



Open House Public Hearing
October 2017





Welcome

Welcome to the Open House Public Hearing for the Double Track Northwest Indiana Project. The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) is here tonight to:

- Share information on the Project
- Summarize the results of the recently completed Environmental Assessment, Section 4(f) Evaluation and Section 106 Historic Properties Assessment of Effects
- Obtain your input

This slideshow will provide a brief overview of the Project. Please visit the Exhibits and talk to Project Team members at the Open House to hear details about the Project alignment, impacts, and mitigation.





Project Overview

The NICTD South Shore Line is pursuing federal funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Core Capacity Capital Investment Grant program for the Project.

- Lead Federal Agency: Federal Transit Administration (FTA)



- Project Sponsor: NICTD



- Project Partner: Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA)



Project Overview

The Project would construct a second track next to the existing South Shore Line track from Gary to Michigan City, Indiana.

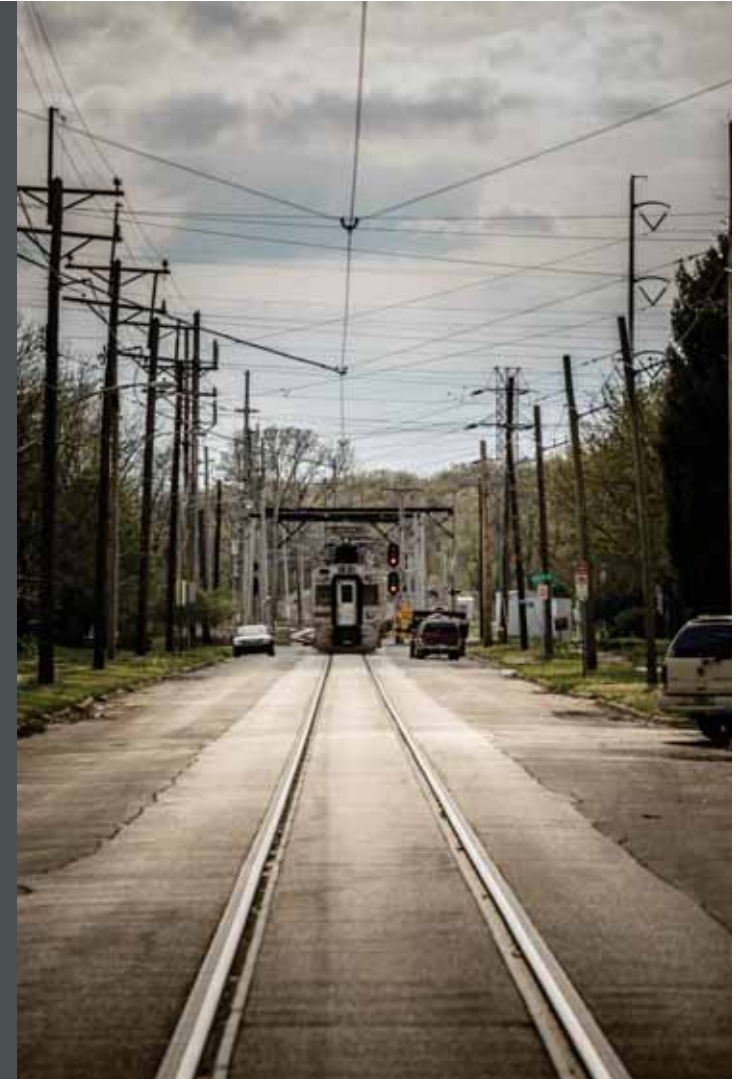




Project Overview

Project elements include:

- 16.9 miles of second track
- 4 new bridges
- New platforms and/or parking at Gary/Miller, Portage/Ogden Dunes, Dune Park, Beverly Shores, and 11th Street (Michigan City) stations
- Removal of street-running track in Michigan City and construction of new separated tracks south of 10th Street and along the north side of 11th Street



Why is the Project Needed?

The existing South Shore Line is a single track shared by passenger and freight trains. Service is delayed by interruptions from track maintenance, equipment failure, or blocking trains. There are passing sidings used for one train to pass another, or pass a blockage, but there are only a few of these sidings along the 26.6-mile project area.



Why is the Project Needed?

The result is longer travel times, less reliability, late arrivals, and limited schedules.

Additionally, the street-running track in Michigan City requires trains to travel slowly and creates safety issues for vehicles and pedestrians.



What are the Benefits of This Project?





How Did We Get Here?

2013 NICTD/Michigan City Realignment Study

2014 NICTD/RDA 20-Year Strategic Business Plan

2016 NICTD received approval from FTA to enter into Project Development phase of FTA Core Capacity Funding application process

2016 Began environmental review process under NEPA and started preliminary design

2017 Continued environmental analysis, meetings with agencies and public and determined preferred alternative



What is the Environmental Review?

National Environmental Policy Act – NEPA

- Federal law requires agencies to assess environmental and social impacts from a proposed project prior to authorizing federal funding
- Requires project sponsor to notify public of impacts and obtain input to involve public in the decision-making process
- Requires that the project sponsor avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts



What is the Environmental Review?

The NEPA process provides a framework to comply with a multitude of statutes, regulations, agency circulars, executive orders, as well as the requirements of state and local law.

Laws and Orders under the NEPA Umbrella

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- ☛ Clean Air Act
 - ☛ Clean Water Act
 - ☛ Floodplains and Wetlands
 - ☛ Environmental Justice Orders
 - ☛ Endangered Species Act
 - ☛ Farmland Protection Policy Act
 - ☛ National Historic Preservation Act
 - ☛ Resource Conservation and Recovery Act / Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, for management of hazardous waste
 - ☛ Section 4(f), protecting historic properties, publicly-owned parks, recreation, and wildlife resources
 - ☛ Section 6(f), protecting parks funded by the Land and Water Conservation Act

What is the Environmental Review?

The NEPA Environmental Assessment (EA) documents the process used to determine if the project would result in significant impacts - impacts that cannot be avoided, minimized, or mitigated. The EA evaluates whether or not the project will affect:

- Transportation network
- Land acquisitions and relocations
- Land use and economic development
- Neighborhoods and businesses
- Historic Properties & Cultural Resources
- Visual resources
- Noise & Vibration
- Hazardous Materials
- Plants, wildlife, and threatened and endangered species
- Wetlands, surface water, groundwater, water quality, and floodplains
- Minority or low income populations
- Safety and security
- Publicly-owned parks, trails or historic properties protected under Section 4(f) of the US Dept. of Transportation Act of 1966
- Any of the resource areas listed, when considered cumulatively with any other reasonably foreseeable project to be completed nearby or at the same time

What is the Environmental Review?

- The EA considers stakeholder and public input and the public has the opportunity to comment on the EA after it is published.
- If it is determined there are no significant impacts after considering the EA and public input, FTA will issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The FONSI will include responses to public comment on the EA and environmental commitments that NICTD must complete to mitigate impacts.
- FTA will monitor the project to ensure that the commitments are carried out.



What Alternatives Were Considered?

To determine where the second track would be constructed, existing conditions were reviewed and considered. Preliminary designs considered previous studies, other corridors and modes, constructing the second track north or south of the existing track based on land ownership, sensitive resources, freight operations, and other impacts to the natural and physical environment. The EA reviewed the following:

Build Alternative: For most of the route, a second track will be added next to the existing track

"No Build" or "Do Nothing" Alternative

- Federal requirement to consider impacts
- Does not meet Purpose and Need
- Generally will have less direct impacts

Were design options studied?

Yes.

Please visit the area-specific exhibits and speak to Project Team members for more detailed information on the track alignment options and impacts.

Two options considered at the Goff/CN Interchange in Gary, near the I-90 overpass

Seven options considered for track alignments at the area known as Bailly, east of Burns Harbor

Two station design options considered in Michigan City



What Have We Heard from the Public and How was it Considered?

Three public workshops were held in October 2016 and the project team has continued to meet with community groups and leaders since that time. Stakeholders have submitted comments and questions through email and on the website about a number of topics:

- Property acquisitions
- Parking
- Traffic flow
- Access during construction
- Fares
- ADA accessibility
- Grade crossings
- Freight traffic
- Project limits
- Aesthetics
- Noise and Vibration
- Environmental stewardship

The comments have been reviewed by the Project Team and considered within the scope of the project, engineering feasibility, and the ability to implement. The Project Team will continue to meet with community groups and leaders through design and construction.



Who is Paying for the Project?

Project has received funding support from the State of Indiana; RDA; Lake, Porter, LaPorte, and St. Joseph counties; and Michigan City

Total Estimated Project Cost is \$312M	
Federal Core Capacity (50%)	\$156M
Non Federal Share (50%)	\$156M
<i>Breakdown of Non Federal Share:</i>	
<i>St. Joseph County</i>	<i>\$18.25M</i>
<i>LaPorte County/Michigan City</i>	<i>\$18.25M</i>
<i>NW Indiana RDA on behalf of Lake and Porter Counties</i>	<i>\$3M annually over 30 yrs*</i>
<i>State of Indiana</i>	<i>\$6M annually over 30 yrs*</i>

**Includes financing costs*



Regional Significance

“ Investing in the South Shore Rail Line will connect my constituents to Chicago’s \$500 billion economy and nearly four million jobs. It will also allow us to begin to draw Chicago’s economic vibrancy to our region as we attract not only new residents, but also new businesses that are seeking locations that offer quality educational, recreational, and transportation opportunities for their employees and their families. ”

U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky

“ These projects have the capacity to truly transform Northwest Indiana by creating a catalyst for billions of dollars in private investment and thousands of high-paying, permanent jobs for Hoosiers. Making the South Shore Line into a modern commuter line will greatly reduce travel times to downtown Chicago and be a significant driver in positioning communities throughout the Region as viable options for relocation and residential growth. ”

Gov. Eric Holcomb

“ [West Lake] and Double Tracking represent the largest investment in commuter rail ever made in Indiana. 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, LaPorte and St. Joseph counties over the next 20 years. ”

Bill Hanna, RDA President and CEO



What is the Project Timeline?





How Do I Comment?

- Talk with the court reporter today
- Comment via website at www.doubletrack-nwi.com
- Email your comments to: DoubleTrackNWI@nicted.com
- Fill out and return comment form today, or by mail to:

South Shore Line

Attn: Double Track NWI

33 East U.S. Highway 12

Chesterton, IN 46304

Formal commenting period is open through October 23, 2017.





We invite you to join us now
at the Open House