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WEST LAKE CORRIDOR PROJECT
Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Volume I: Main Text
December 2016

Prepared by
United States Department of Transportation,
Federal Transit Administration
and
Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District

In Cooperation with
United States Army Corps of Engineers

Pursuant to

Marisol R. Simón, Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

Michael Noland, General Manager
Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District

12/2/2016
Date of Approval

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WEST LAKE CORRIDOR PROJECT
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Responsible Agencies

Federal Lead Agency: United States Department of Transportation; Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Local Project Sponsor: Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD)

Cooperating Agency: United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Title: West Lake Corridor Project

Location: Lake County, Indiana and Cook County, Illinois

Abstract

FTA and NICTD, in cooperation with USACE, have prepared this Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the West Lake Corridor Project (Project) in Lake County, Indiana, and Cook County, Illinois. The Project is an approximately 9-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 15 miles of existing SSL and Metra Electric District’s line to Millennium Station in downtown Chicago. Alternatives to be considered include a No Build Alternative and three build alternatives—Commuter Rail, Indiana Harbor Belt, and Hammond—and several design options for the latter in terms of route alignment, station locations, and vehicle mode. This DEIS evaluates the environmental, transportation, social, and economic impacts associated with the Project. More information can be found on the Project website at http://www.nictdwestlake.com.

Comments on this DEIS

This DEIS will be made available for comment during a 45-day public and agency review period from December 16, 2016 to February 3, 2017. During that period, FTA and NICTD will hold three public hearings to provide the opportunity for comment on this document. The dates, times, and locations of the public hearings are as follows:

January 17, 2017, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., Protsman Elementary School, 1121 Harrison Avenue, Dyer, IN
January 18, 2017, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., Washington Irving Elementary School, 4727 Pine Avenue, Hammond, IN
January 19, 2017, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., Centennial Park, 1005 S. Centennial Drive, Munster, IN

A Notice of Availability of the DEIS will be published in the Northwest Indiana Times, Post-Tribune, and Gary Crusader. The availability of the DEIS will also be announced through e-mails and postcards to parties on the Project’s mailing list. The DEIS, supporting technical reports, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act compliance reports will also be available on the Project website at http://www.nictdwestlake.com/

Written comments should be submitted to NICTD West Lake Corridor Project, 33 East U.S. Highway 12, Chesterton, IN 46304. Comments may also be e-mailed to project.email@nictdwestlake.com, submitted on-line by going to http://www.nictdwestlake.com/, or called in to the automated phone line at 219-250-2920.

In order for comments to be a part of the Project’s final environmental record, they must be received no later than February 3, 2017.

The following persons may be contacted for additional information concerning this document:

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FTA intends to issue a single document that consists of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) pursuant to 23 United States Code § 139(n), unless the FEIS makes substantial changes to the proposed action that are relevant to environmental or safety concerns, or there is a significant new circumstance or information relevant to environmental concerns that bears on the proposed action or the impacts of the proposed action.
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