



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, August 20, 2020

JOINT STATEMENT on Transit and COVID-19 Recovery

Prior to the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Board meeting on August 20, 2020, the executive leaders of the RTA, CTA, Metra, and Pace issued this joint statement on the importance of public transportation as Northeastern Illinois battles the COVID-19 virus.

Together, our transit agencies have created a culture of COVID prevention. All riders should know the trains and buses have never been cleaner. CTA, Metra, and Pace staff worked heroically in the pandemic's earliest stages to carry essential workers to their jobs, and they continue providing safe, reliable trips to meet dramatically shifting customer needs.

Business leaders recognize that transit will be essential for economic recovery, but significant financial challenges mean this can't be taken for granted. The federal CARES Act last spring included \$25 billion for U.S. transit systems, providing our region with a one-time infusion of nearly \$1.4 billion that has sustained our operations during this pandemic. But make no mistake: Without additional federal relief, the Northeastern Illinois transit system and others across America will face a significant shortfall in 2021 due to declining revenues.

Therefore, we call on Congress to provide \$32 billion for transit nationwide in a new COVID relief package, as recommended by the American Public Transportation Association. Within our region, we will work together to make the difficult choices necessary to sustain our transit system despite these unprecedented challenges.

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