



# Illinois Department of Transportation

Office of the Secretary  
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Telephone 217/782-6149

March 16, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) strongly supports and asks for your full consideration of our application for the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant funding on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program. This grant will fund the critical Archer Avenue and Belt Railway of Chicago (BRC) Grade Separation Project (defined as "GS9"), which includes lowering Archer Avenue under existing BRC tracks to grade separate. Additionally, this transportation infrastructure improvement will increase operational efficiency and enhance safety for rail, vehicles, and pedestrians. The total project cost is \$61.1 million with \$1.6 million already expended to complete phase 1 work. Of the remaining \$59.5 million, \$50 million is eligible for INFRA funding. Therefore, the project seeks \$30 million in INFRA funds with the state contributing \$23.8 million, Chicago Department of Transportation \$2.7 million and the Belt Railway Company contributing the remaining \$3.0 million.

The GS9 is located in a heavily trafficked corridor less than one mile from Chicago Midway International Airport. On average, it experiences 32 freight trains, 18,600 vehicles and 259 buses daily. Archer Avenue is also 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. This heavily used at-grade crossing results in 59,600 hours of delay each year which causes major safety issues as this is a critical location for 911 emergency services to access surrounding communities. GS9 is also an integral location for connecting other railroad corridors serving the Chicago metropolitan area, including an industrial district directly south in Bedford Park making it essential for freight movement

Eliminating the at-grade crossing will reduce roadway congestion, eliminate rail-road conflicts and reduce delays for trains operating in the GS9 corridor. The grade separation project will greatly contribute to an area with a low-income and minority population by improving safety, air quality, emergency response times, transit services, and by reducing pedestrian and bicyclist facilities.

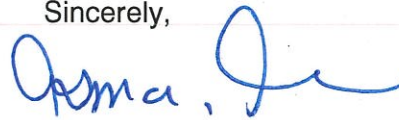
Secretary Pete Buttigieg  
Page Two  
March 16, 2021

The GS9 project aligns with the CREATE Program's overall goals to improve rail and highway operations in the Chicago metropolitan area while reducing the environmental impacts of rail operations on the general public. The efficiencies

resulting from this project support the movement of people and consumer goods along important roadway and railway systems and to communities throughout the nation. Not only does this project support economic growth, but neighboring communities also benefit from cleaner air, reduced vehicle and railroad delays at the Archer Avenue crossing, improved economic development potential and more fluid rail and roadway systems.

The Illinois Department of Transportation fully supports this application and looks forward to this important project's successful implementation.

Sincerely,



Omer M. Osman, P.E.  
Acting Secretary