Appendix H12. Verbal Court Reporter
Public Comments Received on DEIS
– January 19, 2017 Hammond
NORTHERN INDIANA COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT
WEST LAKE CORRIDOR PROJECT

JANUARY 18, 2017
6:30 P.M.
WASHINGTON IRVING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
4727 PINE AVENUE, HAMMOND, IN 46327

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NICTD PUBLIC TESTIMONY 1/18/17
My name is Leon Gamino. Leegam@att.net. Phone number 21-659-1666.

I'm a Hammond resident. To me, this is just window dressing unless they want to have -- unless they're going to talk about a referendum. If there's no referendum on this thing, this is for show and it means absolutely nothing to the public.

It just seems like they're going to ram this thing down everybody's throat without any kind of a process to give the residents here some kind of say on whether or not they pay for this thing or not. Without a referendum, this means absolutely nothing. It's just something to make it look, their PR to make it look like they actually care about the input of the residents in this community. And that's pretty much it. I think we should have a say so on this.

From what they're giving me here, I don't know what any of this stuff means. As far as I'm concerned, with no further information than this, it's a thumb's up or thumb's down thing. I say vote no on it. Until we know what this thing entails, why is this good for Hammond residents? The average median income in this community is probably like $40,000, and we're going to go ahead and go on the hook for $30 million so people that live out in Dyer with twice the annual income can commute back and forth without having to drive up here? What's the upside on in? I don't see it.
And this doesn't really explain to me, it doesn't tell me anything. This is just a bunch of gobbledygook on different ways that they're going to ram this thing through. It's like a kid telling you "well, Dad, tell you what. You don't have to buy me the Lexus, I'll settle for a Hyundai." That's all this is.
Donna Dunn. I live at 2837 171st Street in Hammond.

This train is not needed. If it was needed, the people would be asking for it instead of the politicians ramming it down our throats.

This money, this billion dollars could be spent better on our schools, on our residents, on our roads. There's many things that this money could be spent on. This should have been put in front of a referendum and so that the people decide how they want their tax money spent. The only reason this train project is even as far along as it is is because of the Lake County Option Income Tax. Our tax money is going for this train. We pay for it. Our kids will pay for it and our grandkids will pay for it.

It is not going to create that many jobs. There will only be maybe 50 permanent jobs. The same people that promised us 80,000 jobs when the airport runway expansion are the same people promising us tens of thousands of jobs now with this train. The track record, not that good. We don't have any new jobs at the airport.

We currently have -- they keep saying that we need more -- a route to Chicago. We already have a route to Chicago. Hammond has a station, East Chicago has a station, Gary has a station. There is three stations in this county already. There is absolutely no economic development around any of those stations.
Let's have some economic development around the stations that we currently have. Let's build them up first. Let's rehab those neighborhoods. The time to do this project was 30 years ago. By the time this project is done, people will be having autonomous cars. There's already autonomous trucks. This is 100-year-old technology. We need to be looking to the future, not to the past.
Jeff Cipowski. Jcipowski@aol.com.

I'm in support of the train and its current route. The only opinion that I have is the parking lot for the Munster/Dyer Main Street station. I currently live in West Lakes, and the design shows an outlet into our subdivision to access the parking lot. And then it shows an outlet into the subdivision to our south.

Currently, the West Lake subdivision, there's traffic issues currently with that road. There's about another 75 lots to be developed in that subdivision, which would create just strictly more traffic just for the residents.

The traffic flow pattern through the subdivision would not be, let's say, in the best interest of those that live there.

Currently, in the evenings, there's a large backup of traffic on Glenwood-Lansing Road and Calumet Avenue turning south to go to Dyer and St. John. And I feel that if they find out that that road is open, even if it is a parking lot, that traffic not only to the train but traffic cutting through to get to the south would be increased at such levels that the subdivision would be, I guess, I don't know what the term is, overwhelmed.

So I don't have any opposition to the train or the station or the parking lot. I just feel that the best interest of the residents that live to the north and to the
south of that parking lot, that access to their subdivision to their parking lot is not in their best interest.
Tom Chocholek. I live at 1732 Stanton Avenue. It's in Hammond, but it's a Whiting, Indiana, post office because of the post office exchange there. My home phone is 219-659-7943.

The first thing I'll say, for nine miles of track at a cost of $600 million and then some, to me that's just ludicrous. There's got to be some other alternative.

My question is -- and I said this to Michael Nolan, the CEO there of the South Shore, President, I said, "How did you guys conduct your study?" And then he told me about all these different federal requirements, which I don't really understand. I said, "Did anybody go down to the Hammond station or the Roxanna station and actually take a count as the people pulled in before they boarded the train, asked them, are you from Hammond? Are you from Munster? Are you from Dyer?" To see exactly what the ridership total is from your area?

Because the warrant is $600 million, 9-mile track, and you only got, say, 20 to 30 riders daily from that neck of the woods, you can just have buses bus them into Hammond and then take the South Shore. That's just my opinion because we're using Taxpayer money to fund this, and that's a pretty steep price tag, as far as I'm concerned, for 9 miles of road.

The other thing is: Why wasn't this put out for a...
referendum for the people to vote on in the area since it's affecting us? And we're using our tax dollars, too.

I think that's it. I think I got it all covered.

If I had to choose one, there's four options there.

The one that's going through Hammond, and I look at that, I don't know how the price tag varies on each option, I'm being quite frank, from what I looked at, I tell you what, I really kind of like that IHB alternative.
My name is John Schreiner. Contact information is email address pilgrim120@SBCglobal.net.

Yeah, this expansion line will directly affect my neighborhood. It's a lot of money. I don't think we really need to be spending that money for that when they can use other alternate means of transporting the people, like buses is a good suggestion to get them to the existing stations.

And they said there were overcrowded conditions at the parking lots. Hegewisch has gobs of room there available for people to park. Hammond, the other stations might have problems, but Hegewisch is open.

And I'd like to see them spend the money, instead, on maintaining the service that exists and maintaining the train, coaches and equipment. Right now, they're running short on some of the train cars, trains shorted some cars because they're in for repairs. And they also have problems keeping things on time.

Example is last Thursday, we had the ice storm. I was stuck on the Sunrise Express. It was standing room only. I got on in Hegewisch. I was stuck on the train for five hours. And the train just ran back and forth past the Hegewisch station twice and it never made it up to Chicago. It stopped going around the bend before it got to the Metro lines. And it said we can't go any further because of the icing on the lines and on the [] pannographs. Conditions
were just deplorable. We weren't given regular updates. We weren't even given opportunities to exit the train as it went back and forth from the Hegewisch station, trying to knock ice off the lines. And all the people were just prisoners on the train for five hours. And there was just a big fiasco. They could improve the service, plan better, and allow for these things.

Once we were stuck there, they said they were going to send a diesel to push the train back to Hegewisch. An hour or so later, the diesel never showed up and the train just hobbled back to Hegewisch train station. And we had to wait for the trains that were stationed at the Hegewisch train station to go, that were planning on following us up to Chicago because they couldn't move forward because we couldn't move forward. It was just one big mess. They could start planning a little bit better the maintenance and the service.

Thank you.

I prefer a no-build option and leaving things just the way they are and scrapping the idea of the existing extending the line to Dyer and Munster. Thank you very much.

I've been riding the line for 30 years. I am a 30-year veteran passenger retiring this year, so I know what I'm talking about of having to stand at the stations in the
middle of the cold weather and they say the train's coming in 10 minutes and it doesn't show up for 20 or 25. And they're just not relating well, communicating to the people. Plus, when you call the South Shore, all you get are messages to leave messages rather than talking to individuals.
My name is Walter Matthew Rogers. My contact info is 20 Indy-Illi Parkway, Hammond, 46324. My email is w.matthew.rogers1@gmail.com.

According to the plan as it now stands, all wetlands will be replaced. My request and suggestion is that in the same way all trees will be replaced. Any tree that is cut down should be replaced somewhere else.

If some part of a greenway has to be removed for parking, please make sure that it is absolutely essential and that there are no other alternatives.

Every tree is a life. They are no less essential than wetlands. It is only a matter of perspective.

As the plan now stands, the beltway from 173rd down to 165th will remain largely intact, but the thousand-space parking lot seems excessive, and it does cut into one of the few green beltways we have in Hammond.

My comment is intended to raise the sensitivity to the trees and other life that are already there right now.

My suggestion goes one step further than protection. Let's not only protect what we have and replace what we must take away, but let's use this opportunity to beautify what we have. That same beltway, for example, between 173rd and 165th could be made so much more beautiful with just a little bit of care. All we need is to clean it and to keep it clean. It wouldn't take anything to create just a small
walking path for residents to truly enjoy.

If you want an example of how this kind of thing can really generate beauty in a community, all you have to do is go to the North Shore of Chicago and see what they've done with the Greenbay Trail. That trail is an essential element to the property and the value of those communities. This is a chance for NICTD to create the same kind of value at the same time that they are creating a new train line.

I think this would make NICTD a hero instead of someone trying to balance all of the opposing interests. If we just paid attention to the life of trees, as a metaphor, and also as a practical solution, this whole project will take on a new face for everyone involved.

As a last comment, I noticed that there is also federal funding opportunities here going side by side with the railway. For instance, the Recreation Trail Program offered under the U.S. Department of Transportation directs us to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, who has a million dollars grant for the Recreational Trails Program for our state. This is a perfect tie-in. NICTD doesn't have to even pay for it all themselves. They can create beautiful greenbelts with the help of other money outside of their own budget.

So thank you for your time and attention to this.

As far as my preference for the four plans, I think
your proposed alternative is the best. It has the least
damage to all of the environmental issues I'm talking about.

I think your thousand-space parking lot is a bit
over-the-top, but that can be hopefully remedied through
other situations. And perhaps even purchasing other land
for parking rather than the land directly along the
greenbelt.
Luis Collazo.

219-902-3304.

My question is in this whole ordeal, we have been told how the project is going, is progressing, but yet the homeowners that are going to be losing the properties have not been given any type of information as far as when will we be acquiring your property? And at what value? Any kind of information in that manner. It's just been about them, them and them. How pretty, you know, our train is going to look and how much revenue is going to produce. But, yet, there's quite a bit of people that will be losing their property, but they say nothing about that.

And it would have been nicer if they would have had more information on that behalf.

I don't want any of their options.

(Which were all the proceedings had at such time and date.)

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NICTD PUBLIC TESTIMONY 1/18/17
STATE OF INDIANA )
)
COUNTY OF LAKE )

Within and for the County of Lake and State of Indiana, do hereby certify that heretofore, to wit, On the 19th day of January, 2017, that the Testimony given at the Public Meeting on the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District West Lake Corridor Project was stenographically recorded and afterwards transcribed upon a computer personally by me, and that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of said testimony.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 23rd day of January, 2017.

______________________________
Notary Public
Lake County, Indiana
Comment Card

Name: Theresa CORPIERE

Hearing Date/Location: Irving School 1/18/17

Contact Info: 911-427-4483

Comment: not all my questions answered
I do not think a secured solution in Hammond is needed
Comment Card

Name: JOAN CRIST

Hearing Date/Location: 1/18/17 Hammond

Contact Info': (219) 292-2453, jcrist@calif.edu

Comment: MASS TRANSIT - GREAT! IN HAMMOND - GREAT - THE STATION AND PARKING LOT AT 173 RD. UNNECESSARY NEGATIVE IMPACT, IF THE GOAL IS WALKABILITY, A NO PARKING LOT IS NEEDED, IF PEOPLE WANT TO DRIVE TO A 

Continued
STATION, THEY CAN DRIVE ANOTHER 2 MILES TO DOWNTOWN HAMMOND OR NORTH HAMMOND, WHICH NEED COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC.

THE NATURAL AREA AT 173RD ST. NEEDS TO BE PRESERVED, BOTH FOR THE SAKE OF CARING FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND FOR HUMAN QUALITY OF LIFE. I WANT A COMMITMENT FROM NICTD TO CLEAR LIMITS ON BUILDING & PAVING AT 173RD ST.
Name: Joan Crist

Hearing Date/Location: 1/18/17 Hammond

Contact Info: jcrist@csj.edu

Comment: FEDERAL

EXPLAIN EXACTLY WHAT REGULATIONS APPLY TO THE SIZE AND NUMBER OF PARKING SPACES REQUIRED AT A COMMUTE RAIL STATION.
Name: Andrew Fox

Hearing Date/Location: Hammond 1/18/17

Contact Info: andrewfoxe@gmail.com

Comment: In design of the South Hammond Station, pedestrian access should be provided for from the west at the Ninety/Ninety-First Street end of the station for those that live within walking distance N/W of the station.
Name: Nalili Galanaza

Hearing Date/Location: Irving 1-18-17

Contact Info: mariagalaraza72@gmail.com

Comment: Good location. Only concern is noise and traffic.
Name: Jerry Graham

Hearing Date/Location: 1/18/17 -- Hammond

Contact Info: Tmo 51917@yahoo.com

Comment: Drive on Lupine lane to Turnout St. The noise & pollution access to the bike trail (I used it and love it) and access to homes.

Gardens all need to be soundproof and maintain a large garden on the bike trail that is enjoyed by many. We'll

Continued
Was destroyed?
Name: Kelly Gross

Hearing Date/Location: WI

Contact Info: gross.peggy@att.net

Comment: Commuter parking on side streets - how will it be addressed and how quickly to violators. Since 173rd (Hampton) is a hospital site - what is going to happen to the intersection at Harrison? Lights? Gates? What will happen if an ambulance comes - the train is stopped for passengers? Noise and vibration levels - how will they affect our homes and foundations? How will property values be affected - how close to the track?
Will they need to be affected?

What will be the security for the parking lots, surrounding houses, etc?
Name: Amanda Henry
Hearing Date/Location: Jan 18th, 2017, Irving School
Contact Info: 312-493-6013, amanda8e96@gmail.com

Comment: Where our planning to put this train is going to be right in front of my house. I really don't want to be there. That's going to be an issue for the right now I got to see the beautiful
Brooke path and cemetery there's also going to be noise as well as a light disturbance. What about the dangers or leaving a train next to a bike path?

I don't want to see a train in front of my house. Is there a different route, rate or speed for train?
Name: Chris Brewer

Hearing Date/Location: West 5th

Contact Info': chop@olmec.harley.com

Comment: What type of road improvements will take place on Main St.?

Where does all the funding come from?
Name: Ruth Mores

Hearing Date/Location: Wash Irving - Humo 11/17

Contact Info: ruthmorescymail.com

Comment: South Humo Station is in an area that is now tranquil, tree lined, bike path accessible neighborhood - we'd like to keep as much green space as possible - hold off on the I-0.5 - don't need concrete in South Humo.

Is "tree mitigation" a requirement in project? Who pays?

(Replacing trees taken during construction)
What about a multi-story parking garage
to save on foot print of parking lot??
Comment Card

Name: MICHAEL PENNANEN

Hearing Date/Location: 1/18/17

Contact Info: FINNFRIENDS@ATT.NET

Comment: Regarding the South Hammond Station area, between 169th and 173rd: How much land to the east of the parking lot will be preserved as a "green space" corridor? Can you make a commitment in your final EIS as to how much land will be set aside for the existing natural environment?
Comment Card

Name: Valerie Pennanen

Hearing Date/Location: 1/18/17 Washington Irving, Hammond

Contact Info: vpennanen@csj.edu

Comment: Please specifically state in writing in your final Environmental Impact Statement, your plans to preserve the natural green corridor in South Hammond. Wildlife frequently use this space, and some live there either seasonally or all year round. There are bumblebees. Note that the rusty patch bumblebee is an...
endangered species) who rely on the red clover to survive: there’s a fox who lives in a wooded area of the field north of 173rd Street and east of Lyman... there are hawks who nest in the nearby cottonwood trees... and all of these creatures deserve to live, as peacefully as possible, in their habitat. I expect to submit a petition to NICTD very shortly, with signatures of other local residents who agree that the survival of nature must be a top priority.
Name: Leslie Phanstoo

Hearing Date/Location: 1-18-15, Honolulu

Contact Info: leslie@active-transport.org

Comment: Need working with communities to ensure ped access to/from

centerline. People will need to drive/bike/cross

Some proposed stations are great but

don't get brave using them commonly.
they used to come up with ways to
find the important thing in order
to access + understand
Name: Michael Sandridge

Hearing Date/Location: Hammond Public Hearing 7/18

Contact Info: 219-413-1431 michael.sandridge@gmail.com

Comment: I'm worried about the original price tag of $600M increasing similar to NICD projects in the past. Residents already feel left out of this process after Council members agreed to fund w/o public input. Who will pay the annual maintenance costs? Will it be allocated by stations for city? Will there be a TIF implemented?
Comment Card

Name: JOHN SCHEINER

Hearing Date/Location: WI 1/18/2017 HAMMOND

Contact Info: PILGRIM 120 @ D&K GLOBAL.NET

Comment: PREFER NO BUILD

THE EXPENSE AND CONSTRUCTION IS EXTENSIVE

USE THE MONEY FOR MAINTAINING THE EXISTING TRAINS AND BETTER SERVICE.

DROP THE ENTIRE PROJECT.

Continued ➔
Name: MARY ELLEN SLAZYK

Hearing Date/Location: 1/18/2017 IRVING

Contact Info: 219-933-7170

Comment: **THE SOUTH SHORE EXTENSION WILL NOT BENEFIT OUR NEIGHBORHOOD.** INSTEAD, IT REPLACES OUR PEACE & SAFETY WITH NOISE AND DANGER. THE PROPOSED ROUTE PLACES IT RIGHT NEXT TO EGGERS MIDDLE SCHOOL. THIS PUTS OUR KIDS IN DANGER.
Comment Card

Name: Perry MX Stabler

Hearing Date/Location: Irving Elem 1/18/2017

Contact Info: 805-2783 2936 Gibson Pl Hammond

Comment: You don't have the credit match you are legislating from House Bill 1618 possible House Bill 1114 to taking casino money from schools & city services to pay for Pete's train. Are beams going to be made?
OF CEMENT OR STEEL
Name: Pete Torres

Hearing Date/Location: 1/18/17

Contact Info: 

Comment: Why do we need new railroad stations?

How are homeowners - renters - getting compensated for their homes

Continued