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**MAYOR EMANUEL AND CREATE PARTNERS ANNOUNCE \$132 MILLION GRANT TO IMPROVE
RAIL CONGESTION ACROSS THE REGION**

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Governor Bruce Rauner, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and the Association of American Railroads (AAR), the partners in the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program, today announced that Chicago has received a \$132 million federal grant for the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (CIP). This investment from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) will help separate several freight and passenger rail lines in the Englewood, Auburn Gresham and West Chatham neighborhoods that currently intersect and create significant delays, train idling and congestion. This project is an important step in updating the region's rail infrastructure for the 21st Century and will help increase reliability and efficiency nationally.

"Transportation is not just Chicago's historic strength; it is our competitive advantage for the future," said Mayor Emanuel. "Federal investments in Chicago's rail system, roadways, waterways and airports create jobs for Chicago residents, strengthen our economy and benefit the entire country. I want to thank all the local, state and federal partners, and the passenger and freight railroads, who came together to move full steam ahead on modernizing Chicago's rail system."

"This award will result in a significant advance for our transportation system," Gov. Rauner said. "It means we can finally eliminate the 75th Street bottleneck and start enjoying the commercial benefits that come with modernization and more efficient movement of goods and people through Chicago and Illinois, the nation's most important transportation hub. It is a tremendous achievement by all of the partners involved."

"As the newest member of the CREATE Program, I am grateful for U.S. Department of Transportation's Infrastructure For Rebuilding America Grant," said Cook County Board President Preckwinkle. "My administration has prioritized supporting our region's role as North America's freight capital and this \$132 million enables improved freight and passenger mobility for the most congested rail bottleneck in Cook County and the nation. Creating additional capacity for rail will enable businesses to move their products to market in the U.S. and overseas efficiently and support thousands of jobs."

The 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project will eliminate the most congested rail chokepoint in the region, Belt Junction, where 30 commuter and 98 freight trains per day cross each other's paths. Currently, only one or two trains can pass through each of these crossings at any given time. By

physically separating these crossings, this project will allow many more trains to pass through without delays, eliminating the choke points that today back up trains for miles beyond the project area and into many other City neighborhoods.

The CREATE Program is a first-of-its-kind multimodal public-private partnership to improve the rail and roadway transportation network within the Chicago region through the completion of 70 interrelated infrastructure projects. To date, 28 CREATE projects have been completed, with six more projects under construction and 17 in various stages of design.

The INFRA Grant Application for CREATE's 75th Street CIP was submitted jointly by the CREATE partners, including the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), Cook County, AAR, Metra, Amtrak and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. The AAR represents ten of the freight, passenger, and commuter railroads serving the Chicago region. These railroads include freight carriers BNSF Railway, CN Railway, Canadian Pacific, CSX, Norfolk Southern, Union Pacific, Belt Railway of Chicago, and Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad, as well as Amtrak and Metra.

The \$132 million federal grant will leverage contributions by private freight railroads, the State of Illinois, the City of Chicago, Cook County, Metra and Amtrak for a total investment of \$473 million. This investment will complete the first half of the overall 75th Street Corridor improvement project.

"This unique partnership improves service for both Chicagoland rail commuters as well as freight rail customers across the country," said Edward R. Hamberger, President and CEO of the AAR. "By leveraging the private-sector investments of the freight railroads, with the contributions of METRA and AMTRAK and state, city, county and federal funds, the goals of both the private and public sector partners can be achieved. Today's funding combined with existing partner commitments will put shovels in the ground to improve the flow of rail traffic through the city and the nation."

When the 75th Street CIP is complete it will eliminate 18,500 annual passenger hours of delay by removing conflicts between freight and commuter trains, increase capacity at Union Station, decrease train idling, improve air quality in the surrounding neighborhoods and replace or rehabilitate 36 viaducts for increased mobility.

"There is no more important freight project in the nation," said Joseph Szabo, executive director of CMAP. "By eliminating conflicts for some two million-plus freight cars each year, the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Program will benefit the city's, region's, and nation's economies."

"Funding the 75th Street CIP represents an incredible opportunity to improve the flow of rail traffic for the entire northeast Illinois region, reducing delays for Metra riders by eliminating a major bottleneck for both commuter and freight trains," said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. "We're grateful for the support of our Illinois Congressional delegation who clearly recognize the value of this project to the region's economy and quality of life."

The Chicago Rail Terminal is a complex rail hub where six Class I railroads converge and share track with ten Metra commuter rail lines and more than a dozen Amtrak passenger rail routes. This hub handles 1,300 freight and passenger trains per day and one-fourth of the nation's overall rail cargo. Both individually and collectively, the projects in the CREATE Program will significantly

improve freight rail, passenger rail, and highway operations in the Chicago metropolitan area, while also providing community mobility, safety, air quality, and economic benefits.

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