

What is CREATE?



The Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program is a first-of-its-kind partnership between the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), State of Illinois, City of Chicago, Metra, Amtrak, and the nation's freight railroads. A program of national significance, CREATE was developed to increase the efficiency of the region's rail infrastructure.

What is the Grand Crossing Rail Project?

Every day, six Amtrak trains on the Illini, Saluki, and City of New Orleans lines pass through Chicago's south side, coming from Champaign, Carbondale, Memphis, and New Orleans. The route they currently travel is congested and does not provide direct access into Union Station, causing delays for rail passengers.

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is working with FHWA, the Chicago Department of Transportation, and the Association of American Railroads to find solutions to these issues. The Grand Crossing Rail Project will examine alternate, less congested routes that would enable Amtrak trains to travel directly into Union Station. This will reduce delays for rail passengers and freight trains on Chicago's South Side.

What are the project's potential benefits?

- ✓ Alleviate rail congestion on Chicago's South Side
- ✓ Enhance public safety
- ✓ Promote economic development
- ✓ Improve air quality
- ✓ Reduce noise from idling or slow-moving trains
- ✓ Improve Amtrak service while maintaining adequate freight capacity

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.



Community Involvement

The project team is using IDOT's Context Sensitive Solutions process for the Grand Crossing Rail Project – an approach that involves the public in identifying the transportation issues and community values that will be considered during the project's environmental review. The project team will continue to meet with the public and elected officials at key decision points during the study. In addition, Community Advisory Groups composed of local leaders and residents are being formed to provide another forum for discussing the interests of community residents as they relate to this project.



Environmental Study Process

Input received through the Context Sensitive Solutions process will help guide the project team as it identifies and evaluates the impacts that various project alternatives will have on the natural and human-made environment.

With help from the public and other CREATE partners, IDOT and FHWA are developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Grand

Crossing Rail Project to describe why improvements are needed, how different alternatives will meet those needs, and what the potential impacts and benefits of the proposed improvements would be.

During the Draft EIS process, the project team will work with the communities surrounding the project to establish the purpose and need of the project and develop and evaluate potential alternatives to the transportation needs identified. The Draft EIS will be circulated to stakeholders and the public to solicit input.

After a public hearing, a Final EIS will be developed to describe the Selected Alternative and document how and why that alternative was chosen. The Grand Crossing Rail Project EIS will be approved officially by FHWA in the Record of Decision, which provides the final environmental clearance needed to continue to the project design process.



CONTACT US

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

Grand Crossing Rail Project | Parsons | 10 South Riverside Plaza, 4th Floor | Chicago, Illinois 60606
Attn: Tony Pakeltis | e-mail: info@grandcrossingrail.com | www.grandcrossingrail.com