The 2013-2018 Regional Transit Strategic Plan establishes a common vision for transit in Northeastern Illinois and sets priorities over five years, positioning transit agencies to respond effectively to developing issues.

It describes the core values by which we – the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra, and Pace – work together to manage, preserve, and grow the transit system.

This Progress Report highlights the contributions of our agencies over the last year (2013-2014) towards implementing the plan. It also looks ahead to the needs of our world-class public transit system moving forward.
2013-2018 Regional Transit Strategic Plan

vision

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

goals

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.

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.

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.

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.
Riders are benefiting from several important projects completed recently. CTA rebuilt the Red Line South and partnered with Pace to implement Ventra. Metra is retrofitting some of its trains after extreme weather tested the limits of its aging equipment. The RTA and Service Boards have renewed our commitment to meeting customer needs throughout these transitions by improving communications and by focusing investments on critical needs.

Transit Trips per Resident is Increasing

At this rate, transit ridership per resident will increase 18% between 2013 and 2040.

Transit use has been trending upward since 1997.

100% of all trains and buses and 71% of all stations are ADA accessible.

38% of all households in the Chicagoland area regularly use transit at least once a week. (CMAP Travel Tracker Survey, 2008)

ADA Paratransit services, one of the fastest growing transit market segments, provided 4 million rides in 2013. (RTAMS.org, 2014)

GO TO 2040, the region’s Long Range Transportation Plan, challenges us to double transit ridership by 2040.

We carry more than 2 million riders each workday and we are working to attract more. Our region needs to make major changes if we want to increase ridership significantly over time – more travelers must choose to take transit instead of their cars, more developers must choose to locate near transit, and taxpayers must choose to fund transit projects to improve our system.

www.RTAChicago.org
The RTA and Service Boards continue to manage limited resources to ensure that the region operates with a balanced budget. Agreement on the 2015 operating and capital funding levels was reached in a timely and collaborative manner.

**Costs and Revenues per Passenger Mile are Balanced**

Chicago has the lowest operating cost per passenger mile of 10 peer regions. (RTA 2012 Regional Peer Report Card)

Nearly half of operating revenue comes from fares and other system-generated revenue.

We have ongoing operational funding needs that we address with balanced budgets every year. This solvency is required by law, but RTA and Service Board staff consistently monitor costs, leverage funds, and maximize dollars spent to be sure that balance is reached.

www.RTACHicago.org
Greening the region is a slow process that requires collaboration between transit agencies and others. The RTA and Service Boards helped communities plan for transit-oriented development around the transit network and collaborated with CMAP to update GO TO 2040 this year. We also took several steps toward improving the performance of the transit system itself, including installing energy monitoring software and purchasing alternative fuel vehicles.

Transit Mode Share for Work Trips Remains Steady

68% of the region’s residents have access to transit near their home. (CMAP, 2010)

53% of the region’s jobs can be reached by transit within 90 minutes. (CMAP, 2010)

69% of commuters in the region drive to work alone. (US Census ACS, 3-Yr Estimate)

Transit works best when the land around it is developed to make it easy for people to use transit. We are working with communities to plan and implement transit-oriented development and enhancements to the existing transit system.

www.RTACHicago.org

2013-2014 Actions

• Completion of 8 Community Planning Projects, launch of 13 others
• Improvements to RTA’s Transit Benefit Program and increased outreach
• Energy monitoring and audits
• CTA purchase of electric buses
• CTA upgrade of bus wash facility
• Pace purchase of CNG-fueled buses
• Pace Development Guidelines created to help communities plan for transit

2015 Outlook

• Work with communities to fund Access to Transit improvements
• Launch 16 new Community Planning Projects
• CTA to open new Green Line neighborhood station at Cermak
• Metra piloting use of hybrid vehicles for police fleet vehicle replacement
• Pace delivery of CNG buses and conversion of South Garage to CNG

Learn More

• Transit-Oriented Development encourages transit supportive land uses
• RTA’s Interagency Signage helps passengers transfer seamlessly among services
• Green Transit Plan outlines the system’s efforts to become more environmentally sustainable
• RTAMS website provides planning, asset and financial information on the transit system
• RTA Transit Benefit Fare Program allows employers and their employees to take advantage of a tax savings commuter benefit program
Advocate for and be a Trusted Steward of Public Transportation

Transit was the subject of discussion at all levels of government this year. The Federal government did not pass a new transportation bill in 2014, instead opting for a short term extension of the existing bill. The State legislature passed reform legislation to provide more public visibility into our operations. The RTA and Service Boards were active in both arenas, educating decision makers on the value of transit and the importance of public funding for it.

### 2013-2014 Actions
- **Getting America to Work** national partnership expansion
- Fostered start of bipartisan federal Public Transit Caucus
- DuPage County marketing campaign to promote transit usage
- Legislation passed expanding Bus on Shoulder
- Outreach efforts in Washington DC were more closely coordinated between RTA and Service Boards
- Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) rewards applicants points for projects near transit and within RTA TOD study area

### 2015 Outlook
- Continue work in DC to advocate for long term federal transportation funding bill
- Continue work in Springfield to stop sales tax diversion, extend the State Capital Bond Program and establish dedicated sources of capital funding
- Regional Consumer Marketing program initiation to promote transit usage
- Metra, Pace, and CTA continue to explore creative funding practices

### Capital Funding is Not Meeting the Region’s Needs

The system has a $20 billion capital backlog of already overdue projects. $1.3 billion per year is needed to address normal maintenance and replacement of assets going forward.

The State Capital Bond Program has not been authorized past 2014, thus reducing the region’s capacity to plan long-term projects.

The Chicago region is the economic driver of the state and accounts for over four-fifths of Illinois’ economic output. (IL Bureau of Economics, 2011)

Over the next five years, we do not expect to have sufficient funding to achieve a State of Good Repair on our existing system, let alone to build new transit lines. We need to advocate for a stable, long-term federal funding bill and a dedicated source of state funds to implement more capital improvements.

Visit [www.RTAChicago.org](http://www.RTAChicago.org) for more information.