

## **Transit Development District Steering Committee meeting minutes November 12, 2025**

### **Location**

Conducted via Zoom. A recording of the meeting may be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Axk0hu4XhQg>

### **Present**

Chris Harris, Michael Barry, Brian Poland, Chuck Gardiner, Geof Benson, Angie Nelson Deutch, Tim Corcoran, Tammy Watkins

### **Minutes**

Minutes from the August 13, 2025, meeting were approved.

### **Discussion**

The meeting began with community updates from committee members. Chris Harris started by thanking the IEDC for its recent award of \$15 million for revitalization of downtown Gary. This includes \$5 million for vertical development in the Gary Metro TDD.

Geof Benson spoke about a recent meeting with Pines and the RDA, and upcoming meetings with other bodies such as INDOT as we get all the stakeholders together for work in the Beverly Shores/Pines TDD.

Dave Wellman provided a rail update for the committee. West Lake design is 98% complete, work on the catenary system continues. NICTD has two transformers fail, that has led to delays getting the West Lake line running, but work keeps going. Double track is mostly complete, only the main contract is open and is in the process of being closed out. They are going through some last punch list items at 11st Street in Michigan City.

MKSK's Aaron Kowalski gave an update on TDD boundaries. He noted we are beginning to get a point where we need to complete MOAs and starting to receive requests about expansion of the boundaries in several communities and we continue to assist in that. For 2026 we want to work with communities on adopting zoning recommendations from the TOD work done as part of the TDD implementation. That could be a major enabling step for economic development in the TDD. We also want to work with local communities to apply for grant dollars to support TOD.

We have been working with the city of Hammond over the past year all around supporting Hammond getting the development they want within their TDD boundaries. In Munster and Dyer there continues to be significant interest. In East Chicago the RDA has been meeting with the city about investments they would like to see and how they could capture significant workforce development. In Gary, the recent adoption of the new comp plan and zoning code updates are huge, RDA continues to support that on the technical side. In Portage/OD Portage is working on a new comp plan so we want to make sure the TOD studies are included in that. In Dune Park the RDA is focused on designating US 12 as a scenic byway and we are working with Porter to assist. In Beverly Shores/Pines the lynchpin of development here is the sewers and we are working through that piece of the puzzle now.

RDA controller Courtney Kvachkoff noted that no new increment had been distributed to the RDA for any of the TDDs and the next distribution was scheduled for March. On the RDA front we are finalizing the TDD bank accounts with Centier and Horizon banks.

RDA director of economic development AJ Bytnar provided a 2026 preview for the committee. He started with the Land Development Entity (LDE). He provided a brief overview of its creation. What we have been doing is since is setting up the legal and administrative framework so that we can move ahead in 2026. We have had conversations from small projects to larger sites where there is a need for a team lift. We can provide capacity building and technical assistance. We will have the LDE set up and board seated in Q1. In the meantime we want to look for our first projects, and start to get an idea of where our longer-term projects might be.

Chris Harris asked about the uses of the funds RDA was providing to seed the LDE. AJ replied we would be analyzing projects in a ranked order to determine a strategic deployment of resources. Some of this will be tied to pursuing grant opportunities. We want to ensure the long-term viability of the LDE itself.

The meeting finished up with housekeeping notes regarding reappointment requests and next year's meeting schedule.

The meeting was adjourned.