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ICC Issues 2020-2024 Rail Crossing Safety Improvement Plan

Springfield, IL...The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) has released its 2020-2024 Rail Crossing Safety Improvement 5-Year Plan proposing the implementation of rail safety capital projects in communities across Illinois. Over the five years, the ICC is expected to spend over \$250 million from the Grade Crossing Protection Fund (GCPF) to help local communities and railroads pay for safety improvements at nearly 800 crossing locations statewide.

“Each year the ICC compiles and approves a plan to make rail crossings across Illinois safer for motorists and pedestrians. The Crossing Safety Improvement Program prioritizes projects and allocates funds for much-needed rail crossing safety projects along local roads and streets across the state,” said ICC Chairman Brien J. Sheahan.

The Plan proposes to provide assistance from the GCPF to help cover the cost of 17 highway-rail bridge projects, 4 pedestrian-rail bridge projects, 253 at-grade crossing warning device projects, and low-cost improvements at an estimated 500 crossing locations.

In FY 2020, the ICC will consider projects requiring commitments from the GCPF totaling nearly \$50 million, including over \$28 million for bridge projects. A few of the major projects proposed for FY2020 (July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020) include:

- \$12 million to assist the City of Aurora with the construction of a new grade separation to replace the existing North Aurora Road highway-rail grade crossing of the Wisconsin Central’s tracks in DuPage County.
- \$900,000 to assist Western Springs to construct a new pedestrian-rail grade separation of the BNSF Railway’s tracks in Cook County.

- \$1.3 million to assist the City of Elgin construct a new grade separation to replace the Coombs Road highway-rail grade crossing of the Dakota Minnesota & Eastern Railroad's track in Kane County.
- \$396,000 to help the City of Paxton to reconstruct roadway approaches, install automatic flashing light signals and install roadway gates at the 3600 North highway-rail grade crossing of Illinois Central Railroad's tracks in Champaign County.
- \$342,000 to install new interconnect; install gates and automatic flashing light signals at the E Eldorado Street highway-rail grade crossing of the Decatur & Eastern Illinois Railroad's tracks in Decatur, Macon County.
- \$499,500 to reconstruct roadway approaches, install automatic flashing light signals and gates at Basom Road highway-rail grade crossing of the Union Pacific Railroad's tracks in Salem, Marion County.
- \$5.1 million to assist Sangamon County with the cost to construct a new grade separation to carry Iron Bridge Road over the Union Pacific Railroad's track, near Chatham, Sangamon County.
- \$468,000 to install new automatic flashing light signals and roadway gates at the 17th Street and 18th Street highway-rail grade crossing of the BNSF Railway's tracks in Rock Island, Rock Island County.

The ICC receives numerous requests from local communities and railroads for assistance from the GCPF for safety improvements at public highway-rail crossings. A number of factors are considered when prioritizing projects such as collision history, traffic volume, engineering requirements, and geographical location. The ICC also places a high priority on crossings in rail corridors where conventional speed passenger trains operate, and locations where grade crossing blockages cause substantial motorist or emergency vehicle delays, or a heightened risk for threat of train/vehicle collisions.

The recommendations in the report assume that local funding matches will be available in a timely manner. In the event they are not, the Rail Safety Section staff may recommend the Commission reallocate GCPF assistance for those projects to another fiscal year.

In 2018, preliminary statistics indicate there were 82 collisions at public crossings in Illinois, compared to 88 in 2017, a decrease of 6.8 percent. 31.7% (26 of 82) all collisions in 2018 involved cars driving into the side of trains. Total fatalities resulting from collisions at highway-rail crossings in Illinois decreased from 25 in 2017 to 19 in 2018.

The ICC promotes and supports “The Three E’s” of railroad safety: Education through Operation Lifesaver Illinois; Enforcement of existing laws to ensure motorists and pedestrians obey all railroad safety laws; and the Engineering necessary to make crossings physically and operationally safe as possible.

The Crossing Safety Improvement Plan is published annually by the ICC and can be found on [the ICC website](#).

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About the Illinois Commerce Commission

The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) is a quasi-judicial body made up of five Commissioners. Through its Public Utility Program, the Commission oversees the provision of adequate, reliable, efficient and safe utility services at the least possible cost to Illinois citizens served by electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water and sewer public utility companies. Through its Transportation Regulatory Program, the Commission oversees public safety and consumer protection programs with regard to intrastate commercial motor carriers of general freight, household goods movers, relocation towers, safety towers, personal property warehouses and repossession agencies. The Commission's Rail Safety Program also inspects and regulates the general safety of railroad tracks, facilities and equipment in the state.

To learn more about the Commission, its offices and bureaus, click [here](#). If you are a consumer who needs help resolving a utility dispute call 800-524-0795 or file an online complaint [here](#). For a complaint related to transportation, call 217-782-6448.

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