

3
4 **A NONBINDING RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE**
5 **NORTHERN INDIANA PASSENGER RAIL ASSOCIATION (NIPRA) AND**
6 **THEIR ADVOCATION FOR THE RETURN OF PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE**
7 **TO FORT WAYNE, INDIANA.**
8

9 **WHEREAS**, the Northern Indiana Passenger Rail Association (NIPRA), is a
10 legally recognized not for profit organization in the State of Indiana and is made up
11 entirely of volunteer board members and general supporters; and
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13 **WHEREAS**, NIPRA has long advocated for the return of passenger rail service
14 to Fort Wayne, commencing at the Baker Street Train Station downtown; and
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16 **WHEREAS**, based on a Business Plan and Feasibility Study, there is great
17 potential to serve thousands of citizens with train travel to Chicago and other cities; and
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19 **WHEREAS**, the Midwest Rail Initiative identifies Chicago to Fort Wayne and
20 Columbus, Ohio a key link in providing passenger rail service to millions of citizens; and
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22 **WHEREAS**, the Midwest Rail Initiative and NIPRA identifies potential
23 passenger rail stops in Fort Wayne, Warsaw, Plymouth, Valparaiso, and the Gary
24 Regional Airport, as a key economic development project that would continue to
25 revitalize the aforementioned cities, and Northern Indiana; and
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27 **WHEREAS**, the Business Plan and Feasibility Study prepared by the firm of
28 Transportation Economic and Management Systems (TEMS) identifies that thousands of
29 construction jobs could be created with making this rail connection, and that 27,000
30 permanent jobs could be created in Northern Indiana and Ohio over a period of 30 years
31 with the addition of this passenger rail line; and
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33 **WHEREAS**, federal funding for this Northern Indiana route will yield a return of
34 \$1.71 for every dollar invested in the line, not to mention various benefits to freight train
35 service that currently uses this line; and
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37 **WHEREAS**, the Whitley County Steel Dynamics plant is a large producer of rail
38 for passenger and freight lines, and, there are many railroad suppliers in Indiana and Ohio
39 that will benefit from supplying rolling stock, rail, and parts for this project; and
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1 **WHEREAS**, Amtrak has expressed repeated interest in the Chicago to Fort
2 Wayne to Columbus route and has a parts and repair center located in Beech Grove,
3 Indiana; and

4 **WHEREAS**, with the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of
5 2021, there is some \$36 billion in federal money to be utilized with a state match (similar
6 to President Eisenhower’s Interstate Highway Act of 1956), of probably 80% to 20%
7 state; and

8 **WHEREAS**, Mayor Tom Henry visited with Governor Eric Holcomb, and the
9 governor expressed interest in this plan with a state match; and

10
11 **WHEREAS**, NIPRA board members Jack Daniel, Fred Lanahan, and Geoff
12 Paddock met with Mike Smith, the Commissioner of the Indiana Department of
13 Transportation on July 7 to ask INDOT to apply for these federal funds for this route; and

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15 **WHEREAS**, a Tier I Environmental Impact Study and a partial Tier II
16 Preliminarily Engineering Study have been conducted at the direction of NIPRA, which
17 is a requirement of the Federal Railroad Administration; and

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19 **WHEREAS**, the Fort Wayne City Council voted in November 2014, 9 – 0, to
20 support a bill authored by Councilman Geoff Paddock to put \$200,000 to begin work on
21 the aforementioned studies, and that Allen County government contributed \$50,000, and
22 then other public and private money was raised for this cause; and

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24 **WHEREAS**, there are significant benefits to passenger rail travel, including
25 reducing air pollution by ensuring fewer automobiles on the roads; and

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27 **WHEREAS**, Councilman Geoff Paddock has personally spoken with a
28 representative in the office of U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg regarding this
29 project, and the U.S. Department of Transportation is interested in working with INDOT.

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31 **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL**
32 **OF THE CITY OF FORT WAYNE:**

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34 **Section 1.** Respectfully requests that Commissioner Smith and the Indiana Department of
35 Transportation work with Secretary Buttigieg and the U. S. Department of Transportation
36 to apply for 80% of the proposed amount of money needed to make infrastructure
37 improvements across 150 miles in Northern Indiana, or about \$750 to \$800 million. This
38 amount being a portion of the approximate \$36 Billion available for passenger rail
39 upgrades across the United States through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of
40 2021.

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Geoff Paddock, Council Member

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY

Joseph G. Bonahoom, Attorney for City Council