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South Shore Double Tracking Forges Ahead with RDA Grant for Preliminary Work

NWI RDA Board of Directors approves \$1.6 million grant to NICTD to lay the groundwork for future expansion of the existing South Shore line.

Crown Point, IN (April 21, 2016) – The Board of the Directors of the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) today took another step toward expanding commuter access to Chicago with a \$1.6 million matching grant to the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) to help fund \$4 million in preliminary engineering and environmental work for the South Shore double tracking project.

“Expanding capacity on the existing South Shore line is critical to boosting the economy and creating new jobs here in Northwest Indiana,” said Bill Hanna, President and CEO of the RDA. “Along with the West Lake Extension, double tracking will attract new residents, new businesses and new development to the region and put us on a sustainable, long-term path to growth.”

The \$1.6 million grant will help offset the cost of the project for NICTD while it seeks additional contributions from partners in the region, including funding from the Northern Indiana Regional Development Authority. This preliminary engineering and environmental analysis must be completed before NICTD can seek Core Capacity funding from the Department of Transportation for the double tracking project.

“The Northwest Indiana RDA’s continuing commitment to invest in the South Shore Line and the West Lake Extension is greatly appreciated,” said Mike Noland, CEO and General Manager of the South Shore Line/NICTD. “Our shared vision of the benefits that flow from sound

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investments in the railroad will pay dividends to our riders, the residents of our four-county service region and all the citizens of the great state of Indiana.”

The double tracking project would add a second full track to the existing South Shore line from Gary to Michigan City. Currently, the South Shore line is only double tracked from Chicago to Tennessee Street in Gary. After that, the South Shore has only a single track for both eastbound and westbound trains. As a result, trains must regularly slow or stop on passing sidings to allow a train travelling in the opposite direction to pass.

Double-tracking would greatly reduce commuting times to and from Chicago by allowing the South Shore to increase the number and speed of trains it runs each day. This will elevate the region above its suburban Illinois counterparts in the competition for Transit-Oriented Development, new businesses and new residents.

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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