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

RDA Accepts New Grant Requests

East Chicago and Hammond request funding for projects that would continue to revitalize the shoreline and set the stage for transit oriented development.

Crown Point, IN (February 8, 2018) – The Board of Directors of the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority today accepted grant requests from the cities of East Chicago and Hammond. RDA COO Sherri Ziller also provided a brief update on the Lake County convention center feasibility study.

The City of East Chicago is requesting \$8.545 million to fund phase III of the city's Waterfront Revitalization Initiative, which involves the reconstruction of Guthrie Street and the Fitzsimmons retail project. RDA previously provided \$30.4 million in grants for the first two phases of the initiative.

Guthrie Street is one of the main thoroughfares providing access the East Chicago waterfront. The scope of the project includes (but is not limited to) the complete reconstruction of approximately 6,000 linear feet of the pavement, concrete sidewalks, concrete curb and gutters, storm and sanitary sewers, and the water main and water service lines. This project will also include installation of IT conduits, as well as street lighting with banner brackets and flower pot hangers. This work will enhance the quality of life along the corridor by addressing items such as safety, accessibility and neighborhood identity. Also included are modernized traffic signals and raised pedestrian crossings. The City hopes to begin construction this April.

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The Fitzsimmons retail project, located directly across from Unity Plaza (redeveloped part of phase I of the revitalization initiative) and one block south of the Broadway retail project (part of phase II) is designed to complement these projects with 19,000 square feet of new mixed residential and commercial space. The commercial space will front Main Street with views of Unity Plaza. The residential space will be two-story townhomes above the commercial space and along 138th Street. Construction is scheduled to begin in late April 2018.

The phase III grant would be the final installment of East Chicago's Waterfront Revitalization Initiative.

The City of Hammond is requesting \$100,000 toward a \$124,464 match needed for the Chicago Street construction and demolition project. Hammond has entered into a construction funding agreement with Indiana Department of Transportation to provide \$124,464 in local funds (20%) toward the total \$622,318 construction contract to demolish and clear 27 properties acquired by the City in order to provide direct access to land adjacent to the proposed Gateway commuter rail station. This land has been identified for transit oriented re-development purposes which is expected to provide significant return on the investment from the state and local tax revenue generated by the new economic activity.

“This is the beginning of a true partnership between the City of Hammond, the State of Indiana and the RDA to establish transit oriented development,” says RDA President and CEO Bill Hanna. “This project will facilitate better movement for enhanced TOD value.”

The Board also heard an update on the Lake County convention center feasibility study, which is being funded by the RDA. Currently, CSL, the consulting firm chosen to conduct the study, has completed in-person interviews with local business and civic leaders, and phone interviews with those who were unable to meet in person are ongoing. Once those are complete, CSL will move



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on to phase II of the study, which will look at possible locations for a convention center, financing methods and other details. The study is expected to be completed by May.

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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. Years of successful results have made it a trusted and tested partner for growth in Northwest Indiana. For more information, visit www.rdatransformation.com or www.in.gov/rda.