

Durbin, Kirk, Rush, IDOT, City of Chicago announce \$1.25 Million Federal Grant for design of Grade Separation Project on 95th Street

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Project will improve safety and eliminate rail crossing delays for tens of thousands of motorists and bus passengers on the South Side of Chicago

CHICAGO – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Mark Kirk (R-IL), U.S. Representative Bobby Rush (D-IL), the Illinois Department of Transportation, and the City of Chicago today announced a \$1.25 million federal railroad safety grant that will

help cover the cost of design work for an important grade separation project on 95th Street in Chicago that is part of the CREATE Program. The grant from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is part of Safe Transportation of Energy Products (STEP) by Rail Program. The CREATE program competed against applicants around the country for a share of \$10 million in funding to improve highway-rail grade crossings and tracks along routes that transport energy products like crude oil and ethanol.

Funding was awarded to the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) for design and engineering services to construct a highway-rail grade separation for Union Pacific's (UP) double track main line that crosses 95th Street at Eggleston Avenue in Chicago. On a typical day, the crossing handles 24 UP and CSX freight trains and two Amtrak trains as well 24,000 motor vehicles and 700 buses carrying 18,000 passengers.

“Separating train traffic from vehicle traffic is first and foremost a safety issue - not just for those crossing the tracks, but for those who are counting on first-responders to make it through traffic during an emergency,” said Durbin.

“Chicago is the center of rail transportation in the Midwest and while that boosts economic activity, it can slow down surrounding communities that have to deal with increases in traffic and noise, and pose safety issues from trains carrying hazardous material such as crude oil. I have consistently supported this federal program, which aids the City's efforts to improve safety and alleviate congestion in a region that desperately needs it.”

“The Illinois economy depends on a safe and efficient transportation network to move people and products across our state,” Kirk said. “By reducing road and rail congestion on 95th Street, this project will help maintain Chicago's role as a key transportation hub at the crossroads of the nation.”

“I am pleased that the Federal Railroad Administration has awarded funds through the STEP by Rail Program for this CREATE project in the Washington Heights community. This grade separation project, which will reduce traffic congestion and improve vehicular and train movement at 95th Street and South Eggleston Avenue, is welcome news for community residents and the membership of the historic Trinity United Church of Christ which sits parallel to the Union Pacific main line,” said Rush. “I will continue to work with my congressional colleagues, the City and State of Illinois to support these types of federal programs that provide tremendous benefit to our constituents.”

“We at the Illinois Department of Transportation are proud to have played a lead role in the effort to secure this funding that will help to improve safety and quality

of life throughout the region,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Randy Blankenhorn. “The CREATE program and projects like these are key to promoting economic development throughout the state and maintaining Illinois’ status as the transportation hub of North America.”

“Chicago is the economic engine of the Midwest and the center of our nation’s railroads, making this federal grant an important part of the ongoing work to increase the efficiency and safety of the region’s rail infrastructure,” said Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel. “I want to thank our federal partners for identifying the value in investing in CREATE Program and the important grade separation project on the 95th Street in Chicago.”

“The City of Chicago is grateful that the FRA has recognized the importance of the CREATE Program and this critically needed grade separation on 95th Street in Chicago,” said CDOT Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld. “This grant of design funding will accelerate our efforts to build a grade separation that will improve safety and eliminate traffic delays at this crossing that handles more than two dozen trains and tens of thousands of motorists and transit passengers each day.”

The CREATE (Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency) Program is a partnership that includes the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, the U.S. Department of Transportation, Metra, Amtrak and the nation’s freight railroads that 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.