



April 13, 2021

Via E-Mail

Dustin Anderson, Munster Town Manager
1005 Ridge Rd.
Munster, IN 46321

RE: Town of Munster RAISE Grant Application

Dear Mr. Anderson,

As the President of the Northwest Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), operator of the 90-mile South Shore Line commuter rail service, and soon to be operator of the West Lake Corridor commuter rail service, I am writing this letter to express my support of the Town of Munster's 2022 RAISE Grant Application. The Munster Ridge Road Complete Street Project identifies a number of improvements within the area of the soon to be constructed Munster Ridge Road station. The Ridge Road station is one of four new stations that will serve riders on the West Lake Corridor commuter rail line, a \$943 million New Starts project funded through the Federal Transportation Administration's (FTA) Capital Investment Grant program that is scheduled to begin revenue service in May of 2026.

NICTD presently has a full funding grant agreement with the FTA to construct a 7.8-mile rail extension that will branch off of our mainline South Shore Line rail service that extends from north Hammond, Indiana to the border of the towns of Munster and Dyer, in Indiana. The project has forecasted ridership of 10,400 daily linked trips by the horizon year of 2040. As part of this project, the Munster Ridge Road Station will be equipped with high level boarding platforms promoting passenger safety and accessibility for our riders. High level boarding at this station will also allow for the expanded participation of commuters in NICTD's continually growing bikes on trains program. The adjacent and upgraded bike/pedestrian pathways to the station which are also connecting to the area's trail system, not only promotes greater non-motorized access to the station from local residents, but also opens up opportunities for people from the entire South Shore Line/West Lake Corridor service region to make the Ridge Road station a destination point to access this trail system.

NICTD currently is the sponsor agency of an FTA grant for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in partnership with the Indiana Regional Development Authority. Munster is part of the TOD study efforts focused within the West Lake Corridor that will be further benefited by the opportunities contemplated in the Raise Grant proposal from Munster, and these opportunities are in line with the project efforts put forth under the TOD study. Safety is the number one priority on the NICTD commuter rail system, and we see the tremendous safety benefits that will be created by the project elements in this proposal. We cannot emphasize strongly enough the importance of this proposed projects enhancements to safety. Removal of barriers to accessing the commuter rail system are also priorities for NICTD, and this project enhances the ease of accessibility for our disabled riders and the promotes access for riders who have

non-motorized transportation. Another benefit that we see is the tie in with area recreational trails that will lend to the efforts of creating a multimodal accessible station as well as set up the community for the projected growth to support the Town's TOD vision. In summary, this project will facilitate and support the projected growth of the new commuter rail line by enhancing non-motorized, environmentally friendly, and accessible access to the Ridge Road station.

NICTD is in support of the efforts put forth by the Town of Munster and urges consideration of the proposed Munster Ridge Road Complete Street Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Noland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "Noland" clearly distinguishable.

Michael Noland

President

Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District