

# Gov. Pritzker Joins State, Local Leaders To Call For Federal Investments In Chicago Hub Improvement Program

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CHICAGO – Governor JB Pritzker today was joined by U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin, Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson, members of the Illinois congressional delegation, as well as business and industry leaders to call attention to the Chicago Hub Improvement Program, a proposed series of projects that will invest nearly \$1.1 billion in regional rail infrastructure and upgrade Union Station. The funding

would improve performance and reduce delays while strengthening the state's and city's position as the country's transportation hub. The effort is supported by \$50 million from the Governor's Rebuild Illinois capital program, which is the largest and only one in state history that touches all modes of transportation.

“The Chicago Hub Improvement Program is an opportunity for new federal infrastructure funding to catalyze the rail system this region deserves,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “This proposal would not only make much-needed improvements to Union Station and existing rail lines throughout Illinois and into Michigan — it would unlock a vast system of new and expanded passenger rail services throughout the Midwest, with Chicago's Union Station serving as the hub. These kinds of investments allow our residents to more easily access places and opportunities beyond their immediate neighborhoods, and they open doors for new jobs and new businesses. The Chicago Hub Improvement Program, with its scope and scale, will have an enormously positive impact on people's lives not just in Illinois but across the nation.”

The [Chicago Hub Improvement Program](#) aims to secure a \$872.8 million grant from the Federal Railroad Administration's Federal/State Partnership Program, made possible by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The funding will advance a multitude of regional improvements, resulting in better performance for travelers in the Midwest and across the country. As Amtrak's top national priority, the projects will expand capacity, eliminate bottlenecks, and improve air quality, accessibility, reliability, and customer experience for more than 30 million passengers annually.

Demonstrating the program's widespread support, grant applicants with Amtrak include the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Chicago Department of Transportation, Cook County, Metra, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and the Michigan Department of Transportation, which are contributing a combined \$218.2 million toward the improvements. Grant announcements are anticipated later this year.

The investment in Union Station consists of improving platforms, upgrading the concourse, and reactivating tracks for passenger use that were first built for the Old Post Office, increasing capacity for both Amtrak and Metra. The ventilation system will be upgraded, and the grant will also provide a new connection between Union Station and the St. Charles Air Line bridge over the south branch of the Chicago River near 18th Street. The connection, combined with additional track east of the bridge, will save up to 15 minutes on Illini/Saluki and City of New Orleans trains. Another program element will restore 16 miles of a second track Amtrak owns in southwest Michigan to eliminate a bottleneck and help reduce by 30 minutes the trip between Chicago and Detroit.

In the past 15 years, ridership in Illinois has doubled, with the introduction this summer of two 110 mph passenger trains between Chicago and St. Louis. Today, more than half

of all the country's long-distance rides begin or end at Union Station. The improvements also are necessary to support expansions to Minneapolis/St. Paul and several Wisconsin destinations. More than 15 intercity passenger routes will benefit.

Gov. Pritzker's Rebuild Illinois is investing a combined total of \$33.2 billion into the state's aging transportation system, creating jobs and promoting economic growth. The landmark capital program is investing in roads and bridges, transit, waterways, aviation, and bicycle and pedestrian accommodations across the state, identifying a total of \$1 billion for rail, with \$600 million supporting passenger service.

"Chicago is a national epicenter of passenger, commuter and freight rail, but with that comes congestion, bottlenecks and delays," U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) said. "The Chicago Hub Improvement Program would not only improve rail service and reliability for folks in Chicago and throughout Illinois, it will mean fewer delays and safer service for the more than 30 million riders across all rail services who pass through Union Station each year. Furthermore, the project will also benefit passenger service in states all throughout the Midwest. I'll keep working with my colleagues at the federal level to ensure this critical funding comes to CHIP because we know that this project isn't just a win for Illinois – it's a win for our entire country."

"Chicago has long been the heart of America's rail network, propelling commerce, industry, and innovation across the nation. To maintain this leadership position and accommodate the ever-evolving demands of the 21st century, we must evolve with the times. The Chicago Hub Improvement Project is not just about upgrading rail lines and modernizing stations; it's about charting a course for a more dynamic, sustainable, and resilient Illinois. It's about investing in our people, our economy, and the generations yet unborn," said U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL). "I'm proud to have helped bring local officials, the State, Amtrak, and other stakeholders together to ensure there was a unified push for this project and a competitive application for the federal funding."

"Chicago is one of the most important railroad hubs in the nation and we must continue to strengthen and modernize our transit system," said Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson. "So I join the voices calling on the U.S. Department of Transportation to fund the Chicago Hub Improvement Program, which would significantly renovate and improve intercity, commuter, and freight railways to be greener, cleaner, and more efficient. I look forward to making this project a reality to fulfill Amtrak's potential as a world-class transportation provider and further Chicago's status as a world-class city."

"Cook County's is pleased to be a financial partner for the Chicago Hub Improvement Program. This transformational program will help the region and the nation reach important transportation goals," said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. "This project will make room for Amtrak to upgrade and expand service, give new

transportation options to those who don't have access to other modes and make Union Station more convenient and accessible for all users. I am grateful for the continued commitment of our region's transportation partners to make this project a reality as we work to strengthen our transportation infrastructure and move toward long-term sustainability and growth in our County and country."

"When Congress voted to pass the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to create a generational investment in our nation's infrastructure, it was projects like the Chicago Hub Improvement Program that we had in mind," said Congressman Mike Quigley. "The CHIP program provides critical investment to Chicago's Union Station and rail infrastructure, ensuring our city and the Midwest remains at the center of the U.S. passenger and freight rail network. I will continue to push for full funding of the CHIP program so the vital improvements the program provides can become a reality."

"The time is now to seize the opportunity to maximize Chicago's role as the passenger rail hub of the nation, and position both the city and the state to remain the economic engine for the Midwest, and its people, for generations to come," said Amtrak Board Chair Tony Coscia.

"Under Gov. Pritzker, we are making transformational investments in every part of the state, making communities more attractive for business and enhancing quality of life," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. "These improvements will be felt across our entire multimodal system of transportation for generations to come, benefiting everyone in the Chicago area, Illinois and the Midwest."

"The Chicago Hub Improvement Program will make strategic investments to the important Chicago and Detroit/Pontiac rail corridor and around Chicago Union Station to improve access, reduce travel time, and increase reliability that will be a benefit to Michigan rail passengers," said Michigan State Transportation Director Bradley C. Wieferich, P.E. "The Michigan Department of Transportation is excited about this important project and look forward to working with our partners with the State of Illinois and Amtrak in making this a reality."

"The Chicago Hub Improvement Program represents a bold step toward solidifying our city as a world-class hub for trade, commerce and innovation," said Bob Reiter, President of the Chicago Federation of Labor. "When we invest in modernizing and expanding our infrastructure, we also invest in the people who build, operate, and maintain these important assets for generations to come. On behalf of Chicago's workers, I want to extend my gratitude to Governor Pritzker, our federal delegation, and the public and private partners who have championed this transformative endeavor."

“I want to thank Governor Pritzker and our Congressional leaders for pursuing significant infrastructure investments like the Chicago Hub Improvement Program. If funded, these improvements will create union jobs and have a lasting impact- not just in Cook County, but across the Midwest,” said Michael Macellaio, Chicago & Cook County Building & Construction Trades Council President.

“SMART-TD is proud to support the Chicago Hub Improvement Program. Investing in passenger rail is a proven job creator and this project, with its many facets, will be no different,” said Robert W. Guy, State Director, Illinois Legislative Board, SMART-Transportation Division. “CHIP would further Illinois as the leader in the Midwest for passenger rail development and allow for future expansion opportunities as the public is demanding additional service. It will also elevate safety at CUS by installing new ventilation systems that will help remove unhealthy exhaust that our Amtrak and Metra members, and passengers alike, have had concerns with for years. SMART-TD joins other stakeholders in commending Governor Pritzker, Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, and our congressional delegation for their continued strong support of passenger rail.”

“Rail Labor is proud to support the much-needed Chicago Hub Improvement Program,” said Brian Shanahan, National Vice President, Transportation Communications Union/IAM. “This bold vision will modernize Chicago’s Union Station for both Amtrak and Metra passengers, expand rail service, and create thousands of good paying union jobs. We applaud Governor Pritzker, Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, Congressman Quigley, Mayor Johnson, and other elected officials for their leadership on this project. We urge the United States Department of Transportation to fully fund this vital project.”