



December 12, 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 Federal State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (FSP) Program funding on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program for the Rock Island Connection project, known as P2. The project focuses on constructing a flyover bridge between Belt Junction and Metra Commuter Rail's Rock Island District (RID) line. Implementing P2 will enable Metra to shift its SouthWest Service (SWS) trains to the RID line, ultimately reducing congestion and conflicts between freight and passenger service in and out of Belt Junction, where 30 Metra and 90 freight trains cross each other's paths each day, along with 3 Amtrak trains weekly. By implementing P2, commuter trips will also now terminate at LaSalle Street Station, versus Chicago Union Station (CUS), serving to shorten the average travel time for commuters, and enabling an expansion of Amtrak's intercity passenger rail service in the Midwest, by opening capacity at CUS.

This project is a key part of the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (CIP) - a grouping of four major improvements that make up the most complex portion of the overall CREATE Program. These four improvements are being advanced as a single project due to their logistical and environmental linkages. The first two components of the CIP (projects P3 and GS19) began construction in October 2022 with the support of a 2018 INFRA grant and are on schedule for completion in 2026. In 2024, the next phase of the 75th St CIP (Project EW2A) was awarded MPDG funding for construction, which will commence in 2026. The remaining two project components of the 75th Street CIP, P2 and other segments of EW2, are critical to ensure the full benefits of the overall project.

To compliment the over \$327 million in FSP funds requested via this grant, the CREATE partners commit to collectively provide over \$81 million in matching funds for the balance of P2's estimated cost.

Project P2 helps achieve the CREATE Program's overall goals to improve rail operations in the Chicago metropolitan area and improve quality of life in neighborhoods near rail. Beyond these local and regional benefits, these improvements will have a significant positive impact on the national supply chain. The efficiencies resulting from this project support the movement of people and consumer goods throughout the nation. The 75th St CIP project includes investments in K-12 education and workforce opportunities as well as community mobility improvements (CMI). These CMIs enhance the safety, accessibility, quality of life, and visual appeal of the community while enhancing local transportation systems for people walking, bicycling, taking transit, and driving. Not only does P2 support broader economic growth, but neighboring communities also benefit from cleaner air, reduced railroad delays, and improved development opportunities.

P2 will improve the safety and efficiency of the infrastructure in the Chicago Terminal, the most significant rail hub in the United States, Building on the foundation and laying the ground work for the next phase of CREATE's 75th Street CIP and decreasing transportation-related emissions. In addition, with a calculated

benefit-cost ratio of 1.01, this investment in core infrastructure is also cost-effective and is expected to yield over \$760 million in net benefits with a net present value of more than \$5 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.

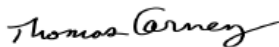
Sincerely,



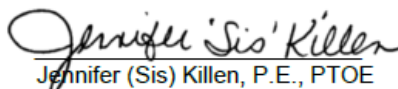
Omer Osman Secretary,
Illinois Department of Transportation




Ian Jefferies
President and CEO,
Association of American Railroads



Thomas Carney
Commissioner, Chicago
Department of Transportation



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



Jim Derwinski
CEO/Executive Director
Metra

December 16, 2024

Amit Bose
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Support for IDOT FY24 FSP-National Application - CREATE Project P2

Dear Administrator Bose:

Metra is pleased to provide this letter of support for the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) application to the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail-National (FSP-National) program for the construction phase of Project P2. Project P2 is currently in the Final Design phase and is expected to complete design in 2025. A grant award will allow the construction phase to proceed without delay, which will benefit Amtrak's intercity passenger rail service, Metra's SouthWest Service (SWS) Line, and the national supply chain.

The Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) is a public-private partnership founded in 2023 by the public agencies of Amtrak, IDOT, Metra, Cook County, and the City of Chicago and private railroads including six of the seven North American Class I railroads as well as short line railroads in the region. The partnership grew out of a Federal Surface Transportation Board task force that was formed in response to the growing urgency around the Chicago region's freight and passenger rail capacity needs.

Metra, IDOT, and the CREATE Partners have coordinated consistently during the scoping and design of Project P2. The project is the final major component of the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Program (75th St CIP) which will drastically improve the movement of freight through one of the most congested railroad corridors on the National Freight Network. Project P2 will build off the other three 75th St. CIP Projects: the Forest Hill Flyover (P3) and 71st Street Grade Separation (GS19) project, both of which are currently under construction, and the 80th Street Junction Replacements (EW2), which will be starting construction shortly.

Grant funding for IDOT's CREATE Project P2 application will enable future increased Amtrak service to better serve the Chicago hub as is called for in FRA's Midwest Regional Rail Plan. Amtrak intercity passenger rail train slots will be freed up at Chicago Union Station, the nation's fourth-busiest station, as P2 allows for Metra's SWS Line trains to shift from Union Station and instead terminate at LaSalle Street Station. Currently, Amtrak operates over 50 daily trains that originate from Union Station. Federal funding from this round of FSP-National will bolster the

partnership between Amtrak and IDOT to add more service capacity for intercity passenger rail trains while reducing conflicts with freight trains and Metra's regional passenger trains.

In 2019, prior to the pandemic, ridership on Amtrak's Cardinal service was 109,000 and Metra carried over 2.3 million passengers on the SWS Line and 7.3 million passengers on the Rock Island Line. Upon completion of CREATE Project P2, the Amtrak Cardinal service performance is expected to improve by eliminating freight conflicts. Metra will have the capability to revise passenger train schedules to meet changing ridership characteristics and better serve Historically Disadvantaged Communities along these two lines.

Constructing CREATE Project P2 will eliminate the most congested rail chokepoint in the Chicago Terminal, Belt Junction, where 30 Metra and 90 freight trains per day cross each other's paths. The rail-rail flyover at 75th Street will eliminate conflict between 30 SouthWest Service Metra trains and 35 freight trains operating on the Western Avenue Corridor (CSX). The railroad infrastructure will be grounded with numerous community mobility improvements. In the surrounding neighborhoods within 1/4 mile of the railroad work, sidewalk and curb repairs will be completed to improve street network connectivity. The project will also repair streets under viaducts which include pavement sidewalks, ADA curb street repaving, tree planting, bus stop and pedestrian safety upgrades, improved ramps, and new LED street lighting.

Metra will contribute \$25,000,000 of the required Non-Federal match funds comprised of Illinois PAYGO funding to the CREATE P2 Project.

Metra strongly supports IDOT's application for the CREATE Project P2 application, which invests in the region's rail network and provides benefits to both passenger and freight rail in Disadvantaged Communities. FRA FSP-National funding will enable to project to proceed expeditiously to relieve one of the most congested rail chokepoints in the Chicago Terminal and the State of Illinois and various safety, speed, and state of good repair improvements will be implemented. Metra looks forward to continuing our partnership with IDOT and CREATE Partners to complete these critical projects. As such, I urge you to consider funding IDOT's CREATE Project P2 application through the FSP-National program.

Sincerely,



Jim Derwinski
CEO/Executive Director



COOK COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
Transportation
and Highways

Jennifer 'Sis' Killen, P.E., PTOE
 Superintendent
 (312) 603-1601
 Jennifer.Killen@cookcountyil.gov

69 West Washington
 Suite 2400
 Chicago, Illinois 60602

TONI PRECKWINKLE
 President
 Cook County Board
 of Commissioners

December 16, 2024

SENT VIA EMAIL

TARA STAMPS
 1st District

MICHAEL SCOTT JR.
 2nd District

BILL LOWRY
 3rd District

STANLEY MOORE
 4th District

MONICA GORDON
 5th District

DONNA MILLER
 6th District

ALMA E. ANAYA
 7th District

ANTHONY QUEZADA
 8th District

MAGGIE TREVOR
 9th District

BRIDGET GAINER
 10th District

JOHN P. DALEY
 11th District

BRIDGET DEGNEN
 12th District

JOSINA MORITA
 13th District

SCOTT R. BRITTON
 14th District

KEVIN B. MORRISON
 15th District

FRANK J. AGUILAR
 16th District

SEAN M. MORRISON
 17th District

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
 US Department of Transportation
 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
 Washington, DC 20590

RE: Financial commitment for IDOT FSP application for CREATE P2 project

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing in support of the Illinois Department of Transportation's application for the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (FSP) Grant Program on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program. This grant will fund the Rock Island Connection project, known as P2. The project will construct a flyover bridge to enable Metra to shift its SouthWest Service (SWS) commuter trains to the Rock Island line, ultimately reducing congestion and conflicts between freight and passenger service in and out of Belt Junction, where 30 Metra and 90 freight trains cross each other's paths each day. Most crucially, by implementing P2, commuter trips will terminate at LaSalle Street Station rather than Chicago Union Station (CUS), allowing an expansion of Amtrak's intercity passenger rail service in the Midwest by opening capacity at CUS.

This project is a key part of the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (CIP) - a grouping of four major improvements that make up the most complex portion of the overall CREATE Program. These four improvements are being advanced as a single project due to their logistical and environmental linkages. The first two components of the CIP (projects P3 and GS19) began construction in October 2022 with the support of a 2018 INFRA grant and are on schedule for completion in 2026. In 2024, the next phase of the 75th St CIP (Project EW2A) was awarded MPDG funding for construction, which will commence in 2026. The remaining two project components of the 75th Street CIP, P2 and other segments of EW2, are critical to ensure the full benefits of the overall project.

Project P2 helps achieve the CREATE Program's overall goal to improve rail operations in the Chicago metropolitan area, which will have a significant positive impact on the national supply chain. The efficiencies resulting from this project support the movement of people and consumer goods throughout the nation. The 75th St CIP project includes investments in K-12 education and workforce opportunities as well as community mobility improvements (CMI) to enhance the safety, accessibility, quality of life, and visual appeal of the community while enhancing local transportation. Not only does P2 support broader economic growth, but neighboring communities also benefit from cleaner air, reduced railroad delays, and improved development opportunities.

Cook County is committing \$10 million in motor fuel tax funding to support this project. We ask for your consideration of this important project and look forward to its successful implementation.

Sincerely,

Jennifer (Sis) Killen, P.E., PTOE

AMTRAK

1 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20001
Email: stephen.gardner@amtrak.com Tel: 202.906.3963

Stephen J. Gardner
Chief Executive Officer



December 16, 2024

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

RE: Funding Commitment for IDOT's application on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program for the FY24 Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (FSP-National) Grant Program

Dear Administrator Bose:

On behalf of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak), I am pleased to submit this letter of support for IDOT's application for the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (FSP) Grant Program funding on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program.

To support this Project, Amtrak will provide \$1 million in non-federal matching funds (Program Income).

This grant will fund the Rock Island Connection project, known as P2. The project focuses on constructing a flyover bridge between Belt Junction and Metra Commuter Rail's Rock Island District (RID) line. Implementing P2 will enable Metra to shift its SouthWest Service (SWS) trains to the RID line, ultimately reducing congestion and conflicts between freight and passenger service in and out of Belt Junction, where 30 Metra and 90 freight trains cross paths each day. By implementing P2, commuter trips will also now terminate at LaSalle Street Station, versus Chicago Union Station (CUS), serving to shorten the average travel time for commuters, and enabling an expansion of Amtrak's intercity passenger rail service in the Midwest, by opening capacity at CUS.

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Project P2 helps achieve the CREATE Program's overall goals to improve rail operations in the Chicago metropolitan area and improve quality of life in neighborhoods near rail. Beyond these local and regional benefits, these improvements will have a significant positive impact on the national supply chain. The efficiencies resulting from this project support the movement of people and consumer goods throughout the nation. The 75th St CIP project includes investments in K-12 education and workforce opportunities as well



*Administrator Bose
December 16, 2024
Page 2*

as community mobility improvements (CMI). These CMIs enhance the safety, accessibility, quality of life, and visual appeal of the community while enhancing local transportation systems for people walking, bicycling, taking transit, and driving. Not only does P2 support broader economic growth, but neighboring communities also benefit from cleaner air, reduced railroad delays, and improved development opportunities.

We thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen J. Gardner", is written over a faint, light blue circular stamp or watermark.

Stephen J. Gardner
Chief Executive Officer