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To: Board of Directors
From: Leanne P. Redden, Executive Director
Date: March 10, 2022
Re: Public Input on Emerging Vision for the Chicago Region's Transit System

At its meeting on March 17, 2022, RTA staff will report out on input received and corresponding modifications made to the *Emerging Vision for the Chicago Region's Transit System*. Additionally, RTA staff will share recommendations for stakeholder working groups and staff technical groups to begin plan development work.

Background and Previous Action

On February 17, 2022, RTA staff shared the [Emerging Vision for the Chicago Region's Transit System](#) with the RTA Board. Developed from a six-month period of engagement, this document outlined a vision for the next strategic plan, articulated three principles to guide plan development, and identified outcomes to achieve through plan implementation.

Following the February board meeting, staff posted the document online and solicited input from stakeholders and the public between February 17 and March 11, 2022. All comments received are included as an attachment.

After Board materials were posted, the RTA received a comment from the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club and Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, which has been added to the end of the public comment attachment.

Summary of Input Received

There were several avenues for stakeholders and the public to provide input on the Emerging Vision, which has evolved over the last few months with the help of many from around the region. RTA staff heard from groups through a public survey, letters, stakeholder workshops (including with the Climate Reality Project, Northwest Municipal Conference, Barrington Area Council of Governments, and DuPage Mayors and Managers), and other meetings.

In advance of the February Board meeting, the RTA received two public comment letters about the strategic plan. A comment from the Climate Reality Project - Chicago Metro Chapter, and later feedback received from the group during a stakeholder workshop held with RTA staff on February 22, reiterated the organization's desire to use transit as a tool to fight climate change. The group asked the RTA to act quickly to recognize the immediacy of the climate crisis and coordinate with the Service Boards on fleet electrification.

The RTA also received a letter from a coalition of transportation advocates, including the Active Transportation Alliance, Center for Neighborhood Technology, Elevated Chicago, Environmental Law & Policy Center, High Speed Rail Alliance, Metropolitan Planning Council, and Shared-Use Mobility Center. The letter expressed concerns about the engagement conducted so far in the strategic plan and encouraged the RTA to act urgently to meet the challenges of the moment. It reinforced the need for a commitment to change and the necessity to include equity as a major component of the plan. Both letters were made public as part of the [February Board agenda](#).

A conversation with the RTA Board at its February meeting on the Emerging Vision prioritized the need to commit to change rather than be open to it and act boldly to address the challenges facing public transit in northeastern Illinois. Also voiced were the need to be specific to climate change actions as part of the Healthy and Resilient outcome, and to identify measures of success.

Following the board meeting, the RTA opened a public comment period and solicited comments about the Emerging Vision through an online survey. The RTA received nearly 1,500 comments from 260 people through an online survey. The input received from the public was primarily positive. Commenters encouraged the RTA to be bold about issues such as advancing equity and fighting climate change and expressed that these times require the transit system to be committed to change rather than open to it. Frequent and affordable service and conversion to zero-emission vehicles were also common responses. All comments received can be found in an attachment to this memo.

Staff Proposed Change to Vision, Principles and Outcomes Based on Input

In response to public input, comments from board members, and advocates, staff recommend changes to the vision, principles, and outcomes articulated in the *Emerging Vision for the Chicago Region's Transit System*. The text changes to each element are underlined in the following section. The recommended changes are small but, taken together, better capture the urgency of the moment and the specific challenges facing the regional transit system. Some comments also urged the RTA to identify specific solutions or changes to the transit system. While such changes are not appropriate for the vision, in the next stage of the process, RTA and stakeholders will work together to advance the discussion into more specific goals, measures, and strategies, with stakeholders and riders alike, as discussed in the later sections of this memo.

Vision

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

Principles

- Commitment to Change
- Equity
- Stewardship

Outcomes

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

- Safe, accessible, reliable, and useful for riders
- In a state of good repair
- Financially stable

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

- Connected
- Winning the fight against climate change
- Thriving

Developing Specific Content Through Stakeholder Working Groups and Technical Groups

During the *Making a Plan* input season, RTA staff, regional stakeholders, Service Boards, and CMAP staff have expressed interest in continuing to shape plan development. Several public comments received in response to the emerging plan contents urged RTA to better respond to the urgency of the moment and to identify specific solutions to transit challenges. RTA staff recommends convening working groups for policy experts and riders to participate in ongoing engagement and development of the strategic plan elements.

The purpose of the groups is to:

- Create a forum for mutual learning and discussion
- Develop content recommendations for the plan, to be considered by RTA and Service Board staff and leadership for inclusion in the next steps of plan review and development.
- Cultivate a group of stakeholders that are knowledgeable about transit issues and invested in potential solutions, in anticipation of needing to call upon these and other stakeholders to help with implementation after the plan is completed in 2023.

Five groups in total will be convened: Three stakeholder groups -- each tied to two of the plan outcomes -- and two technical groups -- each tied to the standalone plan deliverables, the Capital Priority Project list and 10-Year Financial Plan.

Each of the three stakeholder groups will be led by RTA staff and tasked with developing goals, strategies, and performance measures that can advance two outcomes – one focused on the transit system and one focused on the region -- and help monitor regional progress in achieving the desired outcomes. The groups will have 20-30 members each and will aim to include staff from RTA, the Service Boards and CMAP as well as representatives from the Service Board ADA Advisory Boards and Citizen Advisory Boards; other government agencies; non-profit or advocacy groups; academic research institutions; private-sector companies; and members of the riding public. In order to make sure working group participation is equitable, RTA will work with our specialized engagement consultants to ensure that our recruitment pays particular attention to:

- Geographic diversity. The working groups will strive to include representatives from all 6 RTA regional counties and will include representatives from economically disconnected areas.
- Gender diversity. The working groups will strive for gender parity, with particular focus on representation from gender minorities, including women, transgender, and gender-nonconforming participants.
- Diversity of ability and age. The working groups will strive to include members with different levels of physical ability and a range of ages.
- Racial diversity. The working groups will strive to include a membership that is approximately demographically representative of the RTA region by self-identified race.
- Diversity of experience. The working groups will strive to include a distributed mix of transit agency professionals and people who are riders and/or advocates who would like to participate in shaping regional policy.

The groups will operate with group charters that delineate the roles and requirements for the groups, group expectations for meetings to encourage full participation, optional engagement letters for participants who would like to be compensated by the RTA for participation, and translation services and other accommodation will be available upon request.

Separate from the stakeholder groups, one technical group will be convened to develop the 10-year Financial Plan. This group will be led by RTA staff and consultants with representatives from RTA, the Service Boards, and CMAP. It will be tasked with developing a detailed 10-year financial model and analysis of different potential funding scenarios, under advisement of input about goals and measures developed by the stakeholder groups. This group will also be tasked with developing proposed policy solutions, in collaboration with the stakeholder groups and planning process at large.

One other technical group will also be convened to advance the Capital Priority Project list. This group will be led by RTA staff and consultants with representatives from RTA, the Service Boards, and CMAP. It will be tasked with advancing the existing Priority Project list and regional

capital program development process that is undertaken each year through the budget process, in collaboration with the stakeholder groups and planning process at large.

Staff recommends convening the three stakeholder groups over three months, beginning in April and delivering goals, strategies, and measures tied to the six outcomes in late June. The technical groups will meet over six months, beginning in April and delivering draft documents in late September.

The work of the stakeholder and technical groups will be documented and reported-out to the RTA Board, the Service Boards, CMAP, and stakeholders throughout the year. This will include presentations to the RTA Board, workshops and meetings, blog posts on Connections, and updates in the Regional Transit Update newsletter.

Stakeholder group charters and invitations to participate will be issued after the March Board meeting.

Board Discussion

At the Board meeting, RTA staff will share further detail on the input received on the Emerging Vision for the Chicago Region's Transit System and summarize staff recommended changes to the vision, principles, and outcomes. Staff will also discuss the working group plans in more detail. The discussion will be an opportunity for board members to affirm the vision and provide input to initial plan development activities.

Next Steps

Following the Board meeting, RTA staff and engagement consultants will recruit participants for working groups to ensure the stakeholder groups represent the diverse communities throughout the region. In April, staff will kick-off plan development work, convening stakeholder and technical groups and continuing to work into the summer. Regular updates will be provided to the RTA Board.

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

Attachment: Public comment responses

From February 17 to March 11, 2022, the RTA opened an online survey to collect public comment on the Emerging Vision. Normally public comment is accepted by the RTA via email and yields few responses, but the survey was an effort to make engagement with the strategic plan materials easier and more accessible. In total, the survey recorded 1,499 comments from 260 people.

The survey was anonymous and included ten questions, all optional. Questions were mainly open response to allow users to provide feedback on the vision, principles, and outcomes of the plan in their own words. It was promoted by the RTA through social media, newsletters, and blog posts, as well as shared by partners including the Service Boards, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, the Northwest Municipal Conference, and Lake County Partners.

Full survey responses are below.

Vision

Question: What part(s) of the vision statement is most important to you? (Can select more than one)

Answer choices	Number of responses	Percent of responses
Reliable (public transportation)	161	23%
Safe (public transportation)	128	18%
Combats climate change	126	18%
Accessible (public transportation)	113	16%
Connects people to opportunity	97	14%
Empowers equity	62	9%
None of the above	2	0%

Question: Is there anything that you would like to see added to the vision statement that is missing?

Interconnected network. Catenary electric expansion for Metra.
Secure
going carbon free by 2030
no
Giving everyone an equal chance to access points with no borders and a chance to choose with no limits
Clean transportation
Innovative
No
No
The statement also should note that public transit should adapt to societal changes, like what happened during the pandemic.
You can accomplish all of these with any vehicle, but you can only accomplish climate change objective by using 100% electric vehicles, power from renewable sources. YOU MUST GO ALL ELECTRIC NOW, not in 20 years which is what might happen if you continue to use highly polluting dieseling natural gas-powered vehicles
There is no mention of affordable in this.
More Equity goals
A pledge to respond to riders' queries/comments.
affordable
No
Safe for passengers
no
no
The vision statement is vague and obvious - why is the RTA spending time on vision statements when our transit network needs immediate help recovering ridership and providing adequate service?
Does accessible mean affordable or convenient/proximate or ADA-aligned or all of the above?
no
no
no
At a reasonable cost to the user
Secure
efficient

Yes, all of RTA's service area have some form of public transportation, whether it is conventional transit, dial-a ride, or micro transit options.
Adding electric vehicles to the fleet
reasonably priced
Please try to be Fossil fuel free by 2040
no
We need to be sure we are protecting children from pollution by having electric school buses.
empowers equity doesn't really make sense. Equity is about dedicating resources to people and places based on what they need . Outcomes are equitable or not, or a process. You should look for different phrasing that suggests the existence and operation will drive equity outcomes (e.g., wealth creation, economic development, health)
No, it's all good.
Environment Protection Driven
NO
Honestly, it gets the message across concisely and I like the message. Anything I could add might make it too wordy or complicate the clarity.
Make public transit the best option not just an option
Serves all parts of the Chicago area with reliable service
no
EQUITY: I live in Zion which gets way less round-trip Northwestern trains than our very high tax rates and legacy nuclear stranded waste deems equitable. Address this please. "empowers equity" is you checking a box! Can this be fixed?
Plan for future changes needed in transportation needs
No
No; it is already too long
I'd like to be kept informed of updates.
Control the creepy passengers somehow. They scare the rest of us. Selling drugs, smoking cigarettes (yes, in broad daylight on the green line), talking nonstop. All these scares people away...what about OUR rights?
Empower people to live and get around without owning a car
fast, frequent
efficient
no
RELIABLE accessibility. Visible signs on train platforms so we know where the ramp entrances are located - holding up the train because you can't find the door is less than ideal. AN ASSISTANCE PHONE LINE FOR THE L. I had no idea that staff can call ahead to your destination. WE should be able to. Not rely on staff who often aren't available.
frequently scheduled public transportation; connects people to other public transportation
No

add: "with an all-electric fleet."
equitable
increased service
Sustainable power sources
useful?
Less poisonous pollution
That covers it
affordable, connectivity between Metra, CTA and PACE
Add affordable
GO ELECTRIC
No
No
I would add "sustainable" to the beginning of the Vision statement.
ecological (transportation); "over-due"
More help/integration for homeless people/drug addicts on CTA vehicles such as assisted housing and counseling to help that addiction.
Modern and clean
for the entire region
Affordable
More Equity goals
reduces traffic congestion--i.e., public transit is important to fund even if you don't use it
"responsible" in lieu of "combats climate change" - ; implying that the transportation system is both socially and environmentally responsible.
Frequent, affordable
Improving service in nontraditional markets
Affordable (economically accessible)
Affordable
no
Focus on use of renewable energy (i.e. electrify buses and trains and power them with solar energy.)
Frequent and at all hours of the day
economical
convenient(so I choose it over driving in a car alone)
Increases ridership
Safe, reliable, accessible is not vision it is your job aka mission
We movement clean transportation (with clean energy)
no
I so glad you included climate change.

Frequent. Frequency is freedom. Frequency is different than reliability, and the two shouldn't be confused. If I know a train/bus is coming every few minutes, I am free to use transit just like a car user would.
Ever-expanding, imaginative. I think it's important to add dreaming or imagining to anything about public transportation because many people cannot imagine a world without cars. or even a world with safe, reliable, accessible public transportation.
The safe, reliable, accessible part would be better in a mission statement. The vision gets beyond your baseline focus, thus I feel equity and climate change are key vision components.
N/A
In terms of rider experience and system reliability, public transit should be preferable to driving.
Buying only EV (electric vehicles) going forward, needed to combat climate change.
No
cost effective
Frequency
Fare integration
Measurably reduces dependence on cars in the region
no
Build more rail lines
None
Reduce considerable amount of debt on the books - that is the second most important thing for me next to actually having buses and trains running on time and being reliable.
no
Enhanced, expanded, or well funded.
We need to reduce household transportation costs as a part of equity. As a % of household income, transportation costs have more than doubled in the last two decades. Reducing those costs is a practical application of equity and access.
See if you can add language about expanding and modernizing our system. What we have is alright, but we need new routes, stations, and corridors that serve people who aren't well-served by transit today
Frequency
Stronger commitment to transportation as a utility
Connects people to leisure/activities
Good transit builds community (by allowing people who would otherwise not visit an area to do so via transit) and enhances quality of life (connecting to cultural hubs and festivals), in addition to providing work opportunities.
equity in service to areas now being underserved, like the southwest area of Cook County (Chicago and suburbs)
affordable

Convenience, efficiency
Frequent
No, those are all crucially important elements of a public transit system
No
I don't understand what 'empowering equity' really means. Sort of feels like the vision statement doesn't really understand either.
Access must include economic accessibility
No. I think it's great!
Clean public transit (no foul odors or trash laying around)
Faster
More Pace routes in Arlington Heights
Bring back bus stops that were eliminated years ago for those who are Elderly and People with Disabilities, and bring back Bus routes in neighborhoods that needs them most.
Something along the lines of using technology to communicate and improve experience?
Integrated / Cross-Modal / Mode Agnostic for Trip Planning without penalty
No.
More accessibility to bus transportation in the western suburbs --- more routes and pickup points
frequent, all-day service
'Rapid' transportation on corridors which are outside of the "Loop"
Plans on how to improve services on all Metra routes including SWS and HC which have bad schedules that need to be change
I think "advances equity" is better phrasing than "empowers equity." Equity is a target to be strived for and I'm not sure what empowers means here.
Fast or quick

Principles

Question: Do you think these are the right principles to guide the next regional transit strategic plan?

yes
Yes, but add that they should be bold and forward thinking.
Innovative
Yes
Yes
Open to Change is not strong enough. Committed to a clean and just transition - sounds better.
yes
Lead on change; clean and sustainable
No
I'm not sure about stewardship. I feel like quality should be a principle. Right now there are bus stops for pace riders. But they can only be accessed by crossing six lanes of cars on a 35 mph road. And there is no sidewalk access from the nearest stoplight which is usually half a mile away. Technically it's there but nobody's going to use it. It's an equally horrible experience for every single person, so you've hit equity.
Yes
Yes
dd
Yes
Open to change sounds ridiculous - it's time to actually change! Equity is vague, and stewardship of what?
Looks good
depends how they will be used
yes
Yes
Equity should be at the forefront
yes
Sure
Perhaps stewardship and equity need to be explained or defined for us
Yes
yes
I don't know think "open to change" is really a principle, or at least not on the same level as the other two. I think something referencing the central role that public transit has to play in reducing climate changing emissions, including by supporting denser land use, would be

better, e.g., Sustainability; Enabling Sustainability; Enabling Environmental Protection; something like that.
don't really know
No
open to change should be empowering change
I am not sure what is meant by stewardship
Yes
Innovation
open to change sounds negative
Yes.
yes
Kind of general. Stewardship of what?
yes
open to change really needs to change to something more like evolve, ready to meet the moment, innovate etc. Stewardship is a little 90s too unless you are trying to cover money and climate at the same time
Vision for the Future; Environmental Stewardship
Yes, but being available to all is important too.
yes
I believe the Stewardship principle is too vague; stewardship of what ? People, business, area,
yes
Yes
Open to Change is a bit vague - perhaps this alludes to adaptability/flexibility or evolving to meet changing needs. Stewardship might be better said as Environmental Stewardship and Equity might be better said as Social Equity, or perhaps Inclusive. Just my thoughts thank you for asking.
I think they can be. Open to improvement also needs to turn into action.
Yes
maybe something about responding to community needs
Perhaps not in the correct order: Equity means open to change [because equity is the key for raising up our middle and lower class.
YES
Yes
No, I think open to change should be more like adaptable or flexible. And stewardship should maybe something like financially responsible; the average person might not even know the word stewardship
Hope that "open to change" principle will be followed, there's so little innovation to transit concepts in Chicago over the past few decades

yes
Sure, but control passenger behavior instead of ignoring it. Which is exactly what the conductors do (don't do). I'm not trying to be mean, just giving my honest opinion of how you could get passengers back.
Yes
Yes, but what about growth?
yes
Change must lead to service/fare structures that make the system better for the rider.
yes I do
transit wasn't open to change before only now? makes transit look bad old fashioned and stall
no
Yes but I would change the open to change to leading the charge for change
yes
I'd like to see a principle about zero emissions transit vehicles
You should interview your passengers, input from real people on the street. not just rely on your own staff to think of 'new' ideas web they've been rolling with the old rules for so many years.
Open to change is a great start. I just fear it may be incremental change instead of bold visionary change.
Serving the region's public transportation needs
No
No
additionally, phase out the need for cars in our city
as long as open to change includes increased service and a lesser emphasis on peak periods on Metra
Yes
'open to change' could be a little more forceful. Transit needs to change. I would call these 'transformative, equitable, sustainable' or something along those lines.
Yes
add environmentally sustainable
yes
Need to include environmental safety
COMBATS CLIMATE CHANGE
Add : Zero emissions by 2040
Yes. Would add regenerative as a principle
Should include climate friendly
Yes. I would add effective or something that gets across competence.

Yes
yes. allows for growing vision and responsibility
Yes but expansion as a system needs to be an encouragement.
Yes
add accessible
yes
yes
yes
Yes!
They are a bit vague. Open to change especially seems a bit weak. Maybe something that more clearly indicates understanding of the huge challenges ahead for transit and commitment to finding solutions. I'd also like to see a commitment to focus on service over cost cutting and finding creative funding sources to make that possible
Open to change isn't quite strong enough - it should be "committed to change" or "driving change"
Open to change: Learn from the communities that use the system. 1. Survey for ideas, reaching out to ridership for different perspectives and experiences of what they want when riding public transportation. 2. Equity: Distribution of benefits and costs should be appropriate for communities serviced. Generally consider the cost perspectives, impacts and needs of a community in the planning process which should reflect a particular community's equity concerns and priorities. Get input and always have public involvement in important transportation equity evaluating and planning. 3. Stewardship: Goals should be set to give stewardship to riders by setting specific, relevant, and achievable benefits went creating a plans. Brainstorm from community.
scope is well rounded
Yes
Connection
Yes
I would change "open to change" to be adapts based on current conditions
The priority should be on making transit reliable enough that people do not feel like they need to have other options (e.g. their own car) available.
Stewardship should identify environmental stewardship.
Yes. Open to change is critically important in adapting to post-pandemic future.
"Open to change" and "stewardship" are both vague. I'd like a more firm direction to meet our regional goals.
Open to change is vague and non-committal, this does not directly reflect quality of life improvements driven by affordable, frequent transit. It should be commitment to change, clearly the status quo is inadequate, but should also reflect the principles by which RTA would like to provision transit services (frequency, improved QOL) Stewardship is also

unclear, does this refer to the environment? Transportation assets? Community relationships?
yes
I think zeroing out greenhouse gas emissions should be a core principle.
I would use-Serving existing riders, encouraging new riders, financial stability
Sort of, but open to change should be a given. Expansion of both routes and ridership should also be in there, we need to think big here
Progressive, out of the box thinking is critical. You need to be FOCUSED on CHANGE! You absolutely need to explore best practices from other large transit systems (NYC, London, Paris...)
Open to change needs to be -Implement Change
Yes, and all three point to prioritizing the threat of climate change and the need to stretch in the next 8 years NOT 2028!
I think they are all good. It's important to be open-minded. Equity is important. And I hope that by stewardship you mean stewardship of public resources and health, including improving air quality by not using gasoline buses.
yes
1 & 2 make sense, but stewardship is frankly a nothing word. I don't know what that means in this context. A missing piece is that RTA should consider international best practices. While that will require openness to change given the status quo, they are two distinct guiding principles.
Yes, I really like open to change. that really gives a lot of room for exploring and evolving public transportation
Rather than 'open to change' how about 'iterative towards dynamic development and efficiencies'. Also, stewardship should call out the environment clearly as a component.
Yes. I'm hoping open to change means innovation as well
Yes
I might add Advocacy. Public transit needs people willing to get in the arena and help people understand that the Chicago region can only succeed if our regional public transit system succeeds.
They are good principles. "Stewardship" is important especially when considering the environment.
Yes.
so bland, could mean anything
Open to change is too vague. Incorporate world-wide best practices in operations, administration, planning and design is better.
Yes
Yes I do
yes

Yes
Yes
I think the vagueness of "open to change" is an out to rebrand the existing metrics to conform it to what you want. Having reliable service and holding yourselves and the transit agencies accountable is the most important principle - or else all of this is Disney feel good make believe.
Yes! Particularly open to change -- that will be needed in a time of mitigating the risks of climate change and ensuring equity
I think there should also be a focus on sustainability and climate
Equity is fine but what do the other two even mean? A better principle is real commitment. A plan without dedicated resources and the commitment of the government is meaningless no matter how many fancy words it has.
Results should replace Stewardship. In fact if the Stewards do not produce better results, the stewards should be replaced.
Yes, but not if these principles are just vague guidelines. The changes need to be bold, rapid, and transformational in order to get more people on transit and make the system better.
Equity must have stronger emphasis, including addressing suburban transportation deserts in lower income communities
Yes
Equity is definitely important, but personally I'd like to see open to change and stewardship dropped in favor of reliable mobility and modal expansion. We in the Chicagoland are lucky to have the underpinnings of a system (especially track mileage currently used for passenger rail and others that hold potential for future passenger use. that could serve so many more riders than the current one
What does stewardship mean?
Equity should be first
Add 4. Responsive to communities' needs
Yes, although I'd like to add service too
Yes Clearly
yes
Prioritizing transit over cars should be #1
Yes
These sound good, but they are vague, so I'm not sure if they are
Sure
It would be helpful to know what the alternatives were, but generally yes.
Yes
Open to change aka flexible or adaptive
Yes
Yes

technology
Yes
Maybe. I think an emphasis on providing consistent reliable service in built out areas needs to be communicated and promoting new and expanded services in developing, underserved, and new areas should be a guiding principle.
Include "Dependable"
Yes.
Open to change yes.
Yes
Yes but you are missing one! Transportation networks can't just be used to get people to work in to be able to transfer people were ever they need or want to go
I think there needs to be a stronger commitment to change so I would rephrase the first principle. In the face of a pandemic and changing rider behavior/reduced ridership, climate change, and calls for equity, the status quo and being open to change is not enough for the region's transit system. Having a system that caters to work trips is not serving the residents of northeastern Illinois as more people are working from home and does not encourage residents to mode shift from private vehicle for non-work trips. The RTA and the service boards need to be committed to do whatever it takes to meet the changing landscape of rider behavior and reduce automobile dependence. This will do the most to advance equity and help combat climate change as stated in the vision.
Needs something about dedicated to improvement / expansion
Yes
First one feels imbalanced: a verb while the other two are nouns. Who is it describing? RTA, its agencies, or its customers? What kind of change? Feels weak & ineffective

Question: How would you like to see the RTA implement these principles?

Plan for the future.
focus on supporting transit where land use is complementary, rather than trying to spread transit resources thinly to cover places where it is not realistically viable
Write a better survey
Through more diversity in hiring and creation of access to transit
More funding
1. Transition from fossil fuels, 2. make sure all are equally served, 3 Maintain a system that will attract people out of cars.
Electrification of transportation.
Not sure
Not sure
I want you to be open to change
stat
Continue to engage all parties -- users of public transit, governments, MPOs, private sector, etc.
1.) open to change: I would like the RTA to adapt with the times so having the choice to utilize modern ride sharing applications such as Uber/Lyft and bike/scooter share platforms would be tremendously helpful. I knew an executive of a 5000 fortune company who was a daily rider of the BCBS city of Chicago bicycle rider because it was a faster commute for him to get to the office riding his bike rather than sitting in traffic in a cab or Uber.. he also loved that he was able to get a workout in as well. This always stuck with me because it doesn't matter what financial class or background you come from it's all about maximizing your time and having the freedom to do good for the environment.
There has to be more engagement with local governments so that the last mile problems are addressed. To my bus example earlier it is inexcusable for a city to not provide adequate safe crossing zones for pedestrians to get to public transit that's where everything falls apart.
Simply put, stewardship means going electric where feasible
18 months
The last two have nothing to do with transportation.
work with local communities to understand the problems
Hold meetings with users to find out what they need
Commit to 100% electrification by 2030!
Action not talk
increase funding suburban bus services
Working with the various partners (transit agencies, government agencies, business community) and others to implement this principles.
adding electric vehicles as soon as possible

more specificity . I know these are general, but they need more than one or 2 words to make it clear about the goals
a screen for the policies in the plan - how does each meet the mark/advance the goal?
Having cleaner, more fuel efficient vehicles and trains and connecting the rail lines among the suburbs
I'd like to see a move to convert your fleet to all electric vehicles as quickly as possible.
In suburbs need more access to transit. Convert to electric buses
The RTA should be open to ALL kinds of change. Reaching to suburbs and assessing the needs of those communities; Evaluating every change, upgrade, etc. to buildings, fleet, stations for environmental protection. I cannot speak from first-hand knowledge, but the equity to all persons/prospective customers should become incorporated into every activity the RTA does.
Electric buses
Creating reliable routes to low-income and disadvantaged areas connecting to shopping, schools, parks. Better bus stop signage and transport shelters - the few people I see depending on busses are often in full exposure to the elements and waiting for a long time. Continue using green energy and minimizing emissions. Host forums/surveys at regular intervals and provide ways for consumers/users to give feedback to better meet community needs.
Bus electrification, improved service. Make public transit the best option not just an option
Increase opportunities for public voices to be heard
Expanding lines, creating new lines, accessibility at every station for those with limited mobility
Transit that functions on time, is frequent enough, is reasonable cost, and is accessible
Immediate concrete steps to support increased access to more trains and public transport.
Regional periodic discussion groups. Public forums.
Please use data collected from current riders. (Consider current routes and numbers of people who take advantage of RTA.)
Change from diesel to electric buses
Maintain equipment first, be forward-thinking in creating new efficiencies and connecting to contemporary lifestyles.
Again I think these principles need to be adapted 1st. For change one item would be demand response services especially where there are lightly used routes. Another would be cta updating their schedules based on available labor. For stewardship I, more transparency about spending.
Enforcement on the train cars. Don't be so afraid to address bad behaviors. Because that's exactly what you do. Metra doesn't!
Fossil fuel free by 2040
Begin.
True fare integration, with transfers between Metra and CTA/Pace

by making sure that the principles hold true
more funding to suburban services
Think about their customers
There should be a focus on connecting communities outside of Chicago so families that live north or south of each other can visit each other without needing to go into Chicago first or taking 5 different buses.
Require the transit agencies to speed up their electrification timeline
By showing your passengers the plans BEFORE you implement them, and with proper staff training
Much tighter coordination and integration among the sibling agencies. Lobby political will and action.
Provide transportation to areas now not served, like South Barrington
All electric fleet covers 1 and 3. Equity already exists.
Do not agree with these principles. Safety is most important
phase out cars in our city, implement other modes of transit like streetcars/trams, and serve historically excluded communities
younger and more diverse board members, diverse in terms of race as well as socio economic status and where they work within the region i.e. permitting more of an emphasis on reverse commuters
Isn't it your job to decide this since you are the experts?
a stronger hand in planning and marketing service across transit agencies
Do it and ensure Pace and CTA do it
Simply keep the public informed and open communication
Take examples from other cities and countries with successful transit systems. And work together. Why does the RTA even exist if the various entities do not cooperate for the benefit of the passenger/consumer. Equity also means the disabled, elderly and low wage earners being able to get to bus stops. If there are no sidewalks or sidewalks are not usable these riders are marginalized even further.
Go to fully electric buses by 2035
GO ELECTRIC OR HYBRID
Stop the construction bid of the Pace CNG Wheeling garage , pivot to an EV garage instead
Quickly, with community input for all stakeholders, and transparency on all levels of implementation.
Better service. More routes. Phase out diesel buses much faster.
Be bold and consider who the RTA can make Chicago a leader in sustainable and equitable transit.
By asking the state/government for more money, I mean we can't rely entirely on Metra/CTA fares alone to fund an entire network and then expand on it.

Continue the pursuit of funding. Partner with municipalities on ways to take advantage of their transit services.
connect communities
Establishing a process that works fairly across the board without favoring certain areas while acknowledging and addressing specific needs with reasonable response and responsibility.
the first step is to be open to change, and do indeed change
staying affordable and emphasis on environmentally friendly operations
I'm not sure!
Rethink the focus on cost efficiency (as embodied by things like the 50% fare recovery ratio) in favor of focusing on transit as an essential service
Stronger oversight of the operating agencies to also follow through with these principles
Keep following the broad guidelines you have already set, preserve the same underlying value you have been using for implementation. If techniques and results are working don't fix them.
I'd like to see advocacy for more frequent transit on popular corridors, even if it's at the expense of network coverage. "Equity" shouldn't always mean preserving coverage at all costs; underserving high-ridership routes is also a form of inequity
Revisions in management and infrastructure regarding post co-vid funding for CTA
fairly across the population and without adding to those who won't be using your service.
Judiciously
Start a new pilot program once a month, and evaluate for permanent consideration every 6 months
High ethical standards and financial stability
frequent service, accurate apps and schedules
Update the quality of the vehicles and add better uses for Pace
Purchase electric buses and trains and install solar panels on transportation properties.
Ventra card for ALL modes, with transfer discounts from Metra to CTA and Pace. Better schedule coordination to enable multi-modal trips.
Integrate the three agencies to provide more complete transit coverage/access, and form a unified regional operation.
For the first, it needs to be a commitment, and there needs to be acknowledgement of and clear departure from past strategies which have not worked. This needs to be explicit, identifiable, and demonstrated, otherwise it is merely an idea. Equity can be a principle, but perhaps it should be embedded across all principles, I'm concerned if it is siloed it won't be robustly implemented. Stewardship is unclear as a principle.
In close coordination with its member agencies: Pace and CTA
As and after covid impact settles down, assess where riders and potential riders are and where they want/need to go and review service in light of that

Expanding CTA services in the city via new rail lines, improving headways on CTA buses and trains, expanding Metra service to allow for better reverse commuting/midday travel options. Also, Metra and CTA should look into electrifying vehicles
1. Electrify for climate change and environmental justice. 2. Connective routes it's not all about the Loop 3. Prioritize safety for increased ridership, it must be safe for those who do not carry weapons. 4. Plan for employee shortages, routes should not suffer because of employee outages.
Electrifying all transportation
Improved frequency aids all principles.
Electrifying the fleet needs to be much, much greater than the proposal as it stands now.
For open to change and stewardship, I'd like to see an all-electric fleet. I wouldn't expect this to happen all at once but I'd like to see meaningful action this year and a plan and timeframe.
yes
Frequency. Electrification (wires/rails...not batteries). Look to what the rest of the world (not NYC, Philly, etc.) does and do that. We are not in a position to reinvent the wheel. Be humble and understand that there are best practices that aren't being followed currently that we should employ in Chicago.
I'm not sure at the moment, but I'd be interested in seeing how these principles are implemented.
Review the principles every time a decision is being made and ask whether the right choices are being made. Widely publish these principles. Get buttons or pins for all RTA decision-makers to wear for reference.
Innovation, bus prioritization to improve speeds and reliability
Use all available options for transportation--include private and public entities, think outside the box.
Work with on-the-ground advocates to argue in favor of transit investment. Strive to win new riders rather than simply getting ridership back to pre-pandemic levels. Focus on bread and butter improvements (e.g. increased service) rather than shiny objects (e.g. phone charging stations). Make efforts to improve perceptions of safety on lines/routes on which violent crime has increased; look to BART's Transit Ambassador program as one possibility for making this happen.
Purchase only EV buses going forward.
Providing more service is key. People will only use transit if it is reliable.
no idea what they mean
Via accountability measures that holds each service board to annual targets based upon the principles in a publicly transparent manner.
List of Goals and evaluation
Safety, reliability (on par with Uber/Lyft) and improving integration with walking and cycling transportation while reducing the insane number of cars in Chicago.
quickly

Prioritize fare integration
Change current service levels by increasing frequencies, running more times of the day, and serving new destinations
I would like to see RTA actually hold transit providers accountable and ensuring their rides are actually reliable and on time rather than utilizing different language not hold accountability towards them.
Bold decisions and an openness to ideas practiced in other parts of the world
Be open to electrification. The time to act on climate science is now.
Provide more funding for transit, especially in the city of Chicago. It makes no sense to give the suburbs as much money as the cta when the cta is the real urban transit system that serves way more people. That's how you can be more equitable, by focusing on the needs that exist in Chicago. Make it possible to live car free in Chicago, that's how you tackle climate change. It will never be possible to live car free in the suburbs, so cta should be a higher priority than other systems that focus on serving commuters from wealthy suburbs.
Keep in touch with the public more than the government.
If Plan goals are not met, there should be consequences and Plan B's that detail replacement of operators
Be empowered and act boldly. Stand up to auto interests on the state and federal level, advocate yourselves as the real future of transportation. And take any immediate short-term actions you can right away, to demonstrate how much we need good transit!
Subsidize these areas and work with community and employers to get people without cars to jobs
Posting questionnaires on buses to hear from those that need transit but don't know of this online survey
(1) Combine CTA/Pace/Metra into a unified fare structure while re-evaluating Pace bus schedules to allow for easy transfer to/from Metra trains. (2) Build more center running BRT lanes to provide reliable bus service along all arterial streets within the city, including but not limited to corridors that connect CTA train lines like Ashland Ave, Western Ave, etc. (3) Work in conjunction with CDOT to re-asses protected biking infrastructure to allow for riders to seamlessly incorporate biking and transit. (4) Introduce RTA ambassadors, similar to the initiative taken by BART.
Through investing in cost effective projects
increase service to underserved areas in southwest Cook County
With much community input
More frequency, more of a systems-based approach, better integrated into the regional fabric.
Focus on being a true regional transportation network for all types of trips, not just for daily commutes into downtown. This implies better off-peak headways and better connections.
Sunday Service on select high-volume Pace routes
Frequent service, bus lanes, protected bicycle lanes

Reorient the entire transit network so that it is convenient all day in all directions. Many trips are reluctantly taken by car because headways make taking transit uncompetitive & inconvenient.
By focusing especially on under-served areas and communities
More frequent service
Increase wages for bus and train operators to increase reliability; strive for fare integration as a stepping stone for fare-free transit
Interoperability and fare unity across all RTA sub providers
With input from organizations that advocate for Equity and Stewardship, and organizations that focus on predicting the future scientifically (including academia and government).
By readjusting schedules to fit the current situation with the world and ridership. Identify areas of population that can't access economic hubs or general locations that don't have access to grocery stores and connect that population to that. Maintain operations based whatever is established and keep the equipment and fleet in good condition to be reliable to prevent service delays.
Rethink service delivery models, eliminate the service boards, assume transportation beyond transit
Not sure
increased suburban funding
To be a safe, professional and protective environment for passengers and employees from crimes.
Equity - examining who uses and needs transit services the most and allocating more resources to these areas. This provides transportation equity and also boosts RTA ridership. In addition to this, looking at underserved transit areas within RTA boundaries (exurbs, car-dependent suburbs, transit deserts) and finding innovative ways to get new services to reach them (Park-n-ride, paratransit, etc.) helps implement this principle too. Stewardship - RTA can and must find ways to promote CTA, Metra, and Pace harmony instead of competition. Examining incentive structures, using planners to ID harmonious projects (Metra and Pace transfer stations with synced schedules for example) is good for riders but also demonstrates stewardship with public funding. Open to change - RTA needs to continue to find ways to provide service with irregular commuting schedules, suburb-to-suburb commuting, and address driver and staff shortages on the operations side.
Look to peer cities around the world for best practices to implement, and remember that comprehensive freedom of movement is the ultimate goal
Consider expanding hours of operation.
More bus routes in the western suburbs --- especially between other local communities --- example: Wheaton to Lisle. The route now ends at Butterfield road Wheaton and proceeds to Naperville Metra but not Lisle Metra.
Operating more frequent, all-day service throughout the entire region.

Establish regular, on-going 'neighborhood advisory panels' to provide input on the needs which current transit is not meeting
Send out a complete plan or booklet of goals and how we would get to the goals
RTA taking the lead in service board coordination to implement them.
By expanding service in a dramatic fashion
To improve equity, we need more frequency, connectivity, & reliability. Shouldn't be a struggle to get where you're going.

Transportation System Outcomes

Question: What outcome(s) is most important to you?

Outcome	Number of responses	Percent of responses
Safe, accessible, reliable, and useful for riders	161	48%
In a state of good repair	91	27%
Financially stable	71	21%
None of the above	9	3%

Question: Are there any outcomes for the regional transit system that you would like to see added to this list?

4. Clean and sustainable. Transition quickly to zero pollution and zero emissions to enhance public health and combat climate change.
no
A transit system that is accessible and works to meet the needs of all communities, especially underserved communities.
Transit should be "realistic," that is offering service where it's best needed. And, not taking on new major projects (Red Line Expansion for example) when other options (BRT) are available.
Addresses climate change
Stress safety and reliability, and cleanliness. New equipment purchases should reflect the future, not the past.
Competitive with other transportation choices. enabling dense land use patterns.
no

No. These seem comprehensive.
Coordinate the CTA, Metra & Pace to create the infrastructure of a clean, fast transportation future
Crime safe
customer friendly
making the vehicle fleet more energy efficient
what about " last mile" commute options? What about suburban transit?
zero emissions
language could be more active
Environmentally responsible, leading edge, planning for the future
Contribute to a clean and healthy environment.
Environmentally safe
Electrification
Increasing quality of life by connecting communities; Building resilience through sustainability.
I want public transit to be the best option not just safe and reliable. In good repair should include bus electrification or other pollution reduction through new technologies
Increase use of public transit and reduce use of autos, especially for commuting
no
With the Ukraine War, and the draining of equitable access due to profits over people, it would be a great step to come up with subsidies for environmental justice areas to onboard them early and often: their bottom line rising up will help all the other well heeled customers as well.
Clean energy fuels
Be mindful of the need to use renewable energy sources. Looking ahead, this is of prime concern.
Being forward looking, integrating fleet electrification and minimizing use of fossil fuels
I think one is really 3-4 different things so you have covered everything in these three
Innovative and modern. RTA services often feel more like a transit museum rather than a contemporary agency. Just compare what a modern subway car from anywhere else in the world offers compared to the new CTA 7000. The CTA vehicle is already outdated.
Attract more Metra-type riders which will help control the druggies and others who threaten those of us who just want to get to where we're going and back home safely. I used to work downtown and ride the green line 5 days a week for about 5 years. Not sure I'd feel safe doing that today. You want to make everyone feel included at the expense of people who just want to ride quietly and safely without bothering others. I imagine you don't want to hear this and I imagine it falls on deaf ears, but since you asked, that's what I think, and I'm only stating it to help improve things. Not at all hopeful, though.
Environmentally responsible

Again, should we be thinking about growing the system?
Viable as a complete replacement for owning a car for most people
No new ones come to mind.
Transfers between Metra and CTA/Pace
not at this time
multimodal
no
Clean vehicles using renewable energy and electricity
Show your findings of these studies, who you got counsel from, why you needed to implement these particular changes and what you still plan to do and why - (finances and you didn't want travel prices to go up. I'm guessing) basically be more transparent.
For #1, a more pressing question is "How to best serve the needs of people to travel from one place to another in a timely fashion using public transportation?"
Provide transport service for areas not currently served, like South Barrington. Coordinate with paratransit services.
Carbon dioxide emission-free buses.
transit should be the preferred method of travel around the city (aside from walking/biking)
increased service as well as new service. bus only lanes in Chicago, pace service being scheduled to better connect to Metra trains
Popular/competitive with autos
Less poisonous pollution and climate changing gases
The entire fleet should be electric and NOT fossil fueled vehicles
Higher frequency of PACE on the weekends. Cross routes connecting suburbs to other suburbs. Not just suburbs to the city
Fully electric bus system by 2035
ADD ELECTRIC AND HYBRID TO THE MIX OF TRANSIT OPTIONS
Healthy for riders and the local community by using fossil-free power
Climate friendly (zero emission) and climate resilient
Environmental impact. There is no time to waste! Move to electric buses (NO DIESEL), do rigorous cost analysis on implementing clean energy-driven transportation.
Reducing pollution to increase rider health and well being.
Sustainable. The outcomes should include sustainability and 100% carbon free transit. Also pedestrian and bike friendly transit options (bike racks, easy locking, maps that connect routes for pedestrians and cyclists and make it easier for people to walk and cycle.
Yes. Extend service to La Grange, and other suburbs that have little or now public transportation.
Not only be financially stable but see growth for a system rather than be stuck in the same area for over 100 years, this also combined with statewide fare integration for using Ventra statewide.

Modernized system that fights climate change and attracts more users to the system and more people to the region.
for the entire region
cleanliness
focus on environmentally friendly outcomes needs to be a priority
Brings people wherever they need to go, making it possible to reduce car dependency. And while financially stable is of course important I think focus should be on finding / advocating for stable funding sources beyond fares
CTA Red Line Extension
Long-term planning and coordination needs to continue. Coordinating with local governments on land use and parking policies is crucial for growing the transit system.
No
Expanding, increasing service
No
frequent and reliable
none
Purchase electric transportation equipment and install solar panels to power them.
Transit should be frequent and beyond just rush-hour, this could roll up to accessible but it should be explicitly stated, there needs to be more frequent service for people to view it as reliable. I think these are also missing an element of innovation or disruption, can the RTA commit to exploring and deploying new transportation interventions?
Add: Clean and with minimal to no adverse environmental impact, i.e. pollution, greenhouse gas emissions
Respectful of existing communities' reliance on convenient regional transit
Better connection options between CTA, Pace, and Metra must be implemented. The 3 agencies all operate under the same RTA umbrella but don't act like it, often trying to compete with each other instead of trying to have a unified goal of connectivity.
Stop thinking small. Make transit useful and those who have choices will use it.
Promote human and planet health with clean transportation
The health of riders and employees will not be compromised.
I'm not sure. Do electric vehicles fit into these outcomes?
The system shouldn't negatively impact the environment or health.
Efficient and speedy transit service, transit service that cuts commute times for customers, transit service that is attracting and retaining new riders
Fare integration, one method of paying for all transportation options
Sustainable. Only using renewable energy such as EV's.
No
nothing to add

Adaptability/Flexibility. How will the RTA adapt it's services to new market conditions given existing capital and operating constraints?
Shorter headways between trains. Run more trains and faster
Expansion of the system through expanded public funding that is sustainably sourced.
equitable access to transit
High ridership
None
Frequency
Electrifying the public transit fleet. Federal funds have been provided to overcome financial instability. It is time to act for our future generations.
Encourage people to get out of cars and into other forms of transportation.
Be very specific about evolving an integrated shared fare system throughout the region that is supplemented by VMT. Leadership required.
More frequent service outside of rush hour on Metra
Think regionally. A goal should be to provide good service to every neighborhood, job center, and recreation. To get people out of cars and on to transit, the system needs to be expanded and made more frequent and reliable.
Frequency is a big part of accessible
Find more funding sources - we have much money for job training but often cannot be spent because no transportation. We have empty jobs which hurt our economy, and not enough reliable transportation to get people to work. Invest.
N/A
Reach a larger number of people every year by providing improved off-peak and weekend service instead of the typical commuter focused service.
equity in serving currently underserved areas - we all pay sales taxes to support the RTA, but we do not all get the same level of service
4. A system which provides maximum value for riders. Some ways to improve value include *Provide the ability to economically transfer between Metra and CTA/Pace for casual riders. (This was one of the original promises when the RTA was created, but has never been implemented.); *Throw out the flawed Metra fare schedule and replace it with one which is strictly distance-based. (Through years of adding the same dollar amount to each zone fare, the current fare schedule has shorter-distance riders subsidizing rides for longer-distance riders. It has become quite unfair.); *Allow Metra conductors to accept transit value from Ventra cards without the use of any smart phone app.
Customer service- what is the customer experience?
Reduce funding for car infrastructure to prioritize transit
Supporting sustainable development. If station areas are car dependent wastelands, then the ceiling will remain low. Finding partners to create transit oriented development in tandem with service realignment is integral to meeting our climate goals.

These are good, but again I wish the RTA would focus on huge disparities in transit access, e.g. much of South Side
More frequent
More fixed-rail routes to new areas
Provides a meaningful transit routine every part of the service area
Purposeful system. Are we connecting riders to locations they want to go to directly and in a reasonable amount of time?
multi-modal
If Metra and the CTA can have trains, why can't Pace as well?
Identify strategies for growing ridership and promoting harmony between the groups that make up the RTA
Ecologically Sound
No.
Nothing to add.
Frequent, all-day transit service throughout the region
No
Try and electrify or buy as many track as possible to improve services as much as possible
State of good repair as an outcome is not enough if we want to grow transit ridership, advance equity, and combat climate change. The RTA needs to be advocating for more capital and operating funding so the service boards can achieve a state of good repair while also pursuing expansions/enhancements to service.
Reduced need for driving and fights climate change
Expansion of routes and more frequent service
#2 needs some mention of sustainability. Any planning that ignores the need to reduce carbon emissions and plan for climate resilience is a waste of time and money

Regional Outcomes

Question: What outcome(s) is most important to you?

Outcome	Number of responses	Percent of responses
Connected	128	38%
Healthy and Resilient	101	30%
Thriving	102	30%
None of the above	4	1%

Question: Are there any outcomes for the region that you would like to see added to this list?

No
put your riders first
I think "Healthy and Resilient" does not match the question alongside it, which is focused on climate change--needs a name tweak so that people understand that
Find out what communities need. And then try to supply it.
4. Traffic reduction. Get more people out of cars and onto public transit.
no
Tech-forward. Utilizing tech to communicate the most up-to-date info (like broken elevators) so riders can adapt in the moment and thus create more trust in our public transit system.
Safe and secure
safe comfortable for passengers to use
a transit service that is more fuel efficient
connected- and healthy and resilient- what about bus fleet electrification?
zero emissions
solvent; is there room for anything about mode shift towards transit because transit is so appealing?
No.
Health - need electric buses. Connected/thriving - not enough transit in suburbs
Partnered with communities
No
My previous response shows that I got ahead of myself as some of my thoughts are echoed in regional outcomes

No
Increase use of public transit and reduce use of autos, especially for commuting
Connect some of the spokes
no
Our underserved communities deserve more from your services.
Use of clean energy. Electric vehicles or clean burning fuels
Part of healthy and equitable development is realizing the effects of diesel and particulate emissions in the communities you serve. Electrification is the way to honor this
Put surveys in the media for people to give their opinions regarding transit.
Feeling safe instead of wary.
Nothing comes to mind.
no
Be a leader in clean, electric transit, a model for other regions
Basic care for your passengers would be a nice outcome. At least 80% accessible transport, checked weekly for damages. train your staff how to politely assist your passengers including those of us physically and mentally disabled people, rather than act like they don't see us.
Yes connected. But using language like "opportunities to improve their quality of life" sounds a lot like an elaborate way of saying "getting people to and from work". The pandemic has resulted in many more people working from home. Forecasts are that far fewer individuals will commute to 9am-5pm jobs each day. The RTA needs to re focus its attention on the needs of people who want to use public transportation at times and for purposes other than those associated with a "typical business commute".
Serving areas not currently served, like South Barrington. Provide coordination for more residents with paratransit services.
"through an all-electric fleet."
2a. How can we create a transit system that can compete with car travel regardless of the financial standing of riders?
People should not have to travel as far to reach good housing, schools, jobs, and recreation. Each part of our region should be strong at the local level. Transit should not just ferry people between cheap houses and low-paying jobs on the outskirts of the metro for the benefit of developers and large employers.
Connect with people to leave their cars at home and use the RTA
More development of TODs with amenities included. Incentives for homebuyers to live near and use pub trans. Work on giving pub trans a better reputation, which comes with reliability and frequency
BRING GREENHOUSE GASES DOWN
"Leverage transit as a tool for climate action" sounds like a way to force clean transport into the system. Look at the major cities in Europe - they are already doing this. Let's be a modern city and set an example for the American urban centers.

None
In "Healthy and Resilient" add a sentence that shows a commitment to making it easier for people to include walking and cycling into their commutes.
more connected
Adding onto the "Thriving" one, more development not only needs to be around transit stations but also expand a transit to be useful for other people.
no
cleanliness
Equitable
CTA Red Line Extension
No
Equitable
No
Find better way for the NW suburbs to get to the airport and get the expressway to make better use of the bus lanes with Pace.
Buy electric engines and buses and build solar power networks to power them and employ local workers to install and service them.
Better schedule coordination at transfer points. Universal fare card. Transit oriented development in more locations.
Efficient, in terms of more robust service mitigating the need for transfers and delayed arrival.
accelerate transition to electrification of all vehicles
Respectful of each community's plan for its own development. The transit system supports a community's plans for its self determined growth and development
A good outcome would be increasing transit ridership
The top outcome is to electrify!
No
No, #2 must be prioritized sooner rather than later.
not that I can think of
I'm not sure but I really really really like these. Connected is highly important to me. It is very isolating to be without a car, even in environments with decent public transportation. If there was even more reliable public transportation that took you every just like a car could, I imagine I would feel much better about relying on that alone
Perhaps for the system to be thriving, it needs to be more comprehensive and less downtown-centric. That's a tall order but in the long run, likely 'sells' people on actually depending on public transit to get around. In the meantime, perhaps show more clearly how the various systems transit systems connect to one another — for instance, show CTA and bus routes more like a single system. Or analyze this internally — how can we get a more full

'web' of public transit that can get us anywhere in the region? What's the next step in development of this for more reliability?
Growing: We need to grow transit ridership
N/A
Sustainable. Using only EV's and renewable energy going forward.
No
nothing to add
How can we leverage transit infrastructure to increase transit mode share, reduce VMT, and strengthen more walkable and bikeable communities?
TOD development guidelines should be stronger by more aggressively capping the number of car parking spaces in such buildings. Ideally, if a building is within the TOD reach, there should be zero off-street car parking spaces.
no
Rich
None
Remove thriving - that's lingo for improving taxation from neighborhoods without taking into account the people who live there and have to move.
Innovative
no
"work with communities to improve access to transit" sounds like putting the burden on communities to improve access. You improve access by expanding and prioritizing transit. Why can't Chicago have BRT? Why can't we have a larger all electric bus fleet with high frequency? Make transit attractive so it's appealing and not thought of as the option you only take because you're poor. Of course I'll drive if it's faster, but if buses can skip traffic for example and get me anywhere I need faster than a car, then most of what you want to achieve in this plan is already done. People will ride more and drive less, they'll be connect to their destinations, etc. Transit is not rocket science and it shouldn't take decades to figure it out. Look at Asian and European cities and see how they have great systems that just work for everyone because their governments have prioritized transit and funded it.
You cover the basics. More specifics will help
These are fantastic outcomes! Work 3x harder on all of these starting today, and put these outcomes in the face of every politician who can help leverage funding opportunities and convince local gov't to support transit projects (not just roads & electric cars)
More on people served, worrying about climate could push people toward cars
Reliable — able to access public transit when necessary, outside the peak hours (cough HERITAGE CORRIDOR cough)
Safer. As a modal shift toward transit and walking/biking intensifies, we can save lives thanks to having fewer cars on the road and by aggressively implementing traffic calming measures (in conjunction with CDOT).

equity in serving currently underserved areas
Integrated
Frequent
Sunday service on select high-volume Pace routes
Big, transformative change is needed to make Chicago have world-class transit system!
Nah
I like these!
None
More connecting Pace routes added in Mount Prospect and edge
Clean, healthy and safe environment for the stations are necessary to keep everyone involved
I think these are great!
Polycentric
No.
Frequent, all-day transit service throughout the region
No
A needed connection is to provide transit from any giant parking lot to O'Hare, and possibly to Midway airports.
Improve: try and buy, upgrade, add, improve, and electrify track to provide better services and to stop climate change
Transit planning should also help reduce dependence/reliance on cars, offering freedom. If more people have the option to travel by transit, we could reduce drunk driving, car expense, pollution, congestion, & the never-ending expansion of roads

Question: Do you have any other specific feedback on any of these outcomes?

I don't think "Healthy and Resilient" matches well with the question description next to it, which is focused on climate change. Is this outcome about public health, climate change, infrastructure resiliency, or...? they are related but also different, so this needs refinement or else it is too vague/broad to be able to build a plan around. Similarly "Thriving" does not capture the description next to it and needs refining.
no
Look for ways to enhance MaaS.
No
4. More use of public transit.
no
Access to public transportation for all communities.
Together we can solve what needs to be done. Look at overall goals over individuals goals of each transit system.
need to get thugs out of system
As part of #1 and 3, include various options (public transit, paratransit, micro transit, and others) so all residents have options to driving alone.
no
none additional
Please consider how inefficient and unhealthy fossil fuels are for use in the next generation of public transportation.
why are healthy and resilient paired?
I'm very concerned about the health effects of diesel and particulate emissions and the impact on climate change. Please move to an all electric fleet as soon as possible.
I believe Healthy and Resilient should also include Adaptable since new impacts from climate-caused disasters can completely change so many things
Time is of the essence.
These are really important, thank you.
I like the outcomes. I am excited about pollution reduction through better transit and new technology such as electrification. If there's anything RTA can do about transit oriented development, I would love to see more of it
No
can we electrify as much of our transit as possible to make it more healthy?
If someone reads this, I was blown away by just spending a couple hours reading the Metra schedule and became curious about how the inequity is very visible to anyone who wants to compare train access across the region. Blown. away. And told by someone from Metra: there aren't many trains offered to areas that aren't good customers- it's about economics."
There is a need for more promotion of RTA

Cities are investing in their community around Metra/Pace/CTA stations. Leverage this and build off it together.
I am not sure how these tie back to a transit plan. They are very vague.
Transit is crucial to fighting climate change. I am concerned there are very few new rapid transit lines planned for the region. The L needs more new lines and Metra should embark on electrification projects - that is overhead wires, battery trains are a silly solution. Non-Loop-bound rapid transit also should be considered more.
Good luck.
Move away from diesel as quickly as possible
The PACE TAP card is a wonderful idea but should be extended to whole RTA region for greater connectivity--a senior in the city and family in the suburbs...
Connected must include transfer interchange between Metra and CTA/Pace
RTA has to do a better job of keeping their customers safe. Right now RTA is not safe and I would not advise anyone to ride this mode of transportation
I'd rather see you state outright that regional climate action means electrification.
A support line that staff can call for anybody sleeping or staying on the train for an extended period of time. To find them a bed for the night at a shelter. It's heartbreaking to see people suffering and staff just walk on by.
#3 Thriving. I am not certain how "access to transit" is defined. If access means ensuring that individuals with disabilities can access transit vehicles, that is critical. But "access to transit" should also mean ensuring that public transportation is available so that individuals can get to a bus stop and/or train station almost no matter where they reside in the region.
Provide more opportunities for coordination with paratransit / disabled persons within the south Barrington area.
Can our waterways be leveraged as avenues for low carbon public transit using more water taxis?
These are good.
NO
Pub trans has a terrible reputation in the US, especially in the suburbs. As the population ages and older residents are stuck in the far suburbs this will be problematic and not sustainable. Ride shares only add to the congestion but many people are not comfortable or familiar with public transport. Work to change that.
MORE EQUITABLE ACCESS FOR PEOPLE IN LOW INCOME AREAS
Healthy is climate action not only locally through pollution reduction, but globally that affects us all via macro weather disasters.
Chicago appears so dirty to many visitors. Let's clean up our act and provide safe clean transport accessible to all our Chicago neighborhoods.
None
No

"Connected" it's not connected if you have to travel into the loop then back out if you want to go from suburb to suburb via train.
These outcomes are good. Aside from key destinations, including downtown Chicago, our region is disconnected when using transit. We need to do all we can to be a more healthy society. With the RTA's support, municipalities can do more to leverage their transit services.
Encourage investors to provide services, pharmacy and food stores and stores that provide the community convenience and walkability. Place stores in or near transit stops to save time and build a thriving community
I-90 corridor transportation to O'Hare
Healthy & Resilient as a title is a bit misleading, since the description further specifically mentions climate action. The main title should acknowledge environmental / public health instead of being as vague. Though I acknowledge it may not fit into two words like Healthy & Resilient, but they don't necessarily have to be short one or two word statements as long as they are clear.
none
safety, no overnight parking unless a permit is applied to vehicle to signal to local enforcement that it belongs in lot. Frighten to think people could use area to dump stolen vehicles from other areas and come into a new community to cause trouble.
No
Resiliency is more than climate change. Natural disaster, public confidence, etc.
No
frequent service, prompt and accurate communication, and fare integration with other local transit systems
no
no
The "Connected" outcome would benefit from expanded and more frequent service
Connected needs to be fleshed out, as presently the region is connected, but the service is inadequate or indirect. I would also add integrated, with transit services being better coordinated and finally actualizing a universal fare system.
see previous response
Connected could be improved by better connections and transfers between the 3 agencies
Healthy and Resilient should specify prompt electrification of all transportation
Factor in the cost associated with health and resilience when deciding the % of electric buses purchased now.
I appreciate that you recognize that transit can be a tool for climate action.
I really like the wording of thriving. it makes me feel hopeful and I imagine lush greenery. maybe stations for busses and trains could have more greenery - greenhouses and gardens? that would be lovely. especially an integrated community garden, where everyone going to and from could participate in taking care of the garden, including being able to eat from it.

1. Connected is a more comprehensive/functional/dependable system that one can actually turn to and needs to be developed more. 2. Spell out sustainability.
Thriving transit needs to mean transit that is attracting and retaining new riders
Improve options for connectivity. For example, getting from one county in the region to another without having to go through the city or connect to another ADA vehicle
Healthy and Resilient: the most resilient are EV's requiring the least amount of maintenance, are the most healthy for the environment, and make people feel good about riding public transportation.
Number 3 is key. Transit oriented development along CTA stops & Metra stations will create new riders, which provides revenue and demand for transit. We should be learning from how other countries successfully grow transit and TOD is one of them.
Integrate RTA with IDOT and Tollway planning
I feel like these outcomes are timid. As a transit provider, you should be pushing more healthy communities in terms that matter. Like increasing transit mode share (as well as bike and pedestrian modes too), reducing regional vehicle miles traveled, increasing job proximity to transit, etc. This should be laid out clearly.
Run more service for people to use
We need to create a safe and joyful system, one that causes people to smile and love to use. If you do this, expansion of this system becomes much more straightforward.
no
These are far too general
No
I think a lot of this is again feel good Disney stuff but no real metrics to value what your core function is - which is consistently reliable public transit. Without that, this is all fluff to make people feel good about it without holding themselves accountable.
Looking towards successful practices in other cities will be key for all 3
I would like to see more specificity in your outcomes. How are you measuring success ?
Transit to and from work may be important but home life would be best without that need. Local food and stores for example that can be walked or biked to.
just be specific
Pursue these goals boldly & publicly, and work hard to get buy-in from all levels of government: local, council members, city, county, state, and federal. Our region needs a unified voice to fight for these outcomes in the face of car dependence and road projects hogging the funding - talk about that with the public and fight for your vision!!
Connection can be aided eliminating limits on housing near train stations.
Better flexibility for midday and reverse commuting
Please restore the full service on the Southwest Metra Line, as you did for other Metra lines in the RTA system - we need to have more trains, not only in the rush periods, but also throughout the day and after rush hour - the last outbound train leaving Union Station on the

Southwest Metra line leaves at 5:50 PM, while other Metra lines offer service until 10:00 PM or later - please treat us equitably
Transit should not be thought of as a tool for climate control, but if the most efficient equipment is purchased, and if the public finds that the other outcomes make transit more desirable, private vehicle usage may decrease and transit use may increase, which would help the environment as a side effect.
No
Ridership / Coverage budget ratio decided by broadest vote reasonable at this time.
Removing car lanes for bus lanes would do a lot of this cheaply
Focus on practical service improvements, e.g. how frequently does the bus arrive, how long does a trip take including transfers rather than on access measured by route maps.
Nah
No
Need to reduce sprawl and increase density in the region to help transit survive. Need to prioritize transit over driving personal vehicles. Decrease road investment and increase transit investment locally, state-wide, and federally. Need to get bus camera enforcement legislation approved at the state to ensure trip reliability. Need to fix the pension problem in the state. Residents are being taxed immensely (property taxes) to cover underfunded pensions and this prevents an adequate number of affordable housing being constructed at TOD locations. These new developments end up becoming unaffordable to most due to high property taxes which in turn drive up rent and the cost of purchasing these units. It affects everything.
No
No
N/A
Connectivity requires frequency and focus outside of radial core routes
No.
Yes, more access to transit.
Add something about frequent, all-day service throughout the region
'Connected' - Move beyond the outmoded concept that all transportation has to involve going to/from and passing through the "Loop"
There are large , hardly-used parking lots in failing shopping centers. If Busses to and from Chicagoland Major airports had routes at least 4 times a day, folks would not have to drive to the airports. Several unrented stores could hold comfortable waiting rooms.
Please try and convince the state, or government to allow funding for a mass buyout of track around Chicago to improve the L and Metra
As part of the connected outcome, an outcome for the region should be a transit system that allows one to not have to own a car to access opportunities. This is tied to land use, so as part of the thriving outcome, there should be language about transit-supportive development and

land uses (equitable development gets at that, but I think it could be more specific around development that encourages transit use). At the same time, it's not the service boards' responsibility to fix the region's poor land use decisions/sprawl and jobs/employment centers need to and should be encouraged to locate near transit.

Final Comments

Question: Do you have any other comments on the regional transit strategic plan process?

Purchase new equipment that does not pollute.
Keep sharing developments and enlisting feedback. Keep all out in the open.
No
Again, go electric!
please make transit cleaner and safer. please make buses run more frequently outside of rush hour. please make buses run later. please do not force users to own a smartphone in order to use the transit system. please accept Ventra cards on Metra. please add more train cars during rush hour. please add more front facing seats to train cars. please stop using fabric seats. please make rail stations bigger so they are safer and more accessible. please make all stations accessible.
What are the efforts currently in place that are focused on access to public transportation by pregnant individuals and young families in underserved communities.
Make climate impact and even bigger part. That includes marketing to get more people out of their cars and onto public transit. I see nothing about marketing to increase ridership in the plan.
just put the riders first
An important piece should be calling out other policies/plans that are counterproductive to supporting all of the goals and outcomes for transit. For example, policies that enable/support/require free or cheap parking make driving easier. Expanding or building new highways enables sprawl, making transit less viable.
Just keep the focus on locations, price, efficiency. That's hard enough.
I appreciate you listening to what your riders have to say.
Consolidate for efficiencies. Look at out-of-the box solutions, like partnering with companies, businesses, alternatives to buses and trains. Create a publicity campaign that encourages people to take public transportation.
more discussion with the riders
Yes, I worked on Transportation issues for many years. I still see that the Chicago area, for all of its resources, lags behind many other US metropolitan areas, in the types of programs and services that are available for commuters. We should be able to do better than this.
Please make a transition to an electric vehicle fleet a priority

just what I already wrote. Thanks for asking
So many public transit strategies around the globe include zero emission vehicles. Please follow the lead.
When replacing vehicles be environmental friendly...I realize you need to be financially careful but hybrid or possibly electric vehicles are needed.
We need more high speed rail connecting Illinois communities and neighboring states.
more plain language about what you are hoping to achieve here in the context of covid would be good
I wish more government subsidies were available. Countries that have invested in public transportation have created a society of public transit users because the service is convenient, timely and economical. Success breeds success.
Need more trains to Zion, Kenosha, Winthrop Harbor - Usually have to drive to Waukegan to use train
I truly believe that the RTA should strongly influence each agency to become climate-focused. For example: if stations are being upgraded/remodeled, ensure that "green" choices are considered and made (LED lighting, bike racks); any new bus purchases should be electric unless the agency can explain why it is NOT possible(I believe it is always possible); adding electric charging stations/depots to accommodate electrified fleet vehicles
NO
I found this survey through an email chain for a group I volunteer with. I'm going to share on my social media and Next-door to boost outreach as well. I'm glad I got the link and appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts. I think it's important to keep trying to reach as many people as possible for feedback, including students, folks of color, people with disabilities, and senior citizens. And also include outreach in the second/third most spoken languages since not everyone who uses public transportation speaks English as a first language. You might be considering all this and more, and putting it into action so thanks for the opportunity again to share my thoughts. And I wish your team success in your endeavors (especially in funding :D)
The Chicago region needs to be a leader in transit, both in providing excellent transit options and utilizing new technology such as electric buses to reduce pollution and improve health.
I would like to see congestion pricing to drive downtown, as London does. Such pricing could be used to maintain and expand mass transit to so-called transit deserts in the Chicago area.
more access for transit deserts
I tried to be polite here, but well paid wonks wordsmithing boxes with the right verbiage is a great slick commercial without any change I am afraid. prove me wrong.
I would like to see more riders, (students, seniors) take advantage of RTA
Bus electrification. Start planning now. Look at federal and state incentives.
In the short term, at least on the CTA side of things, there needs to be better communication about service levels. CTA schedules are a joke and nothing is being done about this. A transit

system needs to be predictable for it to be useful to riders. 6 minute scheduled headways on blue line when 20-30 minute are the actual reality is just unacceptable.
I'd like to be kept updated on any steps taken.
Plenty.
Growth should be part of the plan.
Extend the Military Service Pass to PACE
The goals of the plan should be much more specific with fewer happy talk generalities.
I'm a person with an 'invisible' illness and I know there are many like myself at times it's hard for me to climb stairs can something be added to at least 1 car to help assist us? Please and Thank you
More safety planning not just infrastructure planning
Just want to see a focus on connecting the suburbs together
I would be happy to help out if you do want to get input from a disabled passenger. I have already been in contact with a guy at Metra after I lodged a complaint, (Mike I believe?) about the lack of wheelchair locks on Metra trains... He did not know what those were.
None at this time
It is difficult for those of us in South Barrington who are disabled to get around. Even after being approved for paratransit services, I am unable to get picked up in my home. I am within the appropriate distance of the pace park and ride at Barrington Road and the tollway, however the paratransit service does not recognize that as a valid transit point.
Please, go all in on all electric.
Should connect the Metra to the subway so can transfer
fund transit with higher tolls for cars polluting and endangering our communities
the strategic plan must include an emphasis on both increasing existing service and adding new service. Better integration between services, especially Pace and Metra. Fare integration. 30 minute headways on all Metra lines. Bus only lanes throughout Chicago. We cannot solve climate change without significant increases in public transportation.
Should be focused on growing ridership. Should involve other transportation planning, e.g. the highway widening projects, the ridiculous Elgin-O'Hare project, etc.... if we spent that kind of money on transit instead we would have an amazing system.
NO
Please do not buy any new fossil fuel engines!!!!
More publicity is needed to win the hearts and minds of the non-riding public. Most people living in the suburbs know very little about PACE or Metra unless they commute for work.
NO
I would like to see a specific Environmental Action working group added to your list of work groups.
It is very important to me that our transit support healthy- pollution free environments and support a lifestyle change to active transportation. Moving away from diesel ASAP is crucial

Community stakeholders should have a voice and the process should be transparent.
Please stop using diesel buses for the sake of our lungs and over-heating planet. Please keep being a great alternative to cars, which take up so much space and waste so much money.
Let's develop a bold plan that other cities can follow. A plan that increases our health, our climate commitments, our access and equity, our reliability and while we're at it, a vibrant look and feel to RTA.
Thank you for this sign of hope
Just ask for more money, the state needs better local and regional rail that is electrified. That sounds like a big ask but seeing the rail systems connecting to more places other than just the city would make people think that Metra or the L would be a more modern system and more useable to the general public.
no
incorporate best practices from similar regions around the world
95th is a largest station with the most ridership. We need more cleaning more often.
Allow overnight parking at the I-90 bus pick up parking lots
Access to ohare and the loop
It should be aggressive in terms of emissions reductions and clean transportation access
Your Strategic Plan process seems to ensure progress and has a strong vision for the future. Adequate funding to support the region's transit system is something that needs work also more input for providing development for Chicago's south side.
no
No
There's not a lot of innovative thinking, even though management says that's the goal. If tech companies can "move fast and break things", RTA should try that where appropriate.
None
Consider holding focus groups that are not currently serviced by the RTA but have community members that travel to the RTA's services. Example - far western suburbs and DeKalb County.
Connect people in an easier, safer way.
No
Elements of transit frequency need to be incorporated. The main reason I presently find transportation unreliable is that service is erratic and frequency is choppy, I can't rely on something that isn't regular. Further, service needs to eschew the rush-hour model, there needs to be robust service in multiple directions throughout the region. Lastly, transit providers need to be better integrated, both in scheduling and in fare card.
I want our systems to be best in class
Please plan to coordinate electrification infrastructure decisions among Pace and CTA to eliminate duplication and unnecessary expense.
no, thank you

Don't be afraid to think big and bold for planning the future of transit in Chicago. New lines and expanded services are a good thing with the threat of climate change, and would lead to a more equitable and clean city
Vision: Equally climate and customer focused world class transit system, Mission: Safe, clean, reliable, connected, equitable, cost effective transit for all
Please lead us to a clean energy future and urge the CTA, Metra, Pace to do the same
The RTA must consider the rapid pace of improved infrastructure to support EV's and not base calculations on infrastructure of the past or even present. The public backs CEJA and the time is now for bold action. We must invest now in electrification and not diesel. CEJA was designed to put Illinois first in climate action yet the RTA proposal is using the time frame as an excuse to delay necessary actions.
The ideas are not hard here because they have been done across the world. The difficulty is political... Integrate fares. Integrate operations. Electrify the fleet. Priority for busses. Dedicated bus lanes with automated enforcement. Level boarding across the region. Frequent clockface scheduling. Our region's planners need to have the international curiosity that our region's transit riders have and the will to implement the already proven best practices.
This makes me hopeful. I think the more exciting and tantalizing public transportation becomes, the more people will want it. it's very hard to think of a world where one could rely on public transportation outside of a busy city (sometimes it's still hard when you're in the city). but creating a space to share ideas and daydreams can help in shifting the general public's feelings about public transportation.
We are in a moment where major infrastructure changes need to happen the world over. Everyone needs to realize that we are in this moment. Together we can figure this out. Innovation and changing circumstances (hopefully for the better) are going to be happening all the time so we need to keep making our plans stronger and more timely. Ultimately, the transition is going to leave us with systems that are SO MUCH BETTER and human health will greatly increase as well as planetary health. This is an exciting time and a time for strong LEADERSHIP.
Please do not buy any more diesel or CNG buses. These are not friendly to the environment and they both contribute to global warming.
Consider investigating what other successful transit systems internationally have done to ensure stability and reliability. And most of all, work with the State and Local leaders to build dense, car-light development along transit lines to promote transit use.
Integrate road and transit planning
How do you plan on soliciting public input? It can't just be rider surveys. I strongly urge the RTA to adopt a similar public input process that CMAP uses for it's regional plans - start at the neighborhood and municipal levels and reach out to as many groups as possible.
Fare integration with Ventra will be a big win for the region

Funding for car infrastructure and too much parking being built in our new buildings is creating an increasingly hostile experience to be outside of a car in Chicago. We need to flip this system on its head and I want to see RTA take a much more aggressive lead with CTA by uniting and undoing the harm imposed on everyone from continually prioritizing car infrastructure and design first and walking, cycling, transit, or even just sitting outside enjoyably, last. These human-centered activities need to come first, always.
Move quickly. Years of study and input benefit nobody.
Need more concrete plans
Try to make transit more competitive than driving/rideshare in denser and majority-minority suburbs like Waukegan, North Chicago, Zion, Elgin, Joliet, and Aurora
There are very few details of measure anywhere in the strategic plan. How will your constituents hold you accountable to meeting this plan if there are no specific measurements.
It always helps to sell the benefits and set more specific measures to the goals down to the household level.
The public engagement has been good, and the guest bloggers have given valuable insights and ideas. Don't ignore them; put those ideas out there and get public support. Don't settle for transit being an afterthought. Leverage this process to fight for the funding and projects we need.
Focus on ridership numbers, more customers, less on other priorities.
Bluntly tell the state that you need money.
Overall, I'd push the RTA to adopt a bolder vision that goes beyond maintaining the current service and focus on expanding transit service and access that connects the city's populace and makes the city more livable.
Please treat all areas equitably - all of us pay sales taxes to support the RTA but northern, northwestern and western suburbs of Chicago get more service than the rest of the region
Please do look at the Metra one way single ride fare schedule and how unfair it has become. The fares for Zone C come closest to equaling the operating costs per passenger mile. Zones D and higher are bargain fares, with the farthest zones the lowest passenger cost per mile. Riders in Zones A and B subsidize the riders to Zones D and higher by paying the highest passenger cost per mile.
N/A
Single payment card with periodic cap.
I'm surprised the plan doesn't involve concrete metrics, such as around mode share percentage.
Goals and Vision are appropriate.
Transit or private automobiles. Pick one to prioritize and be public about your choice.
Public transit is crucial for the health and vibrancy of the Chicago region, and it will require a bold investment of resources and a planning process that focuses on riders to make it convenient and effective.

Nah
Build more redundancy in the system and I cannot stress enough the importance of fare-free transit. Work with County & IDOT to move the needle on congestion pricing.
I appreciate the issuance of periodic surveys like this one. Outreach to people most dependent on public transit (e.g., low-wage workers), whose voices might not normally be heard, is important. Find out what they need in order to use transit, including reduced fares or fares paid by governmental employment agencies until new employees can get established in jobs. Of course, laws requiring the payment of a living wage would help people afford their fares.
None
None at the moment
Fostering more promotion directly with municipal governments to promote and provide services can be beneficial. These units of government are often the ones that residents are closest with and best source for RTA to find feedback.
Please integrate Metra, CTA, and Pace to liberate riders from being penalized when a multi-modal trip makes more sense than an agency gated one
Still would like expanded hours of operation. My shift has been changed and I can no longer ride the bus home.
None
Prioritizing frequent, all-day service throughout the region will help transit transform Chicagoland into an area where people can thrive without access to a car.
No
As electric busses can be obtained, the fuel savings and reduction of fossil fuel pollution will be considerable.
It completely ignores suburbs with close to none public transit like ones on the HC and SWS
Process needs to be accelerated to compete for federal funding on the many large projects that should be done
Continue to expand public transit and the times they are run. Make it easier to transfer between Metra, pace, CTA and Divvy. Also expand divvy into more suburbs other than just Evanston.
This was incredibly vague, I hope it will be followed up by more specific ideas, examples, and opportunities for improvement tied back to these principles. Ultimately, they're intertwined. You can't have financial stability without sustainability, you can't have equity without reliability. But the devil is in the details



March 11, 2022

Kirk Dillard
Chairman
Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)
175 W. Jackson Blvd, Suite 1550
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Chairman Dillard and Members of the Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the RTA's "Emerging Vision," the strategic and financial plan for the region's transit system. Businesses, employers, employees, and our region's long-term economic growth depend on a safe, welcoming, and efficient transit system.

The pandemic has caused massive declines in transit ridership and therefore the amount of revenue the transit system has to operate the system. While federal emergency funding has helped replace these lost revenues, those funds will run out and our region currently has no plan to deal with this certain and looming crisis.

RTA's draft Emerging Vision lacks the urgency this historic moment requires. Our transit agencies are facing serious rider and employee concerns about safety, cleanliness, and reliability, and yet we lack a comprehensive plan to address them.

Even in the strongest ridership months over the past two years, the transit system is carrying only 60 percent of the riders it served pre-pandemic. There has been some experimentation with service and fares to lure riders back, but coordinated, regional efforts have stalled. For example, coordinated efforts to attract riders back to the system – like implementing a universal fare or full participation from CTA in the Metra and Pace Pilot program in the South Side and South Suburbs – are stuck despite strong calls from business, community, labor, and civic organizations to implement these common-sense improvements. The need to move essential workers, provide equitable access to all people in our region, and fuel economic growth in a post-pandemic Chicago require a strategic plan that includes new and innovative actions for the transit agencies to take.

We welcome the increased attention to converting the transit system's buses to all-electric and recognize the goals CTA and Pace recently published in their plans. However, CTA and Pace's efforts are siloed and uncoordinated, likely resulting in a more costly, lengthier adoption of electric vehicles and the climate and air quality benefits conversion to an electric fleet will produce.

In 2019, the RTA made a commitment to reviewing and restructuring their capital allocation formulas. This review and reform are now mandated by state legislation (HB 253), requiring the RTA to meet specific standards of transparency, performance-measurement, and policy goals later this spring. The draft Vision is silent on these efforts, and we re-emphasize our previous public comments that the current capital allocation method is too reliant on outdated data and static formulas. Moreover, the RTA

needs to comprehensively evaluate large transit projects with rigorous cost-benefit analysis before committing serious funding to build them.

The RTA strategic and financial plan should include specific recommendations for all the issues highlighted above. The RTA's three-step COVID-19 recovery plan was launched in October of 2020 and we have been eager for the agency to act on these very obvious, yet challenging issues. The more detailed the RTA can be with their recommendations for changes to transit operations, funding, and capital investment, the sooner we can begin the serious and necessary discussions about the trade-offs of those recommendations. These recommendations will undoubtedly be controversial, and so it is prudent for us to start discussing them now before the fiscal crises is imminent.

We thank you for your consideration of our views, and we look forward to working with you as you develop these important plans.