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SOUTH SHORE LINE PROVIDES STATUS ON DOUBLE TRACK AND WEST LAKE PROJECTS

CHESTERTON, Indiana – February 13, 2018 – The Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Annual Report on Funding Recommendations (Annual Report), published in conjunction with the Administration’s annual budget, includes the South Shore Double Track Northwest Indiana (NWI) and West Lake Corridor (WLC) projects as unrated, at the request of the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD). NICTD made the request to defer a FTA rating decision while it completes work on the environmental process and financing plans needed to move the projects forward.

The Double Track NWI and West Lake Corridor projects continue to move through the federal approval process that began with entry into Project Development, followed by submission to FTA for a project rating in September 2017. The projects are now preparing to enter the Engineering phase, which will lead to a federal Full Funding Grant Agreement.

The Annual Report is a “snapshot in time” of current transit projects and is updated regularly by the FTA as projects complete certain milestones. NICTD will move expeditiously to complete the applications and seek a positive rating.

“Completion of the environmental studies will put us in the best position for the highest possible rating,” said Mike Noland, NICTD president. “The economic development potential for these transit projects is critical for northwest Indiana, and we are committed to providing the FTA with a complete and total proposal that clearly illustrates the environmental and economic benefits of both projects.” NICTD is seeking a Record of Decision for the West Lake Corridor Environment Impact Statement and a Finding of No Significant Impact for the Double Track NWI project in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Each project will remain eligible for funding consideration in the Fiscal Year 2019 federal budget once the rating is complete.

Unlike some projects in the queue, both projects have one hundred percent of the required state and local match already in place. In addition to providing significant direct state investment, Indiana's General Assembly has taken steps to assure all revenue needed to provide the required non-federal match for these projects is fully committed and structured to reflect the dependability and high market rating of the state of Indiana.

The South Shore Line is a 90-mile electrically-powered commuter rail line that operates from the South Bend International Airport to downtown Chicago. The Double Track NWI project would expand this vital rail line from a single track to a double track between Gary and Michigan City, and make improvements to track and passenger stations along the route.

The West Lake Corridor project would extend the existing South Shore Line south by eight miles from Hammond to Dyer.

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