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Federal Agency Recognizes West Lake Corridor Project with Special Honor

Project earns the Excellence in Environmental Document Preparation distinction

CHESTERTON, Ind. (November 7, 2019) – The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has named the West Lake Corridor project in Northwest Indiana a recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Award for Excellence in Environmental Documentation Preparation. The documents were part of a submission to establish a proposed \$933 million project that would increase transportation options for accessing downtown Chicago, improve mobility and accessibility, and stimulate local job creation and economic development opportunities for the growing communities throughout Lake County, Indiana.

The West Lake Corridor project aims to expand Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District commuter (NICTD) rail service via an 8-mile southerly branch from the South Shore Line's station in Hammond to Dyer in Indiana.

“This award represents the substantial, collective efforts of FTA, NICTD, and HDR Engineering to move this project from the Draft Environmental Impact Statement to the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision,” said Noland. “We are extremely proud of the recognition and accomplishments that are signified by this award,” said NICTD President and CEO Michael Noland who accepted the award in New York at the American Public Transportation Association conference in October. “As a result of the public comment process, we received valuable input on the design of the project from local elected officials, community members and other stakeholders in Hammond, Munster and Dyer that resulted in a number of significant positive changes, and the documents accurately reflects these changes.”

The West Lake Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision reflects FTA Region V's new best-practices review process, fulfilling requirements for content, utility and practicality in environmental documentation. As the project moves through design and construction, Noland said it is essential that documents convey the environmental consequences, mitigation and coordination requirements effectively via content that is easily understood by engineers and construction contractors and other stakeholders.

The Outstanding Achievement Award for Excellence in Environmental Document Preparation is presented in two categories every two years — Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Statement.

After recently receiving a positive rating from the FTA, the West Lake Corridor Project was approved to enter the engineering phase of the Capital Investment Grant's New Starts program, a discretionary grant program administered by the FTA.

For additional information regarding the West Lake Corridor Project, visit <http://www.nictdwestlake.com>.

