



Central Avenue at BRC Railroad Grade Separation Study Public Meeting #2 Response to Comments

Comment: Why aren't the other crossing locations at 63rd and Harlem and 65th and Harlem being studied before this location? And why did the crossing on 71st Street in Bridgeview already get a grade separation?

Response: The Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency ([CREATE](#)) Program is a first-of its-kind partnership between the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), State of Illinois, City of Chicago, Metra, Amtrak, and the nation's freight railroads. A Program of national significance, CREATE was developed to increase the efficiency of the region's rail infrastructure.

CREATE projects are selected for further development based upon a variety of factors including local and regional importance, stakeholder support, funding availability, and magnitude of impacts. CREATE Project GS14, 71st Street/BRC RR in Bridgeview, had strong local support and funding contribution from Bridgeview which helped get the project fully implemented; GS14 cost \$30 million to construct.

CREATE Project GS2, Central Avenue/BRC RR at 54th Street in Chicago, has local and regional importance and is funded for the Phase I preliminary engineering and environmental study that will determine if a grade separation is the preferred alternative for improvement. Any further development of the GS2 project will be determined upon completion of the Phase I study; its cost if constructed could be in the \$68 million range.

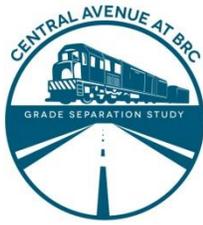
CREATE Project GS1, 63rd Street/BRC RR at Harlem Avenue in Chicago, is also an important project, however, it is not currently funded in the FY 2015-2020 Proposed Multi-Modal Transportation Improvement Program (Program) for any further studies or development. The Program is updated on an annual basis and GS1 will be considered for funding under a future Program and may move forward into the study phase at that time. GS1 is expected to have a higher total cost than GS2.

The BRC crossing of 65th Street at Harlem is not a CREATE project but was considered as a potential candidate for a grade separation as part of an earlier feasibility study. However, it was not carried forward in deference to the aforementioned projects that were deemed more important.

Comment: If my home or business were to be acquired as part of this project, will I be compensated with a fair property value and what are the specifics of the land acquisition process?

Response: IDOT's policy requires a step-by-step procedure when acquiring property to construct capital improvements. The land acquisition process will follow the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act, as amended, and the [IDOT Land Acquisition Procedure Manual](#). Steps in the process include:

1. Determination of ownership
2. Independent appraisal that incorporates fair market value
3. Negotiations
4. Condemnation or court proceedings if necessary
5. Relocation assistance when building acquired



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Comment: Concerned about businesses and residential displacements and effects to property value

Response: Residential and commercial displacements are expected. The extent of impacts will not be known until a Preferred Alternative is selected. Once the Preferred Alternative is selected, all affected property owners will be notified via certified letters.

Comment: In order to reduce travel delay along Central Avenue the BRC should reduce the number and the length of trains.

Response: The project team met with the BRC to determine if they could change the track configuration or reduce the number of trains in order to reduce the travel delay along Central Avenue. The BRC noted that the current track configuration and number of trains is essential to their business operations and do not foresee making any changes.

Railroads have operating procedures designed to prevent extensive blockage of crossings for various length of time:

http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/xings/com_roaduser/07010/sec02.htm

Comment: The BRC should eliminate the tracks to the west of the airport, and convert the tracks to a nature trail or a jogging track.

Response: The BRC Railroad corridor is owned by a private company regulated by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Neither IDOT, FHWA, FRA nor the project team for Central at BRC project have authority to eliminate rail tracks or designate a different use for it.

Comment: Due to traffic problems on Cicero Avenue, Central needs to be the entrance to the airport off Archer.

Response: This project focuses on the Central Avenue and Belt Railroad crossing and does not propose any changes in access to Midway Airport.

Comment: Who can I contact about this study? I have yet to receive notice regarding previous stakeholder events.

Response: Public Meeting announcements were published in the Clear Ridge Reporter, City Newshound and Sun Times three weeks and one week in advance of the meeting. Additionally, invitations were mailed out to businesses and residences along the project corridor and to anyone who signed up for the project mailing list at Public Meeting #1. By signing in at Public Meeting 2, you have been added to the project mailing list and will receive future announcements. If you would like more information or have a question or comment please email the project team at centralbrc@hdrinc.com.



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Comment: Roadway improvements will make the neighborhood less safe due to higher traffic speeds.

Response: This project will not increase the posted speed limit on Central Avenue. The roadway improvements will be designed in accordance with the Illinois Department of Transportation standards to ensure the safety for all modes of transportation.