



Double Track NWI NEPA Re-Evaluation Memorandum Portage/Ogden Dunes Station Parking Changes

Date:	Monday, July 20, 2020
Project:	Double Track Northwest Indiana (DT-NWI) Project
To:	Susan Weber, FTA Elizabeth Breiseth, FTA
From:	Nicole Barker, Project Manager, Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District Janice Reid, Project Manager, HDR Andrea Cline, Senior Environmental Scientist, HDR
Subject:	DT-NWI NEPA Re-Evaluation – Portage/Ogden Dunes Station Parking Changes-

I. Introduction

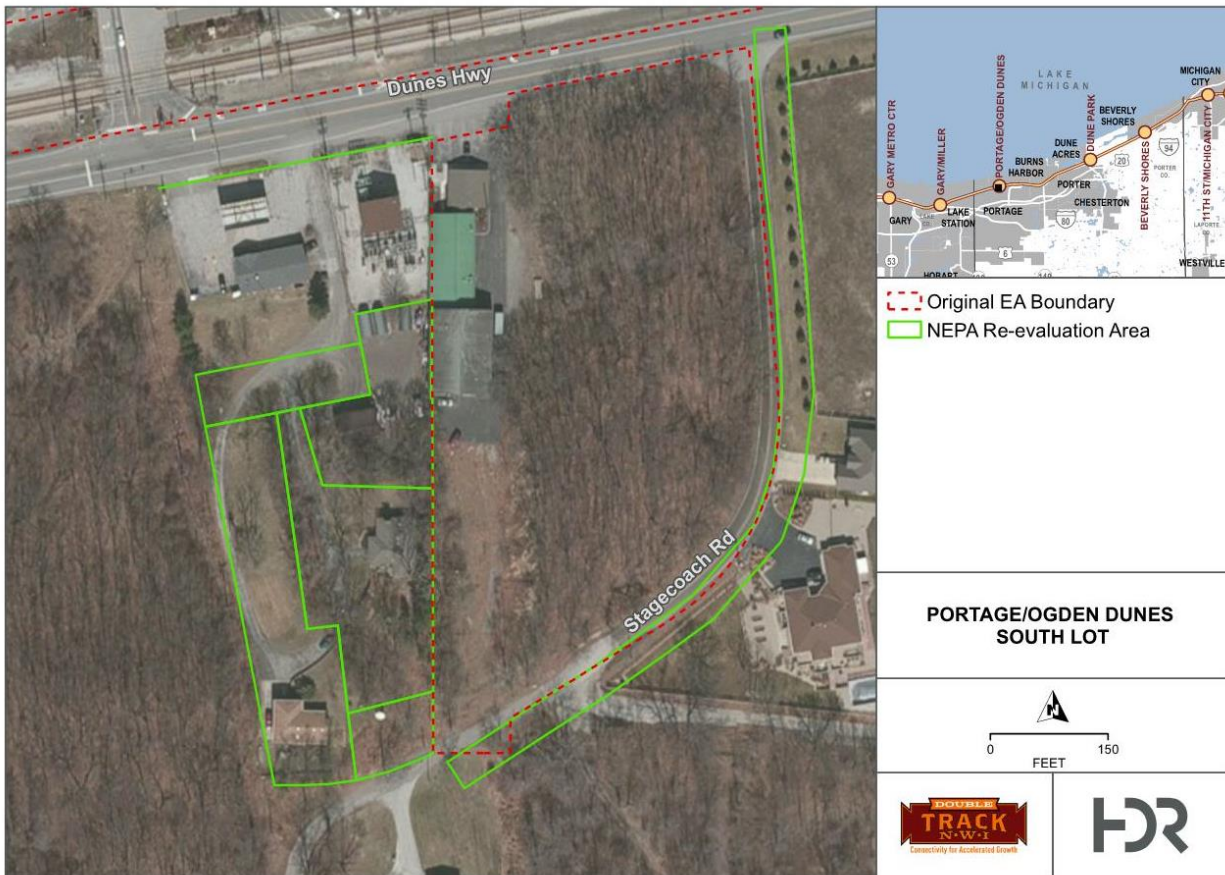
The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) proposes to build a new second track on its South Shore commuter rail line in northwest Indiana between Gary and Michigan City to allow for expanded service. The Project also includes platform upgrades at five stations with additional parking. As lead federal agency, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), jointly prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Section 4(f) Evaluation with NICTD, the local project sponsor. The FTA published the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Double Track Northwest Indiana (DT-NWI) Project on November 1, 2018. Since that time, the DT-NWI Project has entered into the Engineering phase of the FTA New Starts process. AECOM was selected through a competitive bidding process to develop engineering plans and completed the draft 60% design engineering plans in April 2020.

During the NEPA public comment period, there was substantial feedback from Ogden Dunes residents and the Town of Ogden Dunes focused on safety and traffic concerns at the proposed parking lot west of Hillcrest Road (shown as “Lot 3” in the EA). In response, NICTD searched for an alternative to provide the necessary parking spaces. As part of the coordination with local municipalities, NICTD decided to move the spaces to an area south of US-12, adjacent to proposed Lot 2 in the EA. The proposed parking area is outside the environmental survey boundary and project footprint described in the EA and will require additional property acquisition. This Re-evaluation reviews the impacts of constructing a parking lot within an expanded project footprint and compares those impacts against the impacts and mitigation

identified in the DT-NWI FONSI (November 2018) to determine whether FTA’s decision issued in the FONSI remains valid. This Re-evaluation was completed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements (23 CFR 771.129 and 130) as well as FTA Standard Operating Procedure Number 17 (March 2019).

NICTD completed a desktop evaluation of the resources present within the area of expanded ground disturbance. Figure 1 identifies the area reviewed as part of this Re-evaluation. The desktop review qualitatively considered impacts to each resource area reviewed in the EA and identified whether the expanded project footprint will change the impacts or mitigation identified in the FONSI. NICTD also completed field investigations to identify the presence of water resources, biological resources, threatened and endangered species, and cultural resources within the Re-evaluation area. Changes to those resources are discussed in greater detail in this Re-evaluation. Based on this analysis, NICTD finds that the additional parcels do not result in any new significant impacts to the environment, the findings and mitigation identified in the November 1, 2018 FONSI remain valid, and no supplemental documentation is required.

Figure 1. NEPA Re-evaluation Area

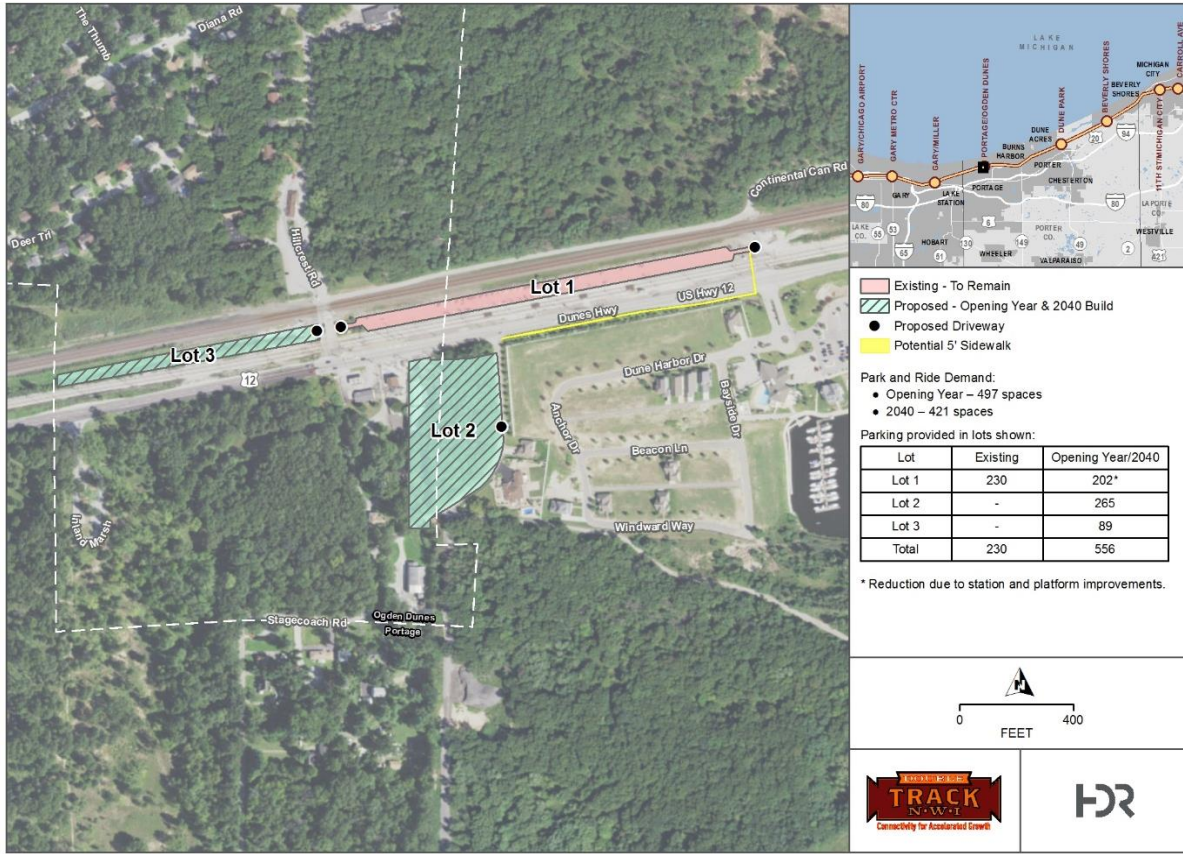


II. Proposed Changes to the DT-NWI Project

The Preferred Alternative described in the EA included parking lots in three locations to serve the Portage/Ogden Dunes Station: within the existing lot, north of US-12 and between Hillcrest

Road and Continental Can Road (Lot 1); south of US-12 and west of Stagecoach (Lot 2); and on the north side of the tracks, west of Hillcrest Road in the NICTD right-of-way (ROW) (Lot 3). The Preferred Alternative also included a sidewalk connection along the south side of US-12, from Lot 2 east towards Dunes Harbor Road. There were no changes to Stagecoach Road. The EA parking locations for the Portage/Ogden Dunes Station are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Parking locations at the Portage/Ogden Dunes Station as per the EA



Proposed Parking Lot 3, which would have had 89 spaces and would have been located west of Hillcrest Road in the NICTD ROW, will now be constructed adjacent to Lot 2, on the south side of US-12.

The total number of spaces required at this station in the Opening Day and 2040 is 556. There will be no change to the 202 spaces in Lot 1. To accommodate the loss of proposed Lot 3, the Preferred Alternative has been revised as follows:

- Construction of 359 parking spaces south of US-12 and west and north of Stagecoach Road;
- Acquisition of six additional parcels in Ogden Dunes that total 1.82 acres. The parcels are south of US-12, just to the west of the proposed Lot 2.

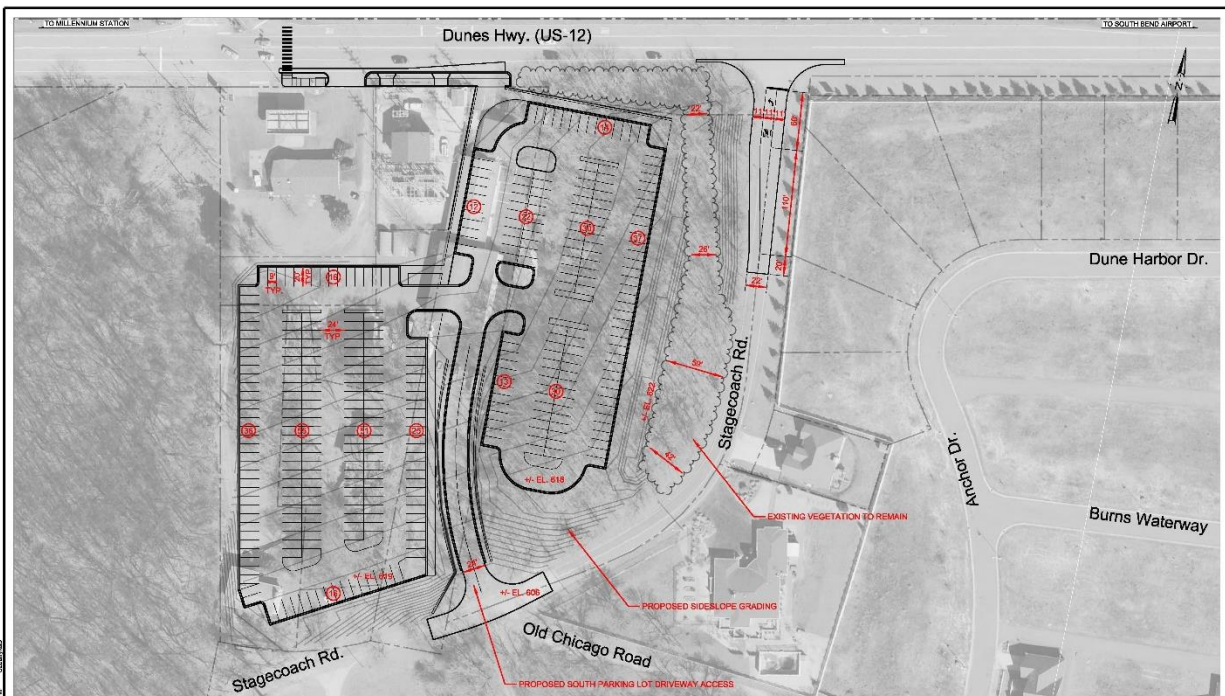
- Modifications to the Stagecoach Road/US-12 intersection;
- Sidewalk connection south of US-12 from Lot 2, heading west towards Hillcrest Road. This change is in favor of routing pedestrians to Continental Can to cross US-12, shown as a yellow line in Figure 2, and is INDOT's preferred pedestrian crossing area.

The total number of parking spaces on Opening Day under the revised Preferred Alternative would be 561. The proposed changes to the DT-NWI project would result in slightly more parking capacity than what was proposed in the EA and what is required for the Project.

III. Re-Evaluation of Environmental Consequences

The NEPA re-evaluation area includes the six additional parcels and Stagecoach Road changes in Ogden Dunes, as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Revised Ogden Dunes Parking Concept



			60% DESIGN - NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION		DRAWING: _____ OF _____
	NORTHERN INDIANA COMSUMER TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT 33 East Highway 12 Charleston, Indiana 46304		MICHIGAN CITY TO GARY, INDIANA		OGDEN DUNES SOUTH PARKING LOT 357 PARKING SPACES
DATE: _____ SCALE: _____	DESIGNED BY: _____ DRAWN BY: _____ CHECKED BY: _____ DATE: _____	FILE NAME: IT_070112_ogden_south_parking_lot.dwg	SCALE: _____	AS NOTED	OF

Table 1. Summary of Impacts from FONSI Compared to Portage/Ogden Dunes Parking Additional Parcels

Resource	EA/FONSI Identified Impacts	Change in Impacts
Transportation	Yes	No change. The change to the station parking lot location will not have an effect on transportation. See additional information in Section IV and Attachment 1.
Land Acquisition/Displacement	Yes. Permanent acquisition of 155 individual properties will occur, as stated in the FONSI, including 81 residences.	Yes. An additional six properties (two residences) will be acquired by NICTD for the Portage/Ogden Dunes station parking.
Land Use and Economic Development	No adverse impacts.	No change from FONSI.
Neighborhoods, Communities and Businesses	Yes. Construction activities associated with the proposed Project are expected to result in temporary increases in noise and vibration, erosion, and airborne dust; temporary increases in traffic and detours; and introduce new station elements and designs into the community.	The proposed changes result from comments and desires from the communities of Portage and Ogden Dunes. No change from FONSI.
Historic, Archaeological and Cultural Resources (Section 106)	Yes. Adverse effects on 27 historic resources eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Properties (NRHP).	No. No additional historic, archaeological, or cultural resources were identified. See additional information in Section IV and Attachment 2.
Visual and Aesthetics	Yes. There are several visual and aesthetic impacts including temporary construction impacts, clearing of trees, and filling of wetlands.	Yes. Additional trees will be cleared resulting in the change in visual characteristics to viewers on US-12 and Stagecoach Road. There will be a change in lighting locations and light glare. Mitigation will be implemented consistent with measures described in the FONSI.
Noise	Yes. Train horn sounding at grade crossings would cause moderate noise impacts at one residence in Gary and two residences in Beverly Shores.	No. There are no additional noise impacts identified.

Resource	EA/FONSI Identified Impacts	Change in Impacts
Vibration	Yes. Vibration impacts would be perceived at eight locations within the corridor: one in the Town of Pines, two in Beverly Shores, and five in Michigan City.	No. There are no additional vibration impacts identified.
Hazardous/Regulated Materials	No. Potential to disturb high- and moderate-risk Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) during construction.	Additional RECs identified adjacent to these properties. See Section IV and Attachment 3.
Biological Resources	Yes. 28 acres of threatened/endangered species potential habitat was identified in the FONSI.	No. No additional threatened/endangered species potential habitat was identified.
Water Resources	Yes. 5.4 acres of wetlands and 1,117 linear feet of streams were identified in the FONSI.	No. No additional wetland or stream impacts nor floodplains were identified on the six additional parcels. See additional information in Section IV and Attachment 4.
Section 6(f) Resources	No	No
Environmental Justice	No. No disproportionately high and adverse impacts to environmental justice populations.	No
Safety and Security	No	No
Indirect and Cumulative Impacts	No. No adverse impacts to the human environment or the natural environment.	No
Air Quality	No	No
Farmland	No	No
Energy	No	No
Navigable Waters	No	No
Coastal Management Zone	No	No
Geology, Soils and Karst	No	No
Section 4(f) Resources	Yes. <i>De minimis</i> impacts identified in the FONSI, as well as impacts to historic resources.	No additional 4(f) resources were identified.

IV. Supporting Information

Traffic

NICTD re-evaluated the traffic analysis from the 2018 EA/FONSI to reflect these changes. **The analysis indicates that the intersections and driveways would continue to operate at an acceptable Level of Service (LOS) for both the AM and PM peak hours.** Exit B/Dune Harbor Drive at US-12 is projected to operate at a slightly less than desirable LOS (D); however, this is not uncommon and is acceptable given the nature of the land use and short influx of traffic as vehicles leave in the evening. This same result for Exit B/Dune Harbor Drive was also projected in the 2018 EA and FONSI.

The LOS changes are shown below, and the full analysis is described in Attachment 1.

Table 1. Portage/Ogden Dunes Station Opening Year – Build (2022) Level of Service – REEVALUATED

Location	AM Peak Hour	PM Peak Hour
U.S. 12 and Hillcrest Road	A	B
U.S. 12 and Portage/Ogden Dunes Station Exit B @ Dune Harbor Drive	B	C
U.S. 12 and Stagecoach Road	C	B
Stagecoach Road and Portage/Ogden Dunes Station Entrance C	A	B

Table 2. Portage/Ogden Dunes Station 2040 – Build Level of Service – REEVALUATED

Location	AM Peak Hour	PM Peak Hour
U.S. 12 and Hillcrest Road	A	B
U.S. 12 and Portage/Ogden Dunes Station Exit B @ Dune Harbor Drive	B	D
U.S. 12 and Stagecoach Road	C	C
Stagecoach Road and Portage/Ogden Dunes Station Entrance C	A	B

Cultural Resources

In April 2020, HDR conducted an additional archaeological survey of approximately 2.4 acres for a proposed supplemental extension of the Portage/Ogden Dunes Station Parking Lot Extension (a 3.26-acre area surveyed for the Project in 2017) and an approximately 15-foot widening of the east side of Stagecoach Road, which is immediately east and south of the proposed 2017 parking lot extension area. The field survey included photo-documentation, a controlled surface inspection, and mapping, followed by subsurface testing in select portions of the survey area.

Within the Stagecoach Road Widening area, the survey documented a buried communication line running along the entire length of the east side of Stagecoach Road, as well as an overhead utility line running along the southern half of the area. No prehistoric or historic materials were identified during the controlled surface inspection of the area.

Within the Supplemental Parking Extension area, the survey included current land owner interviews, photo-documentation, a controlled surface inspection, and mapping, followed by subsurface testing. Three surface features were identified from interviews with current land owners and controlled surface inspection, including a concrete pad foundation of a probable cabin dating from the 1940s; and a refuse dump area and a partially filled well both of which are associated with the existing residential structures (both constructed in 1952) in the area.

A total of 16 shovel tests were excavated in the area; all were negative for prehistoric and historic materials. Subsurface testing revealed disturbed soil profiles (composed of modern structural debris and domestic refuse, disturbed mottled soils, and moderate to heavy slag fill) associated with the development of the area over the last 70 plus years.

Based on the lack of intact deposits, FTA recommends this site as not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). This recommendation was forwarded to the Indiana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on June 2nd, 2020. The SHPO concurred with this recommendation on July 9th, 2020. No further work is recommended at this site, and no additional archaeological investigation is recommended unless the Project footprint changes.

The cultural resources report is included as Attachment 2 to this memo.

Hazardous Waste/Regulated Substances

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was performed on March 18 and 19, 2020 and May 7, 2020 for the entire Portage/Ogden Dunes station proposed parking area south of US-12 (see Attachment 3). The ESA indicated that four out of the eight parcels surveyed contained Recognized Environmental Conditions (REC) due to the current and historical uses of adjoining properties, including an active gas station and an electrical substation. A Phase II ESA will be performed in 2020 prior to acquisition to evaluate if the RECs associated with the historical use of the adjoining properties have impacted the soil and/or groundwater at the four parcels within the construction footprint.

Water Resources

NICTD performed a desktop assessment followed by a field visit to complete a delineation of waterbodies, including wetlands and streams, on April 27, 2020. Wetland determinations were made using the three criteria of assessment approach defined in the *1987 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Wetland Delineation Manual and the Northcentral and Northeast Regional Supplement "Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Northcentral and Northeast Region (Version 2.0) July 2012."* Areas that reflect a predominance of hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, and wetland hydrology are considered wetlands. **No wetlands, streams, floodplains, nor floodways were identified.** Attachment 4 contains a memorandum further describing the results of the water resources investigation.

Biological Resources

While completing the on-site investigation, the six additional parcels were also assessed for habitat for the following Federal and State Threatened or Endangered species: Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), Eastern massasauga rattlesnake (*Sistrurus catenatus catenatus*), Kirtland's snake (*Clonophis kirtlandii*), Spotted turtle (*Clemmys guttata*), and the Northern leopard frog (*Lithobates pipens*). A habitat assessment for the Indiana bat and the northern long-eared bat was conducted on April 27, 2020 in accordance with the 2016 Range-Wide Indiana Bat Summer Survey Guidelines (USFWS 2016). **No potential winter habitat (i.e., caves, mines) was observed in the additional parcels. No high-quality summer habitat was documented in the additional parcels.** Since the parcels were residential in nature and consisted of houses, a warehouse, driveways, mowed lawn, and treed areas, **no habitat was identified for amphibians and reptiles nor threatened or endangered plants.**

Conclusion

The DT-NWI Project's modified construction footprint for the Portage/Ogden Dunes Station parking would not result in significant impacts nor require additional mitigation. Based on this analysis, NICTD finds that the change to parking lot location for the Portage/Ogden Dunes Station does not result in any new significant impacts to the environment, the findings and mitigation identified in the November 1, 2018 FONSI remains valid, and no supplemental documentation is required.

Attachment 1: Traffic – Ogden Dunes Additional Parcels

Attachment 2: Cultural Resources – Ogden Dunes Additional Parcels

Attachment 3: Hazardous Waste/Regulated Substances – Ogden Dunes Additional Parcels

Attachment 4: Wetland and Waters of the U.S. Memorandum – Ogden Dunes Additional Parcels