



ICC Approves Annual Five-Year (FY 2023-2027) Crossing Safety Improvement Plan

Chicago, IL – The Illinois Commerce Commission recently approved its annual five-year Crossing Safety Improvement Program to start implementing highway-rail safety capital projects for local roads across the state. For Fiscal Years 2023-2027, the ICC is expected to spend \$386 million dollars from the Grade Crossing Protection Fund (GCPF) to assist local communities and railroads pay for much-needed improvements at nearly 879 crossing locations. The Plan include Rebuild Illinois (RBI) capital program funds for the installation of grade crossing protection or grade separations not limited to local routes or other restrictions.

“With Illinois’ status as the transportation hub of the nation, ensuring our infrastructure is as safe as it is strong is my top priority,” **said Governor JB Pritzker.** “Our Rebuild Illinois plan is an investment in a safer Illinois, including at and around the rail crossings that crisscross our state. I’m proud to help municipalities protect bicyclists, commuters, and pedestrians on our local roads.”

“The projects included in this plan are reflective of the ICC’s priorities to address crossings with a high collision history, to improve pedestrian access at public highway rail locations and upgrade remote monitoring and automatic warning devices to improve safety and assist with the flow of people and goods on our railways and highways,” said ICC Chairman Carrie Zalewski.

Projects identified in the multi-year Crossing Safety Improvement Plan are prioritized based upon several criteria, including the relative safety of the existing crossing, volume and types of existing train and highway traffic. After each potential project is prioritized based on engineering requirements, geographic location is also considered to ensure projects are awarded across the state as equitably as possible.

The ICC’s transportation division is responsible for developing and working with local communities and railroads to implement the Plan. Among the projects included are grade separation projects in various communities across Illinois to keep pedestrians, bicyclists, and commuters away and safe from railroad tracks. It also continues to invest in major multi-year projects that will improve overall safety and public convenience in communities like Springfield and Elmwood Park and provides for construction of new bridges in high growth areas like Will County. In addition, the Plan furthers the ICC’s ongoing commitment to expand the use of advanced remote monitoring systems to better promote track safety and upgrade active warning devices and corridors in rural and urban communities across Illinois.

The GCPF, appropriated by the Illinois Department of Transportation, but administered by the ICC, was created by state law to assist local jurisdictions (counties, townships and municipalities) in paying for safety improvements on local roads and streets only. Since the establishment of the GCPF in 1955, virtually every public highway-rail crossing in Illinois has received support from the fund. In 2021, \$78 million was provided as part of the Rebuild Illinois capital program to address long-standing grade

crossing protection or grade separation projects needed across Illinois. These funds have been appropriated to IDOT from the Multi-Modal Transportation Bond Fund. In 2021, the ICC ordered \$75 million from the GCPF and \$13.1 million in RBI projects.

Illinois is second only to Texas in the total number of highway-rail crossings. Illinois has 7,550 public highway-rail grade crossings, of which 746 are on state roads, and 6,804 are on local roads. There are 2,670 public highway-rail grade-separated crossings (bridges) in the state. Illinois' rail network is operated by 91 railroads or industries providing rail service to ports and industrial facilities.

In 2021, preliminary statistics indicate there were 104 collisions at public highway-rail crossings in Illinois, compared to 83 in 2020, a 25.3 percent increase. In 2021, 28.8% of all collisions involved cars driving into the sides of trains. Total fatalities resulting from collisions at highway-rail crossings in Illinois increased from 16 in 2020 to 22 in 2021, an increase of 37.5%.

To read the ICC Five-Year Crossing Safety Improvement Program along with the full list of projects click [here](#). An interactive map of projects included in the current plan as well as past programs and crossing inventory information can be found [here](#).

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