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CTA Heads For Shelters

There is nothing very complicated about a bus shelter: clear, weather-proof panels supported by a sturdy aluminum frame. Simple as they are, bus shelters can make a big difference to CTA riders when the weather is bad and some waiting is required.

To make traveling by CTA a little more inviting, the agency began installing bus shelters in 1976. With support from the City of Chicago and the federal government, 1,014 of the CTA's 12,860 bus stops are now equipped with bus shelters.

The CTA places bus shelters where they do the most good for the most people, such as at transfer points and busy bus stops. Community requests also play a role. CTA's Planning

Department is in regular contact with individuals, community groups, elected officials, and businesses regarding the placement and improvement of bus shelters.

Bus shelters were a hot topic in the redesign of State Street. After being completely redesigned between Wacker Drive and Congress Parkway, Chicago's *great street* reopened in November, 1996. Ornamental glass and steel subway entrances now invite riders to board Red Line trains. Shrubs and old-fashioned light fixtures now line the street.

Noticeably absent from the street, however, are bus shelters. A key feature in the redesign of State Street was the reintroduction of automobile

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Wage Increase & Bonus In New Contract

For the first time in 10 years, the CTA and collective bargaining agents agreed on a tentative settlement without arbitration. Union members receive nine-percent in pay increases over four years on an agreement that extends through December 1999.

Full-time employees on the payroll from January 1, 1996 through ratification will receive a \$1,400 bonus. Part-time employees will receive a \$700 bonus.

The agreement also offers early retirement incentives to employees with 25 or more years of service. Their maximum benefit will be raised to 70 percent, from 62.5 percent.

CTA officials and a coalition of 15 CTA unions announced on January 2 that a tentative agreement had been reached. The agreement, which

includes \$70 million in wage increases and bonuses, must be ratified by union membership before it is presented to the CTA board for approval.

"The agreement provides a fair wage increase," said Isiah Thomas, President of the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 241. "CTA employees have a stake in the financial well-being of the CTA." According to Jerry Williams, President of the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 308, "In the past, we bumped heads. This time we put our heads together."

A new part-time job classification called "special part-time employee" creates cost savings for the CTA. CTA retirees will be given first preference in these part-time union hirings. The agreement will also give union members more opportunity to have consecutive days off.



Thanks to the creative cooperation of the CTA and the Sheriff's Office, many non-violent Cook County offenders are doing time on CTA buses. Supervised teams tackle some of the CTA's toughest grime at the agency's ten busiest bus terminals one day per week.

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Dear Sir:

The purpose of this letter is to commend one of your drivers, Ms. Bettye Richmond, badge #7224. I rode with her on the #10 Museum of Science & Industry bus last summer. She has a wonderful personality and is so helpful with handicapped passengers. She really is an asset to the CTA. Hopefully you will put her on the #10 schedule next summer.

Please commend her any way you see fit.

Deborah Rosenbaum
 Chicago

Dear Mr. Mosena:

As a regular traveler on the CTA, I have seen a lot of looks of relief when a train arrives. I have, however, never seen the smiles of delight that greeted the arrival of the Blue Line Holiday Express as it pulled into every station on Wednesday, December 18.

This was a wonderful and welcome surprise. As a woman exclaimed – without sarcasm – “Just what I needed after a hard day at work.”

I just thought you would want to know how much this seasonal touch was appreciated by many commuters. Thanks to all who were responsible for it.

Lorraine E. Granieri
 Chicago

Going Places

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News & Views

New Grinding Cars

While the squeaky wheel may get the grease, maybe all it needed was a little track grinding. The CTA's recent purchase of three new rail grinding cars from Baker Industries of Cambridge, Ontario, promises to smooth the way for better CTA service well into the 21st Century.

\$724,000 in federal funds facilitated the purchase of three new track grinders, replacing CTA's

existing grinding train, which has parts that have been in service for almost 100 years.

Beginning in early 1997, the new 20-foot-long cars will grind away rail head imperfections. Benefits include longer rail life as well as smoother, quieter train rides. Operating at speeds up to 35 m.p.h., the new equipment will not disrupt regular CTA service.

Timetables

“Well, I’ll be! I guess they know what they’re talking about!” said one skeptical ‘L’ rider who watched trains arrive right on time after CTA began distributing station-specific timetables on three lines late in November.

With posted timetables, riders can better plan their trips. Timetables also promote CTA's solid on-time performance: trains arrived within three minutes of schedule 97.8 percent of the time through the first 10 months of 1996.

President David Mosena calls the new system “just-in-time transit.” According to Mosena, “With timetables, riders won’t waste valuable minutes waiting for trains, so their total commute times will be less.”

Station-specific timetable posters and pocket-sized flyers were introduced on the Brown, Green and Orange Lines in November and December. The program expands to the Purple, Red, Yellow and Blue Lines over the next two months.

Budget

At its December 11 meeting, the Chicago Transit Board passed an \$800.1 million operating budget for 1997 after shifting \$19.7 million from proposed capital expenditures to fill a temporary deficit that the Regional Transportation Authority said had to be plugged before it would approve the CTA plan.

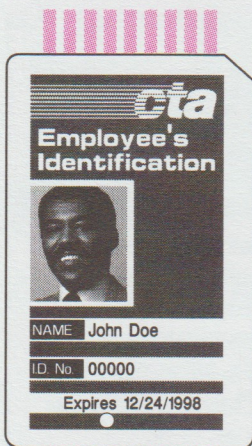
President David Mosena and Board Chairman Valerie Jarrett regretted the temporary diversion of capital funds to cover the budget gap, saying it was a bad business practice that should be avoided. Mosena said it had to be done in this instance because of an abrupt change of position by the RTA, which had originally indicated it was willing to allow CTA to carry over the deficit

until early next year when it could implement efficiencies.

Mosena said ridership losses and public funding shortfalls, combined with the increasing costs of maintaining aging infrastructure, continue to produce serious financial problems for CTA, and that positive measures taken in the past had not solved the problem.

“Every aspect of the CTA is under scrutiny,” Mosena added. “We are reviewing how the CTA is organized, how service is provided, and who provides what service. We now have to reexamine all of the CTA's functions in light of today's reality. And if an opportunity to improve arises, CTA has to take advantage of it.”

The New CTA Employee ID Card



This spring, riders will begin to pay their CTA fares with "Transit Cards" – the new credit card-sized stored value cards. As riders board trains and buses, the amount of their fares and transfers will be deducted from the cards automatically, eliminating the

all-too-familiar fumbling for exact change or tokens.

While the new fare-payment system will change the way riders pay their fares, it will also change the way employees board CTA trains and buses. Please take a moment to examine your new CTA employee ID card.

Like the old CTA IDs, each card includes the employee's photograph, name, and employee number. All employees are required to carry their IDs while on the job and to present the card upon request to fare collecting employees and supervisors. Also, like the old IDs, the cards enable employees to ride CTA and Pace free of charge. The difference, however, is how the cards allow employees to get on board.

Employees will use their IDs just as CTA customers will use their Transit Cards. An employee will insert the ID card into a turnstile or bus farecard machine. Recognizing the rider as an employee, the new fare equipment will allow the rider to board free-of-charge.

The employee identified on the ID is the only one authorized to use the card. Disciplinary action may be taken if an ID card is abused. To guard against potential abuse, the new fare system has built-in safeguards.

Lost or Stolen Cards

The new fare system allows only one active ID card for each employee. When an ID card is reported lost or

stolen, the fare system will "lock-out" the original card before a new card is issued. The original card becomes useless and will no longer allow the user to gain access to the CTA. CTA's lost employee ID policy stays the same: there is a \$50 charge for the first replacement and a \$100 charge for the second.

Employees should treat missing IDs like lost or stolen credit cards. When an ID is lost or stolen, please call CTA Personnel Services immediately at (312) 664-7200 ext. 4936. Be sure to report stolen cards to the police. Send a copy of the police report and a completed replacement form #2622 to Personnel.

Taking care of your ID card

Your new ID card is designed to withstand 12 months of everyday wear and tear. However, like a bank ATM card or credit card, the magnetic strip on your ID is sensitive and requires care. It's a good idea to store your card in your wallet or purse away from other cards with magnetic strips.

From The Mart

CTA's 7th floor Ambassadors

First impressions pave the way for building relationships. They're important for individuals. They're important for billion-dollar transit agencies.

The first impressions made at the CTA's 7th Floor Merchandise Mart Headquarters are in the very good hands of Pearl Kelley and Irvin Burks. Pearl and Irv have manned the Mart's security desk for more than seven years. They are often the first to greet Mart visitors who can range from CTA riders to TV newscasters.

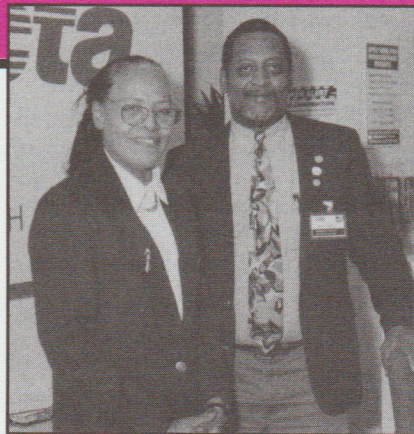
Managing the 7th floor traffic, Pearl and Irv wear a number of hats: security officer, concierge, and PR

agent. In short, Pearl and Irv are the CTA's 7th floor ambassadors.

A Chinese delegation recently arrived at the Mart early for a meeting and, unfortunately, did not speak English. "You don't learn Mandarin Chinese on the West side of Chicago," said Irv. "We took care of the group with basic courtesy – that's a universal language."

Pearl combines toughness with charm. "I'm patient with the occasional complainer, however, most of our visitors are sweethearts." Pearl enjoys helping the disabled, seniors, and fellow employees. "I try to keep a smile going all the time; that works wonders."

An unhappy visually impaired Mart visitor once picked a fight with Irv – and encouraged his dog to join



Pearl Kelley and Irvin Burks

in! Faced with a difficult situation, Irv's professionalism paid off: "I remained calm and, fortunately, the dog did too."

Pearl and Irv's cheerful dispositions and compatibility shine a positive light on the CTA and CTA employees.

traffic. To make way, the street was widened and sidewalks were narrowed. Concerned that the sidewalks might get too crowded, State Street merchants requested that bus shelters be left out of the new design.

While many would have preferred bus shelters, State Street presented opportunities that are not present on other city streets. City planners point out that most State Street bus riders spend little time waiting because headways are usually short. And when the weather is bad, riders can wait inside nearby stores and under building awnings. Merchants appreciate the extra opportunity for business and, with narrower sidewalks, many of the bus stops are within easier reach of building entrances.

While gone from part of State Street, bus shelters will become more familiar in neighborhoods especially in the months ahead when CTA Planning launches a new bus shelter installation program. The new \$1 million dollar program will fund the purchase and installation of 100 new shelters, as well as improvement and repair of up to 340 existing shelters. CTA Planning is currently evaluating rider needs and community requests.

"We are looking at locations for new shelters," said CTA Traffic Planning Coordinator Allan Lee. "More than 200 bus shelter requests are also being considered. Our aim is to install new shelters in every Chicago neighborhood."

With more bus shelters come greater maintenance costs. The CTA currently spends \$800,000 annually to maintain its bus shelters. The budget-busting culprits are graffiti and etching. CTA maintenance crews routinely clean and replace bus shelter panels.

According to Customer Service Maintenance Manager Jack Winkler, the CTA is experimenting with ways to reduce shelter maintenance costs. "Most of our shelters use clear Lexan panels," said Winkler. "We are testing a new grade of Lexan that includes a tough outer film layer. When the new Lexan is vandalized, the film layer can be removed and the panel looks like new." The new panels can reduce CTA's materials and labor costs by as much as \$300,000 annually.

Changing Gears

Harrison Station

The Harrison Red Line Station will stay open an additional hour, until 10:30 PM. The extra hour helps Columbia College evening students whose classes break at 10 PM.

Michigan Avenue

Michigan Avenue viaduct reconstruction between Randolph and the Chicago River makes it necessary to detour several bus routes through mid-November 1997: #2 Hyde Park Express, #4 Cottage Grove, #6 Jeffery Express, #10 Museum of Science & Industry, #11 Lincoln, #16 Lake Street, #56 Milwaukee, #60 Blue Island/26th, #120 NW/Wacker Express, #121 Union/Wacker Express, #145 Wilson/Michigan, #146 Marine/Michigan, #147 Outer Drive Express, and #151 Sheridan.

The #3 King Drive, #3L King Drive Limited, and the #157 Streeter/Willow will not be rerouted.

CTA Map

The next edition of the CTA's award-winning system map will be available late January at rail stations and visitor centers. To receive a copy of the map free by mail, call the RTA Travel Information Center at (312) 836-7000. The new map will include updated service changes as well as improved graphics. The map will make visiting Chicago landmarks by CTA easier with an improved cross-reference list.

#19 Stadium Express

#19 Stadium Express is once again serving all home Bulls and Blackhawks games. Service begins two hours before games. Beginning at Michigan/Chicago, buses make limited stops southbound on Michigan and westbound on Madison. On the return trip, buses wait eastbound on Madison running every few minutes until 30 minutes after games.

