

AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION  
2021 NATIONAL TOP TEN PUBLIC WORKS LEADER OF THE YEAR AWARD SUBMISSION

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## SHAN GUNAWARDENA, PE



### CANDIDATE

Shan Gunawardena, PE

### TITLE

Public Works Director

### AGENCY/ORGANIZATION/COMPANY

City of Fort Wayne, Indiana

### CATEGORY

Municipality

# TOP TEN PUBLIC WORKS LEADERS OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINATION FORM

**Deadline March 1, 2021**  
(electronic submittals only)

In order for the nominee to be considered, both the Nomination Form and Supporting Data Form must be completed by either the nominee or the group/individual making the nomination.

**Please note below who is completing this form.**

- Nominee  
 Group/Individual Nominating

**Shan G**

Candidate's Name

**Public Works Director**

Title

**655359**

Member ID

**City of Fort Wayne**

Agency/Organization

**200 E. Berry Street**

Address (if post office box, include street address)

**Fort Wayne IN 46802**

City

State/Province

Zip/Postal Code

**260.427.1112**

Phone

**shan.gunawardena@cityoffortwayne.org**

E-mail

**Mike McBride, PE**

Group/Individual Nominating

**Vice President/ Partner**

Title

**American Structurepoint**

Agency/Organization

**9025 River Road Suite 200**

Address (if post office box, include street address)

**Indianapolis IN 46240**

City

State/Province

Zip/Postal Code

**3175475580**

Phone

**mmcbride@structurepoint.com**

E-mail

Continued...

# TOP TEN PUBLIC WORKS LEADERS OF THE YEAR AWARD SUPPORTING DATA FORM

**Deadline** March 1, 2021  
(electronic submittals only)

Please complete the requirements listed below limiting submittal to **20 pages**. In addition to the directions on this page, please read the criteria page.

## Candidate

Shan Gunawardena

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## Title

Public Works Director

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## Agency/Organization

City of Fort Wayne

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If applicable, indicate the population served by candidate's agency/organization:

265,752

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Please indicate the category under which the candidate's agency/organization falls:

- Municipality
- County/Special District
- State/Federal/Military
- Private Sector
- Retired
- Do not contact candidate if they do not win the award.  
They are not aware they were nominated. Please do not send letter of regrets.

**Address the following areas in supporting documentation limiting submittal to 20 pages. Nominations must adhere to the sequence below:**

**Employment Record** Briefly list all employment positions, dates of each position and description of responsibilities. Begin with most current and include consulting work.

**Job-Related Technical and Managerial Accomplishments**  
Describe all major achievements and accomplishments. State specific role in each. Include innovations in technical and/or managerial fields. Describe your commitment to advancing other people in career and profession. NOTE: This section weighs most heavily in the judging process.

**Initial and Lifelong Education** Include colleges and universities attended, dates of attendance, majors, and degrees received. List attendance at professional institutes and on-the-job-training.

**Publications and/or Presentations** List any published articles and/or papers delivered at professional meetings.

**Professional Involvement** List organizations, activities, offices held.

**Community Service** List organizations, activities, offices held.

**Awards** List educational, professional and civic awards. Include recognition for public service.

## Directions

Nominations should be limited to no more than 20 pages. The 20 pages do not include a letter of introduction from the chapter/nominator or the nomination form and supporting data form and any letters of recommendation, which should be limited to six.

If submission has a letter of introduction (maximum of two pages) it should be placed in front of the nomination. Submittal should address the areas outlined above in the sequence stated. Letters of recommendation will be accepted provided each letter cites specific examples of professional involvement with the nominee. Letters will not be accepted after nomination deadline. Include at least one color photograph (head shot) of the nominee with submittal. Nominees will be contacted by letter notifying them if they were or were not selected as a Top Ten recipient.

Any examples such as publication articles, newspaper clippings, photos of awards, etc. count toward the 20 page limit.

Only the Top 10 Nomination Form, Introduction Letter From the Chapter or Nominator and 6 letters of recommendation are not counted as part of the 20 page limitation.



February 25, 2021

Re: APWA National Top Ten Public Works Leader of the Year Award  
Letter of Introduction: Shan Gunawardena, PE

Dear Review Committee:

I am writing this letter of introduction supporting City of Fort Wayne Public Works Director Shan Gunawardena, PE, as a very worthy candidate for the 2021 National Top Ten Public Works Leader of the Year Award. As a vice president and partner of American Structurepoint, I have interacted with Shan on numerous occasions and am recommending him for this well-deserved recognition.

Shan's entire 27-year professional engineering career has focused on furthering public transportation and infrastructure projects that improve quality of life and public safety. His public-service career includes nearly 13 years with the City of Fort Wayne and another 8 years with INDOT. He also worked 6 years as a project engineer in the consulting field with the Bonar Group in Fort Wayne. In every one of those positions, Shan has led and managed his staff with a well-defined mission and goals for achievement. Shan has played a key role in Fort Wayne's record investments in neighborhood infrastructure improvements averaging \$27.3 million each year since 2014 and more than \$190 million from 2014 through 2020. Shan has actively worked to oversee transformative infrastructure projects that improve safety and quality of life in all quadrants of the city. He also has actively worked to enhance public space and improve walkability via enhanced landscaping, trails, and sidewalks.

American Structurepoint has maintained an excellent collaborative relationship with Shan in various capacities with the City of Fort Wayne since 2007. His professionalism and devotion to delivering excellence for his city is without question. This was quite evident during our work on the State Boulevard Realignment project that celebrated a ribbon cutting in October 2020. Shan served as the driving force to see this project through in every aspect from start to finish over a 12-year span. The result is a beautiful asset to the community that replaced a 90-year-old failing bridge, addressed flooding concerns, improved safety, and added many aesthetic enhancements that helped preserve the historic qualities of the surrounding neighborhood.

In summary, Shan Gunawardena is an outstanding individual who has given his all to making Fort Wayne a better place in which to live, work, and play. His engineering expertise, his leadership qualities, and his passion for delivering infrastructure projects that position Fort Wayne as a vibrant, growing, innovative city make him a public works dynamo. I highly recommend him for the APWA National Top Ten Public Works Leader of the Year Award.

Sincerely,  
American Structurepoint, Inc.

Michael T. McBride, PE  
Vice President/Partner

AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION  
2021 NATIONAL TOP TEN PUBLIC WORKS LEADER OF THE YEAR AWARD SUBMISSION

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# EMPLOYMENT RECORD

# EMPLOYMENT RECORD

## City of Fort Wayne Public Works Director

**December 2017 – Present**

Shan plans, coordinates, and directs all programs and staff of the 11 services of the public works division. He also coordinates, in conjunction with the City's Engineer Office, the public works engineering, construction, improvements, maintenance, and planning functions. The Public Works Division has responsibility for the following: maintaining and improving the city's transportation systems; street and traffic lighting; leaf collection; street sweeping; snow and ice control; flood fighting and control; greenway trails; right-of-way permitting; solid waste and recycling; transportation engineering services; and fleet management.

## City of Fort Wayne City Engineer

**April 2012 – December 2017**

Shan planned, organized, directed, and managed the rehabilitation and construction of the city's infrastructure system. He also managed the City's capital improvement projects, including scheduling, monitoring, and reviewing the design and preparation of project plans, drawings, specifications, and estimates. The role also included overseeing the city's flood control program and managing the city's green infrastructure/sustainability and bridge management programs. During his tenure, Shan oversaw 30 projects that improved safety and drivability in neighborhoods and arterial streets and roads in all quadrants of Fort Wayne.

## Traffic Engineer, City of Fort Wayne Traffic Engineering Department

**March 2008 – April 2012**

Shan supervised daily operations of the Fort Wayne Traffic Engineering Department. He was responsible for determining traffic control and street lighting needs, managed traffic studies, oversaw the city's computerized traffic control system, and prepared or assisted in preparing departmental budgets, capital improvement programs, and descriptive reports.

## Assistant City Engineer, City of Fort Wayne

**May 2007 – March 2008**

Shan assisted the city engineer with multiple duties including scoping projects, preliminary cost estimates, soliciting funding, selecting design engineering firms,

administering preliminary engineering activities, and overseeing design and construction activities. He also performed transportation studies and identified and recommended necessary infrastructure improvements.

## Senior Transportation Engineer/Project Manager Bonar Group

**December 2001 – May 2007**

Shan was responsible for designing rural and urban highways and for keeping design and construction projects on schedule and within budget. He also managed design projects using federal and local funds from the funding approval stages through plan development, project letting, and construction. His duties also included traffic engineering tasks.

## Traffic Operations Engineer, INDOT Fort Wayne District, Division of Traffic

**December 1999 – December 2001**

Shan supervised all traffic signing, pavement markings, lighting, and traffic signal operations. He supervised approximately 55 employees including six sign crews, an overhead sign crew, a sign shop, an edge line crew, a center line crew, a special markings crew, and six signal technicians.

## Traffic Systems Engineer, INDOT Fort Wayne District, Division of Traffic

**January 1998 – December 1999**

Shan was responsible for the maintenance and operation of all traffic signals, signal systems, intersectional flashes, school zone flashers, and street lighting systems within jurisdiction of INDOT's Fort Wayne District. He performed various arterial and signal timing analyses and maintained and operated all closed-loop systems within the INDOT Fort Wayne District.

## Investigations and Analysis Engineer, INDOT Fort Wayne District, Division of Traffic

**January 1998 – December 1999**

Shan performed traffic operational studies on capacity, safety, speed, signal timing, sight distance, and intersection analyses using field data. He reviewed traffic impact studies for private developments. Shan also supervised a crew of four field investigators.

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# **JOB-RELATED TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

# JOB-RELATED TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

*“Shan is a public servant dedicated to ensuring our transportation system is safe and efficient. I appreciate and respect his professionalism, experience, attention to detail, and commitment to meeting the needs of residents, neighborhoods, and businesses. Shan’s leadership skills, expertise in engineering, and ability to bring out the best in others are unique qualities to lead the City’s Public Works Division in the right direction. He will do a great job in his new role.”*

— MAYOR TOM HENRY, DECEMBER 2017

Shan Gunawardena earned a bachelor’s degree and master’s degree from Purdue University and is registered as a professional engineer and professional traffic operations engineer. He is chairman of the Fort Wayne Board of Public Works and the Urban Transportation Advisory Board and a board member of the Fort Wayne Plan Commission.

Shan has served in various capacities with the City of Fort Wayne—traffic engineer, assistant city engineer, city engineer, and the Public Works Division director. Shan has played key roles in helping to make the City of Fort Wayne a better, safer place in which to live, work, and play. The following is an overview.

## Record Investments in Neighborhood Infrastructure

In 2014, the City began investing record amounts in neighborhood infrastructure improvements of an average of \$27.3 million each year and more than \$190 million through 2020. The investment and project load grew by more than six times that of a previous typical project year. Shan’s leadership, initially as city engineer, and in 2018 as director of public works, was key to accomplishing the record-breaking improvements.

Even during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic that abbreviated the construction season, Shan’s staff of 226 employees was still able to move forward with \$28.3 million in street, sidewalk, trail, curb, gutter, ADA ramp, and lighting improvements in neighborhoods and public spaces throughout the city.

## Sidewalks for School Children

With increased investment also came first-time infrastructure challenges. In 2016, Fort Wayne Community Schools, the largest school district in Indiana, eliminated several bus routes because of budget cuts forced by a change in Indiana’s property tax rules. The result was that nearly 6,000 students from kindergarten through 12th grade would now have to walk to school. In many cases, gaps existed in the 1,600 miles of the City’s sidewalk network, and school officials asked the City to help to create safe routes for these students to walk to school.

Shan took the lead on this challenge and worked closely with the school administration and transportation teams, along with the Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council. The group analyzed where quick adjustments could be made and discussed long-range goals for sidewalk and trail expansion. They also advised the school district of some bus routes that should continue because students would have to cross major, multi-lane state highways. The result of Shan’s effort saw 12 new miles of sidewalk added to connect students with their schools. Additionally, an aggressive sidewalk repair project is fixing more than 1,200 broken and heaved sidewalks in neighborhoods throughout the city.

## Establishing a Local Option Tax

In 2017, Shan worked closely with the mayor’s office to supply data and support material that led the Fort Wayne City Council to approve a local option income tax that would allocate funds for sidewalk and alley improvements. In the past, the Public Works Division didn’t make alley improvements unless a neighborhood funded 50% of the project. Revenue from the new income tax has allowed for reconstructing more than 10 miles of alleys.

## Creating a New Logo

After becoming public works director, Shan asked his public information staff to create a new logo that would support the vast amount of work the division does throughout the city every day. The result was a logo that incorporated the tagline “In Your Neighborhood.” The logo and tagline captures the division’s work in



every neighborhood every week, either through garbage and recycling, infrastructure improvements, snowplowing, and life collection.



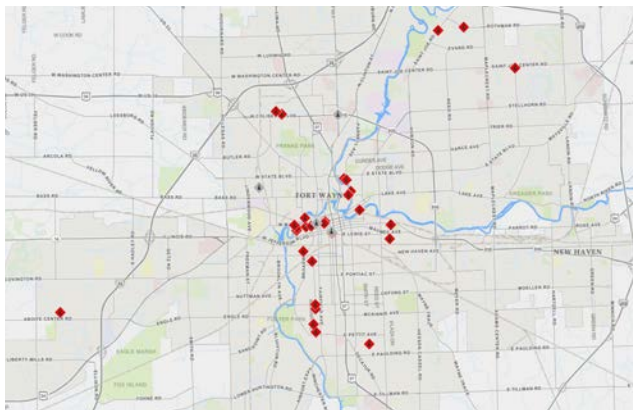
### Public Works Operational Improvements

Under Shan's leadership, the Public Works Division has moved forward with operations improvements such as ending an outside contract and bringing the fleet operations maintenance team in-house.

Fort Wayne's fleet department maintains more than 2,340 vehicles, including plow trucks, water and sewer maintenance trucks, paving equipment, and police and fire vehicles. These work vehicles are used every day to provide essential services throughout the community. The vehicles are in service more than 36,000 hours a day and cover more than 9.4 million miles each year.

A careful evaluation of the outside vendor showed it was not meeting routine upkeep. Vehicle repair was taking too long, resulting in downtime. Costs also were rising with the external vendor for no apparent reason. Shan ended the vendor contract and hired many of the mechanics from the vendor. Efficiency has improved, and there is a cost savings of more than \$340,000 per year.

In 2019, Shan worked with his traffic team and the IT department to develop a new web-based interactive map that offers detailed street and road information about restrictions and closures.



*Shan helped develop a web-based interactive map offering detailed street and road restrictions and closure information.*

The site is TRECTheFort.org, with TREC standing for Traffic-Related Events and Closures. A user can click on the icon and find out what work (public or private) is causing the restriction, the effective date, expiration date, and access a phone number for the person in charge of the project. The page also offers information about weight and height limits and truck routes. It launched in late 2019, with bugs being worked out in 2020 and emergency updates for crashes, storms, and fires added in 2021. Future expansion of the mapping will include information from the Indiana Department of Transportation and Allen County, Indiana.

Technology is also being used to aid bicyclists. In August 2020, Shan and the team from trails and traffic operations solidified a partnership with the GiveMeGreen! app. The program links traffic signals to a smartphone app that bike riders can download. As they approach an intersection, it sends an alert to the traffic light in the same fashion that a pedestrian would press a button on a pole to request that the light change for them to cross the intersection. The technology senses when a cyclist is within 300 feet of the intersection and signals the device to change the light to green. Fort Wayne is the second city in the country to test the app, developed by Sensys Networks.

### Open Streets Event

Understanding that public works is more than concrete and pavement, Shan has actively worked to enhance public space and make the public understand the role these improvements play in creating a sense of place and improving the City's quality of life. Under Shan's leadership, projects almost always include new lighting, enhanced landscaping, trails, and sidewalks, and he and his team work to make the public aware of using these spaces with events like Open Streets Fort Wayne.



Open Streets is an event that draws attention to making Fort Wayne more pedestrian and bicyclist friendly. Fort Wayne has made a significant investment to build more sidewalks, and the city's trail network has grown from 39 miles to more than 120 miles in 12 years. Open

Streets is an annual event sponsored by the Public Works Division that closes to vehicle traffic one of the major streets through the center of town for 25 blocks and opens it to pedestrians and bicyclists. The event receives tremendous media coverage and attracts thousands of residents of all ages and ethnicities. It winds through five neighborhoods and Fort Wayne's downtown. In 2021, Shan is organizing a car cruise-in to draw attention to street upgrades made last year. This annual event will be a fundraiser for a nonprofit and move to different locations around the community each year to draw attention to the infrastructure enhancements.

### **Prioritizing Recycling**

Shan is supportive of the solid waste department, and while the City contracts for hauling, sorting, and disposal, he has worked with the staff to expand efforts to improve the environment. In the past, there were a few Tox-Away Tuesdays in cooperation with Allen County. But it was believed that a weekday was not helpful for families and individuals who couldn't make the events on a weekday. The team started a Tox-Away Saturday program on six dates throughout the spring, summer and fall. Educational outreach through mailers and radio stations helped promote the event, and the City has found non-stop bumper-to-bumper traffic showing up on each of the Saturday events.



**FW PUBLIC WORKS**  
**Solid Waste  
& Recycling**

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Initial and Lifelong Education

Bachelor of Science, Civil Engineering, 1992, Purdue University

Master of Science, Civil Engineering, 1994, Purdue University

### Publications and/or Presentations

Developed a Prototype Congestion Management System per the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) mandates as a graduate assistance at Purdue University

Presented at the 1996 Annual Transportation Research Board (TRB) conference in Washington, DC.

Published a "Joint Highway Research Project FHWA/IN/JHRP-94/2 Final Report *"The Development of a Prototype Congestion Management System for the State of Indiana Phase I"* by Nishantha R. Gunawardena and Kumares, C. Sinha

### Professional Involvement

Board of Directors and Chapter Treasurer, American Public Works Association (APWA), Indiana Chapter

Associate Member, Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)

Member, American Public Works Association (APWA)

Associate Member, International Municipal Signal Association (IMSA)

Chair, Urban Transportation Advisory Board of the Northern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC)

### Community Service

Future City Regional Judge – for sixth, seventh, and eighth grades

City of Fort Wayne Animal Care and Control Volunteer

APWA Indiana Event Host

APWA Indiana Golf Outing

### Awards

2020 APWA Indiana Public Works Leader Of The Year

AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION  
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# LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

**New letter to come from  
the City of Fort Wayne**



February 26, 2021

Re: APWA National Top Ten Public Works Leader of the Year Award  
Letter of Reference for Shan Gunawardena, PE

Dear Review Committee:

I am honored and pleased to write a letter of recommendation for Public Works Director Shan Gunawardena for the APWA National Top Ten Public Works Leaders of the Year Award.

I first met Shan in 2008. I was a project engineer working on the State Boulevard Realignment project, my first project with the City of Fort Wayne. Shan was a city traffic engineer working on the project. Throughout the 12-year journey bringing this \$10 million two-phased project from concept to reality, Shan served as the driving force to bring all stakeholders and interested parties together to improve mobility and public safety for the entire city.

Shan was an active project participant from day one, first as a traffic engineer, then a city engineer, and finally as public works director ensuring that city officials, design engineers, and the public collaborated to make this project a success. The project replaced the 90-year-old Spy Run Creek Bridge, one of the worst-rated bridges in Fort Wayne. The realigned State Boulevard removed a severe curve that had been a frequent location of accidents. A pedestrian footbridge over the roadway now provides a much safer mode of travel for walkers and bicyclists alike. Shan also ensured that the new four-lane roadway included public greenspace, decorative lighting, and the planting of 250 trees, 122 native shrubs, and 2,000 daffodils to preserve the historic characteristics of the neighborhood.

Shan was a vital participant throughout the multi-year project development process. He was involved in all project aspects - the many coordination activities with the city council, INDOT, and the Federal Highway Administration; environmental documentation; and design assistance. He was instrumental in facilitating public meetings and multiple outreach activities to keep the public informed and gain public support. He organized countless meetings over the life of the project. He and I met with individual people at their kitchen tables to discuss the project, in small groups of people onsite or at the City building, as well as large gatherings at the nearby North Side High School, The Allen County Public Library, and Franke Park. Facilitating public involvement and gaining public acceptance were of the highest priorities for Shan to ensure the project's success.

I firmly believe the State Boulevard Realignment project would not have been possible without Shan's dedication and diligence to deliver a premier project that enhances public safety and economic vitality for the citizens of Fort Wayne. He continually puts the interests of Fort Wayne first in all he does. I am proud to call Shan a colleague and even prouder to be a part of recognizing his professionalism and expertise. I highly recommend Shan for the APWA National Top Ten Public Works Leaders of the Year Award.

Sincerely,  
American Structurepoint, Inc.

Scott M. Crites, PE  
Project Development Director