

CREATE GS11

Columbus Avenue & Belt Railway Company (BRC) Grade Separation

Submitted by:

Chicago Department of Transportation

For:

Grant Funding Request under Illinois Competitive Freight Program

April 6, 2018

Executive Summary

The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program Partners, is pleased to submit this application for the **Columbus Avenue & Belt Railway Company (BRC) Grade Separation** ("GS11") project. GS11 will preserve and facilitate freight and vehicle mobility within the Chicago region by removing an obstacle to freight mobility and redirecting traffic from congested arterials onto a less congested route. This route has been identified as a Critical Urban Freight Corridor (CRFC) by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and is a top priority crossing in the CREATE program.

Landers Yard, a Norfolk Southern intermodal terminal that provides approximately 424,017 container lifts per year, is located just south of Columbus Avenue. Its truck entrance is on Western Avenue south of the intersection with Columbus. Currently, truck traffic patterns along Columbus Avenue and surrounding routes negatively impact local and regional freight and commuter traffic from a safety and economic standpoint. Trucks accessing Landers Yard from Northbound Western Avenue often backs up traffic on Western Ave., contributing to over 10 hours of truck delay on this route every day, as well as impeding access to and causing safety concerns for the nearly 600 high school students attending nearby St. Rita High School.

Columbus Avenue could serve as an uncongested alternative to 79th Street and Western Avenue, but the BRC grade crossing and inadequate roadway geometry at the Columbus/Western intersection currently preclude using this route for truck access to Landers Yard. In addition, traffic delays on Columbus due to the grade crossing are causing back up on Western Avenue, further congesting traffic on that vital urban arterial. The GS11 grade separation project is essential to reduce bottlenecks, improve freight efficiency, and increase freight and commuter safety, in the region. Additionally, it will mitigate the noise level for community residents, including senior housing, by reducing the need for trains to blow horns at the grade crossing.

GS11 will eliminate the at-grade crossing of Columbus Avenue and BRC tracks. This will be accomplished by creating an underpass for vehicles using Columbus Avenue, reducing roadway congestion and improving safety at this location. The project will also make improvements to Columbus Avenue and the Columbus Avenue / Western Avenue intersection to improve traffic flows and reduce geometric barriers for trucks. With the grade crossing separation, the GS11 project will eliminate delay to nearly 1,700 vehicles daily, resulting in alleviation of more than 36,800 annual motorist hours of delay, and eliminate the possibility of emergency response vehicles being delayed due to a train crossing and impacting the safety outcome of the

incident to which they are responding. GS11 scored 771 points out of 1050 based on the goals and performance measures criteria required by the Illinois Competitive Freight Program for Intermodal Accessibility.

As noted in the 2017 Illinois State Freight Plan, CDOT and IDOT applied to the 2016 FASTLANE grant program for three grade separation, including GS-11. However, the department's application for funding was not selected to receive a FASTLANE grant. The funding request for \$49 million through the Illinois Competitive Freight Program presents a timely opportunity to build

Table 1. Scores for Intermodal Accessibility

Goal Area	Score
Bottleneck Reduction	56.5
CMV Safety	18.0
Intermodal Accessibility	321.25
Technology Deployment	40.0
Cross-cutting Measures	85.0
Subtotal Points	520.75
TOTAL Points (includes cost-effectiveness)	770.75

this infrastructure improvement to support freight and passenger vehicle efficiency and improve economic outcomes. Because preliminary engineering and the environmental review stage is nearly complete, grant funds will allow CDOT to continue seamlessly into final design and construction.

GS11 is located on CREATE's East-West Corridor. The East-West Corridor is also undergoing numerous rail infrastructure improvements to increase capacity and speed the movement of freight trains. The East-West Corridor also passes through the Belt Railway of Chicago's Clearing Yard, the largest classification yard in Chicago handling more than 3,000 railcars per day out of the 8,000 that traverse the BRC daily. GS11 is located immediately east of the yard. The project has a large and diverse group of stakeholders, including transportation agencies and units of government, many of whom have already committed to the planning, engineering, or capital cost portions of the project. In fact, Phase I (i.e., preliminary engineering) is nearly complete and has been fully funded from local and federal sources. Local agencies are committed sponsors and have agreed to advance the project design and approval process subsequent to Phase I. CREATE is an established, committed partnership. The program has delivered 7 grade separation projects to date. CDOT, IDOT, and railroad partners are also committed to this project. The inclusion of this corridor as a Critical Urban Freight Corridor by IDOT reflects how critical is this project to reduce bottlenecks to support freight and passenger vehicle efficiency and improve safety and economic outcomes.

GS-11 satisfies the goals of the State Freight Plan

Safety. Improves safety by separating truck traffic from passenger traffic in sensitive area (St. Rita's high school). Eliminates the at-grade rail crossing, which reduces the collision probability between trains and vehicles and improves pedestrian and cyclist mobility. Additionally, Columbus Avenue is a designated 911 emergency route. The separation of the roadway and rail at this location will eliminate the possibility of emergency response vehicles being delayed due to a train crossing and impacting the safety outcome of the incident to which they are responding. Improvements include:

- Improve signage, geometry or pavement markings along Columbus Avenue and at the intersection of Columbus and Western
- Install systems to improve truck driver behavior

Improve efficiency. The GS11 project will help alleviate truck congestion and separate truck traffic heading to Landers Yard by providing a superior route on Columbus Avenue. With separation of the at-grade rail crossing and improvements to Columbus Avenue and the Columbus/Western intersection, this route will alleviate truck bottlenecks, reduce overall congestion on busy arterials, and improve safety.

Preserve existing infrastructure. Improves the movement of people and goods by increasing the state of good repair for the road and railway infrastructure at the grade separation. The construction of the grade separation will increase the condition of the roadway at the point of separation and decrease the future maintenance requirements on the roadway.

Grow the economy and support multimodal distribution. This project removes a key bottleneck around Landers Yard, one of Chicago's largest intermodal terminals. Furthermore, supports freight transportation by moving forward the nation's premier road/rail public private partnership, the CREATE program. The <u>full</u> CREATE program is estimated to save more than 120 lives and 16,800 injuries over 30 years; prevent an average of 817,000 passenger hours of delay annually; generate \$31.5 billion in economic benefits over 30 years; rail system capacity benefits will enable an extra 50,000 freight trains to travel through the greater Chicago rail network annually in 2051 compared to no improvements.

1.0 Project Description

Current Issue

GS11 is located on Columbus Avenue at the point where it diverges from Western Avenue, the longest North-South arterial street in Chicago and a major cross-town bus transit corridor. Both of these routes have been identified by the City of Chicago as important truck routes. Columbus Avenue bisects the Greater Southwest Industrial Corridor, an area in the Ashburn neighborhood of Chicago with over 80 businesses and 3,000 jobs. Landers Yard, a Norfolk Southern intermodal terminal that provides approximately 300,000 container lifts per year, is located just south of Columbus Avenue; its truck entrance is on Western Avenue south of the intersection with Columbus. The current facility truck gate count at Landers Yard is estimated to be 1,631 trucks per day.¹

The current travel pattern for trucks to access Landers Yard from points west involves approaching via 79th Street and making a left turn at Western, and then another left turn from Western into the intermodal yard.

This truck movement pattern often backs up traffic on Western Ave., impeding access for more than 600 students to nearby St. Rita High School. Columbus Avenue could serve as an uncongested alternative to 79th Street and Western Avenue, but the BRC grade crossing and inadequate roadway geometry at the Columbus/Western intersection currently preclude using this route for truck access to



Landers Yard. In addition, traffic delays on Columbus due to the grade crossing may back up on to Western Avenue, further congesting traffic on that vital urban arterial. An analysis of truck probe data by CMAP (Figure 2) shows that much of the heavy traffic (shown by line thickness and color) comes from the south and west of the Landers Intermodal Terminal. Furthermore, the length of the lines in the Figure indicates the distance that a truck traveled over a set period of time; shorter lines indicate slower travel speeds and congestion. The bulk of traffic entering Landers Yard is arriving from the south and west and subject delays due to congestion; this traffic will be directly impacted by the alternative route on Columbus Avenue and subsequent reduced traffic congestion in the area.

¹ The current facility truck gate count at Landers Yard is estimated by the number of lifts. NS Landers in 2016 had 424,017 lifts according to the CMAP estimates provided in May 2017(<u>Chicago Intermodal Facility Lift Counts May</u> <u>2017, CMAP.</u>) Considering that one lift is approximately equal to one truck, this is roughly equivalent to 424,017 trucks per year. Using 260 working days per year, this comes out to a current facility truck gate count of 1,631 trucks per day.

Additionally, GS11 is located along a route through which significant numbers of emergency response vehicles pass. As such, it is designated as **911 Critical Crossing**, and the railroads must inform Chicago's Office of Emergency Management and Communication any time a train is expected to block the crossing for more than 10 minutes so that emergency vehicles may be routed to avoid the crossing.

Figure 2. Telematics Records Before Stop at Landers Intermodal Terminal



Truck Locations Eight Telematics Records before Stop at Landers Intermodal Terminal

How will this project address the transportation challenges?

The GS11 project will help alleviate freight congestion, as well as provide an alternate route for accessing or avoiding the entrance to Landers Yard. Norfolk Southern has pursued projects to expand Landers Yard, which along with nearby trucking and rail related businesses provide hundreds of jobs in Ashburn, an economically distressed part of the City of Chicago. Several freight generating businesses are also located

directly near the crossing site, including International Transload Logistics, and Assemblers Manufacturing. There are also numerous vacant parcels nearby that may be suitable for industrial development. GS11 will provide needed connectivity and congestion relief to this region. Truck travel time reliability will be improved through:

 Increase roadway capacity by making improvements to Columbus Avenue and the Columbus and Western Intersection to allow more truck traffic. Figure 3. Current Conditions



- Remove geometric barrier for trucks
 via Intersection improvements to improve turning radii for trucks.
- Separate at-grade crossing by separating Columbus Ave from BRC railroad.
- Other bottleneck improvement is the diversion of traffic away from the left turn into yard from Western Ave. Diverting the number of trucks that turn left from Western Ave into the Yard will reduce the queue of trucks that line up down the median of Western Ave.

There were 2 crashes with serious injuries involving trucks in 5 years--the serious injury rate involving trucks is 0.4. Safety improvements include:

- Improve signage, geometry or pavement markings along Columbus Avenue and at the intersection of Columbus and Western.
- Install systems to improve truck driver behavior
 - Providing an alternative route that avoids congested and sensitive (school) areas

Reducing the number of trucks that need to turn left into NS Landers Yard will reduce impact on local residential community and student, parents, and faculty that turn left into St. Rita High School. Currently the trucks back up down the median, making it difficult for other users to turn left from NB Western between 76th St and 79th St. GS11 is also within the Greater Southwest Industrial (East) tax increment financing district (TIF), which is intended to encourage land uses that strengthen the function and appeal of the area for industrial, commercial, institutional and residential uses. The separation of the roadway and rail at this location will also eliminate the possibility of emergency response vehicles being delayed due to a train crossing and impacting the safety outcome of the incident to which they are responding.

State and Local Approval

GS11 is located on CREATE's East-West Corridor (refer to section below for details). CREATE is a central element of the strategic regional freight and highway system in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), described in the GO TO 2040 Plan. The 2012 Illinois Rail Plan listed GS11 as a priority and reinforced the importance of the CREATE Program overall. GS11 was included in the regional 2014-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and is programmed in the 2018-2022 TIP.

Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program

The Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program is a public-private partnership, including the U.S. DOT, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), Metra, Amtrak, and the Association of American Railroads (AAR) representing: BNSF Railway (BNSF), Canadian National (CN), Canadian Pacific (CP), CSX, Norfolk Southern (NS), Union Pacific (UP), and switching railroads Belt Railway Company of Chicago (BRC) and Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad (IHB). CREATE encompasses improvements along four rail corridors: 1) East-West Corridor (NS/BRC); 2) Western Avenue Corridor (BNSF/UP/CSX/NS); 3) Beltway Corridor (CSX/IHB); and 4) Passenger Express Corridors (Metra Southwest Service/Heritage Corridor Service). The CREATE Program is aimed at addressing existing and future congestion issues on the rail system, which bring adverse effects to the national economy and the transportation system, as well as to mitigate traffic congestion resulting from rail traffic by constructing key highway-rail grade crossing separations. CREATE Program to achieve national and regional benefits.

GS11 is located on CREATE's East-West Corridor (shown in pink in Figure 4). The East-West Corridor is also undergoing numerous rail infrastructure improvements to increase capacity and speed the movement of freight trains. Project EW4 is complete, while Phase I design is complete for projects EW1 and EW2 and nearly complete for EW3. Funding is currently being sought to complete construction on the EW1 project segment. Once funding is received for EW1, freight trains will have the ability to traverse a new east-west mainline route through the Chicago Rail Terminal. The East-West Corridor also passes through the Belt Railway of Chicago's Clearing Yard, the largest classification yard in Chicago handling more than 3,000 railcars per day out of the 8,000 that traverse the BRC daily. GS11 is located immediately east of the yard.





2.0 Cost Estimate

The total cost of the project is estimated at \$65 million. The project estimate includes a contingency level based on subtotal costs. In addition, local partners can ensure the availability of contingency reserves in the event of unforeseen cost increases. Cost estimate tables are included in Table 2 and the attached form.

Table 2. Project Cost Estimate

	Unit			
Item	of Measure	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Cost
Phase I Engineering	LS	1	\$2,500,000.00	\$2,500,000.00
Phase II Engineering	LS	1	\$3,000,000.00	\$3,000,000.00
ROW Acquistion	LS	1	\$4,900,000.00	\$4,900,000.00
City Force Account (OEMC, Water, CDOT, et	LS	1	\$1,500,000.00	\$1,500,000.00
Railroad Force Account	LS	1	\$480,000.00	\$480,000.00
Building Removal	LS	1	\$980,000.00	\$980,000.00
Utility Relocation	LS	1	\$830,000.00	\$830,000.00
Retaining Walls	LS	1	\$5,440,000.00	\$5,440,000.00
Earthwork	LS	1	\$1,600,000.00	\$1,600,000.00
Environmental Mitigation	LS	1	\$2,500,000.00	\$2,500,000.00
Bridge	LS	1	\$6,000,000.00	\$6,000,000.00
Railroad Work (ballast, ties, tracks)	LS	1	\$2,930,000.00	\$2,930,000.00
Pump Station and Detention Chamber	LS	1	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,000,000.00
Roadway Improvement	LS	1	\$4,000,000.00	\$4,000,000.00
Noise Wall	LS	1	\$500,000.00	\$500,000.00
Construction Management (15%)	LS	1	\$3,867,000.00	\$3,867,000.00
Contingency	LS	1	\$16,558,638.00	\$16,558,638.00
Inflation (from 2018\$ to 2021\$)	LS	1	\$6,414,362.00	\$6,414,362.00
TIMATED COST OF WORK INCLUDING ALL LAB	\$65,000,000,00			

3.0 Project Financing

Forty-nine million (\$49M) from the Illinois Competitive Freight Program are sought for Phase II and Phase III (i.e., final design, ROW acquisition, and construction). Phase 1 will be complete by end of 2018, using funding from State of Illinois and federal STP. Phase 2 will use \$1.6 million in State of Illinois funds programmed for use by CDOT. Remaining \$11.9 million in non-federal matching are anticipated to be a combination of State and Local funds. Financing is included in Table 3 below and in the attached form.

Table 3. Project Financing & Freight Funding Request

PROJECT FINANCING & FREIGHT FUNDING REQUEST							
	Starting Federal Fiscal Year*	Total Phase Costs	(New) Freight Funds Requested	Non-Federal matching funds		Other Funding	
Project Phase				Amount	Source /Fund Type	Fund Type	Amount
Engineering Phase 1	2016	\$2,500,000	\$0	\$0	-	Local + Federal	\$2,500,000
Engineering Phase 2	2018	\$3,000,000	\$1,400,000	\$1,600,000	State Funds	-	\$0
Right-of-Way Acquisition	2020	\$4,900,000	\$3,920,000	\$980,000	TBD	-	\$0
Utility Relocation	2020	\$830,000	\$664,000	\$166,000	TBD	-	\$0
Other (Please Explain)	2020					-	\$0
Construction (Including Construction Engineering)	2020	\$53,770,000	\$43,016,000	\$10,754,000	TBD	-	\$0
				\$0		-	\$0
Engineering (For Implementatio n Projects)		\$0	\$0	\$0		-	\$0
Implementatio n		\$0	\$0	\$0		-	\$0
Totals		\$65,000,000	\$49,000,000	\$13,500,000			\$2,500,000
*Phase must be accomplished within 3 years							
Source of Local Matching Funds: Phase 1 will be complete by end of 2018, using funding from State of federal STP. Phase 2 will use \$1.6 million in State of Illinois funds p for use by CDOT. Remaining \$11,900,000 in non-federal matching a to be a combination of State and Local funds.			om State of bis funds pr matching a	Illinois and ogrammed re anticipated			
Have Matching F (Provi	Funds Been Secured? de Details):	Been sured? \$2.5 million for Phase 1 has been fully funded from local and federal sources, stails): \$1.6 million has been secured from State of Illinois for Phase 2. Remaining \$11,900,000 of matching funds will be secured following award.					

*The railroad industry share of the matching funding will be determined in accordance with 23 CFR Section 646.210 based upon actual project costs.

4.0 Project Readiness

Technical Feasibility

Phase 1 (preliminary engineering) is near completion. CDOT seeks funding for final design (Phase II) and construction (Phase III). Phase II will consist of the preparation of the construction contract documents including but not limited to the final plans, specifications and estimates (PS&E). Also included in Phase II services is review of construction shop drawings and resolution of design issues.

Columbus Avenue is a major four-lane urban arterial street. GS11 will eliminate the at-grade crossing of Columbus Avenue and BRC tracks. This will be accomplished by creating an underpass for vehicles using Columbus Avenue, reducing roadway congestion and improving safety at this location. The grade crossing separation will eliminate delay to nearly 1,700 vehicles daily, resulting in alleviation of more than 36,800 annual motorist hours of delay, and eliminate the possibility of emergency response vehicles being delayed due to a train crossing and impacting the safety outcome of the incident to which they are responding.

The proposed plan and profile of the underpass (i.e. viaduct) can be found in Appendix A of this application. Typical section schematics are included in Appendix B. The intersection plan of Columbus Avenue and Western Avenue is included in Appendix C.

Environmental Approvals

Based on similar CREATE grade crossing projects conducted recently in the City, and the fact that no water bodies are located near the project locations, CDOT does not expect any unusual issues such as environmental or historic preservation impacts beyond potentially contaminated soil (e.g., special waste, given that the affected rail lines have been operational for many years). Therefore it is anticipated that GS11 will receive categorical exclusion under NEPA, as was the case for CREATE project GS15a, another recently completed nearby grade crossing separation in the City of Chicago.

Project Schedule

With preliminary engineering near completion, the estimated construction start date for GS11 is March 2020. To improve the intersection of Western/Columbus/74th, right-of-way (ROW) acquisition will be necessary. ROW acquisition will be completed during Phase II (design and permitting stages) and will be cleared prior to the start of construction. CDOT expects to be able reach agreement with any affected businesses. All property and ROW acquisition will be completed in accordance with 49 CFR Part 24 and other pertinent legal requirements.

5.0 Letters of Supports

The CREATE program is a unique public private partnership, with the support of a large and diverse group of stakeholders, including transportation agencies and units of government, many of whom have committed to the planning, engineering, or capital cost portions of the project. The CREATE partners' – City of Chicago Department of Transportation, Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways, and the Association of American Railroads - have affirmed their strong support of this project with a letter attached to this application. Additionally, many agencies contributed letters of support for GS11 as part of the project's FASTLANE application. The letters are available at links below:

- Alderman Brookins, Ward 21
- Alderman Burke, Ward 14
- Alderman Curtis, Ward 18
- <u>Amtrak</u>
- Association of American Railroads
- Belt Railway of Chicago
- <u>Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce</u>
- <u>Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning</u>
- <u>Chicago Transit Authority</u>
- <u>City of Chicago</u>
- <u>Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors</u>
- <u>Cook County Board of Commissioners</u>
- <u>HACIA</u>
- Illinois Chamber of Commerce
- Illinois Department of Transportation
- Illinois Congressional Delegation
- Illinois Road and Transportation Builders Association
- <u>Metra</u>
- Midwest Truckers
- <u>Metropolitan Planning Council</u>
- Pace Bus
- SMART Transportation
- Supply Chain Innovation Network of Chicago
- St. Rita's High School
- Union Pacific Railroad
- World Business Chicago

Appendix A

Plan and Profile of Proposed Underpass

Information on the Columbus Avenue/Maplewood Avenue grade separation is available on the project website.

Appendix B

Section Schematics

Information on the Columbus Avenue/Maplewood Avenue grade separation is available on the project website.

Appendix C

Intersection Plan of Columbus Avenue and Western Avenue

Information on the Columbus Avenue/Maplewood Avenue grade separation is available on the project website.

Appendix D

Project Scoring Matrix

	Scoring					Goal Area Weights	
Goal Areas	Measures	Source/Calculation	Values	%	Points Available	Points Awarded	Applied to Intermodal Accessibility
Cu De Bottleneck Reduction	Current Truck Travel Time Reliability Measure	From SFP. Travel Time Index*(Truck AADT)	3,000 to 4,999	30%	250	75.0	7.5
	Current Hours of Truck Delay	From SFP. Average yearly truck delay in hr/mi-year.	8,500 to 13,999	30%	250	75.0	7.5
	Existing Bottleneck Location identified in SFP	Is the segment identified as a bottleneck at the following levels:	80th percentile bottleneck	70%	250	175.0	17.5
		Qualitative. Provide information. Is	Increase roadway capacity	100%	60	60.0	6
	Improvement in Truck		Remove geometric barrier for trucks	100%	60	60.0	6
	or Hours of Delay	the project expected to:	Separate at-grade crossing	100%	60	60.0	6
			Other bottleneck improvement	100%	60	60.0	6
	Current serious injury rate involving trucks	Number of serious injuries per year, averaged for 4 years or more	0 to 0.99	0	100	0	0
Tate invo		Select the following components included in the project:	Improve signage, geometry or pavement markings	100%	60	60.0	6
CIVIV Safety	Improvements of Safety		Install interactive truck rollover signage	100%	60	60.0	6
			Install systems to improve truck driver behavior	100%	60	60.0	6
	Increased Freight	Total number of additional trucks	25 to 49 trucks	25%	250	62.5	31.25
	Current Facility Truck Gate Count	Total existing number of trucks using the facility per day. Assume 20 tons/truck for non-containerized	more than 400 trucks	100%	250	250.0	125
Ci D Intermodal	Current Hours of Truck Delay	From SFP. Average yearly truck delay in hr/mi-year	8,500 to 13,999	30%	100	30.0	15
	Rail or Port Project	Number of Class 7/8 trucks removed	25 to 100	40%	150	60.0	30
Accessionity	Improvement in Truck Travel Time Reliability or Hours of Delay	Qualitative. Provide information. Is the project expected to:	Increase roadway capacity	100%	60	60.0	30
			Remove geometric barrier for trucks	100%	60	60.0	30
			Separate at-grade crossing	100%	60	60.0	30
			Other bottleneck	100%	60	60.0	30
Technology Deployment	Technology Characteristics	are included in the technology: (a) adaptive or synchronized traffic	1	100%	400	400.0	40
	Truck Volume (AADT)	From SFP	5,000-9,999	75%	100	75.0	15
	Truck Percent	From SFP	10%-19%	20%	250	50.0	10
<u> </u>	Material Partnerships	How many jurisdictions or stakeholders are providing material support, including dollars or dollar	or more material partnershi	100%	150	150.0	30
Cross-cutting			Phase I complete	100%	50	50.0	10
Measures	Project Readiness Which of the following a project:	Which of the following apply to the project:	Other Planning, Environmental, Design or Construction Related Studies or Project Phases Completed	100%	50	50.0	10
			All funding sources identified and confirmed	100%	50	50.0	10
	Subtotal Points Available	Sum all of the points in categories ab	ove				520.75
Scoring	Cost Effectiveness	Subtotal Points/Project Capital Cost IDOT 250					100%
	Total Points Available	Sum subtotal points and cost effectiveness points					770.75

Appendix E

CREATE Partners Letter of Support



CHICAGO REGION ENVIRONMENTAL AND TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY PROGRAM CREATE PROGRAM C/O CTCO I 501 S. CANAL STREET CHICAGO, IL 60607-5204

April 6, 2018

Secretary Randall Blankenhorn Illinois Department of Transportation 2300 South Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62764

Dear Secretary Blankenhorn,

On behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE) partners, the Chicago Department of Transportation is submitting an application for grant funding through the Illinois Competitive Freight Program for design and construction of a highway-railway grade separation at Columbus Ave and the Belt Railway of Chicago in the City of Chicago. The CREATE partners, including CDOT, the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways, and the Association of American Railroads are sending this letter to express our full support of this application.

As you know well, the Chicago region currently handles 1,300 freight and passenger trains per day, accounting for one-fourth of the nation's rail cargo, and the purpose of the CREATE Program is to increase the overall capacity of the Chicago rail network to accommodate the increasing levels of freight and passenger rail demand needed to sustain future economic growth. The CREATE Program also addresses the impacts of rail freight movement on adjacent communities and roadway operations.

The grant funding being sought with this application will enable the construction of a critical grade separation along the Belt Railway of Chicago at Columbus Ave that will facilitate the movement of freight rail traffic through CREATE's vitally important 75th Street Corridor. This location serves critical freight rail routes that lead into Chicago's Clearing Yard, a major freight rail classification yard that sorts more than 8,000 rail cars each day. This grade separation is essential to mitigate any negative community impacts that might otherwise accompany growth in freight rail traffic along these critical freight routes. The project will also create an alternative route for truck access to Landers Yard, a busy intermodal hub on Chicago's Southwest Side. This alternative truck access to nearby St Rita High School.

Grade separations are a vital element of the CREATE Program, which will streamline freight rail operations in the Chicago area, improve commuter and intercity passenger rail service, ease highway congestion, enhance safety, and improve air quality for decades to come. CREATE will help ensure that the Chicago region remains both livable and economically competitive as the

nation's transportation and logistics hub, which provides jobs for thousands of Illinoisans and enables businesses to move their products to market in the U.S. and overseas efficiently and cost-effectively.

The CREATE partners fully support this application and look forward to the project's successful implementation.

Sincerely,

CREATE Stakeholders:

Rebekah Scheinfeld Chicago Department of Transportation

Duard R. Hemberge

Ed Hamberger Association of American Railroads

Hin Sman

John Yonan Cook County Department of Transportation & Highways