Freight Rail and Chicago Fact Sheet

The Significance of Chicago

- For almost 150 years, Chicago has been the largest rail hub in the country
- Chicago is the only city where all six Class-One railroads converge
- More than 1/3 of the nation’s intermodal traffic and half of the country’s container traffic passes through the Chicago area
- More than 1,200 trains pass through Chicago rail yards each day
- 37,500 rail freight cars pass through the city every day; this figure is projected to increase to 67,000 by 2020
- Trains passing through Chicago carry 75 percent of our nation’s freight, valued at $350 billion
- Depending on the time of year, Chicago is the third largest market for global traffic containers
- The regional freight industry employs an estimated 38,000 workers, accounting for more than $1.7 billion in annual wages
- Chicago’s freight industry contributes $22 billion in annual economic value to the region’s manufacturers and businesses

Future Investment

- In 2003, U.S. Department of Transportation, the State of Illinois, the City of Chicago, Metra, Amtrak, and the nation’s freight railroads launched the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE)
- CREATE will invest $1.5 billion in rail infrastructure improvements
- It is estimated that the project will create more than 1,000 jobs with an annual payroll of $50 million.
- The project will generate an estimated $140 million annually in purchases of goods and services from area businesses