

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-05-023R

AMTRAK CORRIDOR EXPANSION PLAN JOINT REQUEST FOR FUNDING

(For enhanced passenger rail service to Champaign-Urbana on multi-frequency Chicago-New Orleans, Chicago-Carbondale, and Carbondale-Chicago routes)

WHEREAS, passenger rail service is increasingly being recognized as a critical modal choice for emerging and established communities, providing reasonably priced, safe, energy-efficient, accessible transportation to complement the highway network; and

WHEREAS, the Canadian National Railroad has a long-standing obligation to passenger rail service, hosting the Amtrak *Illini*, *Saluki* and *City of New Orleans* in each of their daily arrivals and departures from Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. Amtrak *Illini* and *Saluki* connect Chicago to Carbondale with stops in Homewood, Kankakee, Gilman, Rantoul, Champaign-Urbana, Mattoon, Effingham, Centralia, and Du Quoin, Illinois along the CN route. Amtrak *City of New Orleans* connects New Orleans, Louisiana to Chicago, Illinois currently operating thrice weekly and stopping in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois each trip. Through connections, Amtrak provides passenger rail service to more than 400 domestic and Canadian destinations; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak has set ridership records over the past decade, prior to the pandemic, with, thirty-two and one half million trips provided in Federal Fiscal Year 2019, earning \$3.3 billion in revenue, and reducing Federal operating support to the lowest ever, \$29 million; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak is developing a network expansion plan that includes additional passenger rail service on new routes, to new communities, and on existing routes to communities that do not now have passenger rail service. Travelers are opting for passenger trains when the services provided are frequent, competitive in time with driving and flying, and offer a high level of reliability. Amtrak carries more than three-quarters of its annual ridership on such multi-frequency routes connecting communities less than 400 miles apart; and

WHEREAS, the Champaign-Urbana station at the Illinois Terminal hosted over 257,000 boardings and alightings in Fiscal Year 2019; and

WHEREAS, in Fiscal Year 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Amtrak *Illini* and *Saluki* routes had the most negligible reduction in ridership of all the Midwestern, state-supported Amtrak routes; and

WHEREAS, the Amtrak network expansion plan envisions enhancing the Amtrak service to provide for a fourth daily train along the I-57 Corridor with Champaign-Urbana as a daily stop; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Federal government continues to demonstrate the importance of investing in the nation's passenger rail system with annual appropriations consistent with the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (Federal highway reauthorization) of \$2 billion annually; and

WHEREAS, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act will expire at the end of Fiscal Year 2021, and must be reauthorized, Amtrak will submit to Congress a proposal to fund the network corridor expansion plan for new routes and new service to Champaign-Urbana, and other places. The Amtrak Corridor Network Expansion Plan will require \$25 billion over five years to begin developing 36 new routes and service improvements on 23 existing routes and new service to more than 160 places not now served; and

WHEREAS, the Champaign County business community sees the value of increased passenger rail service frequency as critical to efficient travel for employees, allows productive use of time during travel, and increases the attractiveness as Champaign County as a business location; and

WHEREAS, the Champaign County academic community sees the value of frequent passenger rail service as key to efficient travel for students as they travel from home to the University of Illinois flagship campus in Urbana-Champaign and for faculty and staff as they conduct research and business across Illinois; and

WHEREAS, Champaign County community see the value of frequent passenger rail to increase the attractiveness of Champaign-Urbana and surrounding communities as a and tourism destination; and

WHEREAS, the City of Urbana wants to experience the economic and mobility benefits made possible by more frequent passenger train departures, such as that being experienced by communities on similar passenger rail corridors across the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, improving the ease of access to Champaign County for business, tourism and resident travel will enhance Champaign County and surrounding communities' attractiveness and facilitate residential growth and job retention in the area.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council, of the City of Urbana, Illinois, as follows:

The City of Urbana requests the Congressional Delegation of the State of Illinois pass the next Federal surface transportation reauthorization to include funding for the Amtrak Corridor Network Expansion Plan that includes enhanced passenger rail service to Champaign-Urbana on multi-frequency Chicago-New Orleans, Chicago-Carbondale, and Carbondale-Chicago routes.

PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL this Date day of Month, Year.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTENTIONS:

Phyllis D. Clark, City Clerk

APPROVED BY THE MAYOR this Date day of Month, Year.

Diane Wolfe Marlin, Mayor