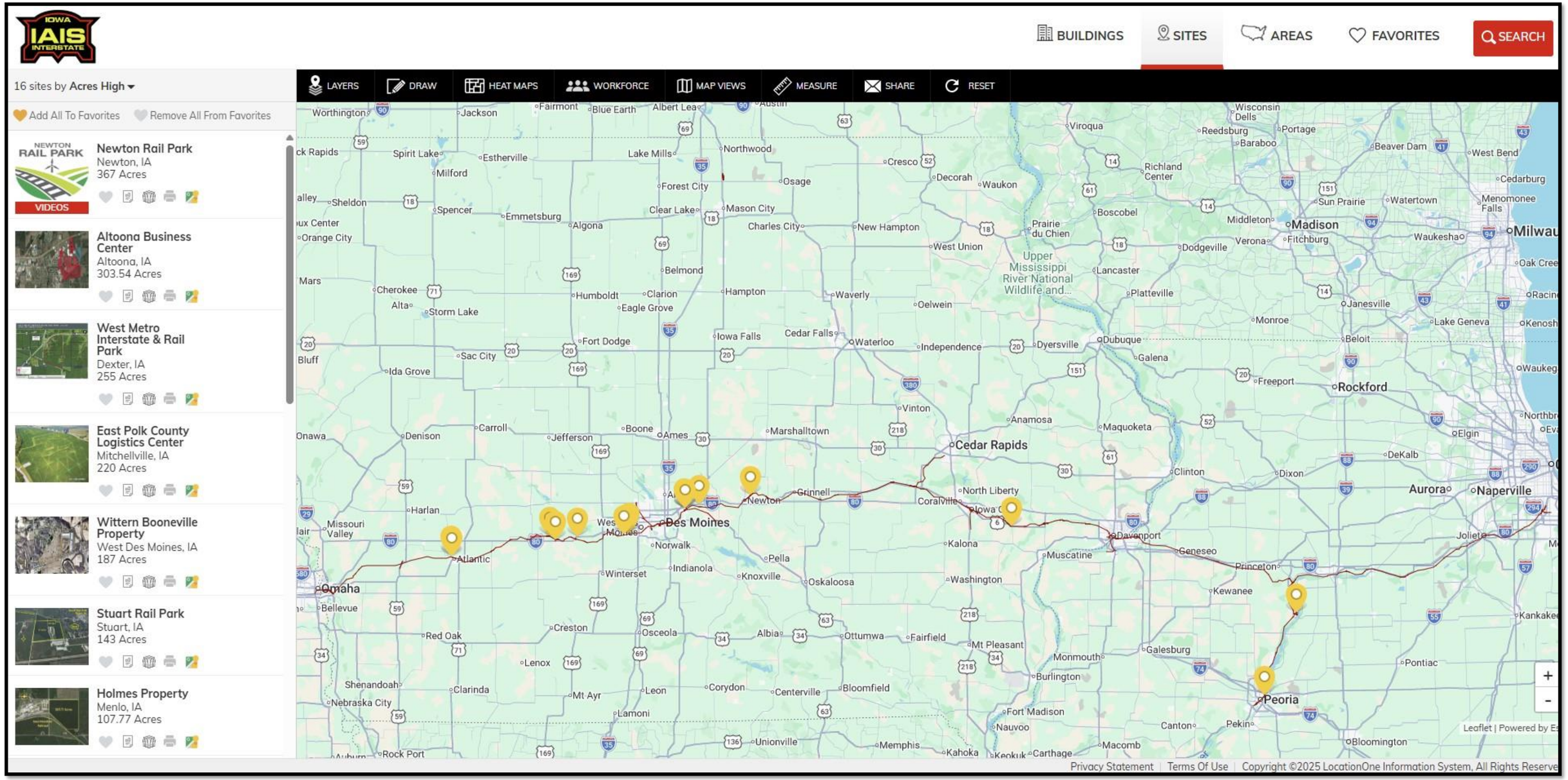
IAIS will coordinate training for your team through Strata Platforms, available as a live session or via recorded training materials. Training typically runs 1 hour per platform. Individual custom training is also available.

- You will leave training knowing how to create and edit your LOIS listing, upload documents and photos, and navigate the platform from a site selector's perspective
- You will understand how Lasso routes incoming RFIs to your account, how to organize a response, and how to document communication
- IAIS will share a best-practice LOIS listing example so you can see what a well-prepared site looks like

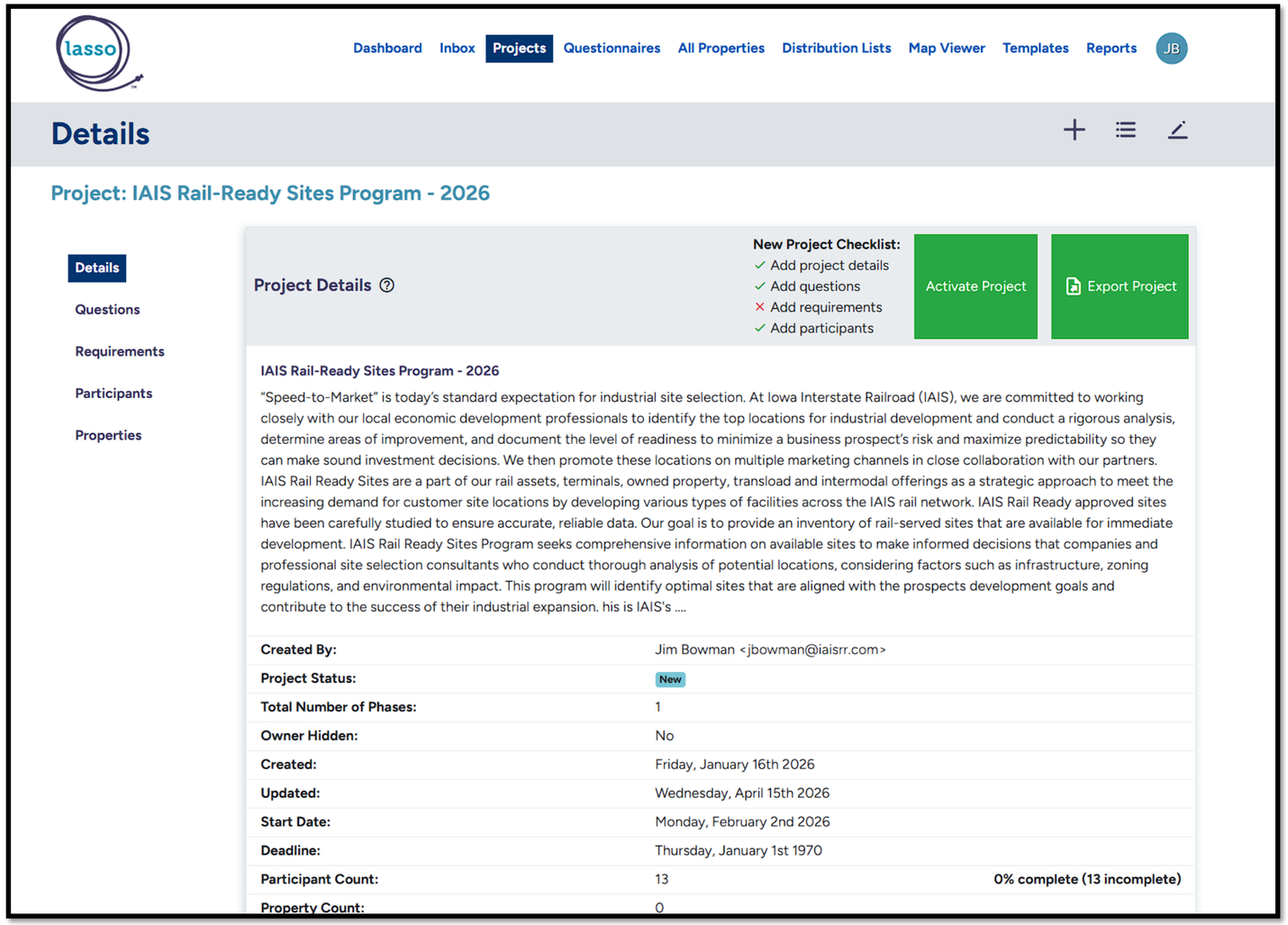
WHAT WE CAN DO TOGETHER

Be Found on the LocationOne.com Property Marketplace which we are building into the Zillow for Economic Development Properties	Extend the National and Global Exposure to IAIS rail served properties
Provide Clear Communication of Available Properties on IAIS website and all websites of partner organizations	Reduce the Coordination Complexity
Respond to RFIs with Ease. Strata Platforms allows all local economic development to respond to RFIs sent through Lasso at no fee.	Save hours every year when responding to RFIs that are sent by Site Selectors, Corporate End Users and Railroads
Feed RFI responses into an automated, benchmarking and analysis tool to see how your site(s) stack up	Receive a designation and score instantly to see where the gaps are and how to improve market viability

LOIS PROPERTY MARKETING



Lasso RFI Management



With Lasso

Collect and connect property data to those who need it most; IIASR and business investors considering a location.

- Submit the most accurate and reliable data
- Save time spent by collaborating with your organization and sending questionnaires to 3rd-party partners
- Generate reports for site certification, site readiness, and site selection opportunities
- Reduce RFI fatigue and reply to RFIs faster with Total Data Recall (i.e., eliminate repetitive data entry) for future opportunities

POPULATE YOUR LOIS LISTING

What to Expect - Step 3

Training Format

Using the framework from Step 1 and the platform training from Step 2, your team now completes your LOIS listing with all currently available information. This is the most documentation-intensive step of the program and will likely require coordination with multiple parties including property owners, utilities, and local government.

- Site Control & Ownership
- Utilities (electricity, natural gas, water, sewer, telecom)
- Transportation Modes
- Zoning & Permitting

ADDITIONAL SPEED-TO-MARKET FACTORS

STEP 3 CONTINUED



- **Boundary Survey:** certified, current
- **Topography Map:** grading and drainage characteristics
- **Title Report:** confirms clear ownership and no outstanding claims
- **Wetlands Delineation:** confirms developable area
- **Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA):** required by most lenders and many projects
- **Utility Buildout Plan with Cost Estimates:** how long and how much to bring service to the site
- **Rail Infrastructure Plan:** switch location, siding capacity, and estimated buildout cost (IAIS will assist with this)
- **Workforce Data:** labor availability, wage rates, commute shed
- **Community Overview:** quality of place, housing, schools, and amenities

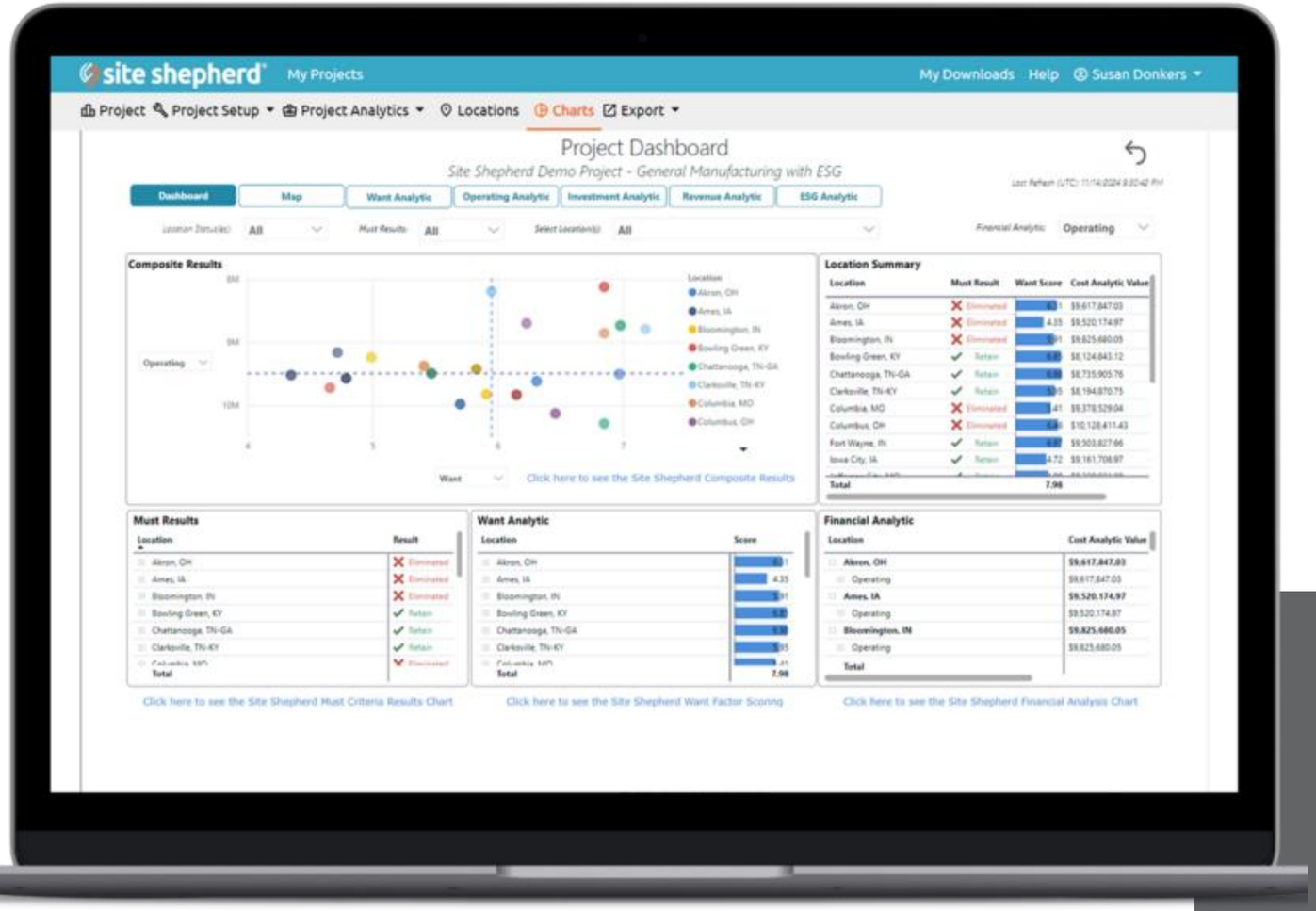
SUBMIT MOCK LASSO RFI

What to Expect - Step 4

Training Format

The mock RFI will reflect the types of questions site selectors actually ask at first contact, including:

- Site acreage and available parcel configurations
- Transportation Modes
- Rail service details: carrier, switch access, siding capacity
- Utility capacity and timeframe to service
- Zoning and permitting pathway
- Environmental status (Phase I, wetlands)
- Ownership and pricing
- Infrastructure buildout timeline and cost estimates



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READINESS SCORECARD

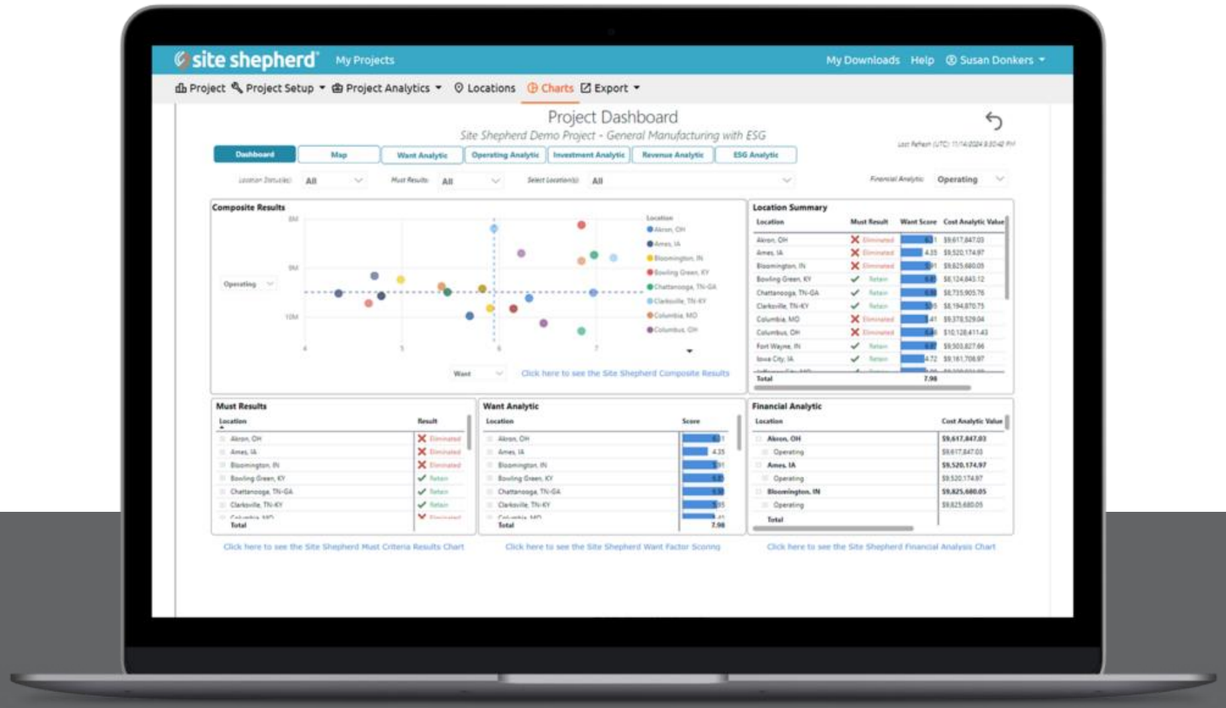
WHAT TO EXPECT - STEP 5

After reviewing your LOIS listing and your Lasso RFI response, IAIS will prepare and deliver a Readiness Scorecard

A structured evaluation of your site's current preparedness level across the key categories that matter to site selectors. The exercise scores the site against itself as well as other sites. A sophisticated data set, as well as a variety of high level and granular reports, will be generated as companions to your scorecard, to assist with visualization and prioritization of next steps.

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READINESS SCORECARD



What the Scorecard Covers:

- **Site Control:** ownership clarity, pricing, and parcel structure
- **Transportation:** rail infrastructure details and road/air access documentation
- **Utilities:** completeness of data and any known capacity limitations
- **Zoning & Permitting:** clarity of development pathway and timeline
- **Environmental:** Phase I status, wetlands, and known risk factors
- **Documentation:** what's present, what's missing, and what's out of date
- **RFI Response Quality:** speed, completeness, and professional presentation

- ✓ *Diagnostic tool, not a grade*
- ✓ *Serves as a guide for improvement*
- ✓ *Sites of all levels benefit from clarity*



ACTION PLAN

WHAT TO EXPECT - STEP 6

Based on the Readiness Scorecard, IAIS will develop and deliver a custom, prioritized Action Plan for your site. This document serves as your roadmap for improving site readiness over time, with items sequenced so that progress can be made incrementally.

What the Action Plan Includes

- Prioritized list of documentation gaps to address, in recommended order
- Specific guidance on how to close each gap (who to contact, what to commission, what information to gather)
- Infrastructure improvement recommendations, including rail and utility buildout planning
- Estimated timelines for each action item, where applicable
- Identification of any third-party studies or reports needed (survey, Phase I, utility study, etc.)
- Create a Site Master Plan

HOW TO WORK THROUGH THE ACTION PLAN



STEP 6 CONTINUED

Not everything on the action plan will be achievable immediately, and that is expected. The plan is designed to be worked progressively.

Prioritize items that:

- Address gaps that cause early-stage elimination (ownership clarity, utility capacity, zoning confirmation)
- Can be completed with low cost or effort (updating contact information, gathering existing utility data, confirming zoning)
- Are prerequisites for other improvements (a boundary survey is required before some utility studies)

ONGOING SUPPORT & PATH TO MARKETING

WHAT TO EXPECT - STEP 7

Rail Ready is not a one-time review, it is an ongoing partnership. IAIS will continue to work alongside your team as improvements are implemented, answer questions as they arise, and advise on both site-specific and rail-specific considerations as they develop.

- Regular check-ins to review progress on action plan items
- Support for future RFI responses — IAIS can advise on rail-specific questions in real inquiries
- Feedback on LOIS listing updates as new documentation is added
- Coordination with IAIS marketing and business development when a site reaches advanced readiness





CONTINUED SUPPORT & PATH TO MARKETING

STEP 7 CONTINUED

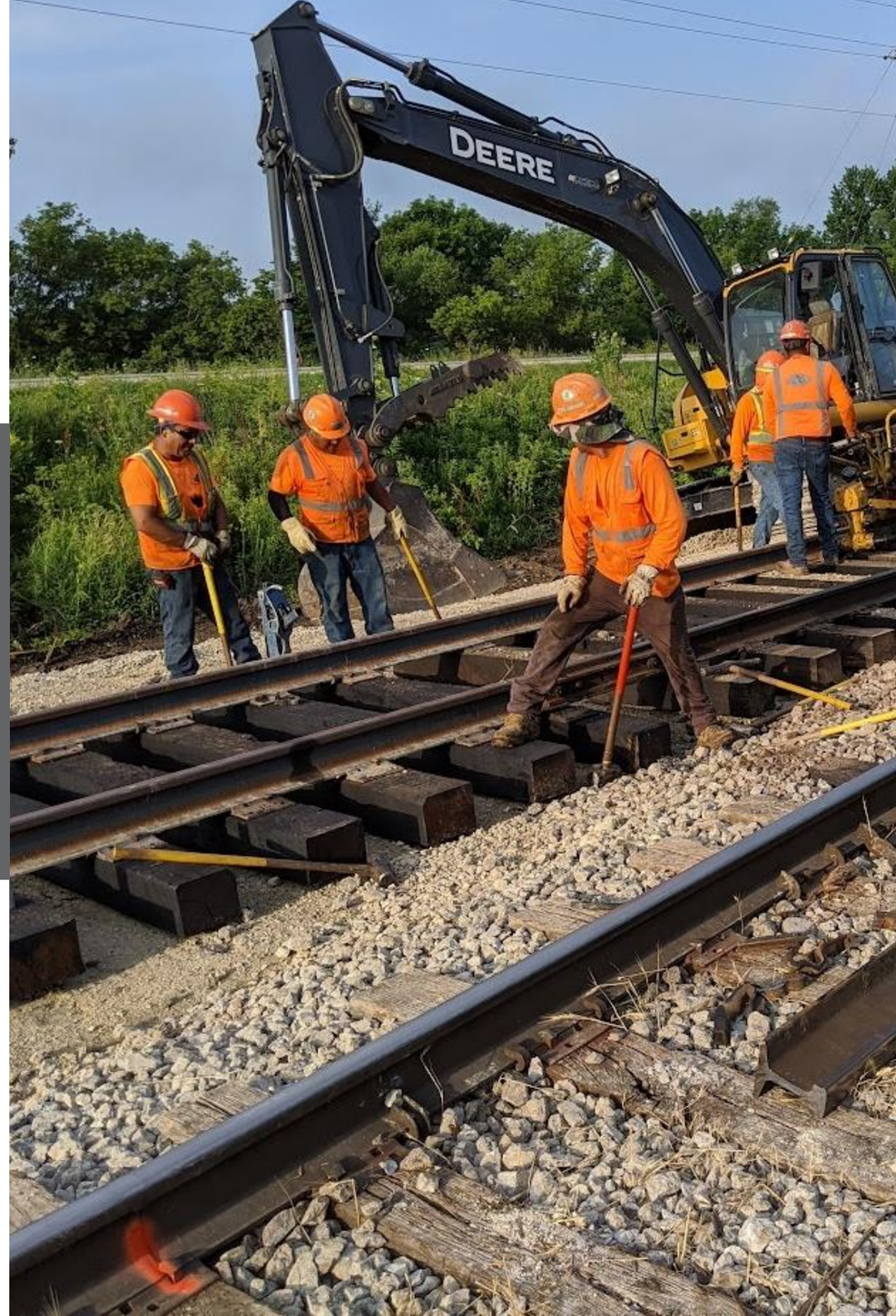
When your site reaches an **advanced level of readiness**, with core documentation complete, utility data confirmed, rail infrastructure clearly defined, and your LOIS listing fully populated, IAIS will develop a customized marketing plan in collaboration with your EDO.
This plan will include:

- Promotion through IAIS marketing channels and partner networks
- Inclusion in IAIS Rail Ready Sites inventory
- Targeted outreach to site selectors and industries aligned with your site's profile
- Coordination with state and regional economic development partners
- Co-branded marketing materials developed with your organization

IT'S ALL ABOUT SITE READINESS!

"Communities that win in today's highly competitive site selection are truly ready. Iowa Interstate Railroad's Rail Ready Sites Program provides economic developers with a proven process to evaluate, improve and compete to land more deals."

~ Phil Schnieder, Principal, Global Location Strategies



Questions?

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