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NORTHERN INDIANA COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT ANNOUNCES FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION APPROVAL TO ENTER INTO ENGINEERING FOR THE DOUBLE TRACK NORTHWEST INDIANA PROJECT

CHESTERTON, Indiana – The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), operator of the South Shore Line railroad, announced today that it is able to begin the final engineering phase of the Double Track Northwest Indiana Project after receiving approval to enter the New Starts Engineering phase of the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Capital Investment Grant Program.

“The Double Track project will greatly reduce travel time between Northwest Indiana and Chicago – a great advantage to the region as we build economic competitiveness and attract talent,” Gov. Holcomb said. “I’m grateful for our strong partnerships at the state, local, and federal levels that have positioned this transformative project to move forward and I couldn’t be more excited to take the next steps,” he added.

Gov. Holcomb’s Next Level Agenda includes the Double Track Northwest Indiana Project, which spans over 26 miles from Gary to Michigan City. The project includes installation of a second mainline track, improvements at five stations, expansion of parking lots for over 1,300 new parking spaces, and 9 new platforms. Significant safety improvements will be made in Michigan City, where the rail will be separated from the roadway and 21 at-grade crossings will be closed. The project is expected to more than double existing South Shore Line ridership and reduce travel times for all riders travelling east of Gary.

The current state budget, which Gov. Holcomb signed into law last year, doubles the state’s investment in northwest Indiana rail by dedicating \$185 million more to projects and an additional \$20 million in a contingency fund.

The Double Track Northwest Indiana Project is occurring in partnership with the FTA, Michigan City and LaPorte County, South Bend and St. Joseph County, Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) and the Indiana Finance Authority (IFA), who are serving as funding partners.

“The FTA’s approval of NICTD’s South Shore Double Track project into the Engineering stage is an exciting step forward in the Capital Investment Grant process,” Sen. Todd Young, R-Ind., said. “I will continue to work with all stakeholders to advance this project and achieve significant economic development in Northwest Indiana.”

“The Double Track Northwest Indiana Project is a win for Indiana and a big step forward for our public transportation system in the northwestern region,” said Sen. Mike Braun. “Thanks to bipartisan work from every level of government by Representative Visclosky, Governor Holcomb, Senator Young, Representative Walorski, our great state legislators and local leaders in our northwestern counties, as well as support from the Federal Transit Administration, the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District, Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority and the Indiana Finance Authority, this project will bring new investment, jobs, and growth to the region.”

“I thank Governor Holcomb, Senators Young and Braun, Rep. Walorski, our state legislators, and the public officials of LaPorte County, St. Joe County, and Michigan City,” said Rep. Pete Visclosky. “I am also grateful to Bill Hanna with the RDA and everyone at NICTD for having the vision and persistence to work hard and collaborate to help our region reach this milestone for the Double Track project. The project enhances the strength and efficiency of our entire public transportation system and further allows our regional economy to support the next generation of residents and workers.”

“The South Shore Double Track project will make transportation more efficient and boost economic development in South Bend and across northern Indiana, and I’m thrilled to see it move to the next phase,” said Rep. Jackie Walorski. “I look forward to continuing work with my Hoosier colleagues, Governor Holcomb, and the administration to make this investment in our region’s economic future a reality.”

In addition to the Double Track Northwest Indiana Project, NICTD, the RDA and the IFA will continue to work with state and federal authorities on advancing towards federal funding for the second major commuter rail expansion project in the region, the West Lake Corridor Project. The West Lake Corridor

Project involves construction of a new eight mile line extending from Hammond on the north to Dyer on the south, with four new stations.

“We are thrilled to announce that the Double Track Northwest Indiana project has reached this critical milestone in the FTA’s Capital Investment Grant program,” said Michael Noland, President and CEO of NICTD. “The continued hard work of the project team and the full support of Governor Holcomb, the Indiana General Assembly, and our Hoosier congressional delegation is reflected in reaching this critical milestone.”

Combined, the Double Track Northwest Indiana and West Lake Corridor Projects are projected to attract approximately \$2.3 billion in private investment to northwest Indiana, and result in over 6,000 new jobs and \$3 billion in economic impact by 2048.

“The Double Track project is critical to reducing commuting time to Chicago and activating the potential for transformational development in the region,” said Bill Hanna, President and CEO of the RDA.

“Distance is measured in time, and the faster and more convenient we make it to commute from here, the greater the return on investment for the state and the taxpayers of northwest Indiana.”

For additional information regarding this project, we invite you to visit the project website at

<http://www.doubletrack-nwi.com>.

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