



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

207 STATE HOUSE  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62706

**JB PRITZKER**  
GOVERNOR

August 21, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

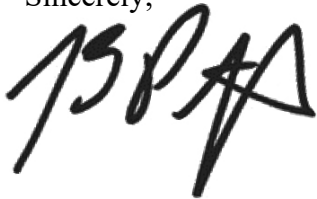
I am pleased to offer this letter of support for the Illinois Department of Transportation's application to the Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) INFRA program in partnership with the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program. If awarded, this grant will fund a segment of the Belt Junction and 80th Street Junction Replacements (defined as "EW2"), which includes reconfiguring Belt Railway Company's (BRC) main tracks between the Dan Ryan Expressway and Belt Junction where four freight railroads conflict with each other and Metra's Southwest Service operations.

EW2 is part of the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (CIP), a grouping of four smaller projects that make up the most complex portion of the overall CREATE Program and have been advanced as a single project due to their logistical and environmental linkages. The first two components of the CIP gained federal support from a 2018 INFRA grant. The remaining two components, projects EW2 and P2, are critical to ensure the envisioned benefits of the project are realized to its fullest. The EW2 project will reconfigure Belt Railway Company (BRC), Norfolk Southern (NS), and Metra tracks. A third BRC main track will be constructed, thus eliminating multiple conflicting paths for freight, Metra, and Amtrak trains. This project will alleviate congestion and improve performance on the Amtrak Cardinal service by eliminating freight conflicts in the vicinity of 80th Street.

This component of the CREATE Program continues to bolster the program's overall goal — improving rail operations in the Chicagoland-area while reducing the environmental impacts of rail operations on the public. Additionally, these improvements will positively impact the national supply chain. The efficiencies resulting from this project support the movement of people and consumer goods along important railway systems and communities throughout the nation.

In summary, IDOT's proposal will strengthen our shared goals at the state and federal levels. Environmental justice is a critical part of the 75th St. CIP, and both education and workforce opportunities paramount to the project's overall plan. Additionally, community mobility improvements will enhance the safety, accessibility, quality of life, visual appeal of the community and enhance the transit-riding experience. Not only do these projects support economic growth, but neighboring communities also benefit from cleaner air, reduced railroad delays, improved economic development potential and more fluid freight and passenger rail systems. I urge your full and fair consideration of Illinois' application for the Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) INFRA program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JB Pritzker', written in a cursive style.

Governor JB Pritzker