



CREATE

KEEPING THE GO IN CHICAGO

Rail and CREATE Program Overview

DECEMBER 2024

Rail in the Chicago Region

Chicago is considered the Railroad Hub of North America. The Chicago region dominates the U.S. rail freight market in both market share and total volume.

Freight is a backbone of the regional economy.

- \$1.5 trillion in goods move by road, rail, air, water and pipeline in Cook County, Illinois¹; this is more than double the region's gross domestic product, showing how the region is critical to the national economy.²
- 27% of all jobs in Cook County are in freight-dependent industries that produce 56% of the County's economic output.³

29% of the nation's freight rail cars move through the Chicago region.

- 69% of cross country freight rail traffic passes through Chicago.

47% of the nation's intermodal containers move through the Chicago region.

- 86% of cross country intermodal rail traffic passes through Chicago.

In terms of **tonnage**, the top ten states/provinces trading through the Chicago Terminal are:

1. Illinois (*consumer products*)
2. Wisconsin (*aggregates*)
3. California (*consumer products*)
4. Wyoming (*coal*)
5. Texas (*aggregates*)
6. Louisiana (*coal*)
7. Iowa (*chemicals*)
8. Ontario (*chemicals*)
9. Michigan (*coal*)
10. Pennsylvania (*consumer products*)

In terms of **value**, the top ten states/provinces trading through the Chicago Terminal are:

1. Illinois (*consumer products*)
2. California (*consumer products*)
3. Texas (*vehicles*)
4. Ontario, Canada (*vehicles*)
5. Washington (*consumer products*)
6. Pennsylvania (*consumer products*)
7. New Jersey (*consumer products*)
8. Ohio (*consumer products*)
9. British Columbia, Canada (*consumer products*)
10. Michigan (*vehicles*)

Source: Confidential Surface Transportation Board Waybill for Illinois. 2017.

¹ The City of Chicago is located in Cook County, Illinois

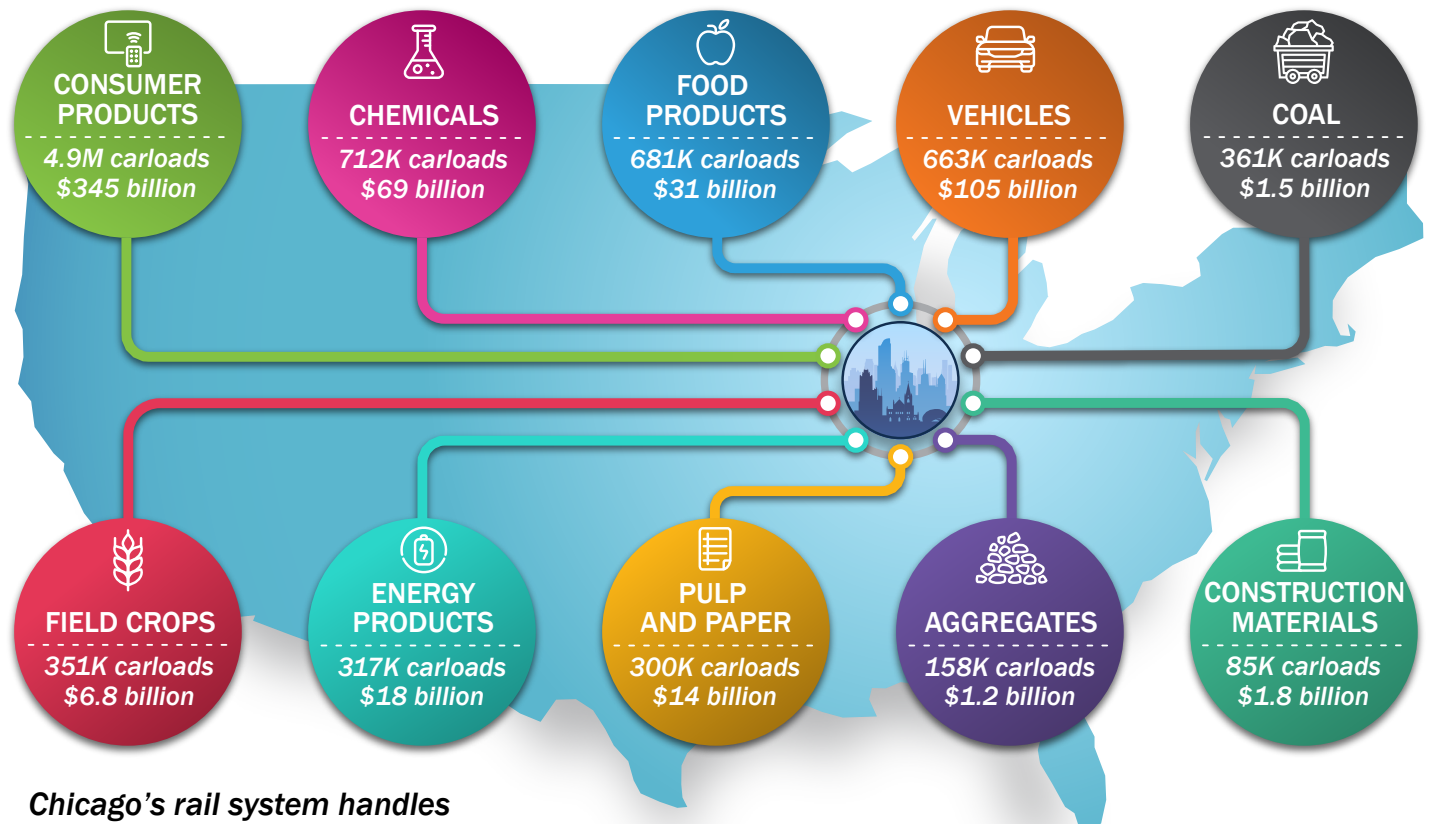
² Regional Strategic Freight Direction. Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. February 2018.

³ Connecting Cook County Freight Plan. Cook County. October 2018.

Overarching commodity trends of the last decade:

- Significant rise in intermodal traffic. Increasing amount of rail capacity has transitioned to intermodal freight as demand for coal and energy products has declined.
- Significant decline in the amount of coal carried through the region; expected to continue.
- Domestic energy production and associated markets are volatile; expected to continue.

CHICAGO REGION TOP COMMODITIES BY RAIL



Chicago's rail system handles

**47% OF INTERMODAL RAIL CONTAINERS
& 29% OF RAIL CARS IN THE U.S.**

\$652 BILLION WORTH OF GOODS EACH YEAR

Source: Annual Carloads and Value, 2017 STB Confidential Waybill Sample.

At-grade railroad crossings are a significant issue in the Chicago region.

- Chicago region has the second highest rail trespassing casualty count in the nation.
- Grade separations promote equity and address environmental justice through eliminating the risk of collisions; reducing delay for people walking, bicycling, taking transit, driving and transporting freight; improving access for emergency services; reducing train horn noise; and minimizing car, truck and train idling, which reduces fuel consumption and improves air quality.
- The Northeastern Illinois Priority Grade Crossings list was developed in June 2019 as a joint evaluation between local and state agencies.⁴

⁴ Northeastern Illinois Priority Grade Crossings. June 2019. tinyurl.com/gradecrossings.

The Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program

Formed in 2003, CREATE is a \$5.8 billion public-private partnership between:

- U.S. Department of Transportation
- State of Illinois
- Cook County
- City of Chicago
- Freight, passenger, switching and commuter railroads serving the Chicago region (represented by the Association of American Railroads)

CREATE Program Components

70 CREATE Projects

- 34** Completed projects
- 5** Projects under construction (Phase III)
- 8** Projects in final design (Phase II)
- 7** Projects in environmental review (Phase I)
- 16** Remaining projects

- 25** New road-rail grade separations
- 6** New rail flyovers to separate passenger and freight tracks
- Upgrading tracks, switches and signal systems
- Improving streets and sidewalks under viaducts in Chicago

Current Funding Commitments

The CREATE Program has received funding commitments totaling \$2.5 billion so far, from a variety of public and private sources. An estimated \$3.3 billion remains needed to complete the full Program of projects.

Federal	\$1.04 billion
State	\$717 million
Railroads	\$534 million
Local Governments	\$252 million

CREATE PARTNERS



\$31.5 Billion in Economic Benefits over 30 years:⁵



Passenger train delay reduced by more than 1.3 million passenger hours annually by 2051.



92,000 hours of truck delay and 230,000 hours of motorist and bus passenger delay saved due to elimination of grade crossings. Approximately 200 vehicle crashes with trains prevented.



Emissions from idling vehicles waiting for trains to pass cut by more than 2,800 metric tons per year.



If CREATE rail improvements are not made, some rail freight traffic would be shifted to trucks. By 2047, due to the additional rail capacity from CREATE projects, **18,500 truck trips per day will be avoided on highways**, resulting in reduced congestion, emissions, pavement damage to roadways and risk of crashes involving trucks.

Workforce, Contracting Opportunities and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Engagement

- As of 2018, freight and passenger railroads employed 18,761 people in Illinois and 12,150 people in the Chicago region, representing approximately \$1.5 billion and \$1 billion in annual wages for Illinois and the Chicago region, respectively.⁶ There are approximately 38,000+ rail-related jobs in Illinois.
- The CREATE partners are committed to robust DBE participation on CREATE projects. Since 2015, more than 45 distinct DBE firms have worked on CREATE projects.
- CREATE work packages are designed to be “right-sized,” enabling a wider variety of smaller firms to work on the project.
- The CREATE partners regularly present contracting opportunities to DBE and minority contractor associations, including the National Association of Minority Contractors, the Hispanic American Construction Industry Association and the Federation of Women Contractors.
- CREATE’s Get On Board events foster networking for certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and other MBE or WBE businesses with rail-industry contractors specializing in engineering, design and construction. At these events, railroad supplier diversity and procurement professionals answer questions and provide information during the event. In addition to networking, the event includes relevant workshops about securing work in the rail industry.



⁵ CREATE Economic Benefits Study conducted by Cambridge Systematics. 2015.

⁶ U.S. Railroad Retirement Board. 2018. rrb.gov.

75th Street Corridor Improvement Project and Community Benefits

The 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (75th St. CIP) is the largest project in the CREATE Program. The project is located in the Chicago neighborhoods of Ashburn, Englewood, Auburn Gresham and West Chatham. The 75th St. CIP comprises four individual improvements that are interconnected and will collectively untangle the most significant rail bottleneck in North America. The CREATE partners received a \$132 million Infrastructure for Rebuilding American (INFRA) grant from the US Department of Transportation in 2018, enabling design of the entire 75th St. CIP and construction of its first segment. The project is leading innovative and sustained engagement with nearby communities. The CREATE partners are proud of this approach and look forward to continuing this model on the remaining segments of the 75th St. CIP and future projects.



Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and Local/Minority Contracting

- DBE contracting goals are routinely set above federal requirements.
- Business-to-business networking events held in conjunction with every mandatory pre-bid meeting.
- Forty-seven different DBEs have worked on 75th St. CIP teams as of March 2024.
- Additional right-of-way acquisition, engineering, construction and supplier opportunities are expected.

Workforce Development

- Two local DBE firms are helping improve connections among the railroads and individuals seeking training and employment opportunities on the project. The teams have been working with the human resource departments at the railroads and contractors to help individuals gain access to training opportunities through these projects.
- The partners are funding on-the-job training on 75th St. CIP construction projects for entry-level individuals who have graduated from IDOT's Highway Construction Careers Training Program (HCCTP) at Dawson Technical Institute of the City Colleges of Chicago.⁷
- As a result of the HCCTP Program, in 2023, 12 graduates were hired by partners of the CREATE Program, one of which was promoted from an internship position to a full-time position.
- In 2023, three graduates from CSX's Railway Career Pathways Program with Dawson Technical Institute were hired by partners of the CREATE Program.

"As a recent graduate from IDOT's Highway Construction Careers Training Program, I am excited to join the CREATE Program. Working on CREATE gives me the opportunity to make an impact in my own community."

Darius Moore
Graduate
Highway Construction Careers
Training Program (HCCTP)



⁷ <https://tinyurl.com/IDOTHCCTP>

Support for Community Education

The 75th St. CIP's Education Commitment consists of a series of programs to encourage project-area elementary and high school students' interest in transportation, engineering and technical fields.

- **Financial contributions** of more than \$600,000 to education programs that serve project area communities.
- **CREATE in the Classroom** – CREATE partners/consultants lead elementary school students in classroom activities focused on engineering, government operations, urban planning, surveying, bridge building and railroad safety – inspiring students to explore careers in transportation.
- **CREATE in the Community** – Field trips to local railroad sites.
- **CREATE in the Lab** – CREATE partners/consultants work with high school students exposing them to technical and soft skills required to design and build transportation infrastructure.
- **Junior Mentor Protégé Internships** – Internships for young adults from 75th St. CIP communities.



Community Mobility Improvements

- **Viaduct Improvements** – 75th St. CIP includes designing structural, roadway, sidewalk, drainage and utility improvements at 36 rail viaduct locations that will enhance safety and security for people walking, bicycling and driving while concurrently reducing congestion and improving local bus transit operations.
- **Community Mobility Benefits (CMB)** – 75th St. CIP also includes community mobility improvements that will enhance the safety, accessibility, quality of life and visual appeal of the community, as well as improve the transit-riding experience. Projects include street tree plantings, accessible sidewalk and curb improvements, street repaving and improvements to bus stops.

