



# GRAND GATEWAY PROJECT

*Frequently Asked Questions - Spring 2022*

## **What is the Grand Gateway project about?**

Public safety has been a concern for many years where Grand Avenue crosses the Metra/CP. The Village of Elmwood Park in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (CCDOH) wish to resolve the safety and mobility issues at this crossing through the initiation of a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study that will inform a Phase I Preliminary Engineering study. These two studies, along with input from the Elmwood Park community, will determine the best possible plan for separating rail, vehicle, and pedestrian traffic.

## **What are the benefits of this project?**

- Increased safety
- More efficient response from the fire and police departments
- Improved mobility for all modes of transportation
- Reduced congestion and delays
- Reduced vehicle-train conflict

## **What is the Study process?**

The Grand Gateway Project was initiated in March 2020 and is anticipated to last through winter 2022. During this time, the project team will work closely with various agencies, the Community Advisory Group (CAG), and community members to first review current conditions and needs in the corridor under the PEL process. Then they will collaboratively develop improvement alternatives and determine a preferred improvement alternative under the Phase I process. Public input is welcome throughout both studies. Once PEL and Phase I have concluded, Phase II and Phase III/Construction Studies are anticipated to occur.

## **How much is this project going to cost and is the project already funded?**

Various alternatives are still being evaluated as part of preliminary engineering that range in cost. Preliminary estimates used for planning purposes total approximately \$121 million for construction. Federal, state, and local stakeholders are committed to improving safety at this location.

- The Planning and Environmental Linkages Study (PEL) has been 100% funded.
- Phase I, Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Study, is 100% funded.
- Phase II, Contract Plan Preparation, is 100% funded. Phase III, construction is already partially funded.
- The project received \$20.9M from Rebuild Illinois and in April 2022, the project received another \$3.1M towards the construction phase.

## **How long will the project last?**

### **How long will construction last?**

Completion of preliminary engineering, which includes all preliminary and final design prior to physical construction, is anticipated for the first quarter of 2025. If fully funded, construction will begin shortly after final design of the project is complete. Substantial completion of construction is anticipated to last two years.



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## **When will project alternatives be presented to the public?**

Public Informational Meeting No. 2 will present alternative(s) being carried forward for further study, which will occur on May 24, 2022. All materials, including the presentation and exhibits, are posted on the project website.

## **How will this project impact access to business, residential areas, local entities (i.e., Village Hall), etc.?**

Various alternatives are still being evaluated as part of preliminary engineering that present varying levels of impact related to access. Property impacts associated with alternative(s) being carried forward for further study will be presented during Public Informational Meeting No. 2 (May 2022).

## **Will there be land acquisition or removal of any residential homes or businesses? When will property acquisition relocations be determined?**

Land acquisition will be required once an alternative has been selected. It is expected that the removal of residential and/or business structures will also be required, depending on the final alternative. Property impacts associated with alternative(s) being carried forward for further study will be presented during the Public Informational Meeting No. 2, on May 24, 2022. The land acquisition process can take several months and involves appraisal reports, review appraisal, certification reports, and negotiation. The project website, [grandgatewayep.com](http://grandgatewayep.com), is continually updated throughout the study.

## **What is a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study?**

The Village of Elmwood Park undertook a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study as part of the Grand Gateway Project. The PEL process was established by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to provide a more efficient process of identifying, evaluating and selecting preferred transportation improvements.

In addition to informing and expediting the Phase 1 process the PEL process will provide an opportunity for early coordination with the public as well as local, state and federal agencies in a transparent and collaborative environment. By working together, alternatives and avoidance measures can be developed at a local level.

## **Why does the study area map show such a large amount of impact?**

The identified project study area encompasses all possibilities for improvement (or impact) associated with each of the alternatives being considered. Considerations related to environment, vehicle traffic, rail traffic and drainage for each alternative will fall within the limits identified, but not necessarily "impact" the entire area.

## **How can people be kept informed about the project?**

The project website is the best way to keep apprised of the project status, which can be found at [grandgatewayep.com](http://grandgatewayep.com). If you do not have access to the internet, the Village of Elmwood Park will continue to provide project updates in their newsletter, which is mailed to all residents. People can also call Elli Cosky, Public Outreach Liaison, at 630-534-6400, ext. 106 to be added to the mailing list.