



CONNECTING OPPORTUNITY

# FALL NEWSLETTER

FALL 2017



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NICTD board voted to approve the Hammond Alternative Option 2

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

### For More Information:

[www.nictdwestlake.com](http://www.nictdwestlake.com)

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

[project.email@nictdwestlake.com](mailto: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.

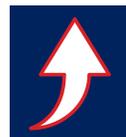
In this issue, I invite you to review our 'By the Numbers' checklist, our 'What's New?' section, funding summary, and project schedule. For up-to-date project information and to continue to learn more about the project, please visit the West Lake Corridor Project website at [www.nictdwestlake.com](http://www.nictdwestlake.com).

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*



✓ 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*



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

*Source: City of Hammond*



✓ 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 million** in property tax by 2038.

*Source: RDA*

# Project Benefits

## Economic

- Faster, less expensive and 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 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.

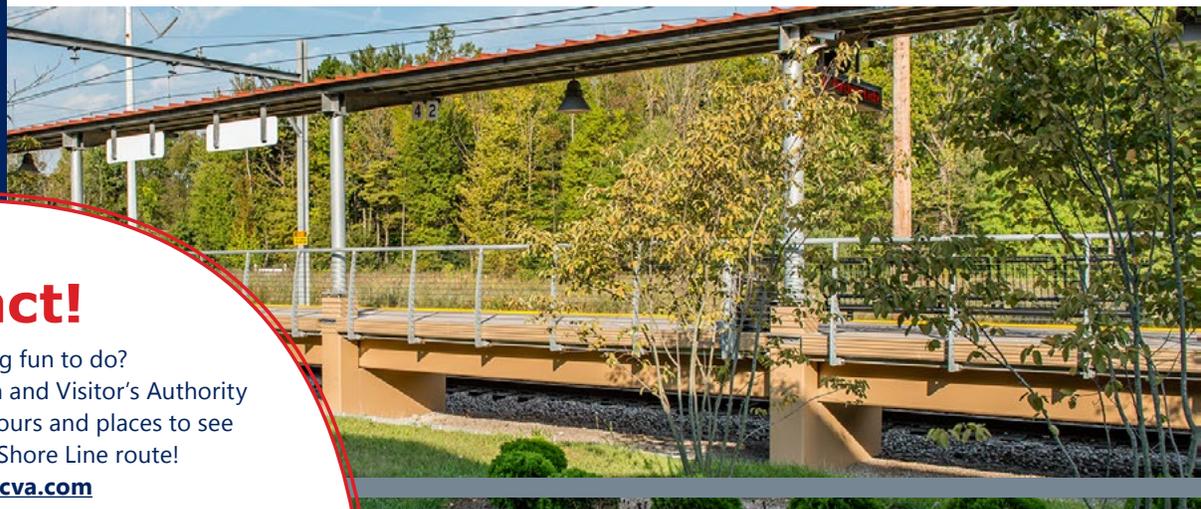
**HAMMOND GATEWAY STATION:** The parking lot and station building have been moved to the south side of the South Shore Line tracks.

**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 Park-and-Ride experience.



## Fun Fact!

Looking for something fun to do?

Visit the South Shore Convention and Visitor's Authority website for a listing of events, tours and places to see along the beautiful South Shore Line route!

[www.southshorecva.com](http://www.southshorecva.com)



## 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](http://www.nictdwestlake.com/resources/#media)**

## What's New?



**Approximate length:**  
**9 Miles** dedicated guideway



**Operating Schedule:**  
**12** trips to/from Millennium Station in Chicago (weekday peak)  
**12** trips connecting to SSL trains at Hammond Gateway (weekday off-peak)



**Travel Time:**  
**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.

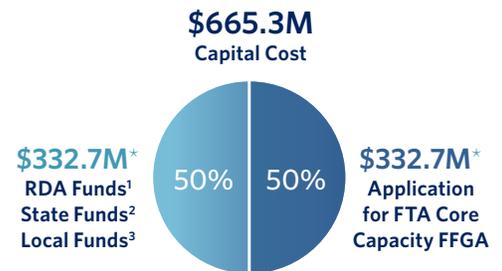
### FEIS Updates

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?



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/](http://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 Policies 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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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/](http://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](http://www.nictdwestlake.com) | [project.email@nictdwestlake.com](mailto:project.email@nictdwestlake.com)  
NICTD West Lake Corridor Project | 33 East U.S. Highway 12 | Chesterton, IN 46304 | automated phone: 219.250.2920

# PROJECT SCHEDULE

