



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

233 South Wacker Drive
Suite 800, Sears Tower
Chicago, IL 60606

voice 312-454-0400
fax 312-454-0411
www.cmap.illinois.gov

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Dear CREATE Partners:

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has long been a supporter of the CREATE program. CREATE will streamline rail service in the Chicago area, which would improve passenger rail service, ease highway congestion, enhance safety, and improve air quality. It would also ensure that Chicago remains the nation's rail hub for freight, which guarantees jobs for thousands of Illinoisans and ensures that Illinois farmers and businesses can move their goods to market as efficiently as possible.

The economy of metropolitan Chicago, the State of Illinois, and the nation as a whole depends heavily on an effective transportation system to move goods and people. Nowhere is that more evident than in terms of freight. One-third of the nation's rail and truck cargo passes through our region, making it the busiest U.S. rail freight hub.

CREATE is a public-private partnership that seeks to maximize the efficiency of five major rail corridors. Grade separations at 25 rail crossings would eliminate waits for motorists, and CREATE would also reduce transit delays via six rail-to-rail "flyovers" – overpasses and underpasses to separate conflicting train movements, including many freight-passenger rail conflicts. These projects are in advanced stages of planning and, with support from decision makers like you, could begin quickly to reduce congestion, create jobs, and promote economic development.

While CMAP continues to work for additional funding for CREATE as part of a broader Illinois capital program, improving freight traffic should also be a federal imperative. The potential benefits are CREATE are truly national -- even international. Whether through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's stimulus programs, a new U.S. transportation bill, or other mechanisms, we urge you to support federal funding for this vitally important project.

If you would like additional information, please contact me at (312) 386-8600.

Sincerely,

Randall S. Blankenhorn
Executive Director

LW:RSB/stk

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