

Double Track Northwest Indiana Gary to Michigan City, Indiana (February 2021)

The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) provides commuter rail service on the South Shore Line, a 90-mile alignment from Millennium Station in Chicago, Illinois to the South Bend International Airport in South Bend, Indiana. The Double Track Northwest Indiana Project includes construction of a new 26.6-mile second railroad track along NICTD's existing South Shore Line (SSL) between Gary and Michigan City in Indiana as well as improvements to the existing line. New construction elements include new separated two-track right-of-way along 18 miles in Michigan city, replacing the current street-running tracks, a new overhead contact system, 22 at-grade crossings, 20 culverts, platform upgrades at five stations, and 1,475 new parking spaces. The project will specifically improve safety along the entire alignment, especially in Michigan City where the new alignment will remove the street-running, eliminate grade crossings, and provide a safer environment for passengers boarding trains.

In the opening year, service is planned to operate every 16 minutes during weekday peak periods and approximately every 75 minutes during weekday off-peak periods and evenings. In the horizon year, service is planned to operate every 14 minutes during weekday peak periods and approximately every 70 minutes during weekday off-peak periods and evenings. In both the opening and horizon years, service is planned to operate every 135 minutes on weekends.

The forecasted ridership on the Project, using current year inputs of population and employment, is 6,000 daily linked trips. This number is expected to grow to 9,700 daily linked trips by the horizon year of 2040.

The total project cost under the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) is \$491.12 million. The Section 5309 New Starts funding share is \$172.96 million.

Status

The project entered Core Capacity Project Development in May 2016. NICTD selected a locally preferred alternative and adopted it into the regional fiscally-constrained long-range transportation plan in May 2017. NICTD completed the environmental review process with receipt of a Finding of No Significant Impact from FTA in November 2018. NICTD withdrew the project from Core Capacity Project Development in February 2019 because the Project could no longer qualify as being at capacity due to declining ridership. NICTD continued working on the project while removed from the CIG program. The Project reentered the CIG program as a New Starts project in the Engineering phase in February 2020. NICTD and FTA entered an FFGA in January 2021. The start of revenue service is projected to be June 2024. The project is approximately at the 90% level of design.

Section 3005 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation ("FAST") Act (Pub. L. 114-94; Dec. 4, 2015) authorized FTA to award Federal major capital investment funds for final design and construction of the Double Track Project. Through FY 2021, Congress has appropriated a total of \$100.00 million for the project.

Reported in Year of Expenditure Dollars		
Source of Funds	Total Funding (\$million)	Appropriations to Date
Federal: Section 5309 New Starts	\$172.96	\$100.00 million in total New Starts appropriations through FY 2021
State/Local: State of Indiana General Fund Appropriations and Bond Proceeds	\$118.56	
State of Indiana Next Level Connection Fund	\$83.79	
Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority Funds	\$45.07	
Cash contributions from Michigan City, LaPorte and St Joseph Counties	\$33.22	
NICTD bond proceeds, SITUS tax and cash contribution	\$37.52	
Total:	\$491.12	

NOTES: The Source of Funds and Total Funding numbers are as established at the signing of the FFGA. The sum of the figures may differ from the total as listed due to rounding.

Double Track Northwest Indiana Project Project Location Map

