

## **Transit Development District Steering Committee meeting minutes November 15, 2023**

### **Location**

Conducted via Zoom. A recording of the meeting may be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-XeehyMX8Y>

### **Present**

Trent McCain, AJ Monrow, Lee Ann Mellon, Tim Corcoran, Debra Gritters, Brian Poland, John Blackburn, Michael Barry, Beth Shrader, Scott Kingan

### **Minutes**

Minutes from the August 16, 2023 meeting were approved.

### **Regional Development Authority Update**

Dave Wellman provided an update on the rail projects. He noted that the design on West Lake is about 91% complete. Bridges and retaining walls remain the big piece to finish. Construction is 54% complete. The project is still on schedule for a May 2025 revenue service date.

Double track is closing in on finished. Construction is 83% complete and trains are running on new track in Michigan City. Service is back up from Carrol St. to Dune Park. On track for revenue service starting in May 2024.

### **Discussion**

MKSK's Aaron Kowalski provided a TDD boundary update. At the end of October, we finalized three more boundaries with the State Budget Committee. These were Dune Park, Hammond South and Gary Metro. All these have a base year of 2024 and potential funding available in 2025.

We are ready to engage with the remaining three communities, Valparaiso, Beverly Shore and South Bend. Plan to have all these boundaries approved in 2024.

Beth Shrader said the City of Valparaiso was also ready to move forward.

John Blackburn said that Beverly Shores feels strongly that they will need the cooperation of the Town of Pines. He also noted he will be stepping down from the committee and town council in 2024. They would love to make a TDD happen but with the Town of Pines' involvement their commercial district for development will be fairly small.

Aaron said he and Dave Wellman would reach out to Valparaiso and Pines.

Tim Corcoran said South Bend was ready, but the issue is the new design for the station being moved to the west side of the airport but is funding not yet secured. How can we do a TDD right now with the location of the station not yet resolved?

Aaron said his interpretation of the statute was that we would include both the current and future station locations in the TDD. PA's David Reynolds agreed with that. The question South Bend and RDA would need to answer is, if funding is not secured, is the existing station the right location for the TDD?

Tim agreed and said the two stations are very close to each other so there is not a lot of potentially "wasted" land. Counsel Dave Hollenbeck also agreed with David Reynolds' and Aaron's analysis of what the statute required.

Aaron then moved on to TOD implementation planning. FTA TOD planning updates have been completed and the final reports are available on [nwtidd.com](http://nwtidd.com). Now we are working on a blight elimination strategy for Gary downtown in support of SB 434. That has been completed and is under review. This will enable projects in anticipation of a new station in the downtown area. RDA also continues to provide technical support to communities for ongoing projects.

We are also seeing continued interest from developers and are referring them to the communities for further discussions. Aaron was asked to expand on that point, what kind of interest are they seeing. Aaron said most is for mixed use and multi family development in our walkable downtown core areas, as well as areas that could be larger neighborhood developments. Particular interest from the Chicago and Indianapolis developer community as well as local developers. We anticipate that interest to increase as revenue service dates get closer.

Finally the committee looked at the calendar for next year's meetings. A request was made and accepted to move the February meeting back a week.

The meeting was adjourned.