

Welcome to another issue of the Green Pennant Special. It is through this newsletter that we endeavor to keep this membership informed on happenings in the organization and the transit industry.

November Meeting

The November meeting will be held on Friday November 5, 1999 at the Welles Park Fieldhouse, 2333 W. Sunnyside at 6:30 p.m. The program will be the Chicago Transit Authority - from its creation on April 12, 1945 to the present.

Pace

The board of directors of Pace-the suburban bus agency, is recommending increasing fares on its buses by 10 cents a trip. The board held a special meeting Wednesday to discuss its budget. In August, it approved a preliminary operating budget of \$119.3 million for next year. But the Regional Transportation Authority, which controls the purse strings of Pace, Metra and the Chicago Transit Authority and subsidizes the agencies, asked Pace to cut the amount of revenues it expects to receive from the RTA to cover its operating expenses by \$1,476,000. The fare increase, which will raise one-way fares from \$1.15 to \$1.25, will bring in an additional \$686,000 next year. Pace spokesman Blaine Krage said. Pace officials plan to make \$790,000 in cuts unrelated to service to cover the difference, he said. They will be positions or supplies," he said, "things that won't directly impact service." Pace's board did not want to cut service, and instead of raising fares even higher, decided on a combination of a small fare hike and cuts unrelated to service, he said. The last fare increase took place in January 1994 when the board raised fares from \$1.10 to \$1.15. The Pace board is expected to vote on a draft of the proposal at its Oct. 13 meeting and will hold public hearings on it at the end of October, Krage said. The board is expected to take a final vote in November. The RTA's board must approve all of the agencies' budgets by Dec. 15. (The Star)

The Pace Board of Directors approved a draft of the agency's 2000 budget, releasing the document to a set of public hearings October 28-30 throughout the six-county suburban region. Pace's proposed operating budget is \$118.5 million, only 3.5 percent above its estimated 1999 budget of \$114.5 million. There are no route cuts or service reductions in the proposed 2000 budget.

Pace's 2000 budget does call for a 10-cent increase to its \$1.15 regular fare and \$1.00 local fare. These fare adjustments, Pace's first since January 1994, will enable the suburban bus agency to meet the Regional Transportation Authority's mandated 40 percent farebox recovery rate, which is the percentage of operating expenses funded by rider fares. The 40 percent mark set by the RTA is the highest ever for Pace, which is achieving a 37.3 percent recovery rate in 1999.

Pace projects a record level for ridership next year. Ridership is forecast to grow to 41.1 million, climbing roughly 2 percent from this year's estimated total of 40.3 million passengers. Pace's record high for ridership was achieved in 1991 when the agency carried 40.5 million passengers. In a time where public transit is finding it more difficult to compete with the automobile, Pace will attain its fifth straight year of ridership gains if it reaches its 2000 goal.

Although Pace is controlling its costs and keeping operating expenses to a minimum, services for persons with disabilities have increased in the proposed 2000 budget. Pace will expand its ADA paratransit program by \$800,000 (10 percent) next year.

The upcoming public hearings are also for Pace's 2000 capital program, which is part of the 2000 budget proposal. Pace anticipates capital expenditures of \$41.3 million next year over and above the operating budget. The majority of the capital plan is earmarked for vehicle purchases. Pace hopes to add 63 fixed-route buses, 88 paratransit buses and 108 vanpool vehicles to its fleet.

Many residents in Bloomingdale and Roselle will be better served by public transportation beginning Monday, November 1, when Pace expands service on Route 407 Bloomingdale/Roselle. Two trips will be added to the route while a Park-n-Ride is put in place to serve commuters who don't live within walking distance of the bus route.

Pace, the suburban transit service, helps make commuting to and from the workplace the easiest part of the day. Route 407 provides weekday rush-hour service from several subdivisions in Bloomingdale and Roselle to the Roselle Metra station along the Milwaukee District West Line.

In addition to the three trips currently operated to the train station each weekday morning, two new trips will originate at a Pace Park-n-Ride in Bloomingdale at Springfield Park on Springfield Drive, south of Lake Street. Commuters who don't have a permit to park at the Roselle Metra Station can conveniently park for free at the Park-n-Ride and take advantage of the inexpensive Pace service. The number of bus trips from the train station in the evening also will be increased from three to five.

"We're looking for new riders to give our service a try, and we think additional trips combined with a convenient Park-n-Ride location will attract commuters who were not able to use our service in the past," said Pace Executive Director T.J. Ross. (www.pacebus.com)

CTA

While PACE has increased its fares, CTA Chairman Valerie Jarrett Monday ruled out a similar action for her agency but warned more than \$550 million is needed to help expand the Brown Line and save the Blue Line Douglas Branch from being shut down. Jarrett said she's going to Washington Wednesday to put pressure on getting more funds for the Brown and Blue Line Douglas Branch. "It would be ridiculous to not have the money that we need from the state for our local match and not be able to get the money

from Washington," Jarrett said, adding that if the CTA doesn't get the money for the Douglas Branch "we'll have to shut it down, and that would be such a waste since we were successful in Springfield. We still don't have the appropriation we need. "We have the seed money to do the initial engineering studies, but we do not have a full funding agreement which is what we need to keep the line open," Jarrett told reporters. She's hoping to get a full funding grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. "Once you get this from the administration, it's unusual for congress not to appropriate the dollars every year. I consider this the prize." She hopes to get the funding within a year. "You can't do it piecemeal. "We have to do a substantial rehab on the entire structure and we have not looked yet at alternatives of scaling that back."

In explaining why there will be no CTA fare hike, Jarrett said; "PACE'S fare increase is independent of the CTA. We're separate units of government. PACE'S current recovery ratio is 38 percent, whereas Metra and the CTA are forced to have recovery ratios of over 50 percent." "Its fine time that PACE increases its recovery ratio and carry its fair share," she told reporters after testifying before the City Council Transportation Committee chaired by Aid. Thomas R. Allen (38th).

"The CTA's recovery ratio is already much higher than PACE'S, so we do not anticipate having to raise fares. We've gone out of our way to belt tighten from within and to make the necessary service adjustments," she explained. Having reduced the monthly bus pass fare down to \$75 and other ridership passes, Jarrett said she's trying to "reverse the trend of increasing fares" resulting in increased ridership. She blamed fare increases for the decline in ridership. Admitting her budget is drained due to a shortage of funds for capital, Jarrett said: "As a result of Illinois First, we've taken great strides towards improving our capital budget which should not have an over burden on our operating budget." Jarrett said she's prepared to face another harsh winter that includes rehabbing half of the 2600 series that broke down last winter. (Chicago Defender)

The Chicago Transit Authority unveiled a variety of CTA-themed items as part of its new CTA Gift Express retail program. CTA Gift Express is a program designed to promote the CTA's image throughout the Chicagoland area. Over twenty items will be available to the public starting Friday, October 8, 1999. A highlight of the program is the unique use of old CTA tokens on jewelry and accessories. High-quality cufflinks, key chains, and tie tacs are all available for transit admirers. Other featured items include system map ties and t-shirts, a selection of Transit Card holders, and CTA- patterned office supplies.

"Transit enthusiasts, CTA employees, and the everyday customer will enjoy these CTA gifts. Using the CTA logo and system map on a variety of items for around the home and office is yet another positive way for us to boost the CTA's visibility," said CTA President Frank Kruesi. "On a daily basis, the CTA will continue to provide on-time, clean, safe, and friendly service to our customers. Maintaining quality service is still the best way for us to get the word out about the benefits of CTA."

CTA Chairman Valerie B. Jarrett added, "Silk ties, silk scarves, and canvas totebags imprinted with the CTA system map are fun and practical ways to promote our service. The Gift Express program will bring these tastes of Chicago to your home in time for the holidays."

Those interested in a free catalog can call 1-888-YOURCTA and a copy will be mailed directly. Catalogs are also available at the main desk of the CTA offices located on the 7th floor of the Merchandise Mart. Merchandise will be available for viewing at the CTA's website, www.transitchicago.com. Purchases can be made via the phone and fax numbers listed on-line and in the brochure. The ability to make on-line credit card purchases will be available in December.

Select token items from the "CTA Gift Express" will be sold throughout Chicagoland, including displays at the Water Works Visitor Center, the Four Seasons Hotel Gift Shop, the Ritz Carlton Hotel Gift Shop, the Chicago Architecture Foundation Store, the Shop at

the Cultural Center, and the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. Token jewelry and accessories will also be featured in the Skymall catalogue, which is available on major U.S. airlines inside passenger seat pockets. (www.yourcta.com)

The Chicago Transit Board today authorized the sale of the property located at the site of the CTA's former Limits Garage. The lot, located at 2684 North Clark Street, will be transferred to Limits LLC for the price of \$14,350,000.

Limits LLC's proposed mixed-use project includes retail facilities and both low- and high-density residential housing.

CTA President Frank Kruesi said, "The development proposed by Limits LLC is based on the extensive discussions over a six-year period among the successive aldermen of the 43rd ward, representatives from the community, and CTA staff. The standards for development which we agreed upon – and that the Limits LLC bid has pledged to adhere to – are meant to insure that redevelopment of this site will enhance the surrounding neighborhood."

The result of those discussions – a set of firm development criteria for the sale of this Lincoln Park property – were incorporated by the CTA into a Request for Proposal (RFP) that publicly solicited redevelopment proposals for the Limits property that conformed to the community's interests.

(www.yourcta.com)

Customers to Benefit from New Rail Station, Bus Terminal and Park 'n' Ride Garage

The Chicago Transit Board, at its monthly meeting, today approved a series of transactions that include the sale of the present Park 'n' Ride lot near the Red Line Rail Terminal at Howard Street, the purchase of land to build a new Howard rail station, bus terminal and CTA administrative offices, and the construction of a new 659-space enclosed parking garage providing shared parking for CTA customers and patrons of the new Gateway Centre development. The existing 141,788 square foot surface Park 'n' Ride facility located at Hermitage and Rogers Avenue in

Chicago will be sold to the City of Chicago for just under \$3 million comprised of \$2.36 million in cash and at least \$600,000 in transit improvements such as sidewalks and a busway. As part of the project, Hermitage Avenue, between Howard Street and West Rogers Avenue, would be re-named Paulina and re-located farther east to accommodate the new busway and car lanes.

Once the CTA has approved the property sale, the City of Chicago will enter into a revised Redevelopment Agreement with Combined Development-Howard, LLC who would then construct a mixed-use development on the property. The Gateway Centre, as the project is called, would include a Dominick's, a multi-screen theatre, and retail space. To promote economic development in the area near the Howard station, the City has created the Howard Paulina Tax Increment Financing District.

The CTA Board's action continues the Gateway development project underway in the area and will include the construction of a new enclosed Park 'n' Ride garage for CTA customers. The new facility will feature 659 parking spaces, 489 of which will be available for CTA passengers who park their vehicles and board the train. The remaining 170 spaces on the first floor will be reserved for the movie theatre's patrons. Like the Park 'n' Ride facility at Cumberland along the Blue Line, this lot will have an all-day rate of \$1.75.

Chicago Transit Board Chairman Valerie B. Jarrett said, "This opportunity allows the CTA to be an active partner in the economic re-investment within the community we serve at Howard. This development project will bring about significant improvements for the community, our customers and our employees."

CTA President Frank Kruesi added, "We're pleased to be able to move forward on this Howard station, a project that has been talked about for almost twenty years. A new rail station, a new Park 'n' Ride garage and bus terminal will provide our customers with more attractive facilities that will hopefully encourage even more residents of the community to

take advantage of the CTA services we provide. Our employees at the Howard Terminal have been working in temporary offices and we're pleased to be able to offer a more productive working environment." (www.yourcta.com)

RTA

The Regional Transportation Authority Board of approved a \$50,000 contract to study transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities near the 143rd Street Metra station in Orland Park.

The study will explore potential enhancements to the area surrounding the 143rd Street station on Metra's Southwest Service line and will include a station area plan, a circulation plan and implementation strategies, with proposed zoning adjustments.

Farr Associates Architecture and Urban Design was awarded the contract through a competitive bidding process and a review of proposals by the RTA, Metra, Pace and the Village of Orland Park. Farr Associates has extensive experience working in the RTA region and is currently working on a similar transit-oriented development project in Westmont, Ill., and has also received national recognition for TOD projects in Oakland, Calif., and Swansea, Ill.

The contract, for an amount not to exceed \$50,000, will include \$20,000 in funds from the Village of Orland Park with the remainder of the funds coming from the RTA's 1999 Regional Technical Assistance Program (RTAP).

"The RTAP program enables the RTA to be actively involved in assessing the transit needs of the communities in our region so that our system can be more responsive," RTA Chairman Thomas J. McCracken, Jr. said. "The Orland Park project and the other projects approved this year will ensure that our transit system is better integrated, more accessible and more attractive to riders."