



Illinois Department  
of Transportation



GRAND CROSSING  
RAIL PROJECT



CREATE

KEEPING THE GO IN CHICAGO

## Appendix E

### Meeting Transcripts

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ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
GRAND CROSSING RAIL PROJECT

PUBLIC HEARING

Monday, December 12, 2011  
6:00 p.m.  
Grand Crossing Field House  
7655 South Ingleside  
Chicago, Illinois 60619

Reported by: Donna T. Wadlington, CSR

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MS. TROTTER: Hi. How are you?

My name is Chiquita Trotter and I'm one of the project team members with the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Thank you for coming to the first public meeting for the Grand Crossing Rail Project.

This is going to be short because you've been shown the presentation that we were going to run this evening and then thereafter have questions, you know, have a question-and-answer period because we have had all the project members here. Instead of that because you've seen the -- unless you -- first, maybe I should take a vote.

If you'd like to view the presentation in its entirety prior to the question-and-answer period, please raise your hand.

Okay. We'll go straight to

1 the questions and answers.

2 Right now I would like to just  
3 take a moment and have the awesome project team  
4 introduce themselves to you and they're -- you  
5 know, they're around the floor.

6 I'll start with myself. I'm  
7 Chiquita Trotter with the Illinois Department of  
8 Transportation.

9 MR. PAKELTIS: I'm Tony Pakeltis. I'm  
10 with Parsons. We're the consultant to IDOT on  
11 this project.

12 MS. FEDERICO: Elizabeth Federico with  
13 Parsons.

14 MR. JAMES: Garrett James with Amtrak.  
15 Good evening.

16 MR. THOMPSON: Bill Thompson with the  
17 Association of American Railroads. Hello.

18 MR. BUSALACCHI: Nicholas Busalacchi  
19 with -- (inaudible). I'm working with IDOT on  
20 this project.

21 MS. STEWART: Danielle Stewart with  
22 the Illinois Department of Transportation and

1 the acting CREATE program manager.

2 MR. SRIVER: Jeff Sriver. I oversee  
3 CREATE for the City of Chicago, Department of  
4 Transportation.

5 MR. BROCKMAN: Cabell Brockman with  
6 Norfolk Southern Railroad.

7 MR. ALLEN: Chuck Allen for Norfolk  
8 Southern.

9 MR. McNUCKLE: Brian McNuckle with  
10 Parsons.

11 MS. MENTOR: Ambar Mentor. I'm a  
12 consultant with Parsons.

13 MS. WYPYCHOWSKI: Margarite  
14 Wypychowski, consultant to Parsons.

15 MR. BUSTAMANTE: Bernardo Bustamante  
16 for the Federal Housing Administration.

17 MR. NOTTOLLI: I'm Nick Nottoli, also  
18 a consultant to Parsons.

19 MR. DRUDING: Josh Druding, consultant  
20 to Parsons.

21 MR. AYUSO: Manuel Ayuso with Parsons.

22 MR. MOORE: Craig Moore with Parsons.

1 MS. TROTTER: Okay. That's great.  
2 Well, thank you everyone.

3 Well, since we are not going  
4 to do the presentation, we are going to go  
5 through the questions-and-answers period here.

6 And, you know, Tony, are you  
7 ready?

8 MR. PAKELTIS: Sure. Can you pull  
9 up -- just to frame that. And just -- I mean, I  
10 recognize a lot of faces here. Out of  
11 curiosity, who attended the CAG meetings in  
12 November on this project? I know -- if you  
13 could just raise your hands.

14 (Show of hands.)

15 One was at St. Bernard  
16 Hospital and the other was at the Grand Crossing  
17 Library. So most of you attended those.

18 And so a lot of the  
19 information that we have on display here as part  
20 of the PowerPoint presentation we discussed at  
21 that meeting, and then the purpose of the public  
22 meeting tonight was to come out again to the

1 general public, inform them about the project  
2 and to get feedback on our purpose and needs  
3 statement.

4 And our purpose and needs  
5 statement, if you just want to go to that, to  
6 that slide. As we discussed at the -- or  
7 actually, if you could just go back one to  
8 the -- if you want to pull that one up then.

9 So, again, the project -- the  
10 problem we are looking at is there is the Amtrak  
11 trains that come up from the -- come up from the  
12 south or head down to the south to New Orleans,  
13 Carbondale, etc., have to do this backup  
14 maneuver to enter into Union Station and that  
15 adds -- that maneuver adds delay to the  
16 scheduled travel times on that route. It also  
17 is subject to congestion and helps cause  
18 additional congestion up in the rail net through  
19 that area.

20 And so we are looking at the  
21 potential to reroute those Amtrak trains onto  
22 this orangish highlighted area there. And,

1 again, we discussed this at the CAG meeting and  
2 what was identified as -- can you go to the  
3 purpose slide.

4 So the project purpose is to  
5 provide a new direct route for Amtrak trains for  
6 New Orleans or Carbondale into Chicago Union  
7 Station to provide sufficient mainline capacity  
8 to accommodate Amtrak and freight trains.

9 So that means if we are going  
10 to shift the Amtrak trains to another route to  
11 provide a better connection, then when we do  
12 that, we need to potentially provide additional  
13 rail improvements to accommodate those  
14 additional trains.

15 So then if we can go to the  
16 needs page. And so the project needs, as we've  
17 identified here, are improved Amtrak route  
18 efficiency, reduced congestion and delays for  
19 freight and passenger rail service and to  
20 provide adequate capacity for passenger and rail  
21 traffic in the overall regional network.

22 So, again, that's -- the



1 purpose of the meeting was to come out, give  
2 that information to the public and get feedback  
3 on it.

4 Additionally, if you could go  
5 to the slide, just to give you a general  
6 overview on where we are in the project, is that  
7 we are at kind of an early stage here, and, you  
8 know, we anticipate having continued outreach as  
9 the project moves forward. Actually, could you  
10 go to the one with the next steps.

11 MS. FEDERICO: I don't think we have  
12 the slide for that. It's on the board.

13 MR. PAKELTIS: All right. That's  
14 fine.

15 So at this stage, again,  
16 talking about the purpose and needs. Based on  
17 that purpose and needs and the feedback we get  
18 from the public meetings, we have one tonight  
19 and one tomorrow night with the same information  
20 to be presented, we are going to finalize that  
21 purpose and need and develop a range of  
22 alternatives meant to address that purpose and

1 need and then identify reasonable alternatives  
2 that we would like to carry forward into the  
3 EIS.

4 As part of that, we plan to  
5 come back and go to the CAG, the community  
6 advisory groups, and another round of public  
7 meetings hopefully in March. And so that's the  
8 schedule we're currently on.

9 And then from there we would  
10 move, based on the input we get there, then we  
11 would finalize those alternatives and then we  
12 look back at the EIS and then we are going to  
13 evaluate them. Put that document together and  
14 then come back later with a public hearing to  
15 discuss, hopefully, a preferred alternative.

16 So that's just kind of an  
17 overview I wanted to frame in terms of what we  
18 are looking at, you know, what type of feedback  
19 we're hoping for. We're here to answer any  
20 questions you may have, but that was laid out as  
21 the purpose for this meeting.

22 So with that, I think we can

1 open it up to questions.

2 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay. As far as the  
3 railroad, I mean, does it just consist on, as  
4 far as production, as far as moving between the  
5 rails and Amtrak and all this, right?

6 Are you going to put anything  
7 up on the tracks to -- advertisement through  
8 comfort or anything as far as getting off the  
9 trains, getting off the Metra trains, anything  
10 as far as like coffee shops or anything like  
11 that on the trails -- I mean, on the rail lines?

12 MR. PAKELTIS: I'm not sure I follow  
13 you.

14 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm saying -- okay.  
15 I'm involved with Trails on the Railroad, and  
16 with that I was -- I was trying to get -- it  
17 might be something out of a question, not a  
18 conversation. I was trying to get some trails  
19 from here to Aurora. It's on trails on the  
20 railroads from here to Aurora. I don't know if  
21 you were involved with that also. It was in the  
22 newspapers, Sun-Times.

1 MR. PAKELTIS: You are talking about  
2 rails to trails? So rail lines that aren't  
3 active anymore are converted to trails for  
4 pedestrian, bicycle use, etc.

5 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.

6 MR. PAKELTIS: At this point our  
7 project, as I mentioned, is focused on shifting  
8 the Amtrak trains. But I mean, again, any --  
9 you know, we welcome any comment in terms of  
10 ways to incorporate improvements in the rail  
11 project.

12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: All right. Because  
13 I was going to get horses put up there for  
14 trails. I thought you might be in click with  
15 that as far as about the neighborhood and all  
16 this -- the legal work.

17 MR. PAKELTIS: Yes. No. No, not at  
18 this time.

19 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay. Then it's  
20 going to happen. Mark my word. We'll continue.

21 MR. PAKELTIS: Yes, sir. Any other  
22 questions?

1           THE REPORTER:  Would you like him to  
2 state his name?

3           MS. TROTTER:  No, we don't need the  
4 name.

5           MR. PAKELTIS:  No.

6           MR. ANDERSON:  My name is Gerald  
7 Anderson.

8                           I was -- in regards to the  
9 CREATE is the one that is going to be handling  
10 this in regards to the jobs and how will they be  
11 breaking it down.  I'm noticing -- I'm reading  
12 that it has the railroad and construction.  So  
13 how would they go do this I mean and when will  
14 they start -- start this?

15           MR. PAKELTIS:  Sure.  Well, you know,  
16 this is one of a number of CREATE projects, and  
17 as I mentioned, our project is going to last  
18 several years to just get through this phase of  
19 it, which is environmental clearance and  
20 preliminary engineering.  Then after that if  
21 funding were available, it could move into final  
22 design and then after that construction.

1                   And so at this point we think,  
2                   you know, our project would conclude at the  
3                   beginning part of 2014 and then beyond that then  
4                   would be that final design and construction, if  
5                   funding is available. So you're not looking at  
6                   construction on this project for several years  
7                   at this point.

8                   MR. ANDERSON: All right. Thanks.

9                   MR. PAKELTIS: Any other questions?

10                  AUDIENCE MEMBER: So with those jobs  
11                  will there be benefit for the community to get  
12                  work as far as construction or do you have your  
13                  own companies that is -- you're going to present  
14                  this to? Or am I speaking too fast?

15                  MR. PAKELTIS: We are not -- I'm  
16                  not -- I'm a consultant, the engineering  
17                  consultant on it. We are not part of the  
18                  bidding process. It would be an open bidding  
19                  process.

20                  AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay.

21                  MR. PAKELTIS: At that time it would  
22                  go out for bid.

1                   AUDIENCE MEMBER: Because I spoke with  
2 the superintendent, Bill Kenny (phonetic), at  
3 Kennedy College, and I told him to talk about  
4 it. I tried to get him to come here to meet,  
5 but he is working out in Bolingbrook. And, you  
6 know, with that location he couldn't make it  
7 here. I thought it was at 4 o'clock. He  
8 couldn't make it here so...

9                   Okay. Next. Anyone else?

10                  MR. PAKELTIS: Yes.

11                  AUDIENCE MEMBER: I want to know will  
12 housing be eliminated as far as this rail is  
13 concerned or is it existing tracks?

14                  MR. PAKELTIS: Well, at this point I  
15 can't answer that question for you because we  
16 aren't at the point where we have developed  
17 alternatives that we can share with you.

18                  At the next -- we have to  
19 develop alternatives to share with you. So at  
20 the next meeting, you know, we may start getting  
21 into those details. At this time we are not  
22 sure. There could be the need for right-of-way

1 acquisition, property acquisition, but we don't  
2 know at this time.

3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Is Norfolk involved  
4 with buying the houses in the neighborhood over  
5 there on 60th and Ellis and 60th and Normal? Is  
6 that involved with that?

7 MR. PAKELTIS: I don't know the exact  
8 limits. What you are referring to, I believe,  
9 is Norfolk Southern is planning to expand their  
10 intermodal yard to the south of its current  
11 location.

12 I don't know the exact limits  
13 of where they are purchasing homes, but I do  
14 know that they have reached out to property  
15 owners in that area to try to acquire land.

16 The intermodal yard expansion  
17 though is separate from our project. They're  
18 independent. That expansion could move forward  
19 without our project taking place. Our project  
20 could move forward without the intermodal yard  
21 expansion taking place.

22 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have a question on



1 that.

2 Okay. With the form of all  
3 these conglomerates that's in here since we --  
4 this is for the community awareness. I want to  
5 be able to go back and tell them how can they  
6 get involved in apprenticeships of some of them  
7 being able to help them further on down the road  
8 so that they can be involved in this here.

9 I mean, not myself. I've  
10 already completed mine, but I want to know how I  
11 can go back and carry that message.

12 MR. PAKELTIS: For construction work  
13 you mean?

14 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes, for the  
15 construction aspect.

16 MR. PAKELTIS: Does anyone --

17 MS. TROTTER: Well, how did you do it?

18 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Well, I come through  
19 an apprenticeship with the Chicago District  
20 Region of Illinois.

21 MS. TROTTER: Would that be  
22 information that you could provide to them? It

1 sounds like it. I'm sure that probably you're  
2 --

3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Pardon me. I'm  
4 listening to you. Go on and finish what you  
5 were saying.

6 MS. TROTTER: Your local elected  
7 officials should be able to provide you with  
8 information as far as what schools within the  
9 surrounding areas, like Kennedy-King College,  
10 Olive Harvey, you know, places such as that that  
11 do have and offer an apprenticeship program, you  
12 know.

13 AUDIENCE MEMBER: But those  
14 institutions that you talking about the job  
15 placement is so low.

16 MS. TROTTER: I understand. But in  
17 regards to this, there is nothing that is set up  
18 specifically for the Grand Crossing Rail  
19 Project. Not at this juncture.

20 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay. But in the  
21 future maybe?

22 MS. TROTTER: Yeah. Everybody should

1 prepare themselves for the future, regardless of  
2 this project or not. So that's what I encourage  
3 you to do. If there is, you know, young folks  
4 or people out there that want some information,  
5 you know, it's out there. It's out there.

6 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Because I thought  
7 that you all might be initiating the program or  
8 something.

9 MS. TROTTER: We're very early. You  
10 know. We talked about this. This is very early  
11 in the stage of this particular project.

12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: At least three years  
13 now.

14 MR. PAKELTIS: Well, our project,  
15 again, which is the environmental clearance and  
16 preliminary engineering, we are showing to be  
17 completed early 2014, and then that would be  
18 followed by final design, preparation of  
19 construction plans to view the work and then the  
20 project going out to bid for construction as  
21 well.

22 And at this point there isn't

1 funding for that either. So the funding has to  
2 be available as well.

3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: You know, with the  
4 State of Illinois, they are in such a finance  
5 thing, I don't even know if the State will be  
6 able to -- because they share of their  
7 20 percent. This is a major project I know.

8 AUDIENCE MEMBER: How many bids with  
9 the whole \$490 million?

10 MR. PAKELTIS: How much is our  
11 project? Is that the question?

12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.

13 MR. PAKELTIS: We are not at the point  
14 where we have an alternative to be able to  
15 prepare a cost estimate.

16 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay. John Paul.

17 MR. JONES: I'm with the --  
18 (inaudible) -- community project, but I also  
19 live in Englewood and so that is in my  
20 neighborhood as well.

21 But I was -- how much is the  
22 Federal Transit Administration engaged in or is

1       there a different federal agency?

2                   MR. PAKELTIS: Federal Highway  
3 Administration is the lead federal agency on  
4 this project.

5                   MR. JONES: When you mentioned the  
6 EIS, are they -- they have been saying they want  
7 to see a lot of initiatives fast track in terms  
8 of the environmental studies and even  
9 engineering studies. And so do you hope that  
10 that will be -- this may be one of those  
11 projects where they can accelerate the study  
12 process?

13                   MR. PAKELTIS: Well, I mean, based on  
14 our experience, this is a fairly aggressive  
15 schedule. The Federal Transit Administration  
16 isn't involved directly with the project as it  
17 doesn't include transit improvements. And so,  
18 again, our lead federal agency is the Federal  
19 Highway Administration, and they are the lead  
20 for all of the CREATE program projects.

21                   MR. JONES: And second question is,  
22 like the pastor said, this project has been

1 around for awhile and so it is of concern that  
2 there is no apprenticeship relationship with  
3 City Colleges.

4 I know the railroad industry  
5 have always communicated that they run into a  
6 huge retirement season where a lot of the guys  
7 will be turning over and they will be looking  
8 for, particularly in this region, they will be  
9 looking for more workers.

10 But I was just curious why  
11 there is no railroad kind of -- interpretation  
12 kind of real thinking about apprenticeship  
13 opportunities or even institutions that would  
14 get the public more acquainted to that.

15 So I was hoping that your  
16 consultants will help orchestrate those kind of  
17 conversations with City Colleges who is looking  
18 for new private partners in their apprenticeship  
19 strategies.

20 I know just last week, which  
21 many people on the south side is scheduled to  
22 raise some concerns with, is that Olive Harvey

1 has chose, as opposed to the railroads, as the  
2 interpretation model for the apprenticeships and  
3 other things they chose aviation and aviation  
4 has nothing really to do with that region at  
5 all. Certainly it would for Daley College,  
6 which is where there's a huge cluster, which is  
7 not far from here as a matter of fact, where  
8 there's a huge cluster of railroad conversations  
9 going on.

10 But we -- but, again, they  
11 haven't indicated their interest to even reboot  
12 their railroad strategies at Daley College and  
13 so, again, we are hoping to get leverage from  
14 your work over here and help us think through  
15 apprenticeship opportunities so guys can get  
16 plugged in.

17 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good.

18 MR. PAKELTIS: Okay. Thank you.

19 Yes, sir.

20 MR. HUFF: My name is Roger Huff. I  
21 am from the 5th Ward and wanted to put on the  
22 record that there are two historic properties in

1 the northeast quadrant where these railroads  
2 intersect. One's on East 75th Street, east of  
3 Woodlawn and the other is on South Kimbark just  
4 north of 75th Street.

5 And they are what are called  
6 orange rated, which means they have some  
7 significance. And as part of the EIS process, I  
8 would expect that you would be identifying these  
9 properties and taking that into account in  
10 considering alternatives. Is that correct?

11 MR. PAKELTIS: That is correct. That  
12 is part of our process. We will look at  
13 potential impacts to these properties.

14 Any other questions?

15 MR. JONES: When I look at the map in  
16 the book here, this railroad, is this the Union  
17 Pacific Railroad?

18 MR. PAKELTIS: No. I don't know  
19 specifically which area are you speaking of.  
20 Sorry.

21 MR. JONES: It's up on the screen.  
22 Move to the right. The one there.



1 MR. PAKELTIS: This here is the CN,  
2 the Canadian National, and the Metra Electric  
3 runs beside it.

4 MR. JONES: Some of the railroads get  
5 mixed up and don't even say which is which. So  
6 that's the Canadian route?

7 MR. PAKELTIS: Yes.

8 MR. JONES: Okay. And then this here  
9 that's being connected to the -- there's more  
10 infrastructure around Indiana, I believe, or  
11 Wabash at 55th Street. That's where we see  
12 right up there in the upper part. Is that new  
13 infrastructure there?

14 MR. PAKELTIS: Well, again, we are  
15 going to be looking at the -- currently, the  
16 Amtrak trains run up here and then into the  
17 Union Station.

18 MR. JONES: Right.

19 MR. PAKELTIS: We are going to be  
20 looking at potentially re-routing them here  
21 which would be -- this is the NS.

22 MR. JONES: Exactly.

1 MR. PAKELTIS: And that also runs  
2 north -- north/south here as well.

3 MR. JONES: Because I know the  
4 infrastructure is west. So I know there is new  
5 infrastructure over there.

6 Okay. Good.

7 And then that's going to Union  
8 Station. Okay.

9 MR. PAKELTIS: Next?

10 MR. JONES: Aren't they wiping out  
11 16th Street? Is that being wiped out?

12 MR. PAKELTIS: Wiped out?

13 MR. JONES: The 16th Street Corridor,  
14 is that being removed or are they going to keep  
15 that?

16 MR. PAKELTIS: Well, the Amtrak --  
17 does this have a pointer?

18 Again, the Amtrak trains --  
19 the 16th Street crossing that's referenced here,  
20 the Amtrak trains come up here and cross over.  
21 That grade meets up with the Rock Island -- the  
22 Rock Island Metra train at the 16th Street

1 crossing.

2 So if the Amtrak trains are --  
3 you know, that conflict would be removed if we  
4 re-routed them as shown on this map.

5 MR. JONES: And then you go straight  
6 up there, of course.

7 MR. PAKELTIS: Right. Right.

8 MR. JONES: Right.

9 MR. PAKELTIS: Currently, Amtrak  
10 trains are coming north -- you know, north/south  
11 along this line and they are allowed to go  
12 straight in and straight out. Yes.

13 MR. JONES: And the arrow we see is  
14 16th Street, right? The arrow going up --

15 MR. PAKELTIS: Well, the 16th Street  
16 crossing is just --

17 MR. JONES: Right there.

18 MR. PAKELTIS: -- right there.

19 MR. JONES: So that would be going  
20 straight ahead as opposed to going like that.

21 MR. PAKELTIS: We wouldn't be crossing  
22 the 16th Street crossing.

1 MR. JONES: Right.

2 MR. PAKELTIS: Next?

3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have got one quick  
4 question.

5 Is the change shown there by  
6 the red arrow lines, just that change alone,  
7 does that add the 15 -- I mean, the 19 minutes  
8 of travel time? Is that fact -- that turn  
9 around and backup, is that what adds the 19  
10 minutes of travel time?

11 MR. PAKELTIS: Up here?

12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.

13 MR. PAKELTIS: Yes. And just that  
14 that's a congested route currently. The backup  
15 maneuver along with the congestion along that  
16 route is adding that time.

17 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes. I guess I was  
18 just wondering in terms of, you know, like the  
19 distance between the study area and the red  
20 line, is that part of the 19 minutes as well or  
21 does that --

22 MR. PAKELTIS: That it's a little

1 longer route?

2 I mean, certainly, yeah. The  
3 route being longer contributes to that as well.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Tony, that  
5 route from McCormick Place and across the 16th  
6 corridor is a slower route.

7 MR. PAKELTIS: Right. Exactly.

8 There's more congestion and  
9 it's slower speeds through this route --

10 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay.

11 MR. PAKELTIS: -- than would be  
12 allowed on this route.

13 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay.

14 MR. JONES: Have the advisory councils  
15 been set up yet for the Grand Crossing District?

16 MR. PAKELTIS: We have formed two  
17 community advisory groups. They met in  
18 November -- November 15 at St. Bernard Hospital  
19 and November 18 at the Grand Crossing Library.

20 MR. JONES: Now, rumor is that it's  
21 only being given -- or persons appointed to that  
22 is only through the Alderman's office. Are you

1 working at all with the State or the federal  
2 official's office for recommendations of persons  
3 on the council?

4 MR. PAKELTIS: We reached out to all  
5 elected officials that represent these -- the  
6 study area for recommendations for the community  
7 advisory groups.

8 MR. JONES: Okay.

9 Because assumption in the  
10 neighborhood is that it's only by the Alderman's  
11 office that are being recommended.

12 MR. PAKELTIS: We reached out to all  
13 elected officials for recommendations.

14 MR. JONES: The County, too? You  
15 didn't reach out to the County, did you?

16 MR. PAKELTIS: Not the County.

17 MR. JONES: So it's really the City  
18 and the State of Illinois and the federal  
19 officials?

20 MR. PAKELTIS: The State and the City.

21 MR. JONES: The State and the City.

22 Okay.

1 MR. PAKELTIS: All right. Next?

2 All right. Well, thanks  
3 everyone for attending tonight and we'll be here  
4 for a little bit wrapping up, if you've got any  
5 other questions. Thanks for coming.

6 Chiquita, did you want to say  
7 anything else?

8 MS. TROTTER: Merry Christmas.

9 MR. PAKELTIS: For those of you who'd  
10 like to stay, if you want to see the slide show,  
11 we'll run it right now. Thanks for coming.

12

13 (WHICH WERE ALL THE PROCEEDINGS HAD  
14 IN THE ABOVE-ENTITLED MATTER.)

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1       STATE OF ILLINOIS    )  
                                  )  
2       COUNTY OF C O O K    )

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4  
5                            I, DONNA T. WADLINGTON, a  
6       Certified Shorthand Reporter, doing business in  
7       the County of Cook and State of Illinois, do  
8       hereby certify that I reported in machine  
9       shorthand the proceedings in the above entitled  
10      cause.

11                           I further certify that the  
12      foregoing is a true and correct transcript of  
13      said proceedings as appears from the  
14      stenographic notes so taken and transcribed by  
15      me this 1st day of January, 2012.

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17  
18                            \_\_\_\_\_  
19                           DONNA T. WADLINGTON  
20                           CSR #084-02443  
21  
22



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ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
GRAND CROSSING RAIL PROJECT

PUBLIC HEARING

Tuesday, December 13, 2011  
6:00 p.m.  
Sherwood Park Field House  
5701 South Shields  
Chicago, Illinois 60619

Reported by: Donna T. Wadlington, CSR

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MS. TROTTER: Good evening and thank  
3 you for coming. This is the first public  
4 meeting for the Grand Crossing Rail Project for  
5 the CREATE program.

6 And I'm Jakita Trotter with  
7 the Illinois Department of Transportation and  
8 one of the project team members.

9 And I would usually at this  
10 time acknowledge any of the elected officials or  
11 distinguished guests that we have in our  
12 audience, but I see only you guys, the  
13 distinguished guests, are here to hear more  
14 about the project.

15 Right now I will take a moment  
16 and introduce some of the team members --  
17 project team members that are here with us this  
18 evening. I'm Jakita Trotter.

19 MR. PAKELTIS: I'm Tony Pakeltis. I'M  
20 with Parsons. It's an engineering firm. We are  
21 a consultant to IDOT on this project.

22 MS. WYPYCHOWSKI: Hi. Margarite

1 Wypychowski, a consultant to Parsons.

2 MS. MENTOR: Hi. Ambar Mentor, also a  
3 consultant to Parsons.

4 MR. MOORE: I'm Craig Moore with  
5 Parsons.

6 MR. BUSALACCHI: Nicholas Busalacchi,  
7 a consultant with IDOT.

8 MS. STEWART: I'm Danielle Stewart,  
9 the IDOT Acting CREATE program manager.

10 MS. FEDERICO: I'm Elizabeth Federico  
11 with Parsons.

12 MR. ALLEN: I'm Chuck Allen with  
13 Norfolk Southern.

14 MR. SRIVER: Jeff Sriver with the City  
15 of Chicago, Department of Transportation.

16 MR. SMITH: Herbert Smith with Norfolk  
17 Southern Railroad.

18 MR. THOMPSON: William Thompson with  
19 Amtrak.

20 MR. KUSKEY: Eric Kuskey (phonetic)  
21 with Parsons.

22 MR. AYUSO: Manuel Ayuso with Parsons.



1 MR. McCANN: Davin McCann and Ron  
2 Deverman with HNTV for work with IDOT.

3 MS. CORNELIUS: Terri Cornelius,  
4 consultant with Parsons.

5 MR. DRUDING: Josh Druding, also a  
6 consultant with Parsons.

7 MR. McNUCKLE: Brian McNuckle,  
8 consultant with Parsons.

9 MS. TROTTER: I know you're saying,  
10 gees, there's a lot of us. Well, this is --  
11 CREATE is a big program, a very big program, and  
12 this project is only one of 70, you know, that  
13 exists within the CREATE program.

14 But you're here tonight to get  
15 some background on the project, you know, the  
16 environmental impact statement process, and Tony  
17 is going to do the honors of providing you with  
18 that information. And afterwards, you know,  
19 we're -- it will be a question and answer. So  
20 any questions that you may have, you know, will  
21 be responded to by the appropriate project  
22 member.

1                   So you should have received a  
2 index card. If you jot questions down that you  
3 have, they will be collected and also compiled  
4 and responded to.

5                   Okay? Thank you. And thanks  
6 to the Chicago Park District for use of their  
7 space this evening.

8                   MR. PAKELTIS: Hi. As I mentioned,  
9 I'm Tony Pakeltis. I'm with Parsons, and I  
10 really just want to -- we've had the  
11 presentation running here throughout the night.  
12 We are not going to rerun it now, since I think  
13 everyone here has already seen it. Afterwards  
14 if someone wants to see that, we can run it  
15 again.

16                   I just want to do -- provide  
17 just a brief overview of kind of what our -- you  
18 know, what the project is and what our purpose  
19 is here tonight.

20                   MS. TROTTER: Excuse me, Tony.

21                   I just wanted to check if  
22 anyone would like to have -- need an index card,

1 pencil or -- no. Okay. You have one. You need  
2 one.

3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Pencil.

4 MS. TROTTER: You need one. Okay.  
5 I'm sorry.

6 MR. PAKELTIS: So the project that we  
7 are working on, the Grand Crossing Rail Project,  
8 is focused on looking at the current Amtrak  
9 route, which runs up along the Canadian National  
10 Railway and into Union Station.

11 And up here at the north that  
12 route is required to -- trains on that route are  
13 required to meet this backup maneuver, which  
14 slows those trains down, and it's also along  
15 that route there is additional congestion that  
16 those trains have to experience.

17 So as part of the project, we  
18 are looking at potentially rerouting those  
19 Amtrak trains onto the Norfolk Southern line  
20 here, which runs along the Chicago Skyway and  
21 then up north into Union Station. There's  
22 currently Amtrak trains to and from the east

1 that operate on this line and in and out of  
2 Union Station.

3 Our problem statement which  
4 is -- you know, we are up with our starting  
5 point for this project. What is the problem  
6 that we are trying to address.

7 And, again, it's this  
8 inefficient Amtrak route. All the trains must  
9 back into Union Station. It lengthens the  
10 schedule by 19 minutes. It ties up other lines.

11 Amtrak trains are subject to  
12 delay of the 16th Street interlocking. That is  
13 up into the northern portion of that corridor.  
14 That affects the Amtrak's on-time performance  
15 and it contributes to congestion.

16 And then additional issues  
17 with the project are Canadian National, which  
18 owns that line that Amtrak operates on, they may  
19 discontinue use of that line. There's limited  
20 number of options into Union Station from the  
21 south, and then shifting -- shift these Amtrak  
22 trains onto another route, that route may

1 already be congested and additional improvements  
2 might be needed to accommodate those Amtrak  
3 trains.

4 So our project purpose and  
5 need, which is really the focus of this meeting,  
6 and we want to get your feedback on that, our  
7 project purpose is to provide a new, direct  
8 route for Amtrak trains from New Orleans and  
9 Carbondale into Chicago Union Station and to  
10 provide sufficient mainline capacity to  
11 accommodate Amtrak and freight trains.

12 The needs that we are trying  
13 to address are improved Amtrak route efficiency,  
14 reduce congestion and delays and adequate  
15 capacity to accommodate these trains.

16 As part of our project, we  
17 have met in November -- we formed community  
18 advisory groups, and we met in November at St.  
19 Bernard Hospital, another time at the Grand  
20 Crossing Library. We met with people from the  
21 community, community leaders, you know, to  
22 discuss issues in the neighborhood, to talk

1 about the problem statement and to get feedback  
2 on that. And some of the feedback is on some of  
3 the presentation material that we have provided  
4 tonight.

5 And then I am just going to  
6 briefly go over where we are in our process, and  
7 then we can answer any questions that you may  
8 have.

9 So we are -- what we are doing  
10 is called an environmental impact statement.  
11 That we anticipate to take about two-and-a-half  
12 years to complete. And it's the first phase to  
13 move forward with a project of this nature.

14 At the end of our project,  
15 we'll have what's called a record of decision,  
16 and from there if the funding is available, the  
17 project could move to final design where  
18 construction plans would be prepared and then  
19 from there the project would be put out to bid  
20 and construction can start.

21 So this is similar to a board  
22 we have here in the gymnasium. We are currently

1 at step two; draft purpose and need prepared.  
2 Public input gathered at tonight's meeting.

3 So we have got laid out here a  
4 seven-step process. It started earlier in the  
5 year with just a notice of intent, which was an  
6 announcement that we were going to prepare an  
7 environmental impact statement. And now we are  
8 at the point where we have prepared a purpose  
9 and needs statement. And we want to get  
10 feedback on that.

11 From there, after this  
12 meeting, we will take that feedback and finalize  
13 the purpose and needs statement and then develop  
14 a range of alternatives aimed at addressing that  
15 purpose and need.

16 And then after we've developed  
17 those alternatives, we are going to come back.  
18 We are going to come back to the community  
19 advisory group members. We are going to come  
20 back with another public meeting and present  
21 that information again where you will see what  
22 types of improvements we may be looking at to

1 address this problem.

2 Then after that meeting, we'll  
3 evaluate those alternatives in full detail and  
4 document them in the environmental impact  
5 statement.

6 Ultimately, we hope to have a  
7 preferred alternative identified in that EIS.  
8 We'll come back and talk about the impact that  
9 we anticipate and discuss those at a public  
10 hearing. And then ultimately again end with  
11 this record of decision which completes the EIS  
12 process, and we are currently targeting early  
13 2014 for that completion.

14 So on this bar schedule here  
15 at the bottom of the page, we show -- here we  
16 are now with public meetings about the purpose  
17 and need. We hope to be back in the spring with  
18 public meetings about the alternatives, and then  
19 from there we will evaluate the alternatives,  
20 finalize the EIS, and then come back with the  
21 public hearings.

22 So I have one card that was



1 submitted earlier with questions. Did anyone  
2 else submit any cards at this time?

3 Let me pull this out. The  
4 first question is when will employment start.

5 And, again, I have laid out  
6 the schedule, and in terms of construction and  
7 any jobs related to construction, we are looking  
8 at several years down the road. And that,  
9 again, is if funding is ultimately available.

10 So if we finish our project in  
11 early 2014, then you look to go to final design  
12 and put the project out to bid. You're looking  
13 at 2015, 2016 for construction.

14 Another question I have, what  
15 qualifications will they need. Again, we are  
16 part of -- we are doing the engineering work  
17 here, and the construction process is different.  
18 I don't have -- I personally don't have any  
19 details on the requirements of contractors, but  
20 that information, I think, can be obtained from  
21 IDOT, but I don't have specifics on that  
22 tonight.

1 MS. STEWART: That will become  
2 available as we move further into the process.  
3 We are not at the point to be giving out that  
4 information. Much less, we don't have funding  
5 to do the next phase into the project at this  
6 point.

7 MR. PAKELTIS: And then the last  
8 statement here, more of a comment, another one  
9 of my concerns is safety, public -- and public  
10 transportation.

11 So as part of our project, we  
12 will, again, look at a number of issues as part  
13 of the EIS. You know, we will consider safety  
14 certainly as part of our -- any designs that we  
15 do. We will meet current design standards to  
16 provide a safe transportation system, and we'll  
17 also look at potential affects to the surface  
18 transportation network, how that project may  
19 affect local circulation. Yes.

20 AUDIENCE MEMBER: As far as -- I'm in  
21 the surrounding areas, not as affected.

22 As far as the noise goes, what

1 have you previously done to avoid so much noise  
2 with the trains and especially in them changing  
3 or whatever in an area?

4 MR. PAKELTIS: Well, we are doing a  
5 study to look at these improvements. As part of  
6 our study, we'll evaluate potential noise  
7 impacts associated with the rerouting of trains.

8 In terms of railroad  
9 operations, I personally can't speak to that, as  
10 I don't work for the railroad.

11 AUDIENCE MEMBER: The other studies  
12 I'm sure you've done -- maybe not you, but  
13 railroads or what have you. What are they --  
14 for a block or two from that site, what do they  
15 do?

16 MR. PAKELTIS: Well, you know, I don't  
17 know how it's going to end up in terms of the  
18 impact and what type of mitigation might be  
19 required. If there are impacts, we would look  
20 at potential noise mitigation, which could be in  
21 the form of a barrier. But at this point we  
22 don't have enough detail to be able to say

1 that's what we are going to be recommending.

2 Next question? Yes.

3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Has the advisory  
4 group submitted any kind of recommendations of  
5 what they would consider to be community  
6 priorities, what community activities should not  
7 be affected by the project, anything like that?

8 MR. PAKELTIS: Well, as part of our  
9 meetings, we did a context -- a community  
10 context audit where we asked them what -- you  
11 know, what features of their community they  
12 found important. It wasn't necessarily specific  
13 to, you know -- you know, what building or  
14 activity shouldn't be impacted.

15 But we did get that feedback,  
16 and it's kind of summarized simply on one of the  
17 boards over there where some of the -- these  
18 were the main issues that we heard at that  
19 meeting related to air quality, safety, jobs,  
20 maintenance, viaduct condition, noise and  
21 vibration.

22 And so when we -- again, prior

1 to our next public meeting, we will go back to  
2 the community advisory group and talk to them  
3 about the alternatives we have developed and get  
4 feedback from them on those.

5 Next question.

6 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I just want to  
7 paraphrase.

8 So what I'm understanding you  
9 to say is that we are looking to streamline rail  
10 operations into the city proper, i.e., Union  
11 Station or wherever else you may go, and any  
12 type of ancillary spill-offs from that you  
13 really haven't determined that.

14 MR. PAKELTIS: What we have -- where  
15 we are is we have this Amtrak route that comes  
16 up from New Orleans and Carbondale. It has a  
17 maneuver that requires the trains to come in  
18 past Union Station and back up into the loop.

19 We are looking at potential  
20 solutions to improve the efficiency of that  
21 route. And at this point we've identified a  
22 general study area that we think we are going to

1 look at for improvements.

2 But in terms of detailed  
3 alternatives, we don't have them at this  
4 meeting. We will have them at the next meeting,  
5 and that's just part of the process that we're  
6 following as part of the EIS.

7 First we come out and we talk  
8 about what the purpose and need of the project  
9 is. That's what we are here for today. And  
10 then the next meeting alternatives, and then we  
11 talk about what the impacts are. And then so we  
12 are just going through that systemically and  
13 then we are here at one of the early stages.

14 Next question.

15 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can you name the  
16 communities that might be affected? Greater  
17 Grand Crossing, Englewood.

18 MR. PAKELTIS: Yes. Those two;  
19 Englewood, Greater Grand Crossing --

20 MR. MOORE: New City, Fuller Park.

21 MR. PAKELTIS: -- New City, Fuller  
22 Park.

1                   Those are the -- and then we  
2 have -- you know, if there's a specific area  
3 that you're interested in, you know, this map is  
4 kind of general. It doesn't have a lot of  
5 details. We have a series of aerial photographs  
6 over there as well where we can, you know,  
7 pinpoint the location and tell you if it's in  
8 the study area or not.

9                   AUDIENCE MEMBER: I was just speaking  
10 generally. I just wanted to know. Maybe that  
11 would help generate discussion.

12                  MR. PAKELTIS: Okay. Thank you.

13                   Next question.

14                  AUDIENCE MEMBER: You speak about the  
15 19 minutes. The trains are being delayed by 19  
16 minutes because they have to back in. After  
17 just -- after this completion is done, will the  
18 trains be backing in still or will they --

19                  MR. PAKELTIS: No. If the trains were  
20 rerouted -- if the trains were rerouted, then  
21 they would go head in. They would be able to go  
22 straight in to Union Station and straight out.

1                   As I mentioned, there's  
2 already some Amtrak service along the NS line  
3 here and those trains are going straight in and  
4 straight out.

5                   AUDIENCE MEMBER: And that would  
6 eliminate the 19 minutes, right?

7                   MR. PAKELTIS: That's right.

8                   AUDIENCE MEMBER: Right along with all  
9 the houses in the area.

10                  MR. PAKELTIS: Well, we are here -- we  
11 are preparing the EIS, so there certainly could  
12 be impacts to property as part of this project.

13                  AUDIENCE MEMBER: Definitely.

14                  MR. PAKELTIS: Next question. Anyone?  
15 Anymore questions?

16                               Thanks everyone for coming.  
17 As I mentioned, we're going to rerun the  
18 presentation, if somebody wants to hear that.

19                               And we've passed out comment  
20 forms here. We certainly encourage you to hand  
21 those in, if you didn't get one. You know, see  
22 one of the project team members, and we will be



1 happy to give you one of those. We would like  
2 to get those tonight. You can hand it in in  
3 writing.

4 We have a court reporter who's  
5 taking your comments or you can send them in  
6 after the meeting as well.

7 Thanks so much for coming.

8 MS. TROTTER: Thank you for coming,  
9 everyone.

10

11 (WHICH WERE ALL THE PROCEEDINGS HAD  
12 IN THE ABOVE-ENTITLED MATTER.)

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1       STATE OF ILLINOIS    )  
                                  )  
2       COUNTY OF C O O K    )

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4  
5                            I, DONNA T. WADLINGTON, a  
6       Certified Shorthand Reporter, doing business in  
7       the County of Cook and State of Illinois, do  
8       hereby certify that I reported in machine  
9       shorthand the proceedings in the above entitled  
10      cause.

11                           I further certify that the  
12      foregoing is a true and correct transcript of  
13      said proceedings as appears from the  
14      stenographic notes so taken and transcribed by  
15      me this 1st day of January, 2012.

16  
17  
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19                            DONNA T. WADLINGTON  
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