



**Double Track Northwest Indiana Project**

*Finding of No Significant Impact*

*November 1, 2018*

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Public Comments and Responses**



**Double Track Northwest Indiana Project**

*Finding of No Significant Impact*

*November 1, 2018*

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**Response to Frequently Asked Questions and Comments**

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed project under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and other applicable federal regulations. FTA and NICTD made the EA available for public and agency review during a 30-day comment period from September 21 through October 23, 2017, along with two public hearings on October 11 and 12, 2017. During the public comment period, FTA and NICTD received comments from 72 members of the general public, organizations and agencies. Comments were on numerous issues but many could be grouped into general categories. Below are the frequently asked questions (FAQ) - Consolidated Responses to the most common comments. To the extent possible, the responses are organized by major topic areas covered in the EA. Responses to the Agency and Railroad Comments and Public and Organization Comments are presented in two tables below, with references to the both the EA and FAQ – Consolidated Responses as appropriate.

FAQ – Consolidated Responses		
FAQ Number	Topic	Response to FAQs and Comments
1	Noise	<p>The noise analysis conducted for the DT-NWI Project measured existing noise and modeled future noise, taking into account increases in commuter rail traffic and the at-grade crossing closures in Michigan City. The analysis followed the FTA’s 2006 Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual and showed that the train horn sounding at grade crossings will cause moderate noise impacts at one residence in Gary and two residences in Beverly Shores. NICTD will mitigate these impacts by lowering the decibel level on the train horn. Additionally, NICTD will work with Michigan City to apply for a Quiet Zone from 0.25 miles west of Sheridan Avenue to 0.25 miles east of Carroll Avenue. The Quiet Zone designation will be subject to approval by the Federal Railroad Administration. See Section 4.6 of the EA and the Noise and Vibration Technical Memorandum in Appendix III of the EA for more information on the noise analysis.</p> <p>The noise from train operations and train horns are the loudest noise source. Additional noise from proposed station parking lots was not quantified in the EA, because such noise will be temporary and will only approach levels that may contribute to the train noise during peak hours. In general, it would take a doubling of car traffic to increase the noise level from parking lots by 3 dB (the change level that is perceptible to the human ear). Due to the location of the lots adjacent to the tracks and near major roadways, a 3 dB increase is not expected to occur and any additional noise would be negligible.</p> <p>Freight train operations, and the noise produced by them, occur at the discretion of the freight companies, and changes in freight train activities are dictated by market fluctuations and the changing needs of customers that rely on freight trains. Because freight operations are not a part of this Project, future increase in freight train operations cannot be accounted for in the noise analysis.</p>

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		NICTD will require the construction contractor to develop a construction noise management plan when working near sensitive receptors such as residences and schools. The plan will identify methods to minimize noise effects, periodic evaluation of the placement of construction equipment to avoid overexposure at any single receptor, and a process to handle and resolve any noise-related complaints.
2	Increases in freight traffic	Freight train operations occur at the discretion of the freight companies, and changes in freight train activities are dictated by both market fluctuations and the changing needs of customers that rely on freight trains. Freight operations are not a part of this passenger train project. The Chicago South Shore & South Bend Railroad (CSS) operates under the interstate commerce provisions of the U.S. Constitution, and NICTD cannot impede their movement through the system or restrict expansion of their freight service. In addition, NICTD's long-term operating agreement with the freight railroad stipulates that NICTD cannot impede freight service. The agreement also stipulates that freight operations cannot interfere with NICTD's passenger service. See Section 3.4.1 of the EA for more information on freight rail.
3	Gary/Miller: Platform and station building location and aesthetics	<p>NICTD understands the desire for the station area to be a part of the vitality of Lake Street and the Miller Beach community. With respect to the location of the station building, NICTD has heard many comments from the community about the desire to locate it as close to Lake Street as possible. Consistent with the traffic plan for the station, as well as the opportunities for transit oriented development (TOD), NICTD will work to keep the station building as close to Lake Street as is practicable. The location of the station building will be determined early in final design through coordination with the City of Gary, RDA, and Gary Public Transportation Corporation. The location of the station building will be consistent with the City of Gary's TOD study proposals and will consider location constraints, pedestrian safety, universal and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)- compliant access to the platforms, bus linkages, and opportunities for wayfinding and landscaping to enhance the area.</p> <p>While the exact location for the station building is not yet determined, the 8-car platforms at the Gary/Miller Station will be located 380 feet west of Lake Street. Gauntlet tracks offset from the main tracks will be constructed to provide adequate clearance for freight trains to safely pass without damaging the platforms. This distance (380 feet) is the closest the platforms can be located to Lake Street while still providing enough clearance for the gauntlet switches, curves, and signals. See Page 28 of Appendix VI to the EA - Preliminary Engineering Plans- for the track and gauntlet switch layout.</p>

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		<p>Approximately 90 feet of the approach from Lake Street will be a sloped walkway to provide universal access to the platforms that is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as for snow-plow and maintenance. There will be three warming shelters on each platform to accommodate the high ridership expected at this station.</p> <p>The station building design would be similar to other South Shore Line station buildings and platforms. NICTD will continue to coordinate with City of Gary staff regarding the station building design. NICTD will consider potential applications of green infrastructure and drainage design at the parking lots in the final design for the project. NICTD will review and consider municipal development standards during final design and coordinate with municipal staff, as appropriate.</p>
4	Gary/Miller: Traffic impacts at Lake Street crossing and to Lake Street itself	<p>NICTD has coordinated with INDOT regarding the future intersection of U.S. 20 and Lake Street. The projected traffic volumes do not suggest there would be any traffic impacts at this intersection. There will be opportunity for public input and participation in the U.S. 12/U.S. 20 roadway consolidation project. INDOT anticipates holding a public meeting in January 2019.</p> <p>Projected peak hour traffic volumes with the Project and without the Project were reviewed by the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) for the segment of Lake Street between the NICTD tracks and U.S. 20. NIRPC compared the future No-Build scenario to the future Build scenario, and concluded that Lake Street will continue to operate at an acceptable Level of Service (LOS C), as it does today.</p> <p>NICTD will work with the City of Gary and INDOT during construction to develop an outreach plan to inform residents, businesses, and visitors of the change in travel patterns.</p>
5	Gary/Miller: Safety – pedestrian access	<p>Pedestrian access to the Gary/Miller station will be provided through improved sidewalks west of the station area, from Lake Street, and from the parking lots south of the platforms. Pedestrians will no longer need to cross U.S. 12 to get from the parking lot to the platforms. Sidewalks and parking lots will be well-lit and include landscaped buffers, where feasible. See Sections 4.5 and 4.13 of the EA for more information regarding landscaping and pedestrian safety, respectively. Additionally, pedestrian crossings will be improved as a part of the U.S. 12/U.S. 20 realignment and will be designed according the INDOT standards as part of the INDOT project. There will be opportunity for public input and participation in the U.S. 12/U.S. 20 roadway consolidation project. INDOT anticipates holding a public meeting in January 2019.</p>

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6	Gary/Miller: Trains blocking access in/out of Miller	<p>Dwell time and total gate down time near stations is expected to decrease through the use of high-level boarding platforms; however, the frequency of gate down incidents will increase.</p> <p>There are currently 14 westbound and 15 eastbound trains that cross Lake Street each weekday. On opening day in 2023, an additional 12 westbound and 12 eastbound trains will cross Lake Street each weekday, for a total of 26 westbound and 27 eastbound trains. This includes the additional service trains and the trains that will shift from storage at Gary Metro to the new Gary/Miller storage tracks. The signal and crossing circuitry will be designed to minimize the time that gates will be down. Dwell time and total gate down time at Lake Street is currently approximately 3 minutes while Gary/Miller Station passengers board or de-board trains. When high-level boarding platforms are installed, it will only take 1-2 minutes to get on or off the train, so gate down time will also be reduced. Grade separated access to Miller is available at Old Hobart Road/Miller Avenue to avoid delays by passing trains.</p> <p>The TOD plans being developed by the City of Gary will direct pedestrians and automobile users to businesses and amenities on both sides of the tracks.</p>
7	Gary/Miller: Parking	<p>There are four proposed parking lots that will be built in phases in the Gary/Miller station area. All parking lots will be accessed from U.S. 12/U.S. 20 and there will be one right-in/right-out access from Lake Street. The City of Gary is working on a TOD study that evaluates redevelopment of the area surrounding the Gary/Miller Station, including several of the existing and proposed parking lots. As a part of the TOD study, Gary is proposing future parking garage(s) that will eventually be located on the existing and proposed surface lots to accommodate commuter parking and future TOD-related parking. There are currently 248 parking spaces at the station, and 743 parking commuter parking spaces are planned to be available in opening year – an increase of 348 spaces. See Section 3.6 of the EA and the Parking and Traffic Technical Memorandum in Appendix III of the EA for more information on parking.</p>
8	Portage/Ogden Dunes: Location of parking lot west of Hillcrest at Ogden Dunes station	<p>Additional parking at Portage/Ogden Dunes is needed to accommodate ridership demands of the station.</p> <p>The proposed parking lot west of Hillcrest Road will be located in between the existing NICTD and NS tracks. This area previously contained a parking lot and a station west of Hillcrest Road. Based on the comments received regarding this proposed parking lot, NICTD explored the feasibility of relocating the proposed lot to the east of the existing lot. NICTD does not own that property. The terms proposed for a lease of the property would not provide sufficient continuing control of that property to justify the expense of construction and parking operations on that parcel. NICTD will work with the Town of Ogden Dunes and City of Portage to develop parking lot designs that include features that will enhance the station area while serving the needs of NICTD and its commuters.</p>

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		A traffic analysis was performed for the intersections of U.S. 12 at Hillcrest Road and U.S. 12 at Stagecoach Road, consistent with methodology identified in the Transportation Research Board’s 2010 <i>Highway Capacity Manual</i> and INDOT’s design guidelines. The analysis showed that with the proposed Project, traffic would be distributed among the three parking lots. It was determined that all intersections and driveways to the Portage/Ogden Dunes Station would operate at an acceptable level of service for both the AM and PM peak hours for opening year, with U.S. 12, Hillcrest Road, and Stagecoach Road through traffic continuing to flow freely. See Section 3.6 of the EA and the Parking and Traffic Technical Memorandum in Appendix III of the EA for more information on parking and traffic.
9	Portage/Ogden Dunes: Safety Concerns about lot south of U.S. 12	<p>Safety is NICTD’s main priority. Pedestrian crossings across U.S. 12 will be designed following INDOT standards. Coordination with INDOT has been initiated to discuss pedestrian crossing at the Portage/Ogden Dunes Station and will be further defined during the Final Design phase to provide a marked crossing that follows INDOT and FHWA guidelines.</p> <p>The methods and means of providing pedestrian and parking lighting requirements will be coordinated with the Town of Ogden Dunes and the City of Portage, as appropriate, throughout the final design and will be guided by standards of the Illuminating Engineering Society and INDOT’s Design Manual. Additionally, NICTD is aware of the International Dark Skies Association recommendations and USFWS lighting guidance and will coordinate the practices that best accommodate the site in balance with the need to provide lighting levels appropriate for safety and accessibility of our passengers.</p>
10	Portage/Ogden Dunes: Noise – Request for Quiet Zone	<p>NICTD followed the FTA’s 2006 Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual to measure existing noise levels on Deer Trail Road in Ogden Dunes and model future noise levels with additional trains to determine the change in noise levels before and after the proposed Project is implemented. The noise environment within the corridor is currently dominated by noise from freight and passenger train traffic and roadway traffic on U.S. 12/U.S. 20, especially truck traffic associated with the ArcelorMittal steel mill, the Port of Indiana (at MP 49), and other industrial land uses in the area. Analysis determined that with noise mitigation measures proposed for the Project (lowering the SSL train horn volume), there will be no noise impacts in the Portage/Ogden Dunes area as a result of this Project. Per the FRA requirements, local agencies (such as a municipality) must apply for Quiet Zones. FRA has published a brochure on eligibility and the process to designate a Quiet Zone at: <a href="https://www.fra.dot.gov/Elib/Details/L03055">https://www.fra.dot.gov/Elib/Details/L03055</a>. See Section 4.6 of the EA and the Noise and Vibration Technical Memorandum in Appendix III of the EA for more information on the noise analysis.</p>

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11	ADA access	<p>All station improvements are being designed in compliance with the latest ADA design standards (2010) and Proposed Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Right-of-Way. Final design will incorporate both accessible and universal design principles. The Gary/Miller, Portage/Ogden Dunes, and 11<sup>th</sup> Street (Michigan City) station designs include sloped walkways for all passengers to use and high-level platforms. The sloped walkways are designed at no less than a 1:12 slope. The high-level platforms will enhance accessibility for all passengers for ease of boarding. Portable wheelchair lifts will be available for anyone who needs it at all regularly scheduled stops where NICTD has low-level instead of high-level platforms.</p> <p>The Final Design team will include an ADA-Compliance Specialist to ensure that design meets all ADA regulations and is incorporating accessible and universal design principles to the greatest extent possible.</p>



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Agency and Railroad Comments				
Comment ID	Source	Date Submitted	Comment	Response Text
<b>EPA</b>	Letter	10/18/17	See Correspondence from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) dated 10/18/17 in Appendix B.	See Correspondence from FTA dated 09/17/18 in FONSI Appendix B.
<b>IDNR</b>	Letter	10/23/17	See Correspondence from Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) dated 10/23/17 in Appendix B.	See Correspondence from FTA dated 09/17/18 in FONSI Appendix B.
<b>CSS</b>	Letter	10/23/17	See Correspondence from CSS dated 10/23/17 and 08/10/18 in Appendix B.	The design at Bailly has been modified to address CSS comments, as outlined on Page 13 of the FONSI. Coordination with CSS has been ongoing and will continue through the final design process to ensure CSS operations are not interrupted or compromised by the Project.
<b>Metra</b>	letter	10/23/2017	As the Metra Electric District (MED) is the host railroad for the northern portion of both existing NICTD service and this proposed service expansion, Metra is a key partner in the success of this endeavor. While Metra generally supports efforts on NICTD's part to improve reliability and on time performance, any increase in the number of NICTD trains operating in Metra territory - whether that is part of service enhancement on this project or as part of other service improvements such as the West Lake Corridor - will be subject to future negotiation and is not guaranteed. As you know, any increase in NICTD service on the MED will require the implementation of some or all of the capacity improvements being explored in the ongoing jointly-funded Metra / NICTD MED Capacity I Calumet Corridor study.	NICTD will continue to coordinate with Metra on any future capacity improvements.

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<b>Ogden Dunes (ODEAB 1a)</b>	Email	10/23/2017	See Correspondence from Ogden Dunes Environmental Advisory Board (ODEAB) dated 10/23/17 in Appendix B.	Addressed individually below.
<b>ODEAB 1b</b>	Letter	10/22/2017	With regard to the proposed parking lot south of U.S. 12, we are wondering if the trees along U.S. 12 can be left to create a visual buffer and to help absorb stormwater from the parking lot.	NICTD will consider potential applications of green infrastructure including native landscaping and drainage design at the parking lots in the final design for the project. NICTD will review and consider municipal development standards during final design and coordinate with municipal staff, as appropriate.
<b>ODEAB 1c</b>	Letter	10/22/2017	We are aware that the town is opposed to the proposed parking lot west of Hillcrest Road. The ODEAB also does not wish to have a parking lot built on that location. We are wondering how stormwater run-off would be addressed. There is also a concern that wild lupine ( <i>Lupinus perennis</i> ) on the far west end of the parking lot would be impacted.	Based on the comments received regarding the parking lot west of Hillcrest Road, NICTD will further reconsider the location of the west parking lot during the final design. To relocate the parking lot, many topics need to be reassessed, which include plants and species, wetlands, acquisition of land, traffic access and safety evaluation. The proposed lot west of Hillcrest Road was environmentally cleared for plants, species, and wetlands in the EA and wild lupine was not identified as a concern within the construction footprint. This area was previously used as a parking lot when the station was located on the west side of Hillcrest Road.
<b>ODEAB 1d</b>	Letter	10/22/2017	As noted in the EA, sound emanating from increased rail traffic would increase from 64 to 70 dBA. Does this estimate also include increased sound that would result from cars entering and exiting the parking lot? Also will the double-tracking project potentially increase freight traffic on the South Shore Railroad	Please see Responses to FAQs 1, 2, and 10 for information regarding noise, freight traffic, and noise at Ogden Dunes, respectively.

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			tracks, and, if so, was that taken into account with respect to estimated increases in sound as well as vibrations?	
<b>ODEAB 1e</b>	Letter	10/22/2017	For a number of years the town has desired to create a horn-free zone in Ogden Dunes. Would this project present an opportunity for the NICTD to assist the town in configuring the crossing to accommodate requirements for a horn-free zone?	Please see Responses to FAQs 1 and 10 regarding noise. Per the FRA requirements, local agencies (such as municipalities) must apply for Quiet Zones. FRA has published a brochure on eligibility and the process at: <a href="https://www.fra.dot.gov/Elib/Details/L03055">https://www.fra.dot.gov/Elib/Details/L03055</a>
<b>ODEAB 1f</b>	Letter	10/22/2017	Light-pollution impacts are also a concern of the ODEAB and residents. During a brief discussion at the Open House in Miller, you indicated that lighting impacts would be lessened by the use of downward-directed lighting. You also indicated that a certain amount of lighting is required. Can you please explain who regulates lighting requirements?	Please see Response to FAQ 9. Lighting requirements are not regulated for this project by any agency, but lighting standards and best practices related to parking lot safety will be followed.
<b>ODEAB 1g</b>	Letter	10/22/2017	The ODEAB requests that lighting impacts be lessened through the use of 3,000 K or less LEDs. This is important to us as the town strives to lessen the impacts of light pollution in Ogden Dunes and be a good neighbor to the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, which is seeking to officially become a Dark Skies Park as designated by the International Dark Skies Association.  We are also very concerned about how lighting in the proposed west parking lot would impact our residents on Deer Trail.	Please see Response to FAQ 9.
<b>ODEAB 2</b>	Email	9/26/2017	I don't think I will be able to be at the public hearings, but will try to attend. In the meantime, I would like to comment directly that we continue to be alarmed by	Please see Response to FAQ 8.

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			<p>the prospect of a second parking lot on the west side of our exit/entrance. We have hours of trains passing our town each day and during the mornings and evenings of weekdays, when the South Shore Line parking will be busiest, we have the most traffic as well.</p> <p>There is a solution to this - identify the owner of the property just east of the current exit and determine the impact of moving the planned parking to this site. I've discussed this with members of NIRPC and our Police Chief has discussed with a County Commissioner. They are both in support of our suggestions.</p> <p>I've copied our Police Chief, Marshall James Reeder, for his views to be expressed as well. Please accept these remarks as part of the hearing period discussion.</p>	<p>NICTD does not own the property east of the existing lot. Project engineers and traffic specialists selected the new lot west of Hillcrest because it is in the existing NICTD owned right-of-way. NICTD has explored the feasibility of relocating the parking lot to the east of the existing lot. The terms proposed for a lease of that property would not provide sufficient continuing control of that property to justify the expense of construction and parking operations on that parcel.</p> <p>NICTD will work with the Town of Ogden Dunes and City of Portage to develop parking lot designs that include features that will enhance the station area while serving the needs of NICTD and its commuters.</p>
<b>Town of Chesterton</b>	Letter	10/13/17	<p>On Monday, October 9, 2017, the Chesterton Town Council passed a Motion expressing the Town's enthusiastic support of NICTD's proposed Double Track project. The Motion was passed unanimously by the four Town Council members present at the meeting. The Double Track project stands to increase local access to Chicago by significantly shortening the commute time to downtown Chicago from Chesterton and surrounding communities. This is a significant key to economic growth in the area, including the Town of Chesterton.</p> <p>The Double Tracking project will increase local access to lucrative jobs in Chicago, bring additional new jobs to the area, and bring new economic</p>	Thank you for your comments and support.

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			<p>opportunities to the Town and its residents. All of these will make the Town of Chesterton and Northwest Indiana as a whole an even more attractive place to live.</p> <p>Please accept this letter as a representation of the Town of Chesterton's fervent support of the Double Track project. If the Town is able to assist the District with regard to the Double Track project, please do not hesitate to contact me.</p>	

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1	Web	9/21/2017	This double track, plus the re-alignment in South Bend will boost the economy around southern Lake Michigan, as well as the quality of life of area residents.	Thank you for your comment and support.
2	Web	9/22/2017	I just want to state my strong opposition to adding any additional railroad tracks across Hillcrest Rd which is the main entrance to the town of Ogden Dunes. There are already 4 sets of tracks there as it is. Adding any more is unacceptable. NITCD has not been maintaining the crossing very well at all. It is amazing that no one got stuck on the tracks this past winter and hit by a train considering how rough and rutted they were. Why don't you use the second set of tracks that you already have there instead of using it for freight? There needs to come a time when people start putting a value on quality of life instead of constantly trying to expand business at the expense of the environment. Also, there is enough noise pollution as it is. We don't need more. Use your existing tracks. The crossing is already dangerous enough as it is. And do us all a favor and properly maintain the crossings you already have. I just drove over the one in Miller which is bad as well. Furthermore, I would like to state that freight trains carrying oil, especially shale oil, should be banned.	<p>Thank you for your comment. NICTD is not adding any tracks across Hillcrest Road. There are currently two sets of tracks and with this project, both of which will be maintained. Passenger and freight traffic operate on both sets of tracks. Under interstate commerce provisions of the US Constitution and pursuant to a long term operating agreement with CSS, NICTD does not have the authority to restrict freight usage, schedule, or length of freight trains.</p> <p>Road crossing surfaces are maintained in a safe condition until they are programmed for replacement. Hillcrest Road was rebuilt in 2017 as it was at the end of its useful life.</p> <p>See Responses to FAQs 1 and 10 for information regarding noise.</p>
3	Email	9/25/2017	Sir, Please extend the double track to the Gary Chicago airport so all can use it. South Bend has it right in the front door. Why can't Gary do that. Sincerely Michael Lindsley. mandrlindsley@yahoo.com	Thank you for your comment. The western limit of this project is at approximately Virginia Street in Gary, east of the Gary airport.

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4	Web	9/25/2017	Why not leave the 11th street track remain and put the other track on 10th street going in the opposite direction	Thank you for your comment. One of the objectives of this project is to increase safety in Michigan City, which requires realigning the tracks out of the roadway and closing crossings where feasible. Using 10 <sup>th</sup> Street would introduce additional miles of tracks within the street and new crossings and would not meet the purpose of the project. Additionally, the proposed alignment is consistent with Michigan City's plans for redevelopment of the area.
5	Web	9/25/2017	As you are aware, the Town of Dune Acres has only one entrance-- Mineral Springs Road-- which crosses the South Shore tracks. I am concerned that the project will close off the entrance into and out of Dune Acres. It is bad enough now when freight trains block the road for more than 10 minutes, and when the gates are frequently stuck in the down position.	Thank you for your comment. Construction of the project will be phased to maintain access to and from the Town of Dune Acres, and Mineral Springs Road will remain open during and after construction. Under interstate commerce provisions of the US Constitution and pursuant to a long term operating agreement with CSS, NICTD does not have the authority to restrict freight usage, schedule, or length of freight trains. There will be up to an additional 12 South Shore Line trains a day, operating in the morning and evening peak hours (5:45 to 9 a.m. and 3:45 to 6:30 p.m., respectively); however, South Shore Line trains are only 8 cars long and require approximately two minutes of gate down time.
6	Web	9/27/2017	This means more loud horns waking up from sleeping. Too many trains with loud horns!!	See Response to FAQ 1 for information regarding noise.

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7	Web	9/27/2017	This project is absolutely fantastic. This project will make a meaningful impact on the economics of NWI. Too often, our civic leaders support economic development actions that do not deliver a direct impact. The lower commuter times will make the NWI - Chicago commute much more appetizing and will lure more residents to our area. Earn in Chicago, spend in Indiana. The best idea in years.	Thank you for your comment and support.
8	Web	9/28/2017	I am a new resident in Michigan City. I moved here from Illinois. I was a commuter there as I am now a commuter here. I am very interested in what this project will do to the train schedule. I started using the Sunrise Express. Which works great. However, it simply gets me downtown too early. The return express ended up being too early in the day to use. Finding a return that stopped at Duneland made the day too long. I now take the 6:26 from 11th and return between 4:02 and 5:2x. The time difference is 30 minutes longer for me now each way. Will there be more express trains? I know you can't tailor a schedule to 1 person but I think I am your typical commuter. I need to get to work between 8:00am and 9:00am. It would be great to leave 11th ave at 7:00am and arrive at Millennium by 8:00am.	Thank you for your comment and support. With the proposed Project, NICTD will be able to add an additional five westbound trains and seven eastbound trains between Michigan City and Millennium Station during the morning and evening peak hours, respectively, and reduce travel time for commuters. While exact schedules are still in development, it is planned that some of those trains will be express service.



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9	Web	10/10/2017	<p>I fully support the proposed changes to improve the South Shore service between Chicago and South Bend with the exception of forcing people in the Ardmore neighborhood of South Bend to leave their homes. The community has asked that the South Bend station be put where the tracks currently come in to South Bend from the west (prior to turning north towards the airport/station) which I ask to be strongly considered rather than ruining a very established and healthy neighborhood. This location will also maximize the proximity to downtown South Bend for events such as SB Cubs games, ND events, etc.</p> <p>I moved to South Bend from Chicago 14 years ago and estimate that 1-3 of us have taken the train roundtrip SBN/Millennium Station an average of twice per month for all of these years due to professional/personal commitments/enjoyment in Chicago. It is a terrific service and I drive in to Chicago only if I absolutely need a car because it is less expensive and more enjoyable to take the train.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and support of the Double Track NWI project. The South Bend Realignment Study is a separate undertaking; however, your comment has been forwarded to the project team for review.</p>

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Public and Organizations				
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10	Web	10/11/2017	<p>I live at 1015 Washington Street, Michigan City IN. My property is situated on the corner of 11th street about 25 feet from where the tracks are currently embedded in the street. Although our house does not appear to be within the structural footprint of the plan, it looks like a second set of tracks will be closer to our home. Our house was built in 1917 and I am concerned about increased vibrations, sound and road dust.</p> <p>The house sits on a sand hill with retaining walls on 2 sides of the property, 11th and Washington streets. It secures the foundation of our house. This retaining wall will be continually compromised by an increased amount of vibration. Please consider replacing the wall to ensure the future value of this historical property.</p> <p>Apartments in the house contribute to our monthly income. Currently, the sound inside the house is 100 decibels for passenger trains. Having trains pass closer with more frequency, more speed, crossing gates and more freight will create a potentially unpleasant atmosphere. Please consider replacing our windows with sound proof windows and adding insulation to help ensure the future of our income.</p> <p>Aesthetically, the house has always been cared for and admired. Natural landscaping mixed with attractive structural features need to be considered as a part of the proposed project. I</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. NICTD followed FTA's 2006 Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment to measure existing noise and identify vibration contours in Michigan City. The existing information was used to determine impacts after the proposed Project is implemented (Section 4.7.2 and 4.7.3 of the EA). There would be five vibration impacts on 11<sup>th</sup> Street between Washington Street and Elston Street, including where your home is located, although the level of change in vibration is not of a magnitude that would cause structural damage. NICTD will install crosstie pads, ballast mats, resilient rail fasteners, or other track support system modifications to mitigate the vibration impacts.</p> <p>Please see Response to FAQ 1 for more information regarding noise. With the closure of 10 crossings and the implementation of a Quiet Zone, noise will be reduced in the corridor. See Section 4.7 in the EA and the Noise and Vibration Technical Memorandum in Appendix III of the EA for more information on the noise and vibration analyses.</p> <p>Michigan City has engaged a streetscape design consultant team to address and maximize pedestrian access and enhance the pedestrian experience along 11<sup>th</sup> Street. We encourage you to participate in that process to discuss landscaping and streetscape.</p>

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			<p>started the Washington Street Historical Neighborhood Association 5 years ago. It has been challenge to move this end of town into a culturally rich environment. In many ways social justice would suggest my historical property requires an investment not limited to the above mentioned.</p> <p>Please contact me at your earliest convenience.</p>	
11	Web	10/12/2017	<p>At the Open House in Miller last night I commented upon the location of the platform and station @ Lake Street (expressing my hope that both would be as close to Lake Street as possible). I'd like to amend that comment with the observation that if positioning the platform further west of Lake Street would lower 'gate down' time at Lake Street for east bound trains, that would be a reasonable reason to have the platform further west.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Please see Responses to FAQs 3 and 4 for more information regarding the platform location and gate down time, respectively.</p>
12	Web	10/12/2017	<p>The second track will free up the first track used for freight traffic. This project adds more than just 12 daily South Shore trains. What is the expected daily increase in freight trains? Is this impact on our neighborhoods and crossings addressed in the EA?</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Please see Response to FAQ 2 for more information regarding freight trains. Increases in freight traffic is dictated by freight companies and is outside the scope of this project; therefore, it was not specifically addressed in the EA. Impacts to neighborhoods and crossings from the project are addressed in Section 4.3 of the Environmental Assessment.</p>

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13	Web	10/12/2017	We need better, more dependable, and affordable bus service, intra- and interconnecting our communities, in Gary and other communities in northwest Indiana. Monies should go for these projects rather than a 9-mile South Shore track. Many thousands of jobs can be created, such as bus drivers, serving the communities 20 hours a day, maintenance and repair workers, keeping the bus services operating, scheduling and logistics jobs, bus shelters, and other service and administrator jobs as required. Thank you.	<p>Thank you for your comment. The West Lake project is a separate undertaking; however, your comment has been forwarded to that project team for review.</p> <p>With regard to the Double Track NWI project, the purpose and need for the second track is outlined in the EA in Section 1.</p>
14	Web	10/13/2017	Hello NICTD, ETC. -- The South Shore Line passenger/freight rail improvement project should NOT interfere or disrupt in any way current and future bicycle and multi-use trail projects, such as the Burnham Greenway, which have been planned and programmed for decades and are crucial to the overall success and prosperity of the region and the efficient functioning of its non-motorized transportation network. At-grade rail-trail crossings should be allowed and improved with state-of-the-art designs and safety treatments. Near the Hegewich Metra station, the railroads should not demand a bridge for the planned Burnham Greenway, but accept an improved at-grade crossing at this location (Burnham Ave. and Brainerd Ave.). If the railroads/NICTD insist on a bridge, then they themselves should pay 100% for the bridge engineering, ROW acquisition, construction, and maintenance, and they should be given 2-years maximum to complete the bridge and have it working.	<p>Thank you for your comment. The West Lake project is a separate undertaking; however, your comment has been forwarded to that project team for review.</p>

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			Thank you, Joe Neal	
15	Web	10/17/2017	There must be a way to design access without stairs, in creating access for all, where ramps and stairs do not force separation from able-bodied individuals from those who have mobility limitations or disabilities. Continuing in the status quo of stairs and ramps vs looking at universal, inclusive design as an approach to design for access begs discrimination, segregation. separation. Create walkways, pathways that are inclusive of all.	Thank you for your comments. Please see Response to FAQ 11 for more information regarding universal access.

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	Web	10/20/2017	My son is disabled and lives at 524 e 11th st. MC I have attended meeting in Gary and was told to put my concerns in writing. My son's needs require the coming and going of quite a few caregivers through out the day and They have been able to use the ample parking on York to fit those needs. I'm taking the time to insure that you include this parking available to his address in the design of the cul de sac. I'm also concerned about snow removal. In the past his street was given 1st priority and I'm afraid that your new design may neglect the snow removal or even worse become a dumping grounds for the snow at the end of the cul de sac. Also I was wondering if we would be allowed to build a fence in what is currently the front of the home seeing as how your plan changes the facade as to which the house is approached from to York?	Thank you for your comment. Michigan City will be designing and implementing the cul-de-sacs, including permissible parking zones on local streets. The City is also responsible for snow removal and permitting for improvements such as fences. We encourage you to contact the Planning and Redevelopment Department at Michigan City for more information. Your comment will be forwarded to the City of Michigan City.
16	Web	10/22/2017	How are we on East 10th Street going to live. With the streets closed to the schools. How are our homes stand all the trains going throw. We are going to have to worry about windows breaking and walls cracking. Our homes will fall apart with the trains so close. We need to know what your plans are to keep our homes safe. As we know now the train shacks our homes and we have to fix walls alot. So are you buying our homes or are we stuck with your plans. Some of us can't just keep repairing our homes from the trains going throw. Alot of us would like to know the plans on this.	<p>Thank you for your comments. Franklin Street, Lafayette Street, and Oak Street will remain open at 11<sup>th</sup> Street for connections between East 10<sup>th</sup> Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Street.</p> <p>NICTD followed FTA's 2006 Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual to determine existing vibration levels in Michigan City and future vibration levels with additional passenger trains to determine impacts from implementation of the Project (see Section 4.7.1 and 4.7.2 of the EA). There will be five vibration impacts on 11<sup>th</sup> Street between Washington Street and Elston Street; however, East 10<sup>th</sup> Street was determined to be</p>

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				outside the area where vibration impacts would occur. In the areas of impact identified on 11 <sup>th</sup> Street, NICTD would install crosstie pads, ballast mats, resilient rail fasteners, or other track support system modifications to mitigate the vibration impacts. See Sections 4.7 of the EA and the Noise and Vibration Technical Memorandum in Appendix III of the EA for more information on the vibration analysis and mitigation.
17	Web	10/22/2017	I am totally opposed to a new parking lot being built west of Hillcrest Rd., in Ogden Dunes! That would be almost in the backyard of my house & neighbors' houses! Not sure about high platforms either.	Thank you for your comments. Please see Response to FAQ 8 for information regarding parking at the Portage/Ogden Dunes Station. Existing platforms are approximately 8 inches above the track. The high-level platforms will be approximately 4 feet above the track.
18	Web	10/22/2017	I'm very concerned about the changes at the Ogden Dunes station. My home is already affected by noise and traffic at the station. These types of changes could potentially decrease the value of my home and cause an increase in train disturbances which already happen on a daily basis.	Thank you for your comments. Please see Responses to FAQs 1 and 10 for information regarding noise.
19	Web	10/22/2017	I am opposed to any additional parking for the Portage/Ogden Dunes Station. It will unnecessarily bring parking too close to residents and obscure the natural dune-look that we currently have. There are game trails all along there that will negatively impact innumerable amounts of wildlife.	Thank you for your comments. Please see Responses to FAQs 8 and 9 for information regarding parking at the Portage/Ogden Dunes Station. The locations of the parking lots were identified after a thorough review of the areas in the NEPA process. Lot 2 planned for south of U.S. 12 will require removal of trees; however, there is a larger, similarly-vegetated area west and south of the proposed parking lot that will continue to support wildlife.

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20	Web	10/22/2017	<p>Thanks for the opportunity to comment. I am submitting these comments as a resident of Ogden Dunes. Overall, I think the project is fantastic and I hope that it actually comes to fruition. The double-tracking, the reconfiguration of Rt. 12 in Miller, the removal of some crossings in Michigan City, high-level boarding platforms – these are all things that I think will add to our quality of life and will not cause much irreparable harm to the environment. In many cases the proposed changes will improve safety along the line. There are a few things here in Ogden Dunes that concern me, number one being the proposed parking lot additions. The west lot, in my opinion, is going to cause some safety hazards on Hillcrest Road. That intersection is complex enough as it is, and now you want to put more traffic and an intersection into the mix? Vehicles barrel out of the current lot with little thought to oncoming traffic. People crossing Hillcrest to get to the train is also problematic. First, there is no sidewalk into the east parking lot. Second, people will try to cross with little regard to oncoming traffic because they will be in a hurry to get to the train. That is all they will be focused on. I personally know that from more than 15 years of commuting on that train.</p> <p>The lot south of U.S. 12 will also cause crossing hazards as people will again be very focused on trying to get across the street to get to the train. With all of the steel haulers and vehicle traffic, I hardly even ride my bike along U.S. 12 let alone walk along it.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and support. Please see Response to FAQs 8 and 9 for information regarding parking and pedestrian crossings at the Portage/Ogden Dunes station.</p> <p>The contractor will be required to follow best practices as it relates to invasive species, including but not limited to cleaning vehicles to avoid spreading seeds, using uncontaminated construction/landscaping material, and planting native species. NICTD will continue to coordinate with the IDNR and National Park Service (NPS) regarding the appropriate ratio and species to provide mitigation for tree replacement.</p>



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			<p>The other thing I'd like to comment upon really doesn't affect Ogden Dunes that much, but it is of concern to me, and that is the spread of invasive species during construction. There are already a lot of invasive species up and down the South Shore line, and I'm happy many invasive trees will be removed, including in Ogden Dunes. But, there is also a lot of risk associated with construction trucks spreading species into other areas on their tires or through disturbance. I hope you will monitor the disturbances and be on the lookout for super-detrimental species that could be inadvertently spread, such as sericea lespedeza, spotted knapweed and black swallow-wort. While mitigating for trees, please make replacement trees are appropriate for the area in which they are plants – and are native trees.</p>	
21	Web	10/23/2017	<p>I am opposed to the addition of parking for the Ogden Dunes station west of Hillcrest Road, which would probably add traffic to an already problematic intersection. I would support any measures to reduce noise from trains such as designating the Ogden Dunes area a no horn zone.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Please see Response to FAQ 8 for information regarding the parking lot west of Hillcrest Road and Response to FAQ 10 for information regarding a Quiet Zone in Ogden Dunes.</p>
22	Web	10/24/2017	<p>Will the 11th Street right-of-way be located within an easement? Which company will own the tracks?</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. Michigan City has jurisdiction over the current 11<sup>th</sup> Street right-of-way and will retain jurisdiction. A portion of the tracks and the underlying land on 11<sup>th</sup> Street will be owned by NICTD with the remainder being secured through an easement from Michigan City. NICTD will own all the track, catenary, signals,</p>

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				and platform assets located in the public right-of-way.
23	Web	10/25/2017	I sincerely hope that this project becomes a reality. It would improve train service, and help to grow local economies	Thank you for your comment and support.
24	Email	9/26/2017	<p>I don't think I will be able to be at the public hearings, but will try to attend. In the meantime, I would like to comment directly that we continue to be alarmed by the prospect of a second parking lot on the west side of our exit/entrance. We have hours of trains passing our town each day and during the mornings and evenings of weekdays, when the South Shore Line parking will be busiest, we have the most traffic as well.</p> <p>There is a solution to this - identify the owner of the property just east of the current exit and determine the impact of moving the planned parking to this site. I've discussed this with members of NIRPC and our Police Chief has discussed with a County Commissioner. They are both in support of our suggestions.</p> <p>I've copied our Police Chief, Marshall James Reeder, for his views to be expressed as well. Please accept these remarks as part of the hearing period discussion.</p>	NICTD does not own the property east of the existing lot. Project engineers and traffic specialists selected the new lot west of Hillcrest because it is in the existing NICTD-owned right-of-way. NICTD explored the feasibility of relocating the parking lot to the east of the existing lot. The terms proposed for a lease of that property would not provide sufficient continuing control of that property to justify the expense of construction and parking operations on that parcel.

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25	Email	10/13/2017	<p>On Monday, October 9, 2017, the Chesterton Town Council passed a Motion expressing the Town's enthusiastic support of NICTD's proposed Double Track project. The Motion was passed unanimously by the four Town Council members present at the meeting. The Double Track project stands to increase local access to Chicago by significantly shortening the commute time to downtown Chicago from Chesterton and surrounding communities. This is a significant key to economic growth in the area, including the Town of Chesterton. The Double Tracking project will increase local access to lucrative jobs in Chicago, bring additional new jobs to the area, and bring new economic opportunities to the Town and its residents. All of these will make the Town of Chesterton and Northwest Indiana as a whole an even more attractive place to live. Please accept this letter as a representation of the Town of Chesterton's fervent support of the Double Track project. If the Town is able to assist the District with regard to the Double Track project, please do not hesitate to contact me.</p> <p>Sincerely, James G. Ton President, Chesterton Town Council</p>	Thank you for your comments and support.
26	Email	10/13/2017	<p>Is it really necessary to close the Carroll Ave crossing for this project? I think the plan will be good for Michigan City with the exception of closing the Carroll Ave crossing. By doing this, traffic needing to cross the tracks will have to be</p>	Thank you for your comment. The DT-NWI plans do not include closing Carroll Avenue as part of the Project. The future closure of Carroll Avenue would be a separate project to be completed independent of the DT-NWI Project. Michigan City

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			<p>redirected to the narrow street of Pleasant on the west or Roeske on the east. Especially in the case of emergency personnel, the time loss and potential for clearance issues on Pleasant could be crucial. This seems to be a big flaw in the current plans. Wondering why the crossing will be closed and if consideration could be given to keeping that crossing open.</p>	<p>committed to the future closure of Carroll Avenue in the City Council's legal agreement with NICTD. The Carroll Avenue closure will be critical to NICTD's future plans to expand its storage capacity west of Carroll Avenue. It is anticipated that Michigan City will take into consideration appropriate traffic considerations if Carroll Avenue is closed, including emergency services. Once the date of closure is known, NICTD will work with Michigan City on an outreach plan to inform the community.</p>
27	Email	10/19/2017	<p>Hello. I am one of many who urge NICTD to establish a South Bend South Shore station either on the old site (Amtrak station) or another spot in the old Bendix property area. I have never understood why the station was moved to the airport; I find that location VERY inconvenient. Retaining that location and cutting a new route through an old settled neighborhood is neither a sensible nor cost-effective proposition. So... please consider either upgrading the current Amtrak site or constructing a small station building and parking area along the Bendix property.</p> <p>As to double track: that is, in my opinion, long overdue, and has my full support.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and support of the DT-NWI project. The South Bend project is a separate undertaking; however, your comment has been forwarded to that project team for review.</p>

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28	Email	10/21/2017	<p>October 2017</p> <p>Dear Sir, Madam and Relevant Others,</p> <p>I am writing this email in hopes of encouraging the committee involved in the planning stage of the upcoming upgrade to the Michigan City Indiana train system, to consider the status of Michigan City as a Quiet Zone in their construction thereof.</p> <p>The fact that Amtrak and the South Shore Lines far exceed the legal limits for decibels of sound for human health is an issue that has gone unrecognized for far too long. The significant medical problems from being exposed to this volume of noise are well documented and anyone living or working in the city and as Far East as Karwick Road is regularly exposed to the ear shattering levels of sound around the clock.</p> <p>Children and the elderly in particular are at an even greater disadvantage. Preschool, Elementary and High Schools all are within the danger zones of this noise. The studies have been done and the fact that the train companies are risking future injury and causing serious present danger to the community to avoid the "possible" injury of a train related accident is unconscionable. Torture the masses to save the train companies from a "potential" lawsuit is a dangerous precedent.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Please see FAQ 1 for more information regarding the noise analysis performed for the proposed Project. In addition to a commitment to lower the horn volume on South Shore Line trains, NICTD is working with the FRA and Michigan City to submit an application for a Quiet Zone along the South Shore Line, between 0.25 miles west of Sheridan Avenue and 0.25 miles east of Carroll Avenue. Please see Section 4.6 of the EA and the Noise and Vibration Technical Memorandum in Appendix III of the EA for more information regarding noise impacts. The designation of a Quiet Zone, along with reducing the horn volume on South Shore Line trains, will improve the noise environment along 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Street and benefit children and the elderly who reside or go to school near the corridor.</p> <p>Noise impacts from Amtrak operations are outside the scope of this Project.</p>

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			Now is the time to lay the groundwork for a Quiet Zone in Michigan City. If funds are needed to meet this challenge then give the public a chance to raise those funds by being forthcoming with the possibility of fulfilling this overdue upgrade to an outdated and miserably failed system for the 21st century.	
29	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	<p>MR. JOHN VINZANT: My name is John, J-o-h-n, Vinzant, V-i-n-z-a-n-t, and I live in Gary, in the First District, and I have just a couple comments. First, I was looking at the assessment document on page 318 -- 3-18, and I wanted to -- I felt like the platforms should be closer to Lake Street, as close to Lake Street as they can be. That will be moving them as far east as possible. Because it's just that's the heart of the community, is Lake Street, that thoroughfare, and I think there's room to do that. And then, also, on that same page, the proposed station site looks like it's being placed in the center of the platforms, from east to west, and I think that's also a mistake. It should be moved as far as possible to the east end of the platforms. Because people will use that structure for shelter from the elements, and if it's in the middle of the platforms, they'll have to walk to one end or the other in order to get on the platforms. You can't walk from the station on the platform; you've got to go to the end and walk up the platforms to get on.</p> <p>So, if you move the station to the easternmost end of the platforms, it will, A, be right on Lake Street where we want it, and, B, it will be easier</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Please see Response to FAQ 3 for more information on the Gary/Miller station platform location. Please see Response to FAQ 4 for more information on traffic and Response Number 6 for more information regarding gate down time.</p> <p>While the layover tracks would be visible from Lake Street, it would be consistent with the station area setting. Set back east of Lake Street, the layover tracks would be at a lower elevation than the NICTD tracks and realigned U.S. 12. It would be buffered by landscaping to the south and a retaining wall to the north. NICTD will continue to coordinate with City of Gary staff regarding the retaining wall design during final design.</p>

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			<p>for people to get out of the station onto the platforms when it's time to catch the train. My next comment is that -- I may have missed it -- but I'm looking through this, and I don't see a lot of analysis of increased train traffic and the impact that it will have on vehicular traffic on Lake Street at the crossing. People have been asking me about that, and I tell them that, "Well, the trains are going to be dwelling at the station for much shorter periods of time, so the gates will not be down for four minutes per train. It will be down maybe for one and a half, two minutes per train, and that's an improvement." But we're also going to be getting 30 percent more train traffic through here. And I want to confirm that those impacts have been looked at carefully. This was a point that was made by a comment that was submitted to the railroad by the Miller Beach Arts and Creative District earlier on in the public comment process; we sent a letter, and that traffic issue was one that was brought up. And, again, it may be in here somewhere, but I didn't really see it, or maybe it was in one of the other documents; it's important to us. The third comment is that there are questions, and it was in the Miller Beach Arts and Creative District comment earlier, that the layover tracks might pose an eyesore, potentially. And the drawings in this document look good, but we just wanted to confirm that because we haven't had a response to that comment. 8937 Lake Shore Drive, Gary, Indiana. 46403.</p>

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30	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	<p>My name is George Rogge, R-o-g-g-e. My address is 1130 North Vigo, V-i-g-o, Gary, Indiana. 46403. You know, I've given comment in the past, and, of course, it's about how wonderful double tracking will be for getting to Chicago and back much quicker, but there's another thing that double tracking will do that I think is more serious and more important, and that's the safety of the Miller Station. I drop off my wife at 5:30 in the morning, and, as we are now getting into winter, it's very dark. And I mean it is very dark. The parking lot is across U.S. 12, and there are people crossing the street in five different locations, and you can hardly see them. And there's steel hauling trucks coming barreling down the road at 40 miles an hour, and it's a mess. And, actually, then you also have people that are coming to drop off their person, but they're late. Or they're coming to park their car, and they're late, so they are really driving fast while the people are crossing the street. And then when I drop her off, I'm going back home, so I have to make a U-turn, and you have to watch it because of not only -- there's always this one guy that just makes it on the train, but you can't hardly see him. You know, he's just skittering across. Plus, the ADA requirements. Double boarding will make our train stop really, really, really interesting for the people coming from Chicago with their bicycles that want to bike in the dunes. And, in fact, many of our residents ride their bike to the station, but they can't put it on the train. Except this one young man has a</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and support. Please see Response to FAQ 5 regarding pedestrian safety and Response to FAQ 11 regarding ADA access.</p> <p>The high level boarding will facilitate bringing bikes on board. Bikes are allowed on specified trains between April and October each year. See <a href="http://www.mysouthshoreline.com/plan-your-trip/bikes-on-trains">http://www.mysouthshoreline.com/plan-your-trip/bikes-on-trains</a> for more information on train schedules and stations that are a part of the bike program. NICTD will evaluate the schedule to determine whether additional bicycle trains can be added to the schedule.</p>



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			foldup bike that he puts on the train. So, I think that's very important, that the double tracking happens, the money flows, the station gets to be built, and there's safety, and we'll all feel a lot better.	
31	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	Gene, G-e-n-e, Ayers, A-y-e-r-s, 9101 Lake Shore Drive, Gary. 46403. I also own a building on Lake Street at 646 South Lake Street, which is, obviously, the second building in from the train tracks, and it's a real estate business. And I have people get off the train, come over to our office, and literally buy a house. So, we're very excited about the station improvements. But we want to make sure that the station improvements are as far to the east, as close to Lake Street, as possible, so that people are drawn to the business district, to the shops, the restaurants, et cetera, not far to the west. Is there any studies done about the impact of blocking Lake Street, vehicular traffic being blocked, and how long it would be blocked and what the impact that would be to people getting in and out of Lake Street?	<p>Thank you for your comments. Please see Responses to FAQs 3, 4, and 6 regarding platform locations, traffic, and gate down time, respectively.</p> <p>NICTD will develop reasonable traffic plans that maintain safe access for businesses, commuters, automobiles, and pedestrians during construction.</p>

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32	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	My name is Patrick Lee, and my address is 563 South Lake Street, and so I'm right across the street. And I basically have two comments: First of all, I think this is an incredibly positive, long overdue project, and I believe the community is incredibly supportive of it. So, I have two technical comments: One is that we need to explore the effect of the added train traffic on Lake Street -- on the Lake Street business district corridor. And the other comment is that for the biggest economic development impact, the station itself needs to be as far east as possible, as close to Lake Street as possible, you know, without interfering with the platform, but as far east as possible.	Thank you for your comments. Please see Responses to FAQs 3 and 4 regarding platform locations and traffic.
33	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	My name is Sue Rutsen, and I am the president of the Miller Community Fund and also of the Nelson Algren Museum of Miller Beach, and I would hope that the train station would be as close to Lake Street as possible because it's an easy walk -- you can take the train from Chicago to Miller and get off and go see the Nelson Algren Museum and enjoy Lake Street.	Thank you for your comments. Please see Response to FAQ 3 regarding platform locations.

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34	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	My name is Jim Meyer, M-e-y-e-r. My local address is 363 South Lake Street, Gary. 46403. Two comments: One is we should evaluate the impact of this project on the traffic on Lake Street since there's going to be some more train traffic and passengers. Seemingly, it would be an adverse impact on traffic on Lake Street. The other comment is that the train platform and station should be moved as far east -- in other words -- as close to Lake Street as possible to make it more convenient for everyone.	Thank you for your comments. Please see Responses to FAQs 3 and 4 regarding platform locations and traffic.
35	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	I'm Carol Smith; I'm vice president of the Miller Citizens Corporation, the Shoreline Committee, and Friends of Marquette Park, and I'm a resident in Miller. And we really want to make sure that our Lake Street thrives and improves. And the train station is critical to the life of our area. We have many residents who live here and work in Chicago, or elsewhere, where they can take the train to and back. So, we want that train station as close to Lake Street as possible, not farther away, but as close as possible. And design it so that the streets and the parking area, so that it's safe and well-lit and an inviting place to come to.	Thank you for your comments. Please see Response to FAQ 3 regarding platform locations and Response to FAQ 5 regarding pedestrian safety.

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36	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	<p>My name is Meg, M-e-g, Roman, R-o-m-a-n, and I'm a Miller resident. So, I would like to make sure that the parking area for the train does not block any cross traffic because we currently have lots of problems with trains stopping or slowing, and we only have two ways out of Miller, so there have been incidences where the trains have blocked one or both exits, and the emergency vehicles can't get through, all that stuff.</p> <p>And then my other comment would be the rerouting of 12 makes a lot of sense, but where it comes back to connect, I would like to see that moved. I think they have it planned to go around the Mosley Hotel, which bypasses our main corridor, our main business corridor, which is Lake Street. So, Lake Street goes north and south, and the redirection is going to go past our main business district and then come back around again. So, we're going to lose traffic coming into our main business district. But other than that, I think it's fabulous, and I fully support it.</p> <p>My name is Meg Roman. So, the reason I like this project is that it will have a good, positive economic impact on Miller and Gary. So, anything that drives business towards our business corridor, which is Lake Street, is good; anything that detracts from it is not good. So, the station being as close to 12, 20, and Lake Street as possible because, right now, that's one of our few positive points about this area, is it's close to Chicago, people can take the train, get off, walk past stores and restaurants to their</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. Please see Responses to FAQs 3, 4, and 8 regarding platform locations, station building design, and traffic. NICTD will work with the City of Gary on the design of the stations and parking areas. Mitigation measures may include landscaping, building construction materials, colors, and architectural styles consistent with the station site's surroundings.</p> <p>The realignment of U.S. 12 is being studied by INDOT as a separate project. INDOT will host a public meeting to review the project and take public comment</p>

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			<p>homes. And so, if the station is too far away, that will negate some of that ease of living and not be as much of a draw to this community as we currently have and would like to keep. So, anything that helps the business district is what we want.</p> <p>So, I would like there to be public input into what this actual station looks like. I just had a conversation with some colleagues representing the project, and they weren't really sure, but they said there would be warming stations, and it didn't sound like there would be any type of building. And I said, "Well, currently there is a building, that you can open a door and walk in." They said it might not be that way. So, that would mean we're going backwards. So, if we currently have a free-standing structure, like a building, and we're going to take that away and just have warming stations, that's not an improvement, and that's not an ideal situation. So, I would like more detail about what the actual station is going to look like.</p>

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37	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	Okay. My name is Camila Villanueva. Recently moved here about three years ago, originally from Chicago. And, yeah, so I was just curious when I first heard about the development of the transportation line and no longer running on freight and more commuter friendly. I was excited; I didn't realize it was going to happen as soon as they actually said that these changes were going to happen, so -- but, yeah, no, I'm sold on the idea. I love the idea of more trains and more options and travel times. Curious to see how all of the commercial area is developed in Miller and Gary, and, yeah, -- and what that does for the community.	Thank you for your comment and support.
38	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	I'm Robert Golding, and we have several properties in Miller; I have a property at 641 North Lake Street. And my comment is that I think this is a good project, and I would like to see the new station have as much parking as possible. Because I think it's very important that there be a lot of parking to encourage people to travel to Miller and visit the beach and just visit Miller in general. Because I think that a big problem in Miller right now is that there's inadequate parking for people to come to visit Miller. So, I would encourage the railroad to put in as much parking as possible and perhaps for there to be some sort of coordinated plan that people can use a shuttle bus or something like that to go from the train station up to the lakefront.	<p>Thank you for your comments. Please see Response to FAQ 7 for more information about parking.</p> <p>A shuttle bus to the lakefront is outside of the scope of this project; however, the NPS already provides a shuttle bus from the Miller Station to the Douglas Center, Lake Street Beach and Marquette Park beaches during beach season. More information can be found at: <a href="https://www.nps.gov/indu/planyourvisit/indu_dune_buggy_shuttle.htm">https://www.nps.gov/indu/planyourvisit/indu_dune_buggy_shuttle.htm</a>.</p>

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39	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	My name's Eric Reaves, R-e-a-v-e-s, and I'm a 49-year resident of Miller Beach and on the Miller Citizens Corporation. It's an organization of which I'm vice president. We've been fighting to keep the railroad station on Lake Street, a South Shore station, and we're very happy to see the TOD and the realignment for the double tracking. The closest the station can be to Lake Street is the best for the retail businesses and the constituents. My address is 8501 Locust Avenue in Gary, Indiana.	Thank you for your comment and support.
40	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	My name is Chris Julsrud, J-u-l-s-r-u-d, 7516 Oak Avenue, Miller Beach/Gary, Indiana. 46403. And my question/concern is has the South Shore analyzed or considered the increased gate downtime that will result on Lake Street, Gary, as a result of what is contemplated by the design we're seeing tonight? Thank you.	Thank you for your comments. Please see Response to FAQ 6 for information regarding gate down times.
41	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	Karren Lee, K-a-r-r-e-n, L-e-e, and I've been with the Miller Beach Arts and Creative District since its inception. I'm excited about everything, my concern is to know exactly what the impact that the station will have on the businesses on Lake Street, how the traffic flows, because since we started six years ago, there's, like, 14 new businesses that have opened. And we need to make sure that people can get in and keep the street alive. And then the other thing is, where is the train station going to be? Because from our point of view, the closer it is to Lake Street, the better. Other than that, those are my concerns, but real excited about all the progress that's	<p>Thank you for your comments. Please see Responses to FAQs 3 and 4 regarding platform locations and traffic.</p> <p>During construction, there will be temporary detours to access Lake Street. NICTD will develop reasonable traffic plans that maintain safe access to businesses on Lake Street. NICTD will also develop a construction public outreach plan that will include specific techniques to communicate with neighborhoods and businesses prior to and during construction.</p> <p>The Project is being designed in coordination with the City of Gary and INDOT and their respective</p>

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			been made and all the victories that has happened.	plans for the Gary/Miller Station area. The Project is supportive of Gary's TOD efforts to continue revitalization of the Lake Street areas. See Section 1.2.1 of the EA for information regarding the City of Gary's planning efforts. INDOT's U.S. 12/U.S. 20 realignment project will improve pedestrian connectivity in the area. The improved station area is expected to draw new visitors to Miller Beach and support multi-modal access to Lake Street.
42	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	My name is Gary Johnson; I'm a Miller resident, and I have two comments: One is making sure that the additional trains don't create significant interference to business traffic on Lake Street, and the second one is to move the station to the corner of Lake Street and 12 for two reasons: One, is that it integrates an existing business, McDonald's, as a nice place to sit and have coffee and wait for a train, into the development, just be right across the street, and secondly, it eliminates the appearances of a surface parking lot on an important corner, and it makes the area looked more developed.	Thank you for your comments. Please see Responses to FAQs 3 and 4 regarding platform locations and traffic.
43	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	Starting with the document itself, as I was reading it, the language when it applies to with persons with disabilities, page 75, 1, point, dash, two, I think it is. It says, "To load and unload persons with disabilities." That "loading" and "unloading," we're not cattle; okay? But, yet, for everybody else, it speaks about boarding and unboarding, but disabilities is	Thank you for your comments. NICTD is excited about the potential to make access to jobs in Chicago easier for all. Please see Response to FAQ 11 for more information regarding ADA and universal access.



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			<p>loading and unloading. The other thing, when we look at the renderings, the drawings, the design says ADA compliant, the design -- the ramp itself looks very steep. We want to make sure that those ramps are accessible, not like hills or mountaintops -- climbing a hill. So, it will definitely help to have an itemized list of what exactly you mean by ADA compliant. If it's not just -- assuming that everything's going to be okay, but we have no idea. So, it would be helpful just to know what do they mean by "ADA compliant" when they talk about ADA compliant. Because the last ADA definition -- what I know the ADA definition to be is very different from what I'm seeing. One other thing. I'm looking at -- we know the economy, and we're talking about doubling the passengers. In the interest of looking at -- also for people with disabilities that could affect the amount of power that persons with disabilities have. So, do not ignore that, as well. So, -- And I would like to read it in the document, that it's not just about able-bodied folks going to jobs in the city of Chicago, but persons with disabilities would like to get jobs, as well. And so, this is an opportunity for all.</p>

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44	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	<p>The (station) one in Ogden Dunes is not very easy. We've tested it with a lot of folks. Because we actually did an accessible active transportation festival here, so we had about 500 people over here, at our hub over here for our Build-a-Bike, and the Adam Benjamin station was under construction and Miller's not accessible, Ogden Dunes was our only option. And a lot of folks, it wasn't easy for them. And we tend to focus on universal design as being the best for it, and it ends up saving money in the long run and actually being the best solution. Jessica, J-e-s-s-i-c-a, Renslow, R-e-n-s-l-o-w, and I live in Gary's First District. Just a universal design's great, and if you have an ADA coordinator on the project, if they're listed, and we would love to talk with them in person. We've got a group of 10 people who are very actively engaged in Access Miller, which is our transportation coalition; I went down and testified for 1144. So, we'd love to have that person come to one of our meetings to discuss what's possible.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. Please see Response to FAQ 11 for more information regarding ADA and universal access at the stations.</p> <p>The Portage/Ogden Dunes station will have high-level platforms for level boarding and will be improved to ADA standards. NICTD will consult with an ADA-compliance specialist during final design.</p>

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45	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	<p>I'm Rex Blackwell, and I am a retired GM executive, 36 years of working with the company, managing plants for them around the country. And my wife and I live at 9449 Lake Shore Drive. So, we've been in Miller for -- really, as a second home -- for about 18 years, but now we just retired here permanently, and we're excited about this opportunity. And we think it's absolutely that critical link to set Miller and Gary back where it belongs. Make it easy for people to get here; make it easy for commuters who actually want to come and discover the dunes and all that the dunes have to offer. And some of the revitalization that's happened here around Gary as well as Miller. We think that it's absolutely critical that as we make this investment, we want to make sure that we're as close to Lake Street as we could be.</p> <p>Because if you walk down Lake Street, you're going to find one of the most beautiful opportunities to Lake Michigan at the end of Lake Street. So, there's a lot of value in having as much of this infrastructure as close here as possible. So, that said, as a citizen and a person that volunteers time in this community, we're willing to do whatever it takes to support that this happens. And we really appreciate you guys being here to help us make it happen.</p>	Thank you for your comment and support. Please see Response to FAQ 3 for more information regarding platform location.

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46	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	<p>My name is Renee Patterson, and I'm a resident of the Miller Beach section of Gary, so we live right here in the neighborhood of the community. So, we were looking at some of the proposed plans for the tracks, and I was just pointing out to one of the representatives that I was wondering why they didn't consider diverting that track, putting another track in, on 7th Avenue. It looks like they have the space for double tracks if they run it along 7th Avenue as opposed to Highway 12. Because Highway 12 is a highway that I travel quite frequently, just about -- well, every day, several times a day. And it does tend to be a little faster than Highway 20, but now we'll be diverting traffic from 12 onto 20, you know, it just causes for a slower, you know, times of getting where you're going and just a little bit more cumbersome travel. So, that's one of the things that was concerning about the project.</p> <p>The other was parking. It doesn't look like there's really been identified any clear concise parking. Once the station has been -- or the tracks have been established in the Miller section, I see that they have the raised platforms now, but I didn't get a clear explanation of whether anyone would actually be avoiding traffic once they exit the train from the platform. And then the other concern we have was the station downtown in Gary. Right now, it's pretty much not useable, and it's, you know, a lot of -- it's just -- it's not conducive for you to travel -- exit -- easy exit off as far as safety is concerned. And I was wondering how</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The station area plans for the Gary/Miller station were developed in coordination with the City of Gary and Indiana Department of Transportation, and are reflective of land use plans for the area and Gary's transit-oriented development (TOD) study. The NICTD right-of-way runs adjacent to existing U.S. 12 and with the proposed realignment, it was feasible to use the abandoned public right-of-way for the second track and station area. The INDOT study is being conducted independent of the DT-NWI project and would be implemented even without the DT-NWI project. INDOT will host a public meeting to take comment on the U.S. 12 realignment project.</p> <p>Please see Responses to FAQs 5 and 7 for more information on pedestrian access and parking.</p> <p>The western limit of this project is at approximately Virginia Street in Gary, east of the downtown Gary station. Any improvements or relocation of the downtown station would be considered in a separate project.</p>

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			much attention was going to be paid to renovating that station or putting it in a more useable position. So, those are some of the concerns we had. I think the idea is admirable and it's something that's needed, but we just want to make sure that it's actually something that we can actually benefit from in the community, as well. Not only in the Miller area, but in the entire downtown Gary, as well.	
47	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	Michael Doyne is the name. 7412 Oak Avenue in Gary. I would like to see the station put as close -- at Lake Street -- put as close to Lake Street as it possibly can. Instead of having the station in the center of the platform, I'd like to make it further -- closer to Lake Street so that the businesses can flourish from that and have a synergy there.	Thank you for your comment and support. Please see Response to FAQ 3 for more information regarding the platform location.

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48	Hearing Transcript	10/11/2017	<p>My name is Peggy Blackwell, and I live here in Miller Beach. And, first off, I want to say that we're really excited about having the changes made and the double tracks lowering the commute time. I commuted from the western suburbs of Chicago for over 10 years on the Burlington Northern, and to hear that the commute time here would go down to five minutes shorter than my commute from Western Springs, I think it's awesome and amazing. So, it's -- and that's a suburb that's only 14 miles out from the Loop, from Union station, so that to me is a game-changer for us, hopefully, here in Miller Beach.</p> <p>One of the concerns that I had was the location of the station and trying to get it moved closer in with Lake Street. That's one thing that always concerns me, as we're developing, we're -- there's a lot of us working on redeveloping and a renewal of the business district here on Lake Street, we don't want the station to be isolated from our downtown. And like the suburban downtowns I'm familiar with out in the suburbs, there's better integration. And so, I would really like to see it closer to Lake Street than where it is now, if that's being considered, to accommodate that type of an integration.</p> <p>Because we want people to not to come park and go to -- jump on the train -- I mean, yeah, we want them to do that, but we want them to use our downtown here that we're trying so hard to revitalize. So, that's probably the biggest input that I have, aside from this: When -- I don't know at what point in time that you get the</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and support. Please see Response to FAQ 3 for more information regarding the platform location and station building.</p> <p>With respect to station naming, NICTD would work with the City of Gary on this effort, if requested. NICTD encourages you to let the Mayor and the Council know of your request.</p>

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			<p>station designed, but I'm just hoping that the South Shore Railroad is going to be investing in some nice quality stations for us that are, like, on par with what you would see in the Chicago suburbs in Illinois. To help our community have a sense of place like they do from their train stations. The last comment that I had was that in our community building efforts here, we are branding ourselves as Miller Beach -- I mean, we are -- there's been interchangeably the term Miller used with Miller Beach in the past, but people -- we are referring to ourselves as Miller Beach because we are a beach community. So, as part of our community branding efforts and revitalization efforts, that's what we're coming out with in all of our literature, and we would like the station name to be called Miller Beach. And that would give more visibility to the fact that we are a beach community.</p>	

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49	Hearing Transcript	10/12/2017	I'm Chad True, on 242 Spring View Drive in Porter. I fully support this project, think you guys have done a great job. I would like to see a little more specifics on planned train additions in order to fully get the value of the money that's being spent on this. I think it's going to be a great way to attract young families from the Chicagoland area that are looking to start somewhere else. Thank you.	Thank you for your comments and support. With the proposed Project, NICTD will be able to add an additional five westbound trains and seven eastbound trains between Michigan City and the Millennium Station during the morning and evening peak hours, respectively, and reduce travel time for commuters. It is anticipated that travel times from Michigan City to Millennium Station will be reduced from an hour and 45 minutes to just over an hour with this Project.
50	Hearing Transcript	10/12/2017	I have homes and businesses in Chicago and Michigan City. I have been here for 14 years and I am -- every single working woman I know is dying to have this new line put in so that we can decrease our transportation time. And I think it would be a tremendous boom to the Michigan City economy, and I'm just all for it.	Thank you for your comments and support.
51	Hearing Transcript	10/12/2017	Dale -- Dale, D-a-l-e. M-a-h-e-r. And, I highly support this project and hope our government will. And it will help with the economic development of Michigan City and the areas around us. Just for the record.	Thank you for your comments and support.
52	Hearing Transcript	10/12/2017	I'm Tom Smith, I live at 1710 West 10th Street. My house is going to be one of the houses acquired for the double track. I've come to every meeting, the meetings that South Shore has held has never had a public comment period. So, as an organization the public has never heard, actually, the public speak, they've only heard the people from NICTD speak. At my age, I am 60 years old getting ready for retirement, I have a house that is paid for and is	Thank you for your comment. All property purchases and relocations would be conducted pursuant to the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, which was enacted to provide consistent and equitable treatment of persons whose property is acquired as part of a federally funded projects. It also requires that relocation assistance is provided, to lessen financial impacts of moving and ensure that new homes are decent, safe,



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			<p>definitely in my living expenses. Now I'm being told that I must sell my house for a price that I have been told what it's worth. And I keep on hearing the words fair, but I do not feel fairness in this at all, I feel railroaded. Ultimately, this is going to totally upend my life and it doesn't feel like I have any comment on this in public whatsoever. I don't feel like I'm being -- my voice is being heard. And it's upsetting to me that I come to meetings having been told that there is going to be public comment, and yet there is no public comment, there's only comments taken from the public in private.</p> <p>So, this is my main concerns. I still think this is a rotten deal for Michigan City and think it will actually hurt Michigan City financially and in growth. But for me it's actually a very personal thing because it's taking my home for 30 years, and I don't have a choice or a word, or even able to comment about it. Thank you.</p>	<p>sanitary, and within a displaced person's financial means. Property negotiations are expected to begin in 2019 and NICTD's real estate services staff will be in contact with you to discuss the process and help with this transition.</p> <p>The open house public hearing format was chosen to allow the greatest number of people personal contact to have questions answered, while being respectful of attendees' time. Your comment has been received and reviewed by the project team and FTA.</p>
53	Hearing Transcript	10/12/2017	<p>My name is Dave Biela, I live at 3044 Ohio Street, Michigan City, Indiana. I'm a former Michigan City councilman and I've got some concerns. First of all, I will be a direct beneficiary of this dual track project, so I am not opposed to the project, per se. Okay. My -- my interest here is to possibly project my thought process a hundred or two hundred years down the road. Isaac Newton, in his law of physics talks about things, what comes up -- what goes up must come down. Well, that also applies to surface water, to drainage water. We have here in the city of Michigan City three -- well, we</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. There is a functioning culvert between near County Line Road. No track work is proposed in this segment of the project. If a determination is made during the design phase of this project that there is a significant potential of flooding and damage to property at the location mentioned, design would consider appropriate drainage to mitigate flood risk.</p>

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			<p>have numerous impediments to the flow of water running downhill. Two-thirds of the city of Michigan City, majority of that rainwater runs to the west side of town. There are barriers that prevent that water from flowing downhill. Obviously, this doesn't pertain to the South Shore, but the CSX tracks is one, the Amtrak tracks is two. The third impediment of water running downhill is the South Shore tracks. Specifically in the area of Highway -- on County Line Road and Highway 12, where the road goes from Porter County by Mt. Baldy into the city of Michigan City. I've talked to, and I have her name, who -- your environment impact girl, Bonnie. Okay. I have talked to her and she agreed with me that there are no culverts underneath the South Shore tracks between County Line Road and going west into the city of the Michigan City. But yet, there is standing water in that particular area which IDEM considers wetland area. Back a hundred years ago when the South Shore tracks were put through there were no culverts allowing the flow of water to run down to Lake Michigan. There is -- Utilizing Google Earth and the topographical readings on Google Earth you can see where this is a natural flow of water to a point, but when it gets past the CSX tracks and the Amtrak tracks it gets to the South Shore tracks and water cannot penetrate underneath the tracks. There is a simple solution to this that's in your engineering studies, or your engineering concept, and that is to tile, put culverts underneath the South Shore tracks that come</p>	

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			<p>into the area, that when you're bringing coal into the NIPSCO -- NIPSCO station and so on, the low sulfur coal from Wyoming, you put culverts underneath the tracks to allow a free flow of water to continue to run downhill. I've got national ge- -- geological survey maps that show two-thirds of the water in Michigan City runs to the west, but we have impediments in the flow of the water running downhill, and the South Shore is one of them. What I'm suggesting to the powers to be, if they would take in- -- take into account Newton's law of physics and the flow of the water running downhill, I would suggest that they tile underneath the South Shore tracks that reside in Michigan City, because according to your environmental impact person that I just finished talking to, she said there are none. If you allow the free flow of water to run downhill you may dry up certain areas. And that now, according to IDEM is considered a wetland, but in reality it's not a wetland because it was a self-imposed backup of water on behalf of the South Shore. Again, as I said, my name is s Dave Biela, I live at 3044 Ohio Street, Michigan City. My telephone number is 872-2442. My cell phone number is 872-3800. If you call 2-2442 number I've got an answering machine, I'd be glad to bring Tony Hendricks, the county surveyor, who would back me up on everything I say. I'd be glad to attend any meeting to point out to you that this, what I tell you, is reality. Why I'm saying this is for the next hundred or two hundred years, you know, I'm going to be dead</p>	

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			and gone, but do we want to continue to back up water, back up water, back up water? And then if we have a hundred-year flood that water backs up and it runs to the point of least resistance, which would be people's basements. You could prevent that water from running into people's basements by simply tiling under the tracks. Thank you for listening and make it a good day.	
54	Email	10/18/17	Two (2) Things: 1) When was the "public hearing" held? I (with others from my group -- AETNA MANOR REVITALIZATION PROGRAM [A.M.R.P.] --) attended on October 11th, but did not find a forum for a "hearing" only a mingling. Please advise if there was an actual hearing? If there was, please advise of the findings. 2) Will the tracks at the Miller Station be raised like the ones at the Metro Center [downtown Gary]? We are greatly concerned that the flow of traffic -- already often interrupted and delayed by the existing tracks -- will increase these interruptions/delays. Thank you for your time.	Thank you for your comments. The open house format was chosen for the public hearing to allow the greatest number of people personal contact with Project staff to have questions answered, while being respectful of attendees' time. A court reporter was available to take comments and comment forms were provided for written comment. Your comment has been received and has been reviewed by the project team and FTA.  Please see Responses to FAQs 4 and 6 regarding traffic and gate down time.
55	One Region Comment Form	10/16/17	I have limited knowledge but very glad for the expansion(s).	Thank you for your comment and support.
56	One Region Comment Form	10/16/17	We would like more information on the rail expansion to Michigan City.	Please visit <a href="http://www.doubletrack-nwi.com">www.doubletrack-nwi.com</a> for more information.

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57	One Region Comment Form	10/16/17	The South Shore Line expansion is integral to the growth of NWI.	Thank you for your comment and support.
58	One Region Comment Form	10/16/17	I fully support the South Shore via double tracking and proposed expansions.	Thank you for your comment and support.
59	One Region Comment Form	10/16/17	Please encourage the double tracking project to happen!	Thank you for your comment and support.
60	One Region Comment Form	10/16/17	These are fantastic for the region. The double tracking project will result in considerable growth in the greater Valparaiso community, providing speedier access to Chicago, while allowing residents to live in the high-quality, low tax environment.	Thank you for your comment and support.
61	One Region Comment Form	10/16/17	I support the double tracking project! And what One Region aspires to do!	Thank you for your comment and support.
62	One Region Comment Form	10/16/17	I appreciate greatly this collaborative effort in Northwest Indiana. I am a district administrator in the school City of Hammond and hope public education will have a formal seat at the collaboration table so to insure a sound infrastructure which includes great K-12+ education to both attract and keep families.	Thank you for your comment and support.
63	One Region Comment Form	10/16/17	Can't be done soon enough.	Thank you for your comment and support.

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64	Letter	10/23/17	The FTA Cannot Rely on Undefined and Unenforceable Mitigation to Reduce Identified Impacts, and Thus Must Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Under NEPA, an EIS is required if a proposed action will have significant effects. An Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) cannot be utilized to approve a project with significant impacts. While mitigation can be used to reduce impacts below the level of significance under NEPA, that mitigation must be identified, documented, enforceable and monitored. The Council on Environmental Quality advises that otherwise the integrity of the NEPA review is undermined.	Thank you for your comments. The EA describes the mitigation measures that NICTD will undertake to offset the impacts of the project and bring them to a level that is less than significant. Many of the mitigation measures that are proposed require NICTD to comply with terms and conditions of federal, state and local permits that must be obtained prior to construction; these terms and conditions are further defined as the project progresses through more detailed design and impacts can be more accurately measured. The FONSI is the document that specifies the environmental commitments for mitigation. FTA will monitor compliance with the commitments identified in the FONSI as the project progresses through design.
64a	Letter	10/23/17	Using mitigation to reduce impacts utilizing an EA is called a mitigated FONSI. This is what the FTA is proposing, but the EA does not meet the requirements that would enable the FTA to issue a mitigated FONSI. To use a mitigated FONSI, the FTA must clearly describe the “[m]itigation commitments needed to lower the level of impacts so that they are not significant. . .” CEQ Memorandum for Heads of Federal Departments and Agencies on the Appropriate Use of Mitigation and Monitoring and Clarifying the Appropriate Use of Mitigated Findings of No Significant Impact, January 14, 2011 at 7 (hereafter, CEQ Guidance. Federal agencies must ensure that mitigation commitments are implemented. CEQ Guidance at 8. That will be difficult for the FTA because the FTA does not	When FTA issues a FONSI based on the incorporation of mitigation into the project, CEQ recommends in its mitigation and monitoring guidance that FTA specify which mitigation measures reduce an environmental impact below a significant level (CEQ, 2011). The EA identifies general mitigation measures that would reduce impacts below a significant level. Mitigation measures outlined in the FONSI become binding and must be implemented by the project sponsor. As a condition of a federal grant, FTA must monitor grantees' progress on implementing the requisite commitments.

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			really know what that mitigation will be for the vast majority of impacts identified in the EA.	
64b	Letter	10/23/17	For example, 27 National Register-eligible properties will be demolished. "Mitigation" for such properties will be through a MOA that has yet to be finalized. The EA does not discuss much of what is in the MOA. Two historic districts will also be adversely effected. The loss of these buildings and impacts to districts is disclosed as an adverse effect. The EA describes that mitigation for one such property, the South Shore Station, includes post-decision work with a consultant to preserve this building's façade. The EA does not discuss whether this will be effective to reduce impacts below NEPA significance – and it can't – because the plan does not yet exist.	The draft MOA was included in the EA for public review, and was distributed to all consulting parties during the public review period. The signatories to the MOA, namely FTA, NICTD and the Indiana State Historic Preservation Office (IN SHPO) agree that the proposed mitigation is appropriate and effective in mitigating the adverse effects identified during Section 106 consultation. The signed MOA is attached as Appendix F to the FONSI.
64c	Letter	10/23/17	Another example is similar deferral of the development of a mitigation plan for wetlands, which is anticipated to occur sometime in the future (EA at 4-98) along with other plans to be prepared later, such as, erosion control and stormwater management (EA at 4-99), and numerous other resources.	The EA discloses that the concept of a wetland mitigation plan has already been discussed and agreed to by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the NPS, the IDNR, and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). As lead regulatory agency for wetland impacts, the USACE has confirmed that mitigation will be required for wetland impacts. The actual development of the wetland mitigation plan is part of the final design and permitting process that takes place with the regulatory agencies. Other natural resource and water-related plans mentioned are also part of the final design process, and must be approved by the appropriate federal, state or local permitting

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				authority after the NEPA process has concluded and a decision document is issued.
64d	Letter	10/23/17	<p>Mitigation commitments must be specified with measurable performance standards or results. CEQ Guidance at 8. Because the commitments have not yet been identified, the FTA has not established any such measurable performance standards or results.</p> <p>Likewise, if funding for mitigation is uncertain, that needs to be disclosed and the significance of impacts must be considered without that mitigation measure. CEQ Guidance at 9. If that is not disclosed and the impact without the funding is not assessed, then if the funding is later not available, the agency cannot continue the proposed action until funding becomes available or the lack of funding is assessed. Id. While as discussed above, the EA discusses developing a plan to preserve the South Shore Station façade sometime in the future, the EA also makes such contemplated mitigation subject to technical and financial caveats. Again, as discussed above, mitigation that admittedly may never happen cannot be used to excuse preparation of an EIS, because it does not reduce the impact below the level of NEPA significance.</p>	<p>Agency decision documents such as a FONSI clearly identify commitments to mitigation measures identified in the EA. Mitigation commitments must then be implemented by the lead agency or another consenting agency through conditions of approval, grant or permit conditions, or other mechanisms. 40 CFR § 1505.3(a)-(b).</p> <p>FTA guidance provides that mitigation should not be overly detailed and should allow the project sponsor some flexibility to develop a tailored solution to an overall goal, consistent with CEQ guidance allowing for adaptive management in mitigation (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508). Flexibility is particularly important when the project sponsor does not have the ultimate responsibility or authority to approve or implement the mitigation measure. The EA listed the permits that will need to be obtained by NICTD but does not provide overly specific mitigation commitments to allow for some flexibility during final design.</p> <p>The costs of mitigation have been estimated and are included in the overall cost estimate for the project.</p>



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64e	Letter	10/23/17	In addition, in those cases where mitigation is necessary to support a FONSI, monitoring of such mitigation is essential to support an agency's determination not to prepare an EIS. CEQ Guidance at 10. There are virtually no monitoring plans for any resource in the EA. This alone requires preparation of an EIS.	As part of the grant process, FTA Regional staff is responsible for mitigation monitoring after the environmental review based on reporting from the project sponsor. FTA's monitoring of the implementation of the mitigation commitments during final design and construction is addressed in many FTA Circulars. Changes in mitigation during final design and construction may require a re-evaluation or supplemental environmental review that would follow FTA procedural requirements.
64f	Letter	10/23/17	Finally, but without limitation, if an agency does not have the authority to require mitigation, or if there is lack of funding, or if mitigation has not been developed, an agency may not rely on a mitigated FONSI and must prepare an EIS. The EA fails to properly assess and require implementation of mitigation appropriate to reduce disclosed impacts below the level of significance. Therefore the FTA must either revise the EA to comply with NEPA and the CEQ Guidance, or prepare an EIS for the Project.	FTA and NICTD consulted with the appropriate required federal, state and local regulatory agencies during the development of the EA. These agencies do have authority to require mitigation, and the mitigation that has been proposed has also been reviewed by these agencies. NEPA is performed at the early stages of design to determine the project footprint and elements, and to indicate potential impacts and mitigation that may occur as a result of the project. During the final design and permitting phase, NICTD will refine the impacts and details of the mitigation commitments, continue working with regulatory agencies, and apply for and receive permits to construct the project, which are subject to the mitigation commitments NICTD has committed to in the FONSI.

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64g	Letter	10/23/17	<p>Wetlands No Practical Alternative Finding. The EA properly discloses that a federal agency “must avoid undertaking or providing assistance for new construction located in wetlands unless [the agency] finds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is not practical alternative to such construction; AND</li> <li>- The proposed action includes all practical measures to minimize harm to wetlands that may result from such use.</li> </ul> <p>[EA at 4-99 (emphasis added) – citing applicable executive orders]. Both factors must be addressed. The EA only even attempts to address the first factor (and does so in conclusory fashion without much analysis). It does not analyze, explain, address or mention anything about whether the proposed action “includes all practical measures to minimize harm to wetlands” as required under the executive orders. This is likely because this required analysis is not possible because the mitigation has yet to be developed. The FTA cannot legally conclude that approval of the Project is proper until mitigation has been developed and the FTA has analyzed whether such mitigation includes “all practical measures.”</p>	<p>The wetlands regulations state that the project sponsor must try to avoid, minimize, and then mitigate wetland impacts (in that order)(40 CFR 230). The EA discusses the measures that were taken to avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands during development of the project. See Section 4.10.4 of the EA. These are known as “all practical measures to minimize harm.”</p> <p>Compensatory mitigation requirements will be determined by the USACE, based on actual impacts to wetlands, as determined during final design. The FONSI indicates that NICTD will develop a wetlands mitigation plan in coordination with USACE, NPS, IDEM, and EPA. The wetlands mitigation plan will be subject to approval by the USACE during the Section 404 permitting process.</p>

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64h	Letter	10/23/17	<p>The Station and Street Configuration in Michigan City Will Not Meet Standards for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Design and Sustainability. The development of a TOD should be location efficient. TODs should consciously place homes, jobs, civic uses, shopping, entertainment, parks, and other amenities close to transit stations with a goal of promoting walking, bicycling, and transit as a means of providing alternatives to automobile use.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>My concern here is the over-emphasis on parking at the Michigan City station site. In the EA at page 2-20, the Project calls for parking for 500-800 vehicles at a station site that had 113 average daily boardings in 2015.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, in Denver, Colorado, at the TOD at the 41st and Fox Station on the Gold Line, City of Denver and Regional Transit District (RTD) officials are trying to maximize TOD benefits in the surrounding Fox Island neighborhood by implementing parking maximums on new development and at the station and through intentional limits on lane infrastructure connecting with surrounding neighborhoods. The officials that I have interviewed believe that sustainable TODs are the ones that decrease</p>	<p>The existing block layout, street grid system and “Main Street” character in the area of the Michigan City 11<sup>th</sup> Street station is very similar to the layout of successful TOD mixed-use projects across the country and has been determined to be an appropriate location for the development of TOD. Michigan City is actively working on TOD planning for the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Station area and was a co-sponsor of the 2013 NICTD/Michigan City Realignment Study that considered TOD. Michigan City’s downtown plan proposes mixed-use development in this larger area and has current codes and ordinances that address sustainable development within its boundaries. Michigan City has currently engaged a consultant team to identify TOD alternatives, potential development capacities and layouts for this area.</p> <p>Appendix III in the EA contains the “Traffic and Parking Technical Memorandum,” which details the projected ridership forecasts and parking needs at all stations; the impacts of parking on the local street system; and proposed mitigation, if warranted. The proposed commuter parking to be provided in the area of the 11<sup>th</sup> Street station is based upon forecasted need and is required as part of the FTA grant application.</p>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Dr. Keith A. Ratner & Dr. Andrew R. Goetz, The Reshaping of Land Use and Urban Form in Denver Through Transit Oriented Development 3-4 (last updated August 10, 2012) [https://ntl.bts.gov/lib/35000/35500/35584/Ratner\\_and\\_Goetz\\_2010\\_\\_Transit\\_Oriented\\_Development\\_and\\_Land\\_Use.pdf](https://ntl.bts.gov/lib/35000/35500/35584/Ratner_and_Goetz_2010__Transit_Oriented_Development_and_Land_Use.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> EA at 1-12.

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			<p>congestion by stressing walkability and bicycle-friendly designs while limiting auto access.<sup>3</sup></p> <p>Here, it appears that automobile use will be encouraged by providing infrastructure in excess of need. This does not conform to current thinking on smart growth and sustainability. The City of Michigan City should consider alternatives to providing automobile access to the heart of the TOD. These comments are also applicable to the other parking structures related to the Project. This issue is relevant to the EA because the EA fails to acknowledge that the Project and parking garage designs at Michigan City and elsewhere will cause an increase in automobile traffic. This incentive is not disclosed in the Transportation and traffic discussions in the EA and is not analyzed. This omission also leads the EA to fail to disclose and analyze the additional emissions cause by such increased traffic in the air quality analysis, and the effects of traffic on adjacent neighborhoods in the land use and socio-economic analysis.</p>	<p>Further, the parking proposed in the area will be shared by other downtown uses during off-commuting hours and is aligned with the parking demand identified in Michigan City’s 2015 Uptown Arts District Parking Master Plan. The impact of the proposed parking structure has been included in the traffic study completed for the area. The traffic study shows the parking structure will have minimal impacts that will be mitigated through traffic controls. The implementation of traffic controls will increase safety for pedestrians and non-commuters in the station area.</p> <p>Parking lots can result in slightly elevated local pollutant concentrations, particularly during the morning and evening commute periods when a number of vehicles attempt to enter or leave a parking lot simultaneously. However, given the improvements in motor vehicle emission standards, these elevated pollutant concentrations would not result in pollutant “hot spots” and would not result in exceedances of the NAAQS at any location within the Project Area (See EA at Section 5.4.1).</p>

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with Chris Nevitt (Denver TOD Manager), Brad Buchanan (Denver City Planner), and Chessy Brady (RTD TOD Associate) have been conducted throughout the Autumn 2017 semester as part of my attendance in the Sustainable Cities Practicum at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law

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64i	Letter	10/23/17	<p>The Specific Impacts to Pedestrians and Bicyclists in Michigan City and Needed Mitigation Are Not Addressed. The EA briefly touches on pedestrian and bicycle accessibility at EA pages 3- 1, 4-9, 4-107, and 4-108. Nowhere in the document does it describe what the impacts to pedestrians and bicyclists are, or what steps should be taken to mitigate those impacts.</p>	<p>There will be a beneficial impact to pedestrians and bicyclists in Michigan City. With the implementation of clearly marked pedestrian crossings and removal of conflicts with the street-running train, safety would be increased for bicyclists and pedestrians. Sidewalks will be replaced along the south side of 10<sup>th</sup> Street and the north side of 11<sup>th</sup> Street within the project area. The sidewalks and crosswalks will comply with ADA and Michigan City standards. New high-level platforms at 11<sup>th</sup> Street will add to bicycle accessibility, ADA accessibility, and ease of boarding for all. See Section 3.5.2 of the EA for more information pedestrian and bicycle accessibility. The Bikes on Trains program will be expanded to the 11<sup>th</sup> Street (Michigan City) station and NICTD will evaluate the schedule to determine whether additional bicycle trains can be added to the schedule.</p> <p>Connectivity for traffic – including cars, bicycles, and pedestrians – will be studied by Michigan City as part of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Streets roadway planning currently in progress. Michigan City is also actively engaged in trail and connection planning to interconnect the Singing Sands Lighthouse Trail to the downtown area.</p> <p>NICTD will work with the City of Michigan City to develop an outreach plan during construction to inform residents, businesses, and visitors of the change in travel patterns.</p>

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64j	Letter	10/23/17	<p>A successful TOD requires. “beautiful, vital, and walkable neighborhoods.”<sup>4</sup> Therefore, Pedestrian Oriented Development (POD) codes should be used in conjunction with TOD.<sup>5</sup> Typical requirements include pedestrian-scaled structures, tree-lined streets, and vegetated medians to calm traffic.<sup>6</sup></p> <p>The proposed station area and physical plant design along 10th and 11th streets run counter to these requirements. This is most easily mitigated along 10th Street west of Willard to Sheridan Avenue where the new rail alignment could run along the south side of the acquired properties, closer to the state property, and away from the streetscape.</p>	<p>Landscaped buffers will be are being installed along 10th Street and 11th Street. Traffic volumes and proposed traffic patterns do not warrant medians. Michigan City is actively working on TOD. NICTD has been supportive of Michigan City’s TOD efforts and was a co-sponsor of the 2013 NICTD/Michigan City Realignment Study that considered TOD.</p>
64k	Letter	10/23/17	<p>In the vicinity of the station property, the effect of having narrow, 5’ sidewalks butted-up against a concrete barrier created by the station platforms near the current alignment of Pine Street could be reduced by narrowing the width of the westbound platform, perhaps by eliminating the warming shelters. As a new indoor station facility is proposed for the site, I question whether a platform warming shelter is necessary. Further mitigation may be possible by moving the planned structures further north from the platforms creating more walkable and bicycle-friendly spaces.</p>	<p>The platforms will be designed in compliance with current ADA standards (2010) and the Proposed Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Right-of-Way. Warming stations are necessary to provide passenger comfort and decrease dwell time. Michigan City has engaged a streetscape design consultant team to address and maximize pedestrian access and enhance the pedestrian experience along 11<sup>th</sup> Street. Further, details on the placement of the station building in relation to the platforms will be determined during final design.</p>

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 4.

<sup>5</sup> David S. Silverman, Green Transportation: Roadblocks and Avenues for Promoting Low-Impact Transportation Choices, 43 Urban Lawyer 775, 778 (2011).

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

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64l	Letter	10/23/17	Nonetheless, all of the elements proposed for track with 45 mph passenger and freight operations, are better suited for areas 11th Street, including the scale of the heavy-electrification catenary system, a station facility nearly a fifth of a mile long, and an open railroad zoned for the producer economy and not in a TOD that requires walkable and bicycle-friendly spaces.	NICTD is integrating typical TOD walkability and connectivity, in coordination with the City of Michigan City.
64m	Letter	10/23/17	Further, such walkable and bicycle-friendly spaces require neighborhood connectivity. Here, the street system currently connected with 11th Street (and to a much lesser extent to 10th Street) will be truncated by cul-de-sacs. This defeats connectivity. Current thinking in this area is that direct connections between destinations are needed to support walkable and bicycle-friendly environments. <sup>7</sup> It is unclear from the EA as to how creating such connections could be accomplished under the proposed Project design scheme.	Please see Section 3 of the EA for more information regarding pedestrian connectivity. Cul-de-sacs on 11 <sup>th</sup> Street will prevent vehicular traffic from crossing the tracks but are not intended to restrict pedestrians from accessing the sidewalk and using the pedestrian crossings at Ohio, Wabash, Washington, Franklin, Lafayette, and Oak Streets (See Figure 3-2, illustrating sidewalk connectivity).
64n	Letter	10/23/17	The Proposed Mitigation for the Adverse Effects to Historic Properties in Michigan City is Insufficient. The EA identifies 27 historic resources eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in Michigan City that will be impacted by the Project (EA at page ES-5). To mitigate these losses, NICTD proposes to install two interpretive panels, construct unspecified exhibits on South Shore Line history in a new station building, and to preserve and	The Preferred Alternative, including the alignment through Michigan City, was chosen because it best meets the Purpose and Need of the project, as defined in Section 1 of the EA. NICTD has coordinated with IN SHPO and other consulting parties to develop the draft MOA that identifies measures to mitigate the adverse effects to historic resources. The draft MOA was included in the EA for public review, and was distributed to the consulting parties multiple times prior to the

<sup>7</sup> Kristine M. Williams, AICP & Karen E. Seggerman, AICP, Model Regulations and Plan Amendments for Multimodal Transportation Districts 12, 20 (National Center for Transportation Research, 2004).

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			reinstall the façade of the South Shore Line station on the new structure if feasible. While the sentiment about reinstalling the façade is laudable if it is indeed carried out, some unspecified exhibits, and a couple of interpretive panels is not proportional to the loss of the 27 structures and the historic street operations in Michigan City, and the EA does not even attempt to assert that these measures reduce the level of impact below NEPA significance.	public review period. Comments that were received were addressed and the final, executed MOA is attached to the FONSI as Appendix F. The signatory parties to the MOA, namely FTA, NICTD and the IN SHPO, agree that the proposed mitigation treatment measures in MOA are appropriate and mitigation the adverse effects to historic resources.
64o	Letter	10/23/17	NICTD does not have good track record on historic preservation. My experience shows that in the past NICTD has not followed federal policy with regard to its own historic assets, but rather has used anticipatory destruction to diminish the integrity of the South Shore Line and thereby render it ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Allowing the destruction of the South Shore Station and other buildings that are contributing elements to the various eligible historic districts puts them on the path to the same fate. There are still debatable contentions that the Michigan City street running trackage is eligible for listing on the NRHP. The following comment is from Paul Diebold in the office of the Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO): ...your arguments for eligibility based on the history of the South Shore Line are sound, but it's the integrity of the line that leaves it ineligible for the National Register. <sup>8</sup>	<p>FTA has made a determination on the eligibility of the South Shore Line, and IN SHPO provided its concurrence on May 23, 2017. A detailed explanation about why the South Shore Line is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places was provided to commenter on August 29, 2017.</p> <p>The design through Michigan City will allow for a maximum speed of 45 miles per hour. The design follows current NICTD and railroad industry track design standards and considers the physical constraints of the available right-of-way. The proposed alignment is appropriate for proposed speeds, passenger and freight. Operating characteristics of the passenger cars were evaluated with proposed vertical and horizontal alignment, and proposed speeds are attainable.</p>

<sup>8</sup> E-Mail from John Carr, Team Leader for Historic Structures Review, Indiana SHPO, to author (June 13, 2017, 10:14 am MDT) (on file with the author).



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			<p>Throughout our correspondence with the Indiana SHPO, it has not been made clear what standards for the integrity of railroad properties it would adopt, if any. Other states have adopted standards that are adapted to the reality that if no consideration is granted for the needs of railroad operations and routine maintenance, there would be no railroad operating facilities of any kind that would be NRHP eligible, an outcome that likely would have been unforeseeable by the drafters of the National Historic Preservation Act and yet, undesirable.</p> <p>I have found that as I have worked over the last four decades to accumulate historic artifacts from the South Shore Line for their preservation and restoration that NICTD's actions can be reluctant at best and hostile at worst. The FTA needs to heed the federal policy regarding private efforts at historic preservation found under 54 U.S.C.A. § 300101 (2017): ... it is the policy of the Federal Government, in cooperation with other nations and in partnership with States, local governments, private organizations and individuals ... to contribute to the preservation of non-federally owned historic property and give maximum encouragement to organizations and individuals undertaking preservation by private means (emphasis added).</p>

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			<p>Personally, I would like to know how this maximum encouragement from FTA is evident. A good place to start showing some maximum encouragement for historic preservation would be by reconfiguring the track alignment through Michigan City to adhere to the operating requirement that speeds will not exceed 45 mph on the former 10th and 11th street alignments (EA 2-28). NICTD has designed the new alignment with a minimum amount of curvature that allows speeds of up to 70 and 75 mph that are not now contemplated by the City of Michigan City.</p> <p>Track built for speeds that will not be attained will take the new alignment further from its original location resulting in the demolition of more residences and other structures most notably between Spring and Cedar streets, but also between Kentucky and 10th streets. By constructing track curvatures suitable for the contemplated 45 mph operation, the new alignment will remain closer to the original location. As a result, fewer homes, including those eligible for listing on the National Register, would need to be demolished.</p>	
64p	Letter	10/23/17	<p>The Level of Additional Passenger Train Service Proposed by NICTD Does Not Require Massive Investment.</p> <p>The unmitigated impacts of this Project are unnecessary, because the professed desired level of service can be achieved without the proposed massive investment. NICTD currently</p>	<p>Thank you for comment. The operating environment in 1952 is not comparable to the existing operating environment for various reasons, including but not limited to, the signal system, the highway system, establishment of the FRA and associated regulations, freight operations, federal safety rules, land use, train speeds, train car capacity, and number of cars.</p>

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			<p>operates 39 passenger trains each weekday. Overall transit times between South Bend and Chicago vary from 1 hour and 55 minutes for train #6 (an express making only six station stops) to 2 hours and 23 minutes for train #7. South Shore Freight operates 14 to 18 daily freights over the same trackage (EA at 1-8). This is a good benchmark to compare and contrast with South Shore Line operations in 1952 as the level of ridership is nearly the same.</p> <p>In 1952, the South Shore Line carried approximately 4.2 million riders. These riders were carried on 72 daily trains. Service was hourly in both directions from Chicago to South Bend; “plug” trains operated between the hourly trains to Gary giving every half-hour service to that city. Travel times from Chicago to South Bend varied from 1 hour and 59 minutes for train #29 (an express making seven stops) to 2 hours and 15 minutes for most other trains operating the entire length of the railroad. Freight operations in 1952 averaged 26 daily trains.<sup>9</sup></p> <p>This comparison does not favor NICTD. Train performance characteristics were lower in 1952 as the vintage South Shore Line cars had a design speed of 75 mph (NICTD cars operate at 79 mph), and were likely not capable of the acceleration rate and braking performance of</p>

<sup>9</sup> Chicago South Shore and South Bend Railroad, This is the South Shore Line, Exhibit 8 (1953).

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			<p>the new NICTD fleet. Chicago to South Bend trains could be expected to call at as many as 36 stops; NICTD's trains on the same railroad make no more than 19 stops in the same distance. Further, in 1952, the South Shore Line operated in city streets in three communities – East Chicago, Michigan City, and South Bend – rather than the one community today. Also, 4.1 miles of double track were added several years ago by NICTD between the Wagner and Wilson sidings eliminating potential bottlenecks in that section of western Porter County.</p> <p>NICTD proposes to add three trains a day each way under the project design limit of five additional westbound and seven eastbound trains, bringing the maximum total number of passenger trains to 51 (EA at 2-3, 4-131). As the South Shore Line of 65 years ago operated 72 passenger trains per day, it is unclear as to how the railroad is at capacity and incapable of bi-directional train operations as NICTD President Mr. Noland claims in the Double Track NWI YouTube video seen at <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liFwJDmFL6A">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liFwJDmFL6A</a>. In 1952, the South Shore Line had less physical plant and less capable rolling stock but was capable of bi-directionally dispatching 33 more passenger and ten more freight trains per day than NICTD does now.</p> <p>How can it be that after NICTD spends \$300 million dollars for the “capacity enhancements” of the Project, NICTD will still not have the</p>

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			<p>capacity that the South Shore Line had 65 years ago? It is inconceivable that after building 16 additional miles of double track and relocating the trackage out of the streets in Michigan City that NICTD's capacity of 67 total trains will still be far short of the 98 total trains per day operated by the South Shore Line in 1952.</p> <p>As to travel times, NICTD employee timetables call for 28 minutes to operate the 14.4 miles needed to traverse the METRA electric district in Chicago and to arrive on South Shore Line rails at Kensington. If NICTD were to meet its goal of South Bend to Chicago in 90 minutes (EA 3-6), the remaining 75.3 miles of railroad would have to be operated at an average speed of 73 mph, this just six miles per hour below the top speed of NICTD's equipment. If the track speed in Michigan City is limited to 45 miles per hour (EA at 2-28), this means that there will be no time for station stops between South Bend and Hyde Park. It is doubtful that this promise of the project will be realized in any case, and if it were, the inconvenience to passengers by foregoing intermediate station stops would be considerable.</p>	
65a	Letter	10/23/17	<p>With the increased parking at the Gary/Miller Station (3.6.1), we recommend that green infrastructure such as permeable pavement, planter boxes, rain gardens, and/or bioswales are implemented to manage stormwater. We are in support of the City of Gary's TOD plans to construct parking garages to replace surface</p>	<p>NICTD will consider potential applications of green infrastructure, BMPs, the use of native landscaping and drainage design at the parking lots in final design for the project. NICTD will review and consider municipal development standards during final design and coordinate with municipal staff, as appropriate.</p>

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			lots near the station and encourage doing so to reduce amount of surface area paved.	
65b	Letter	10/23/17	Save the Dunes is concerned with the potential impacts of proposed Parking Lot 2 for the Portage/Ogden Dunes station (3.6.2). Rapid development is expected in this area of Portage, which surrounds the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore's Tolleston Dunes/Inland Marsh unit- one of the National Park Service's priority sites in the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Removal of the three acres of wooded habitat in close proximity to Tolleston Dunes/Inland Marsh will make the site more vulnerable to threats of invasive species as well as noise and light pollution, especially in tandem with additional expected nearby development. If alternatives are not available, we highly recommend green infrastructure practices be implemented as this parking site as well best management practices (BMPs) to limit noise and light pollution.	<p>The parking lot south of U.S. 12 is located in the corporate limits of Portage. NICTD will review and consider municipal development standards during final design and coordinate with municipal staff, as appropriate. The methods and means of providing lighting will be coordinated with City of Portage staff, as appropriate, throughout final design. NICTD will consider potential applications of green infrastructure, BMPs, the use of native landscaping and drainage design at the parking lots in final design for the project.</p> <p>Additionally, NICTD is aware of the International Dark Skies Association recommendations and will consider these during final design.</p> <p>The contractor will be required to follow BMPs as it relates to invasive species, including but not limited to cleaning vehicles to avoid spreading seeds, using uncontaminated construction/landscaping material, and planting native species.</p> <p>The noise from train operations will be the loudest noise source in that area, with little contribution from parking lot activity. Any noise from the parking lots would be temporary and would only</p>

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				<p>approach levels that may contribute to the train noise during peak hours. In general, it would take a doubling of car traffic to increase the noise level from parking lots by 3 dB (the change level that is perceptible to the human ear). The total capacity of the parking lots in Ogden Dunes may reach a doubling by the opening year. Based on the location and size of the parking lots near the tracks and U.S. 12, the additional noise will be negligible compared to the train operations and traffic on U.S. 12.</p>
65c	Letter	10/23/17	<p>In regards to the expanded parking lot at Dune Park Station (3.6.3), Save the Dunes would like additional information on mitigation plans for the removal of wooded habitat within the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore authorized boundary. In addition to implementing green infrastructure practices, Save the Dunes recommends that NICTD continues to work closely with the National Park Service on measures to buffer the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore from the impacts of increased paved surfaces and additional noise and light pollution. It is further recommended that a floristic assessment is taken to protect the relocation of any endangered, threatened, or rare species within the proposed expanded parking area.</p>	<p>Mitigation of tree impacts will be determined in the wetland and natural resource mitigation plan to be developed in consultation with the NPS, IDEM, IDNR, and USACE during final design.</p> <p>NICTD will consider potential applications of green infrastructure, BMPs, the use of native landscaping and drainage design at the parking lots in final design for the project. NICTD will review and consider municipal development standards during final design and coordinate with municipal staff, as appropriate.</p> <p>The noise from train operations is the loudest noise source in that area. Any noise from the parking lots would be temporary and would only approach levels that may contribute to the train noise during peak hours. In general, it would take a doubling of car traffic to increase the noise level from parking lots by 3 dB (the change level that is perceptible to the human ear). Traffic would not double at the Dune Park station, therefore a 3 dB increase is not expected to occur.</p>

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				<p>Additionally, NICTD is aware of the International Dark Skies Association recommendations and will consider these during final design.</p> <p>NICTD has notified NPS that the parking expansion as described in Section 3.6.3 of the EA will occur and NPS concurrence was provided on July 12, 2018. The land proposed for the parking lot has been designated for transit use through an agreement between NPS, Porter County Board of Commissioners, and NICTD. As part of this agreement, NPS will conduct a floristic assessment prior to any vegetation clearing or construction. A survey will be conducted as part of final design to accurately mark the boundaries of the entire proposed parking lot expansion. If state-listed species are found, Save the Dunes has been invited to participate in a state-listed plant relocation effort.</p>
65d	Letter	10/23/17	Noting the language in Section 4.0 to “consider the consistency of the proposed Project with other land use and economic development plans for areas near the Project and the region,” we notice the need for incorporation of green infrastructure BMPs at updated stations, proposed new parking lots, or other disturbed spaces. Moreover, the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission 2040 Plan’s goal for ‘Reduced flooding risks and improved water quality’ states the objective— “Promote stormwater best management practices including the development of green infrastructure and the reduction of impervious	NICTD will consider potential applications of green infrastructure, BMPs, the use of native landscaping and drainage design at the parking lots in the final design for the project. NICTD will review and consider municipal development standards during final design and coordinate with municipal staff regarding design details and maintenance, as appropriate.



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			<p>surfaces.” We request that NICTD considers the implementation of green infrastructure practices including, but not limited to, permeable pavement, planter boxes, rain gardens, and bioswales. We also strongly feel this upholds the desired community character that exists or in which communities are currently adopting (example: Michigan City’s improvements to Wabash Street and continued implementation of green infrastructure city-wide).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o We recommend that any and all plantings to create “green space” at station updates and access ways include the incorporation of native plant species which represent the character of our communities as well as reduce the risk for invasive species encroachment to the Indiana dunes.</li> <li>o We recommend that any and all green spaces or green infrastructure BMP installations are managed by NICTD for a minimal period of no less than 3 years. We encourage partnerships with municipalities beyond this period of time to ensure greengreen infrastructure is maintained where installed.</li> </ul>	
65e	Letter	10/23/17	<p>In regards to Section 4.9.4, Save the Dunes would like to request more information on woodland habitat mitigation projects, including potential sites, project scope, and timeline. We recommend that NICTD continue to work with the National Park Service and regional ecologists on the siting, habitat type, plant composition, and other components of woodland mitigation projects.</p>	<p>Mitigation of tree impacts will be determined in the wetland and natural resource mitigation plan. NICTD will coordinate with IDNR and NPS regarding the appropriate locations, tree ratio, and species to provide tree replacement for the mitigation of tree impacts.</p>

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65f	Letter	10/23/17	Save the Dunes is pleased to see NICTD proposing wetland mitigation projects (4.10.4) within priority sites of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, and we defer to National Park Service's expertise on these projects.	No response required.
65g	Letter	10/23/17	Addressing natural resources outlined in Section 4.9 and 4.10, Save the Dunes highly recommends the use of BMPs in construction activities along the project area to reduce the spread of invasive species, particularly in areas bordering the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and Indiana Dunes State Park. Machinery will be moving through or near high-quality, globally rare habitats and can serve as a vector for invasive species. Project construction and activities such as moving the Calumet Trail increase disturbed space that encourages invasive species encroachment. We recommend NICTD undertakes native species planting in disturbed areas and adopts a minimum 3-5 year monitoring and management plan for invasive species along the corridor at Miller Woods, Tolleston Dunes/Inland Marsh, West Beach, Cowles Bog, Indiana Dunes State Park, and Great Marsh. This will provide continued protection of the Indiana dunes ecosystem along the rail corridor.	<p>The contractor will be required to follow best practices as it relates to invasive species, including but not limited to washing cleaning vehicles to avoid spreading seeds, uncontaminated construction/landscaping material, and planting native species. NICTD will continue to coordinate with the IDNR and NPS regarding the appropriate ratio and native species to provide tree replacement for the mitigation of tree impacts.</p> <p>Invasive species can be introduced through a number of ways independent of this Project. NICTD will require the contractor to implement BMPs to avoid the introduction of invasive species; however, broad corridor-wide monitoring and management for invasive species is outside the scope of this project.</p>

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65h	Letter	10/23/17	In addition to BMPs implemented during construction, Save the Dunes also recommends NICTD reduce its impact as an invasive species vector by monitoring and managing (or partnering with an external entity to manage) invasive species that resprout within the right-of-way following construction. Because initial construction will clear a great deal of invasive species currently growing along the rail corridor, this is an opportunity for less-intensive management and more effective treatment of invasive species.	NICTD will re-vegetate disturbed areas after construction activities cease. The re-vegetation efforts will be discussed in detail in the wetland and natural resource mitigation plan and as part of the required permit applications.
65i	Letter	10/23/17	There are gross botanical inaccuracies overall in Section 4.9 and Appendix III plant inventories. While additional inaccuracies have been identified, a condensed list highlighting misidentification of species is below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Hypericum prolificum is misidentified and should be H. kalmanium.</li> <li>o Trillium sessile is misidentified and should be T. recurvatum</li> <li>o Ampelopsis brevipedunculata – would be new record to Indiana (there would be a large number of new taxa to Northwest Indiana in this report which is highly questionable)</li> <li>o Typha species identified within and near the Indiana dunes should be Typha x glauca. The other two could occur, but the overwhelming majority of cattail is the hybrid which is not listed.</li> <li>o Liliium philadelphicum var. andinum is misidentified and should be L. michiganense</li> <li>o We do not have Viburnum dentatum just V. recognitum.</li> </ul>	FTA and NICTD appreciate the thorough review by Save the Dunes staff. NICTD has consulted with the botanist who performed the studies and an IDNR botanist to provide verification. As a result, an Errata Sheet has been prepared and is included in the FONSI to correct inaccuracies. See Appendix D of the FONSI.

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			<p>o Many of the <i>Carex grayi</i> would be <i>C. intumescens</i> per location and habitat.</p> <p>The finding of the state extirpated, Russet Buffalo-Berry (<i>Shepherdia canadensis</i>) as well as woolly milkweed (<i>Asclepias lanuginosa</i>), rough false-foxglove (<i>Agalinis aspera</i>), and swamp redcurrant (<i>Ribes triste</i>) are questionable identifications, and if in fact correct, would be of significant note to the botanical and science community.</p>	
65j	Letter	10/23/17	<p>Because of the inaccuracies of the report and the large footprint of the project, Save the Dunes strongly recommends the review of the inventory and a revisit to the sites by a respected regional botanist.</p> <p>o Save the Dunes also recommends an update with the most recent Indiana ETR.</p> <p>o A review of the vouchers collected by Lochmueller Group by a group of regional botanists is also recommended.</p>	NICTD has reviewed the entire inventory with an IDNR botanist and has corrected the inaccuracies in an Errata Sheet attached to the FONSI (Appendix D). The latest ETR published on the IDNR website, as well as lists provided by IDNR to NICTD during project development were used in the analysis. During final design, NICTD will coordinate with regional botanists as part of the state-listed plant relocation plan.
66a	Letter	10/23/2017	<p>NPCA does not support the expansion of surface parking at Dune Park Station as proposed in the EA. The EA proposes adding more than 350 surface parking spaces to this station, to a total of 886 spaces,<sup>10</sup> which would require cutting down mature trees and the removal of habitat within the national lakeshore. We request that NICTD work with NPS and Porter County to develop and consider alternatives to surface parking at Dune Park</p>	<p>The parking lot expansion at Dune Park Station is entirely upon Porter County land and would not encroach upon national lakeshore property. A mapping error incorrectly depicted the proposed parking lot as National Lakeshore property in the Floristic Quality Assessment, Threatened and Endangered Species Plant Survey, and Woodland Characterization Investigation. The correct boundaries are shown in Appendix II to the EA, Environmental Mapbook.</p>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Sec. 3, p. 23.

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			Station, which is in close proximity to park natural areas.	Mitigation of tree impacts will be discussed in the wetland and natural resource mitigation plan. NICTD will coordinate with IDNR and NPS regarding the appropriate ratio and native species to provide tree replacement for the mitigation of tree impacts.
66b	Letter	10/23/2017	We also request that more information be made available regarding tree removal within the national lakeshore boundary, as well as the impact of surface parking expansions throughout the project on stormwater run-off.	There will not be any tree removal within the national lakeshore boundary. NICTD will consider native landscaping and drainage design at the parking lots in the final design for the project. NICTD will review and consider municipal development standards during final design and coordinate with municipal staff, as appropriate.
66c	Letter	10/23/2017	NPCA suggests that NICTD reconsider platform height as proposed in the EA for the north side of the station. <sup>11</sup> Low-level platforms limit accessibility for people with disabilities. Further, unless NICTD changes its policy of prohibiting people with bicycles from boarding trains at low-level platforms, riders who come to Dune Park from Chicago would not be able to leave with their bikes. As the primary gateway for lakeshore visitors arriving by train, this station should remain easily accessible to all.	<p>The second platform at the Dune Park Station will be a low platform because of utility conflicts. The low platform will only be used in emergency situations. The existing high level platform, which will be retained, is ADA and bicycle-accessible and bikes are allowed on designated days already at this station.</p> <p>The Bikes on Trains program will be expanded as part of this Project. Trains at the Miller (Gary), Portage/Ogden Dunes, and 11<sup>th</sup> Street (Michigan City) Stations are currently not accessible by bicycle; however, they will be accessible by bicycle when the new high-level platforms are installed. NICTD will also evaluate the schedule to</p>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Sec. 3, p 23.

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				<p>determine whether additional bicycle trains can be added to the schedule.</p> <p>Portable wheelchair lifts will be available for anyone who needs it at all regularly scheduled stops where NICTD has low level platforms.</p> <p>.</p>
66d	Letter	10/23/2017	<p>NPCA requests that the project contractor take additional steps to limit construction impacts within the national lakeshore, including invasive species, construction noise, road closures, and localized air quality issues.</p> <p>Rail corridors are well-known conduits for invasive species proliferation. NPCA recommends that construction sites be carefully monitored to ensure that equipment and machinery are not proliferating these species. We also recommend that, where invasive species are removed during construction, NICTD, with input from botanists or federal land managers, replants native species and adopts a multi-year monitoring and management program to ensure successful growth.</p>	<p>NICTD will require the contractor to prepare and implement a dust control plan, a work-zone traffic management plan, and a strategy to control emissions from diesel-powered equipment. The contractor will also be required to follow the USEPA's Construction Emission Control Checklist.</p> <p>NICTD will coordinate construction activities with local NPS staff regarding noise, traffic and air quality control during construction.</p> <p>Contractors will be required to implement best practices as it relates to invasive species, including but not limited to cleaning vehicles to avoid spreading seeds, uncontaminated construction/landscaping material, and planting native species. NICTD will require the construction contractor to employ at least one environmental specialist to monitor compliance with the BMPs. However, broad corridor-wide monitoring and management for invasive species is outside the scope of this project.</p> <p>NICTD will continue to coordinate with the IDNR and NPS regarding the appropriate ratio and</p>

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				native species to provide tree replacement for mitigation of impacts to trees.
66e	Letter	10/23/2017	Construction noise should be as limited as possible within the national lakeshore. The lakeshore, a unit of the National Park Service, meets the description of an area “where quiet is an essential element in [its] intended purpose...with significant outdoor use” <sup>12</sup> and should qualify as a Land Use Category 1 for noise monitoring purposes. NPCA asks that construction crews working within the lakeshore minimize noise, consistent with NPS policy. <sup>13</sup>	The proposed project exists in a transportation corridor that is shared by freight and passenger rail service, and also a local highway. The portions of the Dunes that currently experience the highest levels of noise from the existing transportation activities will also experience the highest levels of noise from construction activities. Construction contractors will be required to comply with applicable noise limits at the state and local level. Furthermore, many of the rail construction activities are similar to rail maintenance activities and other construction activities already occurring in the area, so some of the construction noise will be somewhat familiar to the area already. See Appendix III to the EA, Noise and Vibration Technical Memorandum, for more information regarding the noise analysis.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., Sec. 4, p. 46.

<sup>13</sup> National Park Service, Management Policies 2006, p. 56.

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66f	Letter	10/23/2017	Construction will require work at several at-grade crossings on roads within the lakeshore that provide access to park sites. <sup>14</sup> NPCA asks that construction contractors minimize, wherever possible, prolonged closures of these access points, as they may be the only point from which to reach destinations within the park.	Construction of the project will be phased to maintain access to park sites and communities north of the tracks and to reduce crossing closure duration. Detour routes to destinations within park properties will always be available.
66g	Letter	10/23/2017	Regarding air quality, NPCA supports the measures proposed in the EA to minimize dust <sup>15</sup> but requests additional actions to minimize construction related emissions. While the EA contemplates limiting idling of emitting equipment, <sup>16</sup> we ask that contractors further reduce exhaust and emissions by shutting down equipment when not in use and using low-emitting diesel engines when available.	The contractor will be required to implement applicable practices outlined in USEPA's guidance on construction noise and air quality mitigation.
66h	Letter	10/23/2017	NPCA supports the wetland mitigation measures proposed in the EA, including the development of a mitigation strategy that directs all mitigation of wetlands into like lands within the national lakeshore. <sup>17</sup> We request that the development of this strategy include an opportunity for public comment to ensure that the mitigation projects meet a high standard. We commend NICTD for working closely with federal agencies and look forward to learning more about the strategy.	A wetland and natural resource mitigation plan including threatened/endangered species and state-listed plants will be developed as part of the Section 404 permit. NICTD and NPS, in consultation with USCAE and IDEM, will develop the specific details of the mitigation strategy, including management of the restored areas after mitigation, during final design. This mitigation plan will be submitted to regulatory agencies as part of the permitting process before construction activities begin. There is a public review period related to federal permitting. In addition, an

<sup>14</sup> EA, Sec. 4, p. 118.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., Sec. 4, p. 112.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., Sec. 4, p. 112.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. Sec. 4, p. 45.



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			NPCA also requests that the mitigation strategy developed to address impacts to threatened/endangered species and state-listed plants include ongoing monitoring with results available to the public to ensure impacts of the project are minimal.	environmental inspector will be included in the construction phase to ensure there is no encroachment on NPS properties and to protect the natural resources.
66i	Letter	10/23/2017	The EA recognizes the potential for major indirect impacts to natural resources in the project area, which includes Indiana Dunes. <sup>18</sup> These impacts include increased residential and economic development that could result in “impacts on woodlands, wildlife habitat, plant species, threatened or endangered species, and sensitive habitats.” <sup>19</sup> As a national park, which has the specific purpose of preserving these resources “unimpaired” for future generations, additional protections are warranted.	An environmental inspector will be included in the construction phase to ensure there is no encroachment on NPS properties and to protect the natural resources. Potential residential and economic development activities by others would be subject to current local regulations and municipal permitting. Future development by others may also be regulated by permitting agencies, such as USACE, USFWS, and IDEM. BMPs and other special conditions would be included in the development permits to minimize adverse effects of that development. .
66j	Letter	10/23/2017	Although it is not the objective of the EA to address development practices or local regulations, NPCA recognizes that there may not be adequate ordinances in place that balance development with the protection of park resources. New or strengthened local zoning or development ordinances could be implemented that achieve this balance and better protect Indiana Dunes.	Local zoning and development ordinances are outside the scope and authority of NICTD and the FTA. We encourage you to work with NIRPC, policy-focused NGOs, local municipalities, counties and other appropriate organizations to address these concerns.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. Sec. 4, p. 123-124.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Sec. 4, p. 124.

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66k	Letter	10/23/2017	<p>NPCA has been, and will continue to be, a strong advocate for Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. While this project will further specific transportation goals for NW Indiana and improve access to Indiana Dunes, NPCA has outstanding concerns with the Double Track NWI EA.</p> <p>NPCA's strongest concerns with the direct impacts lie with the potential results of botanical inaccuracies and impact of construction on native species. Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore is in the top 10 of our most biodiverse national park sites, so this is a section to be addressed by experts in the field. Until regional experts are brought in, we fear that some of the more than 2,000 native species for which the park was established will be at risk.</p> <p>Our strongest concerns in the area of indirect impacts will result as future growth and development occurs along the new rail corridor. We understand that it is not the role of this EA to cover all aspects of future development, but we strongly encourage NICTD to work with local communities in promoting ordinance and zoning reform so that responsible and sustainable development occurs.</p>	<p>NICTD has reviewed the entire inventory against current lists from USFWS in consultation with an IDNR botanist and has corrected inaccuracies in an Errata Sheet attached to the FONSI.</p> <p>Private development around stations that would occur around stations will be guided by plans prepared by the local municipalities and other entities such as the Regional Development Authority. Your concerns regarding future development, ordinances, zoning, and sustainable development would be best addressed through NIRPC, policy-focused NGOs, local municipalities, counties and other appropriate organizations.</p>