

## Educate. Advocate. Empower.

### PRESIDENT

Mayor Mark T. Kupsky, Fairview Heights

### FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Mayor Deborah Frank Feinen, Champaign

### SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

Mayor Gary W. Manier, Washington

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Brad Cole, Former Mayor, Carbondale

### VICE PRESIDENTS

Mayor Richard H. Veenstra, Addison

Mayor David Gains, Alton

Mayor Richard Irvin, Aurora

Village President Katrina Thompson, Broadview

Mayor Carolin Harvey, Carbondale

Mayor Brandon Johnson, Chicago

Mayor Cohen Barnes, DeKalb

Mayor Teresa Kernc, Diamond

Mayor Reggie Freeman, East Moline

Mayor Art Risavy, Edwardsville

Village President Donny Schmit, Fox Lake

Mayor Jodi Miller, Freeport

Village President Mike McCormick, Godfrey

Village President Rodney S. Craig, Hanover Park

Village President Vernard L. Alsberry, Jr., Hazel Crest

Mayor Andy Ezard, Jacksonville

Mayor Christopher W. Curtis, Kankakee

Village President James L. Discipio, La Grange Park

Village President Sheila Chalmers-Currin, Matteson

Mayor Rick Hall, Mattoon

Mayor Chris Brown, Morris

Mayor Joe Judge, Mount Carmel

Mayor John C. Lewis, Mount Vernon

Town President Chris Koos, Normal

Mayor Herb Roach, O'Fallon

Mayor Rita Ali, Peoria

Mayor Michael A. Troup, Quincy

Mayor Susan L. Harbaugh, Red Bud

Village President Rick Reinbold, Richton Park

Mayor Thomas McNamara, Rockford

Mayor George Van Dusen, Skokie

Mayor Misty Buscher, Springfield

Mayor Christopher Nelson, West Dundee

Mayor Billy McKinney, Zion

### PAST PRESIDENTS

Village President Karen Darch, Barrington

Mayor Julie Moore Wolfe, Decatur

Mayor Michael J. Inman, Macomb

Mayor Leon Rockingham, Jr., North Chicago

Mayor Gerald R. Bennett, Palos Hills

Village President Catherine M. Adduci, River Forest

Mayor Ricky J. Gottman, Vandalia

April 30, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The Illinois Municipal League (IML), the statewide organization representing all 1,294 cities, villages and towns in Illinois, is fully supportive of the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) applications for the Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Opportunity (MPDG) and Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Programs funding on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program. These grants will fund the first segment of the Belt Junction and 80th Street Junction Replacements project, known as EW2a. The project includes reconfiguring the Belt Railway Company (BRC) main tracks between the Dan Ryan Expressway and Belt Junction, where four freight railroad tracks intersect with each other and Metra's SouthWest Service operations.

This project is a key part of the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (CIP) – a grouping of four major improvements that make up the most complex portion of the overall CREATE Program. These four improvements are being advanced as a single project due to their logistical and environmental linkages. The first two components of the 75th Street CIP (projects P3 and GS19) began construction in October 2022 with the support of a 2018 INFRA grant and are on schedule for completion in 2026. The remaining two project components of the 75th Street CIP, projects EW2 and P2, are critical to ensure the full benefit of the overall project. Project EW2 is being designed as multiple project segments, due to the scope and scale of the project, with EW2a being the first phase of the effort.

Project segment EW2a will reconfigure Belt Railway Company (BRC), Norfolk Southern (NS) and Metra tracks and rebuild 14 different century-old railroad structures, including 86 bridges over local streets in three South Side Chicago neighborhoods. A third dedicated BRC main track will also be constructed, eliminating route conflicts for freight and Metra trains. This project will begin to alleviate the most congested rail chokepoint in North America, Chicago's Belt Junction, where 30 Metra trains and 90 freight



Page 2  
Secretary Buttigieg  
April 30, 2024

trains cross each other's paths each day. The project will also improve neighborhood connectivity by replacing railroad structures over city streets and will set the stage for re-routing Metra's SouthWest Service trains out of Chicago Union Station and into LaSalle Street station via the upcoming CREATE project P2, which will greatly increase Union Station's capacity for future Amtrak and Metra rail service.

Project segment EW2a helps achieve the CREATE Program's overall goals to improve rail operations in the Chicago metropolitan area and improve quality of life in neighborhoods near rail. Beyond these local and regional benefits, these improvements will have a significant positive impact on the national supply chain. The efficiencies resulting from this project support the movement of people and consumer goods throughout the nation. The 75th Street CIP project includes investments in K-12 education and workforce opportunities as well as community mobility improvements (CMI). These CMIs enhance the safety, accessibility, quality of life and visual appeal of the community, while enhancing local transportation systems for people walking, bicycling, taking transit and driving. Not only does EW2a support broader economic growth, but neighboring communities also benefit from cleaner air, reduced railroad delays and improved development opportunities.

The Illinois Municipal League fully supports this application and looks forward to the project's successful implementation and eventual completion.

Please feel welcome to contact me with any questions or if I may be of assistance with this or any other matter. I may be reached by phone at (217) 525-1220 or by email at [bcole@iml.org](mailto:bcole@iml.org). Thanks.

Yours very truly,



BRAD COLE  
Chief Executive Officer

c: Jim Derwinski, CEO, Metra  
Omer Osman, Secretary, Illinois Department of Transportation  
Illinois Congressional Delegation