



CREATE PROGRAM

PHASE I PROJECT REPORT AND DESIGN APPROVAL

SECTION II – PURPOSE AND NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT

The following text shall be used in the Project Report for Section II – Purpose and Need for Improvement, Part A:

A. The CREATE Program

The overall goals of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program are to improve freight and passenger rail operations, and to improve highway operations in the Chicago metropolitan area while reducing the environmental impacts of rail operations on the general public. The CREATE Program includes the development of four freight and passenger rail transportation corridors in the Chicago metropolitan area, and also includes rail-highway grade separation projects (over- or under-passes to grade-separate railroads and highways) on existing rail lines outside the four corridors.

Chicago area freight and passenger rail traffic suffers from congestion, low operating speeds and delays due to traffic demands that exceed the capacity of the Chicago Rail System. The development of the four rail corridors includes the upgrading of existing track structure, the double-tracking or triple-tracking of certain lines, the construction of rail-highway grade separations and rail-rail flyovers, the installation of new or improved signaling, and various other additions and improvements. These improvements will significantly improve freight and passenger rail operations.

In addition, the CREATE Program proposes re-routing existing Metra service in order to assist Metra in increasing their capacity and ability to adequately serve the region. Many stations do not have the capacity to handle additional trains which limits the ability for Metra to expand their services. Other stations, conversely, are under-utilized and represent a potential solution. The CREATE Program includes the installation of connections that will shift service to the under-utilized stations thereby enabling Metra to expand their system. The Program also benefits some Amtrak intercity trains.

Additionally, there are many rail-highway at-grade intersections throughout the Chicago metropolitan area that cause vehicular delays and congestion, and contribute to air pollution in the region. The construction of the rail-highway grade separations will improve traffic operations and air quality in the Chicago metropolitan area.