

The Grand Crossing Rail Project will reduce rail congestion on Chicago's South Side, particularly in the Englewood and Greater Grand Crossing neighborhoods. The project is one component of a region-wide program of railroad-related infrastructure improvements called CREATE.



The Environmental Impact Statement Process

The Grand Crossing Rail Project is investigating ways to provide a new, more direct route to Chicago's Union Station for Amtrak's City of New Orleans, Illini, and Saluki trains, and reduce congestion and delays for both passenger and freight trains in the corridor. The Project Team is thoroughly studying the project to better understand the effects that different project solutions will have on the physical, social, and economic environment.

The Project Team is developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Grand Crossing Rail Project. Federal law requires that an EIS be prepared for federally-funded projects that could potentially affect the quality of the human and natural environment. When it is complete, the EIS will explain the solution that will best address the transportation issues and then detail how this solution was decided. The EIS will explain the potential impacts and benefits resulting from the project and identify ways to avoid or lessen the negative impacts. The EIS will also describe how the public was engaged in the decision-making process and how the local community's concerns and values were factored into the proposed solution.

Parts of the EIS

Purpose and Need: This section of the study document explains why the Grand Crossing Rail Project is needed and the specific transportation needs that the project is trying to address. It also includes information about transportation facilities in the project study area. The public plays an important role in developing these needs and identifying the problems, with public input integrated into this section.

Alternatives: This section explores possible solutions to the transportation problems posed in the Purpose and Need. It explains how reasonable alternatives were selected for study and the reasons why some were eliminated from consideration. It may also identify the alternative that best solves these transportation problems (i.e., the preferred alternative) and explain the basis for that decision. This section includes input from the public and local community members, who will have opportunities to comment on the proposed and preferred alternatives.

Affected Environment: This section describes the existing human and natural environmental settings in the project study area. This includes a description of the resources that may be affected by the project including residences, businesses,



community facilities, recreational areas, historic resources, streams and wetlands, and plant and animal species. This information is compiled through research, environmental studies, and community input.

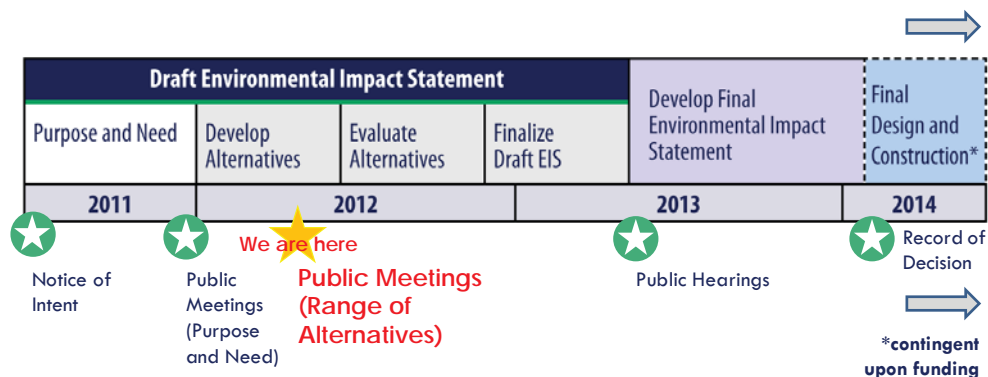
Environmental Effects: This section describes the potential impacts and benefits that each of the alternatives would have on the environment and the actions recommended to avoid, minimize, or mitigate these impacts. Information in this section is used to compare the alternatives carried forward.

Comments and Coordination: This section summarizes the public involvement process for the project, including public meetings, community advisory groups, presentations to block clubs and business associations, and other outreach activities. It details comments received from the public and responses to those comments. It also explains the resource and regulatory agency coordination that took place, any comments received, and how agency comments were addressed.

Environmental Impact Statement Schedule

The EIS process will take place during the next two years and will involve the following steps:

- STEP 1** → The process formally began with a Notice of Intent in March 2011.
- STEP 2** → The Draft Purpose and Need is prepared. Public input on the Purpose and Need was gathered at a Public Meeting in December 2011.
- STEP 3** → Proposed Alternatives are developed. The public is providing input on the proposed reasonable Alternatives at the second round of Public Meetings in March 2012.
- STEP 4** → Alternatives are evaluated.
- STEP 5** → The findings of the technical studies; impacts and benefits; measures to mitigate any negative effects for the project; and public input are documented in the Draft EIS. A Public Hearing is held to formally present the findings of the Draft EIS and receive comments.
- STEP 6** → Based on comments and review of the Draft EIS, a Preferred Alternative for the project is included in the Final EIS.
- STEP 7** → The Record of Decision completes the EIS process.



CONTACT US

If you have questions or need additional information regarding the Grand Crossing Rail Project, please contact:

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