



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 14-5202, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING CROSSRAIL CHICAGO

WHEREAS, Cook County is the financial, business and culture capital of the Midwest, bringing in millions of tourists and visitors every year; and

WHEREAS, Cook County is in the midst of preparing its first Long Range Transportation Plan in more than 70 years - a multimodal blueprint that will highlight the critical importance of improved and expanded public transportation services to maintaining Cook County's economic vitality and accommodating increases in population, businesses and jobs; and

WHEREAS, improved and expanded passenger train service is essential to maintain Cook County's economic vitality and allow for increased growth and prosperity; and

WHEREAS, a new initiative for first-class passenger rail service called CrossRail Chicago has emerged which would, for the first time, connect Metra route lines together, knitting together the Chicagoland region; and

WHEREAS, Metra and Amtrak services bring in millions of people to Cook County and serve hundreds of thousands of Cook County residents, but suffer from one fundamental flaw: all trains terminate in downtown Chicago and do not travel through downtown Chicago, making regional travel on a train less efficient and less attractive; and

WHEREAS, most of the Metra stations are stub stations where all tracks end and therefore do not allow for crosstown service; there are two existing tracks at Union Station along the river that travel through the station, connecting northbound and southbound service which also could be used for crosstown service; and

WHEREAS, a 16th Street connector track exists which could allow for Metra Electric and Rock Island trains to connect to Union Station then travel west, northwest and north, directly connecting the Southland with the rest of Northeast Illinois; and

WHEREAS, Cook County residents of high unemployment areas do not have easy transportation access to areas with job surplus, such as between the area of O'Hare/northwest suburbs and the high unemployment areas of the south side and the south suburbs; and

WHEREAS, Cook County's largest transportation asset - O'Hare Airport - is not currently served well by Metra and not served at all by Amtrak, leaving a major gap in Cook County's transportation network; and

WHEREAS, the Chicago Department of Aviation's new consolidated rental car facility built directly adjacent to a Rosemont Metra station known as the O'Hare Transfer Station will provide a once-in-a-generation opportunity to connect Metra and Amtrak service directly to O'Hare, opening up job opportunities for the entire region; and

WHEREAS, both the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Michigan Department of Transportation are currently working on plans for faster Amtrak service into Cook County, however, these projects need to be coordinated to ensure these investments work together to provide the best possible service for Cook County; and

WHEREAS, much like CREATE did for freight railroads, CrossRail Chicago, if implemented, would combine multiple commuter and intercity rail projects already in various stages of planning into a coordinated program where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts;

WHEREAS, the Cook County Long Range Transportation Plan will seek to ensure that transportation investments are part of a plan for prosperity, and that vision also includes agencies from outside of Cook County, especially Amtrak and Metra, to build and provide first-class passenger train service; and

WHEREAS, there is a gap in coordination for passenger rail projects throughout the region to ensure that Cook County is part of a Midwest-wide process of building crosstown rail service.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners supports CrossRail Chicago and its inclusion in the region's capital plans including those of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Regional Transportation Authority and Metra; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners calls for the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning to include CrossRail Chicago in its GOTO 2040 update as a program of projects in the fiscally unconstrained list to formally recognize the need for this investment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that suitable copies of this resolution be tendered to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Regional Transportation Authority, and Metra.