

## **RESOLUTION 16-37**

### **A RESOLUTION OF THE NORTHWESTERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVING THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ANALYSIS FOR THE PORT OF INDIANA BRIDGE PROJECT SPONSORED BY INDOT**

**December 8, 2016**

**WHEREAS**, Northwest Indiana's citizens require a safe, efficient, effective, resource-conserving regional transportation system that maintains and enhances regional mobility and contributes to improving the quality of life in Northwest Indiana; and

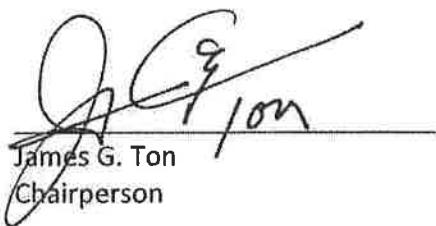
**WHEREAS**, the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, hereafter referred to as "the Commission", being designated the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Lake, Porter and LaPorte County area, has established a regional, comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing (3-C) transportation planning process to develop the unified planning work program, a transportation plan, and a transportation improvement program to facilitate federal funding for communities, counties, and transit operators, and to provide technical assistance and expertise to regional transportation stakeholder interests; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission performs the above activities to satisfy regional requirements under the Fixing American Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act, 2015), as well as other federal, state and local laws mandating transportation planning activities; and

**WHEREAS**, In accordance with Executive Order 12898 of February 11, 1994, which requires a detailed understanding of the potential benefits and burdens transportation projects can place on low-income and minority communities (environmental justice communities). NIRPC has performed an Environmental Justice (EJ) Benefits and Burdens Analysis for the Port of Indiana Bridge project and found it will have no adverse effect on the environmental justice populations of Northwestern Indiana. For a more detailed explanation, see the attached analysis.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission hereby approves the Environmental Justice Analysis for the Port of Indiana Burns Harbor Bridge Project as proposed by the Indiana Department of Transportation.

Duly adopted by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission on this eighth day of December, 2016.



James G. Ton  
Chairperson

ATTEST:



Geof R. Benson  
Secretary

Environmental Justice  
Benefits and Burdens Analysis

for the Port of Indiana Bridge

Prepared by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission

September 2016

## Purpose and Background

On Feb. 11, 1994, President Bill Clinton issued an Executive Order on Federal actions to address environmental justice in minority and low income populations. It directed every federal agency to make environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing the effects of all programs, policies, and activities on “minority populations and low income populations.” The order was designed to focus Federal attention on the environmental and human health conditions in minority communities and low income communities with the goal of achieving environmental justice. The order promotes nondiscrimination in Federal programs substantially affecting human health and the environment, and to provide minority communities and low income communities’ access to public information on, and an opportunity for public participation in, matters relating to human health or the environment.

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) is committed to addressing environmental justice in all of its work. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Northwest Indiana, NIRPC is responsible for planning and programming transportation projects that use Federal funds to maintain and expand the transportation system in the region. In the past, transportation projects have often caused undue burdens on environmental justice communities. NIRPC’s goal is to prevent such undue burdens from occurring in the future. The purpose of this document is to analyze the proposed lane track expansion of the Northern Indiana Commuter District’s (NICTD) South Shore train to determine what benefits and/or burdens the project may have on environmental justice populations in Northwest Indiana.

This proposed project is to replace the heavy-haul bridge on Indiana State Road 249 that stretches over US Route 12 and several railroad tracks, providing access to the Port of Indiana. Currently the bridge is only two lanes in either direction. The proposed project will have four total lanes, providing an extra travel lane in either direction.

## Approach

NIRPC defines the “minority” and “low-income” requirements of an environmental justice community in the following ways. “Minority” people are those who do not identify as “white, non-Hispanic,” when completing the Census. People who are considered, “low income” are defined as people who have lived in poverty, at any time, during the last 12 months. Sources used in extrapolating data for this population were taken from the most recent data sets from the Census and the American Community Survey.

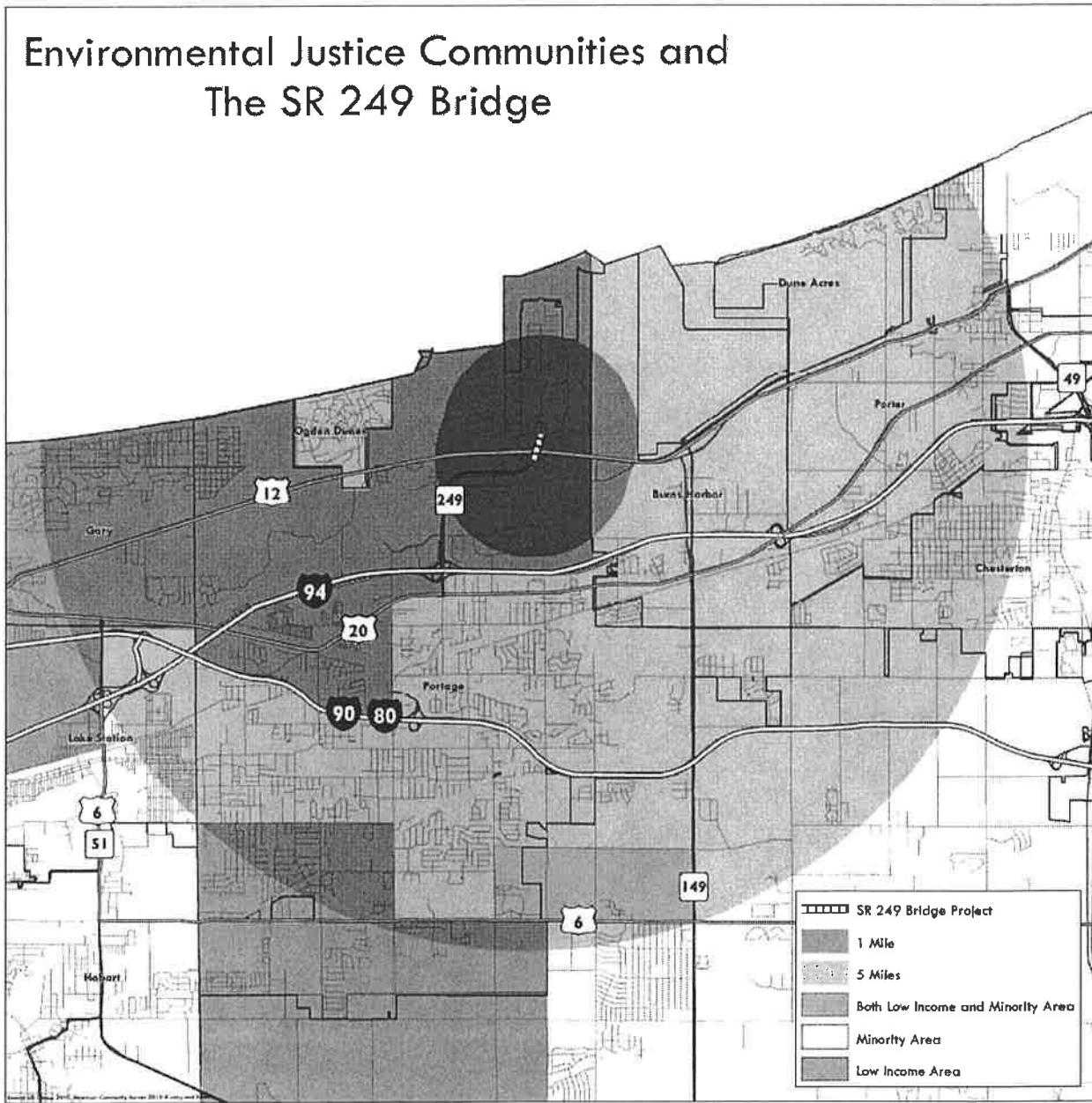
Understanding how the proposed double-tracking of NICTD’s South Shore train can impact Northwest Indiana’s environmental justice population was divided into two distinct parts. First, NIRPC sought to understand how the proposed infrastructure changes may impact environmental justice communities in a very physical way. Do the proposed changes require the acquisition of property? Would the proposed changes dislocate disadvantaged people? Would the proposed changes cause disadvantaged people to disproportionately absorb more environmental burden through pollution and other impacts of building new infrastructure? Second, NIRPC explored how

the added track *may* impact the rest of the travel network by disproportionately harming environmental justice communities in terms of travel delays to key community resources.

To understand the project's potential impact, environmental justice populations were identified, and concentrations of the populations were mapped. Two future scenarios, a "baseline" scenario and a "build" scenario developed and used to determine the effects of adding the Port of Indiana bridge on environmental justice populations. The baseline scenario consisted of the entire 2040 road network that was adopted for the 2040 CRP. The build scenario added the extra bridge to the baseline network. Each scenario was run through the NIRPC transportation model. The model results were used to analyze the effects of the added travel lanes on environmental justice populations using 11 performance measures developed to capture resources that are critical to a community's health. The performance measures are as follows:

- Average number of jobs within a 20 minute drive
- Average number of shopping destinations within a 20 minute drive
- Average number of other destinations within a 20 minute drive
- Average travel time for work trips
- Average travel time for shopping trips
- Average travel time for other trips
- Average travel time for all trips
- Percent of population within 20 minutes of a livable center
- Percent of population within 20 minutes of a retail center
- Percent of population within 20 minutes of a hospital

Figure 1: Map of the proposed Port of Indiana Bridge



## Results

The first portion of NIRPC's analysis is starkly clear. The proposed changes are all within property owned by the Port of Indiana. No new property will need to be acquired. Even though the proposed corridor passes directly through Northwestern Indiana's Environmental Justice population, the proposed changes are contained within an established industrial area.

The second portion of NIRPC's analysis, understanding the impact to the travel network, equally clear. Table 2 indicates the potential changes to the travel network in a build/no-build scenario, separated by low income and minority populations. In the table below, there are no changes to

the existing road network. The proposed bridge will have no positive nor negative impact on the EJ population. The bridge is too small and too isolated in an industrial area to have any measurable effect on the EJ population.

*Table 1: Performance Measures for the proposed Port of Indiana bridge. The proposed bridge will have no effect on the travel time of the Northwestern Indiana EJ population*

		Low Income Population			Minority Population			Impact
		Build	No Build	Difference	Build	No Build	Difference	
Within a 20 min drive:	Average number of jobs	48,127 (14% of total)	48,127 (14% of total)	0	44,341 (13% of total)	44,341 (13% of total)	0	None
	Average number of shopping destinations	27,636 (11% of total)	27,636 (11% of total)	0	27,679 (11% of total)	27,679 (11% of total)	0	None
	Average number of "other" destinations	155,185 (12% of total)	155,185 (12% of total)	0	153,072 (12% of total)	153,072 (12% of total)	0	None
Average travel time for: (values are given in minutes)	Work trips	20.1 min	20.1 min	0.0	20.4 min	20.4 min	0.0	None
	Shopping trips	13.5 min	13.5 min	0.0	14.6 min	14.6 min	0.0	None
	"Other" trips	13.7 min	13.7 min	0.0	14.1 min	14.1 min	0.0	None
	All trips	15.3 min	15.3 min	0.0	15.7 min	15.7 min	0.0	None
Percent of the population within 20 minutes of a:	Livable Center							
	Retail Center	99.9%	99.9%	0%	99.1%	99.1%	0%	None
	Hospital	89.3%	89.3%	0%	89.1%	89.1%	0%	None
	University	93.9%	93.9%	0%	93.6%	93.6%	0%	None
		83.8%	83.8%	0%	80.1%	80.1%	0%	None

## Summary

As illustrated by the NIRPC travel model the proposed Port of Indiana bridge is not expected to have a significant enough negative impact to halt or change the project. The potential impacts to the environmental justice community so minimal that they cannot be measured by our model. Additionally, while the bridge may technically overlap an EJ community, the bridge is contained in an area already dedicated to industry, far away from existing residents. This bridge will have no effect on the EJ population.