



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 1087-2024, **Version:** 1

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### **1. BACKGROUND**

The United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT's) Federal Rail Administration (FRA) is now accepting grant applications for its Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program. The Notice of Funding Opportunity was published March 29, 2024, and it is a combined opportunity for FY 2023 and FY 2024. A combined \$2,478,391,050 can be awarded as part of this funding opportunity. Applications must be submitted by May 28, 2024.

The purpose of the CRISI Program is to invest in a wide range of projects within the United States to improve railroad safety, efficiency, and reliability; mitigate congestion at both intercity passenger rail and freight rail chokepoints to support more efficient travel and goods movement; enhance multi-modal connections; and lead to new or substantially improved Intercity Passenger Rail Transportation corridors.

The City meets the criteria to be eligible to submit a CRISI application to the FRA. The Department of Public Service (DPS) has identified a project candidate on Columbus' far west side. The project would create a new, separated crossing by extending Galloway Road to Hilliard-Rome Road and close the existing at-grade rail crossing (DOT #513244C) on Hilliard Rome Road. The existing at-grade crossing is owned by Norfolk Southern Railway Company. The total project cost is estimated to be approximately \$33,299,240; and the Ohio Railway Development Commission has committed up to \$3,329,924 towards the project from Governor DeWine's Ohio Grade Crossing Elimination Program.

This legislation will authorize the Director of Public Service to formally apply for a CRISI grant from USDOT's FRA. It also authorizes the execution of agreements with USDOT or others in connection with the application for the grant, the award of the grant, the expenditure of grant funds, and the return of unused grant funds if any should remain at the end of the grant.

### **2. FISCAL IMPACT**

No financial participation is required at this time. City funds will be approved in the form of design contracts and/or construction contracts that will be or have been submitted for Council's approval.

### **3. EMERGENCY DESIGNATION**

Emergency action is requested to provide the Department of Public Service with the authorization to proceed with an application prior to United States Department of Transportation's Federal Rail Administration announcing its notices of funding opportunities for eliminating railroad crossings. A copy of the authorizing legislation is required to be included with the application and the application deadline date in May 28, 2024.

To authorize the Interim Director of Public Service to submit applications to the United States Department of Transportation's Federal Rail Administration for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program; to authorize the execution of grant and other requisite agreements with Federal Rail Administration and other entities providing for the acceptance and administration of said grant award on behalf of the City of Columbus Department of Public Service; to authorize the expenditure of any awarded funds and the refund of any unused funds; and to declare an emergency. (\$0.00)

**WHEREAS**, the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT's) Federal Rail Administration (FRA) has announced it is seeking applications for its Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI), which is a grant program to be awarded on a competitive basis; and

**WHEREAS**, FRA is accepting applications until May 28, 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, City Council approval is needed to apply for and accept the grant funding; and

**WHEREAS**, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the Department of Public Service in that it is immediately necessary to authorize the Interim Director to prepare and submit the aforesaid grant application prior to the end of the application period, for the public health, safety and welfare; now, therefore

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:**

**SECTION 1.** That the Interim Director of Public Service be and is hereby authorized to submit applications to the Federal Rail Administration seeking grant funding from the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program to create a new separated crossing on Galloway Road and close the existing at-grade crossing on Hilliard Rome Road (DOT #513244C); to accept said grant, if awarded; and to execute a grant agreement and any other documents necessary to effectuate said applications, acceptance, or agreement on behalf of the Department of Public Service.

**SECTION 2.** That the Department of Public Service be and hereby is authorized to expend any awarded grant funds in accordance with the terms and conditions of said grant.

**SECTION 3.** That, at the end of the grant period, or upon request of the grantor, any repayment of unencumbered balances required by the grantor is hereby authorized and any unused City match monies may be transferred back to the City fund from which they originated in accordance with all applicable grant agreements.

**SECTION 4.** That for the reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.