



Ford Motor Company Infrastructure Investment Creates Economic Revival

Ford Motor Company sparked an economic revival when it renovated an 80-year old assembly plant at 130th Street and Torrence Avenue and fitted it with the latest technology to build cars. Just a half mile away, Ford turned a brownfield site that had been vacant for 40 years into its first U.S. supplier manufacturing campus to provide parts for the assembly plant. The move has brought 4,000 jobs to the area and led to other local investments by Ford.

One of the key components of the plan was an infrastructure investment to separate the rail line traversing 130th and Torrence Avenue from the roadway, which is part of the CREATE program. Currently, freight trains can block the road into the facility for up to 20 minutes. When a freight train obstructs the road, three aspects of Ford's operations are affected: 1) Employees cannot enter the employee parking lot and to access another entrance they need to drive a 10-mile loop. 2) Major auto components manufactured in the supplier park and transported via truck the short distance to the assembly plant are delayed in reaching the assembly floor. 3) Finished cars driven off the assembly line are delayed in their arrival to Ford's nearby "mixing yard" where they are driven onto rail cars and shipped throughout the U.S and the world. All of these burden economic viability.

When the delay is significant for employees starting their shifts or for major automotive materials arriving at the plant, the assembly line may have to start operations late. Delays on the assembly floor caused by rail interference typically occur every two to four weeks. The Ford plant produces one Taurus, Taurus X, or Lincoln MKS per minute, and every minute counts. "The grade crossing separation at 130th and Torrence is critical to keeping the Ford assembly plant running on-time so that our business is competitive," said Reinder Van Der Schoot, Material Planning and Logistics Operations Manager, Ford Motor Company.

This extraordinary opportunity for economic development at 130th and Torrence Avenue is being made possible by investments in critically needed rail infrastructure improvements. The CREATE Program will make improvements here and in other areas to help generate similar opportunities throughout the Chicago region.

