Dear Governor Pritzker and members of the Illinois General Assembly,

Please create and fund the Illinois Fast Track Initiative, a statewide program to expand and modernize Amtrak, Metra and local transit.

Illinois is a great place to live and do business, but highway congestion—and the long drive times between our towns and cities—are stalling our growth and polluting our air.

To attract dynamic businesses and keep young graduates and families here, Illinois needs a transportation system that meets the economic and environmental challenges of the 21st century.

We need fast, affordable, and state-of-the-art ways to get around—not a system stuck in the past.

Getting there begins with a statewide plan to modernize commuter trains, transit and bus systems, and Amtrak—and integrate them into a statewide transportation network, with a 220-mph high-speed trunk line that ties the system together.

A statewide plan is crucial. It will give planning agencies and stakeholders at every level a tool to think about how each piece of the network fits into the big picture. And it will allow them to collaborate on segments that have a transformative impact.

The plan should include:

* Fast, frequent and reliable trains linking cities throughout the state to Chicago, Springfield and St. Louis, with the first arrival timed for a 9 a.m. business meeting
* Modernized Metra service
* Fast, easy access to O’Hare, the Midwest’s gateway to the world
* Expanded transit systems throughout the state
* Better bus links to smaller communities

When the individual parts are well-designed, they work in harmony, and they’re valued more because they’re used more.

For too long, our strategy has been to only build new roads and more lanes. We’ve seen the result.

It’s time for a fresh approach.

It’s time for the Illinois Fast Track Initiative—and a revitalized Illinois!