

**C R E A T E**

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CHICAGO REGION  
ENVIRONMENTAL AND  
TRANSPORTATION  
EFFICIENCY PROGRAMCREATE PROGRAM  
C/O CTCO  
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## **CREATE Partners Announce Track Work Over Easter Weekend Will Speed Freight on SE Side**

### *Historic Partnership Invests in Rail Infrastructure Improvements To Speed Freight Traffic, Create Jobs and Improve Air Quality*

CHICAGO – The partners involved in the CREATE Program (the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program) announced today that track and signal work over this Easter weekend will speed up the movement of freight trains going from the Belt Railway System of Chicago (BRC) to the Norfolk Southern (NS) mainline tracks that run along 95<sup>th</sup> St. and the Chicago Skyway/Interstate-90.

CREATE is a historic public-private partnership involving the railroads, the city of Chicago, the state of Illinois and the federal government and is designed to upgrade the Chicago area's rail infrastructure for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The work will take place over Easter weekend and the next few days, which generally have lighter freight rail traffic due to the holiday. This will allow the crews to work more efficiently. The work involves upgrading and modernizing the tracks and signal system over a half mile stretch extending from 101st St. and Commercial Ave. The improvements will increase the speed at which trains can operate in the area from 6 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour.

The CREATE partners include the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Chicago Department of Transportation, the Association of American Railroads and the six major railroad lines that operate in the region: Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corporation, Canadian Pacific Railway, CN, CSX Transportation, Norfolk Southern Corporation and Union Pacific Railroad; the two switch carriers: The Belt Railway Company of Chicago and the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad; as well as Metra and Amtrak.

"The CREATE Program is of vital importance for the entire transportation system of northeastern Illinois and indeed the nation," said Milton R. Sees, Secretary of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the state agency that is involved in the project. "As Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich has pointed out, CREATE will not only speed rail traffic, improve air quality, and eliminate the long waits and the danger of rail vs. car crashes at 25 rail grade crossings, it will also boost economic development and produce jobs."

"This is the latest CREATE project that will not only help ease congestion and benefit air quality, but will help businesses receive their supplies and goods in a more timely manner," said CDOT Commissioner Thomas G. Byrne.

As the transportation hub for the nation, the Chicago region carries one third of the rail and truck cargo in the country. And Chicago is the only place in the country where six of the seven major railroads converge. The CREATE project is the first time in which the federal, state and local governments have teamed up with the railroads to tackle the issue of rail and road congestion on such a massive scale.

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Over the next 20 years, the demand for freight rail service in Chicago is expected to nearly double. Studies have shown that without the improvements provided by CREATE, the Chicago region could lose out on 17,000 jobs and \$2 billion in annual economic production.

CREATE will ultimately include construction of 25 new roadway overpasses or underpasses where cars cross railroad tracks at grade level. These grade separations will eliminate motor vehicle delays at these crossings and also improve air quality since cars and trucks will not be idling at these locations. CREATE will also include six new rail-to-rail overpasses separating passenger and freight train tracks.