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**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Leanne P. Redden, Executive Director  
**Date:** February 10, 2022  
**Re:** What we've heard: A focus on outcomes will drive the next regional transit strategic plan

At its meeting on February 17, 2022, RTA staff will report out on input received through initial engagement activities and seek the Board's feedback on an emerging vision for the next Regional Transit Strategic and 10-Year Financial Plan.

### **Background and Previous Action**

On August 19, 2021, RTA staff engaged the RTA Board in a workshop to kick off the next Regional Transit Strategic Plan. Following the workshop, staff launched a six-month period of listening, titled *Making a Plan*, from August 2021 through February 2022. *Making a Plan* activities focused on the topic areas of: opportunities for impact, transit system adaptation, funding, equity, and engagement.

### **Summary of Input Received**

RTA provided several methods for engagement including a survey, workshops, and guest blog posts, and Board speakers. More than 1,000 people provided input as summarized in the attached document. Across the *Making a Plan* engagement activities, several themes emerged related to the topic areas identified by RTA and other areas. Themes are also summarized in the attached document.

### **Emerging Vision for the Regional Transit Strategic and 10-Year Financial Plan**

Staff has used the input received to articulate a vision and three guiding principles that will be used to guide and test all activities of the plan. Additionally, staff used the input to identify six outcomes that describe what the region would like to achieve over the five years of the plan period. These emerging contents are described in the attached memo and will be described in the Board presentation during the meeting.

In brief, the recommended vision and principles are as follows:

#### ***Vision:***

Safe, reliable, accessible public transportation that connects people to opportunity, empowers equity, and combats climate change.

**Principles:**

- Open to Change
- Equity
- Stewardship

**Outcomes:**

There are six recommended outcomes. Three outcomes are focused on the kind of *transit system* we want to work toward and three are focused on the kind of *region* a great transit system can help build. The outcomes are paired with questions to help determine the strategies, activities, and projects needed to achieve these outcomes.

*In the future our region's transit system will be...*

- Safe, accessible, reliable, and useful for riders.
  - *How do we create a more seamless rider experience that operates consistently in the face of possible disruptions?*
- In a state of good repair.
  - *How do we maximize benefits of infrastructure investment and use resources efficiently and effectively to maintain the system today while planning for tomorrow?*
- Financially stable.
  - *How do we find new balance in funding so that the transit system can continue to operate while also remaining affordable for riders?*

*In the future our region will be...*

- Connected.
  - *How can we connect people and communities to more opportunities to improve their quality of life?*
- Healthy and Resilient.
  - *How can we best leverage transit as a tool for regional climate action?*
- Thriving.
  - *How do we work with communities to improve access to transit and support equitable development around transit stations?*

Staff is proposing that temporary working groups be established to develop recommended goals and performance metrics in outcome areas, that will serve as recommendations to staff and Board on the contents of the plan.

### **Board Discussion**

The February Board meeting will provide a forum for the Board to hear more details about the input received and weigh in on the emerging vision, principles, and outcomes.

### **Next Steps**

The Board presentation will commence a public comment period on the emerging vision, principles, and outcomes through the *An Emerging Vision for the Chicago Region's Transit System* (public-facing document to be released and promoted starting February 17). RTA staff will return to the RTA Board in March with a summary of input received before commencing content development in March 2022. Staff will also continue to provide updates throughout 2022.

Prepared by: Capital Programming & Planning  
LPR/JL/JHH/PF/PK  
Attachment

## Summary of *Making a Plan* Process and Input Received

On August 19, 2021, RTA staff engaged the RTA Board in a workshop to kick off the next Regional Transit Strategic Plan. Following the workshop, staff launched a six-month period of listening, titled *Making a Plan*, from August 2021 through February 2022. *Making a Plan* activities focused on the topic areas of: opportunities for impact, transit system adaptation, funding, equity, and engagement.

Based on initial Board feedback as well as on-going input received, RTA provided several methods for engagement including:

- [Board workshop](#) on August 19, 2021
- Guest speakers at Board Meetings (Read recaps from [September](#), [October](#), and [December](#))
- Guest blog series on *Connections* with submitted posts from:
  - [Michael Connelly](#), Chief Planning Officer, Chicago Transit Authority,
  - [Jim Derwinski](#), Executive Director, Metra
  - [Melinda Metzger](#), Interim Executive Director, Pace Suburban Bus
  - [Yousef Salama](#), Deputy Executive Director for Research, Programming, and Analysis, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
  - [Rochelle Jackson](#), Community Activist and Chair, Transportation/Infrastructure Committee, North Lawndale Community Coordinating Council
  - [Jesse Elam](#), Director of Strategic Planning and Policy at the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways
  - [Kevin Considine](#), President and CEO, Lake County Partners
  - [Audrey Wennink](#), Director of Transportation, Metropolitan Planning Council
  - [Kate Lowe](#), Associate Professor, University of Illinois-Chicago
  - [Olatunji Oboi Reed](#), President & CEO, The Equiticity Racial Equity Movement, and Co-Chair, Transportation Equity Network
  - [Edith Makra](#), Director of Environmental Initiatives, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
  - [Tom Kotarac](#), Senior Vice President Transportation & Infrastructure, Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago
  - [Ya-Ting Liu](#), Director of Government Affairs & Policy, Via Transportation
  - [John Loper](#), Chief Transportation Planner, DuPage County Division of Transportation
  - [Yonah Freemark](#), Senior Research Associate, Urban Institute
  - [Julia Gerasimenko](#), Advocacy Manager, Active Transportation Alliance

- [Public forum and panel discussion](#) with the Urban Transportation Center at the University of Illinois-Chicago on November 11, 2021
- Public survey and partner promotion toolkit
- Smaller workshops and discussions
- RTA staff workshop January 19, 2022
- [Movers workshop](#) on January 26, 2022
- Social media activity

The following is a summary of input received from all of the *Making a Plan* engagement activities. RTA staff has enlisted engagement consultant Daylight to assist in facilitation of engagement activities as well as aiding in parsing and organizing these different streams of input into digestible content. For clarity, the following sections will describe the input received grouped within the four topic areas used to begin the discussion. Input regarding the fifth topic of engagement was already used to form the above-mentioned methods for engagement so it is not included here.

#### Topic Areas:

- Opportunities for Impact
- Transit System Adaptation
- Funding Sustainability
- Equity

All graphics and visuals are responses from the public survey, while the bulleted text are summarized responses from unstructured feedback, including guest blog posts on *Connections*, RTA Board guest speakers, and workshops that have been thematically grouped by RTA staff.

The public survey ran from November 11, 2021, to February 4, 2022. In total more than 1,000 people responded to the survey. The survey was promoted on *Connections*, in the Regional Transit Update RTA weekly newsletter, and on RTA social media as well as being promoted by regional partners including all three Service Boards, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, and the Metropolitan Planning Council. Survey responses shown in this memo are unweighted.

By a wide margin, survey respondents identified themselves as transit riders or members of the public.

**Figure 1. RTA Strategic Plan Public Survey Response Affiliation**

Organization or affiliation	Number of responses	Percent of responses
Transit rider/general public	1315	74.1%
Elected official	13	0.7%
Non-profit or advocacy organization employee	48	2.7%
Transit agency staff or board member	75	4.2%
State or County employee	38	2.1%
Private sector employee	107	6.0%
Education or researcher	26	1.5%
City of Chicago employee	10	0.6%
CMAP staff or board member	18	1.0%
Suburban municipal employee	44	2.5%
RTA staff or board member	16	0.9%
Other	65	3.7%

The survey asked respondents to describe their vision for the future of the region’s transit system in free text response format. Below is a word cloud of responses, the size of the word corresponds to how frequently respondents used the word.

**Figure 2. In three words, what is your vision for the future of the region’s public transit system (most common responses)**



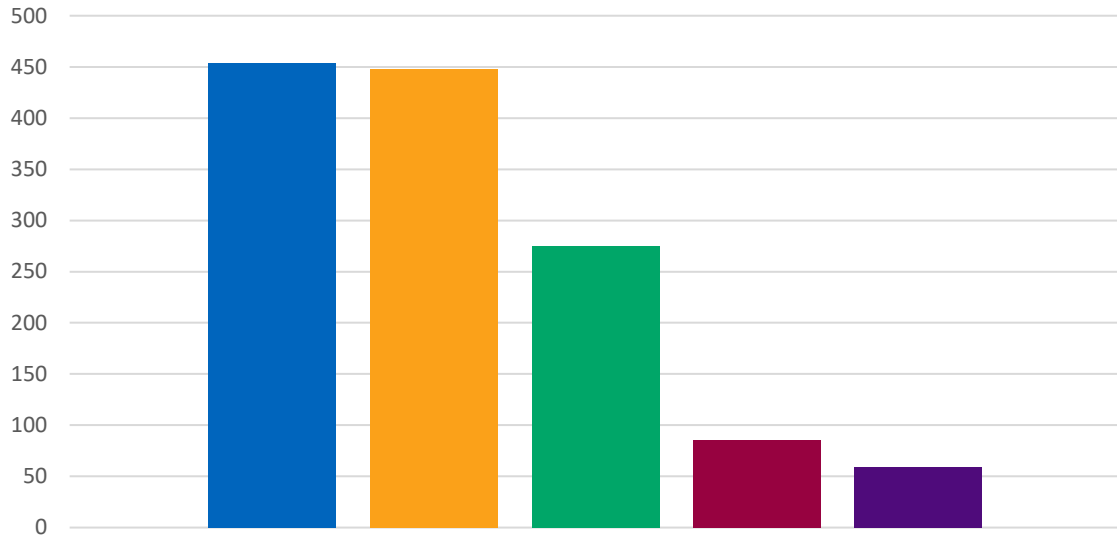
**Topic: Opportunities for Impact**

Staff previously noted that the region’s transit system has many benefits beyond the service itself, such as supporting equitable access to opportunity, enhancing quality of life, providing health benefits, improving air quality, and combatting climate change, to name a few. The Strategic Plan will create a forum to talk about transit’s contribution to all these societal benefits and to highlight a few particular opportunities for impact.






In this topic area, staff asked for input regarding: *What is the greatest opportunity for impact right now that the Strategic Plan process should address?*

Related survey results are shown in the following figure.

**Figure 3. What is the greatest opportunity for impact that the strategic plan process should address?**



**Responses**

-  The RTA should invest in a state of good repair for the system, strengthening the region's broader transportation system.
-  The RTA should work with local communities to improve transit accessibility and advance transit-oriented development and other transit friendly policies.
-  The RTA should prioritize the fight against climate change.
-  The RTA should focus on societal benefits of transit outside of mobility such as improving health and education outcomes.
-  The RTA should work with the business community to improve economic growth of the region.



Notable quotes from the RTA guest blog series on Opportunities for Impact include:

“One of the biggest opportunities for transit systems is the rather unprecedented break in the way that things have always been done...The biggest obstacle will be the pressure to “return to normal” instead of moving on to a way of operating that best serves those who need transit most.”

-- *Kevin S. Considine, President and CEO, Lake County Partners*

“The next ten years pose great opportunity as well as existential threats. As we try to center transit in responding to climate change, an entrenched status quo of a car centric and fossil fuel powered region threaten to hold us back. The pandemic provided a new paradigm in which to recognize transit as essential to our lives and the economy. With the looming threat of climate change and a growing portion of emissions coming from transportation, we must fight for transformational investment in our region’s transit system.”

-- *Julia Gerasimenko, Advocacy Manager, Active Transportation Alliance*

Input from other engagement methods included the following thematic topics:

- **Transit has the opportunity to address climate change concerns:** If the transit system can help encourage mode shift from private autos toward transit, this would help reduce the negative externalities of private auto travel (i.e. GHG, VMT, Particulate Matter, Auto-Oriented Development and Land Use).
- **The agencies should take a more rider-centered approach to the next planning process:** It is important to make transit more available and easier to use.
- **Assess and communicate outcomes:** Be transparent in planning and process, prioritize communities of greatest need.
- **Articulate the value of transit in new terms:** Ridership is not the most important metric.
- **Resilience:** Advance green transit initiatives including fleet electrification and building a network that is more resilient to climate change impacts.

### **Topic: Transit System Adaptation**

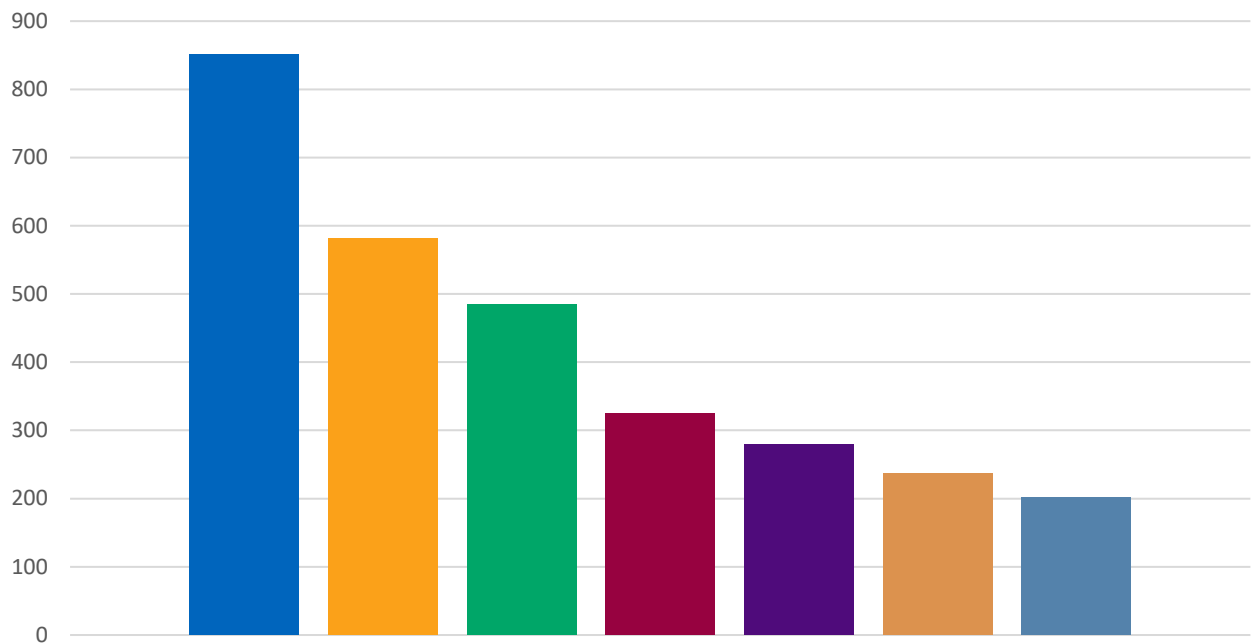
The region’s transit system, while robust in many ways, has been facing ridership declines since 2012. The pandemic has only widened uncertainty about what the region will need from its transit system in the coming years. Many potential ideas for improving the transit system have been included in [Invest in Transit](#) and other regional plans, but progress has been limited due to issues outside of the transit agencies’ control, funding constraints, and competing demands. The Strategic Plan is an opportunity to reinvigorate and focus discussion about opportunities

for improvement and ways the system can adapt to meet the needs of communities throughout the region.

In this topic area, staff asked for input regarding: *What types of transit system changes should be the focus of this process?*

Related survey results are shown in the following figure.

**Figure 4. Of possible changes to the transit system, which of these options should the RTA prioritize?**



### Responses

- Creating a more flexible transit system that better serves destinations outside of downtown Chicago and hours outside of the traditional AM/PM commutes.
- Taking a regional approach to investing in transit infrastructure in order to adapt to changing needs for how people want to get around the region.
- Improving fare integration – e.g., Improved transfers, one fare card for all transit systems (Metra, CTA, and Pace)
- Investing in sidewalks and other strategies to make accessing transit stations and stops safer and easier.
- Strengthening regional policies to locate job opportunities in places that can more easily be served by transit.
- Piloting reduced or free fares for certain populations of riders.
- Returning to pre-COVID service levels.

Notable quotes from the RTA guest blog series on Transit System Adaptation include:

“American cities simply cannot afford to continue to operate a twentieth-century transportation system in the twenty-first century. New infrastructure will allow us to better serve the region that exists today while ensuring (transit) is ready to meet future needs. People will ride a more modern and useful system, increasing our revenue as well as the political will to fund further improvements.”

-- *Melinda Metzger, Interim Executive Director, Pace Suburban Bus*

“Before the pandemic, at the national level, working from home already accounted for a larger share of workers than commuting by transit did. We will see some return to in person work, but likely more varied schedules and not at the same level. Work trips account for a declining minority of all trips, and together these trends demonstrate the opportunity and challenge of changing a system that often had commuting as a focus.”

-- *Kate Lowe, Associate Professor, University of Illinois Chicago*

“Finding relatively low-capital ways to enhance the existing system and make it more flexible and attractive to use is a winning strategy for the region. For example, making it easier and cheaper to transfer between Metra and CTA or Pace would allow riders to take trips by transit they otherwise would not have considered, expanding the transit market. Going up a step in cost, the region should be looking carefully at infill station opportunities. Access to transit can be improved by taking away other barriers as well, such as poor walkability. Most transit trips start or end with a pedestrian trip, and where there are no curb ramps or sidewalks, or unshoveled sidewalks in the winter, getting to transit can be treacherous. The upward trend in traffic fatalities and serious injuries in the region has made being a pedestrian even riskier. Roadway agencies need to play a bigger role in improving transit and access to transit on their rights-of-way.”

*Jesse Elam, Director of Strategic Planning and Policy, Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways*

Input from other engagement methods included the following thematic topics:

- **Adaptation and flexibility:** Make the transit network more flexible to the changing mobility needs of the region.
- **Integration and coordination:** Improve transfers between services, align schedules and service patterns across the Service Boards.
- **Fare integration:** Fully integrate fares across the regional transit system.

- **Fare discounts:** Continue to test and expand pass products, find new ways to make transit more affordable and ensure that fare cost is not a barrier to people riding.
- **Safety and security:** All riders must feel safe and secure when riding transit.
- **Mobility management:** What are the next actions for RTA to take in helping the region coordinate services through mobility management?
- **First/last mile:** How can we continue to improve first and last mile connections, particularly for challenging commute patterns?
- **Community development and equitable transit oriented development:** Proactively promoting development of affordable housing and encouraging employers to locate in areas well served by transit.
- **Economic growth:** Transit is a key ingredient to a multi-dimensional approach to economic development.
- **Regional business partnerships:** Find new ways for employers to incentive transit use and share in developing and maintaining convenient services to connect to transit.
- **Reliability and quality of service:** Quality and reliability are keys to getting riders back on transit. Major bus improvements are critical to enhance access to quality transit throughout our region.
- **Physical expansion:** Expand mass transit to serve more suburban destinations (i.e. Naperville, O'Hare, transportation and logistics hubs.).
- **Speed:** Speed up buses with dedicated lanes, signal priority, and increased frequency – particularly through congested corridors.
- **Automation:** How can we leverage new technologies in automation to improve safety and reliability?
- **Information:** What role should transit play in transporting information across platforms?
- **Security:** Transit ambassadors and community-based approaches to security should be deployed to address crime on transit.
- **Security:** Impacts of over-policing disproportionately harm more transit dependent riders.

### **Topic: Funding Sustainability**

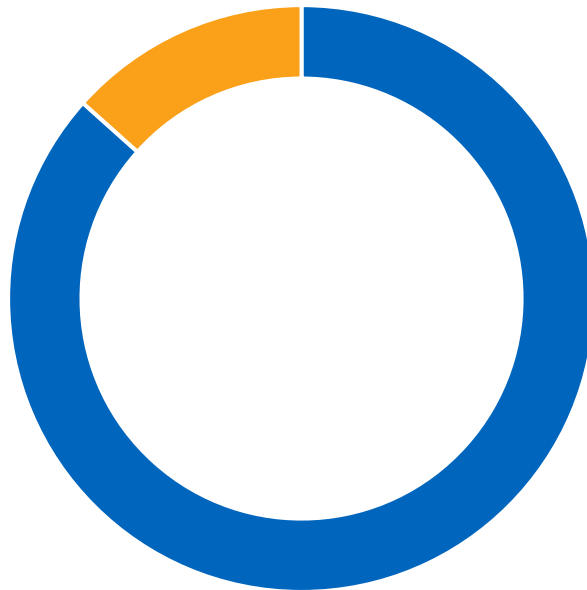
The regional transit system is funded by public and system funds: RTA sales tax and farebox revenue. Federal relief funds have been used to sustain the transit system during 2020 and 2021 and are predicted to last through most of 2025, but they will run out, which means our region's transit needs a long-term financial plan. The Regional Transit Strategic and 10-year Financial Plan process is an opportunity for RTA and stakeholders to identify mismatches

between desired service levels and projected available public funding and fare revenue, and to develop strategies for addressing those mismatches.



In this topic area, staff asked for input regarding: *Which key financial issues should be addressed through this process?*

Related survey results are shown in the following figures.

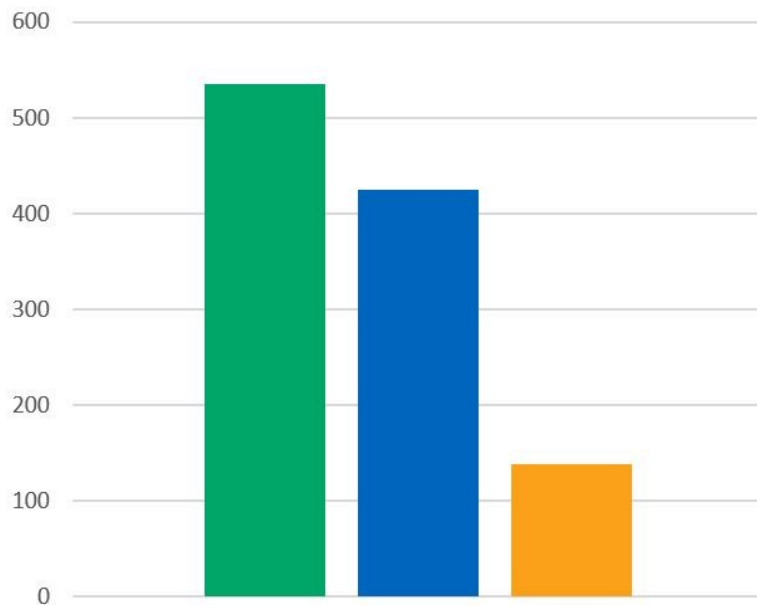
**Figure 5. In the future, if COVID relief funding runs out before ridership fully recovers, the transit system should...**



**Responses**

-  Pursue additional funding sources for transit.
-  Scale back service to "live within its means."

**Figure 6. How should the RTA focus its efforts in addressing funding?**



**Responses**

- **Seek New Revenue:** Identify new sources of revenue at the federal, state, and/or local level.
- **Capital Investment:** Advance a regional, performance-based approach to improving transit infrastructure.
- **Operating Funds:** Prepare for a future deficit by weighing trade-offs between service levels and funding.

Notable quotes from the RTA guest blog series on Funding Sustainability included:

“What was true before the pandemic has become more prevalent now: We need sustainable, more generous public transportation funding. The RTA’s Strategic Plan will address other topics – such as the region’s need to adapt to the new normal and support sustainable transportation – but achieving those targets is much easier with better funding.”

*-- Jim Derwinski, Executive Director, Metra*

“We need to rely less on fares to fund transit operations. In Illinois, to do this we’ll need to make some changes in state legislation to lower the mandated “farebox recovery ratio.” To accelerate the positive health, equity and climate outcomes that we all want, we should be directing Federal, state and municipal resources to support transit operations. We are going to need to toll more of our roads in the future to manage

demand for driving and pay for roadway maintenance, and we must ensure that a significant share of those revenues go to transit so that people have affordable travel options. Toll revenue collected from cars and trucks should be used to support transit operations, including express buses on highways, so that we have truly multimodal corridors where people have sustainable and affordable transportation choices.”

-- Audrey Wennink, Director of Transportation, Metropolitan Planning Council

Input from other engagement methods included:

- **Change funding distribution:** Move away from historic formulas to distribute operations funds.
- **Rely less on fares:** Find more resilient funding sources to ensure critical operations will not be threatened in the face of future disruptions.
- **Rethink fares and funding:** Completely rethink reliance on fares for operations funds and the farebox recovery ratio.
- **New funding sources:** Identify new funding sources for operations revenue, make the case for transit to be funded.
- **Leverage partnerships:** Continue to work with partners across the region and beyond to make the case for transit funding.
- **Communicate the value of transit:** Ridership is not the only or most important metric. Find new ways to articulate the value transit brings to our diverse region.
- **Investment:** Continue to advance state of good repair investment. Rethink priorities and evaluation of projects based on changing needs. Find more ways to invest with an aim to maximize impact of limited resources.
- **Funding parity:** Fight for increased federal funding for transit, focusing on transit’s inherent advantage toward equitable mobility.
- **Control costs:** Ensure we do everything we can to be good stewards of the public funds we have.
- **Road pricing to fund transit:** Seek tolling, congestion fees, and other forms of road pricing as a source of funding for transit operations.

## **Topic: Equity**

*Invest in Transit* focused on geographic equity and distributing investments across different parts of the region. Over the last year, other types of equity have been highlighted at regional, state, and federal levels.

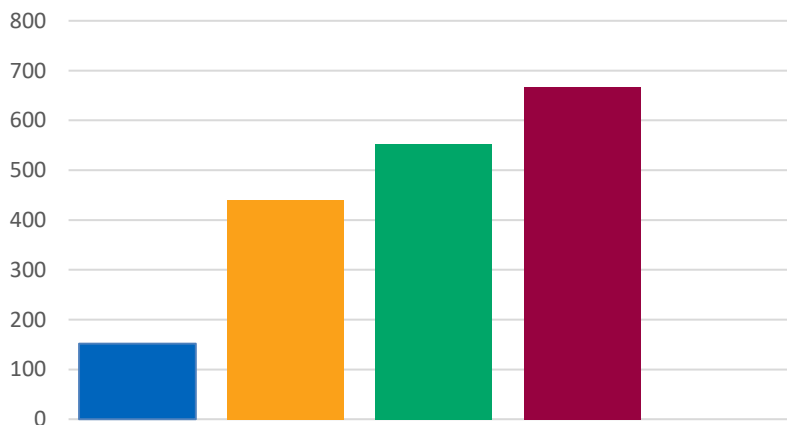
Those discussion have included this Board’s work on using equity analysis as a component of allocating funds for sustaining critical transit service in 2021, echoing other efforts within our region and state, and responding to calls from civic groups and advocates in our region to be more direct in leveraging transit’s inherent advantages toward equitable mobility. All of which is in line with the Biden administration’s executive order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities.

The Regional Strategic and 10-Year Financial Plan will provide a forum to incorporate different forms of equity in funding and planning activities, while continuing to be geographically equitable in how resources are distributed as mandated by the RTA Act.





In this topic area, staff asked for input regarding: *What are some productive ways for RTA to define, understand, and incorporate equity during this process?*

Related survey results are shown in the following figure.

**Figure 7. What should the RTA do to define, understand, and incorporate equity into its work?**



### Responses

-  Develop a shared regional equity statement.
-  Establish goals and performance measures tied to equity.
-  Rethink transit funding and service distribution to prioritize equity at the regional level.
-  Leverage transit’s inherent advantage towards equitable mobility by advocating for increased federal and state transit funding.



Notable quotes from the RTA guest blog series included:

"Our transit system is in dire need of operationalizing a comprehensive commitment to racial equity and mobility justice. It is a critical lifeline for Black and Brown people, especially living on the South and West sides of Chicago, helping us reach important destinations, such as job centers, healthcare, schools, grocery stores, recreation, and civic engagement... The pandemic shone a bright light on racialized transportation inequities, and those impacted: Black and Brown people. The poor people, essential workers, and those transit dependent in our region are Black and Brown."

*--Olatunji Oboi Reed, President & CEO, The Equiticity Racial Equity Movement, and Co-Chair, Transportation Equity Network*

"At no time in recent history has the need for equitable policies and practices in public transportation been more evident than during the COVID-19 pandemic...It's fair to say that we've now reached a tipping point in the public transit industry, where it's no longer a wishful idea, it is a must—especially in urban areas—that we take this opportunity to redefine the new normal and focus on the needs of our most vulnerable and transit-dependent riders... Equity in public transit is more than just individual projects, it's a way of thinking."

*-- Michael Connelly, Chief Planning Officer, Chicago Transit Authority*

Input from other engagement methods included:

- **Operationalize a racial equity lens:** Transit is a critical lifeline for Black and brown communities, we must operationalize commitment to racial equity and mobility justice to dismantle structural racism and historic disinvestment.
- **Establish goals and performance measures for equity:** Set goals to address equity, use performance measure to assess progress against stated goals.
- **Prioritize access to those who need it most:** Using demographic dynamics such as income, employment, and communities of color to identify populations of greatest need.
- **Equity in the transit system starts with a strong system:** Transit is inherently more equitable than other modes of transport, we must prioritize federal funding parity with highways.
- **Provide robust service throughout the region:** RTA is a regional entity with a mandate to be geographically equitable in funding and the distribution of service throughout our diverse region.

- **Acknowledge history of structural racism and inequitable outcomes of the region's transportation system:** Transit alone cannot solve the racial and economic inequities of our region, but transit can work with communities to improve the outcomes of those who most need transit access.
- **Consider low-income and communities of color, beyond Cook County:** Regional demographics are changing, and equity is by no means strictly an urban issue. We must consider the needs of suburban transit dependent populations beyond Cook County and the city of Chicago.

## Staff Recommendations Regarding Key Issues to Address in Strategic Plan

The input received during the public input process has provided valuable insight into shaping the future of the transit system.

The input received said that the vision for the future of the transit system must capture the opportunities ahead while leveraging the multi-faceted value that the transit system creates for the region. The value of transit includes providing people with safe, fast, reliable, accessible, and frequent mobility options that provide people with access to opportunity. The value of transit also goes beyond riders to the region at large, including reducing carbon emissions and powering the regional economy. To that end, staff recommends the following vision:

***Safe, reliable, accessible public transportation that connects people to opportunity, empowers equity, and combats climate change.***

The input received also elevated several thematic principles that staff recommends elevating as cross-cutting principles to guide the plan development process and outcomes. These three principles are:

- **Open to change:** As we adapt to the changing needs of riders, our focus will be to improve the rider experience and people's ability to access opportunity, particularly those with very long transit commutes. High levels of satisfaction among riders seen in RTA's customer attitude surveys provide a strong foundation on which to build. An engaged community of transit policy experts and riders have contributed ideas on what should remain and what will require new thinking. It will be important for all participating in this strategic plan to be open to change and to hearing - and acting on where feasible - new perspectives about how transit can meet people's needs.
- **Equity:** RTA continues to be committed to addressing its legislative mandates to be geographically equitable in investment and service distribution decisions. In

addition, many comments provided during the strategic planning process pointed to the need for the transit system operations, capital, and engagement processes to acknowledge, address, and better meet the needs of historically underinvested, overburdened, and transit dependent communities in the region. This process and plan will work toward addressing these inequities.

- **Stewardship:** RTA has a legislative mandate to adopt balanced budgets for the region's transit system and is committed to wise fiscal stewardship. As a result, the strategic plan must consider the fiscal constraints currently present and the practical likelihood of new capital and operating revenue available to further the goals outlined. The means and methods for reaching solvency may change through the plan but the plan will not make recommendations that put the agencies at risk of insolvency or over-leveraging.

These principles will be used to guide and test all activities of the plan.

In addition, input received pointed to key outcomes that the region would like to see from the transit system going forward. Staff recommends that the Board approve the following six outcomes for which the RTA will chart a course to realize through the strategic plan process.

There are six outcomes this plan will help accomplish. Three outcomes are focused on the kind of *transit system* we want to work toward and three are focused on the kind of *region* a great transit system can help build. The outcomes are paired with questions to help determine the strategies, activities, and projects needed to achieve these outcomes.

***In the future our region's transit system will be...***

- Safe, accessible, reliable, and useful for riders.
  - *How do we create a more seamless rider experience that operates consistently in the face of possible disruptions?*
- In a state of good repair.
  - *How do we maximize benefits of infrastructure investment and use limited resources efficiently and effectively to maintain the system today while planning for tomorrow?*
- Financially stable.
  - *How do we find new balance in funding so that the transit system can continue to operate while also remaining affordable for riders?*

***In the future our region will be...***

- Connected.

- *How can we connect people and communities to more opportunities to improve their quality of life?*
- Healthy and Resilient.
  - *How can we best leverage transit as a tool for regional climate action?*
- Thriving.
  - *How do we work with communities to improve access to transit and support equitable development around transit stations?*

Staff recommends working groups be convened to articulate goals and performance measures tied to outcomes. Working groups will be led by RTA staff and comprised of stakeholders from around the region. Working groups will meet bi-weekly beginning in March through May 2022. The results of these activities will be gathered by staff and reported to the RTA Board.

Each working group will be charged with two primary tasks: Developing 1-3 goals to guide work towards achieving outcomes and developing associated performance measures to assess progress toward goal outcomes during the plan period

As the working groups develop content throughout the spring, RTA and Service Board staff will also begin work on the Capital Priority Projects and 10-Year Financial Plan with help from an outside consultant. This work will be guided by the vision, principles, and the goals and performance measures articulated through the working groups.

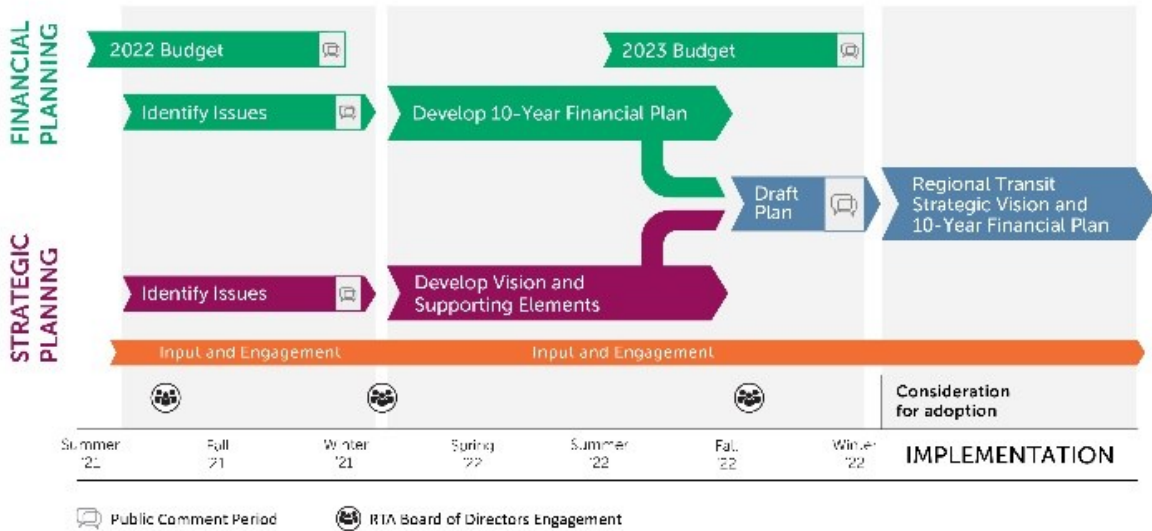
## **Next Steps**

The initial engagement described in this memo represents the first phase of the development of a five-year regional transit strategic plan and a 10-year financial plan along three tracks.

1. A financial track will include yearly budgeting while analyzing potential ten-year funding scenarios to prepare decision-makers for needed future actions to ensure financial sustainability.
2. The strategic planning track will weigh the trade-offs between ideals and funding realities. It will develop a vision for the region and transit system and the projects and strategies needed to achieve it.
3. The communication and engagement track will continually inform and seek input on the process and recommendations of the plan.

## Regional Transit Strategic Plan Timeline

Collaborative development of a new strategic direction for the region's transit system will occur along three tracks and consist of multiple overlapping activities.



These materials, including a document summarizing them for the public, *An Emerging Vision for the Chicago Region's Transit System*, will be available for public from February 17 through March 11, 2021. RTA staff will gather input from the RTA Board and public comment to further refine the vision, principles, and outcomes. Input from the public comment period will be reported back to the RTA Board. Following public input, the working groups will be convened to begin developing plan content as described above.

RTA staff will continue to engage with stakeholders and the RTA Board throughout this process, including reconvening the Movers for additional workshops to gather input throughout 2022. Staff will also continue to work closely with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning on that agency's ongoing mobility recovery work and its required update to ON TO 2050 to ensure a cohesive regional response and alignment on issues impacting transit.