

May 24, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
West Building – 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We are pleased to submit this letter as evidence of our commitment to providing matching funds for the Illinois Department of Transportation's application for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program funding on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program for the EW2 Segment A (EW2A) project. This project focuses on implementing the next phase of the 75<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Improvement Project (75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP), which is an integral CREATE program effort to eliminate the most congested, disruptive rail bottlenecks in the Chicago Terminal.

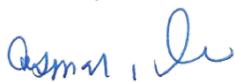
To compliment the \$291 million in federal CRISI funds requested via this grant, the CREATE partners commit to collectively provide \$194 million in matching funds for the balance of EW2A's estimated cost.

EW2A directly aligns with the Biden Administration's commitment to enhancing safety in the freight and passenger rail system by reducing inefficient rail-rail conflicts and delivering a suite of infrastructure improvements along a 3-mile elevated rail corridor on Chicago's South Side, where 93% of census tracts qualify as Historically Disinvested Communities and Areas of Persistent Poverty. Improvements include reconfiguring and adding bypass tracks at key junctions; replacing and restoring aging bridge structures, tracks, and viaducts to improve their state of good repair; modernizing antiquated signal systems to enhance communication; and surface street and sidewalk mobility improvements throughout the corridor, including ADA and pedestrian enhancements, drainage system replacements (supporting climate resiliency), and energy-efficient LED street lighting to improve safety.

EW2A will improve the safety and efficiency of the infrastructure in the Chicago Terminal, the most significant rail hub in the United States, laying the foundation for the next phase of CREATE's 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP and decreasing transportation-related emissions. In addition, with a calculated benefit-cost ratio of 2.22, this investment in core infrastructure is also cost-effective and is expected to yield over \$691 million in benefits with a net present value of more than \$380 million.

The CREATE program has established a record of delivering complex infrastructure projects on time and on budget. We are confident that we can successfully deliver this project according to the timeframe and budget in our application, and look forward to the project's successful implementation.

Sincerely,



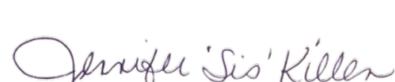
Omer Osman  
Secretary, Illinois  
Department of  
Transportation



Thomas Carney  
Commissioner,  
Chicago Department  
of Transportation



Ian Jefferies  
President and CEO,  
Association of  
American Railroads



Jennifer (Sis) Killen, P.E., PTOE  
Superintendent, Cook County  
Department of Transportation  
and Highways



May 22, 2024

Amit Bose  
Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Support for IDOT's FY23-24 CRISI Grant Application for CREATE Project EW2A

Dear Administrator Bose:

Metra is pleased to provide this letter of support for IDOT's application to the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program to support the construction phase of Project EW2A. CREATE is an ambitious and trailblazing public-private partnership founded 20 years ago between public agencies including Metra, Amtrak, Cook County, and the City of Chicago, and all six of the nation's Class I railroads. The partnership grew out of a Federal Surface Transportation Board task force that was formed in response to the growing urgency to improve how passengers and goods move through the nation's rail hub.

Metra and the CREATE Partners have coordinated throughout the scoping and design phases of Project EW2A. The project is a major component of the broader 75th Street Corridor Improvement Program (75th St CIP), which will remove one of the worst railroad conflict points in the country. Project EW2A is the next crucial step in completing the 75th St CIP and builds upon the Forest Hill Flyover (P3) and 71st Street Grade Separation (GS19) project, both of which are currently under construction. Federal grant funding support from the CRISI program will enable the Project EW2A construction phase to commence on this nationally significant project that will ease the movement of our country's supply chain.

Northeast Illinois' enviable transit system will also benefit from the project. Project EW2A is a critical path to advance the planned P2 Flyover, which is a passenger rail-focused component of the 75th St CIP. The P2 Flyover will reduce interference with freight traffic and allow Metra to reroute the SouthWest Service (SWS) Line trains to the Metra-owned Rock Island (RI) Line tracks. Constructing Project EW2A and the P2 Flyover will support Metra's efforts to move the SWS terminal station from Amtrak's crowded Chicago Union Station (CUS) to Metra's LaSalle Street Station, which will open additional train schedule slots for expanded Amtrak intercity and Metra commuter services to meet changing ridership characteristics.

Metra strongly supports CREATE's EW2A project and commits \$11,172,757 in federal funds to support IDOT's CRISI application for the EW2A project. The project will provide benefits for passenger and freight trains and remove one of the greatest conflict points at the center of the nation's railroad network. Metra is eager to advance projects with the CREATE Partners such as Project EW2A to realize Metra's move from a commuter rail to a regional rail system. As such, I urge you to consider funding IDOT's grant request to the FY23-24 CRISI discretionary grant program.

Sincerely,

Jim Derwinski  
CEO/Director

**AMTRAK**

1 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20001  
Email: [stephen.gardner@amtrak.com](mailto:stephen.gardner@amtrak.com) Tel 202.906.3963

**Stephen J. Gardner**  
Chief Executive Officer



May 22, 2024

The Honorable Amit Bose  
Federal Railroad Administrator  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC, 20590

Re: FY23/FY24 FRA's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Grant Program (IL)

Dear Administrator Bose,

On behalf of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak), I am writing to express our support for the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT's) **75th Street Corridor Improvement Program, Part 2, Project EW2 Segment A** (Project) (Track 3 - Final Design & Construction) application submitted on behalf of the CREATE partnership and Association of American Railroads under the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) FY23/FY24 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program. The Project is located in Chicago, Illinois.

Amtrak's planned federal contribution commitment is \$11,200,000, and is subject to the availability of appropriations and the execution of an agreement between Metra and Amtrak that will provide that, upon completion of the final phase of the 75th Street project, Metra will move its SouthWest Service trains from Chicago Union Station (CUS) to the LaSalle Street Station, enabling Amtrak to use the capacity freed up by that move for its National Network service.

The 75th Street Corridor Improvement Program (CIP) is the largest portfolio of projects within the 70-project, multi-billion dollar CREATE program in Chicago. CREATE is designed to reduce freight and passenger rail bottlenecks throughout the Chicagoland area. The first part of the CIP is now in construction; the requested grant would provide funding for Segment A of Part 2. The future final part will include a flyover that will permit Metra's *SouthWest Service* to move from the 75th Street corridor onto Metra's Rock Island Line into LaSalle Street Station instead of CUS. This in turn will free up slots at CUS that Amtrak can use for expanded Midwest and, potentially, long distance services. In addition, the 75th Street CIP as a whole directly benefits Amtrak's Long Distance *Cardinal* service, which currently operates along the north-south segment on the east end of the 75th Street corridor.

This initial set of 75th Street, Part 2 projects includes the reconstruction of 12 bridges, made up of 86 separate structures, as well as the retirement of two additional bridges, along the 1-1/2 mile 75th Street corridor. The flyover described above cannot be built until this bridgework is complete, so this is a critical first segment of Part 2.

*The Honorable Amit Bose*  
*May 21, 2024*  
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The advancement of this project will not only improve the state's transportation infrastructure, but also contribute to the economic competitiveness of the corridor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephen J. Gardner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "G".

Stephen J. Gardner  
*Chief Executive Officer*

cc: Jason Osborn, Director, Office of Intermodal Project Implementation, IDOT,  
[jason.osborn@illinois.gov](mailto:jason.osborn@illinois.gov)  
Bill Thompson, Chief Engineer, Association of American Railroads, [wthompson@aar.org](mailto:wthompson@aar.org)