



Office of the Mayor
Richard M. Daley
Mayor

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MAYOR DALEY SAYS FEDERAL HIGH SPEED FUNDING STRENGTHENS CHICAGO AS CENTER OF RAIL NETWORK

Midwest States Receive \$2.6 Billion to Improve Service To and From Chicago

The \$2.6 billion in federal high-speed rail funding received yesterday by Illinois and three other Midwest states will strengthen Chicago's longstanding position as a center for both passenger and freight rail commerce, Mayor Richard M. Daley said today.

"High speed rail will help us in the challenging task of bringing new businesses, new industries and new opportunities to our region to create new jobs, not just replace those that have already been lost," Daley said in a news conference held at Union Station, 210 S. Canal St., at which he was joined by U.S. Senator Dick Durbin, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn and Amtrak and federal railroad officials.

Last July, Illinois, other Midwestern states and Chicago submitted a coordinated set of applications requesting funding under the federal economic stimulus program to make capital improvements to the Midwest's intercity passenger rail network, with Chicago as its hub.

Yesterday, President Obama announced that Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan and Ohio will receive \$2.6 billion of the total of \$8 billion in grants made nationally. Illinois will receive more than \$1.2 billion to improve train service and reduce travel times between Chicago, Bloomington-Normal, Springfield, and St Louis as well as on routes connecting Chicago to Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio.

Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ohio will receive more than \$1.3 billion to improve train service and reduce travel times between Chicago and Milwaukee-Madison, Chicago and Detroit, and Chicago and major Ohio cities.

In addition, yesterday's award included \$133 million to build what is known as the "Englewood Flyover" – a new bridge that will carry Metra commuter trains over Amtrak passenger and Norfolk Southern freight trains near 63rd and State Streets.

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That project is part of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE) a public-private partnership among the city, the state and the Association of American Railroads set up to address the great bottleneck the national rail freight system experiences in Chicago and to improve passenger rail service, enhance public safety, improve air quality, reduce noise from slow-moving or idling trains and improve vehicle traffic flow at rail crossings.

CREATE has already undertaken a significant capital program, including new underpasses and overpasses and separation of freight and passenger tracks.

“Completing this project will not only eliminate a bottleneck that delays current Amtrak service to and from Chicago, but it will also create critical rail capacity that we need to speed up Amtrak service from Chicago to Champaign and Carbondale and improve the speed and reliability of Metra service,” Daley said.

“We believe the CREATE Program is critical to improving intercity passenger train speeds and making high-speed rail a reality,” he said.

Daley cited an economic study for the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative that estimated that Midwestern high speed rail routes could serve more than 13 million riders annually by 2025.

“Those routes will serve and spur the development of the Midwest’s major metropolitan areas, but also our universities, towns, and numerous smaller cities, some of which have been hit the hardest by this recession. And connections will be made in a way to reduce the negative impacts of auto traffic congestion, and provide opportunity to sustain and revive our central cities,” he said.

The Mayor said the “new economy” that will emerge from the recession will require more efficient transportation and infrastructure that will support increased speed. “Speed will be essential for us to move people, products and ideas from place to place. And as we better connect people, we also create jobs and expand economic opportunity for our residents,” he said.

Daley thanked the Obama Administration and Congress for enacting the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Senator Durbin for his strong support for Chicago and Illinois, Governor Quinn for helping create the multi-state partnership that succeeded in obtaining the funding and U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood for recognizing how central Chicago is to the success of a national high speed rail network.

“Even though we’re in a recession we must always look ahead for bigger opportunities. With the kinds of steps we’re talking about today, we’ll come out of the recession stronger, with better times to come,” Daley said.

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