



Problem Statement May 2012

Preliminary Purpose and Need from CREATE Feasibility Plan

The purpose of this proposed action is to provide a new direct route for Amtrak trains from New Orleans or Carbondale into Chicago Union Station, and to provide sufficient mainline capacity to accommodate additional Amtrak trains along with freight traffic. The figure below illustrates the existing route traveled by Amtrak's City of New Orleans, Illini, and Saluki trains, as well as the proposed study area, which the CREATE Feasibility Plan identified as the only feasible option for re-routing these trains to an existing rail corridor.

Problem Statement

Primary: Indirect/inefficient City of New Orleans-Illini-Saluki route

- All trains on this route must back into Union Station
 - Ties up other lines
 - Amtrak trains are subject to delay at the heavily congested 16th Street Interlocking
 - Affects Amtrak on-time performance
 - Contributes to congestion
- *Together, these issues lengthen the schedule by 19 minutes*

Secondary:

- CN may discontinue freight operations along the existing route
- Limited number of options into Union Station from the south
- Shifting City of New Orleans-Illini-Saluki passenger trains to the study area corridor will reduce freight capacity along the new route and increase congestion at Norfolk Southern's Park Manor Yard and 47th Street Intermodal Yard

