



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

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March 10, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is fully supportive of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) application on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program for an Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant for Archer Avenue and Belt Railway of Chicago (BRC) Grade Separation Project (defined as "GS9"). The project will support ON TO 2050, the region's comprehensive plan, by increasing operational efficiency and safety for rail, vehicles, and pedestrians.

ON TO 2050 calls for a modern multimodal system that adapts to changing travel demand. GS9 experiences 32 freight trains, 18,600 vehicles and 259 buses daily with being located less than one mile away from Chicago Midway International Airport. Archer Avenue is part of the Chicago Region National Highway System and the project corridor is bounded by two other National Highway System mainline roads; IL 50 (Cicero Avenue) and Pulaski Road. The heavily used at-grade crossing results in 59,600 hours of delay each year and is also a 911 critical location for emergency services to access communities with a high frequency of train crossings and delays. GS9 is an integral location for connecting to other railroad corridors serving the Chicago metropolitan area, including an industrial district directly south in Bedford Park.

The project will improve safety and help achieve ON TO 2050's goal of mitigating the negative impacts of freight on adjacent areas, particularly economically disconnected areas. By eliminating the at-grade crossing, the project will eliminate rail-road conflicts, reduce roadway congestion and potentially reduce delays for trains operating in the GS9 corridor. The project represents investment in an area of the region that has been historically disinvested and economically disconnected. The grade separation project will improve safety, air quality, emergency response times, transit reliability, and enhance pedestrian and bicyclist facilities for the adjacent low-income and minority communities.

The GS9 project aligns with ON TO 2050's goal to maintain the region's status as North America's freight hub by investing strategically in the freight network

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and completing the projects identified in the CREATE program. This project will improve rail and highway operations in the Chicago metropolitan area while reducing the negative environmental impacts of rail operations on the neighboring communities. The efficiencies resulting from this project support the movement of people and consumer goods along important regional and national roadway and railway systems.

CMAP fully supports this application and looks forward to the project's successful implementation. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erin Aleman', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Erin Aleman
Executive Director

RT:EA/stk