

June 2026

The Honorable David A. Fink
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Fink:

Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC), an independent planning and policy organization working to address regional built environment issues, fully supports the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) application, on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program, for funding through the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program. CREATE is the largest public-private partnership of its kind, involving the nation's rail industry and all levels of government.

Federal funding will advance CREATE's Rock Island Connection project (P2), the next phase of the larger 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project, which will construct a flyover bridge to eliminate a major chokepoint and reduce conflicts between freight and passenger trains, which directly aligns with the goals of CRISI by improving safety, reliability, and travel times for both passenger and freight trains.

A key benefit of the project is to reduce conflicts between freight and passenger trains in the corridor, which use the same tracks at the Belt Junction. Currently, passenger trains are prioritized, freight trains are curtailed at least twice daily on the corridor, during peak morning and afternoon commuting periods. Rerouting Metra SWS using the P2 bridge will reduce the state of good repair backlog and improve freight flows through Belt Junction, particularly to and from the adjacent NS Landers Intermodal Facility.

The P2 project is also critical to improving passenger rail performance across the Chicago terminal and the Midwest. Chicago's Union Station serves nearly 17 million passengers annually. P2 will greatly improve the reliability of passenger rail service at CUS by allowing Metra to direct 30 weekday trains away from CUS to the LaSalle Street Station. This change strengthens Amtrak's ability to provide reliable service with improved travel times and reduced freight conflicts for intercity rail service across the Midwest.

The P2 project advances the CREATE Program's overarching goals—increasing the efficiency, capacity, safety, and reliability of passenger and freight rail throughout Chicago and the nation. Chicago is the nation's premier freight hub. This investment is not merely an infrastructure upgrade – it is pivotal step toward enhancing supply chain resilience and driving economic growth nationwide.

MPC fully supports this application and looks forward to the successful implementation of the P2 project with your award of **CRISI**.

Sincerely,



Dan Lurie
President & CEO

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Executive Committee

Manny Flores
Board Chair

Meena Beyers
Board Vice Chair

Paul C. Carlisle
Immediate Board Past Chair

Ramiro J. Atristain-Carrión
Board Treasurer

David Williams
Board General Counsel

Julian G. Posada

Elle Ramel

Matthew R. Reilein

Dan Lurie
President & CEO

Board Members

Jessica Andujar-Redman

Christopher B. Burke

Eileen Chin

Polly Eldringhoff

Alejandra Garza

Janet R. González Tudor

Linda Goodman

Christina Hachikian

James E. Mann

Erica Marquez Avitia

David Mook

Daryl Newell

Marisa Novara

Robert G. Reiter, Jr.

Anel Ruiz

Unmi Song

Bruce W. Taylor

Michael A. Thomas

EXECUTIVE ADVISORS

Carol L. Bernick
*Polished Nickel Capital
Management LLC*

John Bucksbaum
Bucksbaum Properties, LLC

Jonathan C. Bunge
*Quinn Emanuel Urquhart &
Sullivan, LLP*

Keating Crown
Sterling Bay

Robert W. Frentzel
CIBC Bank USA

John S. Gates, Jr.
TradeLane Properties, LLC

Nancy S. Gerrie

J. Marshall Peck
InterPark Holdings LLC

Katherine M. Scherer
Deloitte LLP

Scott C. Swanson
PNC Illinois

Stephan B. Tanda
AptarGroup, Inc.