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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
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November 15, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

As your Department begins the hard work of figuring out how to allocate the billions of dollars for the transformative investments in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, I am writing to ask that you provide funding to the Chicago Transit Authority's (CTA) Red Line extension via Capital Investment Grants and to the 95th Street and the Union Pacific railroad grade separation project via the newly-created Railroad Crossing Elimination Program.

As you may recall from your visit to Chicago earlier this year, the CTA Red Line runs through the heart of the South Side of Chicago and is the only CTA rail line that serves the far South Side. However, the line currently terminates at 95th Street, while the city continues until 138th Street. This leaves many without easy access to rapid rail transit and the access to employment and mobility that a major rail line provides. This transit desert disproportionately impacts Black residents, meaning that the early termination of the Red Line has considerable equity implications. This results in many of Chicago's African American citizens literally being disconnected from the "mainland" of the rest of the city. It reminds one of the "colony" and the "motherland" divides of a past time.

Expanding the Red Line would allow thousands of residents who currently lack access to affordable means of transportation to move around the city with ease, helping to lower barriers to obtaining and retaining high-paying jobs and to participating totally in Chicago's vibrant economic, academic, social, and cultural activities. The CTA has conducted numerous studies over the years on the Red Line extension and has published a draft Environmental Impact Statement that it is now finalizing. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning added the extension to its "fiscally-constrained long-range transportation plan" three years ago. Simply put, the CTA has done its homework, and it is clear the extension is desperately needed and would bring numerous benefits to Chicago's far South Side.

As a part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, \$8 billion has been appropriated to Capital Investment Grants, with an additional \$15 billion authorized to be appropriated over the next five years. How the Department of Transportation chooses to spend that money will help shape the

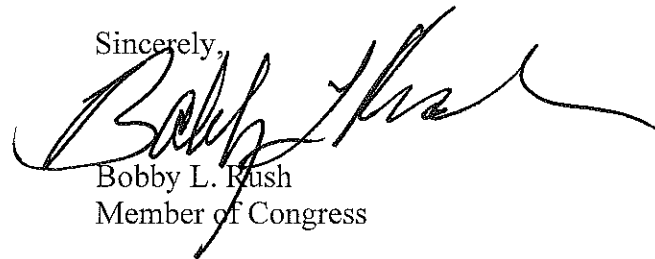
legacy of the Biden–Harris Administration. Secretary Buttigieg, you have repeatedly expressed a desire to use transportation projects to help dismantle the ugly, lingering specter of racism that too often still dictates where people of color live and have access to employment. Funding the Red Line extension via Capital Investment Grants would be an important step in making transportation work for people of color, rather than working against them.

Additionally, 95th Street is a vital corridor for transportation on the South Side, with over 24,000 passenger vehicles, 2,800 trucks, and 700 buses each day crossing the Union Pacific (UP) railroad grade crossing that intersects the street.¹ Whenever trains cross the street, they create congestion that can snarl traffic and delay commutes. The City of Chicago has also designated the intersection a “911 Critical Crossing”, meaning that it has designated it as a critical chokepoint that limits communities from having access to vital emergency services.² The City of Chicago and CMAP have recognized the importance of the project: it is listed on CMAP’s e-TIP database, and the City and State have already budgeted some funds towards engineering for the project.³

Eliminating the at-grade crossing of the railroad and 95th Street will have major safety and congestion benefits. Congress recognized the importance of removing grade crossings when it appropriated \$3 billion in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to separate and remove grade crossings. I hope you will fund the separation of the 95th Street and UP crossing via these newly appropriated funds.

I urge the Department of Transportation to robustly fund both these projects, and I strongly support both the Red Line extension and 95th Street and UP railroad grade separation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

cc:

Ms. Nuria Fernandez

Administrator, Federal Transit Administration

Mr. Amit Bose

Acting Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration

Mr. Mitch Landrieu

Senior Advisor and Infrastructure Coordinator

¹CREATE Program, June, 2018. “95th Street and Union Pacific Grade Separation Fact Sheet.”

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² *Ibid.*

³ CMAP. Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. Accessed November 15, 2021.

https://etip.cmap.illinois.gov/project_info?isReadOnly=True&project_id=31169&version=11+&lat=41.7216600453662&lng=-87.6336099730987&redirect=fullmap&site_list=0%2C1%2C3%2C2%2C&zoom_level=17#tabs-1