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News

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Biden-Harris Administration Announces Funding for 63 Projects in 32 States That Will Help Reduce Train-Vehicle Collisions and Blocked Rail Crossings in the U.S.

President Biden's historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law includes the first-ever dedicated grant program to help communities eliminate points where railroad tracks intersect with roads, which have blocked vehicle and pedestrian traffic, led to deadly vehicle-rail collisions, and prevented first responders from reaching emergencies

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today announced it has awarded more than \$570 million in Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) Grant Program funding to projects in 32 states. This inaugural round of funding will address more than 400 at-grade crossings nationwide, improve safety, and make it easier to get around railroad tracks by adding grade separations, closing at-grade crossings, and improving existing at-grade crossings where train tracks and roads intersect.

Preventing blocked crossings and collisions is one of many ways President Biden's Investing in America agenda will make a difference in people's everyday lives by improving safety and convenience and creating good-paying jobs to rebuild our nation's infrastructure. Last year, there were more than 2,000 highway-rail crossing collisions in the U.S. and more than 30,000 reports of blocked crossings submitted to FRA's public complaint portal.

"Every year, commuters, residents, and first responders lose valuable time waiting at blocked railroad crossings – and worse, those crossings are too often the site of collisions that could be prevented," said **U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg**. "As part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda, we're improving rail crossings in communities across the country to save lives, time, and resources for American families."

For years, FRA has received complaints from citizens, states, and localities regarding the delays and disruptions caused by frequently blocked crossings that force residents to wait hours at intersections or

take detours. These delays and disruptions can also prevent first responders from getting to emergencies quickly. Further, over 2,000 collisions occur every year at highway-rail grade crossings. The projects selected for funding in the first year of this program will greatly improve the quality of life in communities big and small, creating safer rail crossings and allowing people to get to and from their homes, schools, businesses, hospitals, fire stations, and workplaces without being stranded and delayed by a standing train.

“The Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program is another critical tool that FRA is using to make a lasting impact on the safety and transportation needs of communities nationwide,” said **FRA Administrator Amit Bose**. “With these project selections and the many more that are to come, we will save lives and reshape infrastructure in ways that allow individuals to move through their neighborhoods seamlessly and safely.”

Along with projects that build or upgrade physical infrastructure at railroad crossings, FRA awarded \$15.7 million for planning activities and \$33.1 million for project development and design activities that will build a pipeline of projects for future funding. Twenty two percent of all funding, \$127.5 million, was awarded to projects in rural areas or on Tribal lands.

Examples of major projects funded this year include:

- **Texas – West Belt Improvement Project (Phase 1) (\$36,916,200)**

City of Houston

The project will fund a 9,000 foot sealed corridor, construct four underpasses, close four at-grade crossings, and eliminate seven at-grade roadway-rail crossings total—crossings where more than 850 incidents of train blockages have been reported this year through FRA's online portal. In addition to reducing commuter disruptions and delays, decreased vehicle idling at crossings will improve air quality and save people an estimated \$12.7 million in lost fuel, according to the city. Texas is second in the nation in grade crossing fatalities, and this project will increase safety for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists, as well as reliable access for first responders. The Phase 1 project being funded by the Biden-Harris Administration and the City of Houston is also a critical step in developing a future 5-mile long quiet zone that will improve quality of life and remove train horn noise for nearly 15,000 households.

- **Alabama – Railroad Crossing Elimination on Shelby County Road 52 (\$41,766,038)**

City of Pelham

The project will construct a bridge and eliminate two existing at-grade crossings on Shelby County Road 52 to increase safety and mobility in the heart of Pelham and solve a long-standing and worsening problem with blocked crossings. Shelby County Road 52, which carries the second highest traffic volume of any east-to-west route in the area, currently cuts the city in half. When blocked by stalled or slow-moving trains, emergency and HAZMAT responders are prevented from accessing half the city. Infrastructure improvements will establish a permanent, reliable route for emergency responders and decrease delays for the 24,000 drivers utilizing County Road 52 daily. The new bridge will increase capacity to five lanes with a multi-use path to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. These safety improvements will also strengthen the State's supply chain, as more than 30 daily trains destined for the Port of the Mobile travel the CSX line through Pelham.

- **Indiana – Governors Parkway Railroad Overpass Project (\$7,029,392)**

City of Hammond

The project will construct a new, centrally located overpass and eliminate two grade crossings where Parrish Avenue and Arizona Avenue intersect with Norfolk Southern Railway's rail line in the City of Hammond. Given its proximity to Chicago's vast rail network, this area has persistently dealt with blocked crossings, congestion, and connectivity challenges. The new overpass and road alignment, called Governor's Parkway, will provide safe and reliable passage for drivers, pedestrians, and emergency responders. Hammond is home to 53 at-grade crossings, with residents reporting slow or stalled trains blocking crossings lasting between 20 minutes and several hours. Depending on the length, trains can block dozens of local streets throughout the city. The new overpass will eliminate major traffic delays on some of the city's busiest streets and better connect residents, like those in southeast Hessville, where highway rail crossing delays impact their ability to get to their jobs, the grocery store, or other required services and amenities. Governor's Parkway will feature one lane of vehicle travel in each direction and a multi-use path for pedestrians and bikers. The project also includes more than \$2.6 million in Federal Highway Administration funds.

- **Ohio – Unlocking the Iron Triangle: Grade Separation of S Town Street, Fostoria, Ohio (\$7,245,000)**

City of Fostoria

The project will construct a bridge and eliminate three grade crossings in a community bordered by railroad tracks on three sides and farmland on the remaining side. Known as the Iron Triangle neighborhood, access to and from the community depends upon one of the three existing highway rail grade crossings, posing serious safety risks and quality of life challenges. Every 26 minutes, a CSX train travels through Fostoria, Ohio. Even when trains run efficiently, rail traffic means active traffic control devices at crossings sound for at least two hours per day in the east side Iron Triangle neighborhood. The new bridge will provide a safe and reliable route for residents, emergency responders, and others to travel between the neighborhood and surrounding communities.

- **Florida – Broward County Sealed Corridor Project (\$15,440,000)**

Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization

The project will increase safety at 21 grade crossings, along Florida's East Coast Rail Corridor, a freight rail corridor shared with Brightline's intercity passenger rail service. Along the corridor, 17% of collisions are the result of motorists driving around entrance gates, with nearly 60% of those instances occurring in Broward County. Safety improvements will deter such actions by constructing 33 new exit gates and 7 raised medians at crossings where at least 27 collisions have occurred over the last five years. Upgrades being funded by the Biden-Harris Administration, the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization, and six local municipalities will increase safety at crossings where more than 60 trains per day are estimated to pass through by next year and benefit a County projected to grow by nearly 2.2 million by 2045.

- **Iowa – South Concord Street Grade Separation (\$7,756,862)**

City of Davenport

The project will eliminate one highway-rail crossing and build an overpass at another, preventing people and motorists from being stuck by slow moving or stopped trains in an area that has consistently reported blocked crossings ranging in wait times from 30 minutes to 2 hours. At crossings where trains pass at least 10 times daily, improvements will ensure safe and reliable access to the city's Water Pollution Control Plant, a necessity serving approximately 140,000 residents in Davenport, Bettendorf, Panorama Park, and Riverdale. Importantly, for the workers at the water facility as well as the nearby compost facility and Nahant Rail Yard, first responders will have an unobstructed path to each location, ensuring timely emergency response when required. The overpass will be built to withstand 100-year or stage 23.6 floods in an area where transportation has come to a halt due to flooding of the nearby Mississippi River.

- **Washington – 32nd Street Underpass Project (\$40,480,000)**

City of Washougal

The proposed project will fund development, final design, right-of-way acquisition, and rail bridge construction to better reconnect the Addy Street neighborhood with the downtown and port areas. With the design of a new rail bridge and underpass, five key intersections will be reconstructed along 32nd Street, increasing safety and reducing the risk of vehicle-train collisions. Infrastructure improvements will help reduce freight rail bottlenecks and move goods more reliably and efficiently. The combination of rail overpass and roadway improvements will mean safer streets and increase the functionality, efficiency, and accessibility of the 32nd Street Corridor.

There are more than 130,000 miles of railroad track in the U.S. and improving safety in the communities where they run is a priority for the Department.

Over each of the next four years, additional RCE Program funding will be made available annually. Project selections for other grant programs that will improve freight rail safety and efficiency, strengthen supply chains, and expand the passenger rail network – representing billions of dollars in infrastructure law investments – will be announced in the coming months.

For the full list of Fiscal Year 2022 RCE Program project selections, please click [here](#). Further information about the RCE Program can also be found [here](#).

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