

# ILLINOIS CENTRAL CORRIDOR AT RISK

The Canadian National Railway (CN) has submitted an application with the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to purchase the Elgin Joliet and Eastern Railroad (EJ&E).

The EJ&E circles Chicago, connecting all major railroads serving the Midwest. CN intends to use it as a bypass, making some trackage within the city surplus. The purchase will impact most passenger train routes serving the city, some positively and some negatively.

The transaction puts the Illinois Central Corridor at severe risk. This route, illustrated in orange, hosts the City of New Orleans, the Illini and the Saluki. It links Chicago, Champaign, Carbondale, Memphis, New Orleans and eighteen other cities. Future service to Decatur will also use this route.

Passengers transfer from this corridor transfer to other trains in Chicago. Therefore, delays on the Illinois Central Corridor trains will impact the entire Midwest.

The existing trains are very popular. Ridership on the Chicago to Carbondale portion has increased by 67.5 % in the last year since Illinois funded a third daily roundtrip.

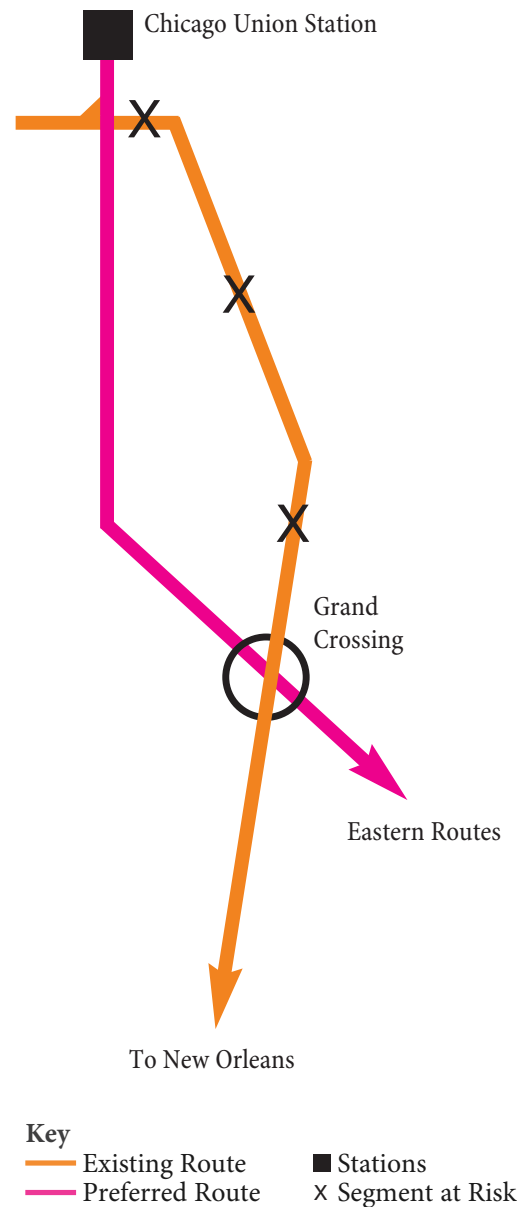
The CN has stated that it hopes to abandon portions of this route within the City of Chicago after the purchase is completed. A new route will have to be found.

Building a new connection between the CN and the Norfolk Southern Railroad (NS) at Grand Crossing (near 75th St. and South Chicago Ave. in Chicago) is the only viable solution. The NS line also hosts four Amtrak routes to the East. NS will also require upgrades to their track.

This connection would eliminate a back-up move on the St. Charles Airline saving 15-20 minutes on each trip. It is included in the State's passenger rail plan and CREATE, a freight rail improvement plan.

Making this connection a reality will require that communities between Chicago and New Orleans make their voice heard during the STB evaluation.

Visit [www.midwesthsr.org/eje](http://www.midwesthsr.org/eje) to learn how you can help.



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*The Midwest High Speed Rail Association (MHSRA) is a membership-based, non-profit organization advocating the development of fast, frequent and dependable passenger trains linking the entire Midwest. MHSRA's nearly 2,000 members, which include more than 100 organizations and municipalities, believe that a strong network of fast trains will make the Midwest a more attractive place to live and do business while conserving energy, boosting transportation safety and minimizing pollution impacts.*

*Learn more at [www.midwesthsr.org](http://www.midwesthsr.org) or call 773 334 6758*