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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**THE NORTHERN INDIANA COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT FORMALLY SUBMITS
ENTRY INTO ENGINEERING REQUEST TO THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION FOR THE
WEST LAKE CORRIDOR PROJECT**

CHESTERTON, Indiana (September 4, 2018) – The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), operator of the South Shore Line railroad, has requested entry into the New Starts Engineering phase of the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program for the West Lake Corridor Project. This effort is occurring in partnership with the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) and the Indiana Finance Authority (IFA), which are serving as fiscal partners.

The West Lake Corridor Project is an 8-mile extension of the South Shore Line that will provide new passenger rail service with stations in three municipalities in Lake County, Indiana: Hammond, Munster, and Dyer. Trains on the new branch line would connect with the existing South Shore Line in north Hammond and ultimately with the Metra Electric District line, with a final stop at Millennium Station in downtown Chicago.

“We are thrilled to reach this critical milestone in the FTA’s CIG program,” said Michael Noland, President and CEO of NICTD. “This submittal to the FTA is the result of many months of hard work and dedication by the full team at NICTD, RDA, IFA, and FTA, as well as federal, state and local elected officials and community members across Indiana,” he added. “We are most grateful to everyone helping to advance this project, and we look forward to obtaining a decision from the FTA to grant us entry into this important phase of the project in 2019,” Noland stated.

Since receiving approval from FTA to enter the CIG New Starts Project Development phase for the Project on September 28, 2016, NICTD and the RDA have worked closely with the FTA to complete each of the requirements for completion of the New Starts Project Development, including:

- Selection of a locally preferred alternative
- Adoption of LPA into the fiscally constrained metropolitan transportation plan
- Completion of the NEPA environmental review process
- Preparation of sufficient information for FTA to develop a project rating
- Obtain commitment of at least 30 percent of the non-CIG funding
- Completion of at least 30 percent design and engineering, including documentation at appropriate level of detail

Following this action, NICTD and the RDA will continue to work with state and federal authorities on funding for the second major commuter rail expansion project in the region, fully double-tracking the existing South Shore Line from Gary, Indiana to Michigan City, Indiana.

“These projects will be game-changers for the region and the state,” said Bill Hanna, President and CEO of the RDA. “By increasing our connectivity to Chicago, the third-largest metro area in the country, commuter rail will drive job creation and economic development here in Northwest Indiana, and provide a much better opportunity for residents to compete for high-paying jobs in Chicago.”

Combined, West Lake and double tracking are projected to attract approximately \$2.3 billion in private investment to Northwest Indiana, and result in an estimated 5,700 new jobs and \$3 billion in economic impact by 2048.

For additional information regarding this project, we invite you to visit the project website at www.nictdwestlake.com.

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