

METROPOLITAN PLANNING COUNCIL



February 3, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

The freight industry is a powerful economic engine for the Chicago region but the negative effects of freight congestion are growing: commuters are experiencing greater delays at rail crossings, rail infrastructure suffers from a serious lack of investment, and regional chokepoints often halt the trains that carry our nation's goods. Freight trains travel at average speeds of less than 10 miles per hour and often take more than three days to travel through the Chicago rail hub, costing shippers almost \$40 million annually.

The region's infrastructure has not kept up with increased rail demand, which affects more than just our freight rail network. Metra's commuter rail network shares congested track with freight trains, often delaying passengers. Idling trains waste fuel and freight is frequently diverted to less efficient trucks, thereby worsening road congestion and the region's air and noise quality. Even though one freight train can haul an average of 280 truck trailers and move one ton of freight an average of 410 miles on just one gallon of fuel, shippers turn to trucks for their needs because of rail delays. Studies project the region will handle 67,000 freight rail cars daily within the next 20 years, doubling today's traffic. As the region grows, the challenges will only get worse.

The Chicago Region Environmental And Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE) lays the groundwork to address these pressing freight concerns. With CREATE improvements, the region's idling motorists waiting for trains to pass would regain more than 195,000 lost hours and 200,000 gallons of gas per year; while public rail commuters would save \$190 million worth of time. With freight infrastructure needs estimated at \$2.56 billion, the consequences of not properly funding rail improvements would not only have devastating effects in the region, but nationally and internationally as well. If the region doesn't address its rail congestion and infrastructure issues now, we will lose 17,000 jobs and more than \$2 billion in annual economic production over the next 20 years.

MPC strongly supports the CREATE program as it will provide significant regional and national benefits. With more than 37,000 freight cars traveling through the Chicago region every day, rail is responsible for moving one-third of the country's goods. Transporting everything from food to textiles to electronics, Chicago is the rail hub of North America. The Chicago area cannot afford to continue to ignore the movement of goods through the region which enriches the

25 East Washington Street, Suite 1600
Chicago, Illinois 60602
phone: 312.922.5616 • fax: 312.922.5619
www.metroplanning.org

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Lee M. Mitchell *
Chair

King Harris *
Vice Chair

George A. Ranney, Jr. *
Vice Chair

Sidney R. Dillard *
Vice Chair-Development

Robert V. Fitzsimmons *
Vice Chair-Development

Valerie B. Jarrett *
Secretary

Jeff E. Smith *
Treasurer

John M. McDonough *
General Counsel

John A. Buck *
Past Chair

Rolando R. Acosta

John W. Baird

David E. Baker

Yasmin T. Bates-Brown

Todd C. Brown

Karen S. Butler

Paul C. Carlisle

Gery J. Chico

Vincent Cordero

Lester Crown

Jon B. DeVries

Kelly King Dibble

Ann M. Drake

James C. Franczek, Jr.

Dennis J. Gannon

John S. Gates, Jr. *

Linda Goodman

Jacques N. Gordon

Joseph A. Gregoire

M. Hill Hammock *

Julie M. Howard

Lawrence Howe

Jerry S. James

Bernard Loyd *

Mary K. Ludgin *

Sari L. Macrie

James E. Mann *

Michael Moore

J. Scot Pepper

Stephen M. Porras

Quintin E. Primo, III

Kevin C. Richardson

Robert S. Rivkin

Jean Rudd *

Jesse R. Ruiz

Maria N. Saldaña

Martin Stern

James P. Stirling

Mary White Vasys

Paula Wolff *

PRESIDENT

MarySue Barrett *

*Executive Committee

EXECUTIVE ADVISORS

Curt R. Bailey
Related Midwest

Carol L. Bernick
Alberto-Culver Company

Larry T. Borgard
Peoples Gas

John L. Bucksbaum
General Growth Properties, Inc.

Ellen M. Costello
Harris Bankcorp, Inc.

William M. Daley
JPMorgan Chase

Craig J. Duchossois
Duchossois Industries, Inc.

Colin Dyer
Janes Lang LaSalle

David L. Grange
McCormick Foundation

Joseph A. Gregoire
National City Bank

Stephen J. Hagge
AptarGroup, Inc.

Edward R. Hamberger
Association of American Railroads

Richard L. Keyser
W. W. Grainger, Inc.

Frederick A. Krehbiel
Molex Incorporated

David J. Neithercut
Equity Residential

Theodore J. Novak
DLA Piper

William A. Osborn
The Northern Trust Company

James W. Owens
Caterpillar Inc.

Robert L. Parkinson, Jr.
Baxter International Inc.

Jeffrey A. Patterson
Prime Group Realty Trust

J. Marshall Peck
InterPark

Thomas Pontarelli
CNA Insurance

Penny Pritzker
Pritzker Realty Group, L.P.

John W. Rowe
Exelon

Paul L. Snyder
KPMG LLP

David B. Speer
Illinois Tool Works Inc.

Brian P. Simmons
Code Hennessy + Simmons LLP

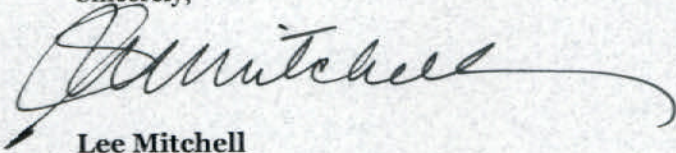
Waiyeem Co.

Miles D. White
Abbott

Terry E. Zink
Fifth Third Bank

Illinois economy with 38,000 jobs and more than \$22 billion in economic activity. The importance of freight in Chicago must be preserved for the future advancement of the region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lee Mitchell", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Lee Mitchell
Chair
Board of Governors