

Durbin, Duckworth, Quigley Discuss Chicago Hub Improvement Project With Union Pacific

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), and U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (D-IL-05) today met with Union Pacific CEO Jim Vena to discuss the Chicago Hub Improvement Project (CHIP), Amtrak’s multi-phased project to revitalize Chicago Union Station (CUS) and revolutionize Midwest passenger rail. During the meeting, the congressional leaders and Vena spoke about the importance of CHIP to the Midwest, as the project is critical to the region’s infrastructure improvement, connectivity, and economic growth. Involvement and support from the freight railroads will be important to completing CHIP, and Vena expressed his willingness to be helpful in moving the project forward.

“Rail has always been a vital component of our state’s infrastructure. As we move forward with the Chicago Hub Improvement Project, we want all stakeholders, including Union Pacific, to share the same vision of improving Midwest rail through improving Chicago Union Station and its connectivity,” said Durbin. “Today, I hosted a productive meeting with my colleagues Senator Duckworth and Congressman Quigley and Union Pacific CEO Jim Vena to discuss the project and how Union Pacific can contribute to its success.”

“Chicago is a national epicenter of passenger, commuter and freight rail,” Duckworth said. “To move forward with the improvements needed to Chicago’s Union Station for improving rail service and reliability, it’s critical for all parties to work together. The Chicago Hub Improvement Project will help prevent delays and increase safety for the more than 30 million riders across all the rail services that pass through Union Station each year. I’ll keep pushing for more funding and to move this forward, because this critical project isn’t just beneficial for Chicago and Illinois, it’s also a win for the Midwest and a win for our entire country.”

“Chicago’s Union Station is the heart of passenger rail in the Midwest. Improving the infrastructure in and around Union Station is a commonsense, critical investment that will create a better experience for riders in the years to come,” said Quigley. “Today’s meeting was an important chance to discuss next steps and the positive impact this project will have on our communities. Ultimately, with the help of Union Pacific, we will make Union Station safer and more efficient for passengers across the Midwest. As Ranking Member of the subcommittee that funds our nation’s railways, I’ll continue to work with my colleagues at the federal, state, and local levels as well as the railroads to make Chicago’s rail service the envy of the nation.”

A photo of the meeting is available [here](#).

In December, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced \$93.6 million in federal funding for CHIP through the Federal-State Partnerships for Intercity Passenger Rail grant program. The grants will fund several components of the project to modernize CUS. This includes renovating and expanding the station platforms, adding an ingress /egress to improve passenger capacity, bringing platforms in compliance with *Americans with Disabilities Act* standards and improving ventilation systems and air quality for nearly 120,000 Amtrak and Metra weekly passengers. The grants also will repurpose the Station’s mail platform, which has been out of use since 2005, for intercity rail service, enabling CUS to accommodate passenger growth and support long-term rail service expansion across the Midwest.