

Durbin Urges Department Of Transportation To Allocate Additional Grants To Chicago Hub Improvement Project For Chicago Union Station

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) today sent a letter to Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg urging him to consider the Chicago Hub Improvement Project (CHIP) for additional grant opportunities to support the project’s mission to modernize Chicago Union Station (CUS).

Durbin began his letter by acknowledging the Department of Transportation’s (DOT) recent announcement that Amtrak and its partners will receive [\\$93 million](#) for CHIP.

These funds will support platform and ventilation upgrades as well as the reactivation of the Station's old mail platform into tracks for passenger use. However, Durbin called on Secretary Buttigieg to allocate additional funding for the remaining aspects of CHIP that can improve travel times and intercity connections.

“While this grant is a significant and long-overdue first step in funding CHIP by modernizing the physical station, I would like to express my disappointment that DOT chose not to fund the other components of the project that would improve travel times and increase connectivity. Funding the entire portfolio of CHIP projects is crucial to revolutionizing Midwest rail, the heart of which is CUS,” Durbin wrote. “CHIP is Amtrak's top National Network priority, as Chicago is the nation's passenger, commuter, and freight rail hub, with more trackage radiating in more directions than any other city in North America.”

Durbin emphasized that, with *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* funds available, CUS is a worthwhile investment. Chicago is at the center of Amtrak's Midwestern expansion plan, a 15-year strategy to connect dozens of cities in roughly 160 communities with Amtrak service.

“There is no better time to invest in Chicago Union Station than now, amid the historic levels of rail funding available through the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*. When DOT invests in Chicago, it invests in the success and future of Midwest rail, which impacts Amtrak's entire long-distance network,” Durbin wrote. “In light of this, many rail projects across the Midwest would benefit from CHIP's full implementation.”

Durbin urged Secretary Buttigieg to weigh CUS' status as a trustworthy passenger, commuter, and freight rail hub while awarding the next round of federal rail grants.

“I am hopeful that the remaining, critically important aspects of CHIP will be funded in the next round of rail grants made available. As you know, CHIP's regional partners already have committed \$218 million to the project, and are ready, unified, and eager to get the project across the finish line,” Durbin wrote.

“I look forward to working with you to expand this federal investment in CUS, which serves 3.3 million Amtrak riders annually, along 16 Amtrak intercity rail lines, and more than 30 million riders across all rail services,” Durbin concluded his letter.

Durbin is a strong supporter of CHIP and worked to bring parties together—local officials, the State, Amtrak, and other stakeholders including labor, environmental groups, and businesses—to ensure there was a unified push for the project. In

September, he led 31 Midwest Congressional colleagues in sending a [letter](#) to DOT and the Federal Railroad Administration to express their support for CHIP's application for Amtrak's Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program.

A copy of the letter is available [here](#).