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Contact: Dave Wellman
Communications Manager
219-644-3506
dwellman@rda.in.gov

Existing South Shore Line, West Lake Expansion Focus of New NICTD Strategic Plan

*New strategic business plan charts 20-year course to success for
commuter rail in northern Indiana.*

Crown Point, IN (May 30, 2014) – A new 20-Year Strategic Business Plan for commuter rail in northern Indiana was delivered today to the Board of Directors of the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD). Jointly funded by NICTD and the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA), the plan incorporates all elements of maintenance and expansion necessary for the South Shore through 2033.

“This comprehensive examination of the South Shore system makes two things very clear,” says RDA President and CEO Bill Hanna. “First, the existing South Shore line needs several important upgrades to modernize the system, increase safety and improve performance. And second, it is the West Lake Corridor expansion and the growth it will bring to South Shore ridership that provides the catalyst for continued investment system-wide.”

The West Lake Corridor project is projected to increase system-wide ridership by approximately 5,600 by 2033. Those additional riders will return an estimated \$147.3 million annually in salaries to Northwest Indiana. That additional spending is in turn expected to create nearly 2,000 non-commuter jobs in the region and generate a total of \$2.5 billion annually in economic output.

“West Lake increases access to high-paying jobs in Chicago, encourages development and job growth locally, increases property values and brings more revenue to the State of Indiana,”

Hanna notes. “It will also help attract new residents and encourage our young people to stay here by increasing the job opportunities they have.”

Improvements to the existing line will bring similar benefits to communities from Hammond to South Bend by reducing travel times to and from Chicago and increasing overall safety and reliability. For a copy of the executive summary, visit [LINK TK].

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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. Its mission is to be a catalyst for transforming the economy and quality of life for Northwest Indiana. For more information, visit www.rdatransformation.com or www.in.gov/rda