



CITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

January 5, 2026

David Fink
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for IDOT's CREATE P2 FY24-25 National Railroad Partnership Grant Program (NRPP)

Dear Administrator Fink,

The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) is pleased to provide this letter of support for the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) application to the National Railroad Partnership Grant Program for the construction phase of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program's (CREATE) project P2. CDOT will contribute \$2,000,000 from City funding sources towards the required non-federal match funds for this CREATE P2 Project application. This project is currently in the Final Design phase and is expected to complete design in 2026. A grant award will allow the project to proceed into construction expeditiously, realizing benefits for Amtrak's intercity passenger rail services, Metra's SouthWest Service (SWS) Line, and the national freight supply chain.

The CREATE Program is a public-private partnership founded in 2003 and includes the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, Cook County, Amtrak, Metra, and the six North American Class I railroads plus two short line railroads serving the Chicago region.¹ CDOT, IDOT, and the CREATE Partners have coordinated consistently during the scoping and design of Project P2. The project represents the next major component of the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (75th St CIP) that is dramatically improving the movement of freight through one of the most congested railroad corridors on the National Freight Network. Project P2 will leverage and augment the benefits of the other three 75th St. CIP Projects: the Forest Hill Flyover (P3) and 71st Street Grade Separation (GS19) project, which are both currently under construction, and the Belt Junction and 80th Street Junction Replacements (EW2) project, which will start construction in 2027.

Full funding for IDOT's CREATE Project P2 application will allow Metra's SWS Line to shift 30 trains per day from Chicago Union Station to LaSalle Street Station, freeing up capacity at Chicago Union Station to accommodate future increased Amtrak service as called for in FRA's Midwest Regional Rail Plan. Amtrak

¹ Belt Railway of Chicago and Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad.

currently operates more than 55 daily trains that originate from Union Station. Federal funding from this round of the FSP-National grant program will bolster the longstanding partnership between Amtrak and IDOT to add more service capacity for intercity passenger trains at Chicago Union Station while reducing conflicts with freight trains and Metra's commuter trains.

Constructing CREATE Project P2 will eliminate Belt Junction, the most congested rail chokepoint in the Chicago Terminal, where 30 Metra and 90 freight trains cross each other's paths daily. Consistent with environmental commitments made in the 75th St CIP's Environmental Impact Statement, the railroad infrastructure work will also include numerous community mobility improvements within ¼ mile, such as rebuilding local streets, sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, curbs, drainage, and bus stops as well as planting trees within the public way. The project will also repair streets and sidewalks under existing railroad viaducts.

CDOT strongly supports IDOT's FY24-25 National Railroad Partnership Grant Program application for funding to support the CREATE P2 project and urges USDOT's full consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Craig Turner".

Craig Turner, PE, PLS
Acting Commissioner
Chicago Department of Transportation