

Appendix D

Appendix D. Public Involvement and Agency Coordination



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Appendix D1

Appendix D1. Public Involvement



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Appendix D1

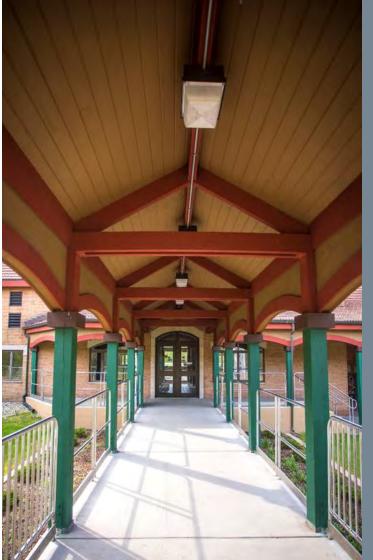
Public Involvement Plan



Appendix D1

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Public Involvement Plan

West Lake Corridor Project

Federal Transit Administration and Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District

March 2018



NORTHERN INDIANA COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT

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March 2018 ii



Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADA Americans with Disabilities Act

DEIS Draft Environmental Impact Statement

EIS Environmental Impact Statement

EJ environmental justice

FAQ Frequently Asked Questions

FEIS Final Environmental Impact Statement

FTA Federal Transit Administration

LEP limited English proficiency

MED Metra Electra District (system or line)
NEPA National Environmental Policy Act

NICTD Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District

PIP Public Involvement Plan
Project West Lake Corridor Project

SSL South Shore Line

USDOT United States Department of Transportation

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Chapter 1 Purpose and Background

1 Purpose and Background

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) have initiated the environmental review process for the West Lake Corridor Project (Project) in Lake County, Indiana, and Cook County, Illinois, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other regulatory requirements. A Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is being prepared as part of this process, with the FTA as the federal lead agency and NICTD as the local Project sponsor responsible for implementing the Project under NEPA.

NICTD's existing South Shore Line (SSL) provides a vital transportation link that connects northwest Indiana to Chicago and Cook County, Illinois. NICTD is proposing the West Lake Corridor Project as a southern branch extension of the SSL route to reach high-growth areas in Lake County, Indiana. The Project would expand NICTD's service coverage, improve mobility and accessibility, and stimulate local job creation and economic development opportunities for Lake County. Specifically, the Project is intended to:

- Serve high-growth areas in central, southern, and western Lake County, Indiana
- Conveniently connect more northwest Indiana residents to downtown Chicago jobs and major activity centers
- Establish a solid modal alternative between the two metropolitan regions other than driving
- Lower commuting travel times and costs
- Increase NICTD system ridership
- Promote economic development opportunities
- Create local jobs in northwest Indiana
- Attract and retain families and younger residents
- Provide a valued transportation asset for use by all northwest Indiana residents.

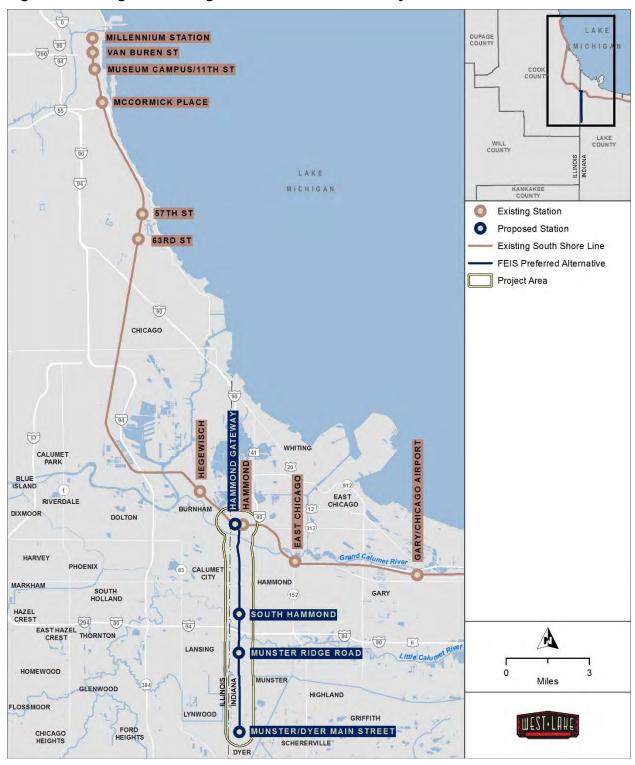
The Project would involve an approximate 9-mile southern extension of NICTD's existing SSL between Hammond and Dyer. The Project would include new track improvements along the existing CSX Transportation and former Monon Railroad corridors, with a flyover to the existing SSL in Hammond. Four stations would be included at Munster/Dyer Main Street, Munster Ridge Road, South Hammond, and Hammond Gateway. A maintenance facility would also be needed to store and maintain the vehicles. Trains on the new Project branch line would connect with the existing SSL and ultimately Metra Electric District's (MED) line to the north, providing new transit service between Dyer and Metra's Millennium Station in Downtown Chicago (**Figure 1.1-1**).

NICTD has submitted an application for funding of 50 percent of the capital costs of the Project through FTA's Core Capacity program. The remaining 50 percent of the costs have been secured from state and local sources.

Public involvement was initiated as part of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) process. The purpose of this *Public Involvement Plan* (PIP) is to provide a framework for how the public involvement activities would be conducted through the remainder of the FEIS process. This PIP is intended to be a dynamic document that would be updated periodically based on input from stakeholders, the public, and results from previous engagement activities.

Chapter 1 Purpose and Background

Figure 1.1-1: Regional Setting of West Lake Corridor Project



Source: HDR 2017.

Chapter 2 Goals and Expected Outcomes

2 Goals and Expected Outcomes

The overall goals for public involvement are to:

- Create frequent opportunities for public involvement, focusing on going to the public and stakeholder groups where they are
- Engage stakeholders in a focused fashion to capture local feedback and increase Project understanding
- Provide clear, timely, and accurate information to ensure that the public has a solid understanding of the Project
- Respond to public questions, comments, and concerns throughout the process
- Use innovative engagement methods to reach more individuals and pilot new tools to reach communities typically underserved in engagement efforts
- Conduct targeted outreach to populations within the immediate Project Area
- Offer a variety of platforms to provide input, including online and in-person coordination opportunities
- Convey complex, technical information using plain language and graphics
- Comply with federal and state requirements

The intended outcome is that the public, including stakeholders, has actively participated in the Project process and assisted NICTD in the development of the West Lake expansion. A secondary outcome is that there is buy-in and ownership of the investment direction set for transit in the West Lake Corridor.



Chapter 2 Goals and Expected Outcomes

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Chapter 3 Federal Requirements

3 Federal Requirements

NEPA requires agencies to consider the environmental impacts of their actions, document their analysis, and make this analysis available to agencies, tribal entities, and the public for review prior to taking action. NEPA also requires federal agencies to use an interdisciplinary approach as they plan and make decisions that could affect the environment, working collaboratively with other agencies that have jurisdiction or special expertise in the project's issues. This includes agency-provided public notice of hearings and public meetings, and the availability of environmental documents to inform those persons and agencies that might be interested or affected.

Public involvement plays an important role in the NEPA process. For this Project, the public is invited to participate in the process by receiving Project information, attending public meetings, and submitting comments to the local Project sponsor, NICTD. All public comments would be provided to the lead federal agency, FTA, by NICTD. Public comments provide valuable information regarding issues to be addressed as part of the environmental analyses. During the development of the FEIS, NICTD would document and incorporate input from the public and agencies into its decision-making process.

3.1 Title VI, Limited English Proficiency, and Environmental Justice Populations

The United States Environmental Protection Agency and FTA define environmental justice (EJ) as "fair treatment for people of all races, cultures, and incomes, regarding the development of environmental laws, regulations, and policies." Environmental justice principles and procedures are followed to improve all levels of transportation decision-making. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin (including individuals with limited English proficiency [LEP]).¹

The 1994 Executive Order 12898 on environmental justice addresses minority and low-income populations. The rights of women, the elderly, and the disabled are protected under related statutes. This Presidential Executive Order and other related statutes fall under the umbrella of Title VI. The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Order 5610.2(a) requires that EJ principles be considered in all USDOT programs, policies, and activities.

In the context of transportation, effective and equitable decision-making depends on understanding and properly addressing the unique needs of different socioeconomic groups. The USDOT EJ Strategy identifies three fundamental principles of EJ that guide USDOT actions:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process

¹ Title VI protection also extends to individuals with LEP. The ruling in *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563, 568 (1974) determined that a failure to address LEP among beneficiary classes in the context of any federally assisted program or activity that provides services to the public could constitute discrimination.



Chapter 3 Federal Requirements

 To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations

The implementation of this PIP should ensure that protected populations are given the opportunity to participate in the Project and public review of the FEIS.

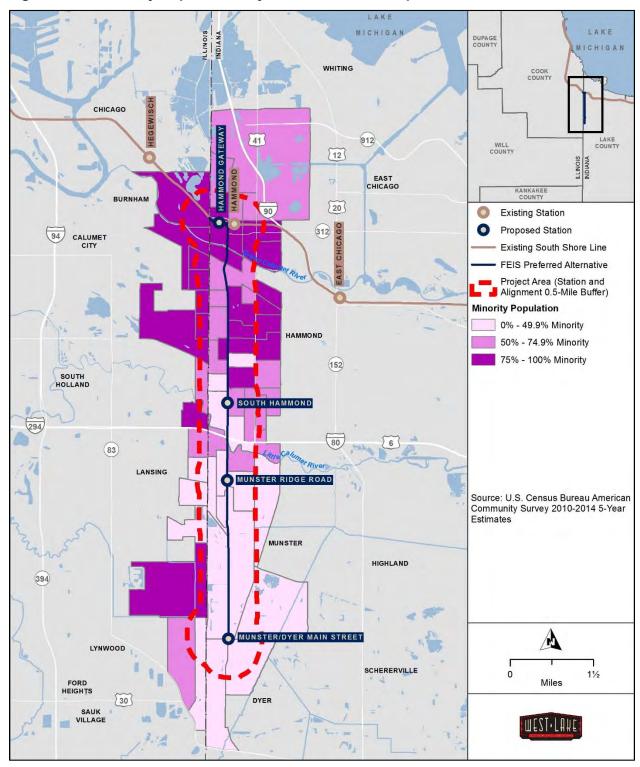
3.1.1 Methodology and Assumptions

In order to appropriately provide reasonable accommodation to all persons within the communities involved and potentially affected by the Project, NICTD evaluated data from the United States Census Bureau (American Fact Finder and American Community Survey) to identify EJ and LEP populations.

Figure 3.1-1 and **Figure 3.1-2** illustrate the EJ populations that have been identified in the Project Area.

Chapter 3 Federal Requirements

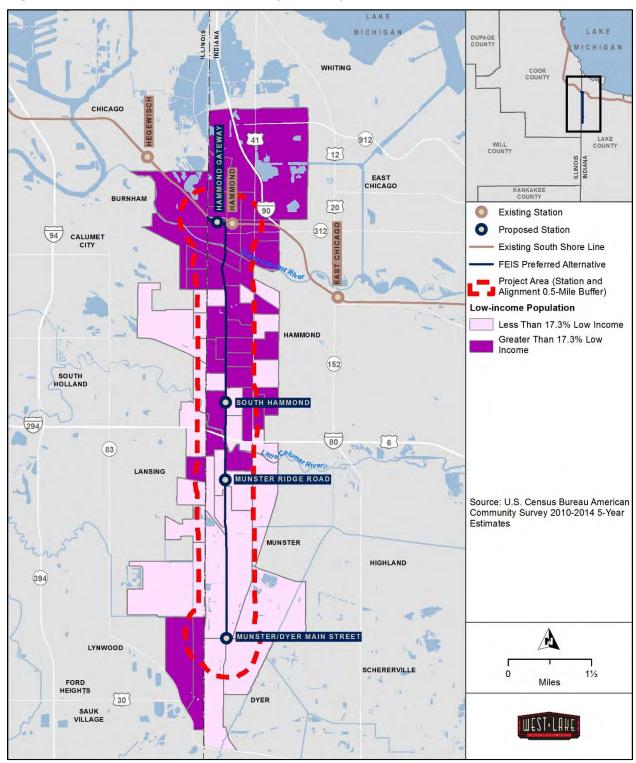
Figure 3.1-1: Minority Populations by Census Block Group



Source: HDR 2017.

Chapter 3 Federal Requirements

Figure 3.1-2: Households below Poverty Level by Census Block Group



Source: HDR 2017.



Chapter 3 Federal Requirements

Additionally, NICTD conducted a Four Factor Analysis for the census tracts in the Project Area. As described by FTA, Four Factor Analysis focuses on the following factors:

- 1. Languages spoken and to what level—How many LEP people are eligible to be served by and come into contact with the transit agency, and what languages do the LEP populations encountered speak?
- 2. Contact LEP ridership has with services—How frequently do LEP people come into contact with the transit program?
- 3. Importance of service to population—How important is the program, activity, or service to the LEP people's lives?
- 4. Cost and resources—What resources are available for outreach to the LEP population, and what would that outreach cost?

Translations must be provided in each LEP language group that is 5 percent or 1,000 people (whichever is less) of the total population eligible to be served. Providing these translations shows compliance and provides a "safe harbor" for transit providers that receive federal funding. Following an evaluation of the Project Area's demographic data related to LEP, NICTD determined that a Spanish-speaking LEP language group is present within the Project Area townships, meeting the threshold of 5 percent of the population to be served or 1,000 people (**Figure 3.1-3**).

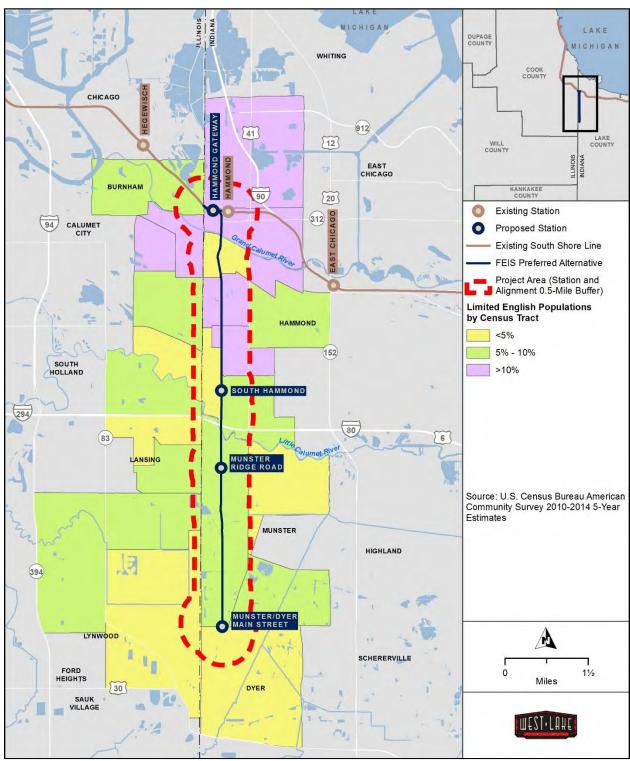
Due to the minority, low-income, and LEP populations identified in the Project Area, NICTD would incorporate the following corridor-wide tools to address and reduce linguistic, cultural, institutional, geographic, and other barriers to meaningful participation:

- Adding Google Translate to the Project website, allowing translation of website text into about 100 languages
- Integrating elected officials, intergovernmental liaisons, and special-interest groups into the process
- Using advertising and graphics to reach illiterate or EJ populations
- Translating public handouts and meeting notices on request
- Having a Spanish-speaking interpreter available at each event on request
- Holding public meetings in locations that are easily accessible and compliant with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Holding public hearings along transit lines for those who are transit-dependent
- Providing sign-language interpreters on request

Many of these tools overlap with tools that also reach the public at large, as discussed in **Section 5**.

Chapter 3 Federal Requirements

Figure 3.1-3: Limited English Populations by Census Tract



Source: HDR 2017.

Chapter 4 Audiences

4 Audiences

NICTD understands that not every audience shares the same level of interest or commitment to the planning process. As a result, it is important to offer opportunities for different levels of involvement. Federal law identifies a spectrum of participation levels including the following:

- Inform: to provide accessible, objective information to assist stakeholders and the public in understanding
- Coordinate: to compare plans, programs, and schedules, and adjust for general consistency
- Consult: to consider the views, actions, or information from others prior to taking action
- Cooperate: to work together to achieve a common goal or objective

The audiences listed below require participation levels customized to their unique needs. The engagement of all audiences would comply with all EJ, civil rights, and ADA requirements as well as additional stakeholder outreach requirements set at the federal and state levels.

4.1 Participating and Cooperating Agencies

Participating and cooperating agencies include any agency, other than the lead agency, that have jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any potential environmental impact addressed in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Cooperating agencies provide input prior to decision-making and provide analysis and studies to help prepare the EIS. The United States Army Corps of Engineers is a cooperating agency for this Project.

The following agencies are participating agencies:

- United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS)
- United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources (INDNR)
- Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT)
- Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
- Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)
- Northeastern Illinois Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)
- Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA)
- Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC)
- Cook County
- City of Hammond
- Town of Dyer
- Town of Munster

Coordination with other resource agencies with an interest in the Project is ongoing. See **Appendix A** for a comprehensive list of stakeholder agencies.



Chapter 4 Audiences

4.2 Elected Officials

Providing proactive, informative, and timely coordination and briefings with elected officials is vitally important to preserving the integrity of public involvement and government outreach principles. Effective communications with government officials places personal, face-to-face contact at a premium. Elected official email updates would be produced quarterly to provide credible, reliable messaging and coordination on behalf of the Project. In-person meetings with elected official briefings would occur as requested. Elected official stakeholders are considered partners and are in the categories of *consult* and *coordinate*.

4.3 Stakeholders

A stakeholder is generally defined as a person, group, or organization with a specific interest in a project. A list of stakeholders has been developed as part of the FEIS process and is provided in **Appendix A**. Additional stakeholders might continue to be included as the Project evolves and as specific needs are identified. The "primary" stakeholders are those in the categories of *consult* and *cooperate* as well as stakeholders identified to meet other specific needs.

4.4 Public

The general public is the ultimate beneficiary of this Project. The interest of a member of the general public might be less specific than that of a key stakeholder but is no less important. Those with any level of interest should have the opportunity to learn about the Project and provide input. NICTD would use a variety of outreach techniques with the goal of reaching a broad audience to *consult* and *inform*. These techniques are documented in **Section 5.0**.

4.5 Traditionally Underserved Populations

NICTD would also provide specific outreach opportunities for traditionally underserved populations, including ethnic or racial minority groups, low wage earners, non-English speakers, elderly, youth, persons with disabilities, and zero-motor-vehicle households. Stakeholder groups associated with these targeted populations would be identified in the Project stakeholder list. Traditionally underserved populations are in the categories of *consult* and *inform*.

Chapter 5 Project Process

5 Project Process

5.1 Key Public Involvement Team Members

The core team that implements stakeholder and public involvement engagement consists of agency and consultant staff. The Public Involvement Team would meet every 2 weeks prior to major milestones. Additional meetings might be added as needed.

Table 5.1-1 lists the key team members, and **Appendix B** provides a matrix of responsibilities.

Table 5.1-1: Key Public Involvement Team Members

Name	Organization	Role
Michael Noland	NICTD	President
John Parsons	NICTD	Director of Marketing and Planning
Cassandra Francis	NICTD	Chief Real Estate and Development Officer, Project Lead
Nicole Barker	NICTD	Director of Capital Investment and Implementation
Kim Slaughter	HDR	Project Manager
Roben Armstrong	HDR	Environmental Task Lead
Janet Gonzalez	HDR	Public Involvement Task Lead
Kelly Sims	HDR	Public Involvement Co-Lead
Matti McCormick	TMG	Public Involvement Task Lead Partner
Kelly Spitzley	HDR	Public Involvement Specialist
Tara Bettale	HDR	Strategic Communications
Jennifer Ninete	HDR	Communications Specialist
Dorothy Bungert	HDR	Graphic Design
Alyssa Tepper	HDR	Graphic Design
Emily Hyland	HDR	Public Involvement Quality Control
James Hall	HDR	Visualization Team Manager

Source: HDR 2017.



Chapter 5 Project Process

5.2 NEPA and Public Involvement Phases

During the development of the DEIS, there were two rounds of public meetings along with individual stakeholder meetings. Each meeting provided the opportunity to receive comments on the Project and input into the process. Public hearings on the DEIS were held in January 2017. The public and agencies had the opportunity to provide comments on the DEIS over a 45-day review period.

The DEIS comment period closed on February 3, 2017. NICTD anticipated that the DEIS would take about 10 months to complete, depending on the level of comments received. An open house was held in May 2017 to demonstrate how public input had been incorporated into the Project development, and two Project newsletters have been distributed to provide updates on the Project's progress.

The Public Involvement Team accepted comments by website comment form, email, and Project hotline during the development of the FEIS. Questions and comments requiring follow up were forwarded to the appropriate team member for response.

The environmental review process would be followed by more-detailed design, engineering, and construction from 2018 to 2022. Service start-up for the Project is targeted for 2022.

Chapter 6 Outreach Techniques

6 Outreach Techniques

The core public outreach techniques that would be used to finalize the EIS include the following items. The outreach techniques include a balance of targeted in-person and online tools to maximize engagement statewide. All meetings hosted by NICTD would be held in locations that are ADA- and transit-accessible (wherever possible). At a minimum, information would be provided in alternative formats and/or languages by request. A comprehensive calendar of all outreach events would be available on the Project website and updated throughout the Project process. At any point in the Project, a group can request a presentation on the Project. Outreach techniques would be implemented using materials written in plain language.

6.1 In-person Engagement

6.1.1 Public Open House

To provide continuity in the outreach process, NICTD hosted a public informational open house in May 2017. The purpose of this open house was to inform the public of changes to the Project since the DEIS was published and discuss the Locally Preferred Alternative. The open house was interactive to continue the dialogue started during the DEIS process.

6.1.2 Elected Official Briefings

Elected officials fill roles that are critical to successful Project implementation. In addition to providing informational Project briefings, the Project Team would also ask elected officials for guidance regarding the overall Project direction and key decisions. Elected official briefings would occur in the form of a Project update newsletter and would be initiated based on milestones and substantive progress in design, as appropriate.

6.1.3 Targeted Resident and Property Owner Information Meetings

Given the size of the Project Area and the number of affected properties, property owner meetings are an effective way to coordinate directly with the affected residents and owners. The Project Team would conduct small-format meetings targeted to affected homeowners. For these meetings, invitations would be sent only to directly affected homeowners and residents. Project maps would be available and staff would be on hand to educate residents on the land-acquisition process and answer questions.

6.1.4 Presentations and Traditionally Underserved Community Partnerships

All Project information includes direction regarding how to request a presentation about the Project. Project Team members would present at community gatherings, neighborhood groups, churches, and professional/civic organizations on request. The Project Team helps take the Project "on the road" to reach a larger cross-section of the public.

The goal of these meetings is to increase overall Project awareness and provide key information to interested and affected stakeholders. The Project Team would look to partner with other NICTD and community stakeholder outreach efforts, whenever possible, in order to reach more groups and limit overlap.

The Project Team would notify leaders of traditionally underserved populations of availability of staff to present to a group or organization. **Appendix A** presents a list of organizations to be contacted. In addition, the Project Team would identify standing meetings, such as neighborhood,



Chapter 6 Outreach Techniques

civic, ministerial alliances, NAACP, and Urban League meetings, for additional engagement sessions that would consist of information sharing and input opportunities. Other opportunities would be identified for engagement at community events.

6.1.5 Translation

Project communication tools have been translated upon request to increase input opportunities for non-English-speaking residents. NICTD identified Spanish as a language other than English that would increase participation. Project handouts, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and summaries would be translated into Spanish on request.

If there are requests for translated materials, they would be posted to the Project website. Google Translate would be installed on the website to allow visitors to choose their preferred language to view information.

A Spanish interpreter would attend public workshops on request to discuss the Project with any Spanish-speaking attendees. Spanish-language mobile meetings would be considered for areas that might have a large population of Spanish-speaking residents.

6.2 Online Engagement

Online engagement is critical to reaching a greater audience. For this reason, the engagement strategy for the Project includes a robust series of online tools. The communications and participation tools online would mirror those implemented in-person, allowing for consistent messaging and sound data integration.

6.2.1 Project Website

This website would serve as a hub for information, resources, and online engagement opportunities for the Project. The website would host online surveys and would integrate with social media. It would host a Project calendar of opportunities to get involved. There would be a place to request a presentation from a Project Team. The Project Team would track hits on a monthly basis to evaluate the success of the website. The website would be mobile-friendly and ADA-accessible. The website would include a translation link for LEP visitors.

Online materials available on the Project website would include:

- Online comment form
- Presentations and display boards
- Videos and Project renderings or visualizations
- Resource documents for review and comment
- Public Comment Summary Reports
- DEIS
- Contact information for the Project email (project.email@nictdwestlake.com)

6.2.2 Social Media

Social media would be used to promote engagement activities and increase understanding of Project benefits. The Project Team would create a project-specific Facebook profile that would be implemented as described in the *Social Media Plan* attached as **Appendix C**. Posts would be



Chapter 6 Outreach Techniques

made as appropriate and in conjunction with events, opportunities to obtain information, and Project milestones, on average, on an every other week basis. Social media posts have included content to increase public knowledge about the Project by driving traffic to the Project website for more information and educational materials, promoting feedback opportunities, and interacting with followers to gain input. Posts would be a mix of graphics and text-based updates.

Although informal and not recognized in the NEPA process, social media comments are tracked and monitored because they can provide insight into the public's sentiment and public comment themes related to a Project. The Public Involvement Team would monitor the theme of comments received through social media to inform the outreach and communication approach implemented during the Project.

Materials posted to the Project website might also be prepared for and posted to social media outlets.

6.2.3 Targeted Facebook Ads

In partnership with the social media strategy, the Public Involvement Team would implement targeted Facebook ads to promote the informational open house and direct the public to the website to obtain up-to-date information about the Project.

6.2.4 Stakeholder Email Updates

The Project Team would use the existing email list to provide Project updates to interested stakeholders and the general public. A link to sign up for the email list would be on the Project website throughout the EIS process. Other strategies would be implemented to direct stakeholders and the general public to the email list throughout the process as well. Email updates would be sent to highlight recent discussions, milestones, and opportunities for input. Specific emails highlighting outreach and engagement opportunities would be sent to the targeted stakeholders identified in the master stakeholder list to increase Project awareness and participation among these communities.

6.3 Media Strategy

Community-based, local, and regional media can be key participants in the public engagement process. The Project Team would provide press releases for distribution to local newspapers and media outlets, including local-access television, radio, and community newsletters, including minority and ethnic publications and outlets. Press materials would be prepared prior to each general public outreach opportunity and would also communicate key decision points (i.e., EIS available for public review, public hearing date, and final EIS adoption).

Press releases and media advisories would be provided to the following newspapers:

- The Northwest Indiana Times
- Chicago Tribune The Post Tribune
- Gary Crusader
- 411 weekly news
- Vivo Los Tiempos
- Lakeshore Public Media



Chapter 6 Outreach Techniques

Contact information for news releases is as follows:

John Parsons
Project Manager
Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District
John.Parsons@nictd.com
(219) 926-5744, extension 204

6.3.1 Earned Media and Additional Opportunities

The Project Team would coordinate with partner agencies to identify additional opportunities to build interest and participation in the Project. Opportunities to be considered include:

- Facilitating radio interviews, newspaper articles, and editorial briefings
- Attending city council and subcommittee meetings and Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission meetings
- Media event to review Project details

6.3.2 Media ToolKit

As a part of the website, an online digital media toolkit would be provided and updated at least once during the outreach process. The online digital media toolkit part of the website would be a place to host Project information and tools for stakeholders and media to download and share. Examples of the type of information that would be available through the online digital media toolkit include handouts, presentation slides and social media banners, fact sheets, and renderings.

6.3.3 Media Monitoring

The Project Team would use Google Alerts to monitor Project mentions and would distribute press releases, media advisories, and/or public service announcements. Monitoring Project mentions and implementing social media listening would help to determine what is well understood and where additional emphasis and information might help to increase Project understanding and support. A well-planned media outreach effort would provide an avenue to disseminate information to the public that would promote and improve Project understanding.

6.4 Other Tools

To help boost Project understanding, the Project Team would strive to use graphics and visual media to communicate Project outcomes and benefits. The Project Team would work with NICTD to determine the appropriate media and platform to improve communication about the Project. Visualization products could include:

- Still images such as concept sketches, illustrations, and photorealistic renderings (used for print or on-screen display)
- Augmented reality, which allows the user to overlay visual data of future or proposed conditions onto existing site conditions, plans, documents, etc. (viewed via smart mobile device)

7 Public Involvement Schedule

Table 7.1-1 lists the dates for which each public involvement activity is scheduled for the Project.

Table 7.1-1: Public Involvement Schedule

Public Involvement Activity	Date(s)					
Website Updates						
Update 1	3/9/2017					
Visual Communications						
Draft Renderings	5/5/2017					
Final Renderings	6/14/2017					
Elected Official Briefings						
Q2 Email Briefing	5/9/2017					
Q4 Email Briefing	11/17/2017					
Presentations and Pop-up Meetings – EJ and Civic Groups						
Identify groups to contact for presentation and upcoming events for potential pop-up meeting	5/1/2017					
Community events – ongoing, as scheduled	7/30/2017					
Public Informational Open House	5/13/17					
Targeted Resident and Property Owner Meetings						
Series of property owner meetings (2 sessions)	4/5/17, 6/27/17					
Media						
Distribute media kit press release	6/19/2017					

Source: HDR 2017.



Chapter 7 Public Involvement Schedule

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Chapter 8 Comment Management, Administrative Records, and Protocols

8 Comment Management, Administrative Records, and Protocols

The public involvement process requires consistent procedures for recording and responding to public comments and for relaying public comments to key Project team members and decision-makers. All comments directed to the Project Team regarding the Project would become part of the Project's administrative record. The Public Involvement Team would use an online database designed to support the NEPA process by:

- Tracking and documenting stakeholder, agency, and public comments received throughout the Project duration
- Managing comments, responses, contact information, and correspondence
- · Analyzing comments for themes and trends
- Preparing an export and summary reports monthly and at the close of each comment period

Online comment forms completed on the Project website would be automatically included in an online database and would be forwarded to NICTD. All comments received through the website would be acknowledged through an automated email response. Comments would be coded by topic to help track trends and appropriate responses.

Following the close of milestone comment periods, the comments would be exported for the Project Team's use in the NEPA process.



Chapter 8 Comment Management, Administrative Records, and Protocols

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Chapter 9 References

9 References

HDR. 2017. Data and analysis prepared for West Lake Corridor FEIS.



Chapter 9 References

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Appendix A

Appendix A. Stakeholders List



Appendix A

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Elected officials	0 - 11 - 0	Recipient Name	Street Address	City	ST	ZIP Code
	1 US House of Representatives	Honorable Peter Visclosky	7895 Broadway, Ste. A	Merrillville	IN	46410
	2 US Senate	Honorable Joe Donnelly	5400 Federal Plaza, Ste. 3200	Hammond	IN	46320
	3 US Senate	Honorable Dan Coats	11035 Broadway, Suite A	Crown Point	IN	46307
	4 Indiana Senate	Honorable Lonnie Randolph	200 W. Washington St.	Indianapolis	IN	46204-2785
	5 Indiana Senate	Honorable Frank Mrvan	200 W. Washington St.	Indianapolis	IN	46204-2785
	6 Indiana Senate	Honorable Rick Niemeyer	13304 W 181st Ave.	Lowell	IN	46356
	7 Indiana House of Representatives	Honorable Linda Lawson	29 Detroit St.	Hammond	IN	46320
	8 Indiana House of Representatives	Honorable Michael Aylesworth	200 W. Washington St.	Indianapolis	IN	46204
	9 Indiana House of Representatives	Honorable Mara Candelaria Reardon	200 W. Washington St.	Indianapolis	IN	46204
	10 Indiana House of Representatives	Honorable Hal Slager	1020 Woodhollow Dr.	Schererville	IN	46375
Federal Agencie	·	Recipient Name	Street Address	City	ST	ZIP Code
reactal Agencie	1 Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	Mr. John M. Fowler	401 F Street NW, Ste. 308	Washington	DC	20001-2637
	2 FEMA	Ms. Janet M. Odeshoo	536 South Clark St., 6th Fl.	Chicago	IL	60605
	3 FHWA - Illinois Division	Ms. Catherine Batey	3250 Executive Park Dr.	Springfield	ΙL	62703
	4 FHWA - Indiana Division	•	575 N. Pennsylvania St., Rm. 254		IN	46204
		Ms. Joyce Newland	·	Indianapolis		
	5 FRA	Ms. Andrea Martin	1200 New Jersey Ave. SE, Mail Stop 20, W38-215	Washington	DC	20590
	8 US National Park Service, Midwest Region	Mr. Cameron Sholly	601 Riverview Drive	Omaha	NE	68102-4226
	9 NRCS	Mr. Jason Weller	1400 Independence Ave., SW, Rm. 5105-A	Washington	DC	20250
	10 USEPA - HQ	Ms. Gina McCarthy	1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW	Washington	DC	20460
	USEPA - Region 5	Mr. Ken Westlake	N			
			Northern Indiana Suboffice			
			Ecological Services			
	11 USFWS	Ms. Elizabeth McCloskey	P.O. Box 2616	Chesterton	IN	46304
	12 USFWS	Mr. Shawn Cirton	230 South Dearborn St., Ste. 2938	Chicago	IL	60604
Tribes	Agency/Organization	Recipient Name	Street Address	City	ST	ZIP Code
	1 Ho-Chunk Nation	Mr. Bill Quackenbush	P.O Box 667	Black River Falls	WI	54615
	2 Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma	Ms. Cynthia Stacy	P.O. Box 1527	Miami	OK	74335
	3 Iowa Tribe of Kansas & Nebraska	Mr. Lance Foster	3345 B Thrasher Rd.	White Cloud	KS	66094
	4 Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma	Mr. Robert Fields	335588 E. 750 Rd.	Perkins	OK	74059
	5 Miami Tribe of Oklahoma	Ms. Diane Hunter	202 S. Eight Tribes Trail	Miami	OK	74354
	6 Otoe-Missouria Tribe	Mr. John R. Shotton	8151 Highway 177	Red Rock	OK	74651
	7 Potawatomi - Citizen Potawatomi Nation	Mr. John A. Barrett	1601 S. Gordon Cooper Dr.	Shawnee	OK	74801
	8 Potawatomi - Forest County Potawatomi	Mr. Harold Frank	5460 Everybody's Rd., P.O. Box 340	Crandon	WI	54520
	9 Potawatomi - Hannahville Indian Community	Mr. Kenneth Meshigaud	N14911 Hannahville Boulevard Rd.	Wilson	MI	49896
	10 Potawatomi - Pokagon Band of Potawatomi	Mr. Jason S. Wesaw	58620 Sink Rd.	Dowagiac	MI	49047
	11 Potawatomi - Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation	Ms. Liana Onnen	16281 Q Rd.	Mayetta	KS	66509
	12 Potawatomi - Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation	Ms. Linda Yazzie	16281 Q Rd.	Mayetta	KS	66509
	13 Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa/Meskwaki	Mr. Jonathan L. Buffalo	349 Meskwaki Rd.	Tama	IA	52339
	14 Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska	Mr. Edmore Green	305 North Main St.	Reserve	KS	66434
	15 Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma	Ms. Sandra Massey	Route 2, Box 246	Stroud	OK	74079
	16 Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska	Mr. Frank White	100 Bluff St.	Winnebago	NE	68071
State Agencies	Agency/Organization	Recipient Name	Street Address	City	ST	ZIP Code
	Indiana Department of Natural Resources			•		
	Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology	Mr. Mitchell K. Zoll	402 W. Washington St., Rm. W274	Indianapolis	IN	46204-2733
	2 Indiana Department of Natural Resources	Ms. Christie Stanifer	402 W. Washington St., Rm. W273	Indianapolis	IN	46204-2733
	3 Indiana Department of Natural Resources	Mr. Carl Wodrich	402 W. Washington St., Rm. W261	Indianapolis	IN	46204-2733
	4 Indiana Department of Natural Mesources 4 Indiana Department of Environmental Management	Ms. Carol S. Comer	100 N. Senate Ave	Indianapolis	IN	46204
	5 Indiana Department of Transportation	Mr. Rick Powers	100 N. Senate Ave., IGCN 755	Indianapolis	IN	46204
	6 Indiana Natural Resource Conservation Service	Ms. Jane Hardisty	6013 Lakeside Boulevard	Indianapolis	IN	46278
	7 Indiana State Department of Agriculture	Mr. Ted McKinney	One North Capitol Ave., Ste. 600	Indianapolis	IN	46204
	8 Illinois Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Land & Water	•		•		62794-9281
	Resources	Ms. Terry Savko	State Fairgrounds, P. O. Box 19281	Springfield	IL	02134-3201
		Mr. Moro Millor	One Netural Decourage Way	Corinatio		60700
	9 Illinois Department of Natural Resources	Mr. Marc Miller	One Natural Resources Way	Springfield	IL 	62702
	10 Illinois Department of Transportation	Mr. Randall Blankenhorn	2300 S. Dirksen Pkwy.	Springfield	IL	62764
	11 Illinois Environmental Protection Agency	Mr. Alec Messina	1021 North Grand Avenue East	Springfield	IL	62794-9276

	12 Illinois Historic Preservation Agency	Ms. Rachel Leibowitz	1 Old State Capitol Plaza	Springfield	IL	62701
Local Agencies	Agency/Organization	Recipient Name	Street Address	City	ST	ZIP Code
	1 Village of Burnham	Mayor Robert Polk	14450 S. Manistee Ave.	Chicago	IL	60633
	2 City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development	Commissioner David L. Reifman	121 N. LaSalle St., 10th Floor	Chicago	IL	60602
	3 City of Chicago Office of the Mayor	Mayor Rahm Emanuel	121 N. LaSalle St., 4th Floor	Chicago	IL	60602
	4 Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT)	Mr. Jeff Sriver	30 N. LaSalle St., Ste. 500	Chicago	IL	60602
	5 Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)	Mr. Joseph Szabo	233 S. Wacker Dr., Ste. 800	Chicago	IL	60606
	6 City of Calumet City	Mayor Michelle Qualkinbush	204 Pulaski Rd.	Calumet City	IL	60406
	7 Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways	Mr. John Yohan	69 W. Washington St. Suite 2300	Chicago	IL	60602
	8 Cook County Bureau of Administration	Ms. Maria Choca Urban	69 W. Washington St. Suite 2300	Chicago	IL	60602
	9 Town of Dyer	Mr. Tom DeGiulio	One Town Square	Dyer	IN	46311
	10 Dyer Town Council	Mr, Jeff Dekker	One Town Square	Dyer	IN	46311
	11 Dyer Town Council	Ms. Cathy J. Lareau	One Town Square	Dyer	IN	46311
	12 Dyer Town Council	Ms. Debbie Astor	One Town Square	Dyer	IN	46311
	13 Dyer Town Council	Mr. Joe Cinko	One Town Square	Dyer	IN	46311
	Dyer Town Council					
	14 President	Ms. Mary Tanis	One Town Square	Dyer	IN	46311
	15 City of Hammond	Mayor Thomas M. McDermott, Jr.	5925 Calumet Ave.	Hammond	IN	46320
	16 Hammond City Council	Mr. Mark Kalwinski	5925 Calumet Avenue	Hammond	IN	46320
	17 Hammond City Council	Mr. Anthony W. Higgs	5925 Calumet Avenue	Hammond	IN	46320
	18 Hammond City Council	Mr. William Emerson	5925 Calumet Avenue	Hammond	IN	46320
	19 Hammond City Council Hammond City Council	Mr. Dan Spitale	5925 Calumet Avenue	Hammond	IN	46320
	20 President	Ms. Janet Venecz	5925 Calumet Avenue	Hammond	IN	46320
	21 Hammond City Council	Mr. Pete Torres	5927 Calumet Avenue	Hammond	IN	46322
	22 Hammond City Council	Mr. Scott Rakos	5928 Calumet Avenue	Hammond	IN	46323
	23 Hammond City Council	Mr. Dave Woepel	5929 Calumet Avenue	Hammond	IN	46324
	24 Hammond City Council	Mr. Robert Markovich	5925 Calumet Avenue	Hammond	IN	46320
	25 Lake County Plan Commission	Mr. Ned Kovachevich	2293 N. Main St., Suite 11	Crown Point	IN	46307
	26 Town of Munster	Mr. Dustin Anderson	1005 Ridge Rd.	Munster	IN	46321
	Munster Town Council	Wil. Bustill Anderson	1000 Hage Ha.	Mulister	111	70021
	27 President	Mr. John Reed	1005 Ridge Rd.	Munster	IN	46321
	28 Munster Town Council	Ms. Lee Ann Mellon	1005 Ridge Rd.	Munster	IN	46321
	29 Munster Town Council	Mr. Joseph Simonetto	1005 Ridge Rd.	Munster	IN	46321
	30 Munster Town Council	Mr. Dave Nellans	1005 Ridge Rd.	Munster	IN	46321
	31 Munster Town Council	Mr. Andy Koultourides	1005 Ridge Rd.	Munster	IN	46321
	32 Northeastern Illinois Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)	Mr. Peter Fahrenwald	175 W. Jackson Blvd., Ste. 1650	Chicago	IL	60604
	33 Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA)	Ms. Sherri Ziller	9800 Connecticut Dr.	Crown Point	IN	46307
	34 Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC)	Ty Warner	6100 Southport Road	Portage	IN	46368
RR and Transit	Agency/Organization	Recipient Name	Street Address	City	ST	ZIP Code
IN and Transit	Amtrak - National Railroad Passenger Cooperation	Mr. Mike Franke	500 W. Jackson, 2nd Fl.	Chicago	IL	60601
	2 Canadian National	Mr. Paul Ladue	17641 S. Ashland Ave.	Homewood	IL	60430
	Chicago South Shore and South Bend Railroad	Mr. Todd Bjornstad	505 N. Carroll Ave.	Michigan City	IN	46360
	4 Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)	Ms. Carole Morey	567 W. Lake St.	Chicago	IL	60661
	5 Conrail Shared Assets	Ms. Jocelyn Hill	1717 Arch Street, 13th FL	Philadelphia	PA	19103
	6 CSX Transportation	Mr. Marco Turra	500 Water St., J315	Jacksonville	FL	32202
	7 East Chicago Transit	Mr. Francisco Rosado	5400 Cline Ave.	East Chicago	IN	46312
	8 Gary Public Transportation Corporation	Mr. Daryl E. Lampkins	100 W. 4th Ave.	Gary	IN	46402
	9 Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad	Mr. Dan Kelly	2721 161st. St.	Hammond	IN	46323
	10 Metra	Mr. David Kralik	547 W. Jackson Blvd.	Chicago	IL	60661-5717
	11 Norfolk Southern Railroad	Mr. Jeff Harris	3 Commercial Pl.	Norfolk	VA	23510
	12 Pace	Mr. T.J. Ross	550 Algonquin Rd.	Arlington Hts.	IL	60005
106 Consulting	Part Agency/Organization	Recipient Name	Street Address	City	ST	ZIP Code
Too Consulting	1 Lake County Historical Society	Mr. Bruce Woods	Courthouse Square, Suite 205	Crown Point	IN	46307
	2 Hammond Historical Society	Mr. Richmond M. Lytle	564 State Street	Hammond	IN	46307
	3 Indiana Landmarks - Northwest Field Office	Ms. Tiffany Tolbert	541 South Lake Street	Gary	IN	46403
	3 maiana Landinara - Northwest Field Office	ws. Imany robert	JTI JOURII LANG JUGGE	Gary	IIN	+0+00

Hammond Historic Preservation Commission	Mr. Brian Poland	Hammond City Hall, Room G17 5925 Calumet Ave.	Hammond	IN	46320
Agency/Organization	Recipient Name	Street Address	City	ST	ZIP Code
League of United Latin American Citizens					
Lincoln Elementary School		4221 Towle Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
First Baptist Church		473 Sibley St.	Hammond	IN	46327
Hammond Public Library		564 State St.	Hammond	IN	46327
All Saints Church		570 Sibley St.	Hammond	IN	46327
Lke County Superior Court		232 Russell St.	Hammond	IN	46327
Work One Hammond		5265 Hohman Ave. #1a	Hammond	IN	46327
St. Joseph Church		5304 Hohman	Hammond	IN	46327
South Shore Arts		435 Fayette St.	Hammond	IN	46327
Hammond Legal Aid Clinic		1402 173rd St.	Hammond	IN	46327
We Care from the Heart Social Services		5272 Hohman Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Hammond Academy of Science & Technology		33 Muenich Court	Hammond	IN	46327
FFSA (Social Services)		5255 Hohman Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Greater Works Deliverance Ministries		5125 Hohman Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
First Baptist Church Womens RU		5109 Bulletin Court	Hammond	IN	46327
First Baptist Church		473 Sibley St.	Hammond	IN	
•		•			46327
Hammond Police Department		5400 Federal Plaza	Hammond	IN	46327
Social Security Administration		418 Douglas St.	Hammond	IN	46327
Hammond Boxing Club		250 Ogden St.	Hammond	IN	46327
School City of Hammond		41 E. Williams St.	Hammond	IN	46327
Kindred Hospital NWI		5454 Hohman Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Henry W. Eggers School		5825 S. Blaine Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Area Career Center		5727 Sohl Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Hammond Civic Center		5825 Sohl Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Greater Deliverance Center Church		5938 Park Pl.	Hammond	IN	46327
First Presbyterian Church		6021 Hohman Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
House of Prayer		403 Highland St.	Hammond	IN	46327
Restoration Ministries Church		6043 Hohman Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Napleton Hammond Body Shop		6131 Hohman Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Hyde Park United Methodist Church		6348 Harrison Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Kenwood School		6416 Hohman Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
First United Lutheran Church		6705 Hohman Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Christian Life Center		6947 Hohman Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Effective Living Ministries		6947 Hohman Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Redeeming Ministries		6949 Hohman Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church		7021 Hohman Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
CSX		1700 167th St. #1	Hammond	IN	46327
An Open Door Church		7105 Hohman Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Congregation Beth Israel		535 Progress Avenue	Munster	IN	46321
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church		7227 Hohman Ave.	Hammond	IN	
•					46327
James B. Eads Elementary School		8000 Jackson Avenue	Munster	IN	46321
Thomas Edison Elementary		7025 Madison Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Maywood Elementary School		1001 165th St.	Hammond	IN	46327
Hammond Fire Department		6110 Calumet Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Mt. Zion Baptist Church		1047 Kenwood St.	Hammond	IN	46327
Hammond High School		5926 Calumet Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Boys & Girls Club of America		5840 Calumet Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Word Made Flesh Ministries		700 Sibley St.	Hammond	IN	46327
New Community Baptist Church		5461 Calumet Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Lafayette Elementary School		856 Sibley St.	Hammond	IN	46327
Dayspring Ministries Church		860 State St.	Hammond	IN	46327
Elks Lodge		722 Michigan St.	Hammond	IN	46327
Elks Lodge		722 Michigan St.	Hammond	IIN	70027

EJ

Spanish Pentecostal Church	4624 Hohman Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
City Baptist Schools	4925 Sohl Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
FFSA (Social Services)	5255 Hohman Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Iglesia Nueva Esperanza	507 Gostlin	Hammond	IN	46327
New Hope Church	507 Gostlin	Hammond	IN	46327
American Legion	617 Gostlin	Hammond	IN	46327
Lincoln Elementary School	4221 Towle Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
St. Michael the Archangel Melkite Church	606 141st St.	Hammond	IN	46327
City Baptist Schools	4925 Hohman Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
Prayer Outreach Deliverance	1101 Chicago St.	Hammond	IN	46327
St. Casimir Church	4340 Johnson Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327
St. Casimir School	4329 Cameron Ave.	Hammond	IN	46327



Appendix B

Appendix B. Responsibilities Matrix



Appendix B

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Appendix B

Task	HDR StratComm	HDR VisComm	ММ
3.1. Project Branding/Brand Refresh	L		
Identify existing Project branding and messaging	S		L
Review public input to date to identify trends, opportunities, and areas for more targeted messaging	L		S
Meeting to discuss role of Project in overall regional marketing strategy and consistency between Project and brand messaging	L		S
Prepare branding/messaging document	S		L
3.2. Project Website	L		
Review existing website for copy updates and opportunities for increased interactive elements	L		S
Interactive mapping feature	L		S
Integrated commenting – Comment Management System	L		S
Comment auto responses	L		S
Updates to website (coding and publishing)	L		S
Online public meeting – content	L		S
Online public meeting – coding and publishing	L		S
Add Google Translate	L		S
Milestone content updates (FAQ)	L		S
Master presentation/newsletter update storyboarding and layout	S	L	S
Newsletter copy	S		L
3.3. Elected Official Engagement/Briefings			L
Develop initial schedule for formal briefings	S		L
Briefing invitations/logistics	L		S
Prepare slide decks and handout (master presentation/newsletter)	L		S
Attend briefings (as needed, not to exceed 3)	S		L
Document input for administrative record	L		S
3.4 Environmental Justice/Civic/Speakers' Bureau			L
Identify areas/demographics for additional targeted outreach	S		S
Identify Project representatives, from the client or design team, to be part of the speakers' bureau	S		S
Develop a targeted campaign notifying public of availability for presentations	S		S
Prepare slide decks or other graphical tools for briefings (based on master presentation/newsletter)	S		S
Document input for administrative record	S		S

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Appendix B

Task	HDR StratComm	HDR VisComm	ММ
3.5. Visual Communications	L		
Determine appropriate media and platform for visual communications	L	S	S
Visualizations – video Project fly-through, renderings, interactive map	S	L	
3.6. In-person Public Meetings	L		
Open house – logistics, advertisement, materials	L		S
Open house attendance	S		L
Mobile meetings (2) – logistics, advertisement, materials, attendance	S		L
3.7. Targeted Resident/Property Owner Information Meetings			
Determine locations/schedule for meetings	S		L
Invitations, exhibits, handouts	L		S
Small-group appointments or "drop-in" hours	S		L
Document input for Real Estate	S		L
3.8. Media Engagement			
Media plan, including schedule	L		S
Press kit	L		S
Press releases and media advisories	S		L
Social media content	L		S
Paid media	L		
Other earned media	L		

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West Lake Corridor
Public Involvement Plan
Appendix C

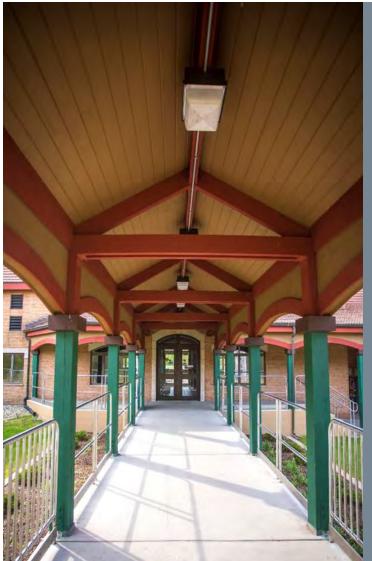
Appendix C. Social Media Protocol and Strategy Plan



Appendix C

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Social Media Protocol and Strategy Plan

West Lake Corridor Project

Federal Transit Administration and

Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District

March 2018



NORTHERN INDIANA COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT

33 East U.S. Highway 12 Chesterton, Indiana 46304 T 219.926.5744 / F 219.929.4438





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Acronyms and Abbreviations

FEIS Final Environmental Impact Statement

NICTD Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District

Project West Lake Corridor Project

SSL South Shore Line

March 2018 iii



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Chapter 1 Overview

1 Overview

This document establishes a social media protocol and plan for engagement activities as a part of the West Lake Corridor Project (Project). The overarching social media goal for the Project is to broaden Project reach and understanding.

This social media plan would be implemented on project-specific Facebook accounts. By meeting the public where many already are—on Facebook—the Project team can engage an audience that may not participate through in-person activities. Social media, therefore, has the potential to greatly enhance public involvement, especially in information dissemination and participant feedback. Facebook allows for easy sharing of information, networking across various social and professional groups, and increasing the visibility and knowledge about the Project. This document provides social media goals, content guidance, an evaluation framework, and a social media management protocol for the social media campaign.

It is important that messages be coordinated with other users of the South Shore Line (SSL) social media accounts. The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) would be responsible for coordinating these posts.

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Chapter 1 Overview

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Chapter 2 Goals

2 Goals

Through social media outlets, the Project would interact with the public and stakeholder groups in the following ways:

- Educate the public on the Project process and benefits
- Engage the public across a large geographic area, including places where in-person activities are not held
- Increase traffic to the Project website and online open house
- Provide additional feedback opportunities through the Project website
- Emphasize key messages

2.1 Key Messages

The West Lake Corridor is planning for the future. This Project would provide a tremendous benefit to northwest Indiana by improving the economy, environment, and quality of life through an effective transportation system.

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Chapter 2 Goals

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Chapter 3 Content

3 Content

All social media posts would incorporate the overarching key messages for the Project and would be coordinated with other social media posts. Content would be developed to deliver information that applies to milestones in the Project related to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), as well as engagement opportunities at that time. Posts to Facebook and Twitter would be made as appropriate, based on key milestones, events, and news, with increasing frequency for the informational open house and other meetings as they approach. This would be discussed among the Project team as needed.

3.1 Content Drivers

Social media posts would be derived from content generated for other components of the Project. This could include a variety of collateral materials. Key content drivers are listed below:

- Website content
- Press/news releases
- Community events
- Transportation facts
- Background documents
- Public comments
- · Featured news stories
- Open houses
- Transportation blogs

3.2 Hashtags

Content would be tagged with logical hashtags to help amplify the reach of messaging and provide a consistent brand for posts. If these hashtags create confusion for the public, the social media team would re-evaluate and propose additional hashtags. Key hashtags include the following:

#WestLake

#ConnectWestLake

#ConnectNWI

3.3 Schedule

The following schedule documents potential messages to be delivered at various stages of Project development. This schedule is intended to be a guide for future posts to be referenced throughout the process. It would be used to ensure key milestones are met.

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Chapter 3 Content

Table 3.3-1: Social Media Schedule

Phase	Timing	Content Messaging
Project	February 2017	Announce website updates
Initiation/Launch		Introduce key messaging, including benefits of the Project
Community Events	May – July 2017	Announce date, time, and location of events
		Share links to supporting documents (website, events Facebook page)
		Share images and videos from events
Open Houses	May 2017	Announce date, time, and location of open houses
		Link to press release, flyer, and website
		Promote online open house
		Share images from open houses
		Share links to open house materials
		Include message that NICTD wants to hear your comments!
On Demand	Ongoing	Post/retweet information related to our Project that would interest followers
		Respond to follower questions within 24-48 hours

Source: HDR 2017.

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Chapter 4 Evaluation

4 Evaluation

Social media strategy evaluation helps inform future efforts. This plan includes analysis benchmarks for Facebook. These benchmarks, along with other archived data, would help evaluate the social media strategy. The Project team would prepare a report for the West Lake social media performance based on the content below. All analytics would be provided from the Project Facebook and Twitter sites. Content would include, but would not be limited to, the following:

4.1 Facebook

The Facebook strategy would be evaluated based on the following metrics:

- Page Likes
 - Total Likes
 - New Likes
- Reach
 - Total Reach
 - Post Reach
- Visits
- Posts
- Engagement
 - Likes
 - Comments
 - o Shares
 - o Post
 - o Clicks
- Targeted Ads

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Chapter 4 Evaluation

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Chapter 5 Protocol

5 Protocol

The following communications protocols are recommended for the social media strategy.

5.1 Process

The Project team would draft social media content per the social media schedule and send to NICTD every other week for review. All content and messages would be approved by NICTD before posting to the West Lake Facebook. The Project team would be responsible for:

- Developing message content
- Sending messages to NICTD for approval and review
- Manually posting all messages
- Managing the conversation
- Replying to Facebook posts/comments, as needed
- Coordinating with the SSL social media accounts

5.2 Public Input and Comments

All conversations through social media would be monitored and recorded. For official comments, the social media manager would direct members of the public to other sites, such as email addresses or website comment entry forms, to make formal comments.

5.3 Responses

For all posts and responses, the following guidelines are recommended:

- **Sourcing:** If possible, link or direct followers to primary information sources, such as the Project website or online documents.
- Response Timeline: Direct messages, mentions, and replies would be responded to within 24-48 hours, which would allow ample time for crafting well-thought-out responses if they require a response. Likes, follows, and favorites would be responded to in the form of following or liking that user. Sometimes, the best choice is no response at all.
- **Positivity**: Every post should be positive toward followers and the Project in general, even in the face of negativity.

5.4 Example Responses

- Thank you for your comment. We have passed the information along to the Project team.
- We appreciate your valuable feedback. Your message has been forwarded to the Project team.
- NICTD would like to thank you for taking the time to provide us with your honest feedback!
 Your feedback is valued and will help shape the future of transportation in NWI.
- Thank you for bringing this to our attention. We will make sure the Project team is aware of your input for future considerations.

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Chapter 5 Protocol

- Thank you for your participation in our Project. If you have any further questions, please visit our website at http://www.nictdwestlake.com/.
- NICTD greatly appreciates your feedback, which is why we are working hard to provide you
 with the correct information to address your concern. Please continue to stay patient as we
 forward this on to our internal team.
- Thank you for your comment on our study.
- Please visit our website for further information.
- Thank you for your input. Please visit our website for further information.

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Chapter 6 References

6 References

HDR. 2017. Data and analysis prepared for West Lake Corridor FEIS.

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Chapter 6 References

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West Lake Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement/ Record of Decision and Section 4(f) Evaluation

Appendix D1

Project Fact Sheet



West Lake Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement/ Record of Decision and Section 4(f) Evaluation

Appendix D1

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PROJECT FACT SHEET

Project Overview

The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District's (NICTD) existing South Shore Line (SSL) provides a vital transportation link that connects Northwest Indiana to Chicago and Cook County, Illinois. NICTD is proposing the West Lake Corridor Project as a southern branch extension of the SSL route to reach high-growth areas in Lake County, Indiana. The project would expand NICTD's service coverage, improve mobility and accessibility, and stimulate local job creation and economic development opportunities for Lake County.

The **West Lake Corridor Project** would be an approximate **8-mile southern extension** of existing SSL between Dyer and Hammond, Indiana. Trains on the new branch line would connect with the existing SSL and ultimately Metra Electric District's (MED) line to the north. The proposed project would provide **new transit service between Dyer, Indiana and Metra's Millennium Station in Downtown Chicago, Illinois**, a total distance of approximately 29 miles.

What is the EIS Process?

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared for the Project, with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as the Federal Lead Agency and NICTD as the Local Project Sponsor responsible for implementing the Project. This study initiates the federal environmental review process for the West Lake Corridor Project in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as well as provisions of US DOT's Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act).

The purpose of the environmental review process is to promote informed decision-making by considering the potential environmental and social impacts of the Project. The FTA and NICTD will engage regulatory agencies with a defined interest in the Project and the public who could potentially be affected by the Project. The environmental review process is structured to encourage participation between government officials, agencies, private businesses, and citizens.



Key Milestones

- EIS Process: 2014 to 2017
- Engineering and Construction: 2017 to 2022
- Project Completion: 2022



Approximate length:

8 Miles dedicated guideway



Operating Schedule:

- **12** trips to/from Millennium Station (weekday peak),
- **12** trips connecting to South Shore Line (SSL) Trains at Hammond Gateway (weekday off-peak), and
- **20** trips connecting to SSL Trains at Hammond Gateway Station



Travel Time:

- **47** Minutes Munster/Dyer Main Street to Millennium
- **14** Minutes Munster/Dyer Main Street to Gateway



Project Cost

Current estimate for the project, with the addition of the Gateway Station in North Hammond, is \$615M. Capital costs will be updated as the project and design are further refined.



4 Stations



Parking:

Each proposed station concept design includes a parking lot and a pick-up/drop-off area.



Maintenance & Storage:

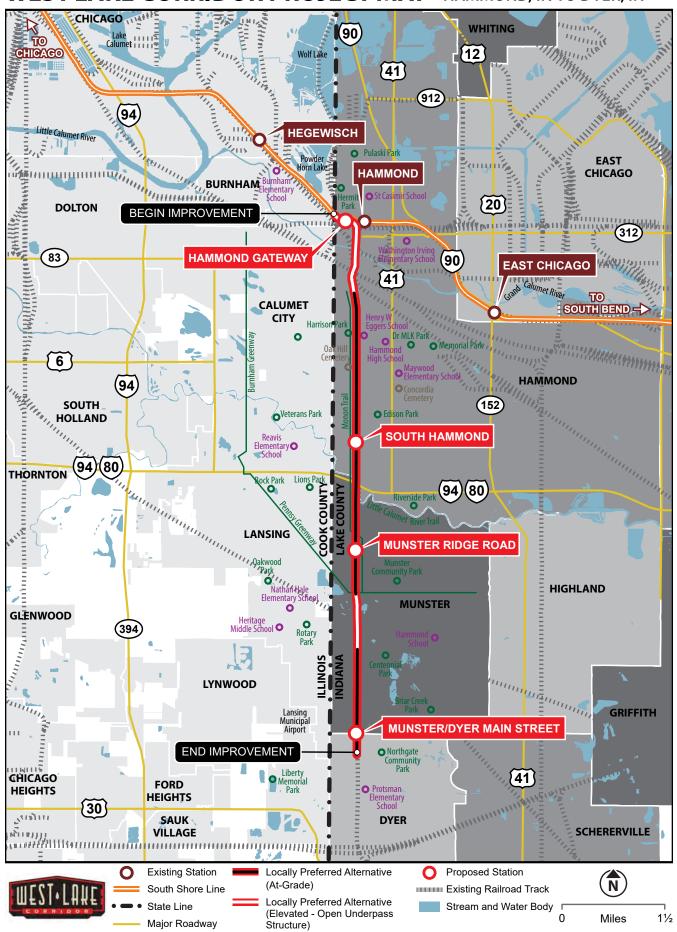
Combined and separate facilities were considered in Hammond and near the Munster/Dyer border.



Sustainability Focus:

Registered with ISI's **Envision**Sustainable Infrastructure Rating System

WEST LAKE CORRIDOR PROJECT MAP - HAMMOND, IN TO DYER, IN



Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I read the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)?

The DEIS can be reviewed on the Resources page at www.nictdwestlake.com. Hard copies of the DEIS are available at:

- Hammond Public Library | 564 State St, Hammond, IN 46320
- Lake County Public Library, Dyer-Schererville Branch | 1001 W Lincoln Hwy, Schererville, IN 46375
- Lake County Public Library, Munster Branch | 8701 Calumet Ave, Munster, IN 46321
- NICTD Administrative Offices | 33 East U.S. Highway 12, Chesterton, IN 46304

How much will the project cost and how will it be funded?

Current estimate for the project, with the addition of the Gateway Station in Hammond, is \$615M. Capital costs will be updated as the project and design are further refined.

When the proposed West Lake Corridor Project is fully advanced through the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts process, it is anticipated that the New Starts program will provide approximately 50 percent of the Project's capital cost. The non-New Starts costs will be covered by a combination of funding sources, including funding from the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority, the State of Indiana, and local communities.

How will the acquisition of property be handled?

In order to construct, operate, and maintain the proposed West Lake Corridor Commuter Rail Project, it will be necessary for NICTD to acquire private property. When property is identified to be acquired, other measures will have already been considered to lessen and mitigate the amount of acquisition and the impact on property owners. The final determination of properties to be acquired will continue throughout our planning and engineering process.

Local, state, and federal regulations and laws govern the acquisition of private property for public use. These laws ensure that owners of property acquired for public projects are treated fairly and consistently. They are designed to encourage and expedite acquisition by agreements with property owners and to promote public confidence in land acquisition programs designed to benefit the public as a whole.

The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Polices Act of 1970 provides for uniform and equitable treatment of persons displaced from their homes, businesses, or farms by federal and federally-assisted programs, and establishes uniform and equitable land acquisition policies. Federal regulations implementing the Uniform Act (49 CFR Part 24) establish the specific process and remuneration methodology that must be followed.

When would properties be acquired?

It is expected that NICTD will begin negotiations to acquire initial properties in late 2017 continuing throughout 2018.

How will the construction of the project affect my business or me?

The construction of the project will have short term effects during construction. Construction activities can temporarily affect access to businesses or require detours to traffic. Some construction noise and other inconveniences can be expected adjacent to the alignment. Information regarding construction staging and short-term effects would be communicated with the public.

Where are stations being considered?

Three stations locations were considered in Hammond, one station in Munster, and one station near the border of Munster and Dyer. However, each of the Build Alternatives considered in the DEIS would include four stations. The combination and location of stations for each Build Alternative is described in more detail in the DEIS.

How will parking be handled at stations?

Each proposed station concept design includes a parking lot and a pick-up/drop-off area. NICTD will work with the host community in later phases of the project to determine how parking operations will be handled for each station. It is possible the operation and maintenance will be the responsibility of the host community. Under this scenario, it is possible that a parking fee would be assessed. Host communities will be offered the opportunity to be fully engaged in the design of parking and station facilities.

Where will the maintenance and storage facility sites be located?

The maintenance facility in the Locally Preferred Alternative is north of the Grand Calumet River in Hammond, west of Sheffield and south of the CSX.

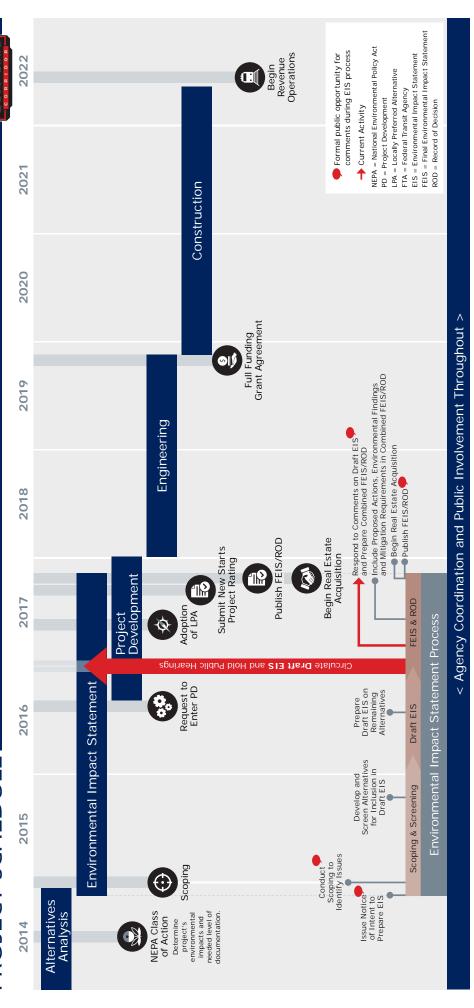
What vehicle type is proposed to be used for the service?

Electric powered trains using overhead wires, the same as is used on the existing South Shore Line.

Will I be able to bring my bike on the train?

Yes, bikes will be permitted on designated trains.

PROJECT SCHEDULE



us to start expanding access to amenities that commuter rail offers. growth of the Northwest Indiana economy. Now is the time for Talent retention and attraction are critically important to the

- Heather Ennis, President/CEO, Northwest Indiana Forum



Appendix D1

Newsletters



Appendix D1

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In This Issue

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The West Lake Corridor: Connecting Opportunity

Project Benefits

Project Map

What's New?
What were the most common comments or questions?

What's Next

Is there funding for the West Lake Corridor Project?

Updated Process/ Schedule

For More Information:

www.nictdwestlake.com

NICTD West Lake Corridor Project 33 East U.S. Highway 12 Chesterton, IN 46304

project.email@nictdwestlake.com automated phone: 219.250.2920





West Lake Corridor Project on Track

Environmental Review Process Planned Completion in Fall 2017

Welcome!

CONNECTING OPPORTUNITY - A Message from Mike Noland

Welcome to the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District's (NICTD) West Lake Corridor Project (Project). The Project is being proposed as a southern branch extension of the South Shore Line (SSL) to connect high-growth areas in Lake County, Indiana to economic activity centers in Chicago and Cook County, Illinois. The new rail line presents an exciting opportunity for growth and economic expansion. We look forward to expanding NICTD's service coverage and improving your ability to move across and access the region.

We will update and improve our website to provide project information to the community, passengers and others who currently use our transit system or who hope to use it in the future. An updated website is designed to provide facts about the project as it continues to develop. I encourage you to explore the West Lake Corridor Project website at www.nictdwestlake.com for up-to-date project information, and to learn about ongoing efforts and next steps.

Sincerely,

Michael Noland President

NICTD/South Shore Line

Project Benefits

Economic

- Faster, less expensive & more reliable access to higher-paying jobs in Chicago and other areas of Lake County, Indiana
- Transportation choices for travel within the corridor and beyond
- Encouragement of business investments in station areas to create growth in local jobs

Social

- Promotion of development around station areas that includes public spaces unique to the community and opportunities to support a live/work/play lifestyle
- Walking trails and bike paths in and around station areas
- Attracting and retaining families and younger residents

Environmental

- Relief of existing and anticipated traffic congestion based on population forecasts
- Reduction in vehicular emissions
- Maintaining or relocating existing trails within corridor to embrace a multi-modal corridor and making improvements where feasible

The West Lake Corridor: Connecting Opportunity

A study on the West Lake Corridor and feasibility of re-establishing passenger rail service along the Monon corridor was completed in the late 1980s. NICTD, Munster and Hammond jointly acquired the Monon Rail Line right-of-way in 1993 with the intent of connecting communities in Lake County and economic centers in Illinois through rail service. From jobs to recreation to walkable and welcoming neighborhoods, the West Lake Corridor offers the potential to connect communities and increase social and economic opportunities of Northwest Indiana residents.

To move this project forward, NICTD initiated a study to identify the potential impacts of the West Lake Corridor Project on the man-made and natural environments. To streamline the process, this effort built upon prior evaluations that examined a broad range of alternatives and transit modes. The study resulted in the preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that meets the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements.

In December 2016, NICTD published the DEIS, which documented the analysis of potential project benefits and impacts of several alternatives, including a preferred alternative. NICTD held public hearings in January 2017 to gather feedback on the alternatives. As part of the DEIS process, NICTD and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) used public input to help determine the staff recommended alternative, which is also referred to as the Hammond Option 2 Alternative.







There are 161 rails-with-trails in 41 states across America. "Constructing a trail along an active railroad multiplies the value a community derives from the rail corridor and provides citizens with transportation options." (Rails-to-Trails Conservancy 2013).

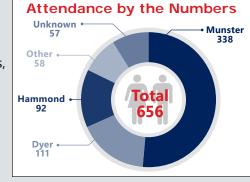
The Monon Trail is within NICTD's right-of-way. The City of Hammond, the Town of Munster, and NICTD have a cooperative agreement to allow NICTD to develop and operate a transit rail line in the corridor and enables the City of Hammond and Town of Munster to build and operate multi-use trails within the same corridor.

What's New?

Thank you to all who attended the public hearings, visited the website, and offered comments on the DEIS. We had great turnout and received valuable input. We

received nearly
1,100 comments
about 53 topics
from community
residents, businesses,
and governmental
agencies! All
comments have
been reviewed and
written responses
to comments will be
provided in the Final

Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) scheduled to be released in fall 2017.



What were the most common comments or questions?

Questions ranged from specifics about air quality to why the project was being considered; however, there were several questions and comments that were frequently submitted.

Is my property going to be acquired?

We understand the concern surrounding your home or business and what the future might bring. The design is currently at a preliminary phase and property needs may change as the design develops, particularly as project team members seek to minimize impacts to properties and the community.

In the DEIS, a preliminary and

conservative estimate was prepared to identify properties that could potentially be purchased to construct the project. The number and location of those properties

is currently under review to look for ways to reduce the number of property acquisitions. Some property owners in the corridor may have received letters notifying them of survey and soil testing work being performed on their property. Please note that receiving one

of these letters does not necessarily mean that your property will be bought. This important survey work supports our preliminary engineering and design. Property needs required to complete the project are still under review.

Local, state, and federal regulations and laws govern the purchase of private property for public use and define when purchase would be required. These laws also confirm that owners of property acquired for public projects are treated fairly and consistently. They are designed to encourage and expedite purchase by agreements with property owners, to minimize litigation and relieve congestion in the courts, and to promote public confidence in land acquisition programs designed to benefit the public as a whole. The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Polices Act of 1970 provides for uniform









The Monon Trail, Erie Lackawanna Trail, and Pennsy Greenway will remain and the project will look for feasible opportunities to enhance existing facilities.

Most common comments (cont.)

and equitable treatment of persons displaced from their homes, businesses, or farms by federal and federally-assisted programs, and establishes uniform and equitable land acquisition policies. Federal regulations implementing the Uniform Act (49 CFR Part 24) establish the process that must be followed.

NICTD would begin negotiations with property owners during the engineering phase of the Project, scheduled to begin in 2018. If you have questions about whether your property is being considered for purchase or have any project-related real estate questions, please contact NICTD at 219-250-2637 or realestate@nictd.com.

Is the Munster/Dyer Main Street Station going to connect to the West Lakes and Meadows Subdivision?

The Munster/Dyer Main Street Station parking lot will not connect to allow vehicles to enter Margo Lane in the West Lakes subdivision or Seminary Drive in the Meadows subdivision, but will provide bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. Parking lot access for vehicles will be from Main Street only. The project team will seek to create aesthetically pleasing parking lot borders to create division between

the parking area and the surrounding neighborhoods. The station will include bike racks and multi-use paths to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists.

What will happen to the Monon Trail (or Erie Lackawanna/ Pennsy Greenway?

NICTD recognizes that the hike and bike trails along this corridor are valuable neighborhood assets. The Monon Trail, Erie Lackawanna Trail, and Pennsy Greenway will remain and the project will look for feasible opportunities to improve existing facilities. There are some areas where short portions of the Monon trail will need to be adjusted to provide adequate clearance from the railroad tracks; however, it is NICTD and the communities' intent to make this a multi-modal corridor that embraces recreational use alongside transit.

The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) has studied safety associated with national rails-with-trail trends and found that rails-with-trails are safe and increasing in number. In fact, safety data suggested that in comparison with railroads outside of the context of rails-with-trails, dedicated pathways for cyclists and pedestrians reduced the incentive to trespass to use the tracks as a shortcut.





If you would like a representative from NICTD to speak to your organization or neighborhood group, please note your request in the 'comment/question' section of the website at www.nictdwestlake.com and fill out your contact information completely. A project representative will contact you in regards to your request.

Most common comments (cont.)

Why is there a station at Ridge Road when the Munster/Dyer Main Street Station is so close?

The Town of Munster is interested in economic growth opportunities in areas surrounding station locations. A station at Ridge Road creates an opportunity to enhance a walkable community environment and provides residents travel options beyond their automobiles. Options for station locations are being reviewed to minimize impacts as part of the FEIS process. Any changes will be identified in the FEIS.

What is the difference between the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) study and the NICTD West Lake Corridor Project?

The NICTD West Lake Corridor Project is designing an extension of the existing South Shore Line that includes railroad tracks, stations, and parking areas. The Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority's (RDA) TOD study is a planning effort to envision what types of land use and development opportunities each municipality would like to encourage surrounding the new NICTD stations. The RDA's TOD study is a separate effort, but one that strives to further improve and add business and residential vitality to station areas in the future. NICTD encourages residents to participate in the TOD process to express your vision for future development around station areas.

Talent retention and attraction are critically important to the growth of the Northwest Indiana economy. Now is the time for us to start expanding access to amenities that commuter rail offers.

– Heather Ennis President/CEO Northwest Indiana Forum





What do all of those Acronyms Mean?

<u>CIG</u> – Capital Investment Grant

<u>DEIS</u> – Draft Environmental Impact Statement

FTA – Federal Transit Administration

FEIS – Final Environmental Impact Statement

<u>NEPA</u> – National Environmental Policy Act

<u>NICTD</u> – Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District

RTC – Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

RDA – Regional Development Authority

ROD – Record of Decision

SSL - South Shore Line

TOD – Transit-Oriented Development

<u>URA</u> – Uniform (Relocation) Act

Click underlined terms above to see more information online.

What's Next

The preliminary design of the corridor was completed during the DEIS development. Our current efforts are focused on developing the design further. The alignment of the tracks has been selected and the station/parking locations are being finalized. While the general footprint of the project presented in the DEIS will not change drastically, some revisions are to be expected. The revisions may include changes in the location of parking, construction phasing and/or additional efforts to minimize impacts of the project on surrounding properties. The FEIS, expected to be completed fall 2017, will incorporate the revisions and will include recommendations and commitments on impact mitigation.

Is there Funding for the West Lake Corridor Project?

In fall 2016, the West Lake Corridor
Project received approval from the FTA to
enter the Capital Investment Grant (CIG)
Program, under the New Starts category.
This is FTA's primary grant program for
funding major transit capital investments,
including commuter rail projects similar to
the West Lake Corridor. The CIG Program
is a discretionary grant program unlike
most others in government. Instead of an
annual call for applications and selection
of awards by the FTA, the law requires

projects seeking CIG funding to complete a series of evaluations over several years to be eligible for funding.

When the NICTD West Lake Corridor Project completes the CIG evaluation process, it is anticipated that the New Starts funds will provide approximately 50 percent of the Project's capital cost. The non-New Starts share will be covered by a combination of funding sources, including funding from the RDA, the State of Indiana, and local communities.





CONNECTING OPPORTUNITY

FALL NEWSLETTER



In This Issue

Welcome

By the Numbers

Project Benefits

What's New?

NICTD board voted to approve the Hammond Alternative Option 2

Frequently Asked Questions

What's Next

NICTD submits the project for a New Starts rating to the FTA in September 2017

For More Information:

www.nictdwestlake.com

NICTD West Lake Corridor Project 33 East U.S. Highway 12 Chesterton, IN 46304

project.email@nictdwestlake.com automated phone: 219.250.2920





West Lake Corridor Project Moving Forward

Public Input Helps Shape Design of South Shore Line Expansion – West Lake Corridor

Welcome! CONNECTING OPPORTUNITY – The route to implementation

Welcome to the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District's (NICTD) West Lake Corridor Project (Project). A great deal of progress has been made due in large part to the thoughtful comments received from many of you and the communities of Hammond, Munster and Dyer.

In this issue, I invite you to review our 'By the Numbers' checklist, our 'What's New?' section, funding summary, and project schedule. For up-to-date project information and to continue to learn more about the project, please visit the West Lake Corridor Project website at www.nictdwestlake.com.

Thank you for your interest and support in this exciting infrastructure improvement project for our community.

Sincerely,

Michael Noland

President, South Shore Line / NICTD

By The Numbers:



✓ By 2035, the West Lake Corridor Project is forecasted to help spur a **20% increase** in new jobs.

Source: RDA



✓ The proposed Hammond Gateway station area would provide better job access opportunities for 1,118 low-income households. Source: City of Hammond



Combined, the proposed station area vicinities along the West Lake Corridor are home to almost a **quarter** of the total population of Hammond, Munster and Dyer. Source: Strategic Economics



✓ West Lake Corridor Project related economic activity is anticipated to produce an additional \$171 million in state sales tax, \$101 million in state income tax and \$207 millon in property tax by 2038.

Source: RDA

Project Benefits

Economic

- Faster, less expensive and more reliable access to higherpaying jobs in Chicago and other areas of Lake County, Indiana
- Transportation choices for travel within the corridor and beyond
- Encouragement of business investments in station areas to create growth in local jobs

Social

- · Promotion of development around station areas that includes public spaces unique to the community and opportunities to support a live/work/play lifestyle
- Walking trails and bike paths in and around station areas
- Attracting and retaining families and younger residents

Environmental

- Relief of existing and anticipated traffic congestion based on population forecasts
- Reduction in vehicular emissions
- Maintaining or relocating existing trails within corridor to embrace a multimodal corridor and making improvements where feasible

The West Lake Corridor: **Connecting Opportunity**

What's New?

In May 2017, the NICTD board voted to approve the Hammond Alternative Option 2, outlined in detail in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), as the Locally Preferred Alternative. The vote solidified the proposed final route for the railroad.

Through coordination with public officials of the city of Hammond, and towns of Munster and Dyer, as well as residents along the corridor, the project team made revisions to conceptual station area plans.

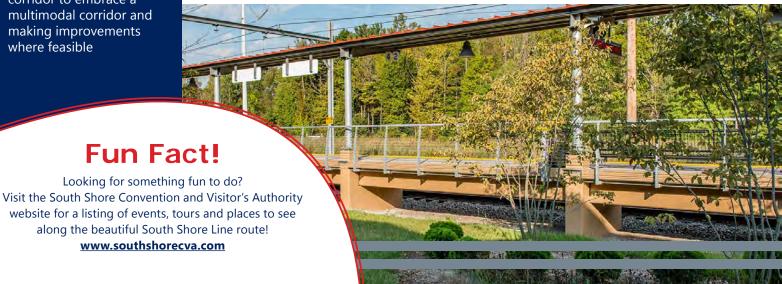
HAMMOND GATEWAY STATION: The parking lot and station building have been moved to the south side of the South Shore Line tracks.

MAINTENANCE AND STORAGE FACILITY: The Layover Facility previously proposed for the Munster/Dyer Main Street Station has been moved next to the Maintenance Facility in Hammond.

SOUTH HAMMOND STATION: The platform and parking lot will be located north of 173rd Street. A station building has been added that includes a warming area and restrooms.

MUNSTER RIDGE ROAD STATION: The platform has been moved north of Ridge Road on the west side of the railroad line. The parking lot will be north of Ridge Road and west of Manor Avenue.

MUNSTER/DYER MAIN STREET STATION: The Layover Facility previously proposed for this station has been moved to Hammond. Now, plans include ADA parking, a Kiss-and-Ride facility and stormwater detention south of Main Street and west of Sheffield. A covered pedestrian bridge over the access roadway has been added to connect the ADA and Kiss-and-Ride lot to the station platform. A station building has been added that includes restrooms and a warming area. Additionally, NICTD is building a pedestrian tunnel with covered ADA-compliant ramps under the CSX track for direct access to the station platform from the west parking lots for a better Parkand-Ride experience.





What do all of those Acronyms Mean?

CEDIT – County Economic **Development Income Tax**

CIG – Capital Investment Grant

DEIS - Draft Environmental **Impact Statement**

FFGA – Full Funding Grant Agreement

FTA – Federal Transit Administration

FEIS – Final Environmental **Impact Statement**

NICTD – Northern Indiana **Commuter Transportation** District

NWI – Northwest Indiana

RDA – Regional **Development Authority**

ROD – Record of Decision

SSL - South Shore Line

Help us spread the word about the West **Lake Corridor Project** and updates! Download current materials from our tool kit at: www.nictdwestlake.com/ resources/#media

What's New?



Approximate length:

9 Miles dedicated guideway

Operating Schedule:

Chicago (weekday peak)

Travel Time:

12 trips to/from Millennium Station in

12 trips connecting to SSL trains at Hammond Gateway (weekday off-peak)

47 Minutes Munster/Dyer Main Street to Millennium Station in Chicago

14 Minutes Munster/Dyer Main Street

to Hammond Gateway Station



4 Stations

Hammond Gateway South Hammond Munster Ridge Road Munster/Dyer Main Street



Parking:

Each proposed station concept design includes a parking lot, Kiss-and-Ride area, and ADA parking area.



Maintenance & Storage:

New combined facility in north Hammond to take advantage of shared facilities and central location.



Sustainability Focus:

Designed with a focused on sustainability and wetland mitigation.

FEIS Updates

The project team is completing a FEIS to address substantive comments received on the DEIS and includes the Locally Preferred Alternative selected for the Project. Additional analysis is being completed for some areas—including traffic, parking, and hazardous materials—to reflect changes in the preliminary design. The FEIS and FTA's Record of Decision are anticipated to be published in winter 2017/2018.

Acceleration of Schedule

On Sept. 1, 2017, NICTD in conjunction with their local stakeholders have decided to advance the schedule for the West Lake New Starts project. The accelerated schedule assumes that the West Lake Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) will be executed in December 2018, instead of July 2019. NICTD will accelerate the technical review of the project within the FTA Capital Investment Grant funding process. Specifically, NICTD will work closely with the FTA to provide technical reports on the project for finance, operations, maintenance, management, design and construction on an accelerated timeline.

Where are we with funding?

\$665.3M **Capital Cost**

\$332.7M RDA Funds¹ State Funds² Local Funds³



\$332.7M* **Application** for FTA Core Capacity FFGA

- 1. RDA will use \$3.5M in annual CEDIT/ Casino revenue from Porter County, Lake County, E. Chicago, Gary and Hammond to issue bonds.
- 2. Committing \$6M per year (30 years).
- 3. Committing \$.45M per year (30 years).
- *Rounded to the nearest \$100k.



Frequently Asked Questions

Will responses to public comments be available? Responses to comments will be posted as part of the FEIS, to be published in winter 2017/2018; however, the FAQs on the project website have been updated to address common questions and comments received through the DEIS/FEIS process. To review Frequently Asked Questions, please visit the Project website at www.nictdwestlake.com/faqs/.

How is this project going to be funded? When the proposed West Lake Corridor Project is fully advanced through the FTA's New Starts process, it is anticipated that the New Starts program will provide approximately 50 percent of the Project's capital cost. The non-New Starts costs will be covered by a combination of funding sources, including the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority, the State of Indiana and local communities.

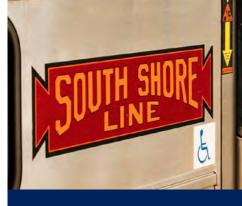
The USDOT has indicated that only **Capital Investment Grant projects** with full funding grant agreements in place will be funded by Congress. Does this project have a full funding grant agreement and if not, why do we believe the project will be funded? This project is being developed following the FTA's New Starts CIG process, which includes three phases: 1) Project Development; 2) Engineering; and 3) Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA)/Construction. Once the FFGA is in place, construction can begin. The West Lake Corridor Project is currently wrapping up the first phase, Project Development. While the President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2018 proposes no funding for projects without FFGA, the FTA is continuing to administer its CIG program, including accepting new applications for funding recommendations in future years. NICTD is following the process and working closely with the FTA to obtain a funding recommendation for this project in Fiscal Year 2019.

Is my property going to be acquired?

We understand the concern surrounding your home or business and what the future might bring. The design is currently at a preliminary phase and property needs may change as the design develops, particularly as project team members seek to minimize impacts to properties and the community.

Local, state and federal regulations and laws govern the purchase of private property for public use and define when purchase would be required. These laws also confirm that owners of property acquired for public projects are treated fairly and consistently. They are designed to encourage and expedite purchase by agreements with property owners, to minimize litigation and relieve congestion in the courts, and to promote public confidence in land acquisition programs designed to benefit the public as a whole. The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Polices Act of 1970 provides for uniform and equitable treatment of persons displaced from their homes, businesses or farms by federal and federally-assisted programs, and establishes uniform and equitable land acquisition policies. Federal regulations implementing the Uniform Act (49 CFR Part 24) establish the process that must be followed.

NICTD would begin negotiations with property owners during the engineering phase of the Project, scheduled to begin in 2018. If you have questions about whether your property is being considered for purchase or have any project-related real estate questions, please contact NICTD at 219-250-2637 or realestate@nictd.com.



"With the expansion of the NICTD South Shore Commuter Rail Line - West Lake Corridor Project and Double Track NWI expansion - the Region will see increased economic development by attracting and keeping residents in Northwest Indiana. The South Shore Convention and Visitors Authority's Board of Directors supports the expansion as a source of increased business for our hospitality assets and to create opportunities to bring additional high-paying jobs to our corner of the state."

South Shore Convention and Visitors Authority Board of Directors and Staff www.southshorecva.com



If you would like a representative from NICTD to speak to your organization or neighborhood group, please note your request in the 'comment/ question' section of the website at www.nictdwestlake.com and fill out your contact information completely. A project representative will contact you regarding your request.



What's Next

NICTD submitted the project for a project rating to the FTA in September 2017. If the project is approved to advance to the next stage, Engineering, the project will await listing in the President's budget in early 2018. Under the current schedule, construction would begin in 2019 and end in 2022.

Thank you for joining us!

Thank you all who stopped by our summer pop-up meetings at Dyer Summer Fest, Munster's Sunday Market in the Park and Hammond's Festival of the Lakes.



Key Milestones

- EIS Process: 2014 to 2018
- Property Acquisition: 2018
- Engineering and Construction: 2018 to 2022
- Project Completion: 2022

Project benefits include...

- Faster, less expensive & more reliable access to higher-paying jobs in Chicago and other areas of Lake County, Indiana
- Walking trails and bike paths in and around station areas
- Relief of existing and anticipated traffic congestion based on population forecasts

What are the most common questions?

Questions range from specifics about air quality to why the project was being considered; however, there are several questions that have been frequently submitted.

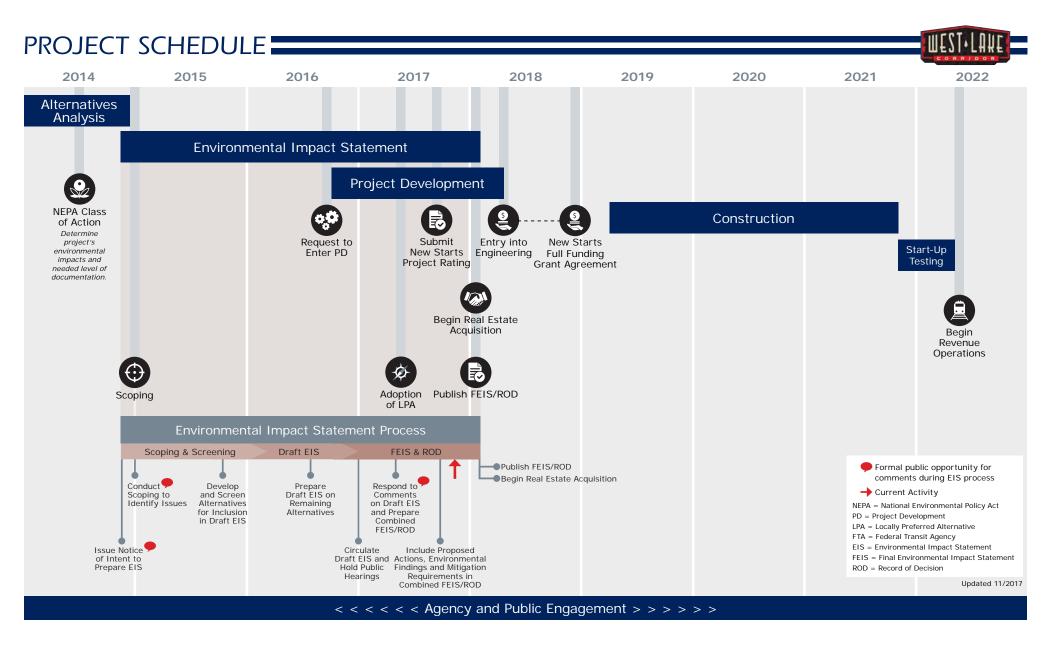
Learn more in the FAQs at: www.nictdwestlake.com/faqs/



Project Cost

Current estimate for the project, with the addition of the Gateway Station in North Hammond, is \$665.3M. Capital costs will be updated as the project and design are further refined.

For More Information: www.nictdwestlake.com | project.email@nictdwestlake.com NICTD West Lake Corridor Project | 33 East U.S. Highway 12 | Chesterton, IN 46304 | automated phone: 219.250.2920





Appendix D1

Project Schedule



Appendix D1

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PROJECT SCHEDULE 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2014 2015 2016 Alternatives Analysis **Environmental Impact Statement** Project Development **NEPA Class** Engineering of Action Determine Request to project's Scoping Adoption environmental Enter PD of LPA Construction impacts and needed level of documentation. **Submit New Starts Project Rating** Full Funding **Grant Agreement** Begin Publish FEIS/ROD Revenue Operations Conduct Begin Real Estate Scoping to Formal public opportunity for Acquisition Identify Issues comments during EIS process Respond to Comments on Draft EIS Develop and Prepare Current Activity Issue Notice and Prepare Combined FEIS/ROD Draft EIS on Screen Alternatives of Intent to Include Proposed Actions, Environmental Findings for Inclusion in Remaining NEPA = National Environmental Policy Act Prepare EIS Draft EIS Alternatives and Mitigation Requirements in Combined FEIS/ROD PD = Project Development Begin Real Estate Acquisition LPA = Locally Preferred Alternative Publish FEIS/ROD FTA = Federal Transit Agency Scoping & Screening Draft EIS FEIS & ROD EIS = Environmental Impact Statement

< Agency Coordination and Public Involvement Throughout >

Environmental Impact Statement Process

FEIS = Final Environmental Impact Statement

ROD = Record of Decision



Appendix D1

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Appendix D1

Press Releases



Appendix D1

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May 12, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: John Parsons 219-926-5744 x 305 john.parsons@nictd.com

SOUTH SHORE LINE ANNOUNCES UPDATED STATION PLANS FOR WEST LAKE CORRIDOR PROJECT

CHESTERTON, Indiana – May 12, 2017 – The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), operator of the South Shore Line, today announced modified station plans for its West Lake Corridor Project. "We have appreciated the robust public involvement in our West Lake Corridor Project, and have updated our station plans based on extensive community input," said Michael Noland, President. "We thank everyone who has commented on the project for sharing their thoughts and concerns," he added.

Changes Include:

 Hammond Gateway Station: Addition of the Layover Facility previously proposed for the Munster/Dyer Main Street Station; it now sits alongside the Maintenance Facility.

South Hammond Station: The platform has been moved further south towards 173rd and the
parking has been split so that parking lots will site both north of 173rd and south of 173rd.

Munster Ridge Road Station: The platform has been moved to the northwest, rather than
southwest, corner of Ridge Road and the railroad line. The parking has been moved to north of
Ridge Road and west of Manor Avenue. As a result, the homes previously slated for acquisition
south of Ridge Road will no longer be required for the project.

 Munster/Dyer Main Street Station: The Layover Facility previously proposed for this station has been moved to Hammond alongside the Maintenance Facility. The southeast corner of Main and the railroad line will still need to be acquired for the project, but will include ADA parking, a Kiss-N-Ride facility, water detention, and a power substation.

To access updated maps and information, go to http://www.nictdwestlake.com/boardmeeting.

NICTD is following the National Environmental Policy Act, and is in the middle of an Environmental Impact Statement for the project in partnership with the Federal Transit Administration.

The NICTD board voted to approve the Hammond Alternative Option 2, outlined in detail in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, as the Locally Preferred Alternative. This is important in that it solidifies the proposed final route for the railroad. As a next step, the railroad will submit the project for a project rating to the Federal Transit Administration. If the project is approved to advance to the next stage, Engineering, the project will await listing in the President's budget in early 2018. Under the current schedule, construction would begin in 2020 and end in 2022.

NICTD has developed a quarterly newsletter to keep interested stakeholders updated on the project. http://www.nictdwestlake.com/news.

For more information and additional information about the project, go to www.nictdwestlake.com.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dave Wellman Communications Manager 219-644-3506 dwellman@rda.in.gov

RDA Readies Federal Funding Bid

Board resolution and documentation approved to accompany the South Shore's submission for federal matching funds on the West Lake and Double Tracking projects.

Crown Point, IN (September 7, 2017) – The Board of Directors of the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority today approved a resolution formalizing the RDA's financial commitments to West Lake and Double Tracking bond issues. The Board also formally accepted reports from KPMG and Farr Associates which, along with the resolution, will be submitted to the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) tomorrow by the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD).

These items are part of the package NICTD is submitting to FTA for a project rating, the first step in securing federal matching funds for West Lake and Double Tracking. This submission will come just over a week after local and state officials, including Governor Eric Holcomb, met with Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, who praised these projects for their bipartisan nature and focus on private investment.

"For Indiana, the Crossroads of America is more than a motto—it's a mission. Today's actions by the RDA Board propel the northern and northwest regions of our state to capitalize on location by working to improve access to one of the nation's largest economies, neighboring Chicago," Gov. Holcomb said. "Connecting Indiana through double tracking the South Shore line will help take our economy to the next level by building a brighter future for Hoosiers."

Wednesday's resolution reinforces the RDA's financial leadership position in funding West Lake and Double Tracking. It allows the RDA to borrow up to \$750 million to cover the construction costs and debt service on the two projects. "I commend RDA President and CEO Bill Hanna and the RDA Board of Directors for demonstrating their commitment to the future of Northwest Indiana by making this tangible financial commitment to the South Shore Rail Line," said Congressman Peter Visclosky, long-time champion of South Shore expansion and recapitalization. "The RDA's collaborative work with NICTD and our other state, local, and community partners will have innumerable positive benefits for all current residents and generations to come."

Projects like West Lake and Double Tracking are exactly the kind of transformative regional projects that Indiana legislators had in mind for the agency when it was created 12 years ago, said RDA President and CEO Bill Hanna. "West Lake and Double Tracking represent the largest investment in commuter rail ever made in Indiana," he noted. "Together, they are projected to double South Shore ridership; attract an estimated 11,000 new residents to Lake and Porter counties; create more than 6,000 new jobs in Indiana; and catalyze more than \$2 billion in private investment in Lake, Porter, La Porte and St. Joseph counties over the next 20 years."

For more details on West Lake and Double Tracking, download the RDA's updated strategic plan at in.gov/rda. The resolution, reports and presentations from today's board meeting can be found at rdatransformation.com/blog/, and will be added to our in.gov/rda page shortly.

* * *

About the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority

Established in 2005 through a bipartisan effort including former Governor Mitchell E. Daniels, Congressman Peter J. Visclosky, key state legislators, and local elected officials, the RDA is quasi-governmental development entity entrusted to make public investment decisions within a regional framework for supporting catalytic infrastructure projects and inducing private sector investment. Years of successful results have made it a trusted and tested partner for growth in Northwest Indiana. For more information, visit www.rdatransformation.com or www.in.gov/rda.



September 8, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: John Parsons 219-926-5744 x 305 john.parsons@nictd.com

SOUTH SHORE LINE FILES RATING APPLICATIONS FOR WEST LAKE CORRIDOR AND NWI-DOUBLE TRACK PROJECTS

CHESTERTON, Indiana – September 8, 2017 – The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), operator of the South Shore Line, today announced that they have filed applications with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) seeking project ratings for both the West Lake Corridor and South Shore Line's Double Track projects. This infrastructure investment package totals over \$977 million and represents the single largest investment in commuter rail in the South Shore's history. The investment will enhance safety, bring more convenient, frequent and reliable service, and quicker travel times to and from Chicago and equally important set the stage for major economic development around the stations.

According to Mike Noland, South Shore Line President, "this is an exciting day and a key milestone in seeking federal funding. We are requesting that 50% of the project funding be covered by the federal government with the balance covered by a combination of already committed state and local funds. The FTA will now evaluate and rate our projects as we continue to wrap-up the environmental work for both West Lake and Double Track. We expect to hear the results of this rating process sometime in early February 2018 as the Administration prepares its 2019 budget."

"We would like to acknowledge the incredible level of robust support that both projects have received from communities throughout our 4-county service area, and especially those directly served by the South Shore; and all the communities in Lake County who chose to participate in West Lake funding." Noland went on to highlight the critical participation of the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority in completing the funding package and the steadfast bi-partisan support of Governor Holcomb, the Indiana General Assembly, our Congressional delegation led by Senators Joe Donnelly and Todd Young, and Representatives Pete Visclosky and Jackie Walorski.

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Appendix D1

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Appendix D1

Legal Notifications



Appendix D1

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NICTD West Lake Corridor Project

Legal Notification

Notice is hereby given that the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) as project sponsor to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Section 4(f) Evaluation pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to evaluate the West Lake Corridor Project. The DEIS documents the benefits and impacts of the alternatives considered, including impacts to Section 4(f) resources. The DEIS is available on the Project website www.nictdwestlake.com for public review and comment from December 16, 2016 to February 3, 2017. A copy of the DEIS is also available for public review at local libraries: Hammond Public Library, Lake County Public Library (Munster and Dyer-Schererville branches), and at the NICTD offices in Chesterton, IN. NICTD will hold three public hearings to present the DEIS and solicit public comments: Tuesday, January 17, 2017, 6:00-8:00 PM, Protsman Elementary School, 1121 Harrison Avenue, Dyer, Indiana 46311; Wednesday, January 18, 2017, 6:30-8:30 PM, Washington Irving Elementary School, 4727 Pine Avenue, Hammond, Indiana 46327; and Thursday, January 19, 2017, 6:00-8:00 PM, Centennial Park, 1005 South Centennial Drive, Munster, Indiana 46321. These hearings will be conducted in an open house format. Comments on the DEIS may be made verbally to a court reporter or in writing during the public hearing. The hearing locations are accessible to people with disabilities. For any person requiring an interpreter, including sign language services, or other accommodations at the public hearings, call the West Lake automated comment line at 219-250-2920 a minimum of 5 days in advance of the hearing date. Para más información en español, visite a un website del Proyecto www.nictdwestlake.com.

Comments may be submitted at the public hearings, on line at www.nictdwestlake.com, via email at project.email@nictdwestlake.com, via the automated comment line at 219-250-2920, or in writing, mailed to NICTD, DEIS West Lake Corridor Project, 33 East U.S. Highway 12, Chesterton, IN 46304.





1549 BROADWAY (219) 885-4357 GARY, INDIANA 46407

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INVOICE

NO. 46612

NICTD

33 E US HIGHWAY 12

CHESTERTON, IN 46304

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	CIVILIA I Subscribed and sworr	n to before me this 19TH day of DECEMBER, 2016		
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My commission expires: September 21, 2018



MICTO West Lake Corridor Project

Legal Notification

Notice is hereby given that the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) as project sponsor to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Section 4(f) Evaluation pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to evaluate the West Lake Corridor Project. The DEIS documents the benefits and impacts of the alternatives considered, including impacts to Section 4(f) resources. The DEIS is available on the Project website www.nictdwestlake.com for public review and comment from December 16, 2016 to February 3, 2017. A copy of the DEIS is also available for public review at local libraries: Hammond Public Library, Lake County Public Library (Munster and Dyer-Scharerville branches), and at the NICTO offices in Chesterton, IN. NICTO will hold three public hearings to present the DEIS and solicit public comments: Tuesday, January 17, 2017, 6:00-8:00 PM, Protsman Elementary School, 1121 Harrison Avenue, Dyer, Indiana 46311; Wednesday, January 18, 2017, 6:30-8:30 PM, Washington Irving Elementary School, 4727 Pine Avenue, Hammond, Indiana 46327; and Thursday, January 19, 2017, 6:00-8:00 PM, Centennial Park, 1005 South Centennial Drive, Munster, Indiana 46321. These hearings will be conducted in an open house format. Comments on the DEIS may be made verbally to a court reporter or in writing during the public hearing. The hearing locations are accessible to people with disabilities. For any person requiring an interpreter, including sign language services, or other accommodations at the public hearings, call the West Lake automated comment line at 219-250-2920 a minimum of 5 days in advance of the hearing date. Para más Información en español, visite a un website del Proyecto www.nictdwestlake.com.

Comments may be submitted at the public hearings, on line at wew nictivestisks.com, via email at project email@nictdwestisks.com, via the sutomated comment line at 219-250-2920, or in writing, mailed to NICTO, DEIS West Lake Corridor Project, 33 East U.S. Highway 12, Chesterton, IN 46304.

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NICTO West Lake Corridor Project

Legal Notification

Notice is hereby given that the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTO) as project sponsor to the Federal Trensit Administration (FTA), and in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Section 4(f) Evaluation purposent to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to evaluate the West Lake Corridor Project. The DEIS documents the benefits and impacts of the atternatives considered, including impacts to Section 4(f) resources. The DEIS is available on the Project website ware accommodate com for public review and common from December 16, 2016 to February 3, 2017. A copy of the DES is also available for public coview at local libraries: Hartmond Public Ubrary, Lake County Public Library (Munster and Dyer-schererville branches), and at the NICTO offices in Chesterton, IN, NICTO will hold three public hearings to present the DES and solice public comments: Tuesday, January 17, 2017, 6:00-8:00 PM, Proteins Elementary School, 1121 Harrison Avenue, Dyer, Indiana 46311; Wednesday, January 18, 2017, 6:30-6:30 PM, Washington Irving Elementary School, 4727 Pine Avenue, Hammond, Indiana 46327; and Thursday, January 19, 2017, 6:00–6:00 PM, Centennial Park, 1005 South Centennial Drive, Monster, Indiana 46323. These hearings will be conducted in an open house format. Comments on the Monster, Indiana 463.23. These hearings will be conducted in an open house format. Comments on the DEIS may be made verbally to a court reporter or in writing during the public hearing. The hearing locations are accessible to people with disabilities. For any person requiring an interpreter, including sign language services, or other accommodations at the public hearings, call the West Lake automated comment line at 219-250-2920 a minimum of 5 days in advance of the hearing date. Para más Información en español, visite a un website del Proyecto yero, pictorentista com

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1549 BROADWAY (219) 885-4357 GARY, INDIANA 46407

INVOICE

NO. 46613

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CHESTERTON, IN 46304	
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Proyecto de la ruta de West Lales de MICTO

Notificación legal

Por la presente se comunida que el Districo de Transporte Suburbano de Indiana del Norte (RICTO, por sus siglas en inglés), como patrocinador de proyecto de la Administración Federal de Trensporte (FTA, por sus siglas en inglés) y en cooperación con el Cuerpo de Ingenierras del Ejército de los Estados Unidos, ha preparado un Borrador de la Declaración de Inspacto Ambiental (DEIS, por sus siglas en inglés) y le Evaluación de la Secución 4 (f) de conformisad con la Ley Racional de Politica Ambiental (TEPA, por sus siglas en inglés) para evaluar el proyecto de la rute de West Lake, El DEIS documenta los beneficios e impactos de las alternativas consideradas, que incluyen los impactos el los recursos de la sección 4(f). El DEIS se encuertra disponible en la págica será bel proyecto sema fucto sentito puesta el disposición del público para su revisido y comentarios desde el 16 de diciembre de 2016 fasta en las disposición del público para su revisido y comentarios desde el 16 de diciembre de 2016 fasta en las abibilistecas locales: Bibliotecas públicas de Hammond, Biblioteca públicas de Lake Couerty (las sucurandes de Muntes y Dyer-Coheceville) y en las oficinas de NAM El NOTO Bevará a cabo tres quellocas para presentar el DEIS y soluciar comentarios del público: martes 17 de enero de 2017, 6-00-6-00 p.m., Escuela Primaria Valabington laving, 4717 Pier Avenue, Hammond, Birthandon A6311; métrodas 18 de enero de 2017, 6-30-8-30 p.m., Escuela Primaria Valabington laving, 4717 Pier Avenue, Hammond, Birthandon de Contennial Drive, Munteste, Indiana 46321; detas audiencias serán llevadas a cabo en un formato abietros al público. Los comentarios sobre el DEIS públicas para percentar de la corte o por escrito durante la sudiencia pública. Las Instalaciones de la audiencia entán condicionadas para el acceso a personas con discuspacidado. Cualquier persona que necesite un intérprete, inchuyendo los servicios de languago de señas u otro tipo de arregio para les sudiencias serán llevadas a cabo en un informato de la fecha de la

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Proyecto de la nuta da Viest Laka de MICTO

Notificación less

Por la presente se comunica que el Distribo de Transporte Subusbario de Indiana del Norte (NICTO, por sus siglas en inglés) y en cooperación con el Cuerpo de Ingenieros del Ejercito de los Estados Unidos. As preparado un Borrador de la Decembración de Impacto Ambiental (DES, por sus siglas en Inglés) y en cooperación con el Cuerpo de Ingenieros del Ejercito de los Estados Unidos. As preparado un Borrador de la Decembración de Impacto Ambiental (DES, por sus siglas en Inglés) para evaluar ol proyecto de la vuta de West Lake. El DEIS documenta los beneficios e impactos de las alternativas consideradas, que incluyen los impactos a los recursos de la sección 4(f), El DEIS se ancuentra disponite en la pigna web del proyecto esem intribuntativa com possa a disposición del público para su remisión y comentarios desde el 16 de diciembra de 2016 hasta el 3 de febrero de 2017. De Igual manera, se encuentra una copia del mismo para su revisión pública en las biblicaceas locales: Biblioteca público de Haumonod, Babbietea público de Lake County (Das nocumales de Munater y Dyer-Scherenville) y en las oficinas de NICTO en Chesterton, IN. El NICTO Bervar à cabo trez acidencias público de reference de 2017, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Escuela Primaria Vistaria de Ambietos invitados resentes 17 de enero de 2017, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Escuela Primaria Washingtos invita, 4727 ples Aventue Himmonod, alternatos de Nunster, Indiana 46321; Estas audiencias serán Revadas a cabo en un formano abierto al público. Direc, Alumente, Indiana 46321; Estas audiencias serán Revadas a cabo en un formano abierto al público. Las instaleciones de la sudiencia están coedicionadas pará el acceso a personas con discapacidad. Cualquier persona que neceste un intérprete, incluyedo los servicios de la personas con discapacidad. Cualquier persona que neceste un intérprete, incluyedo los servicios de la personas con discapacidad. Cualquier persona que neceste un intérprete, incluyedo los servicios de la personas con discapacidad. Cualquier persona que neceste un intérprete,

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South Shore Line (Governmental Unit)

To: The Times Media Company

Lake County, Indiana

601-45th Avenue, Munster, IN 46321

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December 15, 2016					
Additionally, the statement checked below is true and correct:					
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NICTD West Lake Corridor Project Legal Notification

Notice is hereby given that the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) as project sponsor to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Section 4(f) Evaluation pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to evaluate the West Lake Corndor Project. The DEIS and Section 4(f) Evaluation pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to evaluate the West Lake Corndor Project. The DEIS Lake Corndor Project. The DEIS documents the benefits and impacts of the alternatives considered, including impacts to Section 4(f) resources. The DEIS is available on the Project website on the Project website who have and comment from December 16, 2016 to February 3, 2017. A copy of the DEIS is also available for public review at local libraries; Hammord Public Library, Lake County Public Library (Munster and Dyer-Schereiville branches), and at the NICTD offices in Chesterton, IN. NICTD will hold three public hearings to present the DEIS and solicit public comments: Tuesday, January 17, 2017, 6:00-8:00 PM, Protsmant Elementary School, 1121 Harrison Avenue, Dyer, Indiana 46311; Wednesday, January 18, 2017, 6:00-8:00 PM, Washington Irving Elementary School, 4727 Pine Avenue, Hammond, Indiana 46327, and Thursday, January 19, 2017, 6:00-8:00 PM, Centennial Park, 1005 South Centennial Drive, Munster, Indiana 46321. These hearings will be conducted in an open house format. Comments or the DEIS may be made verbally to a court reporter in writing during the public hearing ing language services, or other accommodations at the public hearing locations are accessible to people with disabilities. For any person requiring an inferpreter, including sign language services, or other accommodations at the public hearings, call the West Lake automated comment line at 219-250-2920 a minimum of 5 days in advance of the hearing date. Paramás información en español, visite a un website dei Proyec

at project,email@nictdwestlake.com, via the automated comment line at 219-250-2920, or in writing, mailed to NICTD, DEIS West Lake Corridor Project, 33 East U.S. Highway 12, Chesterton, IN 46304, 12/15 - 20795818 - rispaxip

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Lake County, Indiana

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Proyecto de la ruta de West Lake de NICTD Notificación legal

de NICTD Notificación legal

Por la presente se comunica que el Distrito de Transporte Suburbano de Indiana del Norte (NICTD, por sus siglas en inglés), como patrocinador de proyecto de la Administración Federal de Transporte (FTA, por sus siglas en inglés) y en cooperación con el Cuerpo de Ingenieros del Ejército de los Estados Unidos, ha preparado un Borrador de la Declaración de Impacto Ambiental (DEIS, por sus siglas en inglés) y la Evaluación de la Sección 4(f) de conformidad con la Ley Nacional de Política Ambiental (NEPA, por sus siglas en inglés) para evaluar el proyecto de la ruta de West Lake. El DEIS documenta los beneficios e impactos de las alternativas consideredas, que incluyen los impactos a los recursos de la sección 4(f). El DEIS se enquentra disponible en la página web del proyecto a los recursos de la sección 4(l). El DEIS se encuentra disponible en la página web del proyecto www.nicidwestiaka.com puesta a disposición del publico para su revisión y comentarios desde el 16 de diciembre de 2017 he igual manera, se encuentra una copia del mismo para su revisión publica en las bibliotecas locales: Biblioteca publica de Hammond, Biblioteca publica de Lake County (las sucursales de Munster y Dyer-Schererville) y en las oficinas de NICTD en Chesterton, IN. El NICTO (levará a cabo tres mudiencias públicos para presentar el DEIS y solicitar comentarios del público: mantes 17 de enero de 2017, 6:00-8:00 p.m., Escuela Primaria Protsman, 1121 Hamison Avenue, Dyer Indiana 46311; miercoles 18 de enero de 2017, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Escuela Primaria Washington Irving, 4727 Pine Avenue, Hammond, Indiana 46327 y jueves 19 de enero de 2017, 5:00-8:00 p.m., Contennial Park, 1005 South Centennial Drive, Munster, Indiana 46321 Estas audiencias serán llevadas a cabo en un lormato abierto al público. Los comentarios sobre el DEIS pueden ser aportados de manera verbal a un informante de la corde o por escrito durante la audiencia pública. Las instalaciones de la audiencia están condicionadas para el acceso a personas con discapacidad. Cualquier persona que necesite un intérprete, incluyendo los servicios de langues de la sudiencia de la sudiencia de la sudiencia de langues de la sudiencia de langues de la sudiencia de la code o por es a personas con discanacidad.

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Page 1 of

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Proyecto de la ruta de West Lake de NICTD

Por la presente se comunica que el Distrito de Transporte Suburbano de Indiana del Norte (NICTD, por sus siglas en inglés), como patrocinador de proyecto de la Administración Federal de Transporte (FTA, por sus siglas en inglés) y en cooper-ación con el Cuerpo de ingenieros del Ejército de los Estados Unidos, ha preparado un Borrador de la Declaración de Impacto Ambiental (DEIS, sus siglas en inglés) y la Evaluación de la Sección 4(f) de conformidad con la Ley Nacional de Política Amblental (NEPA, por sus siglas en inglés) para evaluar el proyecto de la ruta de West Lake. El DEIS documenta los beneficios e impactos de las alternativas consideradas, que incluyen los impactos a los recursos de la sección 4(f). El DEIS se encuentra disponible en la página web del proyecto www.nictdwestlake.com puesta a disposición del público para su revisión y comentarios desde el 16 de diciembre de 2016 hasta el 3 de febrero de 2017. De igual manera, se encuentra una copia del mismo para su revisión pública en las bibliotecas locales: Biblioteca pública de Hammond, Biblioteca nithlica do Lako County

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publica de care courtes (las sucursales de Munster y Dyer-Schererville) y en las oficinas de NICTD en Chesterton, IN. El NICTO llevará a cabo tres audiencias públicas para presentar el DEIS y sólicitar comentarios del público: martes 17 de enero de 2017, 6:00-8:00 p.m., Escuela Primaria Protsman, 1121 Harrison Avenue, Dyer Indiana 46311; miércoles 18 de enero de 2017, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Escuela Primaria Washington irving, 4727 Pine Avenue, Hammond, Indi-ana 46327 y Jueves 19 de enero de 2017, 6:00-8:00 p.m., Centennial Park, 1005 South Centennial Drive, Munster, Indiana 46321. Estas audiencias serán llevadas a cabo en un formato ablerto al público. Los comentarios sobre el DEIS pueden ser aportados de manera verbal a un informante de la corte o por escrito durante la audiencia pública. Las Instalaciones de la audiencia están condicionadas para el acceso a personas con discapacidad. Cualquier per-sona que necesite un intérprete, incluyendo los servicios de lenguaje de señas u otro tipo de arreglo para las audiencias públicas puede llamar a la línea automatic de comentarios de West Lake al 219-250-2920 por lo menos 5 días antes de la fecha de la audiencia. Los comentarios pueden presentarse en las audiencias públicas, por Internet en www.nictdwestiake.com, por correo electrónico a project.email@nictdwestlake.com, por medio de la línea automática de comentarios al 219-250-



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) ss:	
Jasper, La Porte, Lake, Newton, Porter, & Starke County)

I, <u>Deidra Durham</u>, a principal clerk of Post Tribune newspaper of general circulation printed and published in the English language in the city of Crown Point in state and county afore-said, and that the printed matter attached hereto is a true copy, which was duly published in said paper for 1 time(s), the date(s) of publication being as follows:

Dec 15, 2016.

The undersigned further states that the Post Tribune newspaper(s) maintains an Internet website, which is located at http://classifieds.chicagotribune.com/classifieds?category=public_notice website and that a copy of the above referenced printed matter was posted on such website on the date(s) of publication set forth above.

435 N. Michigan Ave. Chicago, IL



media group

Proyecto de la ruta de West Lake de NICTO Por la presente se comunica que el Distrito de funsporte subturbano de indiana del Norte (NICTO, por sus siglas en inglés), como patrochrador de ronyecto de la Administración Federal de Transporte (FTA por sus siglas en inglés) y en cooperación con al Cuerpo de ingenieros del Ejércho de los Estados Unidos, ha preparado un Borrador de ingenieros del Ejércho de los Estados Unidos, ha preparado un Borrador de la Declaración de Impacto Ambiental (DES, por sus siglas en inglés) y la evaluación de la Sección (40) de conformidad con la Ley Nacional de Politica Ambiental (NEPA, por sus siglas en inglés) para evaluar el proyecto de la rura de West Lake. El DEIS documenta de West Lake, El DEIS documenta de Sección (NEPA), por sus siglas en inglés) para evaluar el proyecto de la rura de West Lake. El DEIS documenta de Sección (NEPA), por sus siglas en inglés) para el la declaración de la siglama veb del proyecto de la rura de West Lake. El DEIS documenta de Sección (NEPA), por sus siglas en inglés) para la deserción del proyecto de la rura de West Lake. El DEIS de la delicienta de DEIS y la del proyecto puesta a disposición la del proyecto de la rura de West Lake County (NEPA). El DEIS de del la delicienta de 2017. Del igual manera, se encuentra luna copia del mismo, para su revisión publica en las bibliotecas de Lake County del sucrusales. Sibiloteca pública de Lake County en las oficinas de NRCTO en Chesterion, N. El Micro le servicios del poblico martes 17 de enero de 2017, 6:00-8:00 p.m., centrenial Prosentar, 1121. Harrison Avenue, byer indiana 46321, estas audiencias públicas, por internet en la sudiencia pública, por internet en la sudiencia pública, por internet en la delencia pública de la la delencia pública de la la la delencia pública de la la la delencia pública de la la la delencia púb

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Proof of Publication

Order Number: 4654405 Purchase Order: N/A	
State of Indiana)	
) ss:	
Jasper, La Porte, Lake, Newton, Porter, & Starke County)

I, <u>Deidra Durham</u>, a principal clerk of Post Tribune newspaper of general circulation printed and published in the English language in the city of Crown Point in state and county afore-said, and that the printed matter attached hereto is a true copy, which was duly published in said paper for 1 time(s), the date(s) of publication being as follows:

Dec 15, 2016.

The undersigned further states that the Post Tribune newspaper(s) maintains an Internet website, which is located at http://classifieds.chicagotribune.com/classifieds?category=public_notice website and that a copy of the above referenced printed matter was posted on such website on the date(s) of publication set forth above.

Dated at Chicago, Illinois on this _____ day of _______

435 N. Michigan Ave. Chicago, IL

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NICTD West Lake Corridor Project Legal Notification Notice is hereby given that the Northern Indiana

6:00-8:00 PM, Centennial Drive, Munster, Indiana 46:321. These hearings will be conducted in an open house format. Comments on the Deis may be made verbally to a court reporter or in writing during the public hearing. The hearing locations are accessible to people with disabilities. For any person redulfing an interpreter, including sign language services, or other accommodations at the public hearings, and interpreter, including sign language services, or other accommodations at the public hearings of the automated comment. Iline at 219-250-2920 a minimum of 5 days in advance of the hearing date. Para más información en español, visite a un website del proyecto www.inictdiwestlake.com, comments may be submitted at the public hearings, on line at www.nictdiwestlake.com, via email at project.emaillo nictdiwestlake.com, via the automated comment line at 219-250-2920, or in writing, malled to NicTio, Deis West Lake Corridor Project, 33 East U.S. Highway 12, Chesterton, IN 46304.

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NICTD TO HOST THREE PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR WEST LAKE CORRIDOR PROJECT

The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) as project sponsor to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Section 4 (f) Evaluation pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act for the West Lake Corridor Project.

The DEIS evaluated an extension of the South Shore Line between the Munster/Dyer area and Metra's Millennium Station in Downtown Chicago. The DEIS documents the benefits and impacts of the alternatives considered and is available on the Project website www.nictdwestlake.com for public comment and review, from December 16, 2016 to February 3, 2017.

NICTD will hold three public hearings to present the results of the DEIS and solicit public comments. The public hearings will be held:

- Tuesday, January 17, 2017, 6:00 pm 8:00 pm.
 Protsman Elementary School, 1121 Harrison Avenue, Dyer, Indiana 46311
- Wednesday, January 18, 2017, 6:30 pm 8:30 pm.
 Washington Irving Elementary School, 4727 Pine Avenue, Hammond, Indiana 46327
- Thursday, January 19, 2017, 6:00 pm- 8:00 pm.
 Centennial Park, 1005 South Centennial Drive, Munster, Indiana 46321

The public and interested stakeholders are encouraged to attend. These hearings will be conducted in an open house format. Comments on the DEIS may be made verbally to a court reporter or in writing during the public hearing. The hearing locations are accessible to people with disabilities. For any person requiring an interpreter, including sign language services, or other special accommodations, contact the automated contact line at 219-250-2920 a minimum of 5 days in advance of the hearing date.

Additional details about the project and these hearings is available on the project website at www.nictdwestlake.com. Para más información en español, visite a un website del Proyecto www. nictdwestlake.com.

Comments may be submitted at the public hearings, on line at www.nictdwestlake.com, via email at project.email@nictdwestlake.com via the automated comment line at 219-250-2920, or mailed to NICTD, DEIS West Lake Corridor Project, 33 East U.S. Highway 12, Chesterton, IN 46304.

West Lake Corridor Project DEIS (Draft Environmental Impact Statement) available for review and comment, Public Hearings To Be Held!

The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), as project sponsor to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Section 4 (f) Evaluation pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act to evaluate the West Lake Corridor Project. The DEIS is available on the Project website www.nictdwestlake.com for public review and comment from December 16, 2016 to February 3, 2017. A copy of the DEIS is also available for public review at local libraries: Hammond Public Library, Lake County Public Library (Munster and Dyer-Schererville branches), and at the NICTD administrative offices, 33 East U.S. Highway 12, Chesterton, IN 46304. To present the results of the DEIS, and to solicit public comments, NICTD will hold three public hearings:

- Tuesday, January 17th, 2017, 6 p.m. 8 p.m., Protsman Elementary School, 1121 Harrison Avenue, Dyer, Indiana 46311;
- Wednesday, January 18th, 2017, 6:30 p.m. 8:30 p.m., Washington Irving Elementary School, 4727 Pine Avenue, Hammond, Indiana 46327 and,
- Thursday, January 19th, 2017, 6 p.m. 8 p.m., Centennial Park, 1005 South Centennial Drive, Munster, Indiana, 46321.

The public and interested stakeholders are encouraged to attend. These hearings will be conducted in an open house format. Comments on the DEIS may be made verbally to a court reporter at the public hearing or in writing during the 45-day public comment period. The hearing locations are accessible to people with disabilities. For any person requiring an interpreter, including sign language services or other special accommodations, please call our West Lake automated comment line, 219-250-2920, and make this request a minimum of 5 days, in advance of the hearing date. Para más información en español, visite al website del Proyecto www.nictdwestlake.com. Comments may also be submitted on line at www.nictdwestlake.com, via email at project.email@nictdwestlake.com, via the automated phone comment line at 219-250-2920, in writing or via transcribed comment at the public hearings, or mailed to, NICTD, DEIS West Lake Corridor Project, 33 East U.S. Highway 12, Chesterton, IN 46304.

NICTD West Lake Corridor Project

DEIS Review and Public Hearing Announcement

The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), as project sponsor to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and in cooperation with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Section 4(f) Evaluation pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to evaluate the West Lake Corridor Project. The Project would construct an approximately 8-mile proposed southern branch extension of NICTD's existing South Shore Line (SSL) between Dyer and Hammond, Indiana. The Project would also operate on about 20 miles of existing SSL and Metra Electric District's line to Millennium Station in downtown Chicago. Alternatives considered include a No Build Alternative and three build alternatives—Commuter Rail, Indiana Harbor Belt, and Hammond—and several design options for the build alternatives in terms of route alignment, station locations, and maintenance and storage facility locations. One of the build alternatives is presented in the DEIS as the NEPA Preferred Alternative.

The Notice of Availability of the DEIS for the proposed West Lake Corridor Project was published in the Federal Register, on Friday, December 16, 2016. Hard copies of the DEIS are available at the following locations:

- Munster Branch of the Lake County Public Library 8701 Calumet Ave, Munster, IN 46321
- Hammond Public Library
 564 State St, Hammond, IN 46320
- Dyer-Schererville Branch of the Lake County Public Library 1001 W Lincoln Hwy, Schererville, IN 46375
- NICTD's Administrative Office
 33 East U.S. Highway 12, Chesterton, IN 46304

You can also view or download the DEIS from our website: www.nictdwestlake.com. With the publication of the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register, the official 45-day public and agency comment period for the DEIS has begun. You can review and comment on the DEIS until February 3, 2017.

Overview

The DEIS evaluates the environmental, transportation, social, and economic impacts associated with the transportation improvements in the West Lake Corridor study area serving the municipalities of Hammond, Munster and Dyer. The DEIS documents the evaluation of the No Build Alternative, NEPA Preferred and other build alternatives. The No Build Alternative is defined and analyzed to provide the base against which the

NEPA Preferred and other build alternatives can be compared. Final selection of a Preferred Alternative will occur after the DEIS public comment period.

An expansion of the SSL has long been recognized by local residents, stakeholders, municipalities, NICTD, and other agencies as a value to the Northwest Indiana regional community. As early as 1989, the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) released a study that identified an extension to the SSL as a potentially viable means to expand mass transit in the region Since that time, multiple evaluations have occurred. In 2011, NICTD's West Lake Corridor Study concluded that a rail-based service between the Munster/Dyer area and Metra's Millennium Station in downtown Chicago would best meet the public transportation needs of the Study Area. In June 2014, NICTD and the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) released the 20-Year Strategic Business Plan, which highlighted the importance of a West Lake Corridor Project.

The West Lake Corridor Project (Project) would be an approximately 8-mile southern extension of the NICTD existing SSL between Dyer and Hammond, Indiana (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). Trains on the new branch line would connect with the existing SSL and ultimately Metra Electric District's (MED) line to the north. The Project would provide new transit service between Dyer, Indiana, and Metra's Millennium Station in downtown Chicago, Illinois, a distance of approximately 29 miles.

The primary purpose of the DEIS is to assist decision-makers and the public in assessing potential impacts associated with the implementation of the Project. This DEIS documents the Project Purpose and Need and presents a discussion of the alternatives considered for implementation. It evaluates, in detail, the potential environmental, transportation, social, and economic impacts associated with the Project, and describes the recommended mitigation measures to offset the unavoidable impacts.

In accordance with federal regulations, full consideration of environmental effects as disclosed during the NEPA process is required before the Project can be advanced to final design, right-of-way (ROW) acquisition occurs, equipment and facilities are procured, or system construction begins.

This DEIS will be made available and circulated for review for 45 days to interested parties, including members of the public, community groups, the business community, elected officials, and public agencies in accordance with federal and state requirements. The project is also being assessed for compliance with the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act. Comments related to Section 106 and Section 4(f) reviews can also be included during the DEIS public comment period.



Figure 1: Regional Setting for West Lake Corridor Project

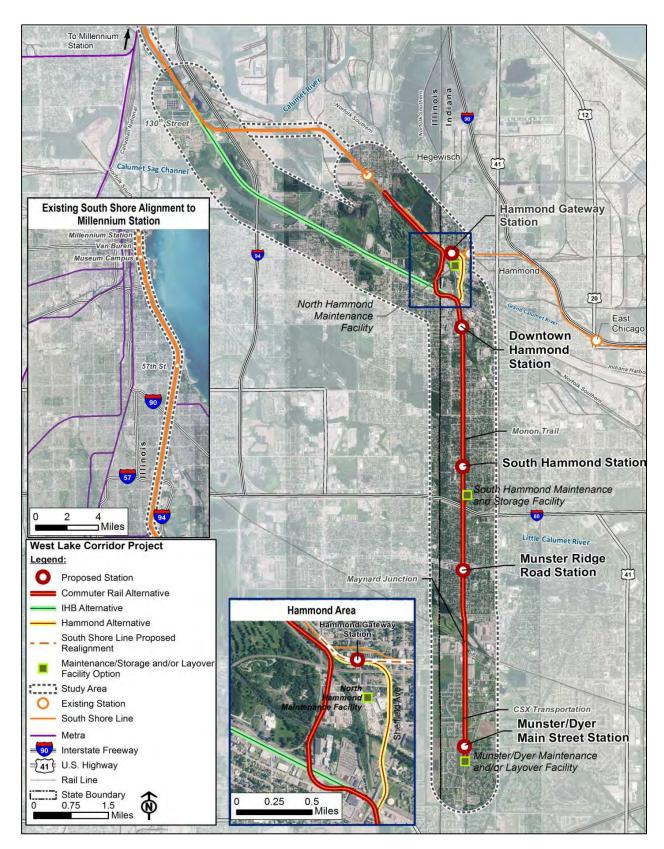


Figure 2: West Lake Corridor Study Area

Public Hearings

NICTD will host three public hearings for the West Lake Corridor Project on the following dates:

Tuesday, January 17, 2017 6:00 - 8:00 PM Protsman Elementary School, 1121 Harrison Avenue Dyer, Indiana 46311

Wednesday, January 18, 2017 6:30 - 8:30 PM Washington Irving Elementary School, 4727 Pine Avenue Hammond, Indiana 46327

Thursday, January 19, 2017 6:00 - 8:00 PM Centennial Park 1005 S. Centennial Drive Munster, Indiana 46321

The purpose of the public hearings is to provide information about the DEIS and solicit comments from the public. All interested parties are invited to review the DEIS and attend the public hearings. The public hearings provide an opportunity for the public to express their views concerning the impacts and mitigation measures identified for the proposed improvements. These hearings will be conducted in an open house format. Comments on the DEIS may be made verbally to a court reporter or in writing during (or after) the public hearings.

Locations of the public hearings are accessible to people with disabilities. If you require an interpreter, including sign language services, or other accommodations at any of the public hearings, please call the West Lake automated comment line at 219-250-2920 and make this request a minimum of 5 days prior to the public hearing date. Para más información en español, visite al website del Proyecto www.nictdwestlake.com.

How to Comment During the 45-Day Public Comment Period

You can comment any of six ways:

- Make a statement for the record to a court reporter at one of the three public hearings
- 2. Submit a written comment form at the public hearings
- 3. Email us at: project.email@nictdwestlake.com
- 4. Submit a web-based comment form: www.nictdwestlake.com
- 5. Call the West Lake automated project phone line (219-250-2920)

 Mail a letter to: West Lake Corridor Project - DEIS, C/O NICTD 33 East U.S. Highway 12 Chesterton, IN 46304

All methods of commenting will receive equal weight. All comments will be reviewed and considered as part of the development of the combined Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)/Record of Decision (ROD), which is expected in summer 2017. Responses to substantive comments will be included in the combined FEIS/ROD.

Comments on the DEIS must be submitted by February 3, 2017. Information on the project is available at the project website, www.nictdwestlake.com.



Appendix D1

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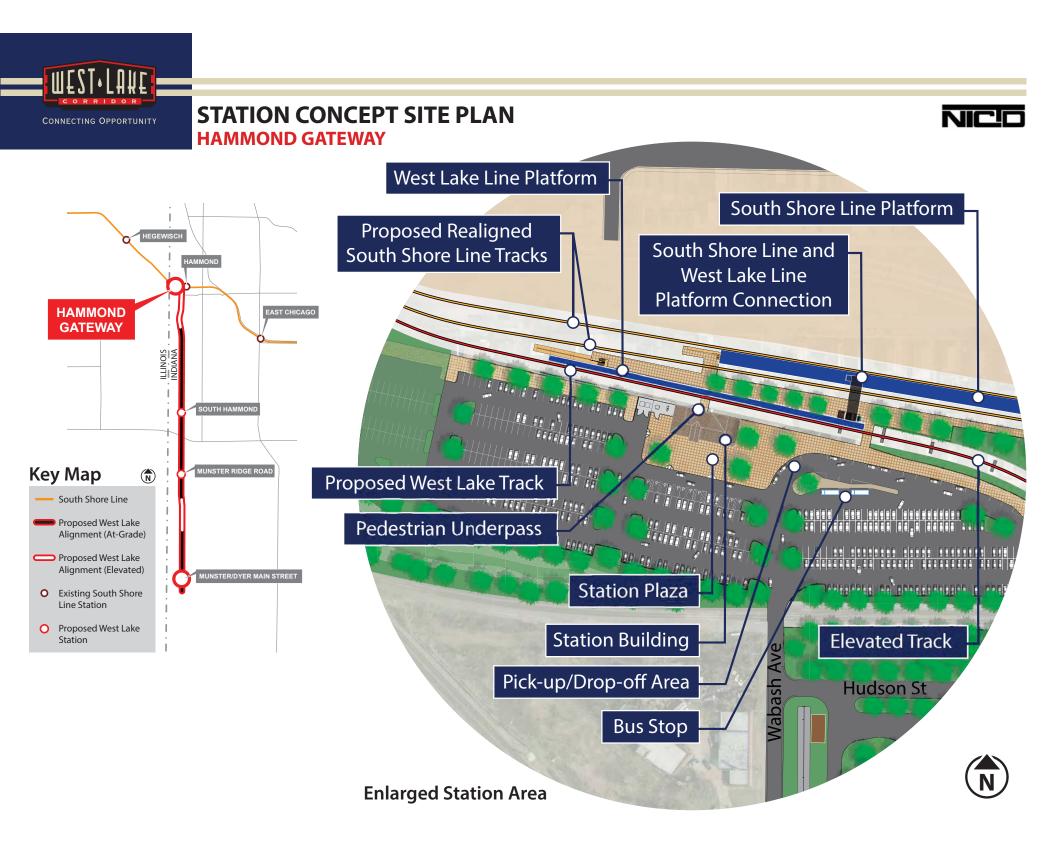
Appendix D1

Station Concept Site Plans



Appendix D1

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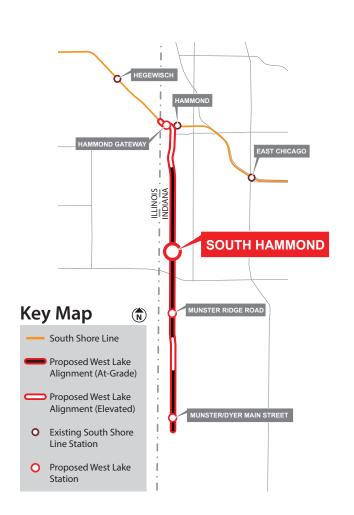


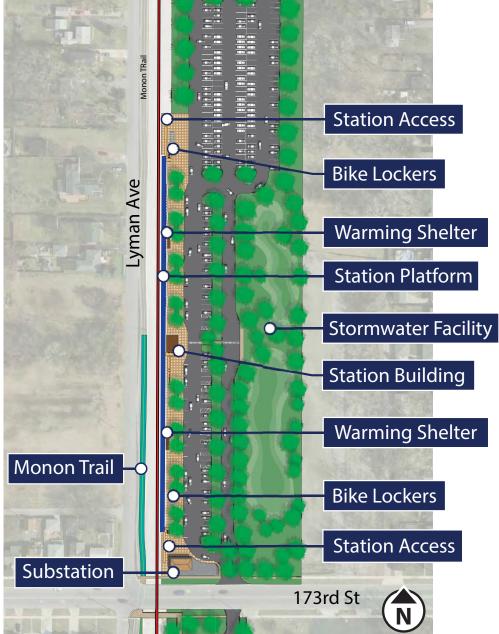




STATION CONCEPT SITE PLAN SOUTH HAMMOND



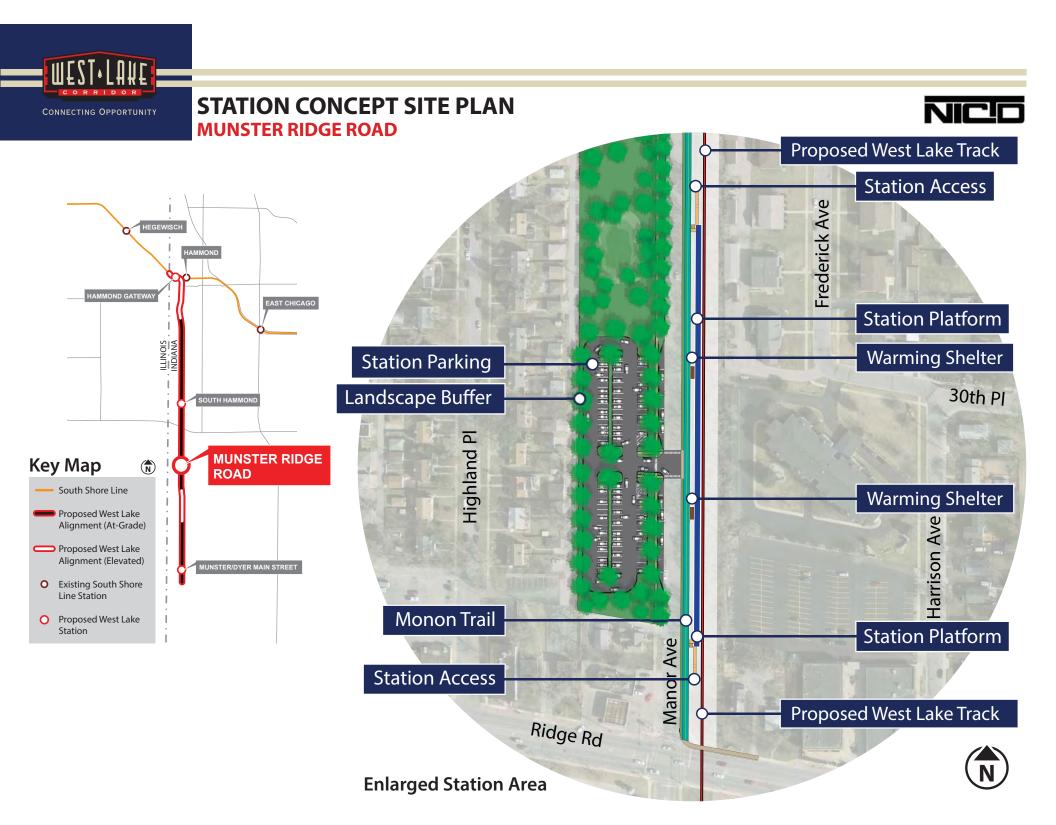




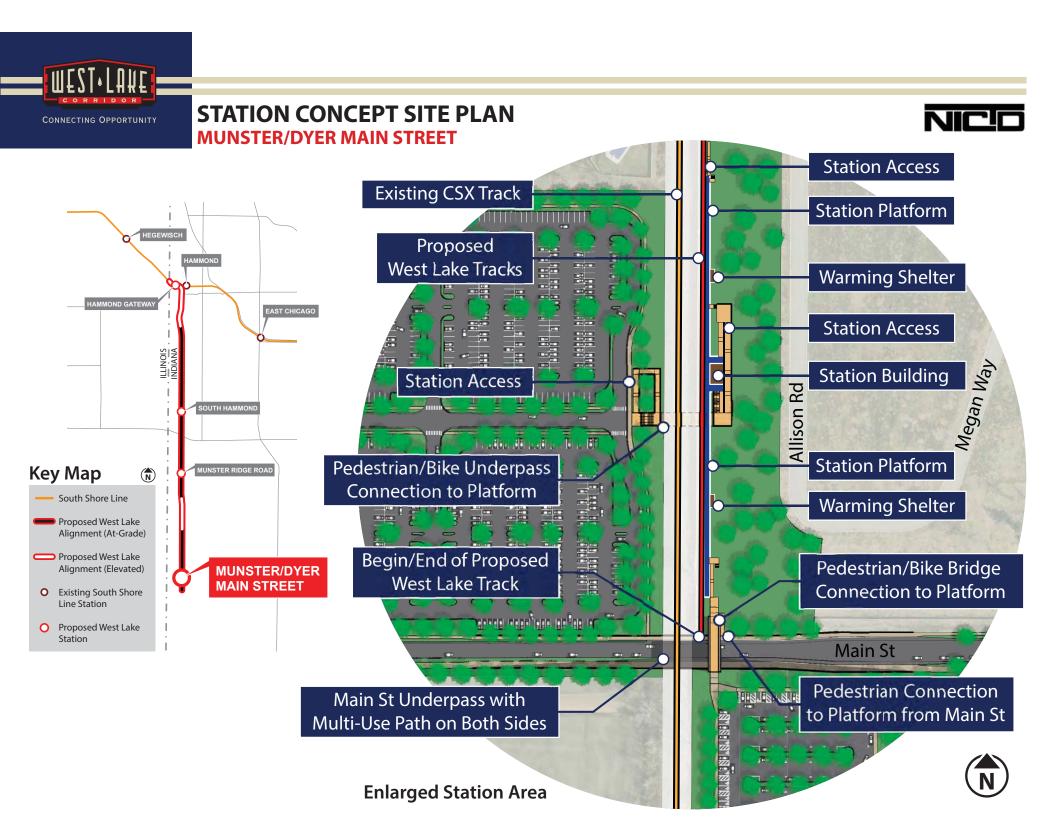
Enlarged Station Area



Conceptual Station Area Site Plan





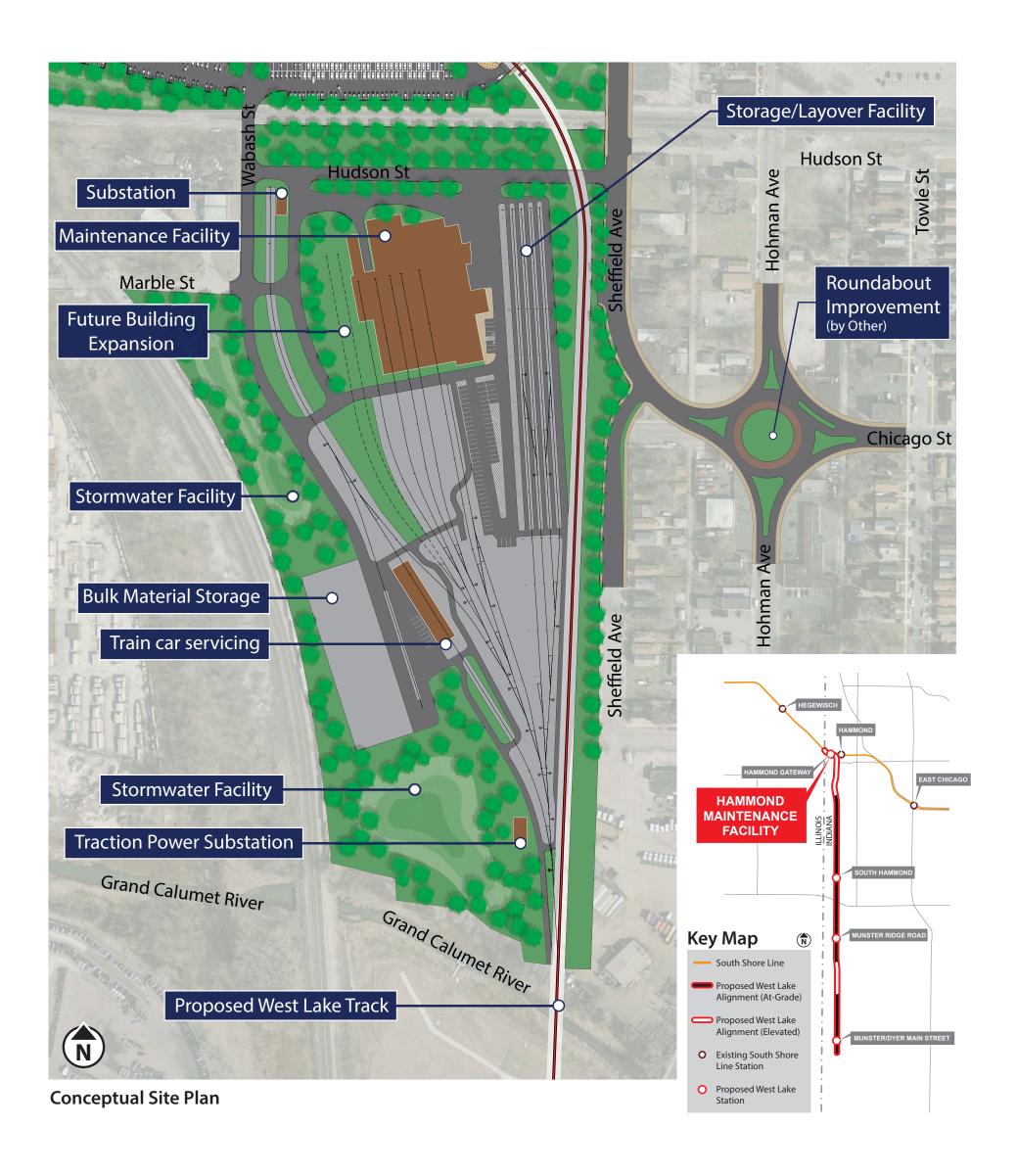






STATION CONCEPT SITE PLAN HAMMOND MAINTENANCE FACILITY







Appendix D1

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Appendix D2

Appendix D2. Agency Coordination



Appendix D2

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State of Indiana DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES Division of Fish and Wildlife

Early Coordination/Environmental Assessment

DNR #:

ER-17897

Request Received: October 6, 2014

Requestor:

US Department of Transportation

Mark Assam

Federal Transit Administration 200 West Adams Street, Suite 320

Chicago, IL 60606-5253

Project:

West Lake Corridor Project, Lake Co., IN and Cook Co., IL EIS: new track

improvements, four (4) new stations, and a maintenance facility along a 9 mile southern

extension along the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD)

existing South Shore Line (SSL) between Dyer and Hammond, IN

County/Site info:

Lake

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has reviewed the above referenced project per your request. Our agency offers the following comments for your information and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

If our agency has regulatory jurisdiction over the project, the recommendations contained in this letter may become requirements of any permit issued. If we do not

have permitting authority, all recommendations are voluntary.

Regulatory Assessment:

This proposal may require the formal approval of our agency pursuant to the Flood Control Act (IC 14-28-1) for any proposal to construct, excavate, or fill in or on the floodway of a stream or other flowing waterbody which has a drainage area greater than one square mile, or the Lake Preservation Act (IC 14-26-2) for any construction that will take place at or lakeward of the legal shoreline of a public freshwater lake. Please submit more detailed plans to the Division of Water's Technical Services Section if you are unsure whether or not a permit will be required.

Natural Heritage Database:

The Natural Heritage Program's data have been checked.

This project does not impact any DNR owned nature preserves. Also, no plant or animal species listed as state or federally threatened, endangered, or rare have been reported to occur within the proposed corridor. However, a historical record of the northern leopard frog (Lithobates pipiens), a state species of special concern, and a wet-mesic sand prairie "between EJE Railroad and Conrail Railroad tracks" near Dyer about 0.4 mile east of project, have been documented with 1/2 mile of the proposed corridor.

corridor.

This review is based on the current proposed alignment. Once stations and maintenance sites are determined, or if the proposed alignment is changed, further review and comments may be needed.

Fish & Wildlife Comments:

We do not foresee any impacts to the Northern leopard frog as a result of this project.

Avoid and minimize impacts to fish, wildlife, and botanical resources to the greatest extent possible, and compensate for impacts. The following are recommendations that address potential impacts identified in the proposed project area:

1) Stream Crossings:

Utilizing existing structures will produce fewer impacts to streams, wetlands, and surrounding habitats. If the rehabilitation of an existing structure is not feasible, consider the following:

State of Indiana DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES Division of Fish and Wildlife

Early Coordination/Environmental Assessment

Using a three span structure without piers within the Little Calumet River could provide benefits to the river by removing the existing structure and piers and allowing the river to flow unobstructed. Locating a new structure within the footprint of the existing structure and minimizing impacts to surrounding habitat will aid to further minimize impacts to the river, wetlands, and surrounding habitat.

For purposes of maintaining fish passage through a crossing structure, the Environmental Unit recommends bridges rather than culverts and bottomless culverts rather than box or pipe culverts. Wide culverts are better than narrow culverts, and culverts with shorter through lengths are better than culverts with longer through lengths. If box or pipe culverts are used, the bottoms should be buried a minimum of 6" (or 20% of the culvert height/pipe diameter, whichever is greater up to a maximum of 2") below the stream bed elevation to allow a natural streambed to form within or under the crossing structure. Crossings should: span the entire channel width (a minimum of 1.2 times the bankful width); maintain the natural stream substrate within the structure; have a minimum openness ratio (height x width / length) of 0.25; and have stream depth and water velocities during low-flow conditions that are approximate to those in the conatural stream channel.

2) Bank Stabilization:

Establishing vegetation along the banks is critical for stabilization and erosion control. In addition to vegetation, some other form of bank stabilization may be needed. While hard armoring alone (e.g. riprap or glacial stone) may be needed in certain instances, soft armoring and bioengineering techniques should be considered first. In many instances, one or more methods are necessary to increase the likelihood of vegetation establishment. Combining vegetation with most bank stabilization methods can provide additional bank protection while not compromising the benefits to fish and wildlife. Information about bioengineering techniques can be found at http://www.in.gov/legislative/iac/20120404-IR-312120154NRA.xml.pdf. Also, the following is a USDA/NRCS document that outlines many different bioengineering techniques for streambank stabilization: http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/17553.wba.

The new, replacement, or rehabbed structure, and any bank stabilization under or around the structure, should not create conditions that are less favorable for wildlife passage under the structure compared to the current conditions. A level area of natural ground under the structure is ideal for wildlife passage. If hard armoring is needed, we recommend a smooth-surfaced material such as articulated concrete mats (or riprap at the toe and turf reinforcement mats above the riprap toe protection) be placed on the side-slopes instead of riprap. Such materials will not impair wildlife movement along the banks under the bridge.

Riprap must not be placed in the active thalweg channel or placed in the streambed in a manner that precludes fish or aquatic organism passage (riprap must not be placed above the existing streambed elevation). Riprap may be used only at the toe of the sideslopes up to the ordinary high water mark (OHWM). The banks above the OHWM must be restored, stabilized, and revegetated using geotextiles and a mixture of grasses, sedges, wildflowers, shrubs, and trees native to Northern Indiana and specifically for stream bank/floodway stabilization purposes as soon as possible upon completion.

3) Riparian Habitat:

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We recommend a mitigation plan be developed (and submitted with the permit application, if required) if habitat impacts will occur. The DNR's Floodway Habitat Mitigation guidelines (and plant lists) can be found online at:

http://www.in.gov/legislative/iac/20140806-IR-312140295NRA.xml.pdf.

State of Indiana DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES Division of Fish and Wildlife

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Impacts to non-wetland forest over one (1) acre should be mitigated at a minimum 2:1 ratio. If less than one acre of non-wetland forest is removed in a rural setting, replacement should be at a 1:1 ratio based on area. Impacts to non-wetland forest under one (1) acre in an urban setting should be mitigated by planting five trees, at least 2 inches in diameter-at-breast height (dbh), for each tree which is removed that is 10" dbh or greater (5:1 mitigation based on the number of large trees).

Remediation efforts along the west and east branches of the Grand Calumet River under the Great Lakes Legacy Act and Great Lakes Restoration Initiative have been on-going, and the last segment of remediation work along the Grand Calumet River from Hohman Avenue to the state line will begin soon. Any work proposed within the Grand Calumet River floodway for this project should avoid impacts to any mitigation planting areas from the remediation project.

4) Wetlands:

A formal wetland delineation should be conducted in order to determine the presence of and extent of any wetland habitat within the project corridor. Impacts should be avoided and minimized to the greatest extent possible.

Due to the presence or potential presence of wetlands on site, we recommend contacting and coordinating with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) 401 program and also the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) 404 program. Impacts to wetlands should be mitigated at the appropriate ratio (see guidelines above).

5) Exposed Soils:

All exposed soil areas must be stabilized with temporary or permanent vegetation by November 1. Between November 1 and April 1, all exposed soils idle for longer than 7 days must be stabilized with erosion control blankets or with a bonded fiber matrix hydro-mulch. Sites must be protected from seasonal flooding by keeping traffic areas covered with stone and soil stockpiles seeded, stable and contained with silt fencing.

The additional measures listed below should be implemented to avoid, minimize, or compensate for impacts to fish, wildlife, and botanical resources:

- 1. Revegetate all bare and disturbed areas with a mixture of grasses (excluding all varieties of tall fescue), legumes, and native shrub and hardwood tree species as soon as possible upon completion.
- 2. Minimize and contain within the project limits inchannel disturbance and the clearing of trees and brush.
- 3. Do not work in the waterway from April 1 through June 30 without the prior written approval of the Division of Fish and Wildlife.
- 4. Do not cut any trees suitable for Indiana bat roosting (greater than 3 inches dbh, living or dead, with loose hanging bark) from April 1 through September 30.
- 5. Do not excavate in the low flow area except for the placement of piers, foundations, and riprap, or removal of the old structure.
- 6. Do not construct any temporary runarounds, causeways, or cofferdams.
- 7. Use minimum average 6 inch graded riprap stone extended below the normal water level to provide habitat for aquatic organisms in the voids.
- 8. Do not use broken concrete as riprap.
- 9. Minimize the movement of resuspended bottom sediment from the immediate project area.
- 10. Do not deposit or allow demolition materials or debris to fall or otherwise enter the waterway.
- 11. Appropriately designed measures for controlling erosion and sediment must be implemented to prevent sediment from entering the stream or leaving the construction site; maintain these measures until construction is complete and all disturbed areas are stabilized.
- 12. Seed and protect all disturbed streambanks and slopes that are 3:1 or steeper with

THIS IS NOT A PERMIT

State of Indiana **DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES** Division of Fish and Wildlife

Early Coordination/Environmental Assessment

staff member at (317) 232-4080 if we can be of further assistance.

erosion control blankets (follow manufacturer's recommendations for selection and installation); seed and apply mulch on all other disturbed areas.

Contact Staff:

Christie L. Stanifer, Environ. Coordinator, Fish & Wildlife Our agency appreciates this opportunity to be of service. Please contact the above

Date: November 7, 2014

Christie L. Stanifer Environ. Coordinator

Division of Fish and Wildlife



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY REGION 5 77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

FEB 0 1 2017

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

E-19J

Mark Assam Federal Transit Administration 200 W. Adams Street, Suite 320 Chicago, Illinois 60606

Nicole Barker Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District 33 E. US Highway 12 Chesterton, Indiana 46304

Re: West Lake Corridor Project, Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Lake County, Indiana and Cook County, Illinois, CEQ #20160297

Dear Mr. Assam and Ms. Barker:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is providing comments in response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the above mentioned project. Our comments are provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is the lead agency for this project under NEPA, and the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) is the project proponent.

The proposed project would extend the existing South Shore Line with a new nine-mile southern branch from Hammond to Dyer, Indiana. The project would also operate on approximately 15 miles of existing South Shore Line and Metra Electric District tracks between Hammond and Downtown Chicago. The Draft EIS considers a no action alternative and three action alternatives, with several design options. FTA and NICTD identified the Hammond Alternative Option 2 as the NEPA Preferred Alternative. This alternative includes: (1) a single track throughout, with one 2,000-foot siding near the center of the alignment, (2) at-grade track on a separate right-of-way (ROW) adjacent to the CSX Monon Subdivision freight line in Dyer and Munster. (3) an elevated crossing over the CSX Elsdon Subdivision freight line at the Maynard Junction, (4) at-grade track on the publically owned former Monon Railroad corridor in Munster and Hammond, and (5) use of embankment and bridges to cross freight lines in Hammond to connect to the existing South Shore Line. The proposal includes four stations with parking, a maintenance facility, a layover facility, and traction power substations. The Draft EIS states that the project is needed in order to increase transportation options from the project area to Downtown Chicago, reduce travel time, reduce the parking burden at existing transit stations, reduce travel costs, and promote economic development.

While we recognize that the proposed project could have economic and environmental benefits, including long-term air quality benefits, we have rated the Draft EIS as *Environmental Concerns*, insufficient information (EC-2, see enclosed Summary of Rating Definitions). Our concerns primarily relate the absence of mitigation commitments, and the potential for significant environmental impacts to air, water, and community resources if appropriate mitigation is not implemented. Please see our detailed comments for recommendations to resolve our concerns.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our recommendations, please contact Jen Blonn, the lead reviewer for this project, at 312-886-6394 or blonn.jennifer@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Kenneth A. Westlake

Chief, NEPA Implementation Section

Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Enclosure:

Summary of Rating Definitions

EPA's Detailed Comments

Construction Emission Control Checklist

Cc via email: Paul Leffler, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago District

Stephen Sostaric, Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission

*SUMMARY OF RATING DEFINITIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTION"

Environmental Impact of the Action

LO-Lack of Objections

The EPA review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The review may have disclosed opportunities for application of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposal.

EC-Environmental Concerns

The EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce the environmental impacts. EPA would like to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

EO-Environmental Objections

The EPA review has identified significant environmental impacts that must be avoided in order to provide adequate protection for the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no action alternative or a new alternative). EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

EU-Environmentally Unsatisfactory

The EPA review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that they are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of public health or welfare or environmental quality. EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts. If the potential unsatisfactory impacts are not corrected at the final EIS stage, this proposal will be recommended for referral to the CEQ.

Adequacy of the Impact Statement

Category 1-Adequate

The EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alterative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis or data collecting is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

Category 2-Insufficient Information

The draft EIS does not contain sufficient information for the EPA to fully assess the environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the EPA reviewer has identified new reasonably available alternatives that are within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which could reduce the environmental impacts of the action. The identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussion should be included in the final EIS.

Category 3-Inadequate

EPA does not believe that the draft EIS adequately assesses potentially significant environmental impacts of the action, or the EPA reviewer has identified new, reasonably available alternatives that are outside of the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which should be analyzed in order to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts. EPA believes that the identified additional information, data analyses, or discussions are of such a magnitude that they should have full public review at a draft stage. EPA does not believe that the draft EIS is adequate for the purposes of the NEPA and/or Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental or revised draft EIS. On the basis of the potential significant impacts involved, this proposal could be a candidate for referral to the CEQ.

From EPA Manual 1640 Policy and Procedures for the Review of the Federal Actions Impacting the Environment

Enclosure 2

EPA'S DETAILED COMMENTS ON THE WEST LAKE CORRIDOR PROJECT, DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA AND COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS, FEBRUARY 1, 2017

Grand Calumet River Area of Concern

The Grand Calumet River in the northern portion of the project area was designated as an Area of Concern (AOC) under the 1987 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Remediation efforts by EPA and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to address polluted sediments have been and continue to take place up to the Indiana/Illinois state line. Remediation work involves dredging of some of the polluted sediments and capping the remaining sediments. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Preferred Alignment would cross the West Branch of the Grand Calumet River in Indiana within the AOC. As discussed in EPA's 2014 scoping comments, EPA is concerned with potential impacts from the proposed project on the remediation, including the integrity of the cap.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) acknowledges EPA's concerns regarding the Grand Calumet River. Page 5-61 states, "The Project would not impact the integrity of the cap that is located in the West Branch of the Grand Calumet River in Hammond... Any bridge in this section of the river would span the river, with no piers or abutments within the river channel." The Draft EIS also acknowledges that large-scale ecological restoration of adjacent wetland and riparian communities is underway, but does not provide a clear commitment to avoid impacts.

Recommendations for the Final EIS, Record of Decision (ROD), and Post-ROD Activities:

- In the Final EIS and ROD, clearly commit to clear span the Grand Calumet River within the AOC. Commit to not use piers or abutments in the river channel, as stated in the Draft EIS. Further, commit to avoid all impacts to the ecological restoration of adjacent wetland and riparian communities.
- During the design and engineering phase of the proposed project, coordinate with EPA to ensure that the proposed plan will not adversely impact remediation efforts related to the West Branch of the Grand Calumet River. Contact Diana Mally of EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office at 312-886-7275 or mally.diana@epa.gov.

Air Quality

Trains would be powered by electricity, and therefore not directly release emissions in the project area. Changes to traffic patterns as a result of project implementation could increase vehicle emissions near stations; analysis in the Draft EIS indicates that such emissions would not be significant.

Emissions from construction activities are briefly discussed in the Draft EIS. Sources of construction emissions and potential health impacts are not fully explained, and the Draft EIS does not commit to minimize emissions from construction equipment. Temporary emissions from construction equipment have the potential to impact human health, especially in sensitive populations, such as the elderly, children, and those with impaired respiratory systems. The recent Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Draft EIS for the Chicago Red Line Extension

provides an example of a fuller qualitative analysis and clear mitigation commitments for construction air quality impacts.

Recommendations for the Final EIS and ROD:

- Include a qualitative analysis of all potential emissions sources from the construction phase of the proposed project. Consider: truck trips, demolition, use of construction equipment, and increases in automobile congestion from lane closures and rerouting traffic.
- Discuss potential local health effects from construction emissions, including childhood asthma and other respiratory illnesses that can be triggered by short-term elevated emission levels.
- Identify and commit to specific measures to reduce emissions, including those listed in the enclosed Construction Emission Control Checklist.
- In line with Executive Order 13045 on children's health, pay particular attention to worksite proximity to places where children live, learn, and play, such as homes, schools, daycare centers, and playgrounds. Construction emission reduction measures should be strictly implemented near these locations in order to be protective of children's health.
- Discuss the timeline for project construction and whether construction emissions would be included in the Conformity Determination.
- In the Final EIS and ROD, demonstration the that proposed project would comply with Conformity requirements.

Noise

Without mitigation, the NEPA Preferred Alternative is predicted to exceed the FTA severe impact criteria at 145 residences and three institutional receptors. It is also predicted to exceed the FTA moderate impact criteria at 290 residences and 20 institutions (page 5-8). As discussed in the Draft EIS, opportunities to avoid or minimize noise impacts are available. Installing stationary wayside horns at grade crossings would eliminate all severe and moderate noise impacts except for one multi-housing building in Munster, which could be protected with a noise barrier (page 5-2). While the Draft EIS discusses potential mitigation measures, it does not provide commitments. Rather, it states that noise control measures would be confirmed during the engineering phase of the project. Other Draft EISs, such as FTA's recent Red Line Extension Project, commonly commit to noise mitigation in the EIS. Such commitments help ensure that protective measures will be used and enable the public to understand likely noise impact levels. Without such commitments, EPA is concerned that proposed project could have significant noise impacts on surrounding communities.

Recommendations for the Final EIS and ROD:

- Commit to specific protective measures to eliminate severe and moderate noise impacts from the proposed project.
- Clarify why some noise levels in Table 5.2-4 (page 5-8) are lower under the Preferred Alternative when compared to the No Build Alternative.

Community Impacts and Engagement

The Preferred Alternative would disrupt communities with up to 91 residential and up to 14 commercial displacements (page 4-13). Residents would be offered fair compensation and relocation assistance per the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act. EPA recommends additional measures below to minimize community impacts due to displacements. The community would also be impacted by the proposed project's use of right-of-way that currently supports the Monon Trail, and impacts would be mitigated by relocating the trail adjacent to the proposed project.

Recommendations for the Final EIS and ROD:

- Actively engage community groups, residents, businesses, and other stakeholders in the project area throughout the EIS process, and document coordination in the Final EIS. Include a description of how local input is being used to inform project design and implementation.
- Commit to provide a single point of contact for residents to gain information and assistance related to displacements and relocations in order to minimize hardships.
- Commit to provide special assistance to enable displaced individuals to remain in the same neighborhood, if desired.
- In order to best protect communities throughout the construction and operational phases of the proposed project, we recommend compiling all mitigation commitments into a single list, sorted by topic. Residents would then have a single source to easily identify protective measures that should be taken. Include a phone number for residents to call if they believe appropriate measures are not being taken. This is particularly important for construction air emission mitigation measures, such as idling time for heavy duty trucks. As an example of the type of list we are recommending, see the Michigan Department of Transportation's project mitigation summary "Greet Sheets," which are available online for many projects.
- Consider promoting local hiring for project construction and operations.
- Consider committing to construct and open the replacement Monon Trail route prior to eliminating the current route.
- Assess whether development of the proposed project could result in the loss of transit bus service to other communities, especially in low-income and minority communities, due to reprioritization of transit funding. If needed, modify plans to avoid such impacts.
- Consider the locations of schools, parks and daycare centers when deciding where to route local traffic and construction equipment. Commit to route traffic away from places where children congregate to the extent possible. When unavoidable, commit to provide crossing guards.
- Clarify where the 2,000-foot siding begins and ends so that stakeholders can better understand potential impacts.

Station Area Development

Where there is local support and appropriate siting, EPA recognizes that rail stations can offer a valuable opportunity to create new inter-modal community hubs, generate economic development, and improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the surrounding area. Dyer, Munster, and Hammond are each participating in the FTA-funded Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented

Development (TOD) Planning, which could help shape the areas surrounding the stations. TOD planning can have long-term environmental benefits to air and water quality.

The proposed project includes four new stations located in Dyer, Munster, and Hammond, respectively. The Draft EIS explains that the South Hammond Station and Hammond Gateway Station would not conflict with existing types of land use. The Draft EIS states that the proposed Munster/Dyer Main Street Station and the Munster Ridge Road Station, however, would be "incompatible with adjacent residential uses" (page 4-7). Additional discussion on station alternatives that were considered but dismissed and the site selection process for the Munster/Dyer Main Street and Munster Ridge Road stations would strengthen the EIS by more fully disclosing the decision-making process. In addition, plans for each station include surface parking lots, with up to 1,850 parking spaces planned for Munster/Dyer Main Street Station. The use of structured parking, which would minimize the project footprint and associated impacts, does not appear to have been considered in the Draft EIS.

Recommendations for the Final EIS, ROD, and Post-ROD Activities:

- Discuss the process that led to the selection of station locations in order to demonstrate that the project team considered a reasonable range of station alternatives in the NEPA process to inform decision-making. Include a rationale for each station location that was dismissed from the NEPA process. Discuss local input on the station locations.
- Document tradeoffs between selecting the Munster/Dyer Main Street Station and the Dyer Amtrak Station location. Discuss potential benefits of co-locating a West Lake Corridor Station with an Amtrak Station in order to serve both markets, as well as plans for mixed use development around the Dyer Amtrak station within the Dyer Comprehensive Plan (as discussed on page 4-4).
- Consider using structured parking with context sensitive designs. Discuss potential benefits of structured parking on displacements, stormwater, and future TOD planning.
- Where there is local interest, form or use existing partnerships with community groups and local and regional planning organizations to fully take advantage of station-area planning opportunities. Consider using such partnerships to: (1) engage residents in station and station-area planning visioning activities to inform station and parking design, and (2) incorporate plans for multi-modal connectivity, complete streets, and creating stations as unique neighborhood destinations. Document coordination and plans in the Final EIS.
- Commit to promote affordable housing as part of future TOD plans in areas with communities with environmental justice concerns, such as Hammond.
- Consider opportunities for green building in station designs, such as: planning for net-zero energy use, obtaining Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification, incorporating green infrastructure for stormwater management, and incorporating on-site renewable energy sources.
- We encourage NICTD, local governments, and interested community organizations to consider EPA resources that support sustainable community development around station areas. Grant and technical opportunities are periodically available at: https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth

Waters Resources

The Draft EIS states that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) provided a preliminary jurisdictional determination for Waters of the U.S. (Waters) in the Indiana portion of the study area on July 29, 2016, and the project team plans to request a final determination during the engineering phase of the project. The proposed project would cross the Little Calumet River and the Grand Calumet River and impact wetlands adjacent to both Waters. Impacts would require a Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401 state water quality certification and a Section 404 permit. The Wetland Delineation Technical Report explains that, for the purpose of this study, the project team assumed all wetlands within the project footprint would be permanently impacted, and all wetlands that would be 50 percent affected were considered to be affected in their entirety. Text states that opportunities to minimize impacts will not be known until project design advances (Appendix H-7, page 37). The Draft EIS quantifies potential impacts to Waters from each build alternative, which range from 4.5 to 20.79 acres. The NEPA Preferred Alternative is estimated to result in 8.18 acres of impacts in Indiana and no impacts in Illinois.

While the Draft EIS references EPA's CWA 404(b)(1) Guidelines, text does not discuss how this project would comply with the requirements to first avoid, then mimimize impacts, prior to mitigating for any remaining impacts. Further, text states that impacts to Waters would be minimized through implementation of best management practices and erosion and sediment control plans, but does not provide details. While we recognize that the project is in an early stage, further consideration of how the project would comply with the Guidelines could help ensure that the NEPA document is consistent with and supportive of a future CWA permit. In addition, considering strategies to reduce wetland impacts during the EIS process could yield early opportunities to minimize impacts and clarify the significance of impacts. Watersheds in the project area that contain potentially impacted wetlands also contain waters listed on the Indiana List of Impaired Waters under CWA Section 303 (d), as discussed in the Draft EIS. Reducing wetland impacts would preserve water filtering capacity for these watersheds.

Recommendations for the Final EIS and ROD:

- Document coordination with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency related to the CWA Section 401 Certification, as well as coordination with the Corps related to the CWA Section 404 permit. Include correspondence in an appendix to the Final EIS.
- Discuss efforts that the project team has taken to date, as well as measures that will be taken in the future, to avoid and minimize potential impacts to Waters to the extent practicable, in line with the CWA Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines.
- Consider opportunities to avoid Waters when siting parking lots, stations, maintenance and layover facilities, and traction power substations.
- Clarify the types of best management practices that text on page 5-62 refers to as a means to minimize impacts to Waters, and summarize or include drafts of erosion and sediment control plans as appendices to the Final EIS.
- In the Final EIS and ROD, clearly commit to mitigate for impacts to Waters within the watershed where impacts occur, as stated on page 44 of Appendix H-7.
- Discuss how cost, logistical, or technological constraints preclude avoidance and minimization of any known impacts to Waters.

- Discuss proposed mitigation types, ratios, and potential locations. Include mitigation sequencing per the CWA Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines, and describe how mitigation would comply with the 2008 Mitigation Rule.
- Include a summary of the Section 404(b)(1) analysis in the Final EIS, or, if available, include a draft as an appendix.
- Include stormwater detention areas, and all other project features, in the project footprint for analysis the Final EIS. Page 5-45 indicates that the current project footprint does not include areas for stormwater management.

Climate Change Adaptation and Resiliency

The Draft EIS considers the effects of the project on climate change by evaluating the net greenhouse gas emissions associated with the project. We recommend that FTA and NICTD also consider the effects of climate change on the proposed action. The Draft EIS does not consider future climate scenarios, and how they may impact the proposal and its impacts. Including future climate scenarios, such as those provided by the U.S. Global Change Research Program's National Climate Assessment (NCA), provides information valuable to determining how changing climate could affect the environmental impacts of the project, and how the project could be made more resilient to the impacts of climate change. The NCA's section on the Midwest provides a useful starting place for analyzing changing climate conditions. The report finds that, in the Midwest, extreme heat, heavy downpours, and flooding will affect infrastructure, health, air and water quality, and more.

Recommendations for the Final EIS:

- Consider the effects of climate change on the proposed action.
- Determine whether the environmental impacts of the alternatives would be exacerbated by climate change. This determination should be informed by assessing future climate scenarios in the Final EIS. If impacts may be exacerbated, additional mitigation measures may be warranted.
- Consider whether measures are needed to improve resiliency to climate change in the project's design, and add protective measures if needed, such as enhanced stormwater management.

¹ U.S. Global Change Research Program, 2014 National Climate Assessment, available at: http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/report

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Construction Emission Control Checklist

Mobile and Stationary Source Diesel Controls

Purchase or solicit bids that require the use of vehicles that are equipped with zero-emission technologies or the most advanced emission control systems available. Commit to the best available emissions control technologies for project equipment in order to meet the following standards.

- On-Highway Vehicles: On-highway vehicles project should meet, or exceed, the U.S. EPA exhaust emissions standards for model year 2010 and newer heavy-duty, on-highway compression-ignition engines (e.g., long-haul trucks, refuse haulers, shuttle buses, etc.).²
- Non-road Vehicles and Equipment: Non-road vehicles and equipment should meet, or exceed, the U.S. EPA Tier 4 exhaust emissions standards for heavy-duty, non-road compression-ignition engines (e.g., construction equipment, non-road trucks, etc.).³
- Locomotives: Locomotives servicing infrastructure sites should meet, or exceed, the EPA
 Tier 4 exhaust emissions standards for line-haul and switch locomotive engines where
 possible.⁴
- Low Emission Equipment Exemptions: The equipment specifications outlined above should be met unless: 1) a piece of specialized equipment is not available for purchase or lease within the United States; or 2) the relevant project contractor has been awarded funds to retrofit existing equipment, or purchase/lease new equipment, but the funds are not yet available.

Consider requiring the following best practices through the construction contacting or oversight process:

- Use onsite renewable electricity generation and/or grid-based electricity rather than diesel-powered generators or other equipment.
- Use ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel (15 ppm maximum) in construction vehicles and equipment.
- Use catalytic converters to reduce carbon monoxide, aldehydes, and hydrocarbons in diesel fumes. These devices must be used with low sulfur fuels.
- Use electric starting aids such as block heaters with older vehicles to warm the engine.
- Regularly maintain diesel engines to keep exhaust emissions low. Follow the manufacturer's recommended maintenance schedule and procedures. Smoke color can signal the need for maintenance (e.g., blue/black smoke indicates that an engine requires servicing or tuning).
- Retrofit engines with an exhaust filtration device to capture diesel particulate matter before it enters the construction site.

² http://www.epa.gov/otaq/standards/heavy-duty/hdci-exhaust.htm

³ http://www.epa.gov/otaq/standards/nonroad/nonroadci.htm

⁴ http://www.epa.gov/otaq/standards/nonroad/locomotives.htm

- Repower older vehicles and/or equipment with diesel- or alternatively-fueled engines
 certified to meet newer, more stringent emissions standards (e.g., plug-in hybrid-electric
 vehicles, battery-electric vehicles, fuel cell electric vehicles, advanced technology
 locomotives, etc.).
- Retire older vehicles, given the significant contribution of vehicle emissions to the poor air quality conditions. Implement programs to encourage the voluntary removal from use and the marketplace of pre-2010 model year on-highway vehicles (e.g., scrappage rebates) and replace them with newer vehicles that meet or exceed the latest U.S. EPA exhaust emissions standards.

Fugitive Dust Source Controls

- Stabilize open storage piles and disturbed areas by covering and/or applying water or chemical/organic dust palliative, where appropriate. This applies to both inactive and active sites, during workdays, weekends, holidays, and windy conditions.
- Install wind fencing and phase grading operations where appropriate, and operate water trucks for stabilization of surfaces under windy conditions.
- When hauling material and operating non-earthmoving equipment, prevent spillage and limit speeds to 15 miles per hour (mph). Limit speed of earth-moving equipment to 10 mph.

Occupational Health

- Reduce exposure through work practices and training, such as turning off engines when
 vehicles are stopped for more than a few minutes, training diesel-equipment operators to
 perform routine inspection, and maintaining filtration devices.
- Position the exhaust pipe so that diesel fumes are directed away from the operator and nearby workers, reducing the fume concentration to which personnel are exposed.
- Use enclosed, climate-controlled cabs pressurized and equipped with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters to reduce the operators' exposure to diesel fumes. Pressurization ensures that air moves from inside to outside. HEPA filters ensure that any incoming air is filtered first.
- Use respirators, which are only an interim measure to control exposure to diesel emissions. In most cases, an N95 respirator is adequate. Workers must be trained and fittested before they wear respirators. Depending on the type of work being conducted, and if oil is present, concentrations of particulates present will determine the efficiency and type of mask and respirator. Personnel familiar with the selection, care, and use of respirators must perform the fit testing. Respirators must bear a NIOSH approval number.

THIS IS NOT A PERMIT

State of Indiana **DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES** Division of Fish and Wildlife

Early Coordination/Environmental Assessment

DNR #:

ER-17897-1

Request Received: December 14, 2016

Date: February 3, 2017

Requestor:

Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation

District

Nicole Barker

33 East US Highway 12 Chesterton, IN 46304-3521

Project:

West Lake Corridor Project, Lake Co., IN and Cook Co., IL DEIS: new track

improvements, four (4) new stations, and a maintenance facility along a 9 mile southern

extension along the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD)

existing South Shore Line (SSL) between Dyer and Hammond, IN

County/Site info:

Lake

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has reviewed the above referenced project per your request. Our agency offers the following comments for your information and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

If our agency has regulatory jurisdiction over the project, the recommendations contained in this letter may become requirements of any permit issued. If we do not

have permitting authority, all recommendations are voluntary.

Fish & Wildlife Comments:

All of the recommendations in our previous letter dated November 7, 2014, still apply;

however, we offer the following additional comments:

The alternatives that were evaluated had varying levels of environmental impact. Of the proposals that were evaluated, the selected proposal seems to be the alternative that will minimize impacts to fish, wildlife, and botanical resources, while still achieving the

stated goals of the project.

Contact Staff:

Christie L. Stanifer, Environ. Coordinator, Fish & Wildlife

Our agency appreciates this opportunity to be of service. Please contact the above

staff member at (317) 232-4080 if we can be of further assistance.

Christie L. Stanifer

Division of Fish and Wildlife

Environ, Coordinator





Consolidated Rail Corporation 1717 Arch Street, Ste. 1310 Philadelphia, PA 19103

February 3, 2016

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL

Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District ("NICTD"), DEIS West Lake Corridor Project 33 East U.S. Highway 12 Chesterton, IN 46304 Project.email@nictdwestlake.com

Re: <u>Comments on NICTD West Lake Corridor Project Draft Environmental Impact</u> Statement

Consolidated Rail Corporation ("Conrail") submits the following comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("Draft EIS") and Section 4(f) Evaluation released on December 15, 2016 by the Federal Transit Administration ("FTA") in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the proposed West Lake Corridor Project. The project involves the construction of an approximately 9-mile extension of the southern branch of NICTD's existing South Shore Line between Dyer and Hammond, Indiana. Conrail is a Class III switching railroad, indirectly and jointly owned by CSX Corporation ("CSX") and Norfolk Southern Corporation ("NS"). Conrail is the majority owner of the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad ("IHB"). Conrail submits these comments on behalf of IHB.

In the Draft EIS, FTA and NICTD propose "Hammond Alternative Option 2" as the NEPA Preferred Alternative. (Draft EIS at Section ES.8, Page ES-11). The Hammond Alternative Option 2 appears to have the least impact on the IHB as compared with other alternatives considered. As a result, Conrail does not object to Hammond Alternative Option 2 as the proposed NEPA Preferred Alternative.

Echoing NS's comments in its letter dated January 30, 2017, Conrail relies upon the following statements in providing its comments: The Draft EIS states "The Project's guideway would be designed to operate completely separated from any freight rail operation." (Draft EIS at Section 8.2, Page ES-12). The Draft EIS provides further that:

"The Hammond Alternative Options would not cross freight railroad tracks at-grade, share railroad ROW and infrastructure, and would have the least effect on freight railroad operations." (Draft EIS at Section 10.4, Page 10-14). Additionally, Conrail relies upon and agrees with the Draft EIS statement that "using or crossing existing freight railroad corridors would require agreement from the affected railroad owners." (Id.).

Conrail notes that the Figure ES.7-3 appears to depict the elevated section of the proposed extension starting just east of the state line. The IHB north-south route through the North State Line area is not shown on either of the maps on Figure ES.7-3 or ES.7-4. The IHB east-west main line is depicted in ES.7-3, but this is not the line which is of concern in the North State Line area. From the description IHB's north-south route does not appear to be disturbed, but the maps are somewhat unclear. As the process moves forward, we request clarity on the exact alignment of the proposed extension of the line, as well as the proposed line's spatial relationship to the existing railroad rights-of-way, including that of the north-south IHB line which crosses the SS main line at CP North State Line.

We have some questions and concerns about potential impacts of the Project on IHB operations, including, but not limited to the following: What is the control system for the junction between the SSL main line and the West Lake extension and will it include what is now CP North State Line? If so, what will be the effect of this new connection between the two NICTD routes on the operation of the interlocking at CP North State Line? Where exactly is the maintenance facility to be located and how will the maintenance operation work? We anticipate that we will resolve these questions and concerns through our continued involvement as a stakeholder in this process, but we enumerate these questions to underscore the need for close coordination with IHB in the planning process.

Finally, the Preferred Alternative must provide sufficient capacity that does not preclude future expansion of IHB capacity. For example, we would like to see more detail on the placement of bridge pillars and overhead clearance (at the Hohman Street area overcrossing) to ensure the preservation of IHB's ability to add a 4th track or a connection between IHB and NS in the northeast or southwest quadrant.

Conrail supports the efforts of the FTA and others to enhance and extend the South Shore Line. We believe it is important, however, to recognize that freight rail is as critical for economic development as passenger service. Conrail appreciates the opportunity to provide comments, and looks forward to its involvement as a stakeholder in the NICTD West Lake Corridor Project process.

Sincerely,

Jocelyn Gabrynowicz Hill

Director of Public Affairs & Assistant General Counsel



January 30, 2017

Mr. Michael Noland Executive Director Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District 33 East U.S. Highway 12 Chesterton, IN 46304

Re: NICTD West Lake Corridor Project Draft EIS

Dear Mr. Noland:

We are grateful for the opportunity to review the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD)'s West Lake Corridor Project Draft EIS dated December 2016. Having reviewed the draft report and following our previous correspondence in November 2015, Metra would like to provide some feedback and comments for your consideration while preparing the final report.

As the Metra Electric District (MED) is the host railroad for the northern portion of both existing NICTD service and this proposed service expansion, Metra is a key partner in the success of this endeavor. It is worth noting in the Draft EIS that enhanced NICTD service on the MED will likely require implementation of some or all of the strategic improvements being explored in the ongoing jointly-funded Metra / NICTD MED Capacity / Calumet Corridor study. Also, note that any NICTD service added to the shared portion of the MED will be subject to future negotiation.

We also wanted to bring to your attention a few minor points within the text of the document. On page 61 of Appendix F, it is our belief that previous communication indicated Metra's desire to serve as a participating agency in this study, so Table 3-1 on this page should be changed to reflect that. Additionally, page 3-2 in Chapter 3 refers to an "Analysis of Capacity..." report in Appendix H which does not appear to be included in the final document.

We look forward to continuing to work with NICTD as the project continues to progress. We remain supportive of the project concept overall, and we are committed to our ongoing partnership to bring about transportation solutions that meet the needs of the residents and employees of northern Indiana, northeastern Illinois, and the entire Chicagoland region. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Don Orseno

Executive Director/CEO



Chicago South Shore & South Bend Railroad

Fax (219) 879-3754

General Offices 505 North Carroll Avenue Michigan City, Indiana 46360

January 30, 2017

Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District DEIS West Lake Corridor Project 33 East U.S. Highway 12 Chesterton, IN 46304

Re: CSS and IIDC Comments on Westlake DEIS

The Chicago South Shore & South Bend Railroad Company (CSS) and its affiliate Illinois Indiana Development Company, LLC (IIDC) hereby submit the following comments to the NICTD West Lake Corridor Project (Project) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS):

CSS is a common carrier freight railroad which shares the track of NICTD. This arrangement derives from a time when both the freight and the passenger operations were under common ownership. That company entered bankruptcy in 1989. Shortly thereafter CSS and NICTD, in a coordinated transaction, acquired the assets of the bankrupt railroad and formed separate passenger (NICTD) and freight (CSS) entities. NICTD is an agency of the State of Indiana. CSS is a privately held Indiana general partnership. IIDC is a privately held Indiana limited liability company, which is under common ownership with CSS. In the DEIS the passenger operation on the traditional NICTD route is referred to as South Shore Line (SSL)

The mainline from South Bend to the Indiana – Illinois state line near Hammond is owned by NICTD and CSS has the perpetual freight franchise. The mainline from the state line to the connection with Metra Electric Division near Kensington in the City of Chicago is owned by the IIDC. NICTD has a perpetual lease to provide passenger service over this line and CSS has an operating agreement with IIDC under which CSS provides freight service on it. NICTD has day-to-day operational control of the IIDC tracks. The two entities work very closely with each other to maintain safe, reliable freight and passenger services using the same tracks.

CSS and IIDC support the West Lake Corridor project. We believe it is good for the economic development of Northwest Indiana. However, we do believe the DEIS is deficient in that its analysis of the impact of the Project on rail freight operations is incomplete.

NEPA Preferred Alternative

Commuter trains and freight trains do not compete commercially, but they do compete for track capacity in shared corridors. The more trains of each type that are run, the more acute the competition becomes. This competition or interference can occur if the route is shared by freight and passenger trains or if passenger and freight routes cross at grade. In section 3.3.4.1 of the DEIS, the statement is made "The NEPA Preferred Alternative would not cross any freight railroad tracks or share railroad ROW or infrastructure." While this statement is true with respect to the newly constructed part of the Project, the Project also includes the operation of new passenger trains over the entire route from Dyer to Millennium Station, which includes the existing shared use IIDC tracks between Hammond and Kensington,

a distance of six miles. The DEIS states that a dozen new passenger trains will operate over that shared use segment in addition to NICTD's traditional SSL service. There will be additional trains that will be added by SSL because of the concurrent NWI Double Track Project, which is intended to increase the speeds and frequency of the SSL.

Furthermore, that same shared use route includes three freight railroad crossings at grade: Indiana Harbor Belt (IHB) at State Line; Norfolk Southern (NS) at Hegewisch; and Canadian National (CN) at Kensington. The CN route also hosts Amtrak passenger service. These crossings are relevant because delays to either freight or passenger trains at these crossings can have ripple effects across the carriers' respective networks. In the same Section 3.3.4.1, this phenomenon is acknowledged in the discussion of the Maynard Junction Rail Profile Option: "The increased congestion at the Maynard Junction could potentially result in delays to the freight network, although it is likely that the commuter trains would be affected more, since permission for them to cross the freight rail track would be controlled by the freight railroad." Also acknowledged in this sentence is that the railway not in control of the track is likely to experience deterioration of its service at that location. It is primarily for this reason that the Maynard Junction Rail Profile Option is rejected despite cost saving. Yet this situation will exist on the IIDC segment from Hammond to Kensington. The phenomenon of crossing-caused delays was also used to justify several CREATE projects ranging from fly overs to improved signaling in the Chicago metropolitan area.

Regardless, there are many locations around the country where busy freight and passenger railroads operate successfully with shared facilities and crossings (including locations where NICTD, CSS and other railroads share or cross today). The key is to have enough of the right infrastructure to minimize delays all around. NICTD and CSS are cooperatively seeking answers to these questions by modelling the proposed operation. CSS and IIDC respectfully request that this portion of the final EIS relating to freight rail impacts not be finalized until after the results of this modelling are complete and can be incorporated into the EIS. The current modelling schedule will accommodate this. This is the same Rail Traffic Controller (RTC) simulation model that was used to study the interface between Project trains and Metra Electric (MED) trains as described in Section 3.2.2 of the DEIS and will consider both shared use and crossing activity. The discussion in 10.4 of the NEPA Preferred Alternative states that the Hammond Alternative Options would have the least potential impact on area freight roads. More information is required to back that up.

IHB Alternatives

CSS and IIDC believe that the analysis of the IHB alternatives overstates the costs and understates the benefits of this route. CSS and IIDC continue to believe this route is superior for the reasons stated in our November 3, 2014 letter, which is included in the DEIS Appendix F Section F3 Appendix D Scoping Comments on pages D-62 and D-63. The cost of the IHB route is significantly overstated by including a totally new freight line to be built parallel to the existing IHB track, which includes a new bridge over the Calumet River. The discussion of the IHB alternative in Section 3.3.4.1 of the DEIS acknowledges that the IHB ROW is currently unused. It is a dormant dead end line. There is no realistic scenario in which a commuter operation could not share its track with a dormant freight operation, nor is there any realistic scenario where this route would ever come back to life as a vital freight line to the extent that operations could not share this line, as NICTD and CSS do today. Despite the letter from Conrail Shared Assets stating this route is not available, there is no evidence that any serious attempt to negotiate access to this route was attempted despite the compelling construction economics if the duplicate freight track were eliminated. There is even sufficient vacant land adjacent to the IHB route on which to construct a maintenance facility at Kensington. The IHB alternative would not

afford the opportunity of a transfer station at Hammond and off-peak shuttles, something not contemplated in the original scoping, but such a transfer could conceptually still take place at Kensington with the more frequent MED trains.

All Alternatives

In the discussion of all alternatives, it is noted that bridge piers associated with the various fly over structures required could negatively impact the construction of future freight capacity on CSX, IHB and/or NS. The same holds true for the impacts of the additional services on our shared track with NICTD. CSS and IIDC maintain that whatever is constructed make sufficient provision for freight operations and growth.

Cordially,

Todd Bjornstad

President

Chicago South Shore & South Bend RR

TOOD BJON STANS

This e-mail and any accompanying attachments are confidential. The information is intended solely for the use of the individual to whom it is addressed. Any review, disclosure, copying, distribution, or use of this e-mail communication by others is strictly prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender immediately and delete all copies. Thank you for your cooperation.

From: McCloskey, Elizabeth [mailto:elizabeth mccloskey@fws.gov]

Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2017 9:58 AM
To: Nicole Barker < nicole.barker@nictd.com >
Cc: Grundel, Ralph < rgrundel@usgs.gov >
Subject: Re: Rusty Patched Bumble Bee?

Good morning Nicole, I just checked on the bumble bee in relation to NICTD's 2 projects and neither one includes the species. So it won't be necessary to do surveys for it.

I still don't know exactly where it is in Lake County, but it is somewhere south of US 30.

Liz

On Wed, Mar 15, 2017 at 11:59 AM, Nicole Barker < nicole.barker@nictd.com > wrote:

Thanks a million, Liz – this is immensely helpful news. Please let me know what you find out when that Lake County instance is up on the map so we can be sure it doesn't intersect with either project.

We really appreciate the help you and Ralph have provided.

Nicole Barker

Director of Capital Investment and Implementation

South Shore Line

nicole.barker@nictd.com

O: 219.926.5744 x 313

M: 219.921-4263

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Federal Transit Administration Region V 200 West Adams St, Suite 320 Chicago, IL 60606-5253 Indiana Division

July 3, 2017

575 North Pennsylvania Street, Rm 254 Indianapolis, IN 46204 (317) 226-7475 (317) 226-7431 http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/indiv/

> In Reply Refer To: HDA-IN

Roy Nunnally, Director Asset Management Division Indiana Department of Transportation 100 N Senate Ave. N925 Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Mr. Nunnally:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have completed our review of the documents necessary to make an air quality conformity finding on the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) amendment to the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan (CRP) and the FY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management, the Indiana Department of Transportation, and the US Environmental Protection Agency have completed their reviews and recommend that we find the amendment to 2040 CRP and TIP conform to the applicable air quality conformity requirements. Appropriate consultation and public involvement on the conformity analyses was completed.

Therefore, FHWA and FTA find the NIRPC's amendment to the 2040 CRP and FY 2018-2021 TIP conform as required by the conformity rule. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Joyce Newland of FHWA at (317) 226-5353 or Susan Weber of FTA at (312) 353-3888.

Sincerely,

Mayel Son Mayela Sosa

Division Administrator

FHWA Indiana Division

Marisol Simón Regional Administrator

marior Churin

FTA Region V

ecc: Ty Warner, NIRPC, Mary Enright, INDOT

Ty Warner, NIRPC Ron Hinsenkamp, WCIEDD Mark Policinski, OKI



Federal Transit Administration Region V 200 West Adams St, Suite 320 Chicago, IL 60606-5253 Indiana Division

July 3, 2017

575 North Pennsylvania Street, Rm 254 Indianapolis, IN 46204 (317) 226-7475 (317) 226-7431 http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/indiv/

> In Reply Refer To: HDA-IN

Commissioner Joe McGuinness Indiana Department of Transportation 100 North Senate Avenue Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dear Commissioner McGuinness:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have completed the review of the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) FY 2018-2021 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the respective Metropolitan Planning Organizations' (MPOs) Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) received June 6, 2017. We hereby give our approval.

We would also like to take this opportunity to recognize INDOT for maintaining and updating the Planning Roles, Responsibilities and Cooperative Operation Manual (PRRCOM), which identifies the planning contacts within INDOT and specifies the responsibilities for specific state and MPO planning functions and establishes processes for various core planning documents. The PRRCOM has been used effectively to guide the development of the planning products, such as the TIPs, the Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWPs) and the Statement of Works. We also commend INDOT's planning reviews of the MPOs under the 200,000 population. We strongly believe this oversight action helps to serve as the basis for INDOT's endorsement of the self-certification of the metropolitan planning process.

As we have communicated, the FHWA and FTA issued new transportation planning rules on the statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes to reflect the use of a performance based approach to decision-making in support of national goals. These processes will document how the MPOs, INDOT and public transportation providers agree to cooperatively develop and share information related to transportation performance data, the selection of performance targets, the reporting of performance to be used in tracking progress toward attainment of critical outcomes for the MPO region, and the data collection for the INDOT asset management plan for the National Highway System.

FHWA and FTA also have performance measures for safety, bridge and pavement conditions, congestion reduction, system reliability and transit asset management for which final regulations are published and in effect. INDOT and the MPOs must collaborate to identify performance

targets for each performance measure. For FHWA and FTA to approve amendments after May 27, 2018, the INDOT, MPOs and public transit operators must reflect this information and describe how projects in the TIP/STIP achieve the performance targets, to the maximum extent practicable, identified in the statewide and metropolitan transportation plans, linking investment priorities to these performance targets.

FHWA and FTA have determined the TIPs are based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process by INDOT, the MPOs, and the transit operators in accordance to 23 CFR 450. The TIP for the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission is subject to the provisions of the Transportation Conformity Rule (40 CFR Parts 51 and 93) has been found to conform (see enclosed approval letter). In addition, this planning finding is based upon the extent to which all the projects in the FY 2018-2021 STIP are the result of planning provisions found in U.S.C. 23 and U.S.C. 49.

We look forward to working with you on implementing the FY 2018-2021 STIP. Should you have any questions, please contact Joyce Newland, FHWA Planning Program Manager, at (317) 226-5353 or Joyce.Newland@dot.gov or Susan Weber, FTA Community Planner, at (312) 353-3888 or Susan.Weber@dot.gov.

Sincerely,

Mayela Sosa

Division Administrator

FHWA Indiana Division

Enclosure

cc: Dan Brassard, INDOT

Kathy Eaton-McKalip, INDOT

Trevor Mills, INDOT

Katie England, INDOT

Roy Nunnally, INDOT

Susan Weber, FTA

Dan Avery, NIRCC

James Turnwald, MACOG

Jerold Bridges, MCCOG

Josh Desmond, BMCMPO

Laura Thayer, CAMPO

Seyed Shokouhzadeh, EMPO

Anna Gremling, IMPO

Tammy Corn, KHCCC

Sallie Dell Fahey, APC

Larry Chaney, KIDPA

Marta Moody, DMMPC

Marisol Simón

Regional Administrator

FTA Region V



219.769.7275 • Fax: 219.945.0452

August 24, 2017

Ms. Marisol Simon USDOT / Federal Transit Administration Region V Regional Administrator 200 W Adams Street, Suite 320 Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Ms. Simon,

Lake County Parks is working in cooperation with the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), operator of the South Shore Line Railroad, as part of its West Lake Corridor Project (the project). Lake County Parks understands that the Project would permanently impact approximately 3.29 acres and temporarily impact approximately 0.26 acres of wetland in Lake County, Indiana.

These wetland impacts will require mitigation to comply with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. We agree that mitigation for these wetland impacts can be accommodated on Lake County Parks property.

Lake County Parks and its consultant EcoLogic Planning, Inc have a schedule of completion for a 106-acre mitigation bank at Oak Ridge Prairie County Park. This schedule outlines permits to be obtained and hydraulic monitoring wells to be installed by the spring of 2018. Site management will commence in the summer of 2018 with weed control, and dismantling of drainage tiles. Dormant season seeding will take place in the fall of 2018. Site management will continue throughout 2018-2023 until all performance standards are met. We plan to pre-sell some credits beginning in late 2018 into 2019.

Oak Ridge Prairie County Park is a superior location for this mitigation bank because of its location in the Lake Michigan Watershed on an existing farm that was recently added to the park, hydric soils, high water table, and adjacent location to many quality upland and wetland plant communities.

Our department is committed to long-term monitoring and maintenance of the mitigation bank to satisfy NICTD and permitting requirements by the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). This bank and surrounding park land will largely be managed as a nature preserve in perpetuity by Lake County Parks. The wetland mitigation bank fits perfectly into long -term goals at Oak Ridge Prairie of restoring and enhancing many different native plant communities.

Bellaboo's 219-963-2070

Buckley Homestead 219-696-0769

Cedar Creek 219-365-2902

Deep River 219-947-1958

Deep River Waterpark 219-947-7850

Gibson Woods 219-844-3188

Grand Kankakee Marsh 219-552-0033

Lake Etta 219-944-9601 Banquets - 219-949-6533

Lemon Lake 219-663-7627

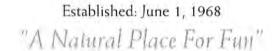
Oak Ridge Prairie 219-884-7238

Stoney Run 219-996-6500

Three Rivers 219-962-7810

Turkey Creek G.C. 219-980-8101 Pro Shop - 219-980-5170 Banquets - 219-887-3550

Reservations - 219-769-7275





This mitigation bank will provide excellent habitat for several federal or state-listed species found nearby which include: Evening Bat, Eastern Red Bat, Franklin's Ground Squirrel, Blanding's Turtle, Northern Leopard Frog, Rough Greensnake, Least Bittern, Whooping Crane, Henslow's Sparrow, Sedge Wren, Greater Yellowlegs, Eastern Meadowlark, Black and White Warbler, Bluewinged Teal, American Wigeon, and many more.

At this time, we understand that the specific ratios for wetland creation, restoration and enhancement are being discussed with the USACE and other federal and state agencies. Lake County Parks would continue to work with NICTD to develop the final mitigation plan including location, ecological approach, timing, and contractual requirements during the final design for the Project. This is expected to take place in 2017 through 2018.

Lake County Parks understands that NICTD will either undergo wetland mitigation activities with either Lake County Parks or Shirley Heinze Land Trust as outlined in NICTD's commitments within their Final Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act.

It is our understanding that the responsibility for the mitigation, including the monitoring and maintenance requirements that would be stipulated in the USACE Section 404 permit, rests with NICTD. We look forward to working with you to restore these valuable wetlands within the Lake County Parks system. If you have any questions please contact me any time.

Sincerely,

im Basala

CEO / Secretary to the Board jimb@lakecountyparks.com

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY



CHICAGO DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS 231 SOUTH LASALLE STREET CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60604-1437

August 25, 2017

Technical Services Division Regulatory Branch LRC-2016-529

SUBJECT: Jurisdictional Determination and wetland boundary concurrence for the NICTD West Lake Corridor Rail Project located in an existing rail corridor along the state line from Hammond to Dyer in Lake County, Indiana

Northwest Indiana Commuter Transportation District Attn: Mr. John Parsons 33 E. US Highway 12 Chesterton, IN 46304

Dear Mr. Parsons:

This is in response to your request that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers complete a jurisdictional determination for the above-referenced site submitted on your behalf by HDR Engineering.

Following a review of the information you submitted, this office has determined that the Indiana project corridor contains "waters of the United States". The wetlands and waters referenced in your delineation report as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42 and 44 are adjacent to the Little Calumet River, a navigable water. The wetlands and waters referenced in your delineation report as 49, 50, 51, and 52 are adjacent to the Grand Calumet River, a navigable water. Therefore these wetlands are under the jurisdiction of this office and impacts to these areas will require a permit from our office. However the wetlands referenced in your report as 12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 43 were created as stormwater detention facilities and are exempt from our regulations.

This determination covers only your project as depicted in the Formal Boundary Concurrence Request dated June 23, 2017 and the "Addendum to Formal Boundary Concurrence Request" dated August 17, 2017 prepared by HDR Engineering. This office concurs with the submitted wetland delineation, and wetland boundaries at the subject site including the expanded boundary for Wetland 4 as represented in the addendum. This confirmation of is valid for a period of five years from the date of this letter unless new information warrants revision of the delineation prior to the expiration date.

To initiate the permit process, please submit a permit application form along with detailed plans of the proposed work. Information concerning our program, including the application form and an application checklist, can be found at and downloaded from our website:

http://www.lrc.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory.aspx. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Paul Leffler of my staff by telephone at 312-846-5529 or email at Paul.M.Leffler@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

MCLAURIN.DIE Digitally signed by MCLAURIN.DIEDRA.L.1230340362
DN: c=US, o=U.S. Government, o=USA, o=USA, o=MCLAURIN.DIEDRA.L.123034036
2 Date: 2017.08.29 10.08:17 -05'00'

Diedra McLaurin Indiana Team Leader Regulatory Branch

Copies Furnished:

Federal Transportation Administration (Mr. Assam) Federal Transportation Administration (Ms. Weber) IDEM (Mr. Maupin) NICTD (Ms. Barker) HDR Engineering (Ms. Primer)



August 28, 2017

Ms. Marisol Simon USDOT / Federal Transit Administration Region V Regional Administrator 200 W Adams Street, Suite 320 Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Ms. Simon:

Shirley Heinze Land Trust (SHLT) is working in cooperation with the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), operator of the South Shore Line Railroad, as part of its West Lake Corridor Project (the Project). SHLT understands that the Project would permanently impact approximately 3.29 acres and temporarily impact approximately 0.26 acres of wetland in Lake County, Indiana.

These wetland impacts will require mitigation to comply with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. We agree that mitigation for these wetland impacts can be accommodated on Shirley Heinze Land Trust property.

SHLT is interested in the perpetual protection of a 50-acre property (Property) in Pine Township, Porter County (see attached Property Map). Mitigation could be accommodated through the acquisition of this Property, which contains approximately 10 acres of forested wetlands and 40 acres of agricultural land that would be enhanced and restored, either as a part of mitigation or through funding that would be pursued by SHLT following permanent protection of the property.

The Property falls within the East Branch of the Little Calumet River Corridor that was designated by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources as a Conservation Area in 2014, and, as a result, SHLT and other conservation partners have been able to protect over 400 acres within the area (see attached Corridor map). The Property is adjacent to a 165-acre property permanently protected by SHLT that is directly adjacent to property owned by the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, known as Heron Rookery, and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. SHLT has secured funding to enhance habitat on the preserve through removal of invasive species and reforestation of former agricultural fields. The Heron Rookery provides appropriate habitat for the federally endangered Indiana bat, which has been identified by DNR as being a resident of Porter County, and Lizard's tail (*Saururus cernuus*) is a sensitive plant that has been found on the adjacent SHLT preserve. Protection and restoration of the Property will provide additional habitat for the Indiana bat, migratory birds, reptiles and amphibians.

As part of the mitigation, SHLT would be committed to undertaking the required five years of monitoring and maintenance as required, with funding provided by NICTD. After the initial five years, SHLT would be committed to protecting the work done in perpetuity. SHLT develops comprehensive adaptive management plans for each of our preserves and is committed to annual monitoring and stewardship of all our properties. Long-term stewardship costs are covered by a portion of our annual operating budget, and we will further seek additional grant, donor, and volunteer opportunities which will support ongoing management of the Property. SHLT is an accredited land trust with over 36 years of experience protecting and managing ecologically significant natural areas in northwest Indiana.

At this time, we understand that the specific ratios for wetland creation, restoration, and enhancement are being discussed with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and other federal and state agencies. SHLT would continue to work with NICTD to develop the final mitigation plan including location, ecological approach, timing, and contractual requirements during the final design for the Project. This is expected to take place in 2018/2019.

SHLT understands that NICTD will undergo wetland mitigation activities with either Lake County Parks or Shirley Heinze Land Trust as outlined in NICTD's commitments within their Final Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act.

It is our understanding that the responsibility for the mitigation, including the monitoring and maintenance requirements that would be stipulated in the USACE Section 404 permit, rests with NICTD. SHLT looks forward to working with you to restore these valuable wetlands within the East Branch of the Little Calumet River Corridor. If you have questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 219.242.8558 or kkrouse@heinzetrust.org.

Sincerely,

Kristopher Krouse Executive Director

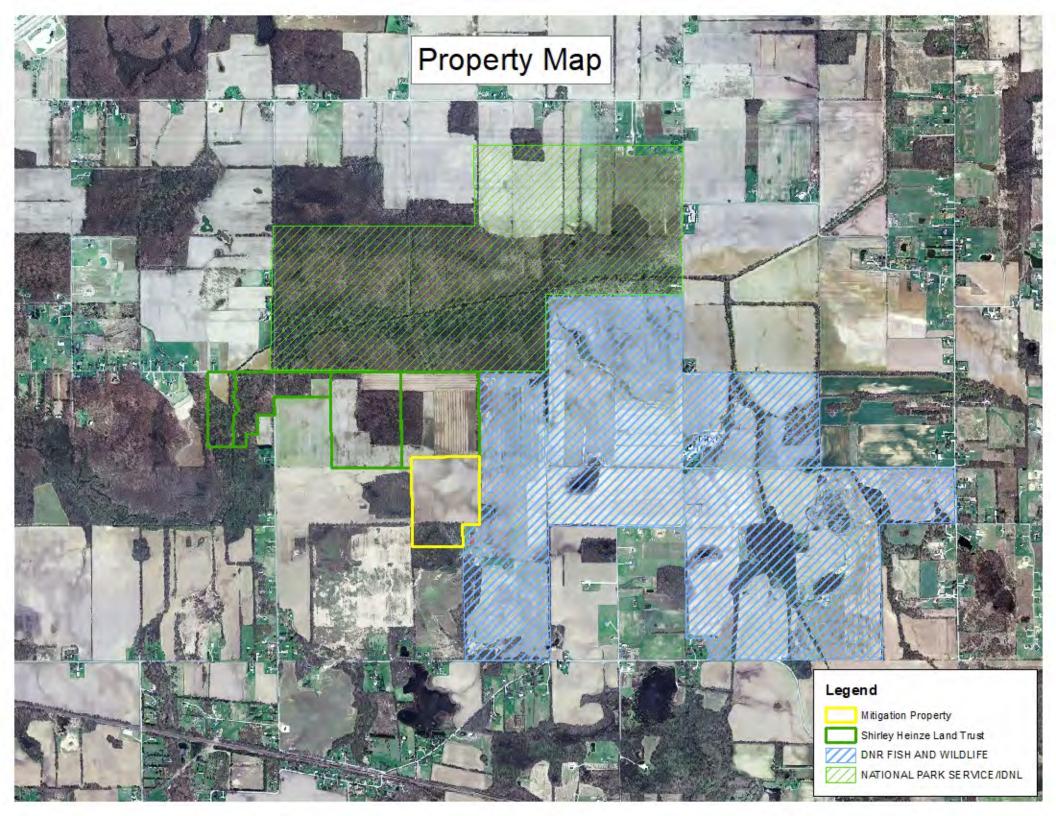
Shirley Heinze Land Trust

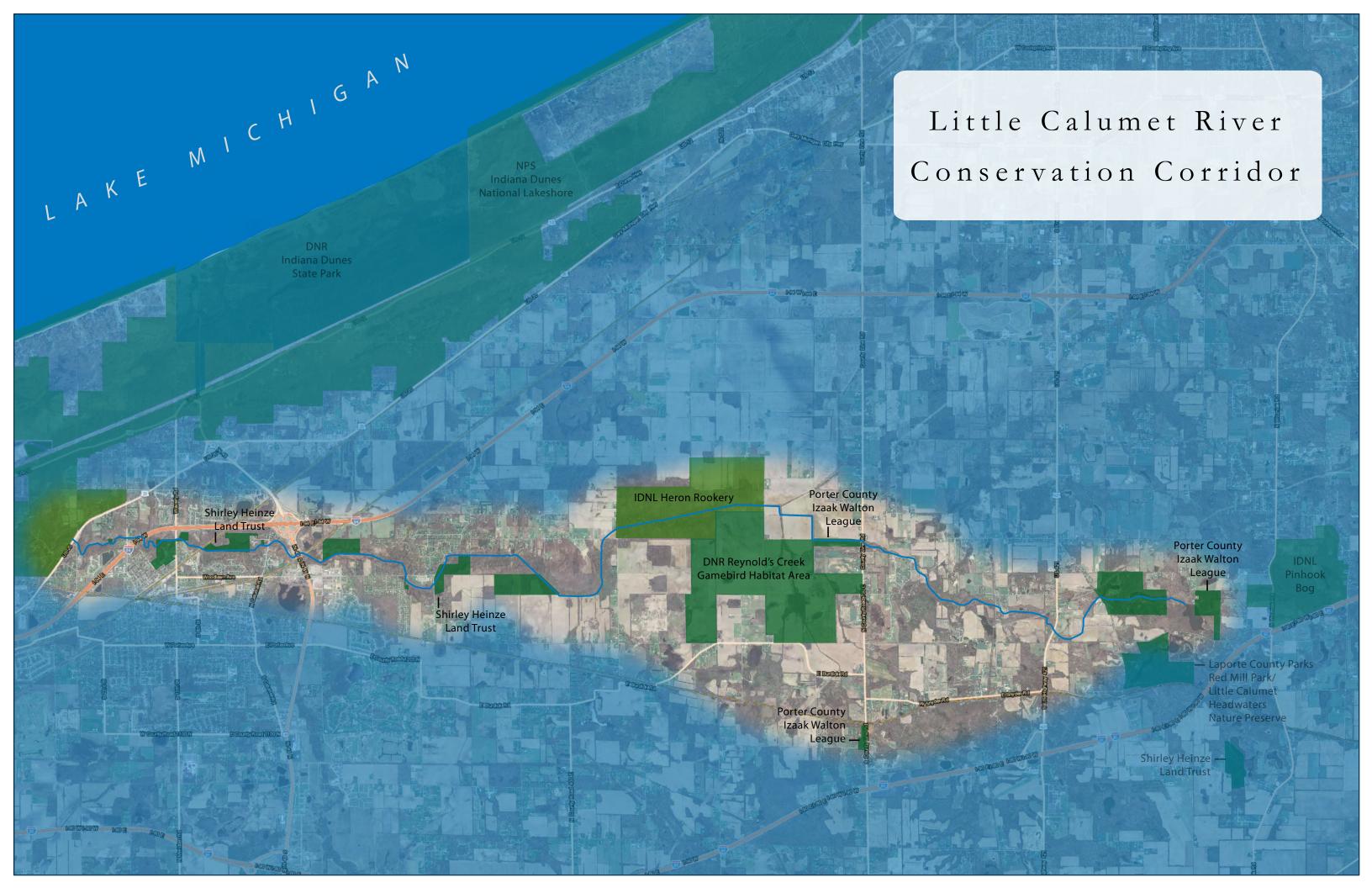
Kow Krown

Enclosures:

Property Map

Corridor Map (2014)





Merchan Paniagua, Sara

HDR

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:	Leffler, Paul M CIV USARMY CELRC (US) <paul.m.leffler@usace.army.mil> Wednesday, September 13, 2017 12:07 PM Primer, Samantha Armstrong, Roben; Jean, Melissa RE: West Lake Corridor wetland mitigation ratios</paul.m.leffler@usace.army.mil>				
Yes that is appropriate. Keep in mind those ratios could be higher if they are forested or scrub shrub or if we receive comments recommending higher ratios.					
Sincerely,					
Paul M. Leffler U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Chicago District, Regulatory Brand (312)846-5529 http://www.lrc.usace.army.mil/n					
	17 4:51 PM ELRC (US) <paul.m.leffler@usace.army.mil> mstrong@hdrinc.com>; Jean, Melissa <melissa.jean@hdrinc.com></melissa.jean@hdrinc.com></paul.m.leffler@usace.army.mil>				
Hi Paul,					
I realized that I don't think we've confirmed mitigation ratios for the West Lake Corridor Project. I've been working under the assumption that the mitigation ratios for West Lake and Double Track would be the same. For Double Track we are using a mitigation ratio of 1.5:1 for wetlands that are not considered a high quality aquatic resource. I wanted to confirm that we can use this same ratio for West Lake as well.					
Thanks,					
Samantha Primer					
Environmental Scientist					

8550 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., Suite 900 Chicago, IL 60631 D 773-867-7247 M 847-902-4957 samantha.primer@hdrinc.com <mailto:samantha.primer@hdrinc.com>

hdrinc.com/follow-us <Blockedhttp://hdrinc.com/follow-us>

Merchan Paniagua, Sara

From: McCloskey, Elizabeth <elizabeth_mccloskey@fws.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2017 12:42 PM

To: Merchan Paniagua, Sara

Cc: Armstrong, Roben; Primer, Samantha; Nicole Barker

Subject: Re: NICTD West Lake Corridor Project - Updated Coordination on Federally Listed

Species

Good afternoon Sara,

There are no known Federally endangered species within the NICTD West Lake Corridor Project foot print in Indiana or Illinois. This was already addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (January 2017), so no additional surveys for any of the species were necessary.

The eastern massasauga is not listed in Lake County, Indiana because it hasn't been found there in many years; it was historically present. The only newly-listed species in Lake County, Indiana is the rusty patched bumble bee, but I checked its location when the listing was made and it is not in the project area; I provided that information to Nicole Barker of NICTD, so no surveys for that species were necessary.

Elizabeth McCloskey
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Northern Indiana Suboffice

On Mon, Sep 25, 2017 at 10:13 AM, Merchan Paniagua, Sara < Sara. Merchan Paniagua@hdrinc.com > wrote:

Hello Liz,

I am reaching out to you in regards to the NICTD West Lake Corridor Project. The project team received a letter from USFWS dated November 4, 2014, which stated that none of the federally listed species occurring in Lake County are known within our project area. In addition, the project team checked in with you via email on June 30, 2017 in regards to the Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat maternity colonies. Your reply email confirmed the November 2014 letter statements. However, since almost 3 years have passed since that letter, we wanted to check with you to confirm there are still no federal species in our project area.

The eastern massasauga rattlesnake was mentioned in the 2014 letter as being a candidate in Cook County. Because it was later listed in Lake County, the team conducted surveys for this species. Surveys concluded there is approximately 1.58 acres of low-quality habitat within the construction footprint (generally located south of Fisher Street along the east edge of the golf course in Munster). However, the team concluded that the shaded nature of this habitat limits its usefulness for this species.

The team also surveyed for the Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat. For the bats, 50 candidate roost trees were identified, of which 45 are of low quality and 5 of moderate quality. The 5 moderate-quality roost trees are outside the project's construction footprint, just north and south of I-80/I-94 in Hammond.

The Karner blue butterfly was also mentioned in the 2014 letter. However, surveyors did not find any wild lupine in the construction footprint. Similarly, the floristic inventory did not yield any occurrences of the Pitcher's thistle or the Mead's milkweed.

We are finishing up the reports with our findings. Let us know if you would like to review these at this time or if you would like us to send you a mapbook of the project corridor.

I would appreciate if you could get back to me at your earliest convenience.

Thanks Liz!

Sara

Sara Merchán Paniagua

Environmental Scientist II



HDR

8550 W Bryn Mawr Ave, Suite 900 Chicago, IL 60631 D 773.867.7217 O 773.380.7900 Sara.merchanpaniagua@hdrinc.com

hdrinc.com/follow-us

INDIANA NATURAL HERITAGE DATA within:

ER 17897-2 WestLake Corridor, NICTD SS Line, Lake County

Sci. Name	Common Name	Site	TRS	State Fed	OBS Date
Vascular Plant					
Catalpa speciosa	Northern Catalpa	SOUTHSHORE EXT MP 65.2	036N010W 13	SR	2015-09-14
Catalpa speciosa	Northern Catalpa	SHEFFIELD RD	035N010W 1	SR	2015-10-27
Carex bebbii	Bebb's Sedge	SOUTHSHORE EXT 65.2	036N010W 13	ST	2017-06-19
Carex bebbii	Bebb's Sedge	SOUTH SHORE EXTENSION MP 61.5	036N010W 36	ST	2015-10-27

THIS IS NOT A PERMIT

State of Indiana DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES Division of Fish and Wildlife

Early Coordination/Environmental Assessment

DNR #:

ER-17897-2

Request Received: October 3, 2017

Requestor:

HDR Incorporated Sara Merchan-Paniagua

8550 West Bryn Mawr Avenue, Suite 900

Chicago, IL 60631

Project:

West Lake Corridor Project, Lake Co., IN and Cook Co., IL EIS: new track

improvements, four (4) new stations, and a maintenance facility along a 9 mile southern extension along the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD)

existing South Shore Line (SSL) between Dyer and Hammond, IN: species survey

reports

County/Site info:

Lake

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has reviewed the above referenced project per your request. Our agency offers the following comments for your information and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

If our agency has regulatory jurisdiction over the project, the recommendations contained in this letter may become requirements of any permit issued. If we do not

have permitting authority, all recommendations are voluntary.

Regulatory Assessment:

This proposal may require the formal approval of our agency pursuant to the Flood Control Act (IC 14-28-1) for any proposal to construct, excavate, or fill in or on the floodway of a stream or other flowing waterbody which has a drainage area greater than one square mile, or the Lake Preservation Act (IC 14-26-2) for any construction that will take place at or lakeward of the legal shoreline of a public freshwater lake. Please submit more detailed plans to the Division of Water's Technical Services Section if you are unsure whether or not a permit will be required.

Natural Heritage Database:

The Natural Heritage Program's data have been checked.

As indicated in the October 2, 2017, letter from Teresa Clark, Division of Nature Preserves, several plant species have been documented within the project corridor. The Division of Nature Preserves has the following comments regarding some of the

plant species found within the project corridor:

1. Catalpa speciosa is a common tree in the area and is not of concern as it tends to be weedy.

2. Pinus strobus (MP 63.8) is likely a planted specimen and is not of concern.

3. The records for Salix serissima (MP 65.8) and Lonicera canadensis (MP 66.9) seem to be very much out of their normal habitat. Those areas should be checked for the presence of those species.

4. Carex bebbii could potentially be found in the area. Measures should be implemented to minimize any impacts to this species.

Fish & Wildlife Comments: All of the comments and recommendations in our previous letters dated November 7,

2014, and February 3, 2017, still apply.

THIS IS NOT A PERMIT

State of Indiana DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES Division of Fish and Wildlife

Early Coordination/Environmental Assessment

Contact Staff:

Christie L. Stanifer, Environ. Coordinator, Fish & Wildlife
Our agency appreciates this opportunity to be of service. Please contact the above staff member at (317) 232-4080 if we can be of further assistance.

Christie L. Stanifer

Environ. Coordinator Division of Fish and Wildlife Date: November 1, 2017

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY



CHICAGO DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS 231 SOUTH LA SALLE STREET CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60604-1437

January 9, 2018

Technical Services Division Regulatory Branch LRC-2016-529

SUBJECT: Final Environmental Impact Statement Concurrence for the NICTD West Lake Corridor Rail Project located along the state line from Hammond to Dyer in Lake County, Indiana

Federal Transit Administration Attn: Mr. Mark Assam 200 W. Adams Street, Suite 320 Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Mr. Assam:

This letter is in response to your request that the Department of the Army (Corps) review and provide concurrence with the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) dated November 2017, prepared by HDR. Our office concurs the FEIS appropriately defines the project Purpose and Need, provides a logical Preferred Alternative Analysis, accurately assesses the impacts to "waters of the U.S." and conceptually identifies a suitable wetland mitigation strategy.

However please note the FEIS includes some misleading language in respect to wetland mitigation. First the document, notably in "Chapter 5: Physical and Environmental Analysis" and Section 5.3 of the "Draft Record of Decision," refers to the Shirley Heinze Land Trust, Oak Ridge Prairie County Park and the DNR Indiana Stream and Wetland Mitigation Program as "Mitigation Banks." While all of these options may be acceptable, none are currently considered "Mitigation Banks." It would be more appropriate to refer to them collectively as "Offsite Mitigation Sponsors." Next, Table 5.1-1 within Chapter 5 states:

"Only fill of jurisdictional wetlands within the construction limits require mitigation. 3.43 acres of wetland mitigation would be provided to ensure no net loss."

This statement neglects to mention isolated wetland impacts may require mitigation by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. In addition low quality emergent wetland impacts are typically mitigated at a minimum 1.5:1 ratio while forested wetland impacts are typically mitigated at a 3:1 ratio. Given the Preferred Alternative proposes 2.49 acres of jurisdictional emergent wetland impact and 0.94 acre of forested wetland impact it would be more appropriate to expect approximately 6.56 acres of wetland mitigation.

In summary all documentation to date is sufficient for this stage and from our perspective the project may now proceed to the next stage of project development. An application for an individual permit for the proposed project may be submitted to the Corps for final review and authorization. For additional information on submitting an individual permit application, please visit our website at: http://www.lrc.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Paul Leffler of my staff by telephone at 312-846-5529, or email at paul.m.leffler@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

Keith Wozniak

Chief, Regulatory Branch

Copy Furnished:

Congressman Visclosky's Office (Ms. Johnson)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Ms. Blonn)
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Ms. McCloskey)
Indiana Department of Environmental Management (Mr. Maupin)
Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (Ms. Barker)
HDR (Ms. Armstrong)