

Appendix F

Responses to Written Comments

May 1, 2012

Donna Barney
[address]
Chicago, IL [zip]

Dear Ms. Barney:

Thank you for participating in the second round of public meetings for the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program's Grand Crossing Rail Project, held on March 26, 2012 at the Grand Crossing Park Field House and on March 28, 2012 at the Sherwood Park Field House. The Project Team appreciates that you took the time to attend the meeting and to provide written comments on the project. Input received from you and from other meeting participants will be vital to shaping a solution for the Grand Crossing Rail Project that best balances the transportation needs of this project with the concerns and values of your community.

We hope you were able to find the information you were seeking regarding the details of the project and its potential impacts on the community. We have noted your preference for the North-1 and South-1 alignments, as well as your comments on the importance of reducing passenger and freight delays and maintaining viaducts and other rail infrastructure to enhance safety and aesthetics in the neighborhood. We will consider this input as we evaluate alternatives and develop the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We also appreciate your kind words regarding the meeting presentation and Project Team staff.

We have added you to the project mailing list and will provide you with periodic updates on the project, as well as notify you of future events. In the meantime, please continue to visit the project website – www.grandcrossingrail.com – on a regular basis for the most up-to-date project information. As we noted at the public meetings, your comments are welcome at any time throughout the life of the project and can be submitted directly through the project website at <http://grandcrossingrail.com/contact.php>, or via the mailing or email address at the bottom of this page. If you have questions or would like to discuss the project, please contact Tony Pakeltis, Parsons Project Manager, at (312) 930-5268 or info@grandcrossingrail.com.

Donna Barney
May 1, 2012

Page 2 of 2

Thank you once again for your interest in the project. We look forward to your continued participation.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Danielle Stewart".

Danielle E. Stewart, P.E.
Acting CREATE Section Chief
Illinois Department of Transportation
www.createprogram.org

May 1, 2012

Roger Huff
[address]
Chicago, IL [zip]

Dear Mr. Huff:

Thank you for participating in the second round of public meetings for the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program's Grand Crossing Rail Project, held on March 26, 2012 at the Grand Crossing Park Field House and on March 28, 2012 at the Sherwood Park Field House. The Project Team appreciates that you once again took the time to attend the meeting and to provide written comments on the project. Input received from you and from other meeting participants will be vital to shaping a solution for the Grand Crossing Rail Project that best balances the transportation needs of this project with the concerns and values of your community.

We appreciate your thoughtful input on ways the Project Team can continue to improve the exhibits, presentation, and overall message to better communicate the details of the project – in particular information on potential property acquisition and displacements – to the community and gather meaningful public input. We will work on implementing these suggestions for future public meetings, Community Advisory Group meetings, as well as other project-related events and correspondence.

We have noted your preference for the North-1 alignment with retaining walls and the South-1 alignment and will consider this input as we evaluate alternatives and develop the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We have also noted your comments on the importance of considering historic resources, noise and vibration impacts, and potential displacements as we evaluate alternatives, as well as the value of incorporating murals and other public art elements into the project.

As a Community Advisory Group member, the Project Team will continue to rely on you to help share the content and outcome of this important study. We will also provide you with periodic updates on the project, as well as notify you of future events. In the meantime, please continue to visit the project website – www.grandcrossingrail.com – on a regular basis for the most up-to-date project information. As we noted at the public meetings, your comments are welcome at any time throughout the life of the project and

can be submitted directly through the project website at <http://grandcrossingrail.com/contact.php>, or via the mailing or email address at the bottom of this page. If you have questions or would like to discuss the project, please contact Tony Pakeltis, Parsons Project Manager, at (312) 930-5268 or info@grandcrossingrail.com.

Thank you once again for your interest in the project. We look forward to your continued participation.

Very truly yours,



Danielle E. Stewart, P.E.
Acting CREATE Section Chief
Illinois Department of Transportation
www.createprogram.org

May 1, 2012

Ted Seals
[address]
Chicago, IL [zip]

Dear Mr. Seals:

Thank you for participating in the second round of public meetings for the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program's Grand Crossing Rail Project, held on March 26, 2012 at the Grand Crossing Park Field House and on March 28, 2012 at the Sherwood Park Field House. The Project Team appreciates that you took the time to attend the meeting and to provide written comments on the project. Input received from you and from other meeting participants will be vital to shaping a solution for the Grand Crossing Rail Project that best balances the transportation needs of this project with the concerns and values of your community.

We hope you were able to find the information you were seeking regarding the details of the project and its potential impacts on the community. We have noted your preference for the South-1 alignment and your objection to both North alignments presented at the meetings, as well as your comments on the criteria and local priorities that are most important for the Project Team to consider as we evaluate alternatives. We understand that your chief concern is that the project provide benefits to the local community, not just Amtrak passengers from elsewhere in the region. The Project Team will consider this input as we evaluate alternatives and develop the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

We have added you to the project mailing list and will provide you with periodic updates on the project, as well as notify you of future events. In the meantime, please continue to visit the project website – www.grandcrossingrail.com – on a regular basis for the most up-to-date project information. As we noted at the public meetings, your comments are welcome at any time throughout the life of the project and can be submitted directly through the project website at <http://grandcrossingrail.com/contact.php>, or via the mailing or email address at the bottom of this page. If you have questions or would like to discuss the project, please contact Tony Pakeltis, Parsons Project Manager, at (312) 930-5268 or info@grandcrossingrail.com.

Ted Seals
May 1, 2012

Page 2 of 2

Thank you once again for your interest in the project. We look forward to your continued participation.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Danielle Stewart".

Danielle E. Stewart, P.E.
Acting CREATE Section Chief
Illinois Department of Transportation
www.createprogram.org

May 1, 2012

Linda McGhee
[address]
Chicago, IL [zip]

Dear Ms. McGhee:

Thank you for participating in the second round of public meetings for the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program's Grand Crossing Rail Project, held on March 26, 2012 at the Grand Crossing Park Field House and on March 28, 2012 at the Sherwood Park Field House. The Project Team appreciates that you took the time to attend the meeting and to provide written comments on the project. Input received from you and from other meeting participants will be vital to shaping a solution for the Grand Crossing Rail Project that best balances the transportation needs of this project with the concerns and values of your community.

We hope you were able to find the information you were seeking regarding the details of the project and its potential impacts on the community. We have noted your preference for the North-2 alignment and the need for improvements in the southern portion of the corridor and will consider this input as we evaluate alternatives and develop the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We also appreciate your kind words regarding the meeting presentation and Project Team staff.

We have added you to the project mailing list and will provide you with periodic updates on the project, as well as notify you of future events. In the meantime, please continue to visit the project website – www.grandcrossingrail.com – on a regular basis for the most up-to-date project information. As we noted at the public meetings, your comments are welcome at any time throughout the life of the project and can be submitted directly through the project website at <http://grandcrossingrail.com/contact.php>, or via the mailing or email address at the bottom of this page. If you have questions or would like to discuss the project, please contact Tony Pakeltis, Parsons Project Manager, at (312) 930-5268 or info@grandcrossingrail.com.

Linda McGhee
May 1, 2012

Page 2 of 2

Thank you once again for your interest in the project. We look forward to your continued participation.

Very truly yours,

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Danielle E. Stewart, P.E.
Acting CREATE Section Chief
Illinois Department of Transportation
www.createprogram.org

May 1, 2012

Elder Kevin Ford

[address]

Chicago, IL [zip]

Dear Elder Ford:

Thank you for participating in the second round of public meetings for the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program's Grand Crossing Rail Project, held on March 26, 2012 at the Grand Crossing Park Field House and on March 28, 2012 at the Sherwood Park Field House. The Project Team appreciates that you once again took the time to attend the meeting and to provide written comments on the project. Input received from you and from other meeting participants will be vital to shaping a solution for the Grand Crossing Rail Project that best balances the transportation needs of this project with the concerns and values of your community.

We hope you were able to find the information you were seeking regarding the details of the project and its potential impacts on the community. We have noted your preference for the North-1 and South-1 alignments and will consider this input as we evaluate alternatives and develop the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We also appreciate your input on the criteria and priorities that are most important for the Project Team to consider as we evaluate alternatives.

As Community Advisory Group member, the Project Team will continue to rely on you to help share the content and outcome of this important study. We will also provide you with periodic updates on the project, as well as notify you of future events. In the meantime, please continue to visit the project website – www.grandcrossingrail.com – on a regular basis for the most up-to-date project information. As we noted at the public meetings, your comments are welcome at any time throughout the life of the project and can be submitted directly through the project website at <http://grandcrossingrail.com/contact.php>, or via the mailing or email address at the bottom of this page. If you have questions or would like to discuss the project, please contact Tony Pakeltis, Parsons Project Manager, at (312) 930-5268 or info@grandcrossingrail.com.

Kevin Ford
May 1, 2012

Page 2 of 2

Thank you once again for your interest in the project. We look forward to your continued participation.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Danielle Stewart".

Danielle E. Stewart, P.E.
Acting CREATE Section Chief
Illinois Department of Transportation
www.createprogram.org

May 1, 2012

Marc Loveless
[address]
Chicago, IL [zip]

Dear Mr. Loveless:

Thank you for participating in the second round of public meetings for the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program's Grand Crossing Rail Project, held on March 26, 2012 at the Grand Crossing Park Field House and on March 28, 2012 at the Sherwood Park Field House. The Project Team appreciates that you took the time to attend the meeting and to provide written comments on the project. Input received from you and from other meeting participants will be vital to shaping a solution for the Grand Crossing Rail Project that best balances the transportation needs of this project with the concerns and values of your community.

While the proposed improvements would reduce travel time for passengers on Amtrak's Illini, Saluki, and City of New Orleans routes by approximately 19 minutes, the Grand Crossing Rail Project is a separate project from the various high-speed rail initiatives currently underway in the State of Illinois. Some potential high-speed rail corridors cross or are located within the Grand Crossing Rail Project study area. Every effort is being made to ensure that improvements associated with the Grand Crossing Rail Project do not preclude advancement of potential high-speed rail projects. For further information regarding Illinois high speed rail initiatives, we encourage you to visit the Illinois High Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail website at <http://www.idothsr.org/> and the Midwest High-Speed Rail website at <http://www.connectthemidwest.com>. We hope you were able to find the other information you were seeking regarding the details of the project and its potential impacts on the community, but please feel free to contact Tony Pakeltis, Parsons Project Manager, at (312) 930-5268 or info@grandcrossingrail.com if you have additional questions.

We have added you to the project mailing list and will provide you with periodic updates on the project, as well as notify you of future events. In the meantime, please continue to visit the project website – www.grandcrossingrail.com – on a regular basis for the most up-to-date project information. As we noted at the public meetings, your comments are welcome at any time throughout the life of the project and can be submitted directly

through the project website at <http://grandcrossingrail.com/contact.php>, or via the mailing or email address at the bottom of this page.

Thank you once again for your interest in the project. We look forward to your continued participation.

Very truly yours,

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Danielle E. Stewart, P.E.
Acting CREATE Section Chief
Illinois Department of Transportation
www.createprogram.org

May 1, 2012

Isaac Webb
[address]
Chicago, IL [zip]

Dear Isaac:

Thank you for participating in the second round of public meetings for the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program's Grand Crossing Rail Project, held on March 26, 2012 at the Grand Crossing Park Field House and on March 28, 2012 at the Sherwood Park Field House. The Project Team appreciates that you took the time to attend the meeting and to provide written comments on the project. Input received from you and from other meeting participants will be vital to shaping a solution for the Grand Crossing Rail Project that best balances the transportation needs of this project with the concerns and values of your community.

We are glad to hear how important Sherwood Park is to you and the other kids in your neighborhood, as a place to socialize and enjoy music lessons, sports, and other activities outside of school. As part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) we are developing, we will examine in detail the project's potential effects on parks and other community facilities, and these results will be presented in the Draft EIS and at the Public Hearing(s) to be held in early 2013. We hope to see you at one of those meetings, too!

We have added you to the project mailing list and will provide you with periodic updates on the project, as well as notify you of future events. In the meantime, please continue to visit the project website – www.grandcrossingrail.com – on a regular basis for the most up-to-date project information. As we noted at the public meetings, your comments are welcome at any time throughout the life of the project and can be submitted directly through the project website at <http://grandcrossingrail.com/contact.php>, or via the mailing or email address at the bottom of this page. If you have questions or would like to discuss the project, please contact Tony Pakeltis, Parsons Project Manager, at (312) 930-5268 or info@grandcrossingrail.com.

Isaac Webb
May 1, 2012

Page 2 of 2

Thank you once again for your interest in the project. We look forward to your continued participation.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Danielle Stewart".

Danielle E. Stewart, P.E.
Acting CREATE Section Chief
Illinois Department of Transportation
www.createprogram.org

May 1, 2012

Margareth Douyon-Webb

[address]

Chicago, IL [zip]

Dear Ms. Douyon-Webb:

Thank you for participating in the second round of public meetings for the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program's Grand Crossing Rail Project, held on March 26, 2012 at the Grand Crossing Park Field House and on March 28, 2012 at the Sherwood Park Field House. The Project Team appreciates that you took the time to attend the meeting and to provide written comments on the project. Input received from you and from other meeting participants will be vital to shaping a solution for the Grand Crossing Rail Project that best balances the transportation needs of this project with the concerns and values of your community.

We hope you were able to find the information you were seeking regarding the project's potential impacts to Sherwood Park and other park facilities in the community. Please note that North-2 alignment as shown and described at the public meetings would not be likely to impact the Sherwood Park Field House or indoor programs held at the park, but it would impact the outdoor ball fields along the west side of the Sherwood Park, as well as portions of Fuller Park. As part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process, the Project Team will examine in detail the project's potential effects on parks and other community facilities, and these results will be presented in the Draft EIS and at the Public Hearing(s) to be held in early 2013.

We have added you to the project mailing list and will provide you with periodic updates on the project, as well as notify you of future events. In the meantime, please continue to visit the project website – www.grandcrossingrail.com – on a regular basis for the most up-to-date project information. As we noted at the public meetings, your comments are welcome at any time throughout the life of the project and can be submitted directly through the project website at <http://grandcrossingrail.com/contact.php>, or via the mailing or email address at the bottom of this page. If you have questions or would like to discuss the project, please contact Tony Pakeltis, Parsons Project Manager, at (312) 930-5268 or info@grandcrossingrail.com.

Thank you once again for your interest in the project. We look forward to your continued participation.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Danielle Stewart".

Danielle E. Stewart, P.E.
Acting CREATE Section Chief
Illinois Department of Transportation
www.createprogram.org

May 1, 2012

Tony Anthony Johnson

[address]

Chicago, IL [zip]

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Thank you for participating in the second round of public meetings for the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program's Grand Crossing Rail Project, held on March 26, 2012 at the Grand Crossing Park Field House and on March 28, 2012 at the Sherwood Park Field House. The Project Team appreciates that you once again took the time to attend the meeting and to provide written comments on the project. Input received from you and from other meeting participants will be vital to shaping a solution for the Grand Crossing Rail Project that best balances the transportation needs of this project with the concerns and values of your community.

The Project Team will continue to provide you with periodic updates on the project, as well as notify you of future events. In the meantime, please continue to visit the project website – www.grandcrossingrail.com – on a regular basis for the most up-to-date project information. As we noted at the public meetings, your comments are welcome at any time throughout the life of the project and can be submitted directly through the project website at <http://grandcrossingrail.com/contact.php>, or via the mailing or email address at the bottom of this page. If you have questions or would like to discuss the project, please contact Tony Pakeltis, Parsons Project Manager, at (312) 930-5268 or info@grandcrossingrail.com.

Thank you once again for your interest in the project. We look forward to your continued participation.

Very truly yours,



Danielle E. Stewart, P.E.
Acting CREATE Section Chief
Illinois Department of Transportation
www.createprogram.org

May 1, 2012

Roland Solinski
[email address]

Dear Mr. Solinski:

Thank you for your interest in the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program's Grand Crossing Rail Project. The Project Team appreciates that you took the time to visit our website and provide written comments on the project. Input received from you and from other interested parties will be vital to shaping a solution for the Grand Crossing Rail Project that best balances the transportation needs of this project with the concerns and values of the community.

As you know, the current routing of Amtrak's Illini, Saluki, and City of New Orleans trains involves a time-consuming backup move to pull into and out of Union Station due to the lack of a direct connection between the tracks that these trains use and those that enter Union Station from the south. Under the current routing, these trains also pass through a congested rail crossing at 16th Street, which frequently causes delays and worsens congestion throughout the rail system. Together, these issues add 19 minutes to the schedule.

Prior to initiating the Grand Crossing Rail Project EIS, the CREATE Feasibility Study was completed for the overall CREATE Program. As part of the feasibility study, different potential routes into Union Station for Amtrak's Illini, Saluki, and City of New Orleans trains were considered. These included the current route along the CN line, and the other existing Amtrak routes into and out of Union Station from the south along tracks owned by other freight railroads such as BNSF, Union Pacific, and Norfolk Southern (NS). The CREATE Feasibility Study can be found on the CREATE Program website at <http://createprogram.org/feasibility.htm>.

In coordination with Amtrak and the various freight railroads, it was determined that the NS route is the only feasible option for re-routing these trains away from the congested 16th Street crossing on the CN line and providing direct access into Union Station from the south. In support of this determination, Amtrak completed a study that evaluated different alternatives that would retain use of the existing CN route and would provide a new connection from the St. Charles Airline into Union Station. Based on the results of Amtrak's study, none of the alternatives evaluated would meet Amtrak's grade, curvature, and clearance requirements. Operational safety concerns were also identified

with each of the St. Charles Airline connection alternatives. Additionally, construction of the new connection would impact Amtrak's ability to modify or expand their existing facilities as may be needed in the future.

We have added you to the Grand Crossing Rail Project mailing list and will provide you with periodic updates on the project, as well as notify you of future events. In the meantime, please continue to visit the project website – www.grandcrossingrail.com – on a regular basis for the most up-to-date project information. Also, your comments are welcome at any time during the project and can be submitted directly through the project website at <http://grandcrossingrail.com/contact.php> or via the mailing address at the bottom of this page. If you have questions or would like to discuss the project further, please contact Tony Pakeltis, Parsons Project Manager, at (312) 930-5268.

Thank you once again for your interest in the project. We look forward to your continued participation.

Very truly yours,



Danielle E. Stewart, P.E.
Acting CREATE Section Chief
Illinois Department of Transportation
www.createprogram.org

May 1, 2012

Valarie Hogg
[email address]

Dear Ms. Hogg:

Thank you for your interest in the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program's Grand Crossing Rail Project. The Project Team appreciates that you took the time to visit our website to find out more about the project.

Our next public event will be a community meeting to be held on Thursday, May 17 at New Beginnings Church, 6620 S. King Drive, Chicago. The purpose of the meeting is to provide an overview of the project, review the project's purpose and need for improvements, and obtain public input on the project, including its Purpose and Need Statement. A formal session with questions and answers will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Prior to that, an open house will be held between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. where you can view an audio-visual presentation and project exhibits. The project team will also be available during this time to discuss the project and answer questions.

We have added you to the Grand Crossing Rail Project mailing list and will provide you with periodic updates on the project, as well as notify you of future events. In the meantime, please continue to visit the project website – www.grandcrossingrail.com – on a regular basis for the most up-to-date project information. Also, your comments are welcome at any time during the project and can be submitted directly through the project website at <http://grandcrossingrail.com/contact.php> or via the mailing address at the bottom of this page. If you have questions or would like to discuss the project further, please contact Tony Pakeltis, Parsons Project Manager, at (312) 930-5268.

Thank you once again for your interest in the project. Input received from you and from other interested parties will be vital to shaping a solution for the Grand Crossing Rail Project that best balances the transportation needs of this project with the concerns and values of the community.

Valarie Hogg
May 1, 2012

Page 2 of 2

We look forward to your continued participation.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Danielle Stewart".

Danielle E. Stewart, P.E.
Acting CREATE Section Chief
Illinois Department of Transportation
www.createprogram.org

May 14, 2012

Brie Ingram
[email address]

Dear Ms. Ingram:

Thank you for your interest in the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program's Grand Crossing Rail Project. The Project Team appreciates that you took the time to visit our website to find out more about the project.

As shown on page 3 of the attached brochure, each of the Build Alternatives being considered for the project would include the following improvements:

- Rail signal improvements near 115th Street
- Connection between the CN and NS lines near 75th Street ("CN Connection")
- One south alignment ("South-1" or "South-2")
- One north alignment ("North-1" or "North-2")

Your home is several blocks east of the proposed south alignments, both of which would occur west of S. Chicago Avenue and would not have any direct impacts to your property. As explained in the brochure, the South-1 alignment would add one new track to the south and west of the existing NS tracks, between the NS tracks and the Chicago Skyway. The South-2 alignment would add one to three new tracks, depending on the specific location, along the north/east side of the existing NS tracks, from Stony Island Avenue to the Dan Ryan Expressway. Neither the South-1 nor the South-2 alignment would result in any residential or commercial displacements.

The Project Team is in the process of preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project, in which we will evaluate the alternatives to determine the potential impacts and benefits resulting from the project and identify ways to avoid or lessen any potential negative impacts. We expect to complete the Draft EIS in early 2013.

In the meantime, our next public event will be a **Community Meeting** to be held on **Thursday, May 17** at **New Beginnings Church, 6620 S. King Drive, Chicago**. The purpose of the meeting is to provide an overview of the project, review the project's purpose and need for improvements, and obtain public input on the project, including its Purpose and Need Statement. **A formal session with questions and answers will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.** Prior to that, an open house will be held between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00

p.m. where you can view an audio-visual presentation and project exhibits. The Project Team will also be available during this time to discuss the project and answer questions.

We have added you to the Grand Crossing Rail Project mailing list and will provide you with periodic updates on the project, as well as notify you of future events. In the meantime, please continue to visit the project website – www.grandcrossingrail.com – on a regular basis for the most up-to-date project information. Also, your comments are welcome at any time during the project and can be submitted directly through the project website at <http://grandcrossingrail.com/contact.php> or via the mailing address at the bottom of this page. If you have questions or would like to discuss the project further, please contact Tony Pakeltis, Parsons Project Manager, at (312) 930-5268.

Thank you once again for your interest in the project. Input received from you and from other interested parties will be vital to shaping a solution for the Grand Crossing Rail Project that best balances the transportation needs of this project with the concerns and values of the community.

We look forward to your continued participation.

Very truly yours,



Danielle E. Stewart, P.E.
Acting CREATE Section Chief
Illinois Department of Transportation
www.createprogram.org

Attachment

May 14, 2012

Sabrina Hall
[address]
Chicago, IL [zip]
[email address]

Dear Ms. Hall:

Thank you for your interest in the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program's Grand Crossing Rail Project. The Project Team appreciates that you took the time to visit our website to find out more about the project.

As shown on page 3 of the attached brochure, each of the Build Alternatives being considered for the project would include the following improvements:

- Rail signal improvements near 115th Street
- Connection between the CN and NS lines near 75th Street ("CN Connection")
- One south alignment ("South-1" or "South-2")
- One north alignment ("North-1" or "North-2")

Your home is several blocks west of the proposed CN Connection, which would re-establish a former connection between the Norfolk Southern (NS) and Canadian National (CN) rail lines that has been out of service for a number of years. The CN Connection would add one new track alongside the existing CN tracks. As shown in the brochure, the new track would begin just south of 83rd Street on the east side of the existing CN line, continuing northward along the east side of the CN tracks to 79th Place, then passing over the CN line and continuing northward on the west side of the CN tracks from 78th Street to the Chicago Skyway. It would then pass under the Skyway, continuing northward to 73rd Street, between the Skyway and the existing NS tracks.

These improvements would take place entirely within the existing railroad right-of-way, so the CN Connection would not result in any residential or commercial displacements. At 83rd Street, the new track would be on the opposite side of the existing CN viaduct than your home, so we do not anticipate that you would experience any direct impacts from the project. The Project Team will confirm this as we prepare the project's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), in which we will evaluate the alternatives to determine the potential impacts and benefits resulting from the project and identify ways to avoid or lessen any potential negative impacts. We expect to complete the Draft EIS in early 2013.

In the meantime, our next public event will be a **Community Meeting** to be held on **Thursday, May 17** at **New Beginnings Church, 6620 S. King Drive, Chicago**. The purpose of the meeting is to provide an overview of the project, review the project's purpose and need for improvements, and obtain public input on the project, including its Purpose and Need Statement. **A formal session with questions and answers will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.** Prior to that, an open house will be held between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. where you can view an audio-visual presentation and project exhibits. The Project Team will also be available during this time to discuss the project and answer questions.

We have added you to the Grand Crossing Rail Project mailing list and will provide you with periodic updates on the project, as well as notify you of future events. In the meantime, please continue to visit the project website – **www.grandcrossingrail.com** – on a regular basis for the most up-to-date project information. Also, your comments are welcome at any time during the project and can be submitted directly through the project website at **<http://grandcrossingrail.com/contact.php>** or via the mailing address at the bottom of this page. If you have questions or would like to discuss the project further, please contact Tony Pakeltis, Parsons Project Manager, at (312) 930-5268.

Thank you once again for your interest in the project. Input received from you and from other interested parties will be vital to shaping a solution for the Grand Crossing Rail Project that best balances the transportation needs of this project with the concerns and values of the community.

We look forward to your continued participation.

Very truly yours,



Danielle E. Stewart, P.E.
Acting CREATE Section Chief
Illinois Department of Transportation
www.createprogram.org

Attachment

April 30, 2012

Citizens Coalition of Grand Crossing Railroad Project (CCoGCRP)

c/o Naomi Davis

[address]

Chicago, IL [zip]

Dear Citizens Coalition:

Thank you for contacting us regarding the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program's Grand Crossing Rail Project. We very much appreciate that you took the time to provide comments on the project and the public involvement process.

Below are our responses to the "Series 2" questions you submitted at the March 26, 2012 public meeting, which are also enclosed here for your convenience:

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1. To date, no public hearings have been held for the Grand Crossing Rail Project. Based on the current schedule, a public hearing will be held in Spring 2013. The meetings held thus far have been Community Advisory Group Meetings and Public Meetings. These meetings are less formal than a public hearing and are intended to engage the community and provide them with opportunities to participate in the decision-making process for the project. The attached public involvement fact sheet summarizes the methods of outreach for the public meetings completed to date.

The purpose of the December 12, 2011 and December 13, 2011 public meetings held at the Grand Crossing Park Field House and Sherwood Park Field House, respectively, were to introduce the project to the community and solicit public input on the project's Purpose and Need Statement. Much of the same information presented at the December public meetings was also available at the March 2012 public meetings, which were well attended by CCoGCRP members and the community residents and officials. However, to ensure that all community members have adequate opportunity to provide their input on these materials, a Community Meeting will be held on May 17, 2012 at New Beginnings Church to solicit additional input on the project, including its Purpose and Need Statement. Please note that the Community Meeting will follow the same format of and present the same materials from the December 2011 public meetings.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 2. As shown on page 3 of the enclosed brochure, the Grand Crossing Rail Project Study Area extends along a predominantly north-south direction along the existing Canadian National (CN) and Norfolk Southern (NS) rail lines. From its southern terminus at 117th Street, the corridor extends northward along the CN line to its intersection with the NS line near 75th Street, then continues along the NS line from 75th Street to Pershing Road.

As noted in the brochure, two main alternatives are being considered for the project:

- **No Build (“Do Nothing”) Alternative** – Amtrak’s Illini, Saluki, and City of New Orleans trains would continue to travel along the same CN tracks they currently use, and no project-related improvements will be made.
- **Build Alternative(s)** – Amtrak’s Illini, Saluki, and City of New Orleans trains would be re-routed to the NS line in the area of 75th Street. Build alternatives include the track and signal work required to re-route Amtrak trains to the NS line, as well as related bridge work and potential temporary and permanent viaduct and/or street closures.

The proposed improvements included in the various build alternatives – including the specifics of their geographic limits – are described in our response to Question 3 below (see Table 1).

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 3. As shown on page 3 of the enclosed brochure, each Build Alternative would include the following improvements:

- Rail signal improvements near 115th Street
- Connection between the CN and NS lines near 75th Street (“CN Connection”)
- One south alignment (“South-1” or “South-2”)
- One north alignment (“North-1” or “North-2”)

Table 1 indicates the geographic limits of each of these proposed improvements (each described from south to north). Note that although the study area extends south to 117th Street to include the proposed rail signal improvements around 115th Street, none of the build alternatives would include any track improvements south of 83rd Street.

TABLE 1 – LOCATION AND EXTENT OF GRAND CROSSING RAIL PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS

IMPROVEMENT	# OF NEW TRACKS	LOCATION	ANTICIPATED PROPERTY IMPACTS
Rail Signal Improvements	Not applicable (n.a.)	Entirely within the elevated CN right-of-way, near 115 th Street	None

TABLE 1 – LOCATION AND EXTENT OF GRAND CROSSING RAIL PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS

IMPROVEMENT	# OF NEW TRACKS	LOCATION	ANTICIPATED PROPERTY IMPACTS
CN Connection	One	New CN connection track would begin just south of 83 rd Street on the east side of the existing CN line, continuing northward along the east side of the CN tracks to 79 th Place, then passing over the CN line and continuing northward on the west side of the CN tracks from 78th Street to the Chicago Skyway. It would then pass under the Skyway, continuing northward to 73 rd Street, between the Skyway and the existing NS tracks.	None
South Alignments:			
South-1	One	South-1 would essentially be a continuation of the new CN connection track. It would run between the Chicago Skyway and the existing NS tracks, from 73 rd Street to the Dan Ryan Expressway, just north of 63 rd Street.	No residential or commercial displacements. Minor property acquisition from the Chicago Skyway.

TABLE 1 – LOCATION AND EXTENT OF GRAND CROSSING RAIL PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS

IMPROVEMENT	# OF NEW TRACKS	LOCATION	ANTICIPATED PROPERTY IMPACTS
South-2	One to three (varies depending on location)	South-2 would begin at 81 st Street, on the east/north side of the existing NS tracks, and continue northward to 63 rd Street. It would begin as a single track at 81 st , then transition to three tracks between 77 th Street and S. Kimbark Avenue. The three tracks would continue northward from S. Kimbark to three tracks from S. Kimbark to 71 st Street, then transition back to a single track that would continue northward to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, where it would tie into an existing NS rail yard.	No residential or commercial displacements. Minor property acquisition from the Chicago Skyway and ComEd.

TABLE 1 – LOCATION AND EXTENT OF GRAND CROSSING RAIL PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS

IMPROVEMENT	# OF NEW TRACKS	LOCATION	ANTICIPATED PROPERTY IMPACTS
North Alignments:			
North-1	Two	North-1 would add two new elevated tracks between Stewart Avenue and Wallace Street, from 62nd Street to 59th Street.	30-40 residential building displacements within the area bounded by 61st Place, the existing Metra Southwest Service tracks (along Wallace Street), 59th Street, and the existing NS line (predominantly along Stewart Avenue).
North-2	One	North-2 would add one track along the east side of the existing NS tracks for approximately one and a half miles, from 62 nd Street to Root Street.	30-50 residential building displacements affecting properties immediately adjacent to the east side of the NS tracks, between 62 nd Street and Root Street.

For further clarification of these locations, please visit the Project Resources page of the project website (www.grandcrossingrail.com) for the maps and typical sections that were presented at the March public meetings.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 4.

Like all IDOT projects, the Grand Crossing Rail Project will undergo a three-phase project development process:

- Phase I – preliminary engineering and environmental studies
- Phase II – final design and property acquisition
- Phase III – construction

As shown on page 5 of the enclosed brochure, the Grand Crossing Rail Project is still early in Phase I, which is expected to conclude in February 2014. Therefore, much of the information requested in Question 4, Parts A through K, is not available at this time. We have made every attempt to respond as specifically as possible, and, where we could not provide details, to indicate when this information will be available.

4a. Table 1 lists the number of new tracks associated with each alignment.

4b. The purpose of the new tracks is to provide a new route for passenger trains on Amtrak's Illini, Saluki, and City of New Orleans routes. However, the new tracks would also be available for freight service.

4c. If the Grand Crossing Rail Project were built, six daily Amtrak trains would be re-routed. The volume of freight traffic through the community is a function of the economy, not the Grand Crossing Rail Project or other CREATE initiatives. When more goods are demanded by consumers, freight traffic increases, and vice versa.

The CREATE Program will positively affect movement of people and goods through the region by improving rail efficiency, removing train bottlenecks, and reducing train and vehicular delays.

4d. Please see our response to 4g through 4i below.

4e. The specifics of the construction staging plan, including the type of equipment to be used, would be determined during Final Design (Phase II) and by the Contractor during Construction (Phase III).

4f. If one of the build alternatives is selected, portions of an existing, out-of-use railroad bridge on the west side of CN tracks would be removed and replaced with a new structure that would be lower than the existing bridge. (The existing bridge was constructed prior to the Chicago Skyway and does not meet current height requirements.)

To accommodate this new bridge, 75th Street and 76th Street would have to be either closed or lowered to provide vehicles enough room to pass under the new bridge. This will be studied further as the project moves forward. A decision would be made after the Draft EIS public hearings and documented in the Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD). While construction activity would occur along the proposed alignments at 71st Street and 79th Street, no permanent impacts are anticipated to these streets.

In addition, construction may require temporary street closures in this area. The specifics of the construction staging plan, including possible temporary street closures, would be determined during Final Design (Phase II).

4g-i. If one of the build alternatives is selected, the ROD will define the mitigation measures on which the ROD is approved, including measures to mitigate impacts to the community during construction. Mitigation measures may include strategies for maintenance of traffic (including emergency traffic), time limits for construction work, and other construction impact mitigation measures. Detailed plans for maintenance of traffic during construction would then be developed during Final Design (Phase II).

4j. The Grand Crossing Rail Project will have no effect on the type of freight transported by the railroads.

4k. Decisions on the City of Chicago's commitments in terms of viaduct upgrades/maintenance and hiring for this work will be made during Final Design (Phase II).

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 5. Unfortunately, as discussed at the March 2012 public meetings, IDOT cannot conduct a site tour of the project. IDOT encourages those interested in the Grand Crossing Rail Project to view the detailed mapping available on the project website (www.grandcrossingrail.com) and to contact the Project Team with any project-related follow-up questions.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 6. No, these operations have not been relocated to the south side from other locations.

As you heard at the March 26th public meeting, Chuck Allen of Norfolk Southern (NS) looked into complaints regarding nighttime noise that were voiced at the March 14th Community Advisory Group meeting. Based on his investigations, there is no known reason why trains would be blowing horns regularly in this area. Mr. Allen requested that anyone hearing train horns should note the date and time and submit those to the project website (info@grandcrossingrail.com) for further investigation by NS.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 7. There are no Community Benefits Agreements related to the Grand Crossing Rail Project currently in place. Mitigation addressing project impacts will be developed and included in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). IDOT looks forward to working with project stakeholders on developing an appropriate mitigation plan for this project.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 8. Information related to job opportunities associated with the CREATE Program projects and the railroad industry can be found in the attached CREATE Program Employment Fact Sheet.

Additionally, individuals interested in pursuing opportunities for training and job placement in the construction trades on CREATE-related work and other IDOT projects in the region are encouraged to contact Shoshiwa Mabina, director of IDOT's Highway Construction Careers Training Program (HCCTP) at Dawson Technical Institute, part of Kennedy King College. HCCTP was initiated by IDOT in 2009 in an effort to increase access to highway construction jobs for minorities, women, and disadvantaged individuals.

Students enrolled in the program receive intensive training in highway construction-related skills, such as mathematics for the trades, job site readiness, carpentry, concrete flatwork, blueprint reading, forklift operation, OSHA 10 safety training, and other skills to improve individuals' employability in Illinois' highway construction industry, including the CREATE Program.

Ms. Mabina can be reached at 773-451-2082 or smabina@ccc.edu.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 9. If a Build Alternative is selected, the property acquisition process could begin only after the Federal Highway Administration approves the EIS and signs a Record of Decision. As noted above, the current schedule anticipates a Record of Decision in February 2014. Note that property acquisition is a Phase II (final design) activity, and the Grand Crossing Rail Project is only funded through Phase I (preliminary engineering and environmental studies). Additional funding would be necessary for property acquisition to proceed.

If the decision is made to pursue one of the build alternatives, owners whose property would be acquired would, at that point, be notified of the acquisition by certified mail. For privacy reasons, IDOT cannot copy the CCoGCRP on this correspondence.

The Project Team is in contact with all City agencies that own property within the study area, including the Chicago Housing Authority.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 10.

10a. Project analyses will be conducted in accordance with the guidance provided in IDOT's CREATE Phase I Manual and IDOT's Bureau of Design and Environment Manual, which can be found on IDOT's website at <http://www.dot.il.gov/create/index.html> and <http://www.dot.state.il.us/desenv/bdmanual.html>, respectively. These manuals identify the guiding regulations, resource issues that will be evaluated as part of the EIS, and how impacts will be determined.

10b. The EIS will identify mitigation measures to address any potential impacts identified by the Project Team. CCoGCRP will have the opportunity to review and comment on the contents of the Draft EIS; comments received on the Draft EIS – including those related to proposed mitigation measures – will be incorporated into the Final EIS.

All mitigation commitments will be formalized in the Record of Decision.

10c. The enclosed EIS factsheet summarizes the steps and timeline associated with the Grand Crossing Rail Project EIS, which will document the environmental analysis conducted for the project.

10d. Several CCoGCRP members are also members of the project's Community Advisory Group, which will work with IDOT and the CREATE Partners throughout Phase I, providing input on the contents of the EIS. If requested, the Project Team can also sit down with CCoGCRP members separately to review the contents of the Draft EIS once it is published.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 11. All applicable procedures guiding the development of CREATE Program projects can be found in IDOT's CREATE Phase I Manual and IDOT's Bureau of Design & Environment Manual, which can be found on IDOT's website at <http://www.dot.il.gov/create/index.html> and <http://www.dot.state.il.us/desenv/bdmanual.html>, respectively.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 12. Funding for this project could come from a variety of federal, state, local, and private sources. The Grand Crossing Rail Project is currently funded only through completion of the Phase I (preliminary engineering and environmental studies). This funding includes federal, state, and private money. Because the project includes federal funding, all federal funding requirements must be met.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 13. The CREATE Program is focused on making improvements to the transportation infrastructure that will benefit the local communities, the region, and the nation as a whole. IDOT suggests that CCoGCRP work with your elected officials and the City of Chicago to identify appropriate sources of funding for community-based initiatives for items such as health and economic development enhancements.

Again, thank you for your comments. They will become part of the public record for the Grand Crossing Rail Project, and our team will carefully consider and, wherever possible, address what you've said as we move forward. Should you have questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me (Telephone: (847) 705-4233; E-mail: Danielle.Stewart@illinois.gov) or Jakita Trotter (Telephone 312-793-2790; E-mail: Jakita.Trotter@illinois.gov). I also encourage you to visit our project website at www.grandcrossingrail.com for more information.

Regards,



Danielle E. Stewart, P.E.
Acting CREATE Section Chief
Illinois Department of Transportation

Enclosures: CCoGCRP "Series 2" Letter, dated March 26, 2012
Grand Crossing Rail Project – Getting the Word Out Factsheet
Grand Crossing Rail Project – EIS Factsheet
Grand Crossing Rail Project Brochure
CREATE Program Employment Factsheet

CCoGRIP

Citizens Coalition of Grand Crossing Railroad Project

To Anthony Pakelkis, Project Manager
Re CAG Advisory Questions/Requests ~ Series 2 - For Written Response
Date March 26, 2012
From CREATE Community Advisory Group (CAG)

Community Advisory Group

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Jose Wilson	312-543-0348	josewil@msn.com

The following questions were submitted to CREATE at your March 14th meeting for written response by March 21st. No written response has yet been received. In recognition of the newness our process and relations, we're resubmitting and supplementing our original questions. The combined old and new questions are now identified as "Series 2." Please provide written responses to all Series 2 questions/requests by Friday, March 30th. As used below, CREATE is intended as fully inclusive of all railroad entities listed as partners, and wherever applicable, also includes successful bidders on CREATE-related RFP's, no-bid, and supply chain contracts." For questions on Series 2, please contact Naomi Davis as listed above. Thank you.

1. We have unanimously voted and requested by letter to Illinois Governor Pat Quinn and CREATE Director Joe Schacter, and renew our request to rescind/re-label the CREATE/IDOT hearing held at Grand Crossing Park on December 12, 2011 on all official documents, including the CREATE website. Your website inaccurately states that resident input was given at this meeting. The 2-3 residents who attended could not and do not represent the community of the P4 Project Area. Recognizing the critical importance of an accurate public record of proceedings in projects of this scale and involving Federal and other public funds, and in the spirit of fair process; authentic community education and engagement; and adherence to your own protocol, we will not allow that convening to be represented as a "public hearing"

on the record. Rather, a replacement public hearing is requested, to be convened prior to moving forward to Phase 2 of P4.

2. Detail the complete geographic parameters of P4, using street names for all coordinates.
3. CREATE website describes the P4 project as providing “a more direct routing for passenger trains from the south, shaving 10-15 minutes off of train schedules relative to current routing.” Please describe exactly what work will be done in the P4 project area and “zone of impact,” including all alternatives currently being considered.
4. Regarding work to be done in the P4 Project Area, questions include but are not limited to:
 - a. How many sets of tracks will be expanded in the P4 Project Area?
 - b. What will be the specific utilization of tracks put in place?
 - c. What percentage of P4 tracks will be passenger vs. freight traffic, and would the percentage of freight be increasing?
 - d. What traffic calming or right-of-way procedures will be established to handle difficulties within the boundaries of work to be conducted?
 - e. What construction equipment will be used?
 - f. What impact, including street closings, will affect 75th to 76th on South Chicago and along 71st, 75th, 76th, and 79th Streets?
 - g. What impact should be expected to normal travel times to church, funerals, ambulance emergency/fire/police, and work in the affected route areas?
 - h. What time limits will be placed on work, for example: 7am – 3pm or 8am - 4pm Monday through Friday?
 - i. What practices of construction maintenance, including street sweeping, will be established?
 - j. Would additional freight come through south side communities that would contain hazardous material?
 - k. What specific commitments, including all accountable parties such as the City of Chicago, are being made to upgrade the quality of underpass/trestle maintenance, and what plans are made to fire community members for this work?

5. We request a full P4 site tour to accommodate all interested P4 community members.
6. Is it true that switching operations - in particular those involving night horns and other industrial commotion - were moved from north side neighborhoods to our south side community?
7. Regarding Community Benefits Agreements, list all benefits presently negotiated for south side communities, both "north" and "south" project areas. Provide the name, title, and contact information of all individuals authorized to contract terms of agreement for Community Benefits, especially key or chief authorities.
8. Regarding employment-based community benefits for CREATE-related work, establish a Task Force accountable to and including self-selected members of CCoGCRP to coordinate practices and to track results, including but not limited to responding to the following:
 - a. What, if any, investment for training, curricula, certificates, apprenticeships, or M/WBE contractor participation have been established and made accessible to the spectrum of residents, including un/der-employed and returning citizens in Chicago's south side communities?
 - b. What, if any, agreements for labor union "Sponsorships" have been negotiated with the Business Managers for hiring employees from Chicago's south side communities?
 - c. What, if any, practices have been established to educate/outreach to Chicago's south side communities on the processes of application, training, and hiring.
9. Regarding community benefits for CREATE-related land acquisition, it is understood as involving "unmotivated sellers" which we require to be made whole in any displacements, including but not limited to responses to the following:
 - a. During what time period are properties targeted for acquisition to be identified, owners contacted, and sales completed?
 - b. Communication by certified letter to such targeted owners is required, with copies to CCoGCRP Advisory Group, c/o Philip Thomas at ETA Creative Arts, 7558 S South Chicago Avenue, Chicago, IL 60619-2644.
 - c. For City-owned properties, a schedule of targeted properties and expansion plans, especially such that land-based initiatives currently planned or implemented can propose relocation coordination.

10. Regarding the contents of all CREATE-related environmental impact studies, we request:
 - a. Advance notice of criteria and standards to be certified for establishing projected increases in pollution, and acceptable levels for such increases in pollution, including but not limited to sound, vibrations, construction materials, chemical/particulate exposure, safety for children, security on tracks, etc.
 - b. Advance notice of all current, additional, and prospective procedures to be used to mitigate pollution.
 - c. Advance notice of the parties, procedure, and timetable for all environmental analysis.
 - d. Examination/input from CCoGCRP Advisory Group, especially through convenings with CREATE/design and environmental designees.
11. Regarding CREATE procedure, provide access to a copy of procedures applicable to following for the P4 Project.
12. Regarding any and all aspects of CREATE project, list all public funding sources - federal, state, county, city - present, prospective, foreseeable, and desired for the duration of all Chicago south side work. Be specific with source name/number and agency/contact, and include citation to any requirements for community engagement.
13. Correspondingly, list all corporate and foundation grants available to impacted south side communities for health and economic development enhancements.

¹ US DOT, State of Illinois DOT, City of Chicago DOT, Association of American Railroads, Amtrak, Belt Railway of Chicago, BNSF Railway,, Canadian Pacific Railway, CN, CSX Transportation, Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad, Metra, Norfolk Southern Corporation, Union Pacific Railroad

² For example Caterpillar and other Fortune 300 companies.