Chicago Transit Board

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Frank Kruesi
President

CTA Facts at a Glance

Area served by CTA .......... Chicago and 38 suburbs
Service population ............. 3.7 million (based on 1990 census)

Ridership (unlinked trips, based on 1997 fiscal year)
Average weekday
Bus .................................... 0.88 million
Rail .................................... 0.41 million
Total system .................... 1.29 million

Annual (1997)
Bus ............................. 287.6 million
Rail ............................... 130.0 million
Special services ................. 1.2 million
Total system .................. 418.8 million

1998 Operating budget $795.8 million
1998 Capital budget $235.0 million
Bus route miles ........................... 1,932
Bus miles traveled per day .................. 203,913
Rail route miles ........................... 222.6
Rail miles traveled per day .................. 170,471

Number of...
Buses .................................. 1,882
Bus routes ............................ 129
Bus stops ................................ 12,200
Rapid transit cars ..................... 1,150
Rapid transit routes .................... 7
Rapid transit stations .................. 140
Employee positions .................. 11,290
Rebuilding for the Future

The Chicago Transit Authority is undergoing an ambitious rebuilding program – efforts are underway to rebuild aging infrastructure, rebuild ridership, and rebuild a reputation as a quality, affordable transit system that links people, jobs, and communities.

The Chicago Transit Authority was created in 1945 to serve the public with a strong, viable transportation system. Today, this system is an important part of the economic vitality of Northeastern Illinois, serving 1.4 million riders each day. The CTA brings people to their jobs, goods and customers to businesses and keeps cars off our crowded roadways.

The CTA system is also an old one with a great need to repair its infrastructure.
- Most of its physical plant was built before World War I and the CTA operates on rail structures over 100 years old.
- Today, 29% of the CTA’s buses and 12% of its rail cars are over their retirement age, half of them need rehabilitation.
- 30% of the CTA’s stations are at least 70 years old.

It is time to rebuild – or there won’t be anything left to repair. That means a commitment of critical funds from the state. The CTA has done its part by improving its operations, cutting costs, negotiating tough labor agreements, undergoing a series of critical but painful service cuts, and securing increased funding from the federal government. Its current focus – based on these rebuilding efforts – is to increase its customer base by providing service that is consistently on-time, clean, safe and friendly.

The Chicago Transit Authority transports people from nearly 40 suburbs as well as the City. The CTA carries more suburban riders – 8 million annually – than either Metra or Pace. The 39 communities served by the CTA provide 80% of its revenue, either through fares, the sales tax or direct contributions from the city of Chicago and Cook County.

The CTA is doing its fair share, as are its riders. The federal government used the TEA-21 bill to address the nation’s transit needs. The State of Illinois must provide a match to ensure that the federal funding is not lost. Beyond that, there is the need for a new program to enable the state’s transit agencies to maintain the standard of service this region so critically needs to keep its commerce and people moving and its economy strong.

In an effort to curb costs, the CTA has made some decisions that were unpopular, but not one decision was made that did not help achieve the objectives of providing on-time, clean, safe and friendly service.

"As the Metropolitan area grows both in population and employment, a modern and effective transportation system is critical to keeping the economy moving. More than 55% of the people who work in the Loop get there by transit, and there is an increased interest in transit serving the suburban job corridors."

MarySue Barrett – Metropolitan Planning Council
The federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) was signed into law in June of 1998. It reflected a recommitment of the federal government’s role in addressing our nation’s transportation needs.

The Chicago Transit Authority lobbed vigorously for the bill, and it stands to receive about 25% more than it did from ISTEA, the last major transportation funding bill. Transit services, which provide one important solution to our region’s traffic congestion, are now on more equal footing with highway road programs at the federal level.

Although the federal government has passed two major transit funding packages in the last seven years, the State of Illinois has not done so since 1989. The Illinois General Assembly holds the key to addressing our state’s transportation needs.

The CTA and Illinois’ other transit agencies need a 20% match from the State of Illinois in order to make full use of the federal money. Without it, the CTA will not be able to leverage the 80% federal share – which would be a devastating and short-sighted waste of effort and political will.

The CTA, Metra and Pace need a reliable, steady source of funding that is placed on an equal footing with highway funds. With that commitment, the CTA will focus on rebuilding its deteriorating assets – which will necessitate spending approximately $4.1 billion over the next five years. This is what is needed to bring the Chicago transit system to a state of good repair, not state-of-the-art public transportation.

Critical projects hang in the balance. For example, TEA-21 authorized two projects: rebuild the Douglas Branch of the Blue Line, which serves Chicago’s Near Southwest Side and suburbs such as Berwyn and Cicero, and extend the platforms on the Brown Line to accommodate new riders in fast growing neighborhoods on Chicago’s Northwest Side. Combined, these two projects have a federal funding level of $555 million. Metra has three commuter rail expansion projects in TEA-21 as well. Altogether, the federal government could invest almost $1 billion into the region for these 5 projects — if the state can provide the 20% match.

A century of Chicago winters and continuing service have left many stations on the Douglas Branch of the Blue Line with deteriorating stairways and station houses that need major rehabilitation.

State Commitment to Transportation

“Our big issue is traffic. When voters look at who’s running for office, they look at the candidates stances on traffic before they decide.”

Lynne Schelder – Executive Manager, Buffalo Grove Chamber of Commerce
A State of Good Repair

Certain categories of capital funds can be used to help ensure the adequate maintenance of assets such as buses and rail cars. CTA has taken advantage of this in order to budget for essential services while keeping the bulk of its capital funds committed to replacing or renewing the equipment and facilities. It is important to maintain this level of commitment until operating expenses can be cut further or funding can be increased.

Our goal is to rebuild the CTA's infrastructure to “a state of good repair” and then to maintain it there. What does this mean?

• No buses older than the industry standard of 12 years and all buses rehabilitated at six to seven years; this assures reliability and comfort and reduced maintenance expenses.
• All rail cars rehabilitated at midlife (12 – 13 years), overhauled at their quarter-life points (6 and 18 years) and either rehabilitated or retired at the end of their useful life (25 years).
• All rail stations in good condition and able to meet modern standards for passenger comfort, security and reliability.
• All rail lines to operate at scheduled speeds; no slow areas due to track or structural disrepair.
• Service management systems that are 100% reliable and incorporate modern features—these systems are used to send information between CTA's Control Center and its vehicles and stations, and are especially important for emergencies and service problems.
• Maintenance facilities that are in good condition so buses and trains can be serviced efficiently and effectively.

Replacements are needed for buses that have been kept in service beyond the standard 12-year lifespan, like CTA's articulated models, purchased in 1982, which become prone to corrosion that paint alone can't stop.

“...The more people we get on public transportation then the more cars we get off the public highways, which would substantially cut down on air pollution.”

Bob Mason - Executive Director, South East Chicago Commission
Imagine this … it is a hot, steamy August day and you are waiting for the bus. One pulls up and you jump on. Instead of air-conditioned relief, the bus is hot and you arrive home positively steamed and wrinkled. And this…you've always saved time by taking the Purple Line from Evanston to your office in the Loop, but because of slow zones due to aging structures, not only do you not save the time you used to save by taking the train, you barely make it home in time for dinner. Or…the Douglas Branch of the Blue Line is closed for lack of repair funds; so, instead of taking transit to work you are sitting on the Eisenhower Expressway, stuck in bumper-to-bumper traffic for over an hour.

The CTA should program $4.1 billion between 1999 and 2003 in order to address its critical capital investment needs. However, only $1.8 billion is projected to be available from federal and state sources—only 43% of the needed investment.
The majority of these funds come from federal sources under TEA-21. The projects in the Program total $1.9 billion, which include the non-federal match for New Start projects. Therefore, unless the State of Illinois acts, much needed work will not be completed.

- 71% of CTA buses will be older than the standard retirement age of 12 years. This means buses with no air-conditioning, more breakdowns and delays and buses that pollute the air.
- Rail cars will also be much older—29% over age by 2003 and 12% severely overage.
- 65 of CTA’s 151 rail station entrances will be over 40 years old and 46 will be over 70 years old if no new capital funds are forthcoming—meaning older, less comfortable and convenient stations.

- Crucial rail line rehabilitation will not happen. Right now trains must operated at reduced speed along 15 miles of mainline track due to its poor condition.
- Safety and on-time operation are what communication and signals mean to the CTA.
- Maintenance facilities are crucial to having out of service buses back on the road as soon as possible.

“By moving people quickly and efficiently, public transportation keeps hundreds of thousands of cars off area roadways on a daily basis, getting people where they need to go while reducing congestion and improving air quality in the region.”

Brian Urbasiewski - Director, American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago
The funding levels used preparing the 1999-2003 CIP are consistent with capital program marks set by the RTA.

The federal funds are consistent with the recently enacted TEA-21. The estimate of State of Illinois funds assumes that the State will continue to authorize at recent levels even though a law that authorizes this does not exist. If a comprehensive transportation bill is not passed – the CTA considers federal funding to be at risk.

Total available funding is $1.78 billion. The projects being presented total $1.91 billion. The difference is that the CIP includes two projects authorized by Congress for New Start funding: rehabilitation of the Douglas Branch on the Blue Line and expansion of the station platform capacity on the Brown Line. And, without State authorization of match money -- $138 million -- these projects will be out of the CIP plan.

Federal legislation enacted in October would allow these two projects to move ahead on a fast track pending the required state match. Therefore, securing the $138 million for these projects is an immediate priority.

If these projects are not done, the CIP shrinks to about $1.22 billion and over $550 million in FTA New Start Funds could never be claimed.

“...It’s a vastly underused resource as far as bringing customers to and from neighborhood stores.”

Martin Berg - Director of Communications for Neighborhood Development, CANDO

Available funding has allowed CTA to order the mid-life rehabilitation of fewer than half the 598 rail cars delivered from 1981 through 1987. The remaining cars need the same kind of attention to ensure safe, dependable service in the years ahead.
The CTA is Determined to Provide its Customers with Rides That Are:

**ON TIME**
- Customers will benefit from a bus management system that can electronically pinpoint the location of every bus, improving on-time performance and reducing bus bunching.
- Signs throughout the CTA system will be improved to make the system easier to understand and use. The upgraded signs will include better information for our customers and will comply with ADA regulations.
- Rail cars are being overhauled to improve their reliability and comfort and to reduce maintenance costs.

**CLEAN**
- Efforts to provide a cleaner and safer environment for CTA customers will continue with a program to fight back against vandalism such as graffiti and window etching.
- The number of work crews available to clean and sanitize rail cars will be increased.
- All bus garages will be equipped with washers to clean vehicle exteriors.
- Clean-up programs in the subways and along rail tracks will continue.

**SAFE**
- Under a new pilot project, cameras will be installed on some buses to monitor on-board activity; images from the cameras will be used in the vigorous prosecution of all criminal activity.
- Funding for security services has been increased.
- Two-way intercom systems are being installed on all rail cars.

**AND FRIENDLY**
- By simplifying our fares, we hope to attract new customers and encourage existing customers to ride more often.
- The CTA is embarking on a four-year program of specialized customer service training for all front-line personnel.
- More than 25% of the capital budget has been allocated to projects that will make CTA rail stations more accessible to disabled and elderly customers.
- Improvements are underway at the CTA’s internet web site [www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com), making access to information and purchasing of farecards even more convenient.

"We have an explosion of office buildings which will greatly impact traffic. Gridlock's already starting to be a problem. People complain about it, but it's still doable. They'll continue to complain until it gets too bad to drive which will happen."

Linda Lisles Ballatine - Executive Director, Rolling Meadows Chamber of Commerce

"It's hard when you live in the suburbs. There's always talk about public transportation in the city, but we need it out here in the suburbs just as bad."

Lynne Scheider - Executive Manager, Buffalo Grove Chamber of Commerce
WHAT HAS THE CTA DONE TO TIGHTEN ITS BELT AND BE A MORE COST-EFFICIENT AGENCY?

Actually, Quite a Bit...

Beginning in 1997 the CTA achieved more than $62 million in administrative savings with new approaches and forward thinking. For example, the automated fare card system is saving $11 million annually and creating an easier way for customers to pay.

The CTA took a hard look at how it provides its service. The agency lost 40% of its ridership in the last 15 years and adjustments were needed. Eliminating service that few people were using—a highly unpopular move, saved $25 million. It was done in order to make the best possible use of scarce resources for the greatest number of riders.

The CTA’s culture is catching up to business trends of the 1990’s—the customer must come first. The CTA has a toll-free number for questions, comments or complaints. Train schedules are posted at rail stations and most bus stops. Customers can travel in any direction with transfers.

The fare structure makes more sense and provides better value for the CTAs customers. Monthly passes are now good for 30 days from the time of purchase. For visitors to our city, there are 2, 3 and 5-day passes to compliment the one-day pass introduced last year. The cost of monthly passes has been reduced. And a reduced-fare University-Pass for college students has proved to be highly popular.

The CTA is reaching out to new riders with the New Residents Program, mailing about 10,000 brochures per month to new residents.

The appearance and maintenance of CTA facilities has been upgraded with newly painted rail stations and brighter lighting for safety. A massive cleaning project is under way.

“I think public transportation has to be safe and monitored to help with traffic flow and get more people downtown as efficiently and effectively as possible.”

Kim Klausmeier - President, Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce
The CTA is not only LEANER, but also CLEANER

• The CTA is the first transit agency in the world to put pollution-free, fuel cell buses into service as a pilot project testing these buses for commercial use.
• The Chicago Transit Agency was the first in the nation to make use of 100 percent recycled plastic ties in place of wood.
• The CTA purchased 15 maintenance vehicles that operate on compressed natural gas.
• Hundreds of new newspaper recycling bins at ‘L’ stations have been installed.
• The CTA recycles aluminum at its facilities as well as nickel-cadmium batteries, and collects oil for re-use by factories that burn it for energy.

CTA’s recycling program is cleaning up the transit environment now, while experimental fuel cell buses are leading the way toward pollution-free transit with exhaust emissions of pure water vapor.

Recycle!
Look for the big blue recycling bins at CTA rail stations and recycle your newspapers.
Looking Ahead

The CTA's mission is to deliver affordable transit services that link people, jobs and communities. With over 60 percent of the state's workforce living in the region we believe the CTA is a key ingredient in the economic well being of northeastern Illinois -- not just Chicago -- as we carry more suburban riders than Metra or Pace.

Although the federal government enacted major transportation funding legislation in 1991 and again with TEA-21 this year, the State of Illinois has not done so in nearly a decade.

The Chicago Transit Authority has major funding needs just to reach a state of good repair.

With passage of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) our federal government demonstrated a commitment to investing in our transportation infrastructure over the next six years. It was the end of the national campaign for transportation ... and the beginning of a statewide campaign.

TEA-21 put transit services on more equal footing with highway road programs at the federal level. We expect to get about 25 percent more funding than we did with ISTEA -- the last major transportation bill. We need a 20 percent local match from the State of Illinois in order to make full use of that money. Without that commitment the CTA will not be able to leverage the 80 percent federal share.

The region's transportation systems are deteriorating at the same time the economy is creating new jobs. A national study ranks the Chicago metropolitan area as the fifth worst in the nation in terms of congestion, costing the region $2.8 billion per year -- or $1,037 per employee -- in lost productivity, fuel and insurance. Road congestion is significantly raising the cost of shipping goods and materials. If the Blue Line is not repaired, congestion on the Eisenhower and Stevenson Expressways will be even worse as transit users get behind the wheel to get to work.

Our goal is to bring the CTA infrastructure to a state of good repair and then maintain it there. Industry standards call for aging buses to retire after 12 years of service and be rehabilitated at 6 or 7 years. Rail lines need to be repaired in order for lines to operate at scheduled speeds; right now many have "slow zones" due to structural disrepair.

If a local investment is not forthcoming, critical projects will be in jeopardy. Even if this occurs, a $2.3 billion short-term funding gap will remain. It is now imperative that the Illinois General Assembly provide a reliable source of state investment in transportation -- or risk losing the federal match grant money.

"We have a population of 18,000 that swells to about 90,000 every workday. Luckily, we have a train station so commuters have an option."

Shirleanne Lemm - Executive Director, Bensenville Chamber of Commerce

"One thing we're always hearing from businesses is that there just isn't enough public transportation in the suburbs, and anything we can do to better help the business community, we support."

Patricia Ornberg - Executive Director, Des Plaines Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Summary

A healthy transit system is critical to Illinois’ economy. With over 60 percent of the state’s workforce living in the region the CTA is a key ingredient in the economic well being of northeastern Illinois — not just Chicago. Investment in public transit should be a top priority this year for legislators.

Although the federal government enacted major transportation funding legislation in 1991 and again with TEA-21 this year, the State of Illinois has not done so in nearly a decade. The time is now, before we fall even further behind. TEA-21 put transit services on more equal footing with highway road programs at the federal level and we expect to get about 25 percent more funding than we did with ISTEA — the last major transportation bill. However, we need a 20 percent local match from the State of Illinois in order to make full use of that money. Without that commitment the CTA will not be able to leverage the 80 percent federal share.

“Public transportation has a tremendous impact on the quality of life in our neighborhoods. Most people rely on public transportation in most of the community areas in the city of Chicago.”
Bob Mason – Executive Director, South East Chicago Commission

“Parking in so many neighborhoods is awful. There are ‘x’ amount of cars having to fit into ‘x’ amount of parking places, and it just isn’t working. We need to get people out of their cars and into public transportation.”
Bob Mason – Executive Director, South East Chicago Commission