Appendix C
Public Involvement and Agency Coordination

C3 - OTHER PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
Moving Forward Together

75th St. CIP
One North Franklin
Suite 500
Chicago, Illinois 60606
www.75thcip.org ◆ info@75thcip.org

MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Date: May 5, 2011

Time: 9:00 am to 11:00 am

Place: Providence Englewood Charter School
6515 South Ashland Avenue, Chicago

Subject: 17th Ward Ministerial Alliance and Pastors of Englewood Meeting

Meeting Participants:

Members Attending	
Name	**Representing**
Pastor Willard Payton	Pastors of Englewood
Pastor St. John Chisum	Pastors of Englewood
Pastor Walter Matthews	17th Ward Ministerial Alliance
Pastor Louis Reeves	Family Focus
Pastor Alvin Richards	17th Ward Ministerial Alliance
Pastor James H. Thomas	17th Ward Ministerial Alliance
Others Attending	
Alderman Latasha Thomas	17th Ward
Glenda Franklin	17th Ward
Angela Johnson Williams	Providence Englewood Charter School
Carlos Nelson	Greater Auburn-Gresham Development Corporation
Chris Butler	New Schools Chicago
Phillip R Hampton	New Schools Chicago
Adrienne Leonard	NCR
Adrienne Garner	New Schools Chicago
Project Team Members Attending	
Larry Wilson	IDOT
Jakita Trotter	IDOT
Gretchen Wahl	Jacobs

Summary of Meeting

Alderman Thomas began the discussion by saying that the CREATE Program is a major initiative for the city and the region, and that the 75th St. Corridor Improvement Project (75th St. CIP) is key to the program. She stated that the community should know about the project and have input as soon as possible, and that pastors are important in getting the word out to the community. She stated that she

and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) are interested in what pastors think about the project.

Carlos Nelson, a volunteer facilitator from the Greater Auburn-Gresham Development Corporation, and Larry Wilson from IDOT, gave a PowerPoint presentation about the project.

Carlos asked the meeting attendees to describe their community in one word. Responses included:

- Active
- Growing
- Changing
- Exciting
- Lively
- Promising
- Has potential
- Inventive/creative

Carlos pointed out that the railroads have always been in the neighborhoods, but that the railroads have never needed us until now. Alderman Thomas pointed out that now the community can go to the railroads and say what they want. She said that describing the community in a positive light is a good start. The group also discussed specific issues, which are detailed below:

Specific Issues

1. *Ballast kicked up by trains*—Pastor Thomas from 1st Corinthian Missionary Baptist Church said that rocks kicked up by the train tracks have broken windows at the church. He also pointed out that the wall at the Rock Island tracks was rebuilt on the east side of the tracks, but not the west side. **Action Item:** The 75th St. CIP team will ask the railroads to research this issue and the team will report back to Pastor Thomas.

2. *Lack of Response from Railroads*—Alderman Thomas said that most of the railroad companies are hard to reach and they rarely respond. They don't cut weeds or trees. People in the area do it themselves, and then railroad security comes and asks them what they are doing. There is a lack of interaction between the railroads and the community. She said that the railroads often say, "We were here first." That may be true, but we still have to live together. She said that when she takes a harsh stance on these issues, it is because she wants the railroads to take the community's needs seriously. She said that railroads already know what the issues are in the community. They are just asking for input so that the community will agree to the plan. She also said that she considers all railroad projects to be part of the 75th St. CIP, even if officially they are different projects. In response, Larry Wilson said that by requirement, IDOT is leading the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) project. An EIS is the most thorough form of federal environmental review. IDOT is not the railroads. However, IDOT will report to the railroads what is said. **Action Item:** The project team will report these concerns to the railroads.

3. *Horn Blowing, Other Noise, and Vibration*—Pastor Thomas said that his mother-in-law lives at 74th St & Parnell, and trains blow their horns all the time, with no care for the community. Ms. Franklin from Alderman Thomas' office said that they often get complaints regarding train horns, the shaking of home foundations, and the squealing of train wheels as they round the corner. Alderman Thomas said that now CSX often double-stacks their trains, making the shaking more severe. She said that she has seen foundation damage to homes. **Action Item:** The 75th St. CIP will address the impacts of horns blowing in many instances. Trains are required by federal law to blow their horns under certain circumstances. For example, a stopped train must blow its horn to signal when it begins moving. One of the project goals is to reduce idling trains, which would mean trains in the project area would have to stop and re-start less. Trains must also sound their horns when they approach a rail-street crossing to alert vehicles. A grade separation at 71st Street should reduce the need for trains to blow their horns there. We have measured existing vibration levels in the project area. We will study changes in vibration levels as a result of the 75th St. CIP and where possible will use techniques to reduce the transmission of train vibration in the proposed design.

4. *71st Street and other Rail-Street Crossings*—Carlos Nelson asked the group about the rail-street crossing at 71st Street. The group agreed that people in the community avoid 71st Street so that they can avoid that crossing. They also expressed concern that children don't want to wait for trains there and sometimes cross in an unsafe fashion. The group stated that some other rail-street crossings need safety gates. The pastors also expressed concern about emergency vehicles being stopped by trains in the neighborhoods. **Action Item:** The 71st Street rail-street crossing is proposed to be grade separated, improving safety and reducing delays for motorists and pedestrians.

5. *Relationship Between Core Issues and Symptoms*—Pastor Payton said that, as pastors, the group understands that there are core issues and there are symptoms. To get buy-in from the community to address those core issues, the project team will also have to address the symptoms, which are the issues that residents notice most easily. The community is very concerned about safety, the blowing of horns, and trains tossing off rocks. However, the two biggest concerns are the viaducts and jobs. The railroad needs to maintain and beautify the viaducts in order to get buy-in and support for the project. The railroads also need to address the jobs issue. The railroads should put up signs with the faces of people who work for the railroad, and they should be people who look like the people in the community. **Action Item:** The 75th St. CIP team will continue to work to understand the community and the relationship between core issues and symptoms. The 75th St. CIP team is reviewing all the viaducts in the project study area and will look for opportunities to make improvements as part of this project, particularly where the 75th St. CIP will require other work to address the identified transportation needs. The CREATE Program team will continue to provide information about job

opportunities with the Program and the railroads to the community's in which construction will occur.

6. *Viaducts*—Pastor Thomas said that the railroads need to clean, redo, and light the viaducts. They need better security. The railroads need shifts of people who pick up garbage around the tracks. The community shouldn't have to see things under the viaducts all the time. The railroads need to do more to solve the problem of crimes. Some pastors said that their parishioners won't come to church at night if they have to walk under the viaducts. **Action Item:** As part of the 75th St. CIP, the team is reviewing all the viaducts in the project study area for sidewalk, roadway, lighting, access, and safety issues. We will look for opportunities to make improvements to several viaducts, particularly where the 75th St. CIP will require other work to address the identified transportation needs. The Chicago Department of Transportation is also making improvements to some viaducts in the area.

7. *Project Communication*—Pastor Williams asked that the project establish a phone number for community input. **Action Item:** The 75th St. CIP published a team member's number in the public materials publicizing the June 7 and 9, 2011 public meetings, and the team is establishing a separate community phone number for the project. This number will be provided to the public once it is established.

8. *Crime and Security*—The pastors also asked that railroads increase their security. One stated that the railroads have the largest security force in the city, after the Chicago Police Department. Philip Hampton, formerly of Chicago's 311 system, stated that the effort to get railroads to clean up is very important. Statistics confirm that debris and overgrowth at viaducts leads to crime and drugs. If graffiti is allowed, it can become a big problem. All of these efforts must come together to eliminate crime. **Action Item:** We will report these concerns to the railroads.

9. *Access to Jobs*—The pastors pointed out that the railroads are always hiring, but that information about the jobs isn't always available in their community. Many community members don't have access to computers. They pointed out that if the railroads are going to hire, they should hire from the community. They will get a better response to the project. People won't like seeing outsiders working in the community when so many people are unemployed. People will also want to see schedules of when work is being done. It is also important that better relationships with the community are maintained even after the project is over. **Action Item:** On the CREATE website, there are links to the railroads on the page for job seekers, and at the recent public meetings the 75th St. CIP team distributed a CREATE fact sheet regarding employment related to the CREATE program, including the links to the railroad's employment webpages. The CREATE Program team will continue to provide information about

job opportunities with the Program and the railroads to the community's in which construction will occur.

10. *Metra's Involvement in Community*—Carlos pointed out that Metra is a partner of the CREATE program, but Metra doesn't stop in the community. Alderman Thomas also wants Metra more involved in the community. **Action Item:** We will report these concerns to Metra.

11. *Project Communication*—The pastors suggested that the project expressly state community benefits, even benefits as mundane as litter abatement. They suggested that the railroads or project team hire groups who could provide workers to perform litter abatement, weed clearing, or cleanup. They stated that they are not interested in getting into a debate about who is responsible for what piece of maintenance or cleanup at an embankment or viaduct. They stated that the wet spring means that the overgrowth will be very bad this year on the embankments. **Action Item:** We will forward these suggestions to the railroads. We encourage pastors and community members to alert us to groups who would like to participate.

12. *Project Involvement with Community*—The group also asked that the project collaborate on art projects with groups from youth ministries and schools. **Action Item:** These kinds of collaboration are definitely possible during the construction process, and the 75th St. CIP will research possible partners for this collaboration. We encourage pastors and community members to forward us recommendations for participating groups and possible locations.

13. *Community's Approach to EIS*—One pastor suggested that the group try to achieve one success with the railroads and then build a new relationship on that success. He stated that if the community tries to address every problem at once, it could just be frustrating. Alderman Thomas pointed out that the federal government is the reason the railroads are coming to the community. It is important to give them a complete picture of the issues in the community, so that they can be documented for the federal government. It all needs to be reflected in the EIS. **Action Item:** The pastors will work to express concerns to the 75th St. CIP team. The project team will work with the railroads and the local community to identify ways—within the scope of the project—to address community concerns and build a better relationship with local neighborhoods.

The meeting went on to other items of business at 11 a.m.

75th St. CIP
525 W. Monroe St.
Suite 200
Chicago, Illinois 60661
www.75thcip.org ◆ info@75thcip.org

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

Meeting Date: February 16, 2012

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: St Thomas More Roman Catholic Church
2825 W. 81st St., Chicago

Subject: **Presentation to the Wrightwood Improvement Association**

Meeting Participants:

Name	Representing
Officers and Members	Wrightwood Improvement Association
Jakita Trotter	Illinois Department of Transportation
Joe Voldrich	Jacobs
Gretchen Wahl	Jacobs

Summary of Presentation

Representatives from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Jacobs were invited to attend the regular monthly meeting of the Wrightwood Improvement Association (WIA) and give a presentation on the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (75th St. CIP). The purpose of the presentation was to provide the organization with an overview of the project, introduce the Preferred Alternative that is being developed for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and answer questions about the project. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be available to the public for review and comment at a public hearing in summer 2012.

The 75th St. CIP presentation was the first item on the WIA agenda, after their call to order and reading of the minutes of the last meeting. Deborah Echols introduced Jakita Trotter, Joe Voldrich, and Gretchen Wahl. The 75th St. CIP team handed out a one-page cover memo summarizing the Preferred Alternative, attached to Range of Alternatives Brochure.

75th St. CIP Overview:

Chicago is center of national commerce and a rail hub for the nation. Rail congestion in Chicago causes delays nationwide, as well as rail and roadway congestion in our region. Therefore, IDOT, the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the American Association of Railroads (AAR) founded the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency

75th St. CIP
525 W. Monroe St.
Suite 200
Chicago, Illinois 60661
www.75thcip.org ◆ info@75thcip.org

Program (CREATE). CREATE is made of over 70 projects designed to ease rail transportation through the Chicagoland region. The largest and most complex is the 75th St. CIP. The 75th St. CIP project study area reaches from Kostner Avenue on the west to the Dan Ryan Expressway on the east, and from Marquette Road on the north to 99th Street on the south.

Public Involvement:

IDOT is using the Context Sensitive Solutions process on this project to make sure that the concerns of the surrounding community are incorporated into the project. Many members of the WIA have attended a public meeting for the project, and several serve on the project's two Community Advisory Groups (one for the east side of the project, one for the west).

The project team met with elected officials, community leaders, and the Community Advisory Groups to help determine the Purpose and Need for the project. As a result of this public involvement, the 75th St. CIP added viaduct conditions to the Purpose and Need for the project. Elected officials, community leaders and the Community Advisory Groups said that viaduct conditions hindered local mobility because the poor condition of pavement, sidewalks and viaduct structures made viaducts in the area uninviting for drivers and pedestrians.

In June 2011 the 75th St. CIP held its first public meetings, one on the east side of the project study area and one on the west. At these meetings, the project team presented the project and asked for comment on the project's Purpose and Need Statement. In August and September 2011, the project team held joint meetings with the Community Advisory Groups to present alternates to solve transportation problems in the study area and get input on those alternates. The project team also presented the results of viaduct inspections and the estimates for viaduct repairs. In October 2011, the project team held a public meeting to present the public with a Range of Alternatives for the project, and to gather public comment. In January 2012, the project team met again with the Joint Community Advisory Group and presented the Preferred Alternative that is currently being developed for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Preferred Alternative:

At the single Metra track that runs along Columbus Avenue, an additional track would be built east of the existing track, requiring the removal of one track in Landers Yard. This will give Metra more flexibility in scheduling trains, and will increase Metra's reliability.

At Forest Hill Junction, a bridge structure would be built that would take the north-south CSX tracks over the east-west tracks in the 75th Street corridor and above 71st Street. The elimination of Forest Hill Junction will reduce the number of idling trains in the area. It will also eliminate the pounding sound of train cars crossing the junction, and greatly reduce the number of trains that must blow their horns in the area. The rail-street crossing at 71st Street will also be removed, meaning that cars will not be stopped at 71st Street, and increasing safety in that area.

75th St. CIP
525 W. Monroe St.
Suite 200
Chicago, Illinois 60661
www.75thcip.org ◆ info@75thcip.org

At 80th Street Junction, the Union Pacific railroad tracks would be re-routed over an existing rail bridge, and extra space and additional tracks would be added through the junction. This will eliminate conflicts at a point where currently six tracks converge onto two.

South of Hamilton Park on the east side of the project, a flyover will be built that will connect the Metra SouthWest Service Line with the Rock Island District line

The work described above will eliminate conflicts at Belt Junction, located directly south of Freedom Temple Church of God in Christ, where the October 2011 75th St. CIP public meeting was held.

All replacement and reconstruction work identified at the 37 viaducts inspected by the project will be performed. This work includes replacing street and sidewalk surfaces, building curb ramps, replacing drainage, making repairs to bridgework, waterproofing bridge decks, and replacing all lighting. Maintenance work at the viaducts is not eligible for 75th St. CIP funds. However, the project has reported maintenance needs to the City of Chicago and the railroads. The city has repaired 108 lighting fixtures at 26 viaducts throughout the study area, and cleared vegetation at the Hamilton Park pedestrian underpass.

All of this work is dependent upon the completion of the Environmental Impact Statement Process, and cannot be completed unless and until funding is secured for the project. The earliest work could begin is 2015.

Next Steps:

The 75th St. CIP Project Team will now refine the Preferred Alternative, evaluating potential benefits, impacts, and costs for comparison to the No Build Alternative. The Project Team is preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which will be made available to the public for review. A public hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be held in summer 2012.

WIA members and the public can continue to be involved in the project by:

- Requesting speakers for local group meetings
- Reading brochures, website, and other project publications
- Reading the DEIS on the project website or at libraries when it is available later this year
- Attending the upcoming public hearing. The Project Team will publicize the public hearing as they have publicized the 75th St. CIP's public meetings, using methods including:
    - Newspaper advertisements
    - Postcard mailing

- Distribution of postcard packets to local organizations, elected officials, and Joint Community Advisory Group members
- Door hangers
- Notice on 75th St. CIP website
- Email blast
- Posters at Metra stations

- Sending comments through
  - Online comment form at www.75thCIP.org
  - Project Team email at info@75thcip.org
  - Mail—525 W. Monroe St., Suite 200, Chicago, IL 60661

Discussion:

The 75th St. CIP team members responded to questions and made comments from the members of the WIA including:

Will the 75th St. CIP require the acquisition of any property in Wrightwood? No, the only property acquisitions will be in the neighborhood south of Hamilton Park. The project will require the acquisition of 20 properties there.

Is one of those properties a church? Yes, one of the properties that the project would need to acquire is a church. The members of the church said that they preferred for their property to be acquired rather than remain near the new flyover.

Where is Hamilton Park? Hamilton Park is between Halstead Street and the Dan Ryan Expressway, between 71st Street and 74th Street.

Will the project have any impacts to roads? The project will have impacts to roads in two places. The Union Avenue viaduct on the east side of the project will be closed at 75th Street. The railroad tracks at the crossing at 71st Street will raised over the street, so that cars will not have to wait at that crossing. This will have a positive impact on traffic and safety in the area.

Will any new viaducts be built in the area? No.

75th St. CIP
525 W. Monroe St.
Suite 200
Chicago, Illinois 60661
www.75thcip.org ◆ info@75thcip.org

Why is this project being done now? Did people just all of a sudden notice these problems? Actually, these train congestion problems have been developing for years. The train tracks were built before the residential neighborhoods in the area, and train traffic has been growing ever since. This project will solve transportation problems that have existed for a long time.

Will any tracks be raised in the area? Yes. The north-south CSX tracks will be raised from near Marquette Avenue to near 79th Street. The raised structure has to be long because trains can't climb steep hills. The tracks will go over 71st Street and over the current Forest Hill Junction, eliminating those conflicts.

When will the work be done? When will they fix the viaducts? The project is in the preliminary planning stages now. The earliest that any work could be done is in 2015, and that depends on funding.

Who will fund the project? The project will be funded by FHWA, IDOT, CDOT, and the railroads.

Does the project have any funding? The project has the funding to perform the preliminary planning and investigation work that we are doing now.

Conclusion:

The 75th St. CIP team thanked the WIA for the opportunity to present the project to the group, and asked them to watch for news of the Public Hearing and to attend it with their friends and neighbors. The WIA moved on to the rest of their monthly agenda.

CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
Moving Forward Together

75th St. CIP
525 W. Monroe St.
Suite 200
Chicago, Illinois 60661
www.75thcip.org ◆ info@75thcip.org

MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Date: February 27, 2012

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Place: 7801 S. Hamilton Avenue, Chicago

Subject: **Site Walk with the 76th, 77th, 78th & Hamilton Block Club**

Meeting Participants:

Name	Representing
Daisy Ryan	76th, 77th, 78th & Hamilton Block Club
Approximately 15 other members	76th, 77th, 78th & Hamilton Block Club
Kevin Glover	18th Ward, City of Chicago
Tom Livingston	CSX
John Wirtz	Jacobs

Introduction

The purpose of this meeting was to answer the questions local residents have about the proposed design of the CSX railroad tracks west of Hamilton Avenue. The group met in front of 7801 S. Hamilton Avenue. Tom Livingston and John Wirtz introduced themselves. Tom described the purpose of the CREATE Program and the concept of the Forest Hill Junction rail flyover.

Key Points Discussed

Jobs

The first question the residents asked was about job creation. Tom said that CSX is planning to hire 150 people this year, but that is not part of this project. Job candidates must apply online and can contact Tom for details. Daisy Ryan volunteered to help put local residents in contact with Tom. She said that the block club would let residents know about this opportunity.

Property Acquisition

The biggest concern from residents was the potential for property acquisition. John and Tom said that property would not be acquired in this area. The only area in the 75th St. CIP project study area where residential property would be acquired is in the neighborhood south of Hamilton Park

Track Location

The group walked to the rear yard of 2151 W. 78th Street to get a better view of the railroad tracks in relation to the homes in the cul-de-sac.

To demonstrate the location of the proposed temporary railroad tracks, Tom walked with a tape measure 69 feet from the fence at the rear property line. This point was located beyond the existing trees and vegetated slope, on top of an existing railroad embankment. John noted that the proposed temporary tracks run at an angle, so they may not be located on top of the existing embankment farther north. The temporary tracks could require tree removal and earthwork. They would rise in elevation going north, reaching a maximum elevation at Forest Hill Junction. John noted that the permanent tracks would be constructed in approximately the same location as they are now, but would be elevated. The temporary tracks would be removed after approximately one year of construction on the permanent tracks.

A resident asked why the temporary railroad tracks couldn't be constructed to the west of the existing tracks instead of to the east. John said that the project team investigated that option, but it would require property acquisition. Another resident noted that there are many homes and some businesses along the tracks north of 71st Street.

Noise and Vibration

Residents were also concerned about noise and vibration impacts. They noted existing problems with noise and vibration from train engines running, train engines idling, train whistles, and the diamond crossing at Forest Hill Junction. John noted that the project would remove the diamond crossing, which would keep trains moving rather than stopping and idling. This would also eliminate the requirement to blow the whistles when trains start from a stop. John said that he thinks the noise analysis showed that a noise wall is feasible at this location, but needed to follow up to confirm. If feasible, the location of the wall would remain to be determined. It could be constructed before the project begins to reduce noise from the temporary tracks, or it could be constructed farther from the homes after the temporary tracks are removed.

Residents showed broad support for the concept of a noise wall. They think it could be a win-win situation by reducing noise and vibration impacts for them and theft from rail cars for CSX. Tom said CSX may be able to help get a wall constructed.

ACTION ITEM: Jacobs will send noise analysis results summary to Daisy Ryan.

Other Issues

Residents also noted concerns about drainage at the foot of the existing embankment and rodents. John noted that preliminary drainage plans have been completed and include underdrains that would connect to city sewers. John also noted that the contractor selected to construct the project would be required to take rodent control measures.

The meeting concluded at 2:00 p.m.

Appendix C
Public Involvement and Agency Coordination

C4 - PROJECT BROCHURES

PROJECT BROCHURE

JUNE 2010

Illinois Department of Transportation

Context Sensitive Solutions and Project Stakeholders

Stakeholder Input

To improve conditions in the 75th Street project area, ideas and comments are essential from local elected officials, property owners, business owners, special interest groups, school and church representatives, and motorists.

These stakeholders can help develop improvements that reflect the area.

The planning team desires to understand the stakeholders' key issues and concerns and address those concerns when possible.

Under this approach—known as "Context Sensitive Solutions"—tools and information required to participate effectively will be provided to the stakeholders. Ultimate project decisions remain the responsibility of FHWA and IDOT.

Information about the project is available at www.75thcip.org. To contact the planning team, visit www.75thcip.org/contact or submit comments to:

Illinois Department of Transportation
Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation
J.R. Thompson Center, Suite 6-600
100 West Randolph Street
Chicago, IL 60601
Attn: Lawrence Wilson, Program Manager
email: info@75thcip.org

Illinois Department of Transportation
CDOT
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS

Illinois Department of Transportation
Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation
J.R. Thompson Center / Suite 6-600
100 West Randolph Street / Chicago, IL 60601

THE 75TH STREET CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

CHICAGO REGION ENVIRONMENTAL AND TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

C R E A T E
KEEPING THE GO IN CHICAGO

The Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE) is a first-of-its-kind partnership between the Federal Highway Administration, State of Illinois, City of Chicago, Metra and the nation's freight railroads.

A project of national significance, CREATE will invest billions in critically needed improvements to increase the efficiency of the region's rail infrastructure and the quality of life of Chicago-area residents.

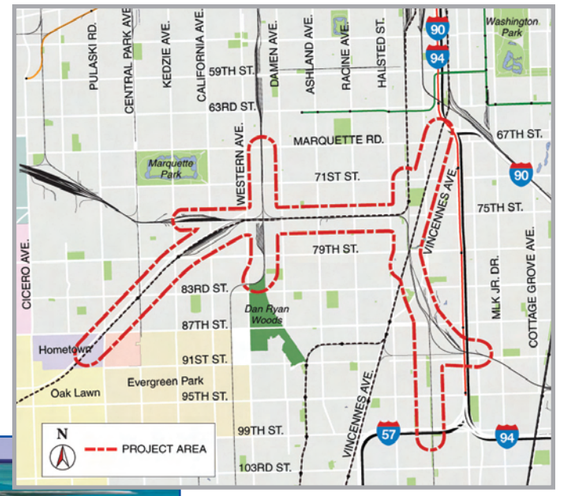
INTRODUCTION

Six major railroads—two passenger and four freight—pass through the Chicago neighborhoods of Ashburn, Englewood, Auburn Gresham, and Chatham. These railroads cross at several points within the area. The crossings result in congestion and delays.

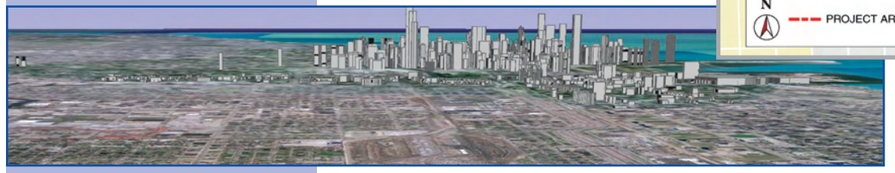
To relieve resulting congestion, a unique public-private partnership is developing the "75th Street Corridor Improvement Project" (CIP) under the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE).

CREATE is a joint effort of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), and the Association of American Railroads (AAR).

Metra operates two lines: the SouthWest Service line and the Rock Island District line. Amtrak's Cardinal Service also runs through the project area. The four freight railroads are the Norfolk Southern (NS), CSX Corporation (CSX), Union Pacific (UP), and the Belt Railway Company of Chicago (BRC).



Location Map



The goal of CREATE is to reduce congestion and environmental and social impacts by restructuring modernizing and expanding freight and passenger rail facilities.

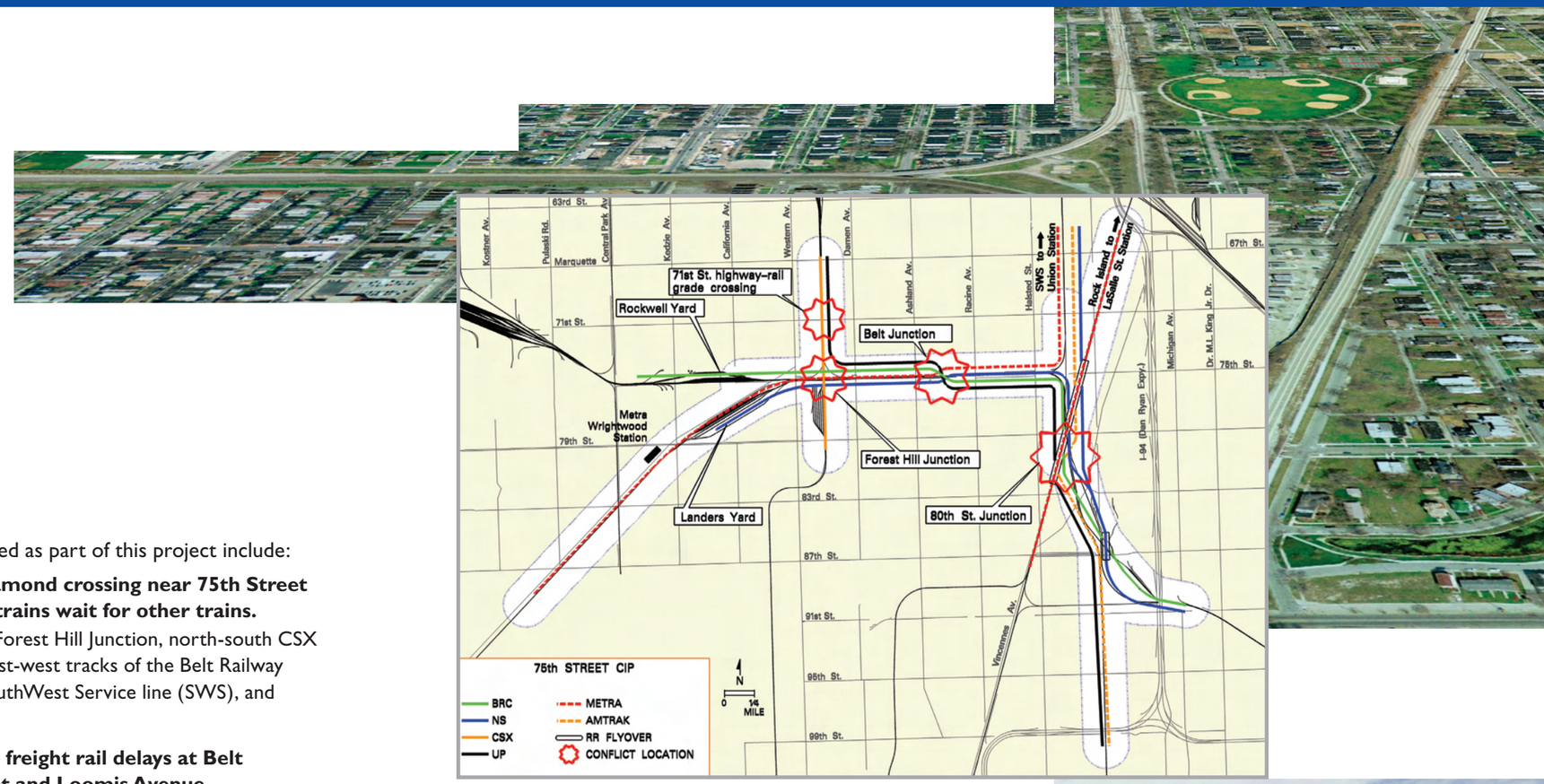
Illinois Department of Transportation
CDOT
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS

EXISTING SITUATION

The purpose of the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (CIP) is to address rail and highway conflicts within the project area that cause congestion and delays for passenger and freight rail service as well as the motoring public *(see Project Conflicts Map)*.

The rail lines pass through residential neighborhoods within the project area. In several locations, multiple rail lines come together in rail-rail crossings. These crossings do not have the capacity to accommodate the high volumes of train traffic that use them.

Congestion at the crossings causes long delays for trains passing through the project area. The idling diesel engines of the delayed trains may affect the noise and air quality of the area.



Project Conflicts Map

Forest Hill Diamond Crossing

The problems to be addressed as part of this project include:

- **Delays at the rail-rail diamond crossing near 75th Street and Western Avenue as trains wait for other trains.**
  At this crossing, known as Forest Hill Junction, north-south CSX railroad tracks cross the east-west tracks of the Belt Railway Company (BRC), Metra SouthWest Service line (SWS), and Norfolk Southern (NS).
- **Extensive passenger and freight rail delays at Belt Junction near 75th Street and Loomis Avenue.**
  Five tracks carrying Metra, the NS and the BRC converge to two tracks at Belt Junction. Most trains coming into Belt Junction need to cross to another track, much like changing lanes on a highway. Usually, only one train is able to pass through the junction at a time.
- **Delays for trains waiting to pass through the 80th Street Junction, near Wallace Avenue.**
  Six tracks carry the Union Pacific (UP), BRC, and NS lines, which converge into two tracks. Total train traffic exceeds existing track capacity, causing delays.
- **Inefficiency because of close spacing between rail junctions.**
  A train cannot stop for one junction without blocking another junction. In order to prevent gridlock, trains must wait beyond the project area for the junctions to clear. A delayed train takes longer to pass through the project area than it would if it did not have to stop. This limits capacity in the corridor.
- **Community environmental issues.**
  Idling trains can create noise and air pollution.
- **Delays for vehicular and pedestrian traffic at 71st Street.**
  71st Street crosses the four tracks of the CSX railroad at-grade near Bell Avenue. This highway-rail grade crossing creates delays for vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and could present a safety risk for that traffic.
- **Limits on Metra.**
  Metra's Southwest Service has only a single track from near Wrightwood Station to Western Avenue. This limits flexibility and reliability of Metra service.
- **Union Station congestion.**
  Metra SouthWest Service trains use Union Station, which is at capacity. This limits Metra's and Amtrak's ability to add trains, particularly during rush hours. However, LaSalle Street Station has extra capacity. A new connection between the SouthWest Service line and Metra's Rock Island District line would allow the SouthWest Service trains to use LaSalle Street Station, thus freeing capacity at Union Station.

71st Street highway-rail grade crossing

PROJECT BROCHURE

Revised, March 2011

Illinois Department of Transportation

CREATE
KEEPING THE GO IN CHICAGO

CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Moving Forward Together

The 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project is part of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE). CREATE is a first-of-its-kind partnership between the Federal Highway Administration, State of Illinois, City of Chicago, Metra and the nation's freight railroads.

A project of national significance, CREATE is investing billions in critically needed improvements to increase the efficiency of the region's rail infrastructure and the quality of life of Chicago-area residents.

INTRODUCTION

Bungalows in Auburn Gresham

Six major railroads—two passenger and four freight—pass through the Chicago neighborhoods of Ashburn, Englewood, Auburn Gresham, and West Chatham. These railroads cross each other and local roads at several points within the area. These crossings result in train and road traffic back-ups and delays.

The 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (75th St. CIP) was initiated to find solutions that will relieve this train and road traffic congestion. The Project Team includes the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Association of American Railroads (AAR). The Project Team is conducting a study to determine how the railroad tracks in these neighborhoods can be "untangled" so that trains, vehicles, and pedestrians can more easily move through the community.

As part of this study, IDOT—with help from the local community—will identify the rail and road traffic problems in the study area. IDOT will then develop and evaluate several alternatives to address the Project Needs and evaluate the environmental impacts of reasonable alternatives carried forward, including taking no action at all, which is known as the No-Build Alternative. This study, called an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), will help us find the best alternatives to address the Project Needs.

71st Street highway-rail grade crossing

Your input is important to us! This project is in the planning stage, and it will be several years before construction can start. We are letting you know about the project now so you can help us identify the rail and road traffic problems in your neighborhoods. Later, we will ask you to help us evaluate possible solutions. Working with the community, we will keep this project "Moving Forward Together".

CDOT

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS

THE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY PROCESS

IDOT—in partnership with FHWA, the CREATE partners and the public—is currently developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the 75th St. CIP. When it is complete, the Draft EIS will describe the solution that IDOT has found best addresses transportation issues in the study area. The Final EIS will describe the preferred solution and explain how decision-makers arrived at that solution. The public will be able to provide comments throughout the entire environmental process. The steps of the EIS process are:

- The process formally begins with a Notice of Intent.
- Next, the project's Draft Purpose and Need is identified.
- Public input on the Purpose and Need will be gathered at a Public Meeting in May 2011.
- Possible solutions to the Needs identified in the Purpose and Need are developed as Alternatives.
- The public provides input on the proposed Alternatives at a second Public Meeting.
- Each reasonable Alternative is evaluated to determine the best and most practical, reasonable alternative meeting the Needs identified in the Purpose and Need.
- The findings of the technical studies, impacts, mitigation, and public input are documented in the Draft EIS.
- A Public Hearing is held to formally present the findings of the Draft EIS and receive public comments.
- Based on comments and review of the Draft EIS, a Preferred Alternative for the project is included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.
- The project is officially approved in the Record of Decision, which provides final environmental clearance. The next step will be to begin the final design process.

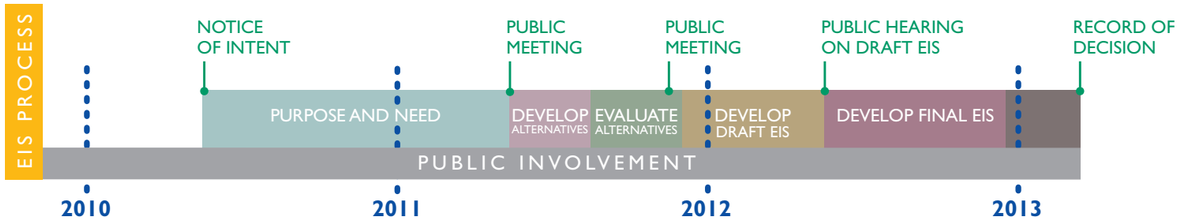
Forest Hill Junction

Community Involvement and Context Sensitive Solutions

When we say "Moving Forward Together," we mean that we are committed to learning about your community and finding solutions that exist in harmony with these unique surroundings. IDOT will use the Context Sensitive Solutions process for the 75th St. CIP—an approach that will involve the public in identifying the transportation and community concerns and values that need to be considered as we develop this project.

We want to hear from people who live in, interact with and represent the neighborhoods surrounding the project. In the coming months, we will hold public meetings and continue to work with elected officials and community leaders to better understand your community. We will also form Community Advisory Groups consisting of local leaders who can discuss the concerns of the residents in the community as it relates to the project. This vital input will help IDOT and FHWA decide on a solution that best balances the transportation needs of this project with the concerns and values of your community.

For more information on how to get involved, please see the "Contact Us" section on the back of this brochure.



75th Street Corridor Improvement Project

THE EXISTING SITUATION

The Project Team has identified these rail and road traffic problems in the neighborhoods:

Delays at the Forest Hill Junction
75th Street and Western Avenue

The north-south railroad tracks cross the east-west tracks of three other railroads at this location, causing delays for freight and passenger trains waiting for other trains to cross.

Delays at the Belt Junction
near 75th Street and Loomis Avenue

Five railroad tracks converge onto two tracks at this location. Most trains need to cross to another track, much like changing lanes on a highway. Usually, only one train is able to pass through this junction at a time.

Delays at the 80th Street Junction
near 80th Street and Wallace Avenue

Six tracks converge onto two tracks at this location. The total train traffic is more than the railroad tracks can handle, which causes freight and passenger trains to back up.

Junctions are Too Close Together
throughout area

Due to the length of most freight trains, a train cannot stop for one junction without blocking another junction. To prevent gridlock, trains must wait beyond the project area so the junctions remain clear. This stopping and re-starting causes delays and limits the amount of train traffic that can pass through the area.

Environmental Issues
throughout area

Idling trains can create noise and air pollution.

Delays for Drivers and Pedestrians at 71st Street Crossing
71st Street near Bell Avenue

At this rail-street crossing, drivers and pedestrians using 71st Street must wait for trains to pass. This crossing may also present a safety risk for drivers and pedestrians.

Poor Conditions at Viaducts
along 75th Street rail corridor

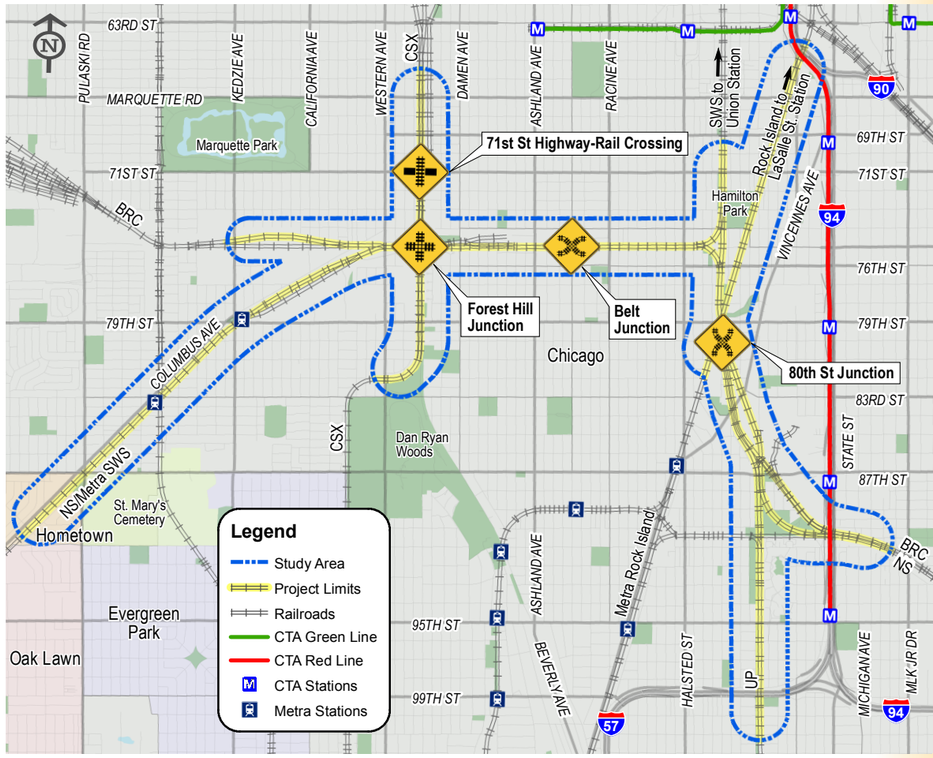
The poor conditions at some viaducts—bridges where road traffic crosses underneath railroad tracks—can cause safety issues for drivers and pedestrians.

Limits on Metra
the SouthWest Service line

Metra's SouthWest Service runs on only one track located near Wrightwood Station to Western Avenue. This limits the flexibility and reliability of Metra service.

Metra Conflicts with Freight Trains

Metra trains cross freight train tracks at several locations within the study area, including the Forest Hill Junction and the Belt Junction. There are also conflicts between freight rail lines and Metra's SouthWest Service in the shared corridor between the study area and Union Station. During peak commuter periods only Metra trains are allowed to run in these areas. As a result, freight trains—and sometimes Metra trains—may encounter lengthy delays.



75th Street Corridor Improvement Project - Study Area

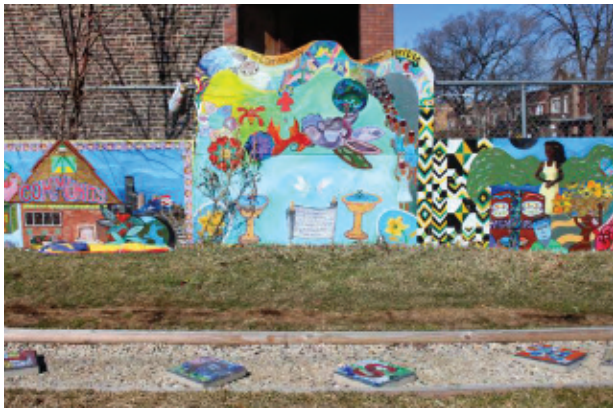
CONTACT US

Thank you for your interest in the 75th St. CIP Project. We look forward to seeing you at future public meetings, and we welcome your comments and questions at any time.

For more information, please visit our website at www.75thcip.org. While you are there, sign up for our mailing list, send a message to the Project Team, or write to:

75th St. CIP
One North Franklin
Suite 500
Chicago, IL 60606
Attn: Doug Knuth

email: info@75thCIP.org



Illinois Department of Transportation

CDOT

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS

PROJECT BROCHURE

New Insert Added, June 2011

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT UPDATE

Community Advisory Groups Hold First Meetings

The 75th St. CIP Project Team invited area leaders and representatives from businesses, police and fire districts, non-profits, churches and schools to form two Community Advisory Groups. On April 19th and 20th, 2011, the Project Team hosted the first Community Advisory Group meetings at the Wrightwood-Ashburn Public Library and the St. Leo Campus for Veterans.

During these meetings, the Project Team provided an overview of the 75th St. CIP and asked attendees to share their thoughts about the project. Carlos Nelson, a volunteer and respected neighborhood leader, led visioning sessions at both meetings by encouraging group members to describe their neighborhoods' strengths, opportunities, and needs for improvement. During break-out sessions, meeting attendees worked with Project Team members to mark transportation issues on large, aerial maps of the community. These exercises helped Project Team members understand the 75th St. CIP from the community's perspective. The valuable input shared by these local neighborhood leaders validated the transportation infrastructure problems previously identified by the Project Team, and helped us better understand how the neighborhoods view these issues. As we develop solutions, community input will help assure the project is developed in coordination with its surrounding neighborhoods.

Based on the analyses conducted by the Project Team and input received from the Community Advisory Groups, the following Problem Statement has been adopted for the 75th St. CIP:

Existing conflicts between rail lines and rail junctions that are too closely spaced cause congestion and delays for rail traffic in the 75th St. CIP study area. These conflicts also interfere with roadway traffic, particularly at the 71st Street road-rail crossing.

Members of the East Community Advisory Group indicate transportation issues on a large aerial map.

Members of the West Community Advisory Group learn about the project.

In addition to creating back-ups that force both trains and cars to idle, these conflict points create safety concerns, noise and air quality problems, and negatively affect the capacity and reliability of Metra transit service. The conditions of the existing viaducts also limit bicycle and pedestrian mobility and adversely affect neighborhood aesthetics and the residents' sense of security.

Transportation problems in the Problem Statement above relate directly to infrastructure. In addition, the Community Advisory Groups identified several other project-related concerns. We are committed to addressing these concerns throughout the implementation of the project:

- Employment and economic development: The Community Advisory Groups emphatically stated that people in their neighborhoods need good jobs.
- Appearance of railroad property: Members raised concerns about poor maintenance of railroad right-of ways, citing dumping, badly-maintained fencing, poor viaduct lighting and maintenance, overgrown vegetation and rodents as examples, and stressing the need for beautification.
- The need for railroads to be good neighbors: The Community Advisory Groups stated that railroads are not perceived as being responsive to community concerns. Members are seeking a better relationship with the railroads related to employment, the appearance of railroad property, and partnerships with non-profit organizations to benefit the community.
- Train horns: Community Advisory Group members expressed concern about train horns blowing during the day and night. Through the City of Chicago, communities can apply for quiet zones to help alleviate noise from train horns.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT UPDATE

The table illustrates how the Community Advisory Group's input supports and better defines the Problem Statement for the 75th St. CIP.

PROBLEM	EXISTING CONDITION	COMMUNITY CONCERNS IDENTIFIED
Delays at rail junctions	**Forest Hill Junction—**The north-south railroad tracks cross the east-west tracks of three other railroads at this location, causing delays for freight and passenger trains waiting for other trains to cross. **Belt Junction—**Five railroad tracks converge onto two tracks at this location. Most trains need to cross to another track, much like changing lanes on a highway. Usually, only one train is able to pass through this junction at a time. **80th Street Junction—**Six tracks converge onto two tracks at this location. The total train traffic is more than the railroad tracks can handle, which causes freight and passenger trains to back up.	• Trains idle in the project area. • Area residents report that idling trains cause noise and air pollution. • Train horns are heard blowing both during the day and at night. • Area residents report that vibrations from trains affect the foundations of adjacent homes. • The community reports that theft from rail cars on stopped trains is a concern. • Area residents report health concerns due to fumes and noise from idling trains.
Junctions are too close together	Due to the length of most freight trains, a train cannot stop for one junction without blocking another junction. To prevent gridlock, trains must wait beyond the project area so the junctions remain clear. This stopping and restarting causes delays and limits the amount of train traffic that can pass through the area.	• Trains idle in the project area. • Area residents report that idling trains cause noise and air pollution. • Train horns are heard blowing both during the day and at night. • Area residents report that vibrations from trains affect the foundations of adjacent homes. • The community reports that theft from rail cars on stopped trains is a concern.
Delays for drivers and pedestrians at 71st Street crossing	At this rail-street crossing, drivers and pedestrians using 71st Street must wait for trains to pass. This crossing may also present a safety risk for drivers and pedestrians.	• Stopped trains can cause people to be late to work, church, and school. • Adults and children sometimes climb between train cars to cross tracks. • Residents are concerned that stopped trains could delay emergency responders.
Poor conditions at viaducts	The poor condition at some viaducts—bridges where road traffic crosses underneath railroad tracks—can cause safety issues for drivers and pedestrians.	• The community reports that viaducts are uninviting to walk or drive under. • Area residents are worried about falling concrete and debris. • Many viaducts are badly lit. • There can be water, ice, or muddy debris on sidewalks underneath viaducts due to poor drainage. • Low clearances of viaducts have prevented truck deliveries to neighborhood businesses. • Low clearances also sometimes cause trucks to become stuck under viaducts. • Vegetation around some viaducts limits visibility. • Columns limit visibility and access for some turning movements at bridges next to intersections.
Limits on Metra's SouthWest Service line	Metra's SouthWest Service runs on only one track located near Wrightwood Station to Western Avenue. This limits the flexibility and reliability of Metra service.	• Access to reliable transit is a concern to the community.
Metra conflicts with freight trains	Metra trains cross freight train tracks at several locations within the study area, including the Forest Hill Junction and the Belt Junction. There are also conflicts between freight rail lines and Metra's SouthWest Service in the shared corridor between the study area and Union Station. During peak commuter periods Metra trains have priority in these areas. As a result, freight trains—and sometimes Metra trains—may encounter lengthy delays.	• Access to reliable transit is a concern to the community.

PROJECT BROCHURE

Range of Alternatives, October 2011

Illinois Department of Transportation

CREATE
KEEPING THE GO IN CHICAGO

75th ST.

CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Moving Forward Together

CREATE Program:

The 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (75th St. CIP) is part of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program. A program of national significance, CREATE was developed to increase the efficiency of the region's rail infrastructure.

Project Team:

The development of the Environmental Impact Statement for the 75th St. CIP is being led by the Federal Highway Administration and the Illinois Department of Transportation, in coordination with the Chicago Department of Transportation and Association of American Railroads.

THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

In the Chicago neighborhoods of Ashburn, Englewood, Auburn Gresham, and West Chatham, railroad tracks serving two passenger and four freight rail lines meet in a complicated arrangement of tracks, junctions, switches and overpasses. These tracks—built as long as 150 years ago—were not designed for modern rail traffic or for the transportation needs of the future. This has resulted in the following transportation problems, which the Project Team and the local community jointly identified:

- Delays at rail junctions
- Junctions too close together
- Delays for drivers and pedestrians at 71st Street crossing
- Poor conditions at viaducts
- Limits on Metra's SouthWest Service line
- Metra conflicts with freight trains

The 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (75th St. CIP) was initiated to solve these transportation problems. This brochure presents the Range of Alternatives the Project Team developed to address these transportation needs, explains how they were developed, and describes how anyone interested in the project can get involved.

Developing the Build Alternative

The Project Team—with the help of the local community—developed the project's Purpose and Need statement by first identifying the rail and roadway traffic problems in the study area. We evaluated the causes of these problems and developed potential solutions to address them. We then analyzed how well these potential solutions met the Purpose and Need and the amount and nature of new property that would need to be acquired to construct them.

The Project Team also presented these solutions to the Community Advisory Groups to obtain their input. Based on our analysis and feedback from the Community Advisory Groups, we combined the best potential solutions into a "Build Alternative." In the Hamilton Park area, we developed three solutions that all meet the Purpose and Need for the 75th St. CIP, but would have different potential impacts to the community. We are presenting them as "Alignment Alternates" within that Build Alternative, and we are asking the community to help us evaluate them. We will also compare the Build Alternative to taking no action, which is known as the "No Build Alternative." For the Build Alternative, we will evaluate cost and other potential impacts and benefits, including noise, environmental effects, and community effects.

Your input is important to us! Please help us evaluate the Range of Alternatives described on the following pages. The last page of the brochure explains how you can provide your comments and get involved with the project. With your valuable input, we will keep the 75th St. CIP "Moving Forward Together."

CDOT

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS

75TH ST. CIP PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the 75th St. CIP is to improve mobility for rail passengers, freight, and motorists in the project study area (see map below). To achieve the project's purpose, a Build Alternative must address the following four transportation needs:

PROJECT NEED 1: **Reduce rail-rail crossing conflicts**

- Forest Hill Junction
- 80th Street Junction
- Metra SouthWest Service (SWS) Connection to Metra Rock Island
- Belt Junction

PROJECT NEED 2: **Reduce road-rail crossing conflicts**

- 71st Street crossing

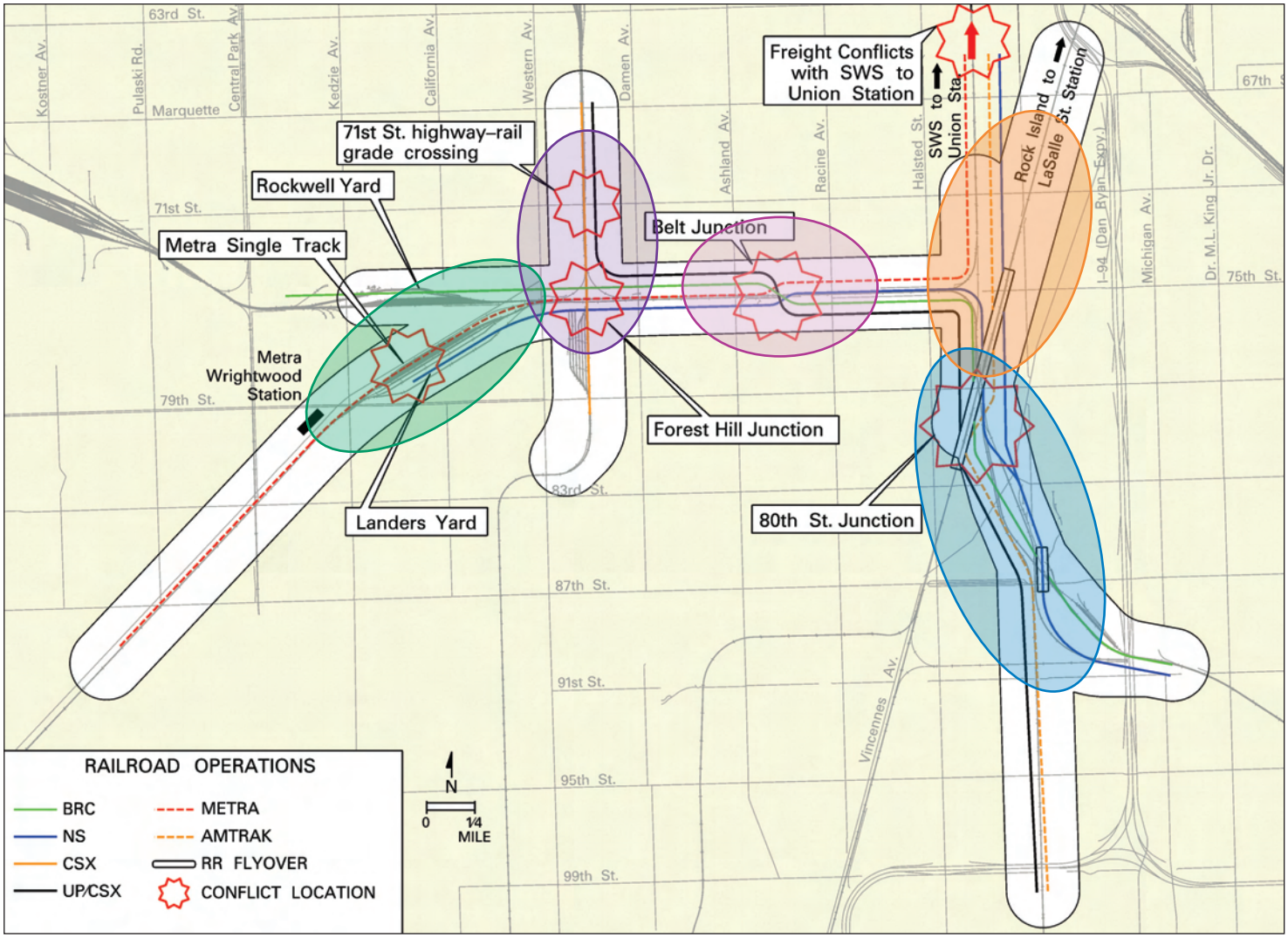
PROJECT NEED 3: **Improve rail passenger service reliability**

- Along Columbus Avenue

PROJECT NEED 4: **Reduce local mobility problems**

- Viaduct conditions (throughout project)

To meet these transportation needs, the Project Team identified five improvement areas where specific conflicts could be alleviated and examined mobility issues throughout the corridor. See the map below for their locations.



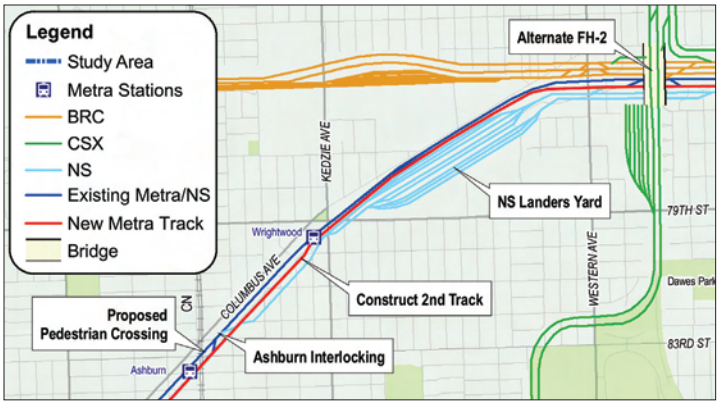
THE BUILD ALTERNATIVE

At each improvement area, we developed alternates to alleviate specific conflicts. To get to the Build Alternative, we combined the recommended alternates from each improvement area and assessed local mobility issues throughout the project study area. The improvement area alternates and viaduct conditions were discussed with Community Advisory Group members. Based on feedback we received, as well as a technical evaluation of how well the alternates addressed the Purpose and Need of the project, we made the following recommendations as to which improvements should be included in the Build Alternative.

Metra Reliability East of Columbus Avenue

Metra SWS trains run on only one track from just north of the Ashburn Metra Station to Western Avenue. As a result, only one Metra train at a time can pass through this section of track. This limits the flexibility and reliability of Metra service. A possible solution is the addition of a second Metra track.

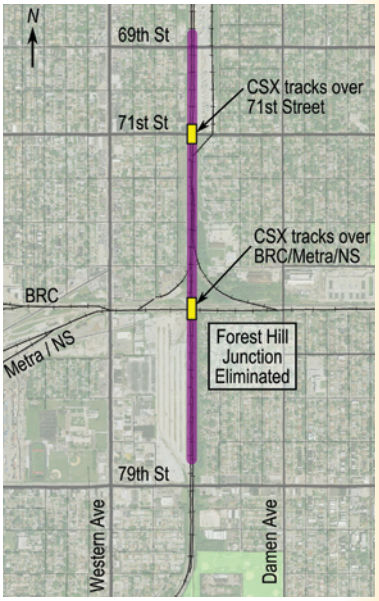
A second Metra track would replace one of the tracks in Landers Yard to allow Metra trains to travel in both directions. Trains and their headlights would only be one foot closer to Columbus Avenue traffic than they are now. This would allow space for roadway and railroad maintenance, roadway lighting and railway signals. There would be no property acquisition.



Build Alternative

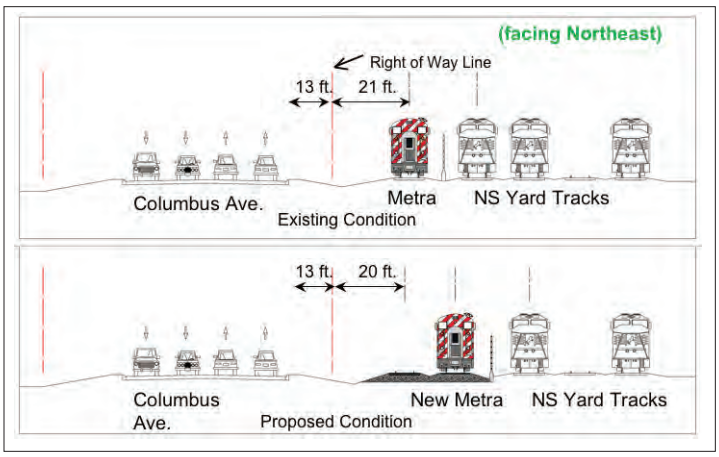
Forest Hill Junction and 71st Street Crossing

At Forest Hill Junction, two north-south railroad tracks cross four east-west tracks, causing delays for freight and passenger trains waiting for other trains to cross. At the nearby 71st Street road-rail crossing, drivers and pedestrians using 71st Street must wait for trains to pass, presenting a potential safety risk. The issues at these locations can be addressed with one solution – raising the north-south tracks over 71st Street and over the east-west tracks at Forest Hill Junction. The train tracks would begin rising north of 69th Street, cross 71st Street at a height of about 19.5 feet, continue to a maximum height of approximately 32 feet above Forest Hill Junction, and then head down to meet the existing track north of 79th Street.

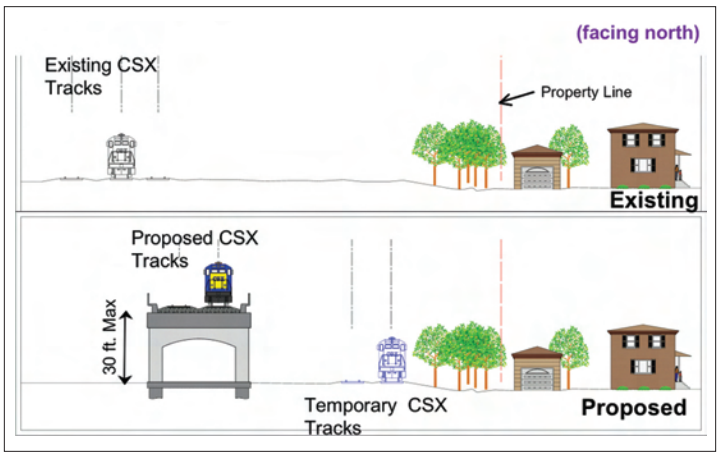


Build Alternative

No homes or businesses would need to be acquired, and no streets would be closed. It would eliminate all rail-rail conflicts at Forest Hill Junction. It would also eliminate the pounding noise from trains passing over the junction.



New Metra track allows for two-way travel



North-south tracks over east-west tracks near 75th Street

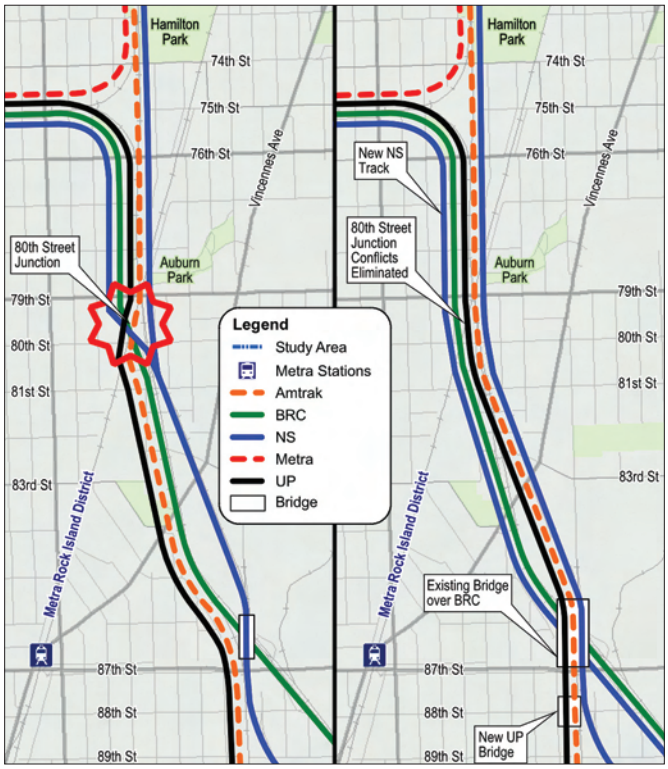
80th Street Junction

Six tracks converge to two tracks at this junction. These tracks are used by five different railroads. The total train traffic is more than the railroad tracks can handle, causing delays for freight and passenger trains.

This bottleneck can be addressed by adding two tracks through the 80th Street Junction. The train crossing conflicts can be addressed by:

- Shifting Amtrak and Union Pacific (UP) trains to the existing Norfolk Southern (NS) bridge over the Belt Railway Company of Chicago (BRC) just north of 87th Street;
- Shifting Amtrak and UP tracks to the east side of the embankment north of 80th Street;
- Constructing a new NS track northward and westward to Landers Yard; and
- Building a new bridge over 88th Street between the two existing railroad bridges.

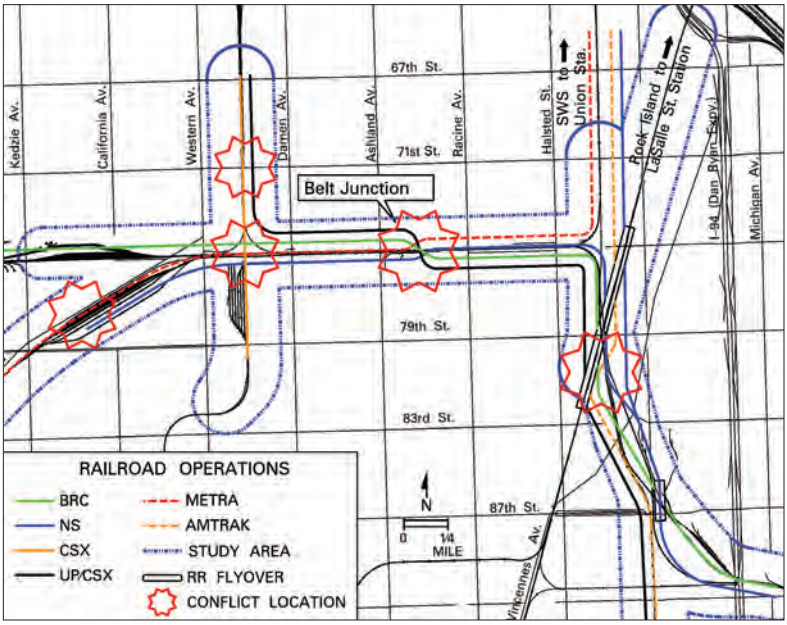
No homes or businesses would need to be acquired, and no streets would be closed. Conflicts between UP, the BRC, CSX, NS, and Amtrak would be greatly reduced by making better use of the existing bridge to route the trains. This solution would reduce train delays and idling trains in the area.



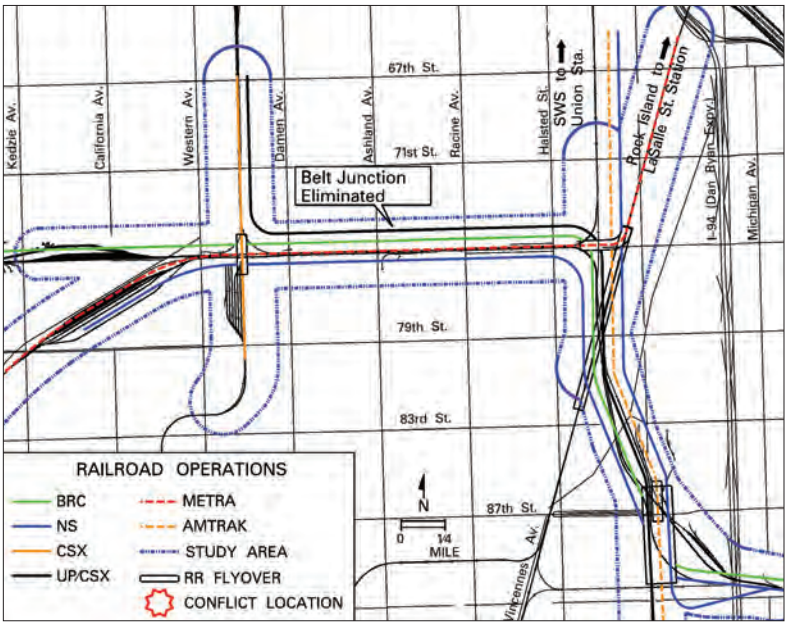
Existing condition **Build Alternative**

Belt Junction

Resolving the railroad track conflicts at Forest Hill and 80th Street junctions and building the Metra flyover south of Hamilton Park would eliminate Belt Junction and the delays it causes for rail passengers and freight.



Existing condition showing rail conflicts



Build Alternative eliminates rail conflicts

Local Mobility and Viaduct Conditions

Poor conditions at some viaducts throughout the study area can cause safety issues for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians, and make it difficult to get around. Community members have emphasized the following safety and mobility issues at viaducts:

- Low visibility due to lighting conditions
- Poor drainage
- Crumbling concrete
- Poor roadway and sidewalk pavement conditions

The Project Team has surveyed 36 area viaducts to find and document these problems.

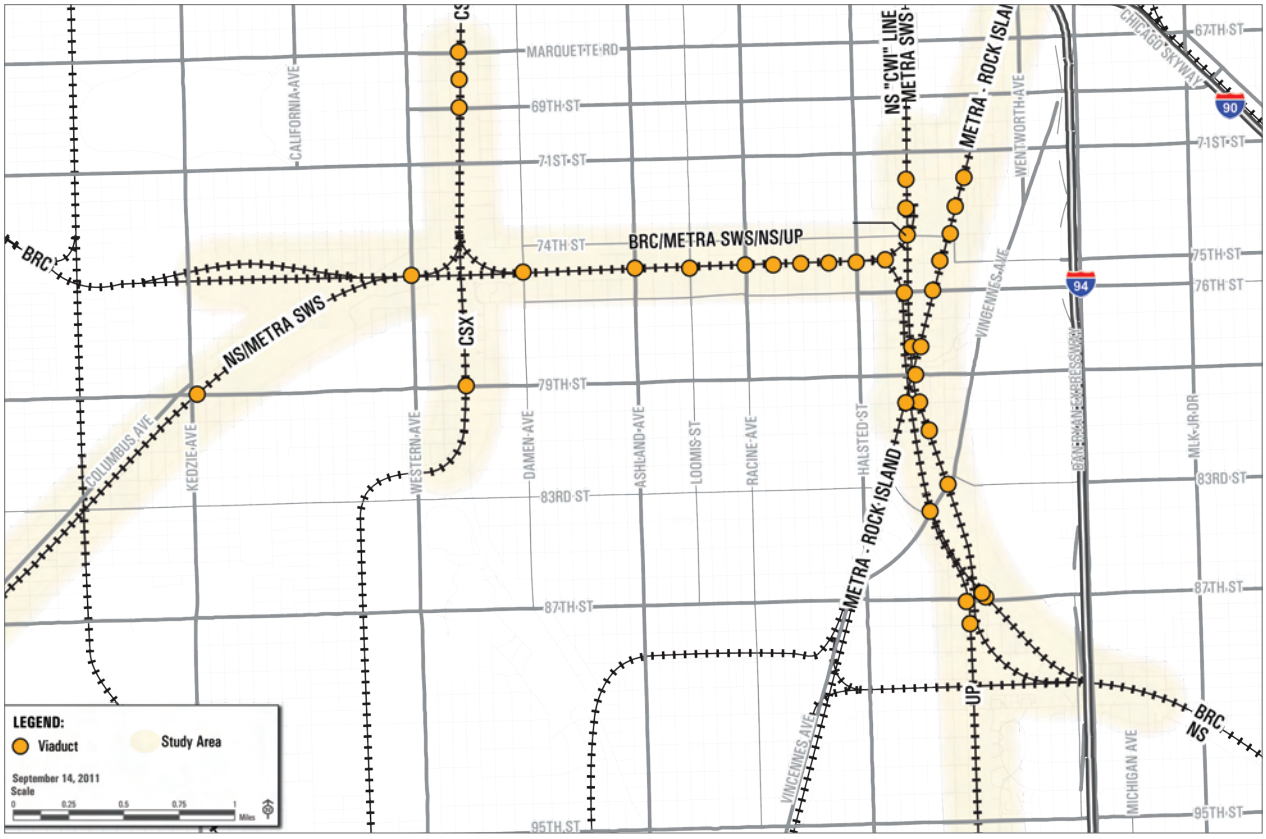
Viaduct work would be included and funded as part of the 75th St. CIP if a Build Alternative is selected. This work could begin once the environmental and design phases are complete (2014 at the earliest, depending on funding). Work could include improvements to lighting, drainage, pavement, and bridges, and could be combined with other work being performed on the structures.

We will continue to ask for public input to identify the improvements the community would find most valuable. Based on public input, our technical assessment of viaduct conditions, and funding considerations, we will include a set of viaduct improvements in the Preferred Build Alternative.

Viaduct improvements being made as a result of 75th St. CIP community meetings

Maintenance

Routine maintenance to viaducts is not eligible for 75th St. CIP federal funds and is considered separate from the project itself. The project team has shared the results of the viaduct surveys with CDOT, IDOT, and the railroads so they can address some of the known maintenance issues now. Viaduct maintenance and improvements already began in some locations in mid-September.



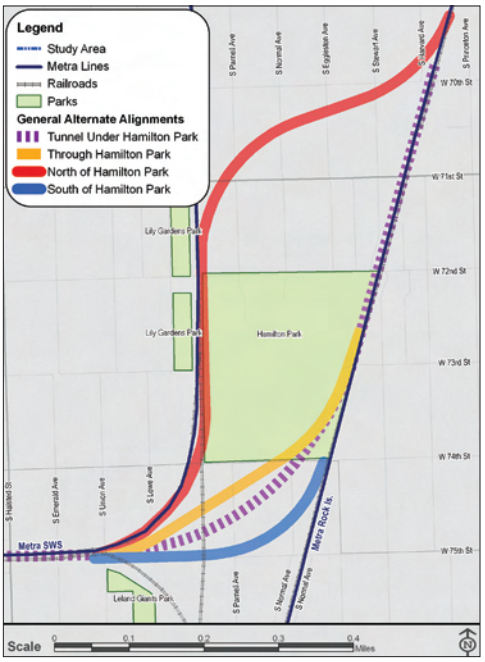
Viaducts surveyed

Metra SWS Connection to Rock Island District Line

Metra's SWS line shares its tracks with freight traffic along the 75th Street corridor and north to Union Station, and must cross freight tracks at Belt Junction. To avoid these conflicts, the 75th St. CIP would connect the SWS tracks to Metra's Rock Island District Line, which arrives downtown at LaSalle Street Station.

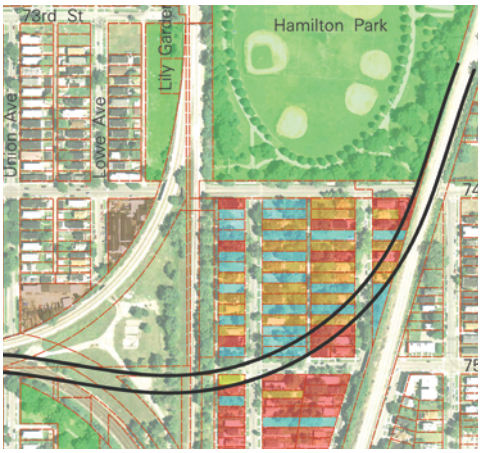
The Project Team considered several ways to connect Metra SWS tracks to the Rock Island tracks. A **tunnel** would be impractical, requiring the closure of many streets, huge ventilation shafts, acquisition of property, and a massive financial outlay. Federal law would prohibit a bridge over Hamilton Park, a valuable community resource listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A **bridge north of Hamilton Park** would require the acquisition of approximately 60 properties, and the bridge would be about 4,700 feet long. A **bridge south of Hamilton Park** would require the acquisition of approximately 20 properties, and the bridge would be about 1,400 feet long.

Since the potential impacts of a bridge south of Hamilton Park are much less, the Project Team decided to explore solutions in this area. The Community Advisory Groups were in consensus with this decision. The Project Team developed three Alignment Alternates. The map below shows the three Alignment Alternates, and the chart compares the potential impacts.

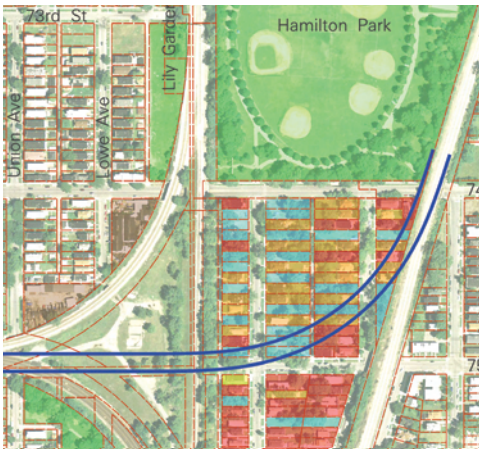


Connections considered

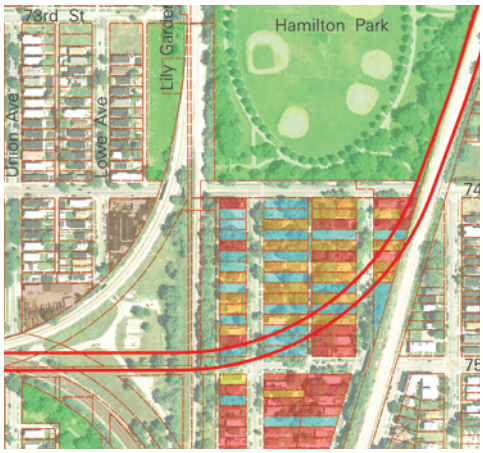
Alignment Alternate 1



Alignment Alternate 2



Alignment Alternate 3

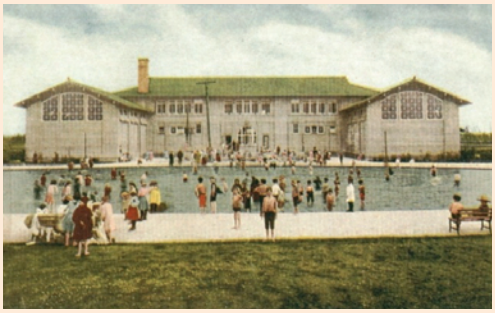


Alignment Alternate	Train speed on curve	Bridge over 75th Street	Park land needed	Total Properties to be acquired	Vacant	Institutional (churches, schools, etc.)	Residential (single- and multi-unit)	Dwelling Units
1	40 mph	Yes	None	21	5	1	15	25
2	35 mph	No	None	21	7	0	14	23
3	40 mph	No	Minimal (0.032 acres)	20	8	0	12	18

Because each Alignment Alternate meets the 75th St. CIP's Purpose and Need but has different potential impacts on the neighborhood south of Hamilton Park, the Project Team is asking for public input on these Alignment Alternates.

Historic Hamilton Park

Hamilton Park was created in 1904 as part of a system of 10 parks designed to create breathing spaces for people living in the crowded tenements of Chicago. The Olmsted Brothers designed the landscape of the park, and Daniel Burnham's firm designed the field house. Since Hamilton Park is a public park listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it is protected by several federal laws. Any taking of park land will require approval of the Chicago Park District and the Illinois State Historical Preservation Office, as well as the Federal Highway Administration under Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966.



A historic postcard of Hamilton Park

Hamilton Park today

THE NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Build Alternative, none of the proposed work would be undertaken and railroads and roadways in the study area would not be changed by the project. The No Build Alternative is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. It serves as a baseline for comparison against other Alternatives. In some cases, the No Build Alternative may be the Preferred Alternative, especially when the potential impacts are great and the need is relatively minor.

PROPERTY ACQUISITION

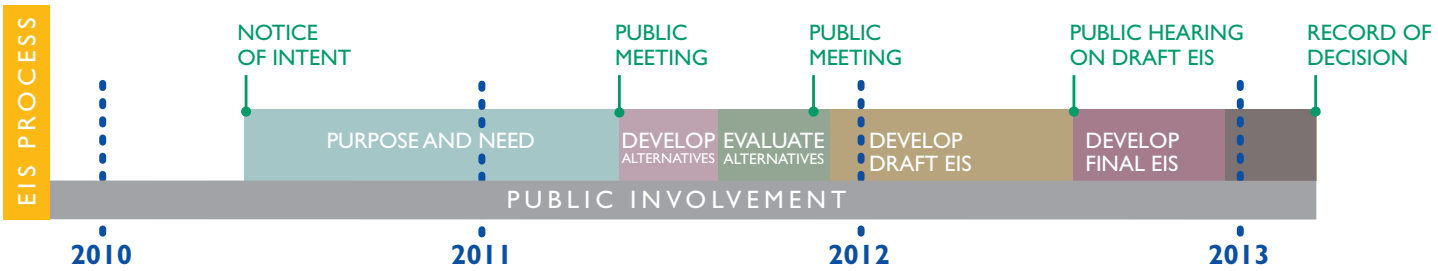
In the event that the Build Alternative is chosen for the 75th St. CIP, the Project Team will make every effort to minimize the need to acquire property. The Build Alternative described in this brochure includes the acquisition of property in the neighborhood south of Hamilton Park. Prior to selecting an Alternative for the 75th St. CIP and after public comments on the Range of Alternatives are received at the fall 2011 public meeting, we will define the exact number and location of any proposed acquisitions.

Any necessary property acquisition will follow the federal Uniform Act. This law ensures that:

- Owners are fairly compensated for the value of their property
- Renters and owners receive relocation assistance, including moving expenses
- Other costs associated with comparable replacement housing are covered
- Residents are given the chance to relocate within the community, if possible

All owners and occupants of property adjacent to or potentially affected by the project will receive notices of public meetings by mail.

Should the Build Alternative be selected for the project, the property acquisition process cannot begin until the Federal Highway Administration issues a Record of Decision. The current schedule anticipates a Record of Decision in **March 2013.**



NEXT STEPS

The Project Team—in partnership with the public—is currently developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the 75th St. CIP. The first two steps of the EIS process are complete: the Project Team has developed the project's Purpose and Need statement and developed a Range of Alternatives to address the identified transportation needs. We are now presenting the Alternatives to the public for their input. After public comments are received, the Project Team will take the following steps:

- The Build Alternative and the No Build Alternative will be evaluated and refined to determine the most practical and reasonable Alternative meeting the needs identified in the project's Purpose and Need statement.
- The findings of the technical studies, potential benefits and impacts, mitigation measures, and public input will be documented in a Draft EIS. The Draft EIS will also identify a Preferred Alternative for the 75th St. CIP.
- A public hearing will be held to formally present the findings of the Draft EIS and receive public comments.
- Based on public and agency review of the Draft EIS, the Project Team will develop the Final EIS.
- FHWA will then issue a Record of Decision signaling its decision. If the Build Alternative is chosen, the next phase of the project will be the final design process.

PUBLIC PROCESS

As we have throughout the 75th St. CIP study process, the Project Team would like to hear from people who live in, interact with, and represent the neighborhoods surrounding this project. We will continue to work with local community leaders and public officials, hold public meetings, visit community groups, and listen to neighborhood input.

CONTACT US

Visit us at www.75thcip.org to send a message to our Project Team and sign up for project updates. You can also email us at info@75thcip.org or write to:

75th St. CIP
One N. Franklin, Suite 500
Chicago, IL 60606
Attn: Gretchen Wahl

Illinois Department of Transportation

CDOT

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS