

NWI Rail VISION

Velocity, Information, Safety, Improvements and Opportunity Network

NWI Rail VISION is a NIRPC working group composed of public and private rail transportation partners including representatives from Class I, regional and short line railroads and the Indiana Department of Transportation. The group has met monthly since July 2011. The initial priorities include:

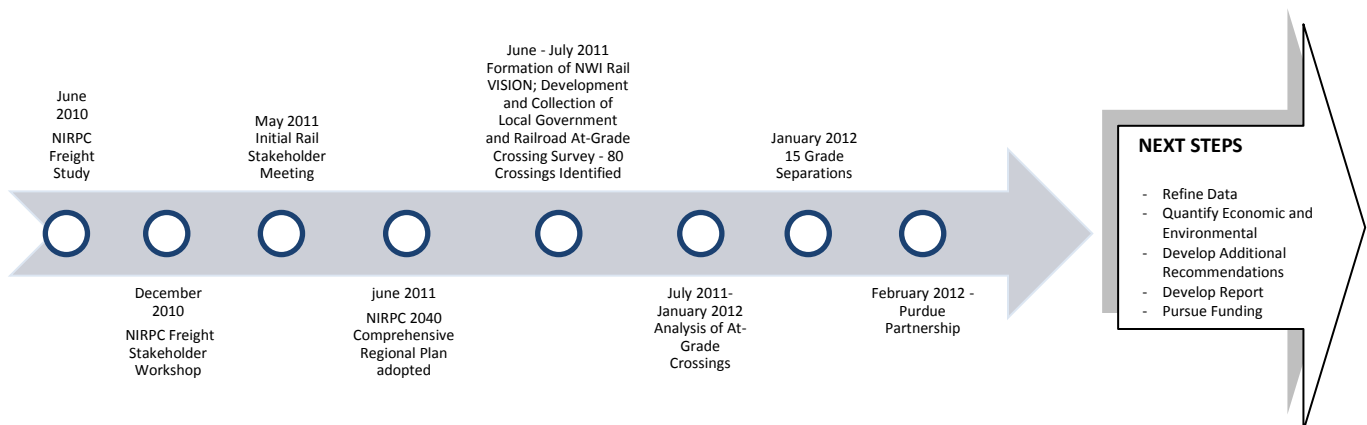
- Identification and prioritization of problematic at-grade crossings and development of an action plan for grade separation.
- Identification of opportunities for funding to resolve rail issues.
- Providing stakeholder input into NIRPC and INDOT planning processes.
- Identification of opportunities for rail-related economic development.

The Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program, after which NWI Rail VISION is modeled, has successfully obtained over \$900 million for railroad improvements from federal, state, local and private sources.

Background

- Northwest Indiana is the eastern gateway to Chicago, the busiest railroad hub in North America.
- Numerous studies have identified significant rail capacity constraints in Northwest Indiana.
- By 2040, the total volume of freight transported in Northwest Indiana is projected to grow by 20%¹.
- 3 Class I railroads (Norfolk Southern, CSX, CN) traverse Northwest Indiana.
 - The CSX and Norfolk Southern mainlines are some of the heaviest traveled rail lines in the United States. The expansion of the Panama Canal by 2015 will allow container ships from Asia to reach East Coast ports, which may result in increased container traffic traveling to Chicago from the East - through Northwest Indiana.
 - CN has announced plans to invest \$165 million in Kirk Yard, a 350 acre rail yard in the City of Gary, which will become CN's primary classification yard in the Chicago area, which will result in longer and more frequent trains passing in and out of Northwest Indiana.²
- Four short line/regional railroads operate in Northwest Indiana: Indiana Harbor Belt; Chicago South Shore and South Bend (South Shore Freight); Chicago, Fort Wayne and Eastern (RailAmerica); Chesapeake & Indiana.
- Three planned high speed rail corridors (Chicago-Detroit, Chicago-Cleveland, Chicago-Cincinnati) pass through Northwest Indiana. The Indiana Gateway project on the Chicago-Detroit corridor was awarded \$71.4 million in ARRA funds.
- Northwest Indiana's industrial economy is dependent upon rail transportation. In 2009, Indiana was ranked first in the nation for originating primary metal rail shipments.³ Base metal is the state's second largest outbound commodity.⁴
- By 2040, most of Northwest Indiana's major highways will be congested, increasing the need for reliable alternative regional travel routes.
- There are over 700 public at-grade crossings in Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties. Lake County alone has over 300 at-grade crossings, more than any other county in Indiana.
- A NIRPC freight stakeholder workshop held in December 2010 recommended separation of at-grade crossings as an effective strategy for meeting the challenges posed by longer and more frequent trains.

NWI Rail VISION At-Grade Crossing Study Timeline

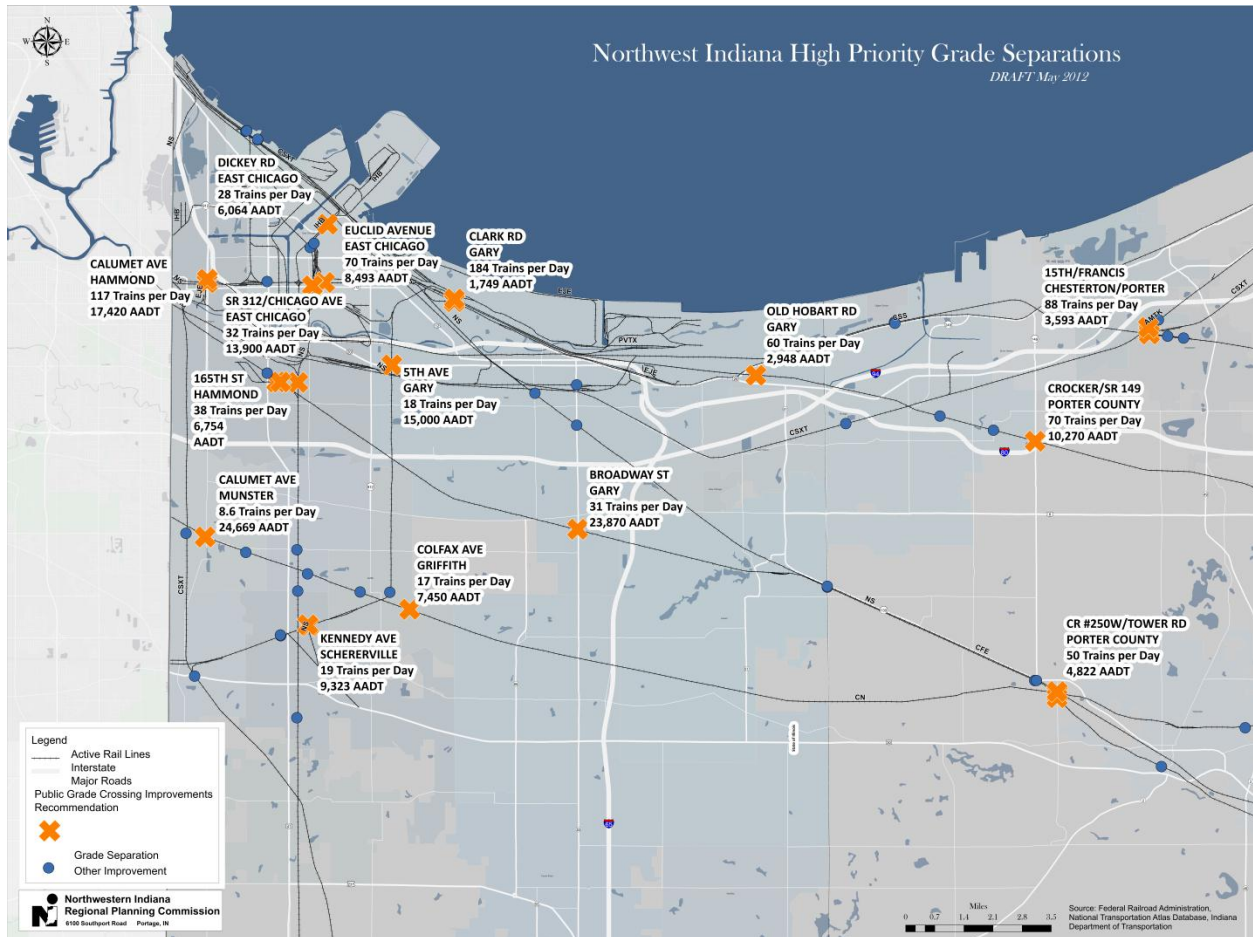


¹US DOT Freight Analysis Framework

² <http://www.cn.ca/en/media-news-locomotive-repair-shop-20110803.htm>

³ American Association of Railroads

⁴ US DOT Freight Analysis Framework



Note: AADT stands for Average Annual Daily Traffic and is an indication of the number of cars and trucks that pass over the crossing on a daily basis.

15 High Priority Grade Separations

The NWI Rail VISION working group has recommended the construction of grade separations in 15 regionally significant locations in Northwest Indiana. These areas are places where high volume roads and high volume rail lines intersect, resulting in traffic congestion, environmental degradation, safety hazards, reduced freight mobility and lost productivity and economic opportunity.

The 15 high priority grade separations were selected from a pool of 80 crossings that were identified through a survey that was distributed to the local governments and railroads of Northwest Indiana. Analysis of traffic volumes, train volumes, and a Federal Railroad Administration accident prediction index and additional stakeholder input refined the list to 15 high priority areas, some with multiple crossings. Additional analysis will be conducted in partnership with Purdue University Calumet and will quantify cumulative traffic delay reductions, air quality improvements, and public safety and economic benefits.

The contact for NWI Rail VISION is Thomas Vander Woude at tvanderwoude@nirpc.org or 219.763.6060 ext. 154

Recommended Grade Separations

EAST CHICAGO

3300 Dickey Road, near Cline Ave.

Crossings:

- INDIANA HARBOR BELT #326879R

914 East Chicago Ave (between Kennedy and Euclid Ave)

Crossings:

- INDIANA HARBOR BELT #326972X
- CANADIAN NATIONAL #260718H

Euclid Avenue (north of E Chicago Ave)

Crossings:

- CSX #163639F

GARY

Broadway between 41st and 40th

Crossings:

- NORFOLK SOUTHERN #478669V

Clark Road, north of US 12

Crossings:

- CSX #155645N
- CANADIAN NATIONAL #260729V
- NORFOLK SOUTHERN #522646H

Old Hobart Road north of US 20 at the CSX main and CSX/CSS siding in Miller

Crossings:

- CSX/CSSB #155633U

US 20, west of Cline near Fulton St.

Crossings:

- CANADIAN NATIONAL #260673D

GRIFFITH

Colfax St. south of Main St between Catlin Dr and Reder Rd

Crossings:

- CANADIAN NATIONAL #283202D

HAMMOND

165th Street between Indianapolis Blvd. and Osborne

Crossings:

- NORFOLK SOUTHERN #478695K
- INDIANA HARBOR BELT #326963Y
- INDIANA HARBOR BELT #327022G

Calumet Avenue/US 41 between Chicago St (SR 312) and Gostlin Street

Crossings:

- CSX #163627L
- NICTD #870916M

MUNSTER

Calumet/45th

Crossings:

- CANADIAN NATIONAL #283195V

SCHERERVILLE

Kennedy Avenue, 1000 feet North of Division Street

Crossings:

- CANADIAN NATIONAL #260657U
- NORFOLK SOUTHERN #522092G

CHESTERTON / PORTER

15th Street, Francis Street between Chesterton and Porter

Crossings:

- CSX #232115K
- NORFOLK SOUTHERN #522628K
- AMTRAK #548529M

PORTER COUNTY

SR 149, between 100N and the Indiana Toll Road, near Portage

Crossings:

- CSX #155623N

Tower Road (CR 250 W) at approximately 375 N: 1.75 mi north of US 30 and 0.25 mi south of SR 130 - Mile Post PC 426.93

Crossings:

- CANADIAN NATIONAL #283239T
- NORFOLK SOUTHERN #478642L
- CHICAGO, FORT WAYNE & EASTERN #522873N