



CREATE

KEEPING THE GO IN CHICAGO

2023 NEWSLETTER

CHICAGO REGION ENVIRONMENTAL AND TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

As we enter 2023, the CREATE Program continues to improve freight and passenger transportation and our environment by “Building Bridges” to better connect the Chicago region’s rail system and our communities. The CREATE Program partners look forward to building on this momentum throughout 2023! Modernizing our region’s railroads is a significant endeavor, requiring the close coordination and partnership between the railroads, city, county, state, and federal government. We’re honored to lead this nationally recognized effort!

The CREATE Program is a first-of-its-kind public-private partnership that has worked to improve the rail and roadway transportation network within the Chicago region through the completion of 70 interrelated infrastructure projects. The CREATE Program is a partnership that includes the U.S. Department of Transportation, State of Illinois, Cook County, City of Chicago, Metra, Amtrak, the Association of American Railroads along with freight railroads BNSF, Belt Railway of Chicago, Canadian Pacific, Canadian National, CSX, Indiana Harbor Belt, Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific. The Program is designed to eliminate freight rail and motor vehicle bottlenecks, boost the economy of northeastern Illinois and improve the overall safety and environment of the region.

PROJECT MOVEMENT

Argo Connections (B9) Ribbon Cutting

In June, U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth, U.S. Senator Richard Durbin, U.S. Representative Marie Newman and the CREATE Program partners, including Illinois Department of Transportation Secretary Omer Osman and CSX General Manager Edward Steinbeck, participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony commemorating the completion of the Argo Connections (B9) Project. This project constructed a new double-track connection and crossovers between the Belt Railway Company of Chicago (BRC) and Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad/CSX line at Archer Avenue and 63rd Street and provided additional crossovers to the control point at 71st Street in Summit, Illinois. These upgrades will allow trains to increase their speeds from 10 mph to 25 mph, providing efficiency and reducing congestion. This project also upgraded Argo Yards to replace capacity that was needed for the installation of new main line crossovers. Click [here](#) for highlights from the event.



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Project Status

The CREATE Program continues to move full steam ahead on projects throughout the Chicago region in 2023!

Completed projects

33

Projects under construction (Phase III)

4

Projects in final design (Phase II)

8

Projects in environmental review (Phase I)

7

Remaining projects

18

CREATE PROGRAM RECEIVES INFRA GRANT TO FUND OGDEN JUNCTION (WA1)

In September, the CREATE Program partners were excited to announce a \$70 million federal Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant award for CREATE's Ogden Junction (WA1) project, located on the Union Pacific Rockwell line on Chicago's West Side. This project consists of a 1.9 mile-long segment along the Western Avenue Corridor. This corridor provides critical connectivity for regional and national freight traffic, accommodating approximately 20 to 30 freight trains a day within a network that serves more than 180,000 freight and 300,000 passenger trains annually.



This project will replace 14 viaducts, rehabilitate two, remove two and upgrade all bridges to modern standards within the corridor. Other community investments include new lighting, sidewalks and roadway paving. This will enhance accessibility and safety for people walking, bicycling, taking transit, or driving in the project area as well as support community efforts to bring development, jobs and housing into surrounding neighborhoods.

The project will also install new Centralized Traffic Control, control points, and upgrade the existing hand-thrown switches to power switches to improve operational capacity, velocity, and fluidity to prepare the corridor for future freight rail demand. A reduction in idling trains will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.



"The CREATE Program demonstrates what it means to invest not only in the physical infrastructure of our communities, but in the educational tools that will power the next generation of urban planners, engineers, government officials and STEM workers."

Omer Osman
Illinois Secretary of
Transportation

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

Get On Board

Business-to-Business Exhibition

April 12, 2023

8:30 am - 1:00 pm

**Malcolm X College
1900 W. Jackson
Chicago**

Sign up for the
CREATE Procurement list at
createprogram.org
to receive announcements about
Get On Board and future procurement
opportunities.



**75th Street Corridor Improvement Project
Advertisements and Opportunities Continue**

To stay up to date with bid advertisements and opportunities, register for our email notifications [here](#).

75TH STREET CIP MOVING FORWARD

The 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (CIP) is the largest and most complex element within the overall CREATE Program. It comprises a group of four projects that are being advanced as a singular project due to being operationally and environmentally interconnected. This rail and roadway improvement project is located on the south side of Chicago in the neighborhoods of Ashburn, Auburn Gresham, Englewood, and West Chatham along two commuter rail lines, one passenger rail line, and four freight rail lines. The project area is roughly bound by Pulaski Road, 63rd Street, Interstate 94 (Dan Ryan Expressway) and 103rd Street. The 75th Street CIP will eliminate the most congested rail chokepoint in the Chicago Terminal, Belt Junction, where 30 Metra and 90 freight trains cross each other's paths per day.



71st Street Grade Separation and Forest Hill Flyover (75th Street CIP, GS19 and P3) Groundbreaking

In October, U.S. Senator Richard Durbin, Governor J.B. Pritzker, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, Mayor Lori Lightfoot, Surface Transportation Board Chairman Martin



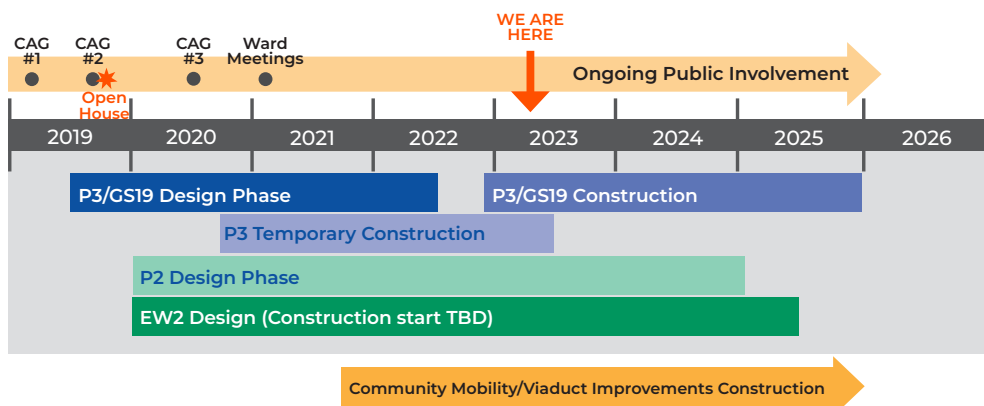
Oberman, and other CREATE Program supporters joined CREATE Program partners, including AAR President & CEO Ian Jefferies, Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski and Metra Madam Chair Romaine C. Brown, to participate in the groundbreaking of the first part of the 75th Street CIP. The Forest Hill Flyover (P3) will eliminate conflict between 30 SouthWest service Metra trains and 35 freight trains operating daily on the Western Avenue Corridor (CSX). The 71st Street Grade Separation (GS19) will reduce neighborhood traffic delay and improve safety. In 2018, the U.S. Department of Transportation awarded \$132 million to the CREATE partners through the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant program, which secured funding for final design and construction of this first part of the 75th Street CIP.



Continuing Education Commitment

The CREATE partners continue to promote Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) educational programs for elementary and high school students located within the 75th Street CIP project area. This includes in-classroom activities, hosting field trips to rail related sites, junior mentor-protégé internships, and more. This year's in-class activities include a bridge building competition for the elementary schools and a Request for Proposal (RFP) competition for the high schools.

For the 2022-2023 school year, the Program partners donated a total of \$200,000 across several recipients. These grants are being used for science labs, on-site visits, internships, after-school clubs, new equipment, at-home science kits, online programs and more.

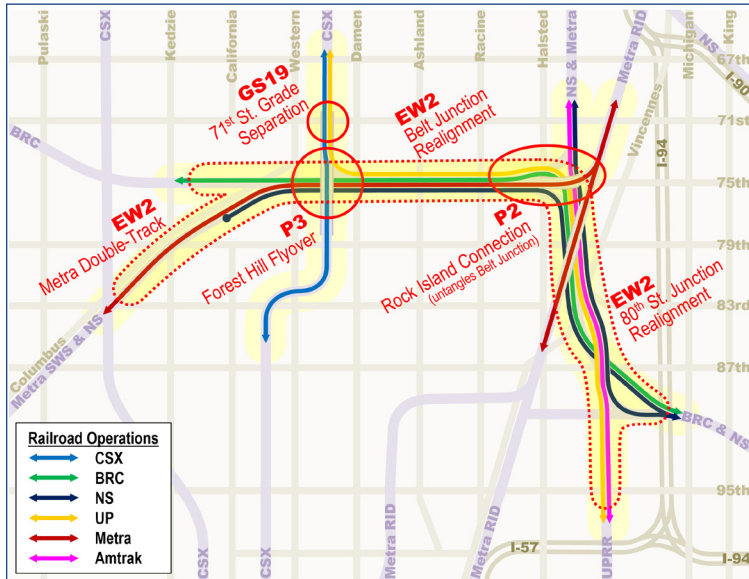


Project Timeline

LEGEND		P3 - Forest Hill Flyover (CSX)
		GS19 - 71st Street Grade Separation (CSX)
		P2 - Rock Island Connector (Metra)
		EW2 - Belt Junction & 80th Street Junction Improvements (NS, UPRR, BRC, Metra, Amtrak)
		Community Mobility & Viaduct Improvements (CDOT & Railroads)
		CAG (Community Advisory Group) and Ward meetings

ENGAGING CHICAGO'S WORKFORCE

Over the past year, the CREATE partners continued their effort to provide procurement opportunities/updates to encourage Program participation by certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE), small businesses and rail-industry prime contractors specializing in engineering, design, land acquisition and construction. We look forward to hosting events as an ongoing project information resource to keep individuals and organizations informed of Program opportunities!



Phase II of the 75th Street CIP

The CREATE Program continues to advance Phase II final design plans for the second part of the 75th Street CIP. The Belt Junction and 80th Street Junction Replacements Project (EW2) will eliminate the most congested rail chokepoint in the Chicago Terminal by reconfiguring the BRC main tracks between the Dan Ryan Expressway and Belt Junction, where four freight railroads cross each others' paths as well as Metra's SouthWest Service. The Rock Island Connection Project (P2) will construct a rail-rail flyover connection and a second main track for Metra's SouthWest Service in this area to reduce congestion and conflicts with freight trains. It will also connect Metra's SouthWest Service with Metra's existing Rock Island District tracks, allowing SouthWest trains to serve LaSalle Street Station instead of Union Station downtown, freeing up capacity for growth in Amtrak and other Metra services there. The CREATE partners will continue to seek funding to construct EW2 and P2.

75th Street Community Mobility Improvements Continue in 2023

The CREATE Program is continuing to implement community mobility improvements within the 75th Street CIP project area. These improvements, led by the Chicago Department of Transportation, include neighborhood street repaving, curb and sidewalk repair, street tree planting, bus stop improvements, ADA ramp improvements, and upgrades to streets and sidewalks under rail viaducts. During 2022, construction was completed for 91 of the remaining projects, and the final three will be completed in 2023. The CREATE partners' commitment to creating economic opportunities in the project area neighborhoods is reflected in the 30% Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) participation goal for this contracted work. The 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project continues to progress with making bid awards and advertising bid opportunities!

- In March 2022, CSX issued an invitation to bid on CREATE Projects P3/GS19 Phase III Construction Contract.
 - The contract was awarded on June 8th, 2022, to Granite Construction. The Granite Construction team includes 15 local, Illinois DBE firms: Highway Safety Corp, Metromex Contractors Inc, K&S Engineers, Inc, Northwest General Contractors, City Lights, LTD, Industrial Fence, Pine Waterproofing & Sealing, Inc, B.B.D. Trucking Co, Inc, AC Iron, Alpine Demolition Services, AB Petroleum Services, Mack Construction Services, Area Equipment, Argo and Nashnal Soil Testing.
- In April 2022, Metra issued a Letter of Interest and Qualifications (LIQ) to provide CREATE P2 Right-of-Way Assessment Services for SWS/RID Flyover Connection. Metra will issue a notice to proceed in early 2023.
- In September 2022, the Belt Railway Company of Chicago issued a Request for Proposals to provide preliminary signal design services for CREATE EW2 and P2 Projects. A selection is anticipated to be finalized in late December of 2022.
- In September 2022, Union Pacific selected the design firm HDR for their portion of the CREATE EW2 Project.

To stay up to date of bid advertisements and upcoming professional development events such as the Get On Board events, Union Pathways Workshops, and other opportunities visit createprogram.org.

PROMOTING CREATE AROUND THE COUNTRY

2022 brought many opportunities for the Program partners to discuss CREATE's regional and national impacts with federal and state transportation officials. We are grateful for the continued support and encouragement from these officials.



U.S. DOT Deputy Secretary Polly Trottenberg

In December, the CREATE Program had the pleasure of hosting U.S. Department of Transportation Deputy Secretary Polly Trottenberg during her visit to Chicago. Program partners updated the Deputy Secretary on the Program status, including its impacts on freight, commuter, and passenger rail operations in the Chicago region and throughout the country. Several Program partners participated in this event, including Illinois Department of Transportation Secretary Omer Osman, Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways Superintendent Jennifer "Sis" Killen, Association of American Railroad's William Thompson, Chicago Department of Transportation's Jeffrey Sriver, Norfolk Southern's Herbert Smith and others at the Chicago Transportation Coordination Office (CTCO). The CREATE partners look forward to continued beneficial collaboration with USDOT.



Port Envoy General Steve Lyons and FRA Deputy Director Jennifer Mitchell

In June, the CREATE partners had the opportunity to meet with the Biden-Harris Administration Supply Chain Disruption Task Force Port & Supply Chain Envoy General Steve Lyons and Federal Railroad Administration Deputy Director Jennifer Mitchell during their visit to tour major intermodal rail terminals in Northeastern Illinois. This visit highlighted the Chicago Integrated Rail Operations Center, CIROC, to demonstrate the complexities of monitoring and facilitating efficient rail operations within the Chicago freight rail terminal area. The partners thank General Lyons and Deputy Director Mitchell and stand ready to provide further updates and information on the CREATE Program's progress.

BENEFITS

BENEFITS OF CREATE

- Reduces passenger train delay by more than 1.3M passenger hours annually
- Saves 92K hours of truck delay and 230K hours of motorist and bus delay
- Avoids 200 vehicle crashes with trains
- Avoids 2.8K metric tons/year emissions from idling vehicles
- Enables 50K more freight trains to travel through greater Chicago rail network annually
- Avoids 18.5K truck trips a day on highways since 122M tons of freight per year would travel by rail

Outreach to U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

This year, the CREATE partners were pleased to engage directly with members and staff of the United States House of Representatives Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure to provide a general introduction to the CREATE Program and its importance to the national supply chain. These discussions highlighted how the CREATE Program's improvements affect commodity flows to and from Congressional districts across the United States.



Senator Tammy Duckworth Staff Tour

This past summer, Program partners hosted transportation staff members from United States Senator Tammy Duckworth's office as well as staff from the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation to highlight CREATE as a program of national importance. Participants were joined by Program partners at the Chicago Transportation Coordination Office (CTCO) before heading to the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (75th Street CIP). In addition to highlighting CREATE's national impact, the partners discussed the Program's efforts around community mobility, education programs, and workforce development initiatives in the 75th Street CIP project area. The CREATE Program partners thank Senator Duckworth and her staff for their continued support as we continue to modernize Chicago's rail network!

Suburban Outreach

In 2022, the CREATE partners engaged with suburban community leaders to discuss the CREATE Program's efforts to improve grade crossings throughout the Chicago region and reduce conflicts between trains and people driving, walking, or bicycling on local roads and streets. These efforts will improve safety, environmental impacts, and travel times for people in many communities and neighborhoods.

U.S. Representative Marie Newman CREATE Tour

In February, Program partners guided United States Representative Marie Newman on a site visit of CREATE projects in her district. The visit included the 65th Street/Harlem Avenue/Belt Railway of Chicago Grade Separation (GS1), Argo Connections (B9), as well as the Rock Island Connection (P2), which is part of the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project.

LOOKING FORWARD

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)

The CREATE partners are excited about opportunities to continue modernizing the Chicago region's rail network through the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act that started to be implemented during 2022 and will continue into the future. BIL makes significant federal funding available for freight and passenger railroad improvements and presents a unique opportunity to advance many of the remaining CREATE projects.



STAY ENGAGED

Follow CREATE on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and sign-up for our mailing lists to ensure you know when the latest procurement notices, project updates and event information is available. As always, CREATE representatives are available to provide briefings, presentations and tours – reach us at info@createprogram.org if you are interested!

CREATE PARTNERS

