



## 75<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Improvement Project

### Congressman Bobby L. Rush

### Coordination Meeting

### Monday, September 24, 2018

#### Meeting Summary

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The purpose of this meeting was to initiate coordination between the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program 75<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Improvement Project (CIP) team and elected officials whose districts overlap the 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP study area.

The 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP was recently awarded a U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant on June 6, 2018. The INFRA funding, along with financial contributions from the CREATE partners, make it possible for the project team to complete final design and right-of-way acquisition for the entire project (i.e., Phase II for P3/GS19/P2/EW2 and 36 viaducts) and construct two of the four major project elements (i.e., Phase III for P3/GS19 and some viaducts). Preliminary design and environmental studies (i.e., Phase I) were completed in 2014.

Now that the 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP is advancing, there will be additional and on-going coordination between the project team, elected officials, and other project stakeholders. The project team is available to answer elected official's questions as they arise and will follow-up with another meeting request once more detailed information is available and prior to any coordination with other project stakeholders.

The meeting included introductions of the project team, an overview of the 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP design and construction elements, funding, schedule, and questions and answers, which are summarized below.

#### **Introductions**

In attendance were Congressman Rush, District Director Robyn Wheeler Grange, and representatives from the CREATE partners. CREATE partners that attended were the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), CSX Transportation (CSX), Norfolk Southern (NS), and Metra. Please see attached sign-in sheet for specific attendees and contact information.

#### **Funding**

The CREATE partners have sought funding to complete the 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP since Phase I was completed in 2014. The total cost to complete the 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP was estimated to be approximately \$984 million dollars in 2014.

In November 2017, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) submitted an INFRA grant application seeking \$160 million in funding on behalf of the CREATE partners for the final design of the

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entire 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP and to partially fund its construction. Additional funds were sought as part of this INFRA grant application for construction of CREATE Project B9, which is located west of the 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP study area. IDOT was awarded \$132 million in June 2018 and the CREATE partners committed to contribute \$342 million for a total investment of \$474 million for the 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP and Project B9. The funding breakdown for the CREATE partner contributions are listed below.

- \$116 million from the American Association of Railroads
- \$111 million from IDOT
- \$78 million from Cook County
- \$23 million from Metra
- \$9 million from the City of Chicago
- \$5 million from Amtrak

INFRA funding is anticipated to become available December 2018, at the earliest. Based on the funding availability and disbursement, Phase II could begin as early as Summer 2019.

### **Project Overview**

The 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP is comprised of the following five (5) project components.

1. Forest Hill Freight rail flyover (P3)
2. Rail-roadway grad separation at 71st Street (GS19)
3. Rock Island Connection Passenger rail flyover (P2 – Metra / Metra double track)
4. Belt Junction and 80<sup>th</sup> Street Junction Improvements (EW2)
5. Viaducts and Local Mobility

Final design for each of these project components is fully funded. Additionally, the construction phase is fully funded for P3 and GS19 but only partially funded for viaducts and local mobility. The partners anticipate pursuing funding opportunities to construct the unfunded components in the future.

Benefits of the 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP include the following:

- Eliminates freight and passenger train delay and increase reliability, speed, and capacity
- Reduces roadway congestion and improve safety
- Decreases train idling and improve air quality
- Reduces horn noise
- Improves 36 viaducts and provide other local mobility improvements

### **Community Benefits**

The 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP includes substantial structural, drainage, roadway, and lighting improvements at 36 existing rail viaducts located throughout the project study area, which will improve local mobility. Final design for this work is fully funded, and it's anticipated that improvements at a minimum of 4 viaducts will be constructed as part of this funding package; however, the number of improved viaducts may increase as project costs and construction limits are refined and finalized.

The project team worked to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts of the proposed project, and this effort will continue through construction. Project impacts include noise, vibration, property acquisition, and temporary construction impacts. To mitigate these impacts and provide offsetting benefits

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throughout the Project study area, appropriate actions will be carried out including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and local jobs program
- Bus stop improvements
- Sidewalk improvements
- Bicycle facility improvements
- Remnant and vacant parcel improvements
- Streetscape improvements
- Mortgage assistance for eligible property owners with negative home equity

These benefits are being developed by the CREATE partners. Planning and implementation will be coordinated with elected officials and other project stakeholders at the appropriate time.

### **Preliminary Schedule**

Construction on CREATE Project B9 is anticipated to begin in spring 2019. This project was included in the INFRA application because it was construction ready, which was a requirement of the application. It's anticipated that design activities on 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP will start in summer 2019. Listed below are past project milestones and anticipated future project milestones based on IDOT receiving INFRA funding in December 2018 and preparing Phase II contract documents and proceeding with Phase II in summer 2019. The dates are preliminary and may change.

- Public hearing: 2014
- Phase I design/environmental: 2014
- Project B9 Construction: Starts 2019
- Temporary railroad construction (P3): 2020
- Permanent construction: Starts 2021
- Viaducts: TBD
- Offsetting Benefits: TBD

### **Open Discussion and Questions and Answers**

- Property Acquisition: Most work associated with 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP will be completed within existing rail right-of-way; however, some property is required for Metra's proposed P2 flyover south of Hamilton Park. Twenty-two properties have been identified for acquisition, including eight (8) single family homes, six (6) multi-family homes, and one (1) church. The remaining properties are vacant or abandoned. The impacted church, the I Care Christian Center, is located at 7500 S. Parnell Ave. During Phase I the impacted property owners were made aware of property impacts and current property owners will be contacted once the property acquisition process begins. Since 2014, the I Care Christian Center has contacted IDOT on twice to inquire about the timing of property acquisition. Property acquisition is funded under INFRA and could begin as early as 2019.
- CREATE Project P1 Lessons Learned: Project P1, also known as the Englewood Flyover, was completed in May 2016. The CREATE partners learned several lessons from Project P1 on employment, contracting, and community benefits. In response, the CREATE partners are proactively developing a comprehensive education, local jobs, and contracting program to provide direct community benefits, create jobs, and promote the participation of DBE design and construction firms. Congressman Rush said he will closely monitor the level of minority participation and that the prime design and construction firms awarded contracts should have a good track record of minority participation in addition to having good track records for completing projects on schedule and on budget.

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- **Contracting:** One lesson learned from Project P1 was the need for more and smaller bid contracts. In response, the CREATE partners are planning more and smaller bid contracts, which are easier for small businesses and BDE firms to secure. To promote and publicize DBE opportunities, the CREATE partners are planning a “Get on Board” event for January 2019 before the bid process begins for the 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP. This event will provide DBE firms with information on 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP design and construction bid contracts, as well as opportunities to meet vendor, railroad, and prime design and construction firms. CREATE previously held “Get on Board” events in 2010 and 2013. In addition to these efforts to promote DBE contracting opportunities, the CREATE partners will follow all Federal and State DBE policies and procedures. The DBE participation goal for bid design and construction contracts have not been set and depend on the level of special railroad work required vs. the level of general design and construction work available. Examples of work DBE firms are competitive on include site surveys, geotechnical surveys, and hauling. The CREATE partners will share the DBE contracting goals once available.
- **Education and Local Jobs:** To promote local education and employment, the CREATE partners are committed to developing a comprehensive education and jobs program. The CREATE partners are identifying area schools with Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) curriculum to support, as well as identifying job training programs and local hiring opportunities to help residents obtain the required qualifications for jobs in the construction industry and to increase exposure to construction activities and jobs. Congressman Rush said he will closely monitor these efforts. The CREATE partners must follow Federal regulations that restrict or prohibit project funds from being spent on education and local jobs programs. The CREATE partners are investigating whether project funds can be spent on these programs or if alternative funds are available to support these efforts.
- **Local Services:** To support local businesses, the CREATE partners are developing a comprehensive list of local businesses and service providers to be shared with the CREATE partners and contractors. For example, local businesses will provide tents, tables, chairs, and portable toilets for an upcoming 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP celebration event. A local and minority-owned business will provide catering.
- **Stakeholder Involvement:** The CREATE partners are developing a comprehensive stakeholder involvement plan to engage elected officials and other stakeholders during design and construction. The CREATE partners met with State Senator Collins and Alderman Moore on June 26<sup>th</sup> (State Representative Flowers was scheduled to participate in this meeting, but a conflict arose), Alderman Curtis on June 26<sup>th</sup>, Alderman Brookins on June 26<sup>th</sup>, and Alderman Sawyer on July 19<sup>th</sup>. In addition to elected official coordination, the CREATE partners will implement a Phase II and Phase III Stakeholder Involvement Plan that will include Community Advisory Group (CAG) meetings, as well as public meetings, as needed, to seek input on the project design and coordinate construction activities. Congressman Rush asked who the Phase I CAG members were, and the CREATE partners offered to provide a list of CAG members after the meeting.

### **Next Steps and Action Items**

The project team will be available as needed to address any comments or questions that arise between now and the time Phase II public involvement activities begin, which is anticipated to occur in 2019. Additionally, the CREATE partners are available to provide a more detailed overview of the 75<sup>th</sup> Street

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CIP scope and impacts upon request. Specific action items and next steps discussed at the meeting are listed below.

1. IDOT to provide Congressman Rush a list of CAG members; Congressman Rush to provide recommendations for any additions or revisions to the Phase I CAG list. *[Completed by IDOT-OIPI (Jakita Trotter) subsequent to the meeting.]*



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**Congressman Rush Meeting  
Monday, September 24, 2018**

### Sign-in Sheet

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