

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **City authorized to proceed with Carpenter Street underpass**

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) has issued an order authorizing the City of Springfield to proceed with the Carpenter Street underpass project. The ICC will provide \$4,939,000 million from the Grade Crossing Protection Fund (GCPF) to help pay for the structure.

The order, which was issued on December 18, begins the first stage of the \$315 million Springfield Rail Improvements Project. These ICC funds bring the total of federal, state and local commitment thus far to \$33 million.

The Carpenter Street underpass will replace the highway-rail grade crossing of Norfolk Southern Corporation's track, located between Ninth and 11th streets, and will provide improved access to the community's major medical facilities and reduce delays for emergency vehicles. Construction should begin in the late summer of 2014.

Preliminary plans for the underpass design recently were submitted to the ICC, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Railroad Administration, Norfolk Southern, Union Pacific Railroad Corp. and utility companies by Springfield-based Hanson Professional Services Inc., a national firm that provides engineering, planning and allied services. The city selected Hanson to provide design, land acquisition, construction engineering and project management services for the Springfield Rail Improvements Project.

The underpass design includes safety features for motorists and pedestrians, including an elevated walkway that separates pedestrians from vehicular traffic; high-visibility and accent LED lighting; stainless steel tensioned-cable railings for the railroad bridge and walkways; and retaining walls that are offset several feet behind the curb and gutter for increased motorist safety.

The estimated cost for the underpass is \$20.6 million. Funds for the Carpenter Street project will partially come from a \$14.4 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant secured with the support of our congressional delegation led by U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin. The city has proposed using \$1.2 million of available city funds toward land acquisition, preliminary engineering and utility relocation. The ICC will provide the remaining \$4,939,000 million needed for the project from the GCPF. The GCPF assists counties, townships and municipalities with paying for safety improvements at highway-railroad crossings on local roads and streets.

The order states that all improvements for the underpass shall be completed by December 18, 2016. Hanson will submit final plans to IDOT in early 2014 for contract letting in June 2014 and groundbreaking in summer 2014. This timeframe is critical for the city to maintain its TIGER funding.

For more information about the Springfield Rail Improvements Project, visit the project website at <http://springfieldrailroad.com/newsite>.