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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Esteemed American architect Daniel Burnham envisioned the City of Chicago's future in the 1909 Plan Of Chicago with transportation, green space, and civic facility projects to beautify, connect, and harmonize the city center to the surrounding neighborhoods and specifically identified Congress Street as the "grand axis" to the west; and

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WHEREAS, The Burnham plan, sponsored by the Commercial Club of Chicago, influenced how the city developed and set a standard for modern urban planning at a time of tremendous growth for Chicago, the State of Illinois, and the nation; and

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WHEREAS, Chicago's growth, as then America's second city and a major industrial and business leader at the center of the nation with a growing and diverse population, ultimately resulted in the Chicago City Council approval of plans for a comprehensive superhighway system in 1940, to include and begin with the Westside route or Congress Expressway; and

18

WHEREAS, The construction of the individual sections of the Congress Expressway were completed between 1954 and 1960, with Mannheim Road to Racine Avenue being one of the oldest sections of the region's highway infrastructure and the only expressway to run under a U.S. Post Office and incorporate

1 both a movable bridge over the Chicago River and a rapid  
2 transit line within the same corridor; and

3 WHEREAS, In 1964, the Chicago City Council renamed the  
4 Congress Expressway after former President Dwight D.  
5 Eisenhower, honoring his public service as well as his vision  
6 in proposing the interstate highway system in 1955; the  
7 roadway would later be nicknamed "the Ike" or I-290 to  
8 designate federal interstate 290; and

9 WHEREAS, The Eisenhower Expressway was an engineering and  
10 transportation achievement, but construction displaced  
11 Chicago's Near West Side neighborhoods, including Greektown  
12 and Little Italy, and, to the west, profoundly altered a  
13 Jewish neighborhood in West Garfield Park, which had been  
14 nicknamed the Jewish West Side, the Austin neighborhood of  
15 Chicago, the Village of Oak Park, and the Village of Forest  
16 Park, where 3,500 graves had to be relocated from the Forest  
17 Home and Concordia cemeteries; and

18 WHEREAS, The Eisenhower Expressway construction led to the  
19 departure of 13,000 families and 400 businesses from Chicago  
20 alone and the removal of over 100 buildings in Oak Park, where  
21 over time the below grade stretch of highway derisively became  
22 known as "the Ditch"; the displacement of neighborhoods in  
23 Chicago contributed to an eventual demographic shift in the

1 percentage of African-American families concentrated in  
2 impacted areas; and

3 WHEREAS, The Eisenhower Expressway remains the western  
4 gateway to Chicago from the western suburbs and a primary link  
5 to O'Hare airport and the regional transportation network and  
6 still includes the vital assets of the Chicago Transit  
7 Authority (CTA) Blue Line, as well as freight railroad lines;  
8 Chicago and the regional transportation networks centered  
9 therein remain a transportation hub of the nation to this day;  
10 and

11 WHEREAS, The Eisenhower Expressway, which is now more than  
12 60 years old, was originally designed to handle 40,000  
13 vehicles per day and now carries over 200,000 vehicles per  
14 day; it was ranked as the most congested highway in the United  
15 States in the INRIX 2020 Global Traffic Scorecard, and the  
16 average weekday ridership on the CTA Blue Line branch that  
17 spans the Eisenhower corridor increased by 8 percent between  
18 2009 and 2019, from 26,496 to 28,543; and

19 WHEREAS, The Eisenhower Expressway reconstruction and  
20 modernization is a priority in the region's long-range  
21 transportation plan; in 2017, the Federal Highway  
22 Administration signed a Final Environmental Impact Statement  
23 and a Record of Decision; the CTA Blue Line and stations need

1 modernization and repair and could explore further extension  
2 to accommodate growth in communities farther west; I-290 and  
3 CTA improvement and reconstruction costs are expected to  
4 exceed \$4 billion; and

5 WHEREAS, The Eisenhower and CTA Blue Line reconstruction  
6 and improvements are, and should be, planned, designed,  
7 constructed, and managed as a multimodal, intermodal corridor,  
8 maximizing transportation assets, enhancing equity,  
9 connectivity, access, and opportunity for residents,  
10 commuters, and marginalized populations and protecting the  
11 safety of all users; and

12 WHEREAS, The Eisenhower and CTA Blue Line projects are an  
13 opportunity to reconnect communities and repair racial  
14 inequities and displacement caused by historic construction  
15 that emphasized transportation efficiencies without attention  
16 to racial equity, livability, community enhancement, and  
17 preservation; and

18 WHEREAS, The Eisenhower and CTA Blue Line reconstruction  
19 is an opportunity to expand open space and sustainable  
20 multimodal connectivity to develop alternative individual and  
21 mass transportation options, such as dedicated pedestrian and  
22 bike lanes designed to be interconnected but separated from  
23 vehicle lanes and rapid bus transit and the use of bridge

1 decking and innovative technologies; and

2 WHEREAS, It is in the best interest of the State of  
3 Illinois to prioritize the planning, design, and  
4 reconstruction of the federal interstate I-290 Eisenhower  
5 Expressway and CTA Blue Line and obtain financial and  
6 technical assistance and partnership from the Illinois  
7 Congressional Delegation and the U.S. Department of  
8 Transportation; therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
10 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE  
11 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that the Interstate 290 Corridor is  
12 a project of state, regional, and national significance that  
13 will improve multimodal transportation and connectivity and  
14 promote economic development; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the goals of reconstructing the Interstate  
16 290 Corridor should include enhancements to racial equity,  
17 promotion of open space, community enhancement, and  
18 sustainable and innovative practices; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That we formally request that the U.S.  
20 Department of Transportation provide sufficient resources to  
21 the Illinois Department of Transportation to begin engineering  
22 and advance this project expeditiously; and be it further

1           RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
2 delivered to the U.S. Secretary of Transportation and all  
3 members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation.