

2013-2018

REGIONAL TRANSIT STRATEGIC PLAN



Regional
Transportation
Authority



Adopted August 2013

CONTENTS

BACKGROUND

- A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR3
- INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND4
- VALUE OF TRANSIT5
- STATE OF TRANSIT7

THE PLAN

- VISION11
- GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.....11
 - GOAL A: PROVIDE VALUABLE, RELIABLE, ACCESSIBLE AND ATTRACTIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS . 11
 - GOAL B: ENSURE FINANCIAL VIABILITY 11
 - GOAL C: PROMOTE A GREEN, LIVABLE AND PROSPEROUS REGION..... 12
 - GOAL D: CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE FOR AND BE A TRUSTED STEWARD OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION 12
- CONTINUING AND EMERGING ISSUES.....12
- RECOMMENDATIONS.....13
 - I. TRANSIT’S SIGNIFICANT CAPITAL BACKLOG AND INSUFFICIENT CAPITAL FUNDING..... 13
 - II. IMPROVE THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE THROUGH A MODERNIZED & INTEGRATED SYSTEM 14
 - III. STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN MEETING CURRENT DEMAND & DEVELOPING NEW MARKETS 15
 - IV. BALANCING TIGHT OPERATING BUDGETS 17
 - V. AFFECT REAUTHORIZATION OF THE FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION BILL & THE NEED TO EDUCATE.. 18
- ORDINANCE19

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Transit plays a critical role in our region's everyday activities. First and foremost, it gets us to work and it provides vital connections to our daily life commitments. But beyond that, it keeps our region moving, taking thousands of cars off of our congested roadways. It helps the environment. It bolsters our regional economy and it enhances the vibrancy of our communities. The Chicago region draws businesses, residents and tourists from around the world and it deserves nothing less than a world-class public transportation system.

Looking ahead, the next five years pose both great opportunities and challenges for our transit system. As ridership continues to grow, we want to capitalize on that momentum and make sure that our system continues to be safe, reliable, affordable, and meets the needs of the region. The continued advancement of technology not only allows us to be more efficient in our operations, but it introduces more amenities to our customers such as real-time information at bus stops, stations and on smartphones.

However, our system is aging and capital funding remains extremely limited. Also, operating budgets are expected to continue to be tight. While I remain committed to raising awareness among our state legislators and representatives in Congress of these needs, I know too that we need to be committed to further increasing our efficiencies and doing even better with what we have.

The Regional Transit Strategic Plan captures the region's shared vision for transit and the core values by which we manage, preserve and grow the system. It also lays out actionable recommendations by which our region can collectively and proactively address the most important issues that face transit in the coming years.

Thank you to the many individuals that have contributed to the development of this plan. I look forward to demonstrating my commitment to your voice by partnering with CTA, Metra and Pace as well as the citizens and leadership of this region to achieve the goals of this plan.

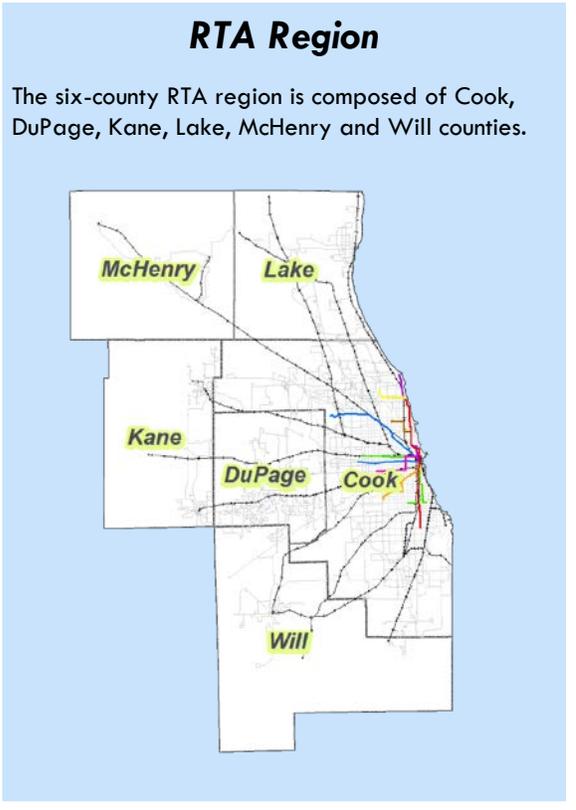


Joseph G. Costello
Executive Director, Regional Transportation Authority

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Recognizing the value and need for a unified regional vision for transit, in 2007, the RTA in partnership with CTA, Metra and Pace developed the Moving Beyond Congestion (MBC) Strategic Plan. The vision, goals and objectives as laid out in the MBC plan coupled with the RTA’s 2008 reform legislation, has shaped and directed much of transit’s strategic activities in the Northeastern Illinois region in the past few years.

Since 2008, the RTA, CTA, Metra and Pace have taken the recommendation of MBC and the requirements of the legislations seriously. With a new focus on performance measures and assessment, several evaluations have taken place to determine the status and needs of the regional transit system. We have made advancements that allow the region to be better informed and more business-minded in its decision-making. A Regional Market Analysis conducted in 2009 provided a better understanding of transit’s market opportunities and how to improve transit’s competitiveness. A newly established program assessing the region’s transit Capital Asset Condition helps us better understand the system’s capital needs and to help guide capital investment decisions. The adopted Performance Measures program enables us to regularly track and monitor the overall performance of the transit system, allowing the region to examine its performance over time and against peer regions. The first Regional Customer Satisfaction study was also completed, which now provides a consistent way of gauging customer input across all the Service Boards. A Regional Green Transit Plan completed in 2012 unifies and furthers transit’s role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. These and other strategic endeavors culminate to a strong base of information and analysis about our transit system, our customers, the environment in which transit is managed and operated, and the emerging issues that we face. The Regional Transit Strategic Plan represents a complete update and synthesis of this strong base of work as well as vital input from key stakeholders and the general public.



VALUE OF TRANSIT

The broad reaching benefits of investing in transit are well acknowledged. Not only does public transportation benefit those who use it, but it also benefits society -- individuals, families, communities, and businesses -- as a whole. Among other things, transit reduces congestion, gives people mobility options, provides access to jobs, helps the environment and supports economic development. The Northeastern Illinois region has a long history of committing to transit.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ENHANCES PERSONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 3.5 million times each year, a person with disabilities or an elderly person relies on Pace's ADA/ Paratransit service to get to an important destination, such as a job, school or medical appointment. (RTA)
- 38% of the region's households use transit at least once a week. Within Chicago, this number grows as high as 71% of households. (SPM/Source: CMAP Travel Tracker Survey, 2008)
- With Chicago as one of the top tourist destinations in the United States... Nearly 60% of Summer City Travelers plan to use public transit. (APTA)
- Providing over 2 million rides per weekday, transit is vital to the mobility of the region. (SPM/ Source: National Transit Database)
- 12% of the region's residents rely on transit to get to work. (SPM/ Source: Census Transportation Planning Package 2006-2008)
- 12% of the region's residents and 31% of people that work in the City of Chicago rely on transit to get to their jobs. (SPM/ Source: Census Transportation Planning Package 2006-2008)
- According to a 2012 Customer Satisfaction Survey, 83% of riders stated they were satisfied or very satisfied with public transportation in the six-county region (SPM/ Source: RTA Customer Satisfaction Survey, 2012)

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION REDUCES CONGESTION

- 9 working days (71 hours) are lost by each resident per year due to congestion delay. Without transit, this would increase to almost 12 lost working days per year per resident. (SPM/ Source: Texas Transportation Institute Urban Mobility Report)
- In 2010, transit replaced almost 300 million auto trips, which would have otherwise severely taxed the space-constrained road system and degraded the region's air quality. (SPM/ Source: GHG Inventory and Displacement Report 2011, National Household Travel Survey 2009, CMAP Travel Tracker Survey 2008, & National Transit Database)

- Multi-modal communities experience 75% fewer casualties than auto-dependent communities (Litman & Fitzroy)
- Americans who use transit spend a median of 19 minutes daily walking to and from transit (CDC Walking to Public Transit)

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SAVES MONEY

- A transit rider will spend only 17 cents for every \$1 spent by an auto driver. (SPM/ Source: AAA Your Driving Costs, 2011)
- Transit saves a commuter \$514 in congestion costs per year (SPM/ Source: Texas Transportation Institute Urban Mobility Report)
- A household's Housing and Transportation (H+T) costs reduce when located near transit. In Cook County, located inside the RTA region, H+T is 46% of income, while in Kendall County, located outside of the RTA region, H+T is 62% of income. 52% of regional median income is spent on housing and transportation. (SPM/ Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology, 2009)
- The average household spends 16 cents of every dollar on transportation, and 94% of this goes to buying, maintaining, and operating cars, the largest expenditure after housing. (APTA)
- Households that are likely to use public transportation on a given day save more than \$10,000 every year. (APTA)

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROVIDES ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

- Each dollar invested in transit generates \$1.21 to \$1.90 in benefits such as direct labor effects, regional mobility effects, household savings from reduced auto use, reduction in highway congestion and improved air quality. (Chaddick, 18)
- For each dollar invested in transit, business sales increase \$3.20 (Smart Growth America)
- 76% of jobs have access to transit, expanding the job market (SPM/ Source: CMAP, 2010)
- Proximity to major transit corridors contributes 5-20% to property values in the region. (Chaddick, 15/ McMillen & McDonald)

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION REDUCES GASOLINE CONSUMPTION & IMPROVES THE ENVIRONMENT

- Nationally, public transportation saves the United States 4.2 billion gallons of gasoline annually. (APTA)
- Households near public transit drive an average of 4,400 fewer miles than households with no access to public transit. This equates to an individual household reduction of 223 gallons per year. (APTA)
- The RTA system displaces more than 5 times the carbon produced by its transit operations. (SPM/ Source: RTA GHG Inventory and Displacement Report, 2010)
- Transit improves air quality
 - 1 CTA or Pace Bus eliminates up to 50 automobiles
 - 1 CTA Train eliminates up to 800 automobiles
 - 1 Metra Train eliminates up to 1,500 automobiles (RTA Fact Book, 2012)
- A single auto commuter switching to public transportation can reduce a household's carbon emissions by 10%, or up to 30% if he or she eliminates a second car. When compared to other household actions that limit CO₂, taking public transportation can be 10 times greater in reducing this harmful greenhouse gas. (APTA)

STATE OF TRANSIT

A look at the past 5 years and where we are now

Transit is integral to the Northeastern Illinois region and as the past five years has shown, transit is not immune to the issues and challenges that face the region and state as a whole. A look at the past five years provides important context as we consider where we are today and where we want to be in the next five years.

In 2008, after a successful grassroots campaign led by RTA, dubbed "Moving Beyond Congestion," brought awareness to a structural deficiency in transit's operating funding, legislation was passed to reform the RTA. This legislation most notably increased the sales tax by 0.25% within the 6 county region and created a Chicago-only real estate transfer tax to solely benefit CTA to stabilize transit's operating funds.

As further indication of broad public support for transit, in 2010, CMAP completed and adopted the region's first comprehensive plan (GOTO 2040) which underscored an increased regional commitment to transit with a goal of doubling transit ridership by 2040 as a means of

increasing regional mobility and creating more livable communities. The key role that transit plays in providing mobility options and reducing the region's impact on climate change was also further echoed in other agency plans such as the City of Chicago's Sustainability Initiative Action Agenda (released in 2012), the Illinois State Tollway's 15 Year Capital Plan (adopted in 2012) and the Illinois Department of Transportation's State Transportation Plan (released in 2012).

Shortly after the 2008 RTA reform act was passed, however, the nation and the global economy began to feel the effects of the Great Recession. The recession impacted transit in significant ways. From a funding standpoint, despite provisions in the 2008 reform legislation, regional sales tax revenues fell far below what experts had projected. Also Chicago's real estate transfer tax generated little revenue due to a paralyzed housing market after the housing bubble burst and the subprime mortgage crisis set in. In addition, the weak fiscal standing of the state delayed and continues to delay the state's release of funds on which all of the region's transit agencies depend, forcing the RTA to issue working cash notes to ensure sustained and uninterrupted CTA, Metra and Pace operations. The state's weak fiscal standing also thwarted efforts to develop a state capital bill that could meaningfully support transit's ongoing infrastructure needs.

Given near record unemployment levels, the transit agencies also experienced a decline in ridership between 2008 and 2010. To overcome some of these challenges, CTA, Metra and Pace all implemented fare increases. CTA introduced an increase to its base fare in 2009, which was the first in 3 years. Metra introduced fare increases in 2008 and in 2010. Pace introduced an increase to its base fare in 2009 which was its first since 2001. In 2010, CTA also implemented a fairly significant, but targeted, reduction in bus and rail service in order to reduce operating expenses while minimizing impacts to customers. These financial realities also forced CTA, Metra and Pace to re-examine agency plans for system expansion. This was particularly true for the more significant capital expansion projects being examined through the Federal New Starts process. The CTA and Metra both downshifted momentum on many of these projects awaiting a more favorable funding situation.

Despite these setbacks in the economy, as compared to our peer regions, transit in our region has overall fared well in terms of performance. Further, during this period, the majority of transit customers (83%) still report to be satisfied with transit in the region. Much of this is a credit to the Service Boards' commitment to enhancing the customer experience through initiatives such as real-time bus & train arrival information, fleet renewal initiatives and improved information sharing through re-vamped agency websites. Additionally, during this period in time, transit ridership noticeably tracked closely with gas prices. In response to historically high gas prices, people began to appreciate transit as a viable and affordable alternative to driving.

While ridership is now rebounding, coinciding with the economic recovery, transit remains cautiously optimistic about the future. While government agencies at the state, regional and local levels eagerly promote transit as being key to a vibrant and prosperous future for the Northeastern Illinois region, transit still faces significant hurdles in the next five years:

- As of December 2011, the 10-year total State of Good Repair capital need for Northeastern Illinois transit agencies is \$31.1 billion. Meanwhile there are no foreseeable funding initiatives at the state and federal levels that will provide the infusion of capital funds that will even begin to address this need. Degrading infrastructure will lead to degrading service quality. Unfortunately, this will undermine the current trend in ridership growth as customer satisfaction will undoubtedly decline.
- The 10-year total includes a significant capital backlog of \$18.7 billion that transit faces as the result of years of disinvestment and the lack of adequate national and state capacity for infrastructure investment. Even if a significant infusion in capital funding became available to help reduce the backlog, having an ongoing funding commitment to maintain transit's infrastructure is a vital element to ensuring the long-term well-being of the transit system, and for which, an additional \$12.4 billion is needed to address normal reinvestment
- Between 2007 and 2011, the region's population above 65 years old grew by 6.1% while the group between 60-64 years old grew 18.8%. In the coming years, transit is expected to play a key role in providing transportation options to an increasingly aging population. If transit's mainline system cannot be made more accessible through capital improvements, more and more travelers will have to rely on ADA / paratransit service which is the most costly service in the RTA system.
- The region's desire for transit to have a greater and more meaningful presence in traditionally auto-oriented parts of the region urges consideration for transit service expansion and coordinated land use planning. While transit's priority is and should be on the well-being of the existing system, the majority of the region's trips are no longer oriented towards Chicago and the downtown. New resources and supportive land-use policies will be key to transit's ability to provide new and improved service to these areas. Furthermore, there remains no state funding for the ADA capital program.



THE PLAN

VISION

A world-class regional public transportation system providing a foundation to the region's prosperity, livability, and vitality.

WORLD CLASS

What is "World-Class"? How do you define it? Can it be defined, or is it just something that you know when you see it? A quick trip across the Internet shows that there is no single definition of "World-Class" as applied to a transit system, but several themes do emerge. World-Class systems are safe, clean, and use cutting-edge technology to be very user-friendly; they provide frequent, reliable service around the clock; they have a broad reach to and from a central city core to the suburbs; they are financially supported to both maintain a constant State of Good Repair and reliability, and grow as expanding demand dictates.

Northeastern Illinois has elements of a World-Class transit system in place, especially in terms of scope and scale. Chicago's World-Class City status is not guaranteed. Our competitors are investing billions in their transit systems to remain players in a global economy. As a foundation to the region's economy, the transit system needs to build upon its existing elements to remain a World-Class competitor.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL A: PROVIDE VALUABLE, RELIABLE, ACCESSIBLE AND ATTRACTIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

- Provide public transportation choices that link people to jobs, education, services, cultural activities and other life commitments.
- Connect communities within the region through an enhanced and coordinated transit network that provides reliable and time competitive transportation options.
- Ensure that the transit system is more accessible and easier to use.
- Deliver safe, clean, reliable and affordable transportation services.
- Provide a customer experience that offers modern amenities utilizing state of the art technology

GOAL B: ENSURE FINANCIAL VIABILITY

- Prioritize capital investments based on safety, State of Good Repair, reliability, ridership, and operating costs.
- Control costs through improved operational efficiencies, effective management, coordinated planning, innovation and technology.

- Increase and stabilize revenue through existing and new funding sources in order to maintain reasonable fares.

GOAL C: PROMOTE A GREEN, LIVABLE AND PROSPEROUS REGION

- Promote transit, both alone and in combination with walking and cycling, as an alternative to motor vehicle use.
- Reduce transit's impact on the environment.
- Encourage Transit-Oriented Development by partnering with communities, employers and other stakeholders.
- Connect employers to a broad and diverse workforce.
- Partner with communities to improve transportation infrastructure that adds lasting value to all users.

GOAL D: CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE FOR AND BE A TRUSTED STEWARD OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- Elevate transit's needs by educating elected officials and citizens on the benefits of public transportation such as its contribution to the region's economic vitality, sustainability and individual health and wellbeing.
- Engage the public in meaningful and constructive ways.
- Increase transparency through improved oversight and information availability.
- Attract more riders to the system by promoting regional programs and services to businesses and residents.
- Increase awareness of transit through coordinated marketing and promotion.

Continuing and Emerging Issues

- I. Transit's Significant Capital Backlog and Insufficient Capital Funding
- II. Improve the Customer Experience through a Modernized & Integrated System
- III. Strike a Balance between Meeting Current Demand & Developing New Markets
- IV. Balancing Tight Operating Budgets
- V. Reauthorization of the Federal Transportation Bill & the Need to Educate

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. TRANSIT'S SIGNIFICANT CAPITAL BACKLOG AND INSUFFICIENT CAPITAL FUNDING

While the Chicago region greatly benefits from a well-established and extensive transit system, current capital funding will not support the much needed renewal of aging transit infrastructure. Deferring infrastructure maintenance and renewal has immediate negative impacts including deteriorating service reliability, larger and more frequent slow zones, and increased inefficiencies and operating costs. Strategies to address transit's capital needs include *proactively seeking stable, long-term funding solutions, being more strategic in our capital investments, and increasing awareness of transit's capital need and its broad impacts on the region.*

Strategies:

- *Proactively Seek Stable, Long-Term Funding Solutions to Support State of Good Repair*

A stable, long-term capital funding solution is critical to renewing and maintaining our region's transit system. Given the fiscal challenges facing all levels of government, a stronger case for transit needs to be made. To do so, the RTA, CTA, Metra and Pace must collectively educate both voters and legislators and better engage advocacy and community groups on transit's needs. More work is also needed with national coalitions such as *Getting America to Work* in order to get the word out, develop legislative proposals for funding solutions, and gain support needed to pass that legislation. In parallel, continued and enhanced efforts should be made to ensure tax compliance by companies that benefit from locating in our region. Beyond seeking funding from local, state and federal levels, continued exploration is also needed into alternative and innovative funding solutions, such as public-private partnerships.

- *Strategically Invest*

Advancements in technology and innovative management practices allow transit to be increasingly thoughtful about capital investment. As national leaders, the RTA, CTA, Metra and Pace have already begun to develop and adopt analytical tools and practices to aid in decision making. Continued development and enhancement of these innovations will ensure that limited capital dollars are being put to their best use and that investments are optimized based on their state of repair need, safety, ridership, service reliability, and operation. Additionally, as aging assets are replaced or

rehabilitated they should be replaced or updated with modern technology and design elements that improve the accessibility of the transit system when possible.

- *Increase Awareness of Transit's Capital Needs and Its Impact on the Region*

The needs of transit are only as real as the region perceives them. For the casual observer, the inner workings of the transit system can be difficult to appreciate. While station and vehicle improvements are tangible, there are a variety of less visible elements (such as signals and traction power systems) that have a significant impact on system safety and reliability. It is important to convey the benefits of these lesser known infrastructure improvements to not only assure the region that meaningful investments are being made with available funding, but to also raise awareness of the impacts of not funding future projects.

II. IMPROVE THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE THROUGH A MODERNIZED & INTEGRATED SYSTEM

Our region's transit system is an older "legacy" system that attempts to unify individual services originally developed and operated by competing entities. Modern day expectations of a world-class transit system include seamless and reliable travel across CTA, Metra and Pace, the adoption of technological advancements, and the adoption of design elements that improve system accessibility while emphasizing green and sustainable operations. Strategies to modernize the transit system include *modernizing the customer experience, continued pursuit of behind-the-scenes initiatives that include better collaboration & partnerships, and a re-orienting of marketing to better resonate with today's customer's needs and preferences.*

Strategies:

- *Modernize the Customer Experience*

While our region's transit system is a legacy system, technological advancements such as integrated real-time information and open fare payment systems can be employed to modernize the customer experience and to allow for more seamless travel across CTA, Metra and Pace. Also, as capital assets are replaced or rehabilitated, modern enhancements should be adopted when feasible (e.g., those featured on new CTA and Metra railcars) and design elements should be integrated that are sustainable, make the system more accessible, and mark us as a progressive transit system. Further, technology can be used to modernize transit's interface with customers through

initiatives such as the integration of an interactive voice recognition system with the travel information center.

- *Pursue Behind-The-Scenes Initiatives*

Though there are few ribbon-cutting opportunities with these initiatives, the pursuit of certain behind-the-scenes efforts can have a great impact on the customer experience. As technology evolves, it becomes easier to integrate independent information systems to improve data sharing and coordination. In doing so, CTA, Metra and Pace will have more information with which to enhance current service planning coordination activities and improve operating efficiencies. Other behind-the-scenes initiatives include partnerships with private industry experts (e.g., Google, IBM) to help transit be more robust with data analytics as well as disseminating customer information (e.g., creation of new apps). Also, implementation of key recommendations from the Regional Green Transit Plan, when feasible, can improve operational efficiencies and further transit's effort to help the environment.

- *Develop Marketing that Better Resonates with Customers*

Transit's marketing efforts need to more closely align with customer preferences and attitudes. Societal trends point toward greener lifestyles, more urban lifestyles among the younger and older generations, and a desire for innovation and more information among an increasingly internet-based, tech-savvy society. Marketing efforts should evolve around technology initiatives that improve the customer experience and also around innovative and green aspects of new infrastructure investments. Approaches to marketing and information dissemination should take advantage of the internet and the popularity of consumer technologies. Such means include better leveraging social media and continuing to encourage the development of transit apps.

III. STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN MEETING CURRENT DEMAND & DEVELOPING NEW MARKETS

The travel needs of our region are both tremendous and diverse. There is a recognition that ridership growth is straining current capacity in our region's core (downtown Chicago) and that the region's transit system needs to change over time to adjust for evolving travel patterns. Given transit's limited capital funding, it is necessary to adopt a balanced approach to meet these dynamic market needs. Strategies to ensure that the system is optimizing its market reach include *managing and better accommodating demand when and where the system is at or near capacity* as well as *thoughtfully*

developing new markets when and where existing available capacity can be better leveraged.

Strategies:

- *Manage and Accommodate Currently Growing Demand*

Transit well serves the vital function of connecting the six-county region to the heart of our region’s job center—downtown Chicago. Naturally, as the downtown commute is transit’s primary market, this is also the market for which the system at peak times is at or near capacity. Much like with highway congestion mitigation, there is a need to consider ways to manage demand as well as ways to enhance or add capacity. New concepts and innovations related to bus service such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Transit Signal Priority (TSP) allow for more efficient bus service and can enhance service and capacity on existing bus routes. Continued coordinated service planning and information sharing across CTA, Metra and Pace would also allow transit resources to be better allocated to accommodate changing market needs and demand.

- *Thoughtfully Increase Ridership to Better Leverage Existing Capacity*

While transit is pressed for capacity in the downtown commute market, there is available capacity in the off-peak times and in other parts of the region. Thoughtful market development initiatives can be targeted at growing new markets while still being mindful of transit’s limited capital funding. Marketing and information dissemination initiatives are relatively quick, low-cost ways to promote transit use among tourists and for recreational purposes to encourage off-peak travel and in places where service is already available. Similar marketing and promotion activities can be targeted at suburban businesses and employers located near transit stations to grow the reverse and suburb-to-suburb commute. Longer-term efforts to develop new markets include: partnering with real estate developers and communities to make more accessible and transit-friendly communities, promoting new marginal services such as shuttle-bugs and vanpools to expand the reach of the existing rail system, and continuing to partner with roadway agencies to develop priority treatments for bus service such as Transit Signal Priority (TSP) and Bus-On-Shoulder (BOS) as a cost efficient alternative to rail expansion.

IV. BALANCING TIGHT OPERATING BUDGETS

Financial forecasts show that future CTA, Metra and Pace operating budgets will continue to be tight if current service levels are to be maintained. And while operating budgets are tight, the region's desire is, in fact, to grow service and ridership. In order to maintain balanced budgets and to support the current momentum in ridership growth, strategies include *continued cost management and increasing efficiencies as well as growing revenues to support operating costs.*

Strategies:

- *Continue to Manage Costs and Increase Efficiencies*

Cost management is an ongoing effort that examines changes in transit's operating environment, advancements in technology, and the market for goods and services. As transit faces the need to accommodate an aging population, in addition to a continued commitment to a thoughtful ADA certification program there is a need to explore innovative service delivery programs and to promote the region's travel training program to manage demand for ADA / paratransit service. Also, as the region's travel patterns and travel needs change, there is need to re-evaluate how transit operation and capital needs are funded. The availability and adoption of technological innovations, such as Transit Signal Priority (TSP) can improve the efficiency of bus service. Also, transit should continue to adopt technology that improves and automates data collection, which will allow for a better understanding of changing market needs and more informed decision making. When cost savings can be achieved, agencies should combine purchasing power and seek joint procurement opportunities.

- *Grow Revenues*

In addition to being more cost efficient, transit must generate more revenue in order to not only prevent service cuts, but to actually enhance and grow service. To this end, transit should partner with legislators to examine various revenue and taxing strategies such as reforming the federal and state gas tax and broadening the state sales tax base. Also, transit should continue to seek non-traditional partnerships and funding sources such as public-private partnerships, value capture, and highway congestion pricing. As opposed to sudden significant fare increases, the merits of implementing regular but moderate fare increases should also be examined as a means of keeping up with operating costs.

V. AFFECT REAUTHORIZATION OF THE FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION BILL & THE NEED TO EDUCATE

Much of transit's operations are federally regulated, and nearly two-thirds of our region's transit capital funding comes from federal sources. The current Federal Transportation Bill (MAP-21) is set to expire in September 2014. The potential for new legislation poses both an opportunity and a threat to our region's transit. Under a favorable scenario, Congress would devise a long-term bill that increases overall transportation funding and appropriately allocates funding to bring transit to a State of Good Repair and in greater parity with roadway. Under a worst-case scenario, Congress would seek only a short-term solution that underfunds transit and imposes new mandates that further divert scarce funding from transit's existing needs. For our region, which is so greatly dependent on an extensive but aging transit system, the upcoming reauthorization of the Federal Transportation Bill is vitally important to our transit system's future and viability. Strategies for a more favorable Transportation Bill include *proactively seeking funding solutions for existing needs* and *diminishing the risk of unfunded mandates by better educating legislators*.

Strategies:

- *Proactively Seek Funding Solutions for Existing Needs*

In addition to the tactics earlier proposed to seek stable and long-term funding for transit's State of Good Repair needs, it is imperative in the context of the national dialogue on transportation funding that the Chicago region's needs do not get overlooked and that transit, as a mode, is recognized as a critical element in the nation's overall transportation system. Efforts to educate legislators on the Chicago region's reliance on transit will be critical. Also, should the new Federal Transportation Bill garner new dollars for transit in our region, transit must work closely with Springfield to develop local match commitments.

- *Reduce Unfunded Mandates and Encourage Initiatives that are Transit Supportive*

Within the national dialogue on transportation funding, various interests are vying for the attention and support of legislators. Transit cannot afford to take a backseat in these discussions. It is vitally important that transit becomes a more proactive and effective voice in the national dialogue in order to stave off future potential unfunded mandates as well as for transit to achieve greater parity with roadway on regulatory and funding matters.

ORDINANCE

ORDINANCE NO. 2013-63

WHEREAS, the Regional Transportation Authority (the “Authority” or the “RTA”) is the region’s transit planning and financial oversight agency and is required to adopt plans that implement the public policy of the State to provide adequate, efficient, and coordinated public transportation throughout the metropolitan region;

WHEREAS, Section 2.01a of the Regional Transportation Authority Act (the “Act”) requires the RTA to adopt a Strategic Plan, no less than every 5 years;

WHEREAS, Section 2.01a further states that the Strategic Plan shall describe the specific actions to be taken by the Authority and the Service Boards to provide adequate, efficient, and coordinated public transportation;

WHEREAS, the Strategic Plan update uses the core elements of the current Regional Transit Strategic Plan, *Moving Beyond Congestion*, as its starting point for the current vision, goals and objectives;

WHEREAS, the Strategic Plan update largely builds from a broad base of studies and initiatives led by the RTA and conducted in partnership with CTA, Metra and Pace; including the Performance Measures, the Regional Market Analysis, the Capital Asset Condition Study, ten-year financial forecasts, Regional Customer Satisfaction Study, and the Regional Green Transit Plan, all of which have been presented to the RTA Board of Directors;

WHEREAS, the Strategic Plan update reflects the input of the general public, stakeholders and elected officials from the six-county region;

WHEREAS, the draft Strategic Plan was made available for public comment from June 1, 2013 through July 1, 2013 and was the subject of 8 public hearings held throughout the six-county region;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY that:

- 1) The Authority hereby adopts the Regional Transit Strategic Plan, including its vision, goals, objectives and recommendations.
- 2) The Authority shall be committed to the region’s shared vision for a world-class public transportation system providing a foundation to the region’s prosperity, livability, and vitality.
- 3) The Authority shall work in partnership with CTA, Metra and Pace to achieve the goals of
 - a) Providing valuable, reliable, accessible and attractive transportation options,
 - b) Ensuring financial viability,
 - c) Promoting a green, livable and prosperous region, and
 - d) Continuing to advocate for and be a trusted steward of public transportation.

ADOPTED AUGUST 21, 2013

