

**Indiana Department of Transportation**

County Lake Route US 12 & US 20 Des. No. 1601716

FHWA-Indiana Environmental Document  
**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION / ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FORM**  
 GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

<b>Road No./County:</b>	US 12, US 20, & Lake Street
<b>Designation Number:</b>	1601716 and 1801738
<b>Project Description/Termini:</b>	Realignment and reconstruction of US 12 between US 20 and Clay Street, US 12 beginning at a point 0.14 mile east of Lake Street and continuing east for 0.27 mile, US 20 between Fayette Street and a point 0.45 mile east of Lake Street, and 0.1 mile of Lake Street between US 12 and a point 0.04 mile south of US 20 in Gary, Indiana.

After completing this form, I conclude that this project qualifies for the following type of Categorical Exclusion (FHWA must review/approve if Level 4 CE):

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Categorical Exclusion, Level 2</b> – The proposed action meets the criteria for Categorical Exclusion Manual Level 2 - table 1, CE Level Thresholds. Required Signatories: ESM (Environmental Scoping Manager)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Categorical Exclusion, Level 3</b> – The proposed action meets the criteria for Categorical Exclusion Manual Level 3 - table 1, CE Level Thresholds. Required Signatories: ESM, ES (Environmental Services Division)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Categorical Exclusion, Level 4</b> – The proposed action meets the criteria for Categorical Exclusion Manual Level 4 - table 1, CE Level Thresholds. Required Signatories: ESM, ES, FHWA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Environmental Assessment (EA)</b> – EAs require a separate FONSI. Additional research and documentation is necessary to determine the effects on the environment. Required Signatories: ES, FHWA

Note: For documents prepared by or for Environmental Services Division, it is not necessary for the ESM of the district in which the project is located to release for public involvement or sign for approval.

**Approval** \_\_\_\_\_  
 ESM Signature Date ES Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 FHWA Signature Date

**Release for Public Involvement**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_ REB \_\_\_\_\_ 5-29-19  
 ESM Initials Date ES Initials Date

**Certification of Public Involvement** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Office of Public Involvement Date

Note: Do not approve until after Section 106 public involvement and all other environmental requirements have been satisfied.

INDOT ES/District Env.  
 Reviewer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Organization of CE/EA Preparer: American Structurepoint, Inc., Briana Hope (Lead) and Monica Del Real

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Part I - PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Every Federal action requires some level of public involvement, providing for early and continuous opportunities throughout the project development process. The level of public involvement should be commensurate with the proposed action.

Does the project have a historic bridge processed under the Historic Bridges PA\*? If No, then: Opportunity for a Public Hearing Required? Yes No X

\*A public hearing is required for all historic bridges processed under the Historic Bridges Programmatic Agreement between INDOT, FHWA, SHPO, and the ACHP.

Discuss what public involvement activities (legal notices, letters to affected property owners and residents (i.e. notice of entry), meetings, special purpose meetings, newspaper articles, etc.) have occurred for this project.

Remarks:

Notice of Entry:

Survey work for the project occurred between February 20, 2017 and March 31, 2017. Prior to the initiation of survey activities, notice of entry letters are typically mailed to potentially affected property owners notifying them about the project and that individuals responsible for land surveying and field activities may be seen in the area. Due to a gap in data records, a copy of the survey notice is not available and delivery to property owners cannot be confirmed. A sample survey notice has been created for this project (Appendix C, C-62).

Section 106

To meet the public involvement requirements of Section 106, FHWA's finding of "No Adverse Effect", a notice was advertised in The Times of Northwest Indiana on July 18, 2018. The public comment period closed 30 days later on August 20, 2018. The text of the public notice and the affidavit of publication appear in Appendix D, D-81 to D-82. No comments were received within the allotted timeframe.

Public Hearing:

The proposed project will meet the minimum requirements described in the current Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) Public Involvement Manual which requires the project sponsor to offer the public an opportunity to submit comment and/or request a public hearing. Therefore, a legal notice will appear in a local publication contingent upon the release of this document for public involvement. This document will be revised after the public involvement requirements are fulfilled.

Public Controversy on Environmental Grounds

Will the project involve substantial controversy concerning community and/or natural resource impacts? Yes No X

Remarks:

At this time there is no substantial public controversy concerning impacts to the community or to natural resources.

Part II - General Project Identification, Description, and Design Information

Sponsor of the Project: INDOT INDOT District: LaPorte Local Name of the Facility: US 12, US 20, and Lake Street

Funding Source (mark all that apply): Federal X State X Local X1 Other\*

1This project is a joint effort between the City of Gary and INDOT.

\*If other is selected, please identify the funding source:

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County LakeRoute US 12 & US 20Des. No. 1601716**PURPOSE AND NEED:**

Describe the transportation problem that the project will address. The solution to the traffic problem should NOT be discussed in this section. (Refer to the CE Manual, Section IV.B.2. Purpose and Need)

The need for the project is to create space for the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) double track improvement project including the expansion of the Miller Train Station. An Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the NICTD double track project on September 18, 2017 and is discussed in more detail in the Project Description Section. Residential and commercial growth in the region has led to an increased demand on multimodal transportation services, driving the NICTD Miller Train Station expansion project. The NICTD expansion project not only drives the need to create more space for the expansion but also the need to improve the surrounding roadways and associated pedestrian facilities, due to the anticipated increase in future ridership. The limited sidewalks present along US 20 are not Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. A lack of pedestrian facilities presents a safety issue, including the potential for increased pedestrian and vehicular accidents, with the anticipated increase in pedestrian traffic in the immediate area.

The purpose of the project is to facilitate the NICTD expansion of the Miller Train Station and double track improvement project, while maintaining surrounding vehicular and pedestrian routes able to accommodate increased ridership.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE):**County: LakeMunicipality: Gary

Limits of Proposed Work: US 12 between US 20 and Clay Street, US 12 beginning at a point 0.14 mile east of Lake Street and continuing east for 0.27 mile, US 20 between Fayette Street and a point 0.45 mile east of Lake Street, and 0.1 mile of Lake Street between US 12 and a point 0.04 mile south of US 20.

Total Work Length: 1.32 Mile(s)Total Work Area: 13 Acre(s)

Is an Interchange Modification Study / Interchange Justification Study (IMS/IJS) required?  
If yes, when did the FHWA grant a conditional approval for this project?

Yes <sup>1</sup>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Date: _____	

<sup>1</sup>If an IMS or IJS is required; a copy of the approved CE/EA document must be submitted to the FHWA with a request for final approval of the IMS/IJS.

In the remarks box below, describe existing conditions, provide in detail the scope of work for the project, including the preferred alternative. Include a discussion of logical termini. Discuss any major issues for the project and how the project will improve safety or roadway deficiencies if these are issues.

**Project Location:**

The proposed project area is located in Calumet Township, Lake County, Indiana, approximately 1.3 miles east of the I-65 and I-90 interchange (Appendix B, B-1). The area is more specifically located on the Gary USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle Map in Section 1 of Township 36 North, Range 8 West, and Sections 5 and 6 of Township 36 North, Range 7 West. Activities related to the proposed project will occur along US 12, US 20, and Lake Street in the City of Gary.

**NICTD Double Track Improvement Project and Miller Train Station Expansion:**

Approximately 60 miles of the existing South Shore Line (SSL) is single track railroad. Of that 60 miles, less than nine miles are available as either double track or separate passing sidings for NICTD and CSS (Chicago South Shore and

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South Bend Railroad) to operate on. The lack of appropriate railway infrastructure has led to increased conflicts with freight and passenger trains. Current conditions require that passing of trains must schedule coordinated meetings to guarantee safe passage. Frequently, this can result in cascading delays which lead to operational inefficiencies. Additionally, track or equipment defects, repairs, and maintenance can leave portions of single track out of use, ultimately resulting in more delays. Expansion of the Miller Train Station will contribute to more operating flexibility and lead to reduced travel times.

According to a 2017 Environmental Assessment (EA) and 4(f) Evaluation, prepared by HDR, travel demand currently exceeds the capacity threshold at 98 percent. The same assessment predicts up to 28 percent growth in ridership by 2040 with no improvements to transportation services (HDR, 2017). Additionally, populations in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties are projected to increase 22 percent by 2040 (HDR, 2017). Adding to the increase in demand is the continued growth of Chicago as a major employment hub. Expansion of the Miller Train Station and reconstruction of US 12 will facilitate the increases in ridership for years to come. According to NICTD, a key element of the double track project is relocating US 12 to merge with US 20 in order to provide additional space required for the double track project and Miller Train Station expansion.

Currently, commuting between Michigan City and Chicago takes longer by rail than by automobile. Increased rail travel time is due, in part, to low-level boarding platforms located at the Miller Train Station. Low level platforms require passengers to use narrow end-door stairwells at low-level platforms and passengers with disabilities are required to use the portable lift when loading or unloading. Installing new eight-car, high-level boarding platforms that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) at the Miller Train Station would reduce the time for passengers to board and exit the train. Reducing boarding and exiting times at the Miller Train Station would contribute to a reduction in overall travel times.

This document is covering the US 12 Realignment and Reconstruction to US 20 project as described below, and not the NICTD double track and Miller Train Station expansion project covered in the 2017 EA prepared by HDR.

### **Existing Conditions:**

**US 12:** The existing US 12 roadway is classified as an Urban, Principal Arterial. US 12 consists of two 12-foot wide travel lanes with 8-foot paved shoulders in each direction. The typical section transitions into a four lane curbed facility as it nears the Lake Street intersection. West of the Lake Street intersection US 12 narrows to approximately two 12-foot travel lanes with 2-foot paved shoulders in each direction. Sidewalks extend west along the north and south sides of US 12 from Lake Street for approximately 600 feet. Sidewalks extend east along US 12 from Lake Street for approximately 300 feet along the north side of the roadway and 400 feet along the south side of the roadway. Existing right-of-way is approximately 104 feet wide along the US 12 corridor. US 12 has a posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour (mph). The surrounding land use is mostly commercial businesses, with some forested parcels.

**US 20:** The existing US 20 roadway is classified as an Urban, Principal Arterial. US 20 consists of two 12-foot wide travel lanes with 2-foot minimum paved shoulders in each direction and a 4-foot minimum striped paved median, level with the existing roadway. At the location where US 20 intersects with Lake Street, the roadway widens to incorporate left and right turn lanes. US 20 horizontal curves are superelevated, banked along a horizontal curve to help motorists comfortably maneuver the curve, throughout the project area. Sidewalk extends approximately 480 feet east of Lake Street along the south side of US 20. Sidewalks are not present in any other quadrant. Existing right-of-way generally varies between 80 and 100 feet wide within the US 20 corridor. US 20 has a posted speed limit of 40 mph west of Lake Street and 45 mph east of Lake Street. The surrounding land use is a mix of commercial and residential properties with some forested parcels.

**Lake Street:** Lake Street is classified as an Urban, Minor Arterial. Lake Street consists of one curbed 11-foot wide travel lane in each direction. Lake Street also has left and right turn lanes at the US 20 intersection and one unmarked parking lane. Sidewalks are present along the east and west side of Lake Street south of US 20. Sidewalks are present along the east side of Lake Street north of US 20. Existing right-of-way along Lake Street varies from 42 feet on the east side to between 42 feet and 47 feet on the west side of the road centerline within the project corridor. The posted speed limit along Lake Street is 30 mph. The surrounding land use is commercial businesses.

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### **Proposed Improvements (Preferred Alternative):**

The approximately 1.32-mile project discussed in this document will be conducted in two phases and consist of removing and realigning sections of US 12. US 12 will connect with US 20 at a new stop controlled intersection located east of the existing US 20 and Lake Street intersection. The current intersection of US 12 and US 20, west of Clay Street, will be removed and US 12 pavement will be removed east to Clay Street. The current US 12 and Lake Street intersection will be removed. Improvements along US 20 include restriping, installation of sidewalks, addition of decorative lighting, new signage, enhanced pedestrian crossings, and landscaping. Improvements along Lake Street include the construction of raised median islands, addition of bike lanes, addition of sidewalks, and addition of parallel parking. All work will remain south of the CSS railroad.

Phase I: (Des. No. 1601716)

#### US 12 Realignment east of Lake Street:

The plan for US 12 includes realigning US 12 to create a new stop-controlled intersection with US 20, 0.21 mile east of Lake Street. The new connector roadway will consist of one 12-foot wide lane in each direction with a left turn lane at US 20 and 8-foot wide minimum paved shoulders. One vacant structure, a former business located approximately 0.19 mile east of Lake Street between US 12 and US 20, will be removed to accommodate construction of the US 12 realignment. A retaining wall and barrier wall will be constructed on both sides of the new roadway realignment connecting US 12 to US 20. The retaining walls will be located approximately 14 feet from the edge of the east and west travel lanes and extend for approximately 400 feet, varying between 4.5 and seven feet tall. The walls will be embedded approximately two feet. A stop controlled intersection will be added at the new intersection of US 12 and US 20. Traffic along US 12 will stop and yield to traffic along US 20. To increase safety, ADA-compliant curb ramps will be constructed at the new US 20 and US 12 intersection. A marked pedestrian crossing will be added along the northern side of the intersection. An approximately 0.25 acre detention pond is proposed west of the new US 12 alignment (Appendix B, B-50). The detention pond is proposed because the current storm drains go into a combined sewer system, however this project will separate the storm sewer from the sanitary sewer. The storm sewer will be directed to outflow into the proposed detention pond. The US 12 realignment will impact approximately 0.75 acre of forested land south of US 12.

#### US 20 from 0.08 mile east of Lake Street to 0.29 mile east of Lake Street:

Work will involve retaining existing pavement and restriping lanes for two 12-foot wide travel lanes in each direction with a 12-foot wide flush paved median. An eastbound left-turn lane will be added at the new US 20 and US 12 intersection. New curbs and gutters, as well as an enclosed storm drainage system will be constructed. Installation of the storm drainage system will require excavation to a maximum depth of eight feet. New sidewalks and ADA-compliant curb ramps varying between six and eight feet with buffers will be constructed along US 20. The design and posted speed will be 45 mph.

#### US 12 from the current US 20 and US 12 intersection to Clay Street:

Pavement along US 12 will also be removed between Clay Street and the current US 20 and US 12 intersection. The signal at the former US 12 and US 20 intersection will be removed and the intersection will be reconstructed to correct the crown transition and superelevation to follow US 20 instead of US 12. The 4-way stop at the intersection of US 12 and Clay Street will be removed so only traffic from the east along US 12 will stop and yield to traffic going north and south along Clay Street.

#### US 12 from 675 feet east of Lake Street to the realignment east of Lake Street:

Pavement along US 12 will also be removed from approximately 675 feet east of Lake Street to the new US 12 alignment. The remainder of the pavement, between Lake Street and 675 feet east of Lake Street, will be removed as part of the NICTD double track and Miller Train Station expansion project.

Phase II: (Des. No. 1801738)

#### US 20 from 0.41 mile west of Lake Street to 0.08 mile east of Lake Street and 0.29 mile east of Lake Street to 0.40 mile east of Lake Street:

The plan for US 20 involves retaining the existing pavement and restriping lanes for two 12-foot wide travel lanes in each direction with a 12-foot wide flush paved median. New curbs and gutters, as well as an enclosed storm drainage

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system will be constructed. Installation of an enclosed storm drainage system will require excavation to a maximum depth of eight feet. New sidewalks with ADA-compliant curb ramps varying between six and eight feet wide with buffers will be constructed between Fayette Street and Hancock Street. The project also includes the addition of decorative lighting, new signing along US 20 between the existing intersection with US 12 and the new proposed intersection with US 12, and landscaping consisting of trees where feasible. The design speed will be 45 mph and the posted speed will be 40 mph west of Lake Street and 45 mph east of Lake Street. In addition, the traffic signal at the US 20 and Lake Street intersection will be enhanced to address pedestrian safety with the addition of crosswalk markings, new ADA compliant curb ramps, pedestrian refuge islands, and accessible pedestrian push-button signals.

Lake Street from 0.06 mile north of US 20 to 0.05 mile south of US 20:

The plan for Lake Street involves the construction of new raised median islands to delineate northbound and southbound lanes at the US 20 intersection and the addition of bike lanes (Appendix B, B-22). Improvements will require widening of the typical roadway section by up to 1-foot. New 6-foot wide sidewalks with ADA-compliant curb ramps will be constructed along both sides of Lake Street. Concrete curbs and gutters in addition to an improved storm sewer system will be incorporated along Lake Street. Additionally, parallel parking will be developed through the use of existing pavement and curb lines. The intersection of US 20 and Lake Street will also require full depth pavement reconstruction.

Logical Termini:

The logical termini of the proposed project and phases were selected to provide independent utility and fulfill the purpose of the project. Phase I of the project includes the creation of the new US 12 and US 20 intersection east of Lake Street, the removal of US 12 at the current US 12 and US 20 intersection, and restriping of US 20 near the new US 12 and US 20 intersection. This phase provides the realignment of US 12 needed to provide adequate space for the NICTD double track and Miller Train Station expansion project. Phase II of the project includes restriping, installation of sidewalks, addition of decorative lighting, new signage, enhanced pedestrian crossings, and landscaping along US 20 and the construction of raised median islands, addition of bike lanes, addition of sidewalks, and addition of parallel parking along Lake Street. This phase provides the enhanced pedestrian facilities to address anticipated increases in pedestrian traffic in the vicinity of the Miller Train Station.

The Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) for the project will require the closure of US 12 and lane restrictions along US 20. For more details, refer to the MOT section of this document.

The preferred alternative described above meets the purpose of the project, to facilitate the NICTD expansion of the Miller Train Station and double track project while maintaining vehicular and pedestrian routes, and the need of the project, to create space for the proposed NICTD expansion of the Miller Train Station and double track project and enhance pedestrian facilities to accommodate the anticipated increase in pedestrian traffic in the project vicinity.

For reference to the road plans for US 12, US 20, and Lake Street, see Appendix B, B-18 to B-50. For reference to the NICTD double track project plans, see Appendix B, B-51 to B-53.

### OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

*Describe all discarded alternatives, including the Do-Nothing Alternative and an explanation of why each discarded alternative was not selected.*

Do-Nothing Alternative

The Do Nothing alternative leaves the existing roadway in its current condition. No reconstruction of the road, no provisions for pedestrian safety, no raised island medians, and ultimately no expansion of the Miller Train Station. While this alternative eliminates cost and any environmental impacts, it would not meet the objectives of the purpose and need. Therefore, this alternative was discarded from further consideration.

Improvement of US 12 and Lake Street Intersection

The US 12 and Lake Street alternative would modify the existing intersection of US 12 and Lake Street to accommodate increased traffic associated with the expansion of the Miller Train Station. It would not include the new alignment

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connecting US 12 and US 20. According to NICTD, a key element of the double track project is relocating US 12 to merge with US 20 in order to provide additional space required for the double track project and Miller Train Station expansion. This alternative may eliminate the need to realign US 12 to create a new US 12 and US 20 intersection, reducing the amount of new permanent right-of-way required for the project, but it fails to meet the objectives set forth in the purpose and need. Therefore, this alternative was discarded from further consideration.

Realignment of US 12 to US 20 - 0.23 mile east of Lake Street

The realignment of US 12 to US 20 0.23 mile east of Lake Street alternative would direct traffic along a new alignment from a new stop controlled intersection 0.23 mile east of Lake Street. Improvements to US 12, US 20, and Lake Street would be the same as those outlined in the "Proposed Improvements (Preferred Alternative)" section above, however the new alignment would require the relocation of the existing Mosley Motel property. This alternative would allow for the construction of a more geometrically desirable roadway as compared to the preferred alternative. This alternative would meet the purpose and need by creating adequate room necessary for construction of the NICTD Double Track Project and improved safety throughout the project area. However, this alternative would negatively impact an existing business and structure (Mosley Motel). Therefore, this alternative was discarded from further consideration.

The Do Nothing Alternative is not feasible, prudent or practicable because (Mark all that apply):

- It would not correct existing capacity deficiencies;
- It would not correct existing safety hazards;
- It would not correct the existing roadway geometric deficiencies;
- It would not correct existing deteriorated conditions and maintenance problems; or
- It would result in serious impacts to the motoring public and general welfare of the economy.
- Other (Describe)

Increased travel times and delays in transportation would remain. Safety issues, including the potential for increased accidents with the anticipated increase in pedestrian traffic in the immediate area, would remain.

### ROADWAY CHARACTER: US 12

Functional Classification: Principal Arterial, Urban (Intermediate)  
 Current ADT: 4,321 VPD (2015) Design Year ADT: 4840 VPD (2039)  
 Design Hour Volume (DHV): 630 Truck Percentage (%): 6  
 Designed Speed (mph): 35 Legal Speed (mph): 35

Existing                      Proposed

Number of Lanes:	2		2 to 3
Type of Lanes:	Travel		2 Travel & 0 to 1 Auxiliary
Pavement Width:	24	ft.	36
Shoulder Width:	8	ft.	16
Median Width:	N/A	ft.	N/A
Sidewalk Width:	N/A	ft.	N/A

Setting:  Urban     Suburban     Rural  
 Topography:  Level     Rolling     Hilly

If the proposed action has multiple roadways, this section should be filled out for each roadway.

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### ROADWAY CHARACTER: US 20

Functional Classification: Principal Arterial, Urban (Intermediate)  
 Current ADT: 18,235 VPD (2015) Design Year ADT: 20,420 VPD (2039)  
 Design Hour Volume (DHV): 2,450 Truck Percentage (%) 9  
 Designed Speed (mph): 45 Legal Speed (mph): 40 to 45

**Existing** **Proposed**

Number of Lanes:	4		4 to 5
Type of Lanes:	Travel		4 Travel & 0 to 1 Auxiliary
Pavement Width:	48	ft.	48
Shoulder Width:	4	ft.	N/A
Median Width:	4	ft.	12
Sidewalk Width:	N/A	ft.	8

Setting:  Urban  Suburban  Rural  
 Topography:  Level  Rolling  Hilly

*If the proposed action has multiple roadways, this section should be filled out for each roadway.*

### ROADWAY CHARACTER: Lake Street

Functional Classification: Minor Arterial, Urban (Intermediate)  
 Current ADT: 3,512 VPD (2012) Design Year ADT: 3,990 VPD (2039)  
 Design Hour Volume (DHV): 400 Truck Percentage (%) 11  
 Designed Speed (mph): 35 Legal Speed (mph): 30

**Existing** **Proposed**

Number of Lanes:	4		3 to 4
Type of Lanes:	2 Travel & 2 Auxiliary		2 Travel & 1 to 2 Auxiliary
Pavement Width:	44	ft.	44
Shoulder Width:	N/A	ft.	N/A
Median Width:	N/A	ft.	8
Sidewalk Width:	0 to 6	ft.	6

Setting:  Urban  Suburban  Rural  
 Topography:  Level  Rolling  Hilly

*If the proposed action has multiple roadways, this section should be filled out for each roadway.*

### DESIGN CRITERIA FOR BRIDGES:

Structure/NBI Number(s): N/A Sufficiency Rating: N/A  
(Rating, Source of Information)

**Existing** **Proposed**

Bridge Type:	N/A		N/A
Number of Spans:	N/A		N/A

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Weight Restrictions:	N/A	ton	N/A	ton
Height Restrictions:	N/A	ft.	N/A	ft.
Curb to Curb Width:	N/A	ft.	N/A	ft.
Outside to Outside Width:	N/A	ft.	N/A	ft.
Shoulder Width:	N/A	ft.	N/A	ft.
Length of Channel Work:	N/A		N/A	ft.

*Describe bridges and structures; provide specific location information for small structures.*

Remarks:

No bridges or small structures are located within this project area.

Will the structure be rehabilitated or replaced as part of the project?  Yes  No  N/A  
*If the proposed action has multiple bridges or small structures, this section should be filled out for each structure.*

### MAINTENANCE OF TRAFFIC (MOT) DURING CONSTRUCTION:

	Yes	No
Is a temporary bridge proposed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is a temporary roadway proposed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will the project involve the use of a detour or require a ramp closure? (describe in remarks)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provisions will be made for access by local traffic and so posted.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provisions will be made to accommodate any local special events or festivals.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will the proposed MOT substantially change the environmental consequences of the action?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is there substantial controversy associated with the proposed method for MOT?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Remarks:

The MOT for the project will require the closure of US 12 and lane restrictions along US 20. During construction on US 12, the roadway will be closed at the intersection with US 20, west of Clay Street. Traffic will be maintained along a detour route via US 20 and SR 249 located east of the project area. It is anticipated that US 12 will be closed throughout the project area for the duration of construction, however, access will be maintained to all residences and businesses during construction via utilization of Clay Street. During construction on US 20 and Lake Street, traffic will be maintained along the existing roadway through the use of phased construction. A minimum of one lane will be provided in each direction, and access to all residences and businesses will be maintained throughout construction. For reference to the detour plans, see Appendix B, B-24 to B-28.

The closure and lane restrictions will pose a temporary inconvenience to traveling motorists (including school buses and emergency services); however, no significant delays are anticipated and all inconveniences will cease upon project completion.

### ESTIMATED PROJECT COST AND SCHEDULE:

Engineering: \$ 230,000 (2017) Right-of-Way: \$ 400,000 (2018/19) Construction: \$ \$4,875,000.00 (2019)

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Anticipated Start Date of Construction: Spring 2019

Date project incorporated into STIP July 1, 2015 (FY 2016-2019 STIP); July 3, 2017 (FY 2018-2021 STIP) (Appendix G, G-1 to G-5)

Is the project in an MPO Area? Yes No

If yes,

Name of MPO Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC)

Location of Project in TIP 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) documents: All Project List (<http://www.nirpc.org/fy-2018-2021-tip/>) (Appendix G, G-6)

Date of incorporation by reference into the STIP May 18, 2017

**RIGHT OF WAY:**

Land Use Impacts	Amount (acres)		
	Permanent	Temporary	Reacquisition
Residential	0.379	0.028	0.056
Commercial	5.293	0.046	2.997
Agricultural	0.0	0.0	0.0
Forest	0.0	0.0	0.0
Wetlands	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other: Government owned property	0.506	0.012	0.0
Other:	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6.178</b>	<b>0.086</b>	<b>3.053</b>

*Describe both Permanent and Temporary right-of-way and describe their current use. Typical and Maximum right-of-way widths (existing and proposed) should also be discussed. Any advance acquisition or reacquisition, either known or suspected, and their impacts on the environmental analysis should be discussed.*

Remarks: The proposed project requires approximately 6.178 acres of permanent right-of way acquisition from Lake County, Indiana to accommodate for the US 12 realignment, along Lake Street and US 20. Included in this acreage, as illustrated in the above table, are various land uses consisting of 0.379 acre of residential, 5.293 acres of commercial, and 0.506 acre of government property currently owned by the City of Gary and NICTD. The project also requires approximately 0.086 acre of temporary right-of-way for the completion of the reconnection of US 12 to US 20 and drive reconstruction. Furthermore, approximately 3.053 acres of existing right-of-way that was previously unrecorded will be reacquired. The existing right-of-way along US 20 varies between 80 to 100 feet and the proposed right-of-way is 100 feet. The existing right-of-way along US 12 is approximately 104 feet and will remain unchanged. The existing right-of-way along Lake Street varies between 84 and 89 feet and is will remain unchanged.

One vacant structure, a former business located approximately 0.19 mile east of Lake Street between US 12 and US 20, will be removed to accommodate construction of the US 12 realignment. Access to businesses along US 12 will be maintained via utilization of Clay Street and the remaining portion of US 12 east of Clay Street.

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The acquisition and relocation program would be conducted in accordance with 49 CFR 24 and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 as amended.

If the scope of work or permanent or temporary right-of-way amounts change, the INDOT Environmental Services Division (ESD) and the INDOT District Environmental Section will be contacted immediately.

### Part III – Identification and Evaluation of Impacts of the Proposed Action

#### SECTION A – ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES

	<u>Presence</u>	<u>Impacts</u>	
		Yes	No
<b>Streams, Rivers, Watercourses &amp; Jurisdictional Ditches</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
State Natural, Scenic or Recreational Rivers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nationwide Rivers Inventory (NRI) listed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outstanding Rivers List for Indiana	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Navigable Waterways	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Remarks:**

Based on a desktop review, a site visit on August 29, 2017 by American Structurepoint staff, the aerial map of the project area (Appendix A, A-3), the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps and the water resource maps in the Red Flag Investigation (RFI) report (Appendix E, E-12 to E-13) there are no streams, rivers, watercourse or jurisdictional ditches within the proposed project area. Therefore, no impacts are expected.

A Wetland Delineation and Waters Report was approved on January 23, 2018 by INDOT Ecology and Waterway Permitting Office. Please refer to Appendix F, pages F-1 to F-17 for excerpts from the Wetland Delineation and Waters Report. It was determined that no potential water resources are located within the project area.

Early coordination letters were sent to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Fish and Wildlife (IDNR-DFW), IDEM, and the USACE, Chicago District on August 14, 2017.

The IDNR-DFW responded on September 13, 2017 (Appendix C, C-32 to C-33). The IDNR-DFW did not indicate the presence of any streams, rivers, watercourses, or jurisdictional ditches within the project corridor. Recommendations for avoiding, minimizing, or compensating for impacts to fish, wildlife and botanical resources were provided. All applicable IDNR-DFW recommendations are included in the Environmental Commitments section of this CE document.

The USFWS responded on August 31, 2017 (Appendix C, C-30 to C-31). The USFWS did not indicate the presence of streams, rivers, watercourses, or jurisdictional ditches within the project corridor. All applicable USFWS recommendations are included in the Environmental Commitments section of this CE document.

The IDEM automated response to early coordination was received on August 18, 2017 (Appendix C, C-17 to C-23). Their response contained recommendations regarding streams, rivers, and water courses. All applicable IDEM recommendations are included in the Environmental Commitments section of this CE document.

The USACE did not respond to early coordination efforts. However, it is anticipated the USACE will provide any concerns regarding water resources as part of the permitting process, as well as any conditions to minimize impacts.

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Other Surface Waters	<u>Presence</u>	<u>Impacts</u>	
		Yes	No
Reservoirs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lakes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farm Ponds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Detention Basins	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Storm Water Management Facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Remarks: Based on a desktop review, the aerial map of the project area (Appendix A, A-3), and the water resource maps in the RFI report (Appendix E, E-12 to E-13) showed there are four lakes mapped within the 0.5 mile search radius. The nearest lake is located approximately 0.25 mile from the project area. A site visit was conducted on August 29, 2017 by American Structurepoint staff and no reservoirs, lakes, farm ponds, detention basins, or storm water management facilities were identified within the proposed project area. Therefore, no impacts are expected.

A Wetland Delineation and Waters Report was approved on January 23, 2018 by INDOT Ecology and Waterway Permitting Office. Please refer to Appendix F, pages F-1 to F-17 for excerpts from the Wetland Delineation and Waters Report. It was determined that no potential water resources are located within the project area.

Wetlands	<u>Presence</u>	<u>Impacts</u>	
		Yes	No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Total wetland area: 0.00 acre(s) Total wetland area impacted: 0.00 acre(s)

(If a determination has not been made for non-isolated/isolated wetlands, fill in the total wetland area impacted above.)

Wetland No.	Classification	Total Size (Acres)	Impacted Acres	Comments
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Wetlands (Mark all that apply)	<u>Documentation</u>	<u>ES Approval Dates</u>
Wetland Determination	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	January 22, 2018
Wetland Delineation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	January 22, 2018
USACE Isolated Waters Determination	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Mitigation Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**Improvements that will not result in any wetland impacts are not practicable because such avoidance would result in**  
 (Mark all that apply and explain):

Substantial adverse impacts to adjacent homes, business or other improved properties;	<input type="checkbox"/>
Substantially increased project costs;	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unique engineering, traffic, maintenance, or safety problems;	<input type="checkbox"/>
Substantial adverse social, economic, or environmental impacts, or	<input type="checkbox"/>
The project not meeting the identified needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate wetland impacts need to be discussed in the remarks box.

Remarks: Based on a review of the NWI online mapper (<https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/data/Mapper.html>), the USGS topographic map (Appendix B, B-2), and the water resource maps in the RFI report (Appendix E, E-12 to E-

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13) showed there are thirty wetlands mapped within the 0.5 mile search radius. The nearest wetland is located approximately 0.03 mile from the project area. A site visit was conducted on August 29, 2017 by American Structurepoint staff and no wetlands were identified within the project area. Therefore, no impacts are expected.

A Wetland Delineation and Waters Report was approved on January 23, 2018 by INDOT Ecology and Waterway Permitting Office. Please refer to Appendix F, pages F-1 to F-17 for excerpts from the Wetland Delineation and Waters Report. It was determined that no wetlands are located within the project area.

Early coordination letters were sent to the USFWS, the IDNR-DFW, IDEM, and the USACE, Chicago District on August 14, 2017.

The IDNR-DFW responded on September 13, 2017 (Appendix C, C-32 to C-33). The IDNR-DFW did not indicate the presence of any wetlands within the project corridor. IDNR-DFW stated that due to the presence or potential presence of wetlands on site, it is recommended to contact and coordinate with the IDEM 401 program and also the USACE 404 program, and that impacts to wetlands should be mitigated at the appropriate ratio according to the 1991 INDOT/IDNR-DFW /USFWS Memorandum of Understanding. All applicable IDNR-DFW recommendations are included in the Environmental Commitments section of this CE document.

The USFWS responded on August 31, 2017 (Appendix C, C-30 to C-31). The USFWS did not give specific comments concerning wetland areas. However, should new information arise pertaining to project plans, it will be necessary for the Federal agency to reinitiate consultation. All applicable USFWS recommendations are included in the Environmental Commitments section of this CE document.

The IDEM automated response to early coordination was received on August 18, 2017 (Appendix C, C-17 to C-23). All applicable IDEM recommendations are included in the Environmental Commitments section of this CE document.

The USACE did not respond to early coordination efforts. However, it is anticipated the USACE will provide any concerns regarding water resources as part of the permitting process, as well as any conditions to minimize impacts.

	<u>Presence</u>	<u>Impacts</u>	
		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
<b>Terrestrial Habitat</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Unique or High Quality Habitat			

Use the remarks box to identify each type of habitat and the acres impacted (i.e. forested, grassland, farmland, lawn, etc).

Remarks:

Based on a desktop review, a site visit on August 29, 2017 by American Structurepoint staff and the aerial map of the project area (Appendix B, B-3) the project corridor was observed to be relatively flat and developed consisting of mixed-use businesses and residential areas, scattered woody vegetation, and sidewalks. The dominant species consisted of *Festuca arundinacea*, *Symphotrichum lateriflorum*, *Poa pratensis*, *Phragmites austral*, *Juncus tenuis*, *Seteria glauca*, *Bromus inermis*, *Ailanthus altissima*, *Lolium perenne*, *Vitis riparia*, *Solidago altissima*, *Juglans nigra*, and *Ulmus rubra*. The project will clear approximately 0.75 acre of woody vegetation directly south of US 12 for the new US 20 and US 12 intersection. The remainder of impacts to terrestrial habitat, approximately 0.90 acre, will include maintained roadside right-of-way and residential lawns.

Early coordination letters were sent to the USFWS and the IDNR-DFW on August 14, 2017.

The IDNR-DFW responded on September 13, 2017 indicating that no high-quality natural communities exist

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within the project vicinity (Appendix C, C-32 to C-33). The IDNR-DFW also provided recommendations to address bank stabilization, riparian habitat, and impacts to wetland habitat. All applicable IDNR-DFW recommendations are included in the Environmental Commitments section of this CE document.

The USFWS responded on August 31, 2017 (Appendix C, C-30 to C-31). The USFWS provided no specific information regarding the terrestrial habitat located within the proposed project area. All applicable USFWS recommendations are included in the Environmental Commitments section of this CE document.

*If there are high incidences of animal movements observed in the project area, or if bridges and other areas appear to be the sole corridor for animal movement, consideration of utilizing wildlife crossings should be taken.*

**Karst**

Is the proposed project located within or adjacent to the potential Karst Area of Indiana?  
 Are karst features located within or adjacent to the footprint of the proposed project?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, will the project impact any of these karst features?

*Use the remarks box to identify any karst features within the project area. (Karst investigation must comply with the Karst MOU, dated October 13, 1993)*

Remarks:

Based on a desktop review, a site visit on August 29, 2017 by American Structurepoint staff, the topographic map of the project area (Appendix B, B-2), and the RFI report (Appendix E, E-1 to E-28), the proposed project is located outside the designated karst region of Indiana as outlined in the October 13, 1993 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). There are no karst features identified within the project area.

In the early coordination response, the Indiana Geological Survey (IGS) did indicate high liquefaction potential as the Geological Hazard (Appendix C, C-24 to C-27). The response also indicated that mineral resources exist within the project area. Bedrock resources are classified as having "High Potential" and Sand and Gravel resources are classified as having "Low potential." Additionally, no documented active or abandoned mineral resources extraction sites are located nearby. Given that the project requires minimal excavation, no impacts are anticipated.

**Threatened or Endangered Species**

Within the known range of any federal species  
 Any critical habitat identified within project area  
 Federal species found in project area (based upon informal consultation)  
 State species found in project area (based upon consultation with IDNR-DFW)

	Impacts	
	Yes	No
Presence		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Is Section 7 formal consultation required for this action?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Remarks:

Based on a desktop review and the RFI (Appendix E, E-1 to E-28), completed by American Structurepoint on December 27, 2017, the IDNR-DFW Lake County Endangered, Threatened and Rare (ETR) Species List has been checked and is included in Appendix E, E-18 to E-28. The highlighted species on the list reflect the federal and state identified ETR species located within the county. According to the IDNR-DFW early coordination response letter dated September 13, 2017 (Appendix C, C-32 to C-33), the Natural Heritage Program's Database has been checked and did reveal records of plant or animal species listed as state or federally threatened, endangered, or rare that have been reported to occur in the project vicinity. Species and communities documented within 0.5 mile of the project area include the plant species sand-heather, Jack pine, bearberry, northern bush-honeysuckle, fire cherry, roundleaf dogwood, and rishlike aster; the insects karner blue and bunchgrass skipper; and the animals least bittern and blanding's turtle. The IDNR-DFW does not foresee any impacts to the Least Bitten as a result of this project. The IDNR-DFW states to minimize

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impacts to Blanding's Turtle a silt fence be installed around the construction areas to serve as a barrier to roaming turtles and other amphibians and reptiles. Any reptiles or amphibians encountered in the project area should be removed, unharmed, and immediately placed outside the construction area. Recommendations for avoiding, minimizing, or compensating for impacts to fish, wildlife and botanical resources were provided. All applicable IDNR-DFW recommendations are included in the Environmental Commitments section of this CE document.

An early coordination letter was sent to the USFWS on August 14, 2017. The USFWS early coordination response letter dated August 31, 2017 (Appendix C, C-30 to C-31), indicated that the project is within range of the federally endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*), and Karner blue butterfly (*Lycaeides melissa samuelis*), and the threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), rufa red knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*), Pitcher's thistle (*Cirsium pitcheri*), and Mead's milkweed (*Asclepias meadii*). The letter also stated that there is no habitat for any of these species within the proposed project area and therefore the project is not likely to adversely affect these endangered and threatened species.

The project qualifies for the Range-wide Programmatic Informal Consultation for the Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat (NLEB), dated May 2016 (revised February 2018), between FHWA, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and USFWS. Project information was submitted through the USFWS's Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) portal, and an official species list was generated on February 20, 2019 (Appendix C, C-36 to C-42). The official species list generated from IPaC indicated three species, the federally endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and Karner Blue Butterfly (*Lycaeides melissa samuelis*), and the threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) within the project area.

This project does not qualify for the USFWS Interim Policy. Based upon the early coordination response letter received from the USFWS on August 31, 2017, the USFWS supports the project as proposed.

Lake County is within range of the federally endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and the federally threatened NLEB (*Myotis septentrionalis*). On March 8, 2019 American Structurepoint staff conducted a field visit and completed a Bridge/Structure Assessment Form for the vacant structure, located 0.19 mile east of Lake Street between US 12 and US 20, which is proposed to be removed (Appendix C, C-43 to C-44). No evidence of bats was found. An effect determination key was completed on March 11, 2019 and based on the responses provided, the project was found to Not Likely to Adversely Affect (NLAA) the Indiana bat and NLEB. INDOT reviewed and verified the effect finding on March 15, 2019, and requested USFWS's review of the finding through a Concurrence Verification Letter (Appendix C, C-45 to C-61). No response was received from USFWS within the 14-day review period; therefore, it was concluded they concur with the finding. Avoidance and Minimization Measures (AMMs) are included as firm commitments in the Environmental Commitments section of this document.

On January 30, 2019 American Structurepoint staff reviewed the USFWS map Range Map for the Rusty Patch Bumble Bee (*Bombus affinis*) (<https://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/insects/rpbb/rpbbmap.html>) and identified the project area is located outside a high potential zone for rusty patch bumble bee habitat. The RFI report dated December 27, 2017 (Appendix E, E-1 to E-28) and INDOT confirmed, this project is located outside a High Potential Zone for the Rusty Patch Bumble Bee.

This precludes the need for further consultation on this project as required under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as amended. If new information on endangered species at the site becomes available, or if project plans are changed, USFWS will be contacted for consultation.