



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT JOINS 56 REGIONAL MAYORS TO SUPPORT \$850 MILLION INVESTMENT IN CHICAGO-BASED PASSENGER RAIL**

*Pending Amtrak application could improve Chicago Union Station and build capacity for better train service throughout the region and nation*

**CHICAGO** — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot spearheaded a letter sent to U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg and Federal Railroad Administration administrator Amit Bose to support Amtrak's proposed \$850 million Chicago Hub Improvement Program (CHIP). The letter garnered the support of 56 Mayors, highlighting the urgent and collective need for infrastructure improvements. If successful, Amtrak would use funds from a federal Mega Grant to improve Chicago Union Station, create more routes into the city, and open a variety of new service options.

"I am proud to join dozens of regional mayors in support of this transformative project for transportation in the Midwest," said Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. "This investment in improved train services will give Chicago residents and visitors convenient, safe, and modernized travel options while reducing our carbon footprint. It will also lay the foundation for a more equitable transportation network, giving Illinois residents from all walks of life access to the amenities and opportunities found in our great city and region."

CHIP would create a new way for passenger trains to access Union Station from the south. Benefits include significantly improving on-time performance for both Amtrak and Metra trains and providing capacity for new routes and increased frequencies. In addition, CHIP would provide faster connections between the region's largest job hubs and modernize Union Station to improve passenger flow and station ventilation. CHIP would also lay foundations for future improvements, such as direct access to intercity trains at O'Hare and McCormick Place.



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“It’s no surprise that mayors from so many other cities support investment in better rail infrastructure in Chicago, because our city serves as the hub for most of North America,” said Rick Harnish, executive director of the Chicago-based High Speed Rail Alliance. “Our region has wonderful colleges, thriving towns and cities, innovative businesses, and great people. The missing link is a network of fast, safe, and affordable trains connecting them. CHIP would provide a first, foundational step toward implementing this vision.”

Mayors from many other cities in Illinois signed the letter — so did mayors in neighboring states such as Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, as well as Idaho, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, and Ohio.

The letter builds on support expressed at a July press conference at Chicago Union Station. Then, a coalition of local leaders gathered to advocate for the project, including Mayor Lightfoot; Senator Durbin; Senator Duckworth; Rep. Garcia; Secretary Omer Osman of the Illinois Department of Transportation; Chicago Metra’s CEO Jim Lewinski; Jennifer Killen, the head of Cook County’s Department of Transportation and Highways; and Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner.

A decision on the CHIP application is expected before the end of the year. For more information about CHIP (formerly known as Chicago Access), please see [the resources provided by Joe Schacter, Amtrak Senior Manager for State Corridors.](#)

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