



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

RDA Advances Blight Elimination, Development Planning in Northwest Indiana

*RDA Board of Directors accepts bid for demolition of structures in the Gary Metro Transit
Development District, plus three new Development Catalyst Grants*

CROWN POINT, IN (June 15, 2026) – The Board of Directors of the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority today accepted a \$2.87 million bid from McDonagh Demolition for the demolition of multiple structures in the Gary Metro Transit Development District (TDD), including the former Gordon’s Department Store, the Gordon’s Department Store Annex, and the Genesis Center and parking garage.

“RDA would like to thank all of the contractors who submitted bids for this project,” said RDA President and CEO Sherri Ziller. “It was a very competitive process, and we appreciate the time and effort all parties put into their submissions. We anticipate finalizing a contract and moving forward with demolition in the next few weeks.”

These removals are being executed as part of the Blight Elimination Program established by Gary Mayor Eddie D. Melton during his time in the Indiana Senate. “This is another step forward in our commitment to transforming Gary’s landscape and creating new opportunities for growth,” said Mayor Melton. “By eliminating long-standing blight and preparing these sites for future investment, we are building a stronger, more vibrant city for our residents and positioning Gary for long-term economic success.”

In conjunction with the award, the Board also approved an \$894,740 contract extension for EGIS, the global architectural, consulting, construction engineering, operations and mobility services firm that RDA engaged in 2025 as project manager for the Blight Elimination Program.

“It was necessary and contemplated to amend the contract of EGIS for demolition oversight and contract administration to ensure all local, state, and federal requirements are in compliance,” explained AJ Bytnar, RDA Director of Economic Development. “Specifically, proper disposal of demolition of materials, environmental and safety regulations, and transportation routing.”

DEVELOPMENT CATALYST GRANTS AWARDED

In other business, the Board approved the RDA’s first three Development Catalyst Grants for the towns of Pines, Beverly Shores, Chesterton and the City of Lake Station. The RDA launched the \$250,000 Development Catalyst Grant program in March 2026 to help local governments build the tools, plans, and frameworks needed to attract quality development and expand the tax base.

Today’s awards included:

- \$75,000 to the towns of Pines and Beverly Shores for leveraging their current EPA CAWAG (Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap) grant. The Development Catalyst Grant will help the communities coordinate and crystallize action steps necessary on utility connection, funding, development code updates, and project implementation.
- \$60,000 to the Town of Chesterton for the next phase of their strategic update to the town's development codes. The zoning code update will commence as they finalize their Comprehensive Planning process. The town is taking a strategic approach to systematically updating gaps they have identified in reaching the town’s community development goals.
- \$75,000 to the City of Lake Station to modernize their Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Code, and Economic Development strategy. They will use these funds to update their comprehensive plan with a focus on unlocking development and investment potential in the city and strategically updating their codes, allowing them to pursue future funding opportunities that become available with a current comprehensive plan.



“While these grants are relatively small in and of themselves, we believe they will provide multiples of return on investment by supporting millions of dollars of new development, investment and jobs,” said Ziller. “These grants will equip Pines, Beverly Shores, Chesterton and Lake Station to be responsive to both their residents and the development community, setting up all parties for sustained success”

Complete details about the Development Catalyst Grant program can be found at <https://www.in.gov/rda/guidelines>.

[photo caption] *Contractors examine the Genesis Center during a mandatory walkthrough on May 5, 2026.*

* * *

About the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority

Established in 2006 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.nwitdd.com or www.in.gov/rda