

Gary airport OKs rail agreement pushing expansion forward

By [Keith Benman keith.benman@nwi.com](mailto:keith.benman@nwi.com), (219) 933-3326 | Posted: Monday, April 25, 2011 5:30 pm



John J. Watkins | The Times GARY | The Gary/Chicago International Airport Authority on Monday approved a landmark agreement clearing the way for airport expansion.

GARY | The Gary/Chicago International Airport Authority on Monday approved a landmark agreement clearing the way for airport expansion.

By a 7-0 vote, the authority board approved a final memorandum of understanding with three railroads encompassing rail projects needed to move tracks that block expansion of its main runway.

"This is a gigantic step because we have been trying to get the railroads together for just this type of agreement for a long time," Airport Authority Chairman Nathaniel Williams said shortly after the vote.

Airport Director Steve Landry said he anticipates all three railroads involved will sign the agreement, as it is the product of months and even years of negotiations. It outlines seven major rail projects.

"At this point no more projects can be added and no more removed," Landry said. "We are there."

Landry said the airport still plans to break ground on the first of the rail relocation projects by July 4. Each project will require a separate agreement between the airport and railroads.

Three years ago the airport reached a preliminary memorandum of understanding with railroads on the track relocation project, but there was little apparent progress after that. Then last year the airport hired international engineering firm Aecom Technology Corp. for \$2.8 million to speed up the airport expansion. Last week the airport asked the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority for \$30 million to fund three of the projects involved in the railroad relocation. Those projects include a vehicle overpass on Airport Road, formerly Industrial Highway, for CSX and Canadian National tracks.

Other projects, including the relocation of tracks that sit 130 feet from the northwest end of the airport's main runway, will be paid for with Federal Aviation Administration and other funds.

The \$128 million airport project will expand its main runway to 8,900 feet from its current 7,000, making it possible to land most passenger airliners as well as larger cargo planes. It also will bring the airport into compliance with FAA safety regulations.

[Copyright 2011 nwitimes.com](http://www.nwitimes.com)

California Aviation Alliance: Airport News List E-mail

Sent by AviaEd@netscape.net - Lorena de Rodriguez on behalf of CAA subscribers. Add your comments

to these stories realtime online at <http://aviaed.wordpress.com/>.

To subscribe or unsubscribe to the Airport News List, send an email, from the email account you wish to receive or discontinue CAA posts on, addressed to imailsrv@californiaaviation.org and place only the following in the first line of the body of the message: **Subscribe airport YourFirstName YourLastName YourJobTitle YourAirport/Company**

Manage your CAA subscriptions with the user friendly Mail List Administration database. You'll find it at: <http://californiaaviation.org/cal/index.cfm>