

AMTRAK

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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
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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 the first name "Stephen" and last name "Gardner" clearly distinguishable.

Stephen J. Gardner
Chief Executive Officer

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