Illinois Department of Transportation

CREATE
KEEPING THE GO IN CHICAGO

ROCK ISLAND CONNECTION PROJECT – P2

CONSOLIDATED RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

SUBMITTED TO:
FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION

SUBMITTED BY:
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FY2025-2026

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Project Title	Rock Island Connection Project – P2
Applicant Name	Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)
Amount of CRISI Funding Requested Under this NOFO	$383,976,978
Total amount of proposed non-Federal cost share	$95,994,245
Amount of non-CRISI Federal funding (if applicable) including pending awards	$0
Total Project Cost	$479,971,223
Source(s) of proposed non-Federal cost share and other Federal funding (provide funding amount by source)	$95,994,245 State—IDOT Cash $28,994,245 Private—Freight Railroads Cash $10,000,000 Local—Metra Cash $30,000,000 Local—Cook County Cash $10,000,000 Local—City of Chicago Cash $2,000,000 Non-Federal—Amtrak Cash $15,000,000
Was a Federal grant application previously submitted for this Project? If yes – please specify the program; funding year; and project title of the previous application. Identify any differences between the applications.	**Yes**; For the FY 2024-2025 National Railroad Partnership Program/Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program (NRP-FSP) Project Title: Rock Island Connection (P2)
City(ies) where the project is located	Chicago
County(ies) where the project is located	Cook
State(s) where the project is located	Illinois
Congressional district(s) where the project is located	IL-001 and IL-007
What percent of funding is spent in a Rural Area?	0%
Amount (if any) of funding request eligible for set-aside funds	$0

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Lifecyle Stage(s) proposed to be funded by this NOFO	☐ Systems Planning ☐ Project Planning ☐ Project Development ☐ Final Design ☐ Right-of-Way Acquisition X Construction ☐ Non-Capital
Current Lifecycle Stage and its anticipated completion date	☐ Systems Planning ☐ Project Planning ☐ Project Development X Final Design X Right-of-Way Acquisition ☐ Construction ☐ Non-Capital Anticipated Date of Completion: 06/2027
Is the project located on real property owned by someone other than the applicant? If yes – list real property owners and the nature of the property interest.	**Yes**; Metra owns the Rock Island Subdivision that serves LaSalle Street Station
Host railroad/infrastructure owner(s) of project assets	Norfolk Southern Railway (NS), Belt Railway Company of Chicago (BRC)
Other impacted railroad(s) (including tenants)	Amtrak
If the applicant is a commuter railroad: list the intercity passenger and/or freight railroad service(s) utilizing the proposed project.	N/A
Has the applicant executed an agreement with the host railroad regarding use of the railroad right-of-way where the project will be located consistent with 49 U.S.C. 22905(c)3 (if applicable)?	**Pending**; The CREATE partners agree to work through this once the project receives funding or construction starts.

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Is the project currently programmed in any medium- or long-range planning document? If yes – specify planning document.	**Yes**; Illinois State Rail Plan, State Freight Plan, Long Range Plan, STIP and Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) TIP
Is the project located on a potential corridor selected for the Corridor Identification and Development Program? If yes– specify the corridor(s).	**Yes**; Amtrak's *Cardinal* Route
Is the project expected to need a waiver under FRA's domestic preference requirements?	No

II. Project Summary

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in partnership with the CREATE Program, seeks CRISI funding to advance the **Rock Island Connection Project – P2** (the 'Project' or 'P2'), a key construction phase of the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project, specifically P2 (see P2 Project Video). The Project addresses **a critical rail chokepoint** at Belt Junction in the Chicago Terminal, where shared infrastructure creates significant operational challenges between freight, intercity passenger trains, and commuter rail, resulting in substantial delays and reduced system reliability.

P2 will construct a grade-separated flyover that safely separates freight and passenger movements, will add nearly 4,200 feet of double track with crossovers, realign Belt Railway Company and Norfolk Southern tracks, and install new switches and signals to improve safety, efficiency, and reliability, and enhance system resiliency. P2 demonstrates that a freight rail project can deliver benefits beyond the rail system itself as the Project also includes family-friendly, community mobility improvements at six viaduct locations, including ADA ramps, lighting, sidewalks, pavement upgrades, sewer improvements, and landscaping that enhance both the rail system and the communities it serves.

A 19th Century Bottleneck

In 2024, the Chicago Tribune described Belt Junction as *"Chicago's most notorious rail bottleneck because, more than a hundred years ago, somebody decided five sets of tracks should merge into two and cross each other's path."*

In a region that handles nearly half of all U.S. intermodal units and one-third of the nation's rail cars, the Project will produce meaningful and measurable benefits. This Project directly benefits 36 passenger and commuter trains and 90 freight trains that use the corridor daily by reducing congestion, improving access to intermodal facilities, and increasing overall rail capacity. **With a benefit-cost ratio of 3.17**, P2 delivers significant improvements in safety, efficiency, and resiliency, while supporting the CREATE Program's mission to leverage strong public and private funding contributions to implement this construction-ready project.

III. Grant Funds, Sources, and Uses of Project Funds

P2 is in the Implementation Stage (Final Design). The Systems Planning Stage—covering the program-wide feasibility study and defining the scope, objectives, and benefits of the 75th St. Corridor Improvement Project (CIP), including P2—was completed in 2007 and updated in 2011. The Development Stage (Project Planning and Development) was concluded with FHWA's approval of the 75th St CIP's FEIS and ROD in 2014 and the preliminary engineering report in 2015. P2 is in final design and right-of way-acquisition which will be completed by June 30, 2027. Pending CRISI or NRP/FSP funding, construction will commence with bid procurement in October 2027, followed by construction starting in April 2028 and largely complete by 2032 with construction closeout in late 2033.

Table 1 details project cost allocations by task name/project component for each major construction activity, derived from Exhibit 2B. 75th St CIP Annual Financial Plan and Exhibit 2C. 75th St CIP Cost and Schedule Risk Assessment.

Table 1 Construction Phase Project Funding Overview (Capital Project)

Lifecycle Stage	Project Component/ Task Name	CRISI Federal (80%)	Applicant Cost Share (20%)	Total (100%)
Construction	Removals/Demolition	$2,760,612	$690,153	$3,450,765
	Civil—Earthwork	$14,114,589	$3,528,647	$17,643,236
	Trackwork	$22,103,410	$5,525,852	$27,629,262
	Signals & Systems	$21,600,000	$5,400,000	$27,000,000
	Structures	$166,668,080	$41,667,020	$208,335,100
	Viaducts	$1,539,612	$384,903	$1,924,515
	Environmental Mitigation	$8,793,700	$2,198,425	$10,992,125
	Miscellaneous & Temporary Facilities	$18,080,000	$4,520,000	$22,600,000
	Utility	$5,600,000	$1,400,000	$7,000,000
	Professional Services	$34,417,934	$8,604,483	$43,022,417
	Unallocated Contingency	$88,299,042	$22,074,761	$110,373,803
	Total	**$383,976,978**	**$95,994,244**	**$479,971,223**

Table 2 presents the annualized, year-of-expenditure budget being requested through this grant application. A detailed schedule and risk assessment are available on the application website.

Table 2 Annualized Construction Budget*

Funding Source	Projected Expenditures (in millions)						
	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	Total
CRISI	$7.68	$92.15	$92.15	$92.15	$92.15	$7.68	$383.98
Non-Federal	$1.92	$23.04	$23.04	$23.04	$23.04	$1.92	$95.99
Total	$9.60	$115.19	$115.19	$115.19	$115.19	$9.60	$479.97

**Year represents Federal Fiscal Year.*

With public sector and private railroad support through the CREATE Program, IDOT requests $383,976,978 or 80% of the total project cost of $479,971,223 to enable Project construction. The remaining 20 percent of funding will be provided by CREATE partners. This funding structure reflects strong institutional commitment and a clear delivery path for a project that is supported by public-private partnership that includes an established multi-agency partnership with experience advancing complex rail improvements in Chicago.

IV. Applicant Eligibility Criteria

Applicant Eligibility

IDOT, as the lead applicant and partner in the CREATE Program, meets the eligibility requirements in 49 U.S.C. 24407(b)(8). IDOT is a unit of state government authorized under 20 ILCS 2705 to carry out programs and policies authorized and funded by the Illinois General Assembly. IDOT's DUNS number is 1336007540000. The application contact is:

- **Jason Osborn** Director, Office of Intermodal Project Implementation**,** Illinois DOT 312-793-2116 (o), Jason.Osborn@illinois.gov

V. Project Eligibility Criteria

Confirmation of Eligibility

As outlined under Section 3(d), P2 is eligible for CRISI funding as it meets the definitions under 3(d)iii, 3(d)iv, 3(d)vi, and 3(d)vii.

Table 3 P2 is Eligible Under Several CRISI Categories

Project Eligibility	Project/Project Element
3(d)iii. A capital project identified by the Secretary as being necessary to address congestion or safety challenges affecting rail service.	P2 reduces congestion and increases safety at Belt Junction, Chicago's most congested rail chokepoint, where shared infrastructure creates significant conflicts between freight, intercity passenger trains and commuter rail. By grade-separating freight and passenger rail traffic, P2 will result in substantial efficiency gains, including added system capacity, reduced passenger and freight delay, and improved safety via upgraded infrastructure and fewer conflict points.
3(d)iv. A capital project identified by the Secretary as being necessary to reduce congestion and facilitate ridership growth in intercity passenger rail	The completion of P2 enables Amtrak and Metra to increase on-time performance and encourage new ridership by ensuring that the 100,000 annual Amtrak *Cardinal* riders and 1.1 million annual Metra *Southwest Service (SWS)* riders who traverse this corridor experience reliable and efficient travel,

transportation along heavily traveled rail corridors.	making rail transportation a more attractive and competitive option.
3(d)vi. A rail line relocation or improvement project.	P2 constructs a grade-separated flyover to separate freight and passenger movements and adds nearly 4,200 feet of double track with crossovers to realign rail traffic.
3(d)vii. A capital project to improve short-line or regional railroad infrastructure.	P2 upgrades significant portions of the nation's largest switching terminal and Class III railroad, Belt Railway Company (BRC) tracks, by installing new switches and signals to improve network performance.

Benefits to Intercity Passenger Rail Transportation and Freight Transportation

The Amtrak *Cardinal* route, which traverses the Project area, is included in the FRA's Corridor ID (CID) Program (see Exhibit 1a). The intercity route carries 98,583 riders annually, providing essential passenger rail service between New York Penn Station and Chicago Union Station. The *Cardinal* is **the only intercity rail option** for passengers from Indianapolis, Cincinnati, and Charleston, West Virginia to directly connect with major metropolitan areas such as Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, New York, and Chicago—supporting mode choice, multimodal connectivity and economic development across 12 states.

Since Amtrak shares tracks with 30 Metra weekday *SouthWest Service (SWS)* revenue trains and two daily freight trains, with additional unscheduled movements, the *Cardinal* is constrained and often subject to delay—an estimated 244 hours in 2023 *(see Table 10 in the Benefit-Cost Analysis Technical Memo)*. Completion of this Project will reroute Metra's 30 weekday *SWS* trains to the flyover to allow for more uninterrupted and efficient movement of Amtrak, Metra, and Class I trains on the Metra-owned track north of project (see **Figure 3** and **Figure 7**).

As well, P2 enables Amtrak and its state sponsors to grow ridership by converting the *Cardinal* from 3 weekly trains to daily service as planned in the CID. Within the 2025 *Daily Long-Distance Service Study*, Amtrak estimates that enhancing the *Cardinal* to daily service, could expand rail to approximately 110,000 new annual riders, and generate an additional $11 million in operating revenue. This Project also has immense freight benefits. Foremost, the current configuration of the project location experiences up to six hours of daily freight delay due to passenger train priority. P2 will increase fluidity and reduce delay by decongesting shared track (i.e. separating existing Metra *SWS* service to a dedicated line and increasing capacity for freight and Amtrak).

VI. Detailed Project Description

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), as lead applicant and a public partner in the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE)

Program—the nation's largest public-private rail partnership—seeks CRISI funding to advance the **Rock Island Connection Project – P2**. A part of the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (CIP), P2 is a construction-ready project now in **Final Design.** P2 is the next construction phase of the CIP and is well-positioned for implementation to allow the corridor to function at its full operational capacity (see **Figure 1**). Completion of P2 will support the realization of the corridor's full operational benefits. The P2 Project Video provides a detailed overview of the CREATE Program, the 75th St. CIP, and highlights P2's integral function in the Chicago Terminal.

Figure 1 Location of P2 in the 75th Street Corridor CIP

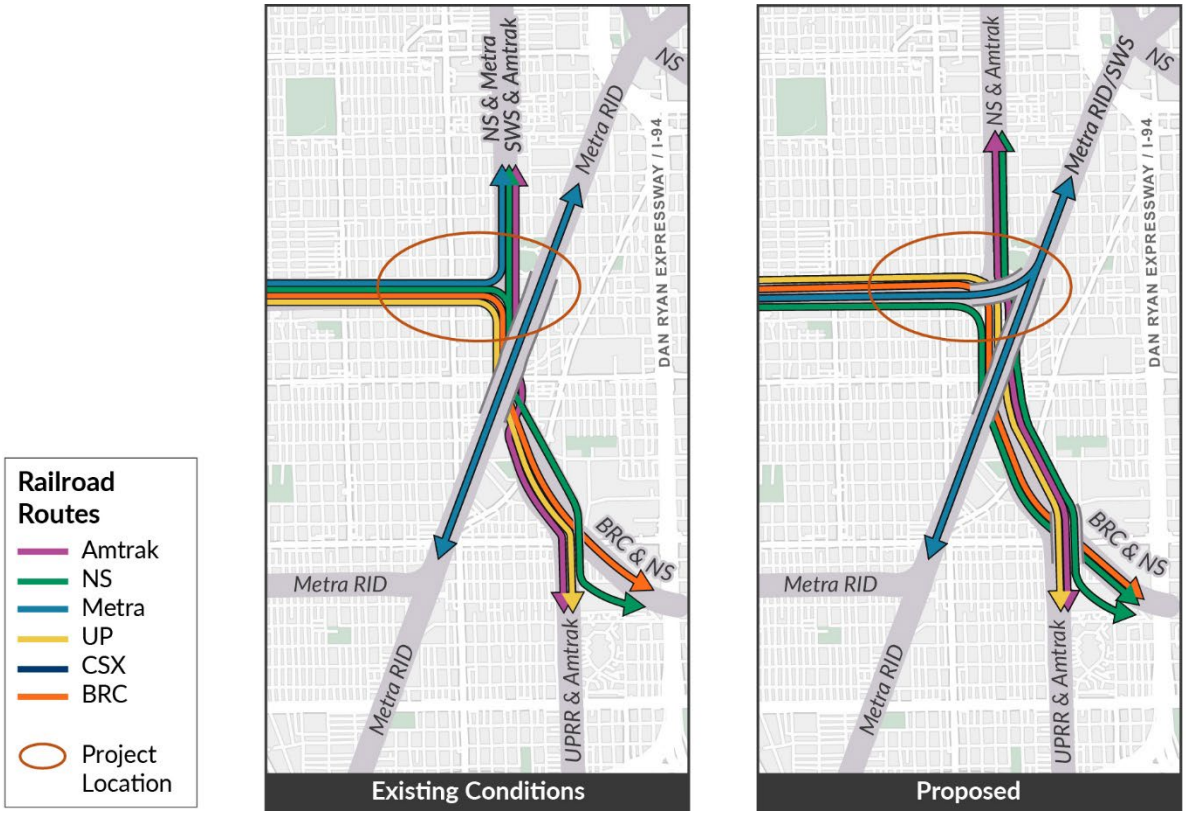
Project Description—Construction Lifecycle Phase

In the **construction life cycle phase**, P2 is a landmark effort that will improve safety by constructing a grade-separated flyover that will separate freight and passenger movements. P2 will construct nearly 4,200 feet of double track along with four crossovers, realign BRC and NS tracks, and install new switches, signals and bungalows at seven locations—enhancing overall network performance within one of the nation's busiest rail hubs. In addition, **community mobility improvements** will be installed at six viaduct locations (see **Figure 2**) including ADA ramps, LED lighting fixtures, sidewalk and pedestrian enhancements, pavement replacements, sewer upgrades and landscaping. This Project ensures that investments enhance both the rail systems and the communities it serves.

Figure 2 Deteriorating Viaduct at W. 81st St. and Wallace St.

Figure 3 details the existing and proposed conditions of the Project. **Figure 7**, displays the location and geographic context of the **Rock Island Connection Project – P2** in greater detail.

Figure 3 Existing Operations and Proposed Improvements



Project Challenges

P2 addresses one of the most critical rail chokepoints in the Chicago Terminal, where freight, intercity passenger, and commuter trains operate on shared, antiquated infrastructure. The current configuration creates significant operational conflicts that result in recurring delays and reduced system reliability, which particularly affect freight access to major intermodal facilities such as NS' Landers Yard. These constraints limit network efficiency, restrict passenger service improvements, and create cascading impacts across the national rail system.

Chicago is central to the national freight network-when reliability falters, costs rise for businesses and are ultimately passed on to American families.

Current and Proposed Railroad Operations

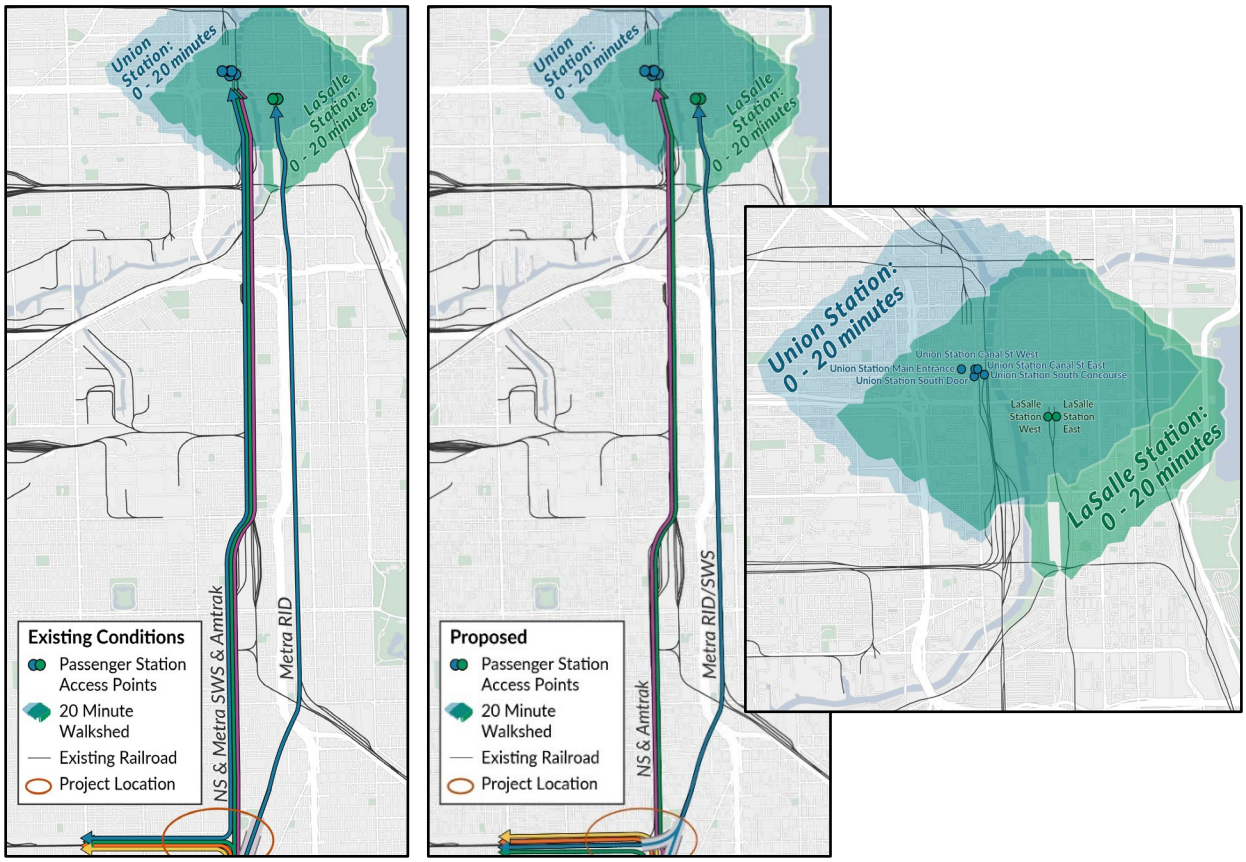
The project corridor currently supports intensive mixed-use rail operations, including:

- **90 daily freight trains** operated by multiple Class I railroads, including NS, UP, CSX, and BRC;
- **6 weekly Amtrak *Cardinal* trains**, serving approximately 98,583 annual riders; and,
- 30 weekday **Metra *SouthWest Service (SWS)*** commuter trains, serving over 1.1 million annual riders.

Under existing conditions, these services compete for shared track capacity, leading to congestion and delays. Upon completion, the P2 flyover will grade separate freight and passenger movements, enabling more efficient and reliable operations. As shown in **Figure 4**, the Project will also reroute 30 weekday Metra *SWS* trains from Chicago Union Station (CUS) to LaSalle Street Station (which currently accommodates Metra's *Rock Island District (RID)*. This will reduce congestion on critical passenger rail approaches to CUS, improving operational fluidity, and it will also reinforce efficient, multimodal rail access (commuter and intercity) to downtown Chicago. By rerouting *SWS* to the *RID* line, Metra service to LaSalle Steet Station will be faster and more reliable, while Amtrak and NS service to CUS will be less congested and efficient.

Additionally, as shown below, the operational changes proposed under P2 do not reduce access to both CUS and LaSalle. Rail users will continue to be served by a walkshed of more than one square mile, preserving multimodal connectivity (walking, bike, transit, passenger and commuter rail), traveler choice and access to key employment and activity centers within downtown Chicago.

Figure 4 P2 Reinforces Efficient Access to Downtown Chicago via Passenger Rail



Expected Project Outcomes and Benefits

P2 addresses critical transportation needs by resolving conflicts, which will benefit users and operators of **the 36 passenger, commuter, and 90 freight trains that travel this corridor daily**. The Project alleviates pressure on critical passenger rail corridors and stations, allowing for passenger trains to bypass congested freight corridors, mitigating recurring delays and congestion that limit Amtrak's service frequency and reliability. The Project also intends to improve freight access to major intermodal facilities while reducing delays for freight trains that share track with several Class I railroads, Amtrak, and Metra. By separating conflicting train movements at Belt Junction, P2 will address a critical operational bottleneck in the nation's busiest rail hub to capitalize on reliability improvements of both freight and passenger service.

P2 also delivers substantial public and economic benefits. CUS, Amtrak's fourth-busiest station and a major Midwest passenger gateway, connects 17 intercity routes and serves nearly 17 million passengers each year. P2 will reroute 30 weekday Metra *SWS* trains from CUS to LaSalle Street Station, reducing pressure on shared rail approaches and minimizing conflicts with freight operations. These improvements enhance safety and reliability for intercity and commuter passenger rail users while strengthening access to nationally significant freight facilities and supply chains.

P2 will deliver measurable improvements in safety, efficiency, and network resiliency, as well as, strengthen regional rail mobility and national freight rail movements, as demonstrated in a strong benefit-cost ratio (BCR) of 3.17—benefits outweighing the costs by 3.17:1.

In summary, key outcomes include:

- **Reduced delays and congestion** through separation of conflicting train movements;
- Improved reliability and service frequency for Amtrak and Metra operations;
- Enhanced freight mobility and access to major intermodal facilities;
- Improved state of good repair and infrastructure performance in a high-volume rail corridor; and
- Enhancing safety and accessibility for surrounding communities, achieved by targeted viaduct and pedestrian improvements.

In a region that handles nearly half of all U.S. intermodal units and one-third of the nation's rail cars, the Project will produce meaningful and measurable benefits.

In a region that handles nearly half of all U.S. intermodal units and one-third of the nation's rail cars, the Project will produce meaningful and measurable benefits (see BCA Narrative).

Users and Beneficiaries

P2 aligns closely with CRISI's focus on improving railroad safety, efficiency, reliability, and resiliency for users through targeted infrastructure investment. The corridor currently carries **90 daily freight trains**, six weekly Amtrak *Cardinal* trains **serving 98,583 annual riders,** and 30 weekday Metra *SouthWest Service (SWS)* revenue trains **serving 1,114,000 annual riders**. Because these services share antiquated and convoluted infrastructure, the passenger train prioritization and operating conflicts create delays of up to six hours per day, particularly for freight access to Norfolk Southern's Landers Intermodal Facility, which handled 352,775 lifts in 2024.

Primary beneficiaries include:

- **Freight operators** (including BRC, NS, and other Class I railroads) utilizing the Chicago Terminal;
- **Intercity passenger rail users**, particularly including Amtrak *Cardinal* service riders and Amtrak passengers utilizing Chicago Union Station;
- **Commuter rail users** on Metra's *SouthWest* Service; and
- **Adjacent communities** benefiting from safety and accessibility improvements, and higher-quality infrastructure that optimize how residents safely navigate their neighborhoods.

More broadly, the Project supports national freight movement by improving performance within the Chicago region—one of the most critical freight hubs in the United States. The region handles approximately one-quarter of all U.S. freight trains each day and is served

by six Class I railroads, multiple regional carriers, and extensive Amtrak and Metra operations, making it essential to the efficiency and reliability of the national supply chain.

A. Statement of Work

Key Objectives, Milestones and Deliverables

Key objectives of the Project are to construct the P2 Flyover, complete track work reconfiguration, and improve associated rail, signal, and community infrastructure improvements to progress safety, eliminate passenger and freight conflicts, and foster faster and more reliable operations. Milestones and deliverables are displayed in **Figure 6 below, Page 12**.

Project Components and Tasks for Construction Phase

P2 prepares the region's infrastructure for anticipated growth in passenger and freight movements. AAR's Rail Traffic Controller (RTC) model, which simulates train performance in the Chicago Terminal with and without the construction of P2, indicates that total annual train miles in the Terminal are expected to increase by 1.25 million between 2025 and 2050 (see Exhibit 3B. Train Growth Results and Calculations).

P2 is a component of the greater 75th St. CIP (see **Figure 1** above). P2's scope was developed to have independent utility as a standalone project, **as well as enable future projects that depend on its construction**. The Project includes the following components:

- **Structures Work-Flyover:** The proposed P2 flyover structure begins at the west along the Metra SWS tracks, between Peoria and Halsted Streets, rising to its maximum height over the BRC tracks near Union Ave. From there, it descends along a curve to the northeast, where it connects to the existing Metra RID tracks, near Hamilton Park and 74th St. **Figure 5** shows the details of the P2 flyover.
- **Track Work:** East of Belt Junction, tracks will be reconfigured to six lines, grouped into three alignments. The first alignment group includes three BRC tracks (the northernmost tracks) established in Federally funded EW2A (see EW2A in **Figure 1**), while the second alignment includes two new Metra tracks relocated to the south, and the third alignment is the new NS Landers Main as the southernmost track. The two Metra tracks (Alignment 2) rise from an existing grade of 0.35% to a near 2% grade west of the Peoria St. Bridge, crossing over the three BRC tracks near the existing Union Ave. Bridge. The three BRC tracks (Alignment 1) remain at their current grade, as they curve to the southeast using an approximately 5-degree 45-minute curve toward 79th Street to the south. The two new Metra tracks connect to Metra's *Rock Island District (RID)* tracks using #20 turnouts near 75th St. and S. Parnell Ave. and enable continuation to LaSalle Street Station. In total, nearly 4,200 feet of double track will be constructed, along with four #20 crossovers. A temporary shoofly will be constructed for the bridge improvements at 73rd and 74th St. To support P2 improvements including the realignment of BRC tracks and the NS Landers Main, NS will implement track enhancements along the 75th St. east-west corridor, spanning Western Ave. and Union Ave., and the north-south corridor between 74th St. and 78th St. This includes the construction of

approximately 8,200 feet of new track. Furthermore, approximately 19,600 feet of track will be shifted with 33% timber crosstie renewal and ballast renewal. Four new power operated turnouts and five new power crossovers will facilitate a fully automated, dispatcher-controlled route.

- **Signals Work:** New switches, signals, and bungalows will be added at seven distinct locations on the existing and newly constructed segments along the corridor.
- **Community Mobility Improvements:** The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) will implement various street improvements at six viaduct locations—73rd St., 74th St. east of Normal Ave., Normal Ave. north of 75th St., 75th St. at Normal, Halsted St., and Peoria St.—along the corridor and within the surrounding neighborhoods up to one-quarter (1/4) mile from the railroad work. Improvements including ADA ramps, LED lighting fixtures, sidewalk and pedestrian enhancements, pavement replacement, sewer upgrades, and landscaping will improve safety and useability for pedestrians, motorists, commercial vehicles and families walking and driving below the railroad bridges. At the 73rd St. viaduct, upgrades will also improve the pedestrian tunnel under the Metra *RID* to provide enhanced access to Hamilton Park from the east.

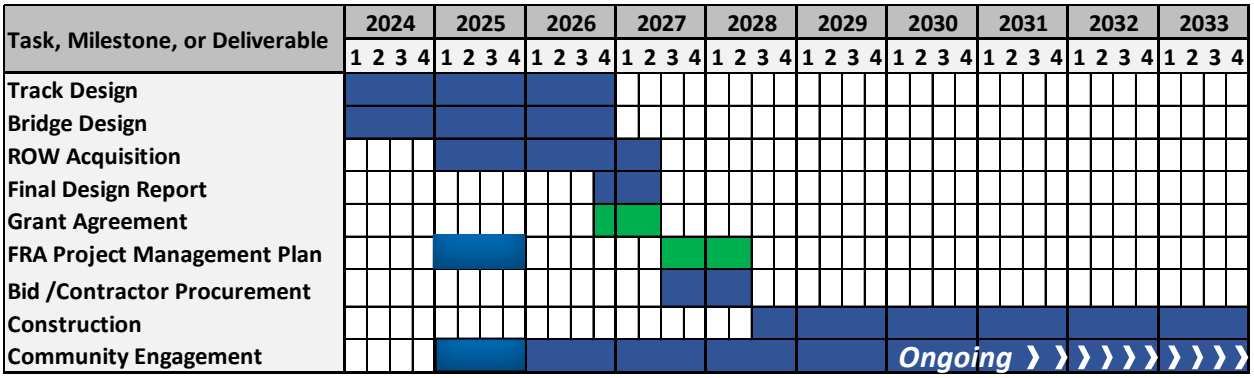
Figure 5 Future P2 Flyover Visualization

Proposed Schedule

FRA's Systems Planning Stage for P2 was completed through the CREATE Program's Final Feasibility Plan, a feasibility study defining the costs, impacts, and development activities for all 70 Program projects, including P2, and serves as a Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Final Feasibility Plan was completed in 2007, and last modified in 2011. Following the Final Feasibility Plan, CREATE Projects advance through IDOT's three project phases: Phase I Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Studies, Phase II Final Engineering, and Phase III Construction. IDOT's Phase I encompasses all elements of FRA's Lifecycle Development Stage—Project Planning and Development—which were completed for P2 with the approval of the 75th St CIP Final EIS (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) in 2014, followed by preliminary design approval in 2015. Because more than eight years have passed since FHWA approved the 2017 EIS reevaluation due to the overall 75th St CIP cost and phasing constraints, certain EIS documents—such as the EIS technical memorandum and related studies—will be reevaluated and updated.

IDOT's Phases II and III correspond to FRA's Implementation Stage, covering Final Design and Construction. P2 final design is fully funded and began in 2020. Phase II includes track and bridge design as well as land acquisition needs and real property interests (ROW, fee, and easements). Final design is currently underway and will be completed by June 2027 as shown in Figure 6. Land acquisition needs and real property interests to be acquired from private property owners have been identified and will also be completed by June 2027. P2's detailed project schedule and narrative are available on the application website. Construction will commence with bid procurement in October 2027, followed by construction starting in April 2028 and largely complete by 2032 with construction close out in late 2033. Community engagement has been occurring and will continue throughout the Project.

Figure 6 Project Schedule: Milestones and Deliverables



B. Environmental Information

The Project's environmental review process is complete. FHWA approved the 75th St CIP's FEIS and ROD on September 19th 2014, providing a Federal environmental clearance for P3, GS19, EW2, and P2 as environmentally linked projects. In addition to P2's environmental commitments, the project will obtain environmental permits detailed in **Section 12.1 Environmental Compliance Documentation** to ensure environmental

and public health protection. An EIS reevaluation in 2017 confirmed that the 75th St CIP FEIS and ROD findings remained accurate and valid. Because more than eight years have passed since FHWA approved the 2017 EIS reevaluation due to the overall 75th St CIP cost and phasing constraints, certain EIS documents—such as the EIS technical memorandum and related studies—will be reevaluated and updated. These documents will be updated for FHWA's approval before the final design report is completed and construction begins. Critical project phase milestones following 2017 include:

- **2018:** FY2017-2018 INFRA Agreement, funded 75th St CIP final design and P3 and GS19 construction
- **2020:** 75th St CIP—Phase II/III Stakeholder Involvement Plan; Project P2 and EW2 begins final design
- **2022:** Projects P3 began construction
- **2024:** EW2 Segment A awarded construction funding
- **2025:** Project P3 construction operationally and substantially complete

C. Grade Crossing Information

No USDOT-listed grade crossings will be eliminated by the P2 project but a rail-to-rail at-grade crossing will be eliminated, reducing train-to-train conflict and delay. The project will also reroute 30 weekday Metra SWS trains away from the at-grade highway-rail crossing at South Lumber Street (Crossing ID: 523004X). Metra SWS traffic accounts for more than 95% of train movements at this location; therefore, redirecting this traffic to a fully grade-separated corridor will provide substantial operational and safety benefits at the Lumber Street crossing, which carries roughly 1,000 daily motor vehicles.

D. Positive Train Control Information

The Project also includes signal work at seven distinct locations on the existing and newly constructed segments along the corridor. All railroads in the corridor are currently compliant with Positive Train Control (PTC) standards and will remain so following the proposed signal improvements. Improvements will aim to enhance interoperability among railroads, allowing for more efficient train movements throughout the corridor. Reconfigured track segments and updates to the PTC and Centralized Train Control (CTC) technology will continue to contribute to the prevention of derailments due to excessive speeds, unauthorized train movements within work zones, and the movement of trains through improperly aligned switches.

VII. Project Location

As displayed in **Figure 7**, the **Rock Island Connection Project – P2** is located within the Chicago IL-IN 2020 Census Designated Urban Area. The Project spans the communities of Auburn Gresham, Englewood, and Greater Grand Crossing, in Chicago's South Side. It is within Illinois **US Congressional Districts 1 and 7**.

Project coordinates are 41.757919, -87.648866 degrees at the western limits; 41.763630, -87.634453 degrees at the northeastern limits; and 41.754914, -87.637778

degrees at the southeastern limits. The flyover structure is designed for Cooper E-80 loading and meets or exceeds the minimum vertical clearance of 23'-0" over railroads and 14'-9" over roadways. The overall flyover structure length, including retaining walls, is around 4,616 feet. Superstructures include: (1) steel deck plate girder spans with reinforced concrete decks over Peoria St. and Halsted St.; (2) a curved flyover structure with transverse steel floor beams and a reinforced concrete deck over the BRC tracks; (3) a steel thru plate girder span over the NS tracks; and (4) steel deck plate girder spans with reinforced concrete deck at Normal Ave. Between the steel spans are Polyester Polymer Concrete (PPC) beam spans of varying length, supported by reinforced concrete piers and abutments, built on deep foundations. Each structure end consists of cast-in-place concrete walls, built on deep foundations at the east end. In addition, NS will install about 3,170 feet of new retaining walls from Aberdeen St to the east of Union Ave to support both the new track and the P2 flyover's western approach spans, along with about 1,720 feet of noise barriers. The abutments at Peoria and Halsted Streets will extend to the south by about 25 feet with a new superstructure to accommodate the installation of the NS Landers Main.

Figure 7 Project Increases Passenger and Freight Rail Operational Efficiency

VIII. Evaluation and Selection Criteria

i. Project Readiness

P2 is currently in final engineering, which began in 2020 and will be completed by June 2027. If selected for CRISI funding, the grant would likely be executed in 2027, with bid

procurement beginning in October 2027, and construction work anticipated to occur from 2028 to 2033. Train movements will be maintained through the corridor during construction. In accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, land acquisition needs and required real property interests (including right-of-way, fee, and easements) to be acquired from private property owners have been identified and acquisition will be completed by June 2027. All land acquisition and relocation activities will comply with applicable federal requirements, with funding for these activities provided through separate sources. This CRISI grant will not be utilized for any land acquisition or relocation services. The State Rail Agreement (Exhibit 2E) that covers all land acquisition and ROW needs has been executed. Acquisition of identified real estate interests and relocation, if any, will be completed by June 2027. Planning, conceptual design and preliminary engineering are complete. The FEIS, and ROD were approved in 2014. Because more than eight years have passed since FHWA approved the 2017 EIS reevaluation due to the overall 75th St CIP cost and phasing constraints, certain EIS documents—such as the EIS technical memorandum and related studies—will be reevaluated and updated.

NEPA Status

The Project's environmental review process is complete. FHWA approved the 75th St CIP's FEIS and ROD on September 19th 2014, providing a federal environmental clearance for P3, GS19, EW2, and P2 as environmentally linked projects. In addition to P2's environmental commitments, the project will obtain environmental permits detailed in **Section 12.1 Environmental Compliance Documentation** to ensure environmental and public health protection. An EIS reevaluation in 2017 confirmed that the 75th St CIP FEIS and ROD findings remained accurate and valid. Because more than eight years have passed since FHWA approved the 2017 EIS reevaluation due to the overall 75th St CIP cost and phasing constraints, certain EIS documents—such as the EIS technical memorandum and related studies—will be reevaluated and updated. These documents will be updated for FHWA's approval before the final design report is completed and construction begins. Critical project phase milestones following 2017 include:

- **2018:** FY2017-2018 INFRA Agreement, funded 75th St CIP final design and P3 and GS19 construction
- **2020:** 75th St CIP—Phase II/III Stakeholder Involvement Plan; Project P2 and EW2 begins final design
- **2022:** Projects P3 and GS19 begin construction
- **2024:** EW2 Segment A is awarded construction funding
- **2025:** Project P3 construction operationally and substantially complete

Lifecycle Stage

P2 is in the Implementation Stage (Final Design). The Systems Planning Stage—covering the program-wide feasibility study and defining the scope, objectives, and benefits of the 75th St CIP (including P2)—was completed in 2007 and modified in 2011. The Development Stage (Project Planning and Development) was concluded with FHWA's

approval of the 75th St CIP's (FEIS) and (ROD) in 2014 and the preliminary engineering report in 2015. Final design for P2 began in 2020 and will be completed by June 2027. Pending CRISI funding, construction will begin with bid procurement in October 2027, followed by construction starting in April 2028 and ending in late 2033.

Necessary Agreements with Infrastructure Owners and Project Partners

IDOT will perform all tasks required for the Project through a coordinated process that will involve affected railroad owners, operators, and funding partners, including:

- **IDOT**—Project sponsor, project oversight, permitting coordination, asset owner
- **City of Chicago**—Asset owner, project oversight, permitting coordination
- **Cook County**—Project oversight, permitting coordination
- **Metra**—Asset owner, design and construction oversight
- **Norfolk Southern (NS)**—Asset owner, design and construction oversight
- **Association of American Railroads (AAR)**—Program support, partner coordination
- **The Belt Railway Company of Chicago (BRC)**—Asset owner, design and construction oversight
- **Union Pacific (UP)**—Asset owner to adjacent Project improvements
- **Amtrak—**Project oversight
- **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)**—Project oversight on NEPA documentation
- **Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)—**Grant administrator

The CREATE Program partners regularly coordinate with FHWA and FRA on the 75th St CIP, including P2, and have ensured its inclusion in relevant state and local plans such as CMAP's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). CREATE is updating the 75th St CIP's Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP) to guide stakeholder outreach. To date, P2 has secured over 50 support letters from elected officials, agencies, organizations, and community stakeholders, with additional letters posted on the application website after submission.

Status & Timeline of Agreements

CREATE projects are governed by a Joint Statement of Understanding (JSOU), executed in 2003 and amended in 2018 (Exhibit 2G). The CREATE Program Partnerships and Management practices (Exhibit 2F) ensure construction activities do not hinder the Terminal's capacity and access. Metra, NS, and BRC will oversee the design and construction of the respective passenger and freight rail infrastructure for the P2 project, while IDOT and the City of Chicago will provide project oversight and permitting coordination. Interagency coordination around land acquisition needs and real property interests are also captured in Exhibit 2E.

Financial Readiness

Non-federal matching funds are committed and secured for 20% of total construction cost from IDOT, Metra, Cook County, the City of Chicago, Amtrak, and the Freight Railroads in the amount of $95,994,245 for the P2 construction. The non-federal funding commitment letter is available on the application website.

ii. Technical Merit

Scope of Work

The proposed tasks and subtasks are appropriate and follow CREATE best practices for projects of similar size and scope. CREATE's rigorous design and review process ensures compliance with all Federal, state, and local requirements and supports responsible, high-quality project delivery. This process confirms that the proposed budget and schedule are appropriate for achieving the project's objectives and outcomes. As discussed in under **NEPA Status,** P2's preliminary design is approved and final design is nearing completion.

Qualifications and Experience of Key Personnel

CREATE partners have extensive experience delivering projects of similar scope, having administered 16 Federal grants totaling $1.05 billion over the last 20 years. Each project is managed by a sponsor overseeing procurement, engineering, and construction activities. For P2, IDOT serves as the sponsor, overseeing financial management, partner coordination, and environmental review. Metra, NS, and BRC will oversee the design and construction of their respective infrastructure, with partner railroads providing review and concurrence. The Chicago Transportation Coordination Office (CTCO) will oversee rail operations through the corridor during construction, while IDOT, Cook County and the City of Chicago provide project oversight and permitting coordination. The personnel assigned to P2 have a strong track record of successfully delivering CREATE projects:

Amtrak: ***Joe Shacter (Director, Program Management).*** Mr. Shacter holds over 15 years of leadership experience at Amtrak and IDOT and will assist with agency coordination.

Association of American Railroads: ***Bill Thompson (Chief Engineer), Rebecca Wingate (CREATE Program Manager).*** Mr. Thompson brings over 40 years of freight rail operations, design, construction, and research experience and has been a CREATE partner since 2005. Ms. Wingate is a civil engineer with 18 years of railroad engineering, construction, and transportation planning experience. Both will support IDOT, as project sponsor, and Metra.

Belt Railway Company of Chicago (Design and Construction): ***Ed DeVries (General Counsel), Thomas Lyons (Asst. Chief Engineer).*** Mr. DeVries joined the BRC in 2025 after 10 years practicing railroad law, and Mr. Lyons joined in 2024 after 8 years with Norfolk Southern. Both will provide review support.

City of Chicago: ***Ryan Richter (Rail Coordinating Planner).*** Mr. Richter has been a transportation planner for 15 years, including 6 years of railroad experience at Metra. He will provide oversight and permitting support.

Cook County: ***Jesse Elam (Dir. of Strategic Planning & Policy), Tara Orbon (Asst. Superintendent), Jennifer Killen (Superintendent).*** Mr. Elam is a planner with 19 years of experience at Cook County and CMAP. Ms. Orbon is a transportation engineer with 26 years of experience, including 9 years of leadership at Cook County. Ms. Killen is also a transportation engineer with 26 years of experience, including nearly 5 years as Cook County superintendent. All will assist with oversight and agency coordination.

IDOT (Project Sponsor): ***Joanne Fehn (Freight Rail Bureau Chief), Carrie Cooper (Deputy Dir., Office of Intermodal Project Implementation [OIPI]), Jason Osborn (Dir., OIPI).*** Ms. Fehn has over 30 years of legal, corporate, and governmental experience in the public and private sectors. Her public service includes leading and managing cases, projects, and successful teams at the Illinois Tollway, Office of the Illinois Attorney General, and IDOT. As IDOT's Bureau Chief of Freight Rail Management, Ms. Fehn oversees the CREATE program. Ms. Cooper has more than 30 years of transportation experience across roadway, transit, and rail in both the public and private sectors. Mr. Osborn brings 25 years of transportation and government administration experience with IDOT and Metra. Together, they will oversee project management, grant administration, procurement, and coordination.

Infrastructure Engineering, Inc. / RINA (IDOT Program Management Consultant): ***Samuel Tuck III (Project Manager)***. Prior to joining Infrastructure Engineering, Mr. Tuck served as the CREATE Project Manager on behalf of IDOT, during his ten years as IDOT Freight Rail Bureau Chief.

Metra (Design and Construction): ***David Kralik (Director, Planning & Programming), Paul Bobby (Operations Engineer).*** Mr. Kralik has 24 years of experience at Metra, where he oversees transportation planning. He will provide agency coordination and oversight. Mr. Bobby, an engineer with 25 years of railroad engineering experience and 5 years as Metra PMO's Deputy Program Manager for Implementation, will oversee final design and construction.

Norfolk Southern (Design and Construction): ***Jacob Watson (Planning Engineer), Herbert Smith (Regional VP, Government Affairs).*** Mr. Watson brings 13 years of railroad engineering experience at NS and will provide oversight of project implementation. Mr. Smith brings 18 years of government relations experience at NS and will assist with agency coordination and public engagement.

Union Pacific: ***Katie Novak (General Director – Interline Operations).*** Ms. Novak holds 19 years of public affairs and railroad operations experience at UP. She will assist with coordination.

WSP (IDOT Corridor Management Consultant): ***Chris Ferguson (Project Manager).*** A supervising signal engineer with 21 years of experience in private consulting and at NS, Mr. Ferguson will assist IDOT with project management, coordination, and railroad oversight.

Private Sector Participation

P2 demonstrates strong private sector collaboration. CREATE is the nation's largest rail public-private partnership and it plays a critical role in coordinating major rail investments

across the Chicago region. Through this established framework, CREATE aligns railroads, public agencies, and other stakeholders to advance complex, multi-party projects in one of the country's most vital freight hubs. This coordination significantly reduces implementation risk—particularly the challenges that can arise from misalignment between multiple stakeholders—and strengthens the project's technical readiness. It also underscores robust private sector participation, not only through financial contributions but through sustained engagement, collaboration, and shared commitment to project delivery. For P2, private railroads have committed $10 million toward construction, The completion of P2 will leverage their ongoing Terminal maintenance and state of good repair investments, totaling over $575 million. Private railroads have been active partners since the development of the CREATE Program's Final Feasibility Plan, the 75th St CIP Phase I Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Studies, and throughout P2's ongoing final design.

Legal, Financial, and Technical Capacity

IDOT, as project sponsor and lead applicant, has the legal, financial, and technical capacity to oversee P2's delivery. P2 funding and implementation will be supported by the CREATE partners described under Qualifications and Experience of Key Personnel, and IDOT will coordinate closely with affected railroads and funding partners in its role as grant administrator. Each CREATE partner has extensive experience delivering complex transportation infrastructure projects. After P2 is completed, Metra, NS and BRC will operate and maintain their respective facilities and equipment.

Innovation

P2 incorporates innovative and effective technology, approaches to project delivery, and funding and financing solutions. While the Project uses proven industry systems—such as contemporary bridge design, centralized traffic control, and updated PTC-capable signals (on passenger routes)—these elements will significantly modernize the corridor. P2 also strengthens asset and operational protection through an innovative cybersecurity framework overseen by AAR and the participating railroads via the CREATE Rail Information Security Committee (RISC). To deliver the project with minimal impact to operations, the procurement process will require bidders to propose strategies that maximize construction efficiency and minimize impacts on rail traffic and on motorized and non-motorized users under the viaducts.

Consistency with Planning Guidance & Documents

This Project requires local approvals through CMAP's TIP and is included in the federal fiscal year 2023-2028 TIP under ID 01-07-0001. TIP projects align with CMAP's ON TO 2050 Comprehensive Regional Plan, where it is emphasized that "the CREATE Program has greatly improved rail movement in the region and nationwide, [but that] the effort requires continued investment with a focus on public benefits." The Plan also highlights the 75th St. CIP as the "largest, most complex, and most significant remaining component of the CREATE program," making it a regionally and nationally significant infrastructure investment. The CMAP TIP is included in the Illinois Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) (Exhibit 2I). The CREATE Program is featured prominently in the current versions of the Illinois State Rail Plan, the State Freight Plan, and the Long

Range Transportation Plan. As shown above, the Project is included in all required metropolitan and State planning documents. See TIP and STIP (Exhibit 2I).

iii. Project Benefits

System and Service Performance

Infrastructure and Operational Improvements Drive Performance

As part of the CREATE Program's largest endeavor, 75th St. CIP, P2 delivers substantial performance improvements by separating passenger and freight movements via a grade-separated flyover **resulting in a 3.4% reduction in delay for the entire Chicago rail terminal by 2048** (See BCA Narrative, pg. 24) The project will add 4,200 feet of double track with crossovers, realign switching (BRC) and Class I (NS) tracks, and install new switches and signals. Together, these improvements will strengthen this critical rail junction by eliminating operational conflicts, modernizing infrastructure, and simplifying historically complex configurations, resulting in improved on-time performance, which contributes to rail passenger and rail time savings, and increased network capacity for Amtrak, Class I, and Metra commuter rail services.

System and Service Performance Benefit-Cost Results

P2 will generate:

- **$91.3M** in passenger travel time savings due to operational efficiency.
- **$4.3M** in avoided delay benefits for passenger and freight operators.

P2 Enables Rail Growth and Cost Efficiency

Under existing conditions, these services compete for shared track capacity, leading to constrained growth, bottlenecks, and delays. Upon completion, P2 will separate freight and passenger movements, enabling more service and more freight throughput. Beyond the flyover, P2 will also reroute 30 weekday Metra *SWS* trains from CUS to LaSalle Street Station, reducing traffic on critical passenger rail approaches that result in on-time performance issues. Building dedicated rail connections to Chicago's downtown reduces overall corridor congestion while freeing up platform capacity at CUS and optimizing the use of LaSalle Street Station. This enables both freight and passenger rail providers to accommodate growing demand for more service. For freight, this allows providers to continue meeting growing demand without the risk of over-saturation and capacity constraints that would occur in the absence of P2. For passenger rail, these benefits would translate into increased service frequency. For example, within Amtrak's *Daily Long-Distance Service Study*, they highlight the intent to convert the *Cardinal* to daily service as planned in CID. Amtrak estimates that daily service could expand the *Cardinal* to approximately 110,000 new annual riders, and generate an additional $11 million in operating revenue. This added capacity supports future expansion of Amtrak intercity services, reinforcing the growth potential of the national rail network. As well, by reducing delay and idle time, P2 lowers fuel consumption and operating costs for both passenger and freight operators, improving overall cost efficiency.

Safety, Competitiveness, Reliability, Trip or Transit Time, and Resilience

P2 Flyover Simplifies Operations and Reduces Operational Risk

The proposed flyover structure is the safest option, both operationally and physically, for this complex, multi-carrier railroad junction. A grade-separated flyover provides significant safety benefits as it removes conflict points between different train movements and reduces the need for trains to cross one another's path, pass, or wait. By physically separating train movements, the Project reduces operational risk of side collisions and reduces operational complexity by allowing each service to operate independently without safety risks from mixed or conflicting traffic.

The track will have no diamonds or switches, which provides significant safety benefits as these components are some of the highest-risk and highest-maintenance components of rail infrastructure. Switches are common locations for operational failures, maintenance issues, and derailments—eliminating them reduces risk. Diamonds require trains to cross each other's tracks at the same level, creating potential conflict points and increasing maintenance needs—eliminating them improves both safety and reliability. Overall, having fewer intersecting elements reduces potential conflicts and points of failure, as well as the likelihood for maintenance-related disruption.

Bolstering Supply Chain and Passenger Rail Resilience

The Chicago Terminal handles nearly half of all intermodal rail containers and nearly a third of all carload rail freight in the U.S. Given the volume of rail traffic (passengers and goods) that traverses this corridor daily, regional rail's ability to adapt, recover, and withstand disruption is critical to maintaining a flowing supply chain and reliable passenger service. P2 adds resilience to both freight and passenger rail through increased core asset robustness (e.g. State of Good Repair improvements) and through the development of redundant routes.

P2 enables Metra to consolidate SouthWest Service (SWS) operations onto the Rock Island District (RID) via a new flyover, reducing or eliminating train movements over 44 aging bridge structures and decreasing traffic on Amtrak's high-maintenance lift bridge.

Asset Resilience Benefit-Cost Results

P2 will generate:

- **$248.1M** in avoided rehab and replacement costs from transition away from aging bridge structures.

Subject to dispatcher discretion, currently, the Metra bridge structures carry six weekly Amtrak *Cardinal* trains, daily NS freight trains, and 30 weekday Metra SWS trains. With SWS rerouted to the RID and Amtrak shifted to adjacent tracks (subject to agreement modification), which currently occurs about fifty percent of the time at dispatcher discretion, Metra would not operate trains on the single-track segment between 23rd Place (CP23) and 43rd Street (CP518), where adjacent NS tracks can carry Amtrak traffic, and reduce operations from two tracks to one between 43rd and 74th (CP74) Street while maintaining Amtrak and NS service.

Along the same corridor, Amtrak owns and maintains the South Branch Bridge (SBB), a high-maintenance lift bridge that carries frequent passenger train movements. With the

flyover in place and *SWS* service shifted to the *RID* with termination at LaSalle Street Station, 30 weekday Metra train movements would be removed from the SBB. This reduction significantly lowers the daily wear on critical components of this aging bridge. While Amtrak is advancing a separate program to replace the bridge, reducing rail traffic in the interim helps extend the functional performance of the existing structure and maintain service reliability within this shared corridor.

This strategy, jointly developed by Metra, Amtrak, and NS, maintains service continuity and corridor functionality while eliminating redundant infrastructure. By removing train movements from one track across the corridor, the Project eliminates the need to rehabilitate, maintain, or replace a full set of bridges, avoiding significant future capital and O&M costs. More broadly, the project shifts investment away from century-old assets toward modern, purpose-built infrastructure that better aligns with current rail volumes, routing, and reliability needs.

Reliability

P2 advances CRISI criteria with a primary emphasis on improving rail system reliability through targeted infrastructure upgrades that address critical failure points and reduce the likelihood of service disruptions. By reducing congestion and increasing throughput for both freight and passenger trains, the project supports more consistent and predictable operations across the corridor. These improvements drive measurable reliability gains, including increasing passenger on-time performance from 92 percent to 97 percent and significantly reducing the number of delayed trains. The Project also enhances operational reliability by generating substantial trip time savings through network efficiency and operational improvements. Specifically, the Project is estimated to save rail passengers more than 400,000 hours annually through improved operating speeds alone, while reducing congestion-related delays for passenger and freight rail operators by more than 1,000 hours annually, on average, over 30 years (see BCA Narrative, pg. 19 and 24). In addition, P2 strengthens infrastructure resilience by rerouting Metra Southwest Service trains via the new flyover to the Rock Island District, avoiding approximately $248 million in costly bridge rehabilitation and reducing exposure to asset failures while maintaining Amtrak *Cardinal* service. These investments align with the CREATE Program's focus on maintenance and modernization, ensuring assets remain in a state of good repair, minimizing unplanned outages, and extending infrastructure lifespan. Collectively, these improvements deliver a more reliable, resilient, and high-performing rail network

Efficiencies from Improved Integration with Other Modes

Community Safety and Quality of Life Benefits

P2 includes targeted pedestrian and streetscape improvements at six viaduct locations along the corridor and within surrounding neighborhoods within approximately one-quarter mile of the Project. These enhancements are intended to improve safety, accessibility, and multimodal connectivity for users traveling beneath and between the rail corridor, including pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. Planned upgrades include ADA-compliant ramps, enhanced sidewalks and crossings, LED lighting, pavement reconstruction, sewer improvements, and landscaping.

At the 73rd St. viaduct, improvements to the pedestrian tunnel under the Metra *RID* will enhance access to Hamilton Park from the east. This is a popular gathering place for families that includes a playground, open space, recreational activities and additional children's amenities such as a swimming pool and locations for birthday parties, thus further strengthening local family connectivity and neighborhood access. Together, these elements will improve visibility, continuity, and overall usability for travel across modes within the corridor.

Improved lighting and other community mobility improvements are anticipated to reduce crashes on the streets under the project area viaducts by a factor of 0.68 and reduce crime by 4% (BCA Narrative, pg. 33 and 36). Family-friendly improvements such as these provide neighborhood stability and create attractive communities that also provide economic output and value to the greater region.

Additionally, the Project will enable mode shift from vehicle to train, reducing about 24.7 million vehicle miles traveled over 30 years. This has immense safety benefits for cyclists, pedestrians, and other roadway users by reducing crash exposure and reduced accident likelihood.

Ability to Meet Existing or Anticipated Demand

P2 Sustains Rail Demand Benefit-Cost Results

P2 lowers the likelihood that freight rail traffic will divert to other routes or modes. **P2** will generate:

- **$75.0M** in benefits from avoided truck diversion.
- **$306M** in benefits from avoided rail diversion.

One of the primary concerns of the CREATE partners is that, without this investment—along with the broader improvements included in the 75th St. CIP—the Chicago rail network will be increasingly constrained. Specifically, a future without P2 could force regional freight to shift to truck or to less efficient, longer rail routings. By 2048, the Chicago Terminal is projected to face significant freight rail capacity constraints if P2 is not constructed, leading up to an estimated 8% of freight rail volumes traveling to and from Chicago and nearby Midwest markets diverting to truck by 2060, and additionally push up to 5% of non-intermodal rail traffic onto longer alternative routes through St. Louis or Kansas City. To avoid estimated externalities associated with diversion of freight to truck or excessive rail routings, P2 is necessary to secure the region's ability to accommodate future freight demand.

Similarly, the Project delivers critical passenger rail benefits by removing operational constraints that currently limit reliability, capacity, and growth. By separating commuter, intercity, and freight movements, the Project improves on-time performance, reduces travel times, and supports more frequent and reliable service, creating a more competitive and attractive passenger rail network. Increased service frequency is expected to attract additional ridership and reduce reliance on personal vehicles, helping ease congestion on Chicago's roadway system. The Project also shifts commuter rail traffic away from CUS, freeing capacity at a major Amtrak hub and creating opportunities for future expansion of intercity passenger rail service.

P2 prepares the region's infrastructure for anticipated growth in passenger and freight movements. AAR's Rail Traffic Controller (RTC) model, which simulates train performance in the Chicago Terminal with and without the construction of P2, indicates that total annual train miles in the Terminal are expected to increase by 1.25 million between 2025 and 2050 (see Exhibit 3B. Train Growth Result and Calculations).

IX. Project Implementation and Management

Project Contracting

CREATE projects are managed by individual sponsors who oversee procurement, engineering, and construction activities, following Federal standards through preliminary engineering, NEPA, and final design to maintain eligibility for Federal funding. As grant administrator, IDOT will coordinate closely with affected railroad operators and funding partners to advance construction.

After construction and closeout, each railroad will operate and maintain its respective infrastructure, while public highway components will be owned and maintained by the appropriate public agency per CREATE JSOU (Exhibit 2G). Acquisition of properties through other funding sources for P2 is to be done in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended from time to time, and its implementing regulations (49 CFR Part 24) and will also be subject to existing, executed IDOT state rail agreements with the applicable railroads for acquisition, maintenance, and disposition, as detailed in *Attachment A8-2—Property Acquisition Using Federal Funds* in Exhibit 2E. P2 ROW Acquisition Plan & Agreement.

Contract Oversight and Control

As lead applicant, IDOT will serve as the fiduciary recipient and grant administrator for CRISI funding. Each CREATE project is managed by a sponsor overseeing procurement, engineering, and construction. For P2, the sponsor is IDOT, and the contracting entities are Metra, NS, and Belt Railway Company of Chicago (BRC). P2 will realign tracks and construct a flyover to create a grade separation between Metra, NS and BRC. P2 will continue to follow all federal guidelines through final design and construction, with IDOT coordinating closely with affected railroad owners, operators, funding partners, and local communities. The CREATE Program Management Office of the Association of American Railroads (AAR) will support project delivery and oversight, representing the interests of CREATE's member railroads. FHWA is the oversight agency for the project's NEPA documentation and FRA will verify that the NEPA documentation has been approved by a federal agency.

Change-Order Management

P2 will follow established CREATE processes and procedures for engineering, design, and procurement work. The project requires extensive coordination to avoid long-term impacts on network capacity and access. All construction bid packages will be issued through Federally approved processes with IDOT oversight. Track and signal work will be completed by the railroads under union agreements. Metra, BRC, and NS will manage change orders in accordance with CREATE procedures, with IDOT approval required

before any changes proceed. Construction will comply with FRA, partner agency, and railroad standards, as well as CREATE Partnerships and Management practices (Exhibit 2F).

Risk Management

IDOT brings extensive experience managing federal awards, is committed to successful project delivery, and will maintain open communication with FRA. IDOT also has an established working relationship with FHWA through past and ongoing federal projects, including FHWA's role in the 75th St. CIP's environmental review. Under the CREATE JSOU, each owner will assume responsibility for maintenance, operations, management, and dispatch on its property following construction completion.

Project risks and mitigation strategies—outlined in the P2 Risk Assessment—include risk mitigation and risk probability for multiple topical areas related to cost and schedule that could be faced during the construction phase from land acquisition and relocations, unforeseen environmental issues, design revisions, cost escalation, material supply delays, labor shortages, unknown utilities, and local permitting. As described in P2 Risk Assessment, the risks that have a probability of 90% or higher include: 1. Signal cost increase which is being mitigated by updating cost estimates throughout the project and engaging a signal professional services provider 2. Permitting and scheduling for bridge repair locations which is being mitigated by coordinating with CDOT's Office of Underground Coordination at key design milestones and coordination throughout project construction. In addition, to the risk assessment, the FEIS identifies environmental mitigation responsibilities for all partners, summarized in Exhibit 2H. Environmental Commitments. Partners will also address project cost risks during implementation in accordance with the Estimates and Contingency Plan (Exhibit 2A).

Conformance to Federal Project Progress Reporting Requirements

IDOT and the CREATE partners will comply with all USDOT reporting requirements and as detailed in the grant agreement, including quarterly progress reports and federal financial reports, interim and final performance reports, and all applicable auditing, monitoring, and close out requirements. Included in the reporting will be performance measures mutually agreed upon by USDOT and IDOT.