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## **RDA Sets Vision for Northwest Indiana in Updated Strategic Plan**

*NWI RDA Board of Directors accepts plan aimed at making Northwest Indiana the preferred place to live, work and play in the Chicago marketplace.*

Crown Point, IN (August 18, 2016) – The Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) Board of Directors today accepted the update to the RDA’s Comprehensive Strategic Plan required by the General Assembly as part of the process to access state funding for the West Lake expansion of the South Shore commuter rail line.

“When the Indiana General Assembly approved \$180 million for the West Lake Corridor last year, they asked that we update our plan to reflect this major new initiative,” explained Bill Hanna, President and CEO of the RDA. “This update lays out a road map for rail expansion and transit-oriented planning and development that will make Northwest Indiana the first choice in suburban Chicago for new and existing residents, the first choice for businesses to start or expand, and the first choice for access to jobs, both in the region and in Chicago.”

The update details the costs, benefits, and fiscal and economic impacts of commuter rail expansion in Northwest Indiana. These include:

- Construction of the West Lake Corridor and double-tracking the existing South Shore line from Gary to Michigan City will support approximately 1,000 construction jobs during the construction period from 2018 to 2022. And together, these improvements to the South Shore system are projected to create about 5,400 permanent jobs in Lake and Porter counties by 2046.

- The West Lake Corridor will increase the South Shore’s daily ridership from about 14,500 now to more than 21,000. Completion of the double-tracking project will boost ridership to over 24,000.
- Station area development is projected to generate an additional \$435 million in local property tax revenues for Hammond, Munster, Dyer East Chicago, Gary, Miller, Ogden Dunes and Portage from 2019 to 2039.

Just as funding for South Shore expansion was secured thanks to the region coming together behind the project, future success will only come if Northwest Indiana continues to work together. “We will need the involvement of all who can contribute at each city and in each county. We recognize that the RDA has a narrow and focused mission within this vision, but we are mindful of the need for a broader impact. After we adopt this comprehensive strategic plan, we will be visiting with all of our public, private and nonprofit partners and them to pledge support and resources to this plan,” Hanna said.

A copy of the updated RDA Comprehensive Strategic Plan can be downloaded at

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#### **About the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority**

Established in 2005 through a bipartisan effort including former Governor Mitchell E. Daniels, Congressman Peter J. Visclosky, key state legislators, and local elected officials, the RDA is quasi-governmental development entity entrusted to make public investment decisions within a regional framework for supporting catalytic infrastructure projects and inducing private sector investment. Years of successful results have made it a trusted and tested partner for growth in Northwest Indiana. For more information, visit [www.rdatransformation.com](http://www.rdatransformation.com) or [www.in.gov/rda](http://www.in.gov/rda)