



**NORTHERN INDIANA COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING**

July 28, 2017

Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District

33 East U.S. Highway 12

Chesterton, IN 46304-3514

Public Session – 10:30 a.m. (CST)

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Christine Cid
Mark Catanzarite

David Pranckus
Jim Biggs

Michael Repay
Scott Lauerman

OTHERS PRESENT:

Adam Wojasinski – Leg. Rep. Smart TP 1526
Pam Eanes – Concerned Families WLCP
Mike Yacullo – Ciorba Group
Kim Anderson – Parsons
Greg Price – Passenger
Roy G. Benedict – Passenger
Paul F. Willer – Passenger
Steve Lyons – Passenger
Fred Owens – Harry O. Hefter Associates
Lawrence Kirchner- Trans System
Ders Anderson - Openlands/Village of Burnham
Mel Jessup - Cass County Rail
Carl Biek-Cass County Rail

Gerald Williamson – Passenger
Timothy Whalen- AECOM
Randy Strasser-US Engineering
Roger Morrisett-Passenger
Earl Wacker-AECOM
Darwin Simonaitis-Passenger
Julie O’Connor-Concerned Families WLCP
Felicia Haberkamp-Group 7
Brian Jones-INDOT
Karie Koehneke-Patrick Engineering Inc.
Mike Yacullo-Ciorba Group
Ken Knoll-Passenger

STAFF PRESENT:

Michael Noland
Cassandra Francis
Boris Matakovic
Victor Babin
Bob Byrd
Bjarne Henderson
Brianna Anderson

John Parsons
Chuck Lukmann, Esq.
Anthony Siegmund
Laura Harrington
Steve Plesha
Kelly Wenger
Justice Anderson

Nicole Barker
Christine Dearing
Bill O’Dea
Greg Yovich
Joe Crnkovich
Kevin Dywan

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman, Ms. Cid, called the meeting to order.

MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Cid requested approval of the minutes from May 12, 2017. Mr. Catanzarite motioned to accept the Public Session and Executive Session Board minutes for May 12, 2017. The motion was seconded by Mr. Repay. The motion was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ders Anderson, Project Manager for the Village of Burnham Trail Project, asked NICTD to consider their bike trail and safety proposal at the railroad crossing in Burnham. He asked NICTD to participate in an engineering study for an additional bridge at this location. Mr. Anderson asked NICTD to commit \$70,000 along with other railroads to fund the Phase I portion of the study.

Darwin Simonaitis from Elkhart, Indiana stated the need for line improvements from South Bend to Chicago to shorten travel time. Mr. Simonaitis stated that recent media coverage is inaccurately stating that the South Bend Airport project would only reduce travel time by 10 minutes; he said it would be 30 minutes. Mr. Simonaitis asked that NICTD consider keeping the Double Track Project a single track with a couple of CTC controlled sidings.

Julie O'Connor, resident of Munster, Indiana spoke on behalf of the Concerned Families of West Lake Corridor Project. Ms. O'Connor stated that NICTD recently confirmed they will begin the property acquisition process in fall of 2017, well before receiving the full funding grant award for the project. Ms. O'Connor further stated, at the meeting for residents June 29th, 2017, Mr. Noland announced that NICTD could end up acquiring homes and displacing residents even if funding is never received. Ms. O'Connor asked that Board Members of NICTD serve in the best interest of residents of their respective districts and protect them from governmental overreach by not approving NICTD's request to start the acquisition process until it has secured a full funding grant agreement.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Regarding the Village of Burnham issue, Mr. Noland stated that NICTD would consider participating in an engineering study for a bridge. Mr. Noland noted that there are warning devices at the crossing today including lights and bells. Mr. Noland added that with additional bike traffic, the current design needs to be reevaluated for safety. He stated that our position – installation of a pedestrian/bicycle flyover – remains unchanged. This is why NICTD has been asking for a pedestrian/bike flyover. Mr. Noland added that the Burnham Greenway will generate additional bike traffic, which means the character of the design needs to be reevaluated, which is why NICTD's position advocating a pedestrian flyover has not changed.

Responding to Mr. Simonaitis comments, Mr. Noland stated NICTD is seeking to reduce the time totally up and down the line while investments are being made, but the express service has nowhere to pass without continuing the Double Tack Project. Mr. Prankus expressed that South Shore Freight does run a lot of trains at night. He shared, the previous night the train was delayed due to following a freight train, if NICTD had Double Track the delay would not have been an issue. Mr. Noland advised the Board that NICTD has done computer modeling to show the additional track and crossovers, and how they will significantly enhance the service without degrading our partner, South Shore Freight. Mr. Catanzarite added that NICTD has emphasized to the media The South Bend International Airport Project is to not only increase time savings, but safety as well.

FTA Rating and Funding for West Lake and Double Track. Mr. Noland announced that NICTD is now able to report all four counties (St. Joseph, LaPorte, Porter and Lake) have committed funding for Double Track. Mr. Noland added that Hammond City Council voted on their share of the West Lake funding on July 24, 2017. NICTD now has 100 percent of the non-federal matching funds for both Double Track and West Lake projects.

Mr. Noland advised the Board that NICTD will request 50% of project costs for West Lake and Double Track from the FTA. While President Trump's budget cut funding for the FTA's Capital Investment Grant programs, the targeted sources of federal dollars for both West Lake and Double Track projects; Congress is working to reinstate these dollars. NICTD will submit both projects for a rating to the FTA on September 8. NICTD cannot begin acquiring property until completing NEPA and receiving a positive rating. In the interim, NICTD will continue to proceed through the National Environmental Policy Act requirements for both projects.

Ms. Cid expressed the importance of advising owners early in the process. Mr. Noland noted that NICTD has held meetings in Michigan City, Gary/Miller, Hammond, and Munster/Dyer to educate owners of any expectations and rights they have during this process.

Gateway Station and Hammond Resolution. Mr. Noland announced that the Hammond City Council adopted a Resolution to officially provide Local Income Tax (LIT) funding totaling 15% for 30 years for the West Lake project with three conditions. First, that the Hammond Gateway station is included in the project. Second, the maintenance yard is built in North Hammond. Third, that NICTD receives a full funding grant agreement. Mr. Noland added that this Resolution has been fully executed.

RFPs for Double Track Final Engineering and Project Management Documentation. Mr. Noland explained that in order to prepare for entry into Engineering, NICTD has issued two RFPs for the Double Track project. NICTD will review the responses and expects to bring recommendations to the Board in September or at a special Board meeting.

South Bend Airport Reroute. Mr. Noland noted South Bend Airport reroute now has 100 percent of local funding as well. NICTD held a media briefing in July, which included Mayor Buttigieg of South Bend, and has created a website so the public can track progress. Mr. Noland shared that the first public meeting for this project is expected in September 2017. Mr. Noland noted at the end of the preliminary engineering, NICTD will make a recommendation to the Board of the preferred alignment. NICTD staff and consultants (DLZ) are working through National Environmental Policy Act requirements to remain eligible for federal funds, if available. Mr. Noland expressed the importance of the reroute in regards to safety enhancements and travel time savings.

Hillcrest Route Grade Crossing. Mr. Noland stated there was a two-week reroute at Hillcrest Road in Portage/Ogden Dunes, to full replace NICTD's grade crossing there. NICTD understood the inconvenience to the local community and worked rapidly to finish the project a day early.

Late Summer Early Autumn Construction. Mr. Noland summarized the late summer and early autumn construction projects and emphasized that these projects cannot wait until Double Track is complete.

- **Michigan City 11th St. Panel Replacement:** NICTD will repair the 11th St panel from Franklin Street to Cedar. Mr. Noland noted that because NICTD shares this area with the roadway, the railroad ties wear out faster and the salt presents signal challenges. Mr. Noland stated this project will run from August 7th to September 1st, 2017 and passengers will be bused from Carroll Ave. to Dune Park.
- **Kensington Subway Bridge:** Mr. Noland announced this construction will begin in October 2017 to replace the deck. It will require busing passengers between Hegewisch and Kensington beginning October 6 at 7:30 pm thru October 9 at 4:30 am.; and again on October 13-16 over the same time period.. Mr. Noland added the Kensington Subway Bridge came in significantly under bid forecasts at \$719,000. Mr. Catanzarite asked whether this bridge is our responsibility to repair. Mr. Noland explained that pursuant to NICTD's trackage rights agreement with South Shore Freight's parent company, NICTD is responsible for the maintenance.

Triennial Review. Mr. Noland explained that every three years the Federal Government evaluates NICTD's compliance with government, regulations, and practices as a recipient of federal grant money. Mr. Noland announced that NICTD received a perfect score, which will also help us when submitting for a grant request. He congratulated staff, including Christine Dearing, Tony Siegmund, and others, for their excellent work that made this Triennial Review a success.

DISCUSSION OF REAL ESTATE ACQUISITION

Resolution 17-04 Authorizing Real Estate Acquisition for West Lake Corridor

Project. NICTD's attorney, Mr. Chuck Lukmann, introduced Resolution 17-04, which would authorize Mr. Noland to acquire real estate for the West Lake project in conformance with all regulations including FTA's. Mr. Repay made motion to approve; Mr. Biggs seconded motion.

Mr. Repay noted that he has the utmost confidence in what NICTD has been able to do and will be able to do in the future. He added that while neither he nor anyone on NICTD's staff would want to own property that would not positively affect the operation of the train system, NICTD must also be ready to construct. Mr. Repay said he leaves it to NICTD staff to determine the best time to acquire property. Mr. Repay added that NICTD board members are enormously accessible to those who want to discuss this further during a public meeting or in a private conversation. Mr. Catanzarite echoed Mr. Repay's comments, stated that he supports this Resolution, trusts NICTD staff, and has confidence that property owners will be taken care of to their satisfaction. Ms. Cid added that NICTD recently took action in the legislature to follow federal guidelines to benefit property owners.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Resolution 17-05 Authorizing Real Estate Acquisition for the Double Track Project.

Mr. Lukmann introduced Resolution 17-05, which would authorize real estate acquisition for the Double Track Project. It mirrors Resolution 17-04. Mr. Repay motioned to approve Resolution 17-05; Mr. Biggs seconded motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

INDOT GRADE CROSSING CORRIDOR PROJECT

Mr. Babin, NICTD chief engineering officer, summarized proposed changes in highway grade crossing protection coming in the future. NICTD is working with INDOT to plan for this effort. NICTD will improve 20 highway grade crossings for \$1.4 million in LaPorte County. Mr. Babin added that this effort will substantially reduce highway/train grade crossings and increase safety.

PURCHASING (Purchasing Packet Attached)

Mr. Siegmund stated that NICTD requires Board review of three purchasing items. Mr. Siegmund summarized each project in writing as well as verbally. The three purchasing items are explained in the Recommendations that follow and the Board's vote is described at the end of each Recommendation.

The first item was a competitive bid for a **Change Order Request**. Mr. Noland provided the board with correspondence and recommendation on Change Order. Mr. Noland asked that the board approve the last change order for AECOM on the West Lake project. Mr. Repay made a motion to approve change order; Mr. Biggs seconded. Ms. Cid added that RDA is picking up

the majority of the costs and this is really a \$16,000 cost to NICTD. The motion was passed unanimously.

The second item was a competitive bid requested by the engineering department for a replacement **Tie Crane**. Mr. Siegmund explained the bid process, responses and staff consideration. He asked the board to approve the staff recommendation to grant the President authority to sign the Notice to Proceed for a new Tie Crane at his discretion. Mr. Catanzarite motioned to approve Tie Crane; Mr. Biggs seconded. Motion was passed unanimously.

The third item was a recommendation from the mechanical department to overhaul our **HVAC Systems (heating, venting, and air conditioning)** on single level cars. Mr. Siegmund stated the existing system needs to be rebuilt and reconfigured to accept the new style of refrigerant because our existing systems run on a refrigerant that is no longer produced. Mr. Siegmund continued to explain the bid process, responses, and staff considerations. Mr. Siegmund asked the board to grant the President authority to sign the Notice to Proceed for the overhaul of the HVAC systems. Mr. Catanzarite motioned to approve overhaul of HVAC systems; Mr. Repay seconded. Motion was passed unanimously.

RIDERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE REPORT

Schedule Change. Mr. Parsons provided an update regarding the schedule changes that went into effect July 1st. Mr. Parsons explained the unexpected challenges NICTD faced and how NICTD proceeded to handle the unforeseen matters between the updated timetable July 1st and the updated timetable July 18th. On July 18th, NICTD redistributed the three eastbound rush hour trains leaving Millennium Station between 5 and 6PM.

Mr. Noland added that there were a number of changes effective July 1st that were proven to be effective, although we did return to the previous schedule. He stated that we now know our passengers do want the 5:45PM departure slot. Due to Metra's current schedule, we are unable to secure a slot for a train any closer than 5:24PM, but we will continue to monitor this as a future option.

Ticket Sales. Mr. Parsons supplied a Ridership Revenue Report from January to June compared to the previous year showing revenue is up 2.5%.

Mr. Parsons provided an update on digital ticket sales. NICTD's goal was to drive commuters to the app or ticket vending machines. The South Shore Line app is continuing to be of value to riders and its use continues to grow.

Mr. Parsons stated monthly ridership is still negative at 1.2% from January to June 2017 vs. 2016, but off-peak weekday and weekend ridership is coming back.

On-Time Performance. Parsons stated NICTD is at 88.6% for all trains in on-time performance from January through June 2017. Mr. Parsons adds that typically for rush hour trains NICTD's goal is 90%; NICTD is currently at 93% during rush hours.

Bike Capacity. Mr. Parsons explained that we have plenty of space on both weekdays and weekends for bike service. Mr. Parsons believes the lack of high level boarding platforms is affecting our ability to increase bike utilization. Mr. Noland added that NICTD is running about the same bike ridership as the previous year; Metra's bike program took a while to accelerate as well.

Summer Events. Mr. Parsons concluded by summarizing the summer events and the special services NICTD is providing to better connect people to and from these events. Mr. Noland explained the Teacher Appreciation Promotional Event will be offered again this year.

OPERATIONS REPORT

Mr. O'Dea stated he will be working closely with engineering partners to minimize delays during the renewal of the 11th Street Panel and Kensington Bridge, and has strong support from the operating department, engineering, and collectors. Mr. O'Dea noted that the physical state of the railroad is in excellent shape.

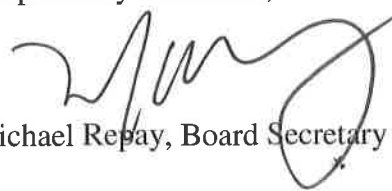
OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Noland introduced new members to the NICTD team including Mike Rowe, Justice Anderson, and Brianna Anderson. Mr. Noland brought attention to Mr. Jesse Watts and the transit police on a matter he felt deserved public credit for outstanding police work. Chief of Police Byrd shared the details of Lt. Watts's rescue of a young boy and explained the process they are currently going through to secure this child's safety. Mr. Catanzarite made a motion to draft a letter of commendation with legal counsel's help; Mr. Repay seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Catanzarite made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Repay. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,


Michael Repay, Board Secretary