



Appendix H12. Verbal Court Reporter Public Comments Received on DEIS – January 19, 2017 Hammond



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1 NORTHERN INDIANA COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT

2 WEST LAKE CORRIDOR PROJECT

3
4 JANUARY 18, 2017

5 6:30 P.M.

6 WASHINGTON IRVING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

7 4727 PINE AVENUE, HAMMOND, IN 46327

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11 Verbatim Stenographic and Transcription Services of
12 this Public Meeting provided by:

13
14 KATHY CORTOPASSI, RPR, RMR, CRR, CCP, CBC

15 Voice to Print Captioning

16 9800 Connecticut Drive

17 Crown Point, IN 46307

18 866-523-5359

19 www.voicetoprint.com

20 kathy.cort@voicetoprint.com

1 My name is Leon Gamino. Leegam@att.net. Phone
2 number 21-659-1666.

3 I'm a Hammond resident. To me, this is just window
4 dressing unless they want to have -- unless they're going to
5 talk about a referendum. If there's no referendum on this
6 thing, this is for show and it means absolutely nothing to
7 the public.

8 It just seems like they're going to ram this thing down
9 everybody's throat without any kind of a process to give the
10 residents here some kind of say on whether or not they pay
11 for this thing or not. Without a referendum, this means
12 absolutely nothing. It's just something to make it look,
13 their PR to make it look like they actually care about the
14 input of the residents in this community. And that's pretty
15 much it. I think we should have a say so on this.

16 From what they're giving me here, I don't know what any
17 of this stuff means. As far as I'm concerned, with no
18 further information than this, it's a thumb's up or thumb's
19 down thing. I say vote no on it. Until we know what this
20 thing entails, why is this good for Hammond residents? The
21 average median income in this community is probably like
22 \$40,000, and we're going to go ahead and go on the hook for
23 \$30 million so people that live out in Dyer with twice the
24 annual income can commute back and forth without having to
25 drive up here? What's the upside on in? I don't see it.

1 And this doesn't really explain to me, it doesn't tell
2 me anything. This is just a bunch of gobbledygook on
3 different ways that they're going to ram this thing through.
4 It's like a kid telling you "well, Dad, tell you what. You
5 don't have to buy me the Lexus, I'll settle for a Hyundai."
6 That's all this is.

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1 Donna Dunn. I live at 2837 171st Street in Hammond.

2 This train is not needed. If it was needed, the people
3 would be asking for it instead of the politicians ramming it
4 down our throats.

5 This money, this billion dollars could be spent better
6 on our schools, on our residents, on our roads. There's
7 many things that this money could be spent on. This should
8 have been put in front of a referendum and so that the
9 people decide how they want their tax money spent. The only
10 reason this train project is even as far along as it is is
11 because of the Lake County Option Income Tax. Our tax money
12 is going for this train. We pay for it. Our kids will pay
13 for it and our grandkids will pay for it.

14 It is not going to create that many jobs. There will
15 only be maybe 50 permanent jobs. The same people that
16 promised us 80,000 jobs when the airport runway expansion
17 are the same people promising us tens of thousands of jobs
18 now with this train. The track record, not that good. We
19 don't have any new jobs at the airport.

20 We currently have -- they keep saying that we need
21 more -- a route to Chicago. We already have a route to
22 Chicago. Hammond has a station, East Chicago has a station,
23 Gary has a station. There is three stations in this county
24 already. There is absolutely no economic development around
25 any of those stations.

1 Let's have some economic development around the
2 stations that we currently have. Let's build them up first.
3 Let's rehab those neighborhoods.

4 The time to do this project was 30 years ago. By the
5 time this project is done, people will be having autonomous
6 cars. There's already autonomous trucks. This is
7 100-year-old technology. We need to be looking to the
8 future, not to the past.

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1 Jeff Cipowski. Jcipowski@aol.com.

2 I'm in support of the train and its current route. The
3 only opinion that I have is the parking lot for the
4 Munster/Dyer Main Street station. I currently live in West
5 Lakes, and the design shows an outlet into our subdivision
6 to access the parking lot. And then it shows an outlet into
7 the subdivision to our south.

8 Currently, the West Lake subdivision, there's traffic
9 issues currently with that road. There's about another 75
10 lots to be developed in that subdivision, which would
11 create just strictly more traffic just for the residents.

12 The traffic flow pattern through the subdivision would
13 not be, let's say, in the best interest of those that live
14 there.

15 Currently, in the evenings, there's a large backup of
16 traffic on Glenwood-Lansing Road and Calumet Avenue turning
17 south to go to Dyer and St. John. And I feel that if they
18 find out that that road is open, even if it is a parking
19 lot, that traffic not only to the train but traffic cutting
20 through to get to the south would be increased at such
21 levels that the subdivision would be, I guess, I don't know
22 what the term is, overwhelmed.

23 So I don't have any opposition to the train or the
24 station or the parking lot. I just feel that the best
25 interest of the residents that live to the north and to the

1 south of that parking lot, that access to their subdivision
2 to their parking lot is not in their best interest.

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1 Tom Chocholek. I live at 1732 Stanton Avenue. It's
2 in Hammond, but it's a Whiting, Indiana, post office because
3 of the post office exchange there. My home phone is
4 219-659-7943.

5 The first thing I'll say, for nine miles of track at a
6 cost of \$600 million and then some, to me that's just
7 ludicrous. There's got to be some other alternative.

8 My question is -- and I said this to Michael Nolan, the
9 CEO there of the South Shore, President, I said, "How did
10 you guys conduct your study?" And then he told me about all
11 these different federal requirements, which I don't really
12 understand. I said, "Did anybody go down to the Hammond
13 station or the Roxanna station and actually take a count as
14 the people pulled in before they boarded the train, asked
15 them, are you from Hammond? Are you from Munster? Are you
16 from Dyer?" To see exactly what the ridership total is from
17 your area?"

18 Because the warrant is \$600 million, 9-mile track, and
19 you only got, say, 20 to 30 riders daily from that neck of
20 the woods, you can just have buses bus them into Hammond and
21 then take the South Shore. That's just my opinion because
22 we're using Taxpayer money to fund this, and that's a pretty
23 steep price tag, as far as I'm concerned, for 9 miles of
24 road.

25 The other thing is: Why wasn't this put out for a

1 referendum for the people to vote on in the area since it's
2 affecting us? And we're using our tax dollars, too.

3 I think that's it. I think I got it all covered.

4 If I had to choose one, there's four options there.

5 The one that's going through Hammond, and I look at that, I
6 don't know how the price tag varies on each option, I'm
7 being quite frank, from what I looked at, I tell you what, I
8 really kind of like that IHB alternative.

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1 My name is John Schreiner. Contact information is
2 email address pilgrim120@SBCglobal.net.

3 Yeah, this expansion line will directly affect my
4 neighborhood. It's a lot of money. I don't think we really
5 need to be spending that money for that when they can use
6 other alternate means of transporting the people, like buses
7 is a good suggestion to get them to the existing stations.

8 And they said there were overcrowded conditions at the
9 parking lots. Hegewisch has gobs of room there available
10 for people to park. Hammond, the other stations might have
11 problems, but Hegewisch is open.

12 And I'd like to see them spend the money, instead, on
13 maintaining the service that exists and maintaining the
14 train, coaches and equipment. Right now, they're running
15 short on some of the train cars, trains shorted some cars
16 because they're in for repairs. And they also have problems
17 keeping things on time.

18 Example is last Thursday, we had the ice storm. I was
19 stuck on the Sunrise Express. It was standing room only. I
20 got on in Hegewisch. I was stuck on the train for five
21 hours. And the train just ran back and forth past the
22 Hegewisch station twice and it never made it up to Chicago.
23 It stopped going around the bend before it got to the Metro
24 lines. And it said we can't go any further because of the
25 icing on the lines and on the [] pannographs. Conditions

1 were just deplorable. We weren't given regular updates. We
2 weren't even given opportunities to exit the train as it
3 went back and forth from the Hegewisch station, trying to
4 knock ice off the lines. And all the people were just
5 prisoners on the train for five hours. And there was just a
6 big fiasco. They could improve the service, plan better,
7 and allow for these things.

8 Once we were stuck there, they said they were going to
9 send a diesel to push the train back to Hegewisch. An hour
10 or so later, the diesel never showed up and the train just
11 hobbled back to Hegewisch train station. And we had to wait
12 for the trains that were stationed at the Hegewisch train
13 station to go, that were planning on following us up to
14 Chicago because they couldn't move forward because we
15 couldn't move forward. It was just one big mess. They
16 could start planning a little bit better the maintenance and
17 the service.

18 Thank you.

19 I prefer a no-build  option and leaving things just the
20 way they are and scrapping the idea of the existing
21 extending the line to Dyer and Munster. Thank you very
22 much.

23 
24 I've been riding the line for 30 years. I am a 30-year
25 veteran passenger retiring this year, so I know what I'm
talking about of having to stand at the stations in the

1 middle of the cold weather and they say the train's coming
2 in 10 minutes and it doesn't show up for 20 or 25.

3 And they're just not relating well, communicating to
4 the people. Plus, when you call the South Shore, all you
5 get are messages to leave messages rather than talking to
6 individuals.

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1 My name is Walter Matthew Rogers. My contact info is
2 20 Indy-Illi Parkway, Hammond, 46324. My email is
3 w.matthew.rogers1@gmail.com.

4 According to the plan as it now stands, all wetlands
5 will be replaced. My request and suggestion is that in the
6 same way all trees will be replaced. Any tree that is cut
7 down should be replaced somewhere else.

8 If some part of a greenway has to be removed for
9 parking, please make sure that it is absolutely essential
10 and that there are no other alternatives.

11 Every tree is a life. They are no less essential than
12 wetlands. It is only a matter of perspective.

13 As the plan now stands, the beltway from 173rd down to
14 165th will remain largely intact, but the thousand-space
15 parking lot seems excessive, and it does cut into one of the
16 few green beltways we have in Hammond.

17 My comment is intended to raise the sensitivity to the
18 trees and other life that are already there right now.

19 My suggestion goes one step further than protection.
20 Let's not only protect what we have and replace what we must
21 take away, but let's use this opportunity to beautify what
22 we have. That same beltway, for example, between 173rd and
23 165th could be made so much more beautiful with just a
24 little bit of care. All we need is to clean it and to keep
25 it clean. It wouldn't take anything to create just a small

1 walking path for residents to truly enjoy.

2 If you want an example of how this kind of thing can
3 really generate beauty in a community, all you have to do is
4 go to the North Shore of Chicago and see what they've done
5 with the Greenbay Trail. That trail is an essential element
6 to the property and the value of those communities. This is
7 a chance for NICTD to create the same kind of value at the
8 same time that they are creating a new train line.

9 I think this would make NICTD a hero instead of someone
10 trying to balance all of the opposing interests. If we just
11 paid attention to the life of trees, as a metaphor, and also
12 as a practical solution, this whole project will take on a
13 new face for everyone involved.

14 As a last comment, I noticed that there is also federal
15 funding opportunities here going side by side with the
16 railway. For instance, the Recreation Trail Program offered
17 under the U.S. Department of Transportation directs us to
18 the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, who has a
19 million dollars grant for the Recreational Trails Program
20 for our state. This is a perfect tie-in. NICTD doesn't
21 have to even pay for it all themselves. They can
22 create beautiful greenbelts with the help of other money
23 outside of their own budget.

24 So thank you for your time and attention to this.

25 As far as my preference for the four plans, I think

1 your proposed alternative is the best. It has the least
2 damage to all of the environmental issues I'm talking about.

3 I think your thousand-space parking lot is a bit
4 over-the-top, but that can be hopefully remedied through
5 other situations. And perhaps even purchasing other land
6 for parking rather than the land directly along the
7 greenbelt.

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1 Luis Collazo.

2 219-902-3304.

3 My question is in this whole ordeal, we have been told
4 how the project is going, is progressing, but yet the
5 homeowners that are going to be losing the properties have
6 not been given any type of information as far as when will
7 we be acquiring your property? And at what value? Any kind
8 of information in that manner. It's just been about them,
9 them and them. How pretty, you know, our train is going to
10 look and how much revenue is going to produce. But, yet,
11 there's quite a bit of people that will be losing their
12 property, but they say nothing about that.

13 And it would have been nicer if they would have had
14 more information on that behalf.

15 I don't want any of their options.

16 (Which were all the proceedings had at such
17 time and date.)

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1 STATE OF INDIANA)
2)
3 COUNTY OF LAKE)
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5 Within and for the County of Lake and State of Indiana,
6 do hereby certify that heretofore, to wit, On the 19th day
7 of January, 2017, that the Testimony given at the Public
8 Meeting on the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation
9 District West Lake Corridor Project was stenographically
10 recorded and afterwards transcribed upon a computer
11 personally by me, and that the foregoing is a true and
12 correct transcript of said testimony.

13 In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and
14 seal this 23rd day of January, 2017.

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Notary Public
Lake County, Indiana

Name: Theresa CORRIERE

Hearing Date/Location: Irving School 1/18/17

Contact Info: 219-437-9483

Comment: not all my questions answered.
do not think a secured situation in Hammond
is needed

Continued 

Name: JOAN CRIST

Hearing Date/Location: 1/18/17 Hammond

Contact Info': (219) 292-2453; jcrist@clsj.edu

Comment: MASS TRANSIT - GREAT; IN HAMMOND -

GREAT; - THE STATION AND PARKING LOT AT

173RD - UNNECESSARY NEGATIVE IMPACTS, IF THE
AS THE DEIS STATES

GOAL IS WALKABILITY, A NO PARKING LOT IS

NEEDED; IF PEOPLE WANT TO DRIVE TO A →

Continued →

STATION, THEY CAN DRIVE ANOTHER 2 MILES

TO DOWNTOWN HAMMOND, OR NORTH HAMMOND,

WHICH NEED COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC.

THE NATURAL AREA AT 173RD ST.

NEEDS TO BE PRESERVED, BOTH FOR THE

SAKE OF CARING FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND

FOR HUMAN QUALITY OF LIFE. I WANT A

COMMITMENT FROM NICTD TO CLEAR LIMITS

ON BUILDING + PAVING AT 173RD ST.

Name: JOAN CRIST

Hearing Date/Location: 1/18/17 Hammond

Contact Info: jcrist@ccsj.edu

Comment: EXPLAIN EXACTLY WHAT FEDERAL REGULATIONS
APPLY TO THE SIZE AND NUMBER OF
PARKING SPACES REQUIRED AT A
COMMUTER RAIL STATION.

Continued 

Name: ANDREW FOX

Hearing Date/Location: HAMILTON 1/13/17

Contact Info': andrewfox@gmail.com

Comment: IN DESIGN OF THE SOUTH HAMILTON STATION, PEDESTRIAN
ACCESS SHOULD BE PROVIDED FOR FROM THE WEST AT THE
NORTH/SOUTH STREET END OF THE STATION FOR THOSE THAT
LIVE WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE N/W OF THE STATION

Continued 

Comment Card

Name: Maria Galarza

Hearing Date/Location: Irving 1-18-17

Contact Info: maria.galarza77@gmail.com

Comment: Good location, only concern
is noise and traffic.

Continued 

Comment Card

Name: Jerry Graham

Hearing Date/Location: 1/18/17 cc. Hanover

Contact Info: 714 61917 @ yahoo.com

Comment: I live on Linn Ave & Fernwood St.
The concern is noise, vibration, access to the bike
trail (I use it and love it) and decrease home
values. I also created and maintain a large garden
on the bike trail that is enjoyed by many. Will

Continued 

it be destroyed?



Comment Card

Comment ID No. 00446

Name: Peggy Gross

Hearing Date/Location: WI

Contact Info: gross.peggy@ATT.NET

Comment: COMMUTER PARKING ON SIDE STREETS - HOW WILL IT
BE ADDRESSED & HOW QUICKLY TO VIOLATORS.
* SINCE 173RD (HAM'D) IS A HOSPITAL RTE - WHAT IS GOING TO
HAPPEN TO THE INTERSECTION AT HARRISON? - LIGHTS - GATES - WHAT
WILL HAPPEN IF AN AMBULANCE COMES + THE TRAIN IS STOPPED FOR
PASSENGERS?
* NOISE + VIBRATION LEVELS - HOW WILL THEY AFFECT OUR
HOUSES + FOUNDATIONS?
* HOW WILL PROPERTY VALUES BE AFFECTED & HOW CLOSE TO THE

Continued

RAIL LINE will they need to be to NOT be affected?

*What will be the security for the parking lots,?

surrounding houses, etc?



Comment Card

Matti referred: Just response

1) Friday: after 1:00

Name: Amanda Henry Wed amanda8909@clinet.com

Hearing Date/Location: Jan. 18th 2017 in my school

Contact Info: 312-493-1015 amanda8909@clinet.com

Comment: When our planning to put this
train is going to be right in front of
my house? I really don't want to be
that. They going to be an area
right now I get to see the beautiful

Continued →

Blue path and cemetery there's also
going to be noise, as well as a light
disturbance. What about the dangers
of having a train next to a blue
path?

I don't want to see a train in front
of my house? is there a different route?
Back of speed air train?



Comment Card

Comment ID No. 00448

Name: Walt Jones

Hearing Date/Location: West Lake

Contact Info: Chapman@Columbert-Harley.com

Comment: What type of road improvements will take place to Main St?

Where does all the Funding come from?

Continued 

Name: RUTH MORES

Hearing Date/Location: WASH EXHIBIT - HAMMO 1/16/17

Contact Info: RUTHMORESCO@MAIL.COM

Comment: SOUTH HAMMO STATION IS IN AN AREA THAT IS NOW A
TRANQUIL, TREE LINED, BIKE PATH ACCESSIBLE NEIGHBORHOOD - we'd
like to keep as much "Green Space" as possible - HOLD off on
the T.O.D. - DON'T NEED CONDOS IN SOUTH HAMMO
IS "TREE MITIGATION" A REQUIREMENT IN PROJECT? WHO PAYS?
(REPLANT TREES TAKEN DURING CONSTRUCTION)

Continued 

WHAT ABOUT A MULTI-STORY PARKING GARAGE

TO SAVE ON FOOT PRINT OF PARKING LOT ??



Comment Card

Name: MICHAEL PENNANEN

Hearing Date/Location: 1/18/17

Contact Info': ~~FINNFRIENDS~~ FINNFRIENDS@ATT.NET

Comment: Regarding the South Hammond Station area, between
169th and 173rd: How much land to the east of the parking lot will
be preserved as a "green space" corridor? Can you make a commit-
ment in your final EIS as to how much land will be set aside for
the existing natural environment?

Continued 

Name: Valerie Pennanen

Hearing Date/Location: 1/18/17 Washington Irving, Hammond

Contact Info': vpennanen@ccsj.edu

Comment: Please state ^{specifically} IN WRITING, in your final
Environmental Impact Statement, your plans to preserve
the natural green corridor in South Hammond. Wildlife
frequently use this space, and some live there either
seasonally or all year round. There are bumblebees
(note that the rusty patch bumblebee is an Continued 

endangered species) who rely on the red clover to survive... there's a fox who lives in a wooded area of the field north of 173rd Street and east of Lyman... there are hawks who nest in the nearby cottonwood trees... and all of these creatures deserve to live, as peacefully as possible, in their habitat. I expect to submit a petition to NICTD very shortly, with signatures of other local residents who agree that the survival of nature must be a top priority.

Comment Card

Name: Leslie Phanstor

Hearing Date/Location: 1-18-17 Hammer

Contact Info: leslie@activetrans.org

Comment: Start working with communities
now to ensure ped access to/from
stations. People will want to walk/bike/cross
Some proposed stations are great but
don't get some neighborhoods connecting

Continued 

they need to see how many to
find the important and media
of access + surroundings

Name: Michael Sandridge

Hearing Date/Location: Hammond Public Hearing 7/18

Contact Info': 214-413-1431 michael.sandridge@gmail.com

Comment: I'm worried about the original price tag of \$600M
increasing similar to NICTD projects in the past. Residents already
~~feel~~ feel left out of this process after Council members agreed to fund
w/o public input. Who will pay the annual maintenance costs? Will
it be allocated by stations per city? Will there be a TIF implemented

Continued 

to pay for annual maintenance? Do you ever think this train

will be able to break even for annual operating costs? ~~It~~

~~It will not be able to break even for annual operating costs.~~

~~It will not be able to break even for annual operating costs.~~



Comment Card

Name: JOHN SCHREINER

Hearing Date/Location: WI 1/18/2017 HAMMOND

Contact Info: PILGRIM 120 @ SPKGLOBAL.NET

Comment: PREFER NO BUILD

THE EXPENSE AND CONSTRUCTION IS EXTENSIVE,

USE THE MONEY FOR MAINTAINING THE EXISTING

TRAINS AND BETTER SERVICE.

DROP THE ENTIRE PROJECT,

Continued 

Name: MARY ELLEN SLAZYK

Hearing Date/Location: 1-18-2017 IRVING

Contact Info': 219-933-7170

Comment: THE SOUTH SHORE EXTENSION WILL NOT BENEFIT OUR NEIGHBORHOOD. INSTEAD, IT REPLACES OUR PEACE + SAFETY WITH NOISE AND DANGER. THE PROPOSED ROUTE PLACES IT RIGHT NEXT TO EGGERS MIDDLE SCHOOL. THIS PUTS OUR KIDS IN DANGER.

Continued 



Comment Card

Name: PERRY MY STABLERHearing Date/Location: IRVING ELEM 1/18/2017Contact Info': 805-2783 2936 GIBSON PL HAMMOND

Comment: YOU DONT HAVE THE CREDIT MATCH
YOU ARE LEGISLATING FROM HOUSE BILL 1618
POSSIBLE HOUSE BILL 1114 ~~TO~~ TAKING CASINO MONEY
FROM SCHOOLS & CITY SERVICES TO PAY FOR
PETEYS TRAIN / ARE BEAMS GOING TO BE MADE

Continued 

OF CEMENT OR STEEL

Name: _____

Pete Torres

Hearing Date/Location: _____

1/18/17

Contact Info': _____

Comment: _____

*Why do we need new
rail road stations?*

*How are homeowners - renters -
getting compensated for their homes*

Continued 