



GREATER SOUTHWEST
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

December 5, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The Greater Southwest Development Corporation (GSDC) is fully supportive of IDOT'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 focuses on constructing a flyover bridge between Bell 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, reducing congestion and conflicts between freight and passenger service in and out of Bell Junction, where 30 Metra and 90 freight trains cross each other's paths daily. Additionally, P2 will allow commuter trips to terminate at LaSalle Street Station instead of Chicago Union Station (CUS), shortening average travel times for commuters and expanding Amtrak's intercity passenger rail service in the Midwest by opening capacity at CUS.

This project is a vital component of the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (CIP), which comprises four major improvements within the most complex segment of the CREATE Program. These improvements are being advanced collectively due to their logistical and environmental interconnections. The first two components of the CIP (projects P3 and GS19) began construction in October 2022, supported by a 2018 INFRA grant, and are on track for completion in 2026. In 2024, the next phase of the 75th St CIP (Project EW2A) was awarded MPDG funding, with construction set to begin in 2026. However, completing the full benefits of the 75th Street CIP depends on advancing P2 and the remaining segments of EW2.

Project P2 aligns with the CREATE Program's overarching goals to improve rail operations in the Chicago metropolitan area and enhance quality of life in neighborhoods near rail infrastructure. Beyond local and regional benefits, these improvements will significantly impact the national supply chain by increasing efficiencies in the movement of goods and people across the country.

Moreover, the 75th St CIP includes investments in K-12 education, workforce opportunities, and community mobility improvements (CMI). These CMIs promote safety, accessibility, and quality of life while enhancing local transportation systems for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers. P2 will not only bolster broader economic growth but also deliver cleaner air, reduced railroad delays, and improved development opportunities for neighboring communities.

Greater Southwest Development Corporation fully supports this application and looks forward to the successful implementation of this project.

Sincerely,


Adrian Solo
Executive Director, Greater Southwest Development Corporation