



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2015

RUN 6-2015

Welcome to another issue of The Green Pennant Special, the official publication of The Omnibus Society of America.

Through this publication we hope to keep our readers informed of events happening in the transit industry in Chicago and other cities in the United States.

Visit the Omnibus Society of America website at **osabus.org**. At **osabus.org** we will be posting upcoming fan trips and meetings information, as well as membership information.

Please visit our site when you have a chance and give us your opinions and comments.

• NOV/DEC MEETINGS

The November meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on November 6, 2015, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital. The meeting will start at 7:30 pm.

Our program will be a "Potpourri" presented by John LeBeau.

The December meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on December 4, 2015, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital. The meeting will start at 7:30 pm.

Our program for the evening will be a presentation by long-time member Ed Montajano on the current Milwaukee transit scene.

ELECTION NOTICE

The director's position of David Zucker is up for election in December. At the November meeting we will be accepting nominations to fill this position. Ballots will be mailed out the first or second week of November and must be received by the beginning of the December meeting to be counted.

CTA Continues Brown Line Modernization With New Signal Project That Will Increase Train Speeds, Improve Service Reliability

9/9/2015

Chicago Transit Board OKs project to replace 40-year-old signal system on section of Brown/Purple Line Express that carries 80,000 passengers each weekday

Mayor Emanuel and the CTA are taking the next major step to improve the speed, reliability and comfort of the Brown and Purple Express lines to create a better travel

experience on a rail line that has seen rapid growth in ridership.

The Chicago Transit Board today approved a contract to begin design work on the Ravenswood Loop Connector Signal Project to replace a 40-year-old signal system on tracks serving the Brown and Purple Line Express between Armitage and Merchandise Mart stations. The modern signal system will enhance CTA's ability to move trains more efficiently and safely.

This signal project complements the historic Ravenswood Loop Connector Rehabilitation Project begun by Mayor Emanuel in 2013, which has significantly modernized century-old track structure and replaced deteriorated track components. The Rehabilitation Project is expected to be completed by the end of 2015, and follows other Brown Line investments made in recent years.

"The Brown Line is one of our fastest growing lines, with ridership exploding more than 45 percent in the last 10 years," said CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. "This is a key rail corridor that carries 700 trains each weekday, connecting people with jobs, education and opportunity. Mayor Emanuel has recognized the importance of making the necessary investments in our rail infrastructure to meet demand today and in the future as ridership continues to grow."

The two Ravenswood Loop Connector projects combined will improve service to Brown and Purple Line Express customers on several fronts: modernizing tracks and structure that is more than 100 years old, and replacing a signal system installed in 1975 that is out of date and contributes to congestion issues that have developed from stronger-than-expected ridership growth on the Brown Line in the last decade.

These projects follow a number of rail investments made to improve service. Those include the Brown Line Capacity Expansion Project, substantial traction power upgrades, Brown Line slow zone remediation and the Purple Line Express Track Improvement Project that began earlier this summer.

Customer impacts during the project are expected to be minimal, with much of the work occurring during off-peak hours.

The \$32.6 million contract is being awarded to Ragnar Benson Construction LLC, following a Request for Proposals process. The contractor is expected to begin the design work for the signal project this fall. The project is expected to be completed by early 2018.

CTA Reminds Northwestern Students of New, Expanded #201 Bus Service this Fall

9/15/2015

In Unique Partnership with NU, Expanded #201 Service Replaces Former Campus Shuttle

The Chicago Transit Authority is reminding Northwestern University employees, students and faculty to take advantage of the new campus transit service offered along CTA's existing #201 bus route, which operates between the Evanston campus, Ryan Field, Evanston's central business district and other destinations beginning this fall.

During the academic school year, those displaying a valid and active Northwestern University-issued ID card, can board CTA's #201 Central/Ridge bus route for free. As part of this unique, five-year agreement with Northwestern University, CTA's #201 bus route replaces the University's former Ryan Field Shuttle bus service.

University riders now have a more convenient travel option along the #201, for which estimated bus arrival times are available via CTA Bus Tracker; more frequent service; longer service hours; and convenient connections between Old Orchard Mall and CTA's Howard bus and rail terminal.

The new bus service is available each year between September 1 and June 30 (dates will be adjusted as needed to align with the start and end of the academic school year) until 2020. During this time, the University has agreed to reimburse the CTA the cost of fares for Northwestern students and employees who use the bus service. For the remaining two months of the year, service along the #201 route will continue to be provided; however, university riders will be required to pay the standard CTA bus fare.

Service along the #201 route is provided on weekdays beginning at approximately 5 a.m. until 8 p.m. and on Saturdays between approximately 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. In 2014, the route averaged roughly 2,000 rides each weekday and 1,100 on Saturdays. The Ryan Field Shuttle previously offered shorter weekday hours and no Saturday service.

CTA anticipates an additional 600 weekday rides along the #201 bus route as a result of this new agreement. The service is also expected to reduce local traffic congestion by consolidating redundant local transit options.

A #201 route timetable is available online at http://www.transitchicago.com/assets/1/bus_schedules/201.pdf.

First-Ever Ventra App for Riding CTA, Metra and Pace Makes Strong Progress During Development Phase

9/16/2015

CTA, Metra and Pace used valuable feedback from Smart Chicago Collaborative's Civic User Testing Group's road-testing of app to improve features, functionality ahead of fall app release

Buying Metra mobile tickets with your Ventra account funds or credit or debit card. Adding money to your Ventra account while standing at a CTA or Pace bus stop. Getting real-time train and bus arrival information for CTA, Metra and Pace.

And doing all of these with your smartphone with just one app: the Ventra App, the first multi-transit agency fare payment app of its kind in the nation.

The Ventra App will provide transit customers with a seamless, enjoyable "one-stop shopping" experience that essentially puts a Ventra vending machine and a Metra ticket vending machine in their pockets.

The CTA, Metra and Pace today provided an update on the app's development. A key part of that development is its testing so far by hundreds of individuals, including members of the public and transit employees, to ultimately develop a best-in-class app that transit customers will love.

Among the testers were dozens who tried out the app as part of the Smart Chicago Collaborative's Civic User Testing Group, a highly regarded program that maintains a pool of Chicago residents to road-test new apps under development.

"We are beyond pleased with how the CUT Group has helped us make the Ventra app better," said Michael Gwinn, CTA Director of Fare Systems. "We asked them to not just kick the tires, but kick the tires hard, and they did. They came up with a number of really helpful observations and suggestions that we listened and responded to, enriching the Ventra app's usefulness and experience for customers."

"We knew all along that feedback from the testing phase would be crucial to the development of this app, and the feedback we received from the CUT Group was certainly invaluable," said Lynnette Ciavarella, Senior Division Director, Strategic Capital Planning at Metra. "As a result of their input, we were able to fine-tune the app so that it will be much more useful and easy to navigate."

"In order to get the best experience for our customers, we placed a heavy emphasis on testing from a diverse group of users," said Pace Deputy Executive Director Mike Bolton. "We received great feedback from all of our testers, resulting in an app that we are excited to launch and that will make Ventra even more convenient to use." About 25 individuals with the CUT Group who have experience with using apps and gauging functionality and the quality of the user's experience were selected to test the app.

"We were happy to be a part of the development of the region's first-ever transit app, which will change how hundreds of thousands of commuters travel each day," said Smart Chicago Executive Director Daniel X. O'Neil. "Our testers gave a lot of suggestions for improvements to the Ventra app as well as noting what worked well, and we're glad that that feedback could contribute meaningfully to the app as it nears release to the public."

The group came back with a number of recommendations that CTA, Metra and Pace are in the process of making, including:

How-to: Added a small series of tutorial screens to introduce the basic parts of the app when it's first opened after installation, as many modern apps include.

Password improvements: Made it easier to reset passwords to help infrequent users with accounts get signed into the app more easily; made password requirements more prominent in the account creation process; and added a "show password" button to reveal password in what were standard masked password fields.

"Back" button: Improved the "back" button on Android to make it easier to find and use.

Transit Tracker: Renamed the real-time arrival information feature for CTA, Metra and Pace to "Transit Tracker" instead of "Trip Tools" to better reflect what information is provided. A later phase of the app will offer integrated trip planning.

Transit Tracker functionality: Improvements to Transit Tracker include allowing customers choices on how stops are listed; more prominently displaying "Favorites" and "Nearby Stops" so users are more aware of these functions and can more easily find them; and refining the information display in the Metra tracker to make it more intuitive and useful for customers.

Easier navigation: Improved user experience to make navigation and functionality more intuitive (such as better description of autoloan switch functionality, how to flip the start/end points in station-to-station Metra arrivals, and how to register additional Ventra Cards).

Easier to read: A number of cosmetic improvements are being made including font changes based on user preference.

Adding value: Replaced "sliders" used to select value when splitting a payment between multiple funding sources (such as a Ventra account and a personal credit card) and establishing autoloan value amounts.

As with all feedback, the CTA, Metra and Pace will continue to accept and evaluate feedback throughout the apps development, implementation and lifecycle.

Some of the feedback CTA, Metra and Pace received from CUT Group testers:

Do you like the Ventra app?

Yes 92% (24)

No 8% (2)

Why or why not?

Here are the top reasons why testers liked the Ventra app

Easy to use
Metra functionality
Convenient
Good visual designs

Concerns expressed by testers included wireless connections, ability to use NFC-enabled phones on buses and train Ventra readers to board (which will come in a later phase of the Ventra App), and having phones charged while riding Metra.

Sample of feedback from testers:

"I added a 30 day pass to an existing transit account and it went very smoothly. I'm also REALLY, REALLY impressed with how split tenders for payments were implemented. It's really intuitive and I really like that feature."

"It's a good, reliable app. One thing I noticed is that when you add value it appears instantly, versus the online site, where it usually doesn't update until you log off and log back in again, so that's a plus. I also like that Bus Tracker is built into the app, which saves time from having to search it on the internet."

"Purchasing in general is easy. Multiple times, I've purchased a ticket while walking to the train. I love the ability to pay with my Ventra autoreloading balance."

"I will ride Metra more often because of the app. I wouldn't have usually considered it as an option." (Note: Tester is a frequent CTA rider)

"Overall, I like the look and ease of using the website. I think that I would make the categories of 'Transit value,' 'CTA & Pace passes' and 'Metra Mobile Tickets' more bold or make the grey heading a little darker. The delineation between the categories needs to be clearer." (Note: fonts were changed)

"Term [trip tools] is very misleading, it is actually a bus and train tracker. Trip Tools make me think of real time trip planner..." (Note: "Trip Tools" was changed to "Transit Tracker")

"Actually easier than my other apps! And I think that may be because of simplicity and consistency on the screen and not use of a lot of different colors."

Mayor Emanuel Announces Completion of Clark/Division Red Line Station Renovation

9/29/2015

Ribbon Cutting Mark's First Complete Renovation of Red Line Subway Station Since 1943

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) President Dorval Carter and Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld in announcing the completion of a major renovation project to the Clark/Division Red Line CTA station. The project added a new entrance, and fully renovated and modernized the station.

"This investment will make life easier for the thousands of Chicagoans who get on or off the Red Line and Clark and Division, but this is about more than just a CTA station," said Mayor Emanuel. "Investments like this, and other major infrastructure projects we have undertaken throughout Chicago, allow our economy to grow, our neighborhoods to thrive, and our city to flourish."

The project was completed in two stages. In the first phase, CDOT built an entirely new mezzanine and entrance at LaSalle Street and Division Street. The new 8,800-square-foot mezzanine at LaSalle Street, which opened last summer, increased the entering/exiting capacity of the station by adding stairs, fare turnstiles, elevators and escalators. The station previously had no elevators.

The second stage of the project, which is now complete, involved modernizing the entrances and the mezzanine at Clark Street. With the opening of the entrances at Clark Street, customers can now enter or exit the station at LaSalle Street or Clark Street, improving the experience for station users, particularly at high traffic times of day.

"Chicago has one of the oldest and largest mass transit systems in the nation," said U.S. Senator Dick Durbin. "I commend Mayor Emanuel for making the rehab of the city's CTA stations a top priority. Through the help of a \$41 million federal investment in the Clark/Division CTA station, Red Line riders will now benefit from a safer and more efficient station that is more accessible to all CTA passengers, including people with disabilities."

The \$50 million construction project was managed by CDOT on behalf of the CTA and supported by Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) funds from the Federal Transit Administration.

"This renovation project shows how CDOT and the CTA are working in partnership to improve the City's mass transit system," CDOT Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld said. "The Clark/Division station renovation increases the capacity of the station and makes it more inviting for customers, encouraging the use of mass transit."

The Clark/Division renovation is one of several CTA capital improvement projects that are key elements of Mayor Emanuel's Building a New Chicago, a comprehensive \$7.3 billion infrastructure renewal program.

"This is yet another great example of how the CTA and CDOT work together to modernize and improve the transit experience for all CTA customers," said CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. "We are pleased to continue to invest in the city's busiest rail line with improvements that benefit CTA customers now and for decades to come."

- Major highlights of the renovation project include:
- Two new elevators and three new escalators
- New granite floors and stairs
- New decorative wall and ceiling tiles
- Brighter and more energy-efficient lighting
- New security equipment and customer-assistance kiosks
- Improved communication and speaker systems
- New cast iron street-level entrances and protective canopies
- Bike ramps and racks to promote alternate modes of transportation

The Clark/Division station was the 16th-busiest CTA rail station last year, with more than 2.5 million station entries.

CTA Awards 95th Street Terminal Construction Contract

10/14/2015

Project moves into next major phase, with first passenger terminal opening in 2017

The Chicago Transit Board today approved the award of a construction contract for the new, modern and larger 95th Street Terminal, one of the largest rail station projects in CTA history and an investment by Mayor Rahm Emanuel that will modernize transit and promote economic opportunity on Chicago's South Side.

The board approved the award of a \$180 million contract to Paschen Milhouse Joint Venture IV ("Paschen Milhouse"), which will engineer, design and build new north and south passenger terminals at 95th/Dan Ryan, following a comprehensive Request for Proposals process. The modern terminal project will replace an outdated, cramped bus and rail facility at 95th with a modern, spacious facility that will better serve the 20,000-plus bus and rail passengers who travel through 95th Street Terminal each day.

The passenger terminal work, which will begin next spring, follows extensive foundation and related construction that began in 2014. Over the past 16 months, CTA has overseen \$26 million in advance

construction work needed to prepare for construction of the north and south terminals, including:

Foundations for the South Terminal

Expressway sign and light relocation

Fiber optic relocation

Utility prep work

The project will expand and greatly improve the terminal, which is one of CTA's busiest, with 24-hour Red Line service and over 1,000 CTA and Pace bus trips on a typical weekday. This work will help improve the movement of train traffic in and out of the 98th yard and through the 95th Terminal with services the Red Line, which is the CTA's busiest rail line.

In addition, the project scope will now include improvements to the tracks south of 95th Terminal to the 98th Street Yard, which stores Red Line trains and maintenance facilities. The work includes replacement of track and all elements in the Right of Way, including a complex interlocking, signal and traction power cabling and duct banks, ballast and other related materials. CTA is taking advantage of the ongoing terminal construction to make improvements while other work is ongoing. Doing this track work simultaneous with the station work will limit the need for any service disruptions after the new station is built.

The new station design features contemporary architecture including new canopies and light-filled, glass-enclosed structures with expanded space and more shelter for customers. The station will have buildings both north and south of 95th Street, connected by an enclosed walkway over 95th Street, increasing safety for the thousands of adults and children who move through the station each day, and will include expanded retail concession space.

The new station will create a better, safer and more accessible pedestrian environment, with wider sidewalks and larger waiting areas for increased passenger comfort. Wider bus lanes and increased spacing between bus bays will reduce congestion and improve traffic flow.

Paschen Milhouse's winning bid also includes a 27-percent Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) commitment. Milhouse Engineering and Construction, Inc., an African-American-owned DBE firm, will contribute civil/bridge engineering, electrical engineering and construction expertise. CTA will also work closely to coordinate outreach events with the contractor to help identify certified DBE vendors who may be eligible to work on the project.

Customers will begin to enjoy the new station beginning in 2017. The South Terminal will open in 2017 and the North Terminal will open in 2018. Funding for the \$280 million project is provided through a variety of federal, state and local sources.

Mayor Emanuel Announces First Chicago Transit Authority Subway Section Now Offers Chicagoans 4G Wireless Service

10/15/2015

CTA will be the Largest Public Transit System in the U.S. with 4G Coverage in all Subway Stations and Tunnels; Targeted to be Completed by the End of 2015

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced the completion of the first phase of a project to bring 4G wireless coverage to the Chicago Transit Authority subway system. Upon completion of the network upgrade, which is expected by the end of 2015, the City of Chicago will be the largest city in North America to have a subway system with full 4G wireless coverage across its entire system of subway stations and tunnels.

Starting this week, CTA Blue Line O'Hare Branch riders have full 4G wireless coverage in the Kimball Subway, a 1.2-mile section serving the Logan Square and Belmont stations. Activation of 4G coverage in the remaining portions of the Blue and Red Line subways will occur in phases, with the entire subway network completed by year's end.

"The addition of 4G coverage will ensure that CTA passengers can benefit from dependable data service while riding the subway," said Mayor Emanuel.

"Importantly, it will also improve communications for first-responders working inside the tunnel system. This is part of the city's ongoing efforts to invest in 21st century technology for Chicago's world-class transit system, and expand economic opportunity for more Chicagoans throughout the city."

The 4G wireless project is a \$32.5 million deal, brokered by the Chicago Infrastructure Trust, with America's four major wireless providers – T-Mobile, AT&T, Verizon, and Sprint – to finance the network modernization. In January 2015, T-Mobile, AT&T, Verizon, and Sprint collectively agreed to fund the design and construction of a next-generation Distributed Antenna System (DAS) capable of supporting the latest 4G wireless networks and mobile devices.

The project will provide continuous 4G coverage in 22 miles of subway, from O'Hare airport and through the underground tunnels and platforms of the Red and Blue Lines, the CTA's two busiest rail lines.

The network upgrade, which began earlier this year, will give millions of Chicago subway riders a faster mobile experience throughout their commutes. The design and installation of the system will create approximately 50 jobs.

"We've finished phase one of the project and by the end of 2015, the new network will be ready to provide an incredible 4G wireless experience to T-Mobile, AT&T, Verizon and Sprint customers that ride the Chicago subway enabling them to talk, chat, tweet, surf, or send

and receive video calls while using the nation's second largest public transportation system," said Neville Ray, Chief Technology Officer, T-Mobile, the project's lead wireless provider.

"4G wireless will not only improve customer experience by offering faster and more robust wireless services that supports today's tablets and smartphones, but it also increases system safety measures by providing more reliable communication between CTA personnel and emergency responders," said CTA President Dorval R. Carter.

This initiative is one of several efforts by Mayor Rahm Emanuel and CTA President Carter to modernize the City's infrastructure and further improve Chicago's world-class transit system. Over the past four years, several technology improvements have been implemented across Chicago's transit system, including expansion of CTA Train Tracker and Bus Tracker functionality, digital displays with service information at bus shelters and rail stations throughout the service region, and a dramatically expanded security camera network.

About the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)

The CTA operates the nation's second largest public transportation system and covers the City of Chicago and 35 surrounding suburbs. On an average weekday, approximately 1.7 million rides are taken on CTA buses and trains.

About the Chicago Infrastructure Trust

The Chicago Infrastructure Trust was created in April 2012 by executive order of Mayor Emanuel and City Council resolution. The Trust's purpose is to assist the people of the City of Chicago, the City government and its sister agencies in providing alternative financing and project delivery options for transformative infrastructure projects. Visit the Trust's website at www.shapechicago.org.

CTA Announces Yellow Line Service to Return October 30

10/16/2015

Track maintenance, inspection and testing to be performed in October; CTA reminds customers to stay off the tracks

The Chicago Transit Authority today announced that Yellow Line service will resume Friday, October 30. Track maintenance, inspection and testing—including running test trains—will continue through the end of the month. For everyone's safety, the CTA reminds customers that it is important to stay off the tracks and stay alert near street-level rail crossings.

The Yellow Line was suspended in May following an embankment collapse that resulted from construction on Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) property. The restoration of service follows the design and reconstruction of the embankment by MWRD and its contractor, Walsh Construction.

"Restoring Yellow Line service as quickly as possible has remained our top priority while maintaining the safety of our riders," said CTA President Dorval R. Carter Jr. "We know how critical access to public transportation is to the livelihood of people across the Chicago area and we look forward to welcoming Yellow Line riders back to the quick, affordable service to which they are accustomed."

CTA President Carter will be joined by Village of Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen and MWRD officials for a ceremonial first ride the morning of October 30 at the CTA Oakton Station. The officials will ride vintage 2400-series rail cars in celebration of the return of the Yellow Line. Additionally, the CTA will put into service CTA's two newest 5000-series rail cars—the last to be delivered from an order of 714 cars, part of CTA's ongoing modernization of its rail fleet.

"The Village of Skokie looks forward to the resumption of Yellow Line service," said Mayor George Van Dusen.

"We appreciate the community's patience with this inconvenience. The Village monitored the CTA and MWRD's handling of this system failure and we are reassured that our concern for local riders was heard. We further appreciate the continued community support for the numerous businesses near the Yellow Line stations that rely on commuters as customers, and we hope that ridership will quickly return to the levels attained before the unfortunate service interruption."

The restoration of the embankment by MWRD and Walsh Construction also included re-fencing the right-of-way area between the tracks and MWRD property; the rebuilding and stabilization of the soil embankment; the reconstruction of approximately 1,200 feet of north and southbound Yellow Line tracks atop the embankment including ties, rail plates, fasteners, running rail and third rail; and reconnecting signals and communication lines.

"We are grateful for the collaborative relationship we have maintained with the CTA and the Village of Skokie during the rebuild process," said MWRD Executive Director David St. Pierre. "All parties worked cooperatively to meet the same goal—the safe return of the Yellow Line to service as soon as possible. We also appreciate the patience of the public as we worked through the many issues related to this complex project."

Prior to restoration of service, CTA engineers will continue to perform track maintenance, inspection and testing of the Yellow Line tracks including:

Re-energizing of traction power/third rail.

Operation of a rail-smoothing car, to eliminate any accumulated rust along the full length of Yellow Line tracks.

Testing of signal equipment to ensure full functionality including track circuits, switch machines, wayside signals and grade/pedestrian crossings.

Yellow Line stations inspections and cleanings.

Inspection of 5000-series rail cars that service the Yellow Line tracks.

Operator re-training on Yellow Line route.

Several days of train testing along entire track corridor, which includes weighted trains to simulate full capacity.

Following suspension of Yellow Line service in May, the CTA has taken extensive efforts to minimize impacts to customers including by providing customers with free Shuttle Bus service in both directions that serve the affected Yellow Line stations. The Village of Skokie and the CTA have also provided free parking at the park and ride facility at its Dempster-Skokie station. The CTA has continued to communicate with Yellow Line customers throughout the suspension of service through its alert system, social media content, informational fliers as well as sandwich boards posted at affected stations and bus stops.

To promote the reopening and encourage ridership to return, the CTA and Village of Skokie will undertake significant outreach efforts to riders, residents and local businesses. Additionally, the Village of Skokie and CTA will provide free parking at the Dempster station for the remainder of 2015.

For more information, please visit:
www.transitchicago.com/travel_information/yellowreturn.aspx

No Fare Increases in CTA 2016 Proposed Budget

10/22/2015

Proposed balanced spending plan freezes fares and preserves service levels; capital spending plan continues historic investment in modernization

The Chicago Transit Authority today proposed a balanced \$1.475 billion operating budget that—for the fifth year in a row—holds the line on base fares and maintains or improves service, while continuing historic investment to modernize the CTA and improve the customer experience.

"CTA's budget proposal builds on our unprecedented investments to modernize and improve Chicago's transit system," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "CTA provides vital transit services for millions of riders each year, and the proposed budget continues to invest in efforts to better serve Chicagoans across the entire city."

The 2016 budget introduces, builds on and accelerates several new initiatives, service improvements and technology upgrades to benefit riders and improve the customer experience.

Additionally, the agency in 2016 will continue with the more than \$5 billion in system-improvement projects completed, begun or announced by Mayor Emanuel since 2011, including rehabilitating rail stations and building new ones, modernizing rail and bus fleets, adding new technologies to improve the commuting experience, and bringing the agency's massive infrastructure into a state of good repair to improve

reliability and safety. For a fifth straight year, the CTA will not transfer capital funds to cover operating costs.

"Over the last four years, Mayor Emanuel's investment in Chicago transit has provided CTA customers with improved, more reliable and affordable transit service, and I am committed to continuing that work," said CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. "Equally important with keeping up with meeting the needs of our customers is to continually find ways to do so more efficiently and cost-effectively. I look forward to continuing the many improvements the CTA has made thus far, and exploring new and even better ways to provide vital transit services to our customers."

CTA customers in 2016 can look forward to many new and enhanced services:

- The new Ventra app, launching in 2015, that will seamlessly integrate fare payment across CTA, Metra and Pace
- 4G wireless through CTA's 22 miles of subway tunnels
- Return of express bus service to Western and Ashland, two of three of CTA's busiest bus routes
- Launch of Loop Link, better connecting 30,000 bus customers to the Loop each weekday with faster, more efficient service
- Continuing to pursue next-generation rail cars, the 7000-series, to provide a more modern, reliable rail fleet as rail ridership grows
- Overhauling or replacing nearly CTA's entire fleet of buses
- Continuing to grow advertising revenue to offset operating costs and keep fares affordable for customers

Among the capital projects to continue or begin in 2016:

- Your New Blue program will continue to upgrade the Blue Line O'Hare branch with improvements of five more stations, including a new elevator at Addison
- Continuation of the complete reconstructions of the 95th Street and Wilson stations on the Red Line—transforming decades-old stations into modern transit hubs
- Work on the new Washington-Wabash station will continue which will replace two century-old stations and serve as a gateway to Millennium Park and the Loop
- Accessibility improvements to the historic Quincy Loop 'L' station
- Continuation of planning for the Red-Purple Modernization and Red Line Extension, projects

- Continuing signal improvements to modernize Brown and Purple Express tracks between Armitage and the Merchandise Mart stations

Continuing its efforts to streamline management and non-union personnel, the CTA will eliminate 100 positions in non-customer-facing areas, maintaining a lean management-to-worker ratio.

The 2016 budget projects a 0.7 percent growth in ridership, continuing an upward trend in 2015, which was on pace to show a 0.2 percent growth in ridership and another record year for rail ridership.

A public hearing will be held on Monday, November 16, 2015 at 6 p.m. at CTA headquarters, 567 W. Lake Street, second floor conference room, Chicago, Illinois, 60661.

Written and oral comments will be taken into consideration prior to Chicago Transit Board action. This input will be welcomed at the hearing or by correspondence addressed to Gregory P. Longhini, Assistant Secretary of the Board, Chicago Transit Authority, P.O. Box 7567, Chicago, Illinois 60680-7567. Comments also may be submitted in writing either via email to: glonghini1@transitchicago.com or via fax: 312-681-5035. The deadline to submit written comments is 5 p.m. Tuesday, November 17.

The proposed budget is available for public review at the CTA Headquarters reception desk, second floor, 567 W. Lake Street, Chicago, Illinois, 60661 weekdays between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Copies are also available for review in standard size print and large print at the main office of the Regional Transportation Authority, reception desk, Suite 1650, 175 West Jackson, Chicago, Illinois, 60604; at the Archer Heights Branch Library, 5055 South Archer Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60632; Austin Branch Library, 5615 West Race Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60644; Harold Washington Public Library, 400 South State Street, 5th floor, Chicago, Illinois, 60605; Jefferson Park Branch Library, 5363 West Lawrence Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60630; South Shore Branch Library, 2505 East 73rd Street, Chicago, Illinois 60649; Sulzer Regional Library, 4455 North Lincoln Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, 60625; West Town Branch Library, 1625 West Chicago Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60622; Woodson Regional Public Library, 9525 South Halsted Street, Chicago, Illinois, 60628; Evanston Public Library, 1703 Orrington Avenue, Evanston, Illinois, 60201; Evergreen Park Public Library, 9400 South Troy, Evergreen Park, Illinois, 60805; Oak Park Public Library, 834 Lake Street, Oak Park, Illinois 60301; Riverdale Public Library, 208 West 144th Street, Riverdale, Illinois, 60827; and at the Skokie Public Library, 5215 West Oakton, Skokie, Illinois, 60077.

A copy of the proposed budget is also posted on the CTA's web site at www.transitchicago.com.

Ventra Vending Machines

To make it easier to get and reload your Ventra Card, Pace has installed a number of vending machines

throughout the suburbs. In addition to buying passes and reload Ventra accounts at hundreds of retail stores and CTA rail stations, online at VentraChicago.com or by phone at 877.NOW.VENTRA, Pace has installed Ventra vending machines at the following locations:

Harvey (Transportation Center at 154th Street and Park Avenue),

Chicago Heights (Transportation Center at 1620 Vincennes Avenue),

Elgin (Transportation Center at 102-06 W. Chicago Street),

Aurora (Transportation Center at 233 N. Broadway),

Waukegan (transfer location on Sheridan Road, north of Washington Street), and

Joliet (Union Station at 50 Jefferson Street)

Schaumburg (Northwest Transportation Center at Kimberly Dr and Martingale Rd)

Des Plaines (Metra station at 1501 Miner St)

Aurora/Naperville (Route 59 Metra Station at 1090 N. Route 59)

Niles (Golf Mill Shopping Center, entrance 8)



These machines make it even more convenient for Pace riders to use Ventra. At any vending machine, customers can reload transit value, load Pace or CTA passes to their account, check their balance, and even get a new card. The machines take cash and credit/debit cards. Riders eligible for reduced or student fares are automatically able to load the reduced fare products to their accounts at any vending machine.

To find the nearest Ventra retailer to you, visit Ventra Locations and look up locations by ZIP code. Vending machines are located at the major Pace transfer points listed above, as well as every CTA rail station. Pace is also working to install new Ventra vending machines at several other high-traffic suburban locations.

Additionally, Pace, CTA and Metra are working together on development of the Ventra App, which launches this fall and will allow customers to buy passes, add transit value and manage their Ventra account as well as purchase and display mobile Metra passes and tickets using Ventra transit value and/or bankcards.

Fox Valley Market Analysis & Restructuring

Better Transit for Fox Valley Starts October 26, 2015

Traveling with Pace is about to get even easier with later, more frequent service and routing designed to better serve our valued passengers in the Fox Valley region. This streamlined network of service with more direct routes is easier to understand and simplifies transfers between routes and our Call-n-Ride services. New destinations include the Walmart Supercenter near Kirk and Butterfield Roads and Woodman's on Orchard Road. Most service now runs until 8 pm or later, and runs every 30 minutes. Updated schedule and map previews will be available soon. A map of the restructured Fox Valley network can be viewed by clicking this link.

Below is a summary of the Phase One changes to Pace's Fox Valley Services.

Two new services are added:

The Southeast Aurora Call-n-Ride.

Route 540 Farnsworth Avenue

Five existing services have changes to their timing and routing/boundary:

Route 524 extends north along Randall Road to serve new destinations including Woodman's.

Route 532 is converted to a peak-only commuter service.

Route 533 has local routing changes and extends north to serve the Walmart Supercenter.

Route 802 adds service to Mercy Medical Center and adds a new northern branch running along Randall Road.

The Batavia Call-n-Ride has an expanded service area and is adjusted to make connections with Routes 801 and 802.

Two existing services have changes to their timing only:

Route 530 is adjusted to make connections at the Aurora Transportation Center and expand evening hours.

The St. Charles-Geneva Call-n-Ride is adjusted to make connections with Routes 801 and 802.

Three existing services are eliminated:

Route 521 is replaced by Routes 533, 540, and the Southeast Aurora Call-n-Ride.

Route 528 is replaced by Route 540 and the Southeast Aurora Call-n-Ride.

Route 529 is replaced by Routes 802, 524, and the Southeast Aurora Call-n-Ride.

Routes 534, 672, 673, and 675 have not had any service changes. School trips have not changed, but may have different route numbers.

Watch for on board and online notices about the implementation of Phase Two, which is expected to occur in early 2016.

To view this information in Spanish, please view this document.

Project History

Over the past two decades, the Fox Valley area has seen significant population growth, but ridership on public transit on buses in this area has dropped by 40% since 2000.

Additionally, while the Hispanic community represents 41% of Aurora's population, only 19% of our riders are Hispanic, according to a recent survey, indicating there are opportunities to improve service for this community. To address these trends, Pace began a study of the Fox Valley area's transit needs and to redesign our bus services accordingly. A market analysis studying the area's travel patterns and preferences was completed in February, 2015. This study included a survey of 878 local residents and employees, as well as focus groups of Hispanic residents. More information on this effort can be found in the "Project Documents" section below.

Based on what we learned from the market analysis, Pace staff identified a set of goals to guide the bus network redesign. In the section below, we outline these goals and describe the changes that are proposed to improve Pace services so that they better match current travel patterns and community preferences.

In June and July, 2015, Pace held four public meetings and one public hearing to present the proposed Fox Valley Initiative restructuring plan and gather feedback from are stakeholders. Staff presented the input gathered at these events and the restructuring plan to the Pace Board of Directors at their August 12, 2015 meeting. That meeting can be viewed online.

Planned Improvements

The new Fox Valley network extends service to new destinations that have developed near Aurora's eastern and northern boundaries. New timed transfer points are created where customers can easily connect between routes. And service frequency improves on most routes to every 30 minutes, with evening service running until at least 8pm on weekdays. A map of the restructured Fox Valley network can be viewed by clicking this link.

Updated schedule and map previews will be available soon.

This restructuring represents an increased investment by Pace, with financial assistance from the RTA ICE program. These improvements involve dramatic changes to the Fox Valley network with an emphasis on building ridership by serving the destinations and areas with the highest demand. After the changes are implemented,

Pace projects bus ridership in the area could grow by approximately 30%, and the number of residents in the area with easy access to transit could grow by approximately 21,000.

Fox Valley Network Restructuring Goals

Pace set four basic goals for this restructuring. These were selected primarily to reflect the priorities that were identified in our market analysis survey.

Extend service to new destinations that have high travel demand. This was the top-rated improvement chosen in the survey, and several major destinations were identified that are beyond the reach of our current network.

Provide more frequent service during more hours of the day. The survey results show a strong desire for service to be more frequent and run for more hours of the day. Current riders were especially interested in adding evening service, while non-riders were especially interested in service frequency.

Replace routes that perform poorly, but maintain service to key destinations. Many of Pace's Fox Valley-area routes fail to meet ridership goals and should be redesigned. Important community destinations will continue to be served in the new network, but we will work to find methods of serving them in new ways that can attract better ridership.

Simplify the transit network. Our research showed that most people are unfamiliar with existing bus service. We plan to build a new network that is easier to understand and better meets the needs of the development occurring in the communities we serve.

Letsgo Charter and Tours adds their first new J4500, to an all-MCI fleet

DES PLAINES, IL — October 20, 2015 — In buying its company's first new MCI® J4500, Letsgo Charter and Tours co-founder Lynn Johnson describes his company's long history with MCI this way: "If we wouldn't put our grandchildren on these motor coaches, then we wouldn't want to carry anyone else."



Safety and clean coaches have always come first at the Fort Smith, Arkansas-based company, which went into business only a month before the 9/11 attacks. Said

Johnson, he and co-owner Richard McMahan had worked for other motor coach carriers before their startup and believed they knew how to do it a little better. In the year afterward, Letsgo saw business slow. They redoubled efforts with a handful of pre-owned MCI coaches and a dedication "to be the best."

Today, the company has 15 MCI coaches and a smaller 29-passenger bus. Letsgo's new MCI J4500 comes with advanced safety features, clean-diesel-engine technology with leading fuel economy, power outlets and Wi-Fi. "Customers really like the J4500's spiral staircase," said Johnson, adding that the new coach would be used for multiple-day charters.

The company runs charters in all 48 states and Canada, provides airport shuttles and industry-related charters through its Springdale office serving the busy Bentonville, Arkansas area — home to Wal-Mart, a customer — and many sports- and university-related charters. "We pull for six different universities and athletic groups," said Johnson. The company is approved for military transport by the U.S. Department of Defense and the Department of Transportation, which does regular inspections of the company's fleet. "We keep our equipment in top condition," says Johnson.

The company has stuck with MCI's pre-owned coaches up until now because of parts supply, and workhorse dependability. "MCI has always been easier for parts availability on a range of its models," said Johnson. The company's reliance on pre-owned coaches has made regular detailing mandatory and not just because spotless interiors please customers. Dirt can become a mechanical issue on a coach. "We never run a coach without a hand wash and a thorough vacuuming between trips. Dust, hair, actually clogs up heating and air conditioning systems and slows down their performance. Keeping coaches clean is a really big part of keeping them operating," he said.

Letsgo has a full-time staff of six and has someone on duty 24 hours a day. "If you need us, you'll get one of us," said Johnson, who attributes the company's growth and success to a dedication to exceptional service.

Letsgo's website is www.letsgocharters.com.

R&J Transportation adds a new MCI® J4500, marks 35th anniversary

DES PLAINES, IL — September 10, 2015 — The family behind R&J Transportation knows what it takes to keep a company going for 35 years: a focus on really knowing and serving its market.

Located in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, 97 miles northwest of Philadelphia, R&J has built its tour and charter business by listening to rural customers who want a regular taste of the big city — or a coast-to-coast tour of the country.

"We are the only company that serves this area specifically. There are many people who depend on us to make all of their trips," says Jay Newswanger,

president of the firm. "We have only eight coaches but we do 250 tours a year — it's a lot for a little company. But we really understand our people and what they want — safe, knowledgeable travel with a luxury coach experience."



Today, the Newswanger family continues to operate its two-pronged transportation business by taking care of longtime customers. Its 75 school buses serve most of Schuylkill County, and the company's eight luxury coaches support a growing national and international tour business.

The latest addition is a brand-new MCI J4500 featuring state-of-the-art REI entertainment system, Wi-Fi, a wheelchair lift, and a low-emission Detroit Diesel engine. "We have young passengers and a Boomer population that need all these amenities," said Newswanger.

A young gun at the start

In 1980, Newswanger was in his early twenties when his dad, Raymond, who had run other bus businesses, formed R&J Transportation. On December 24 of the same year, the elder Newswanger died suddenly. "He was only 56 at the time," remembered his son, who decided to keep the company going with his sister Joyce. His brother Kenneth joined the business later and is now vice president of R&J.

After expanding the school bus operation, providing eastern Pennsylvania travelers with that luxury coach experience began at R&J in 1990, a decade after the founding of the company. In the 25 years since, R&J has remained an all-MCI fleet, starting with the company's former E-Series models and moving to its industry-leading J4500 models. The company's email client list is somewhere between 8,500 and 9,000 customers.

Newswanger explains that the company's allegiance to MCI adds up to more than its record for reliability, service and speedy parts availability. "From the beginning, MCI has demonstrated an understanding of our business and our region and offered us a real personal touch in all of our dealings," explained Jay Newswanger. "When you're serving small communities like we do, and people really depend on you for their vacation investment, that's really important."

R&J's tour business to New York City and Washington, DC, remains its most popular, with the 9/11 Memorial and Museum its biggest single current destination. However the company works to stay flexible as trends change. Recently, R&J began planning international tours through Colette Vacations and Mayflower Tours. The company has planned trips to Italy, Iceland, Costa Rica, Ireland, Australia, Hawaii, the Rose Bowl and U.S. national parks.

When the company started in 1980, it employed 20 people. Today it employs more than 180. "Our employees make it happen. We are very proud of what we do, and we really enjoy serving our customers," said Newswanger, who is a member of the American Bus Association, United Motor Coach Association, and Pennsylvania School Bus Association. He is also a member of the board of directors for the Pennsylvania Motor Coach Association.

The company's website is www.rjtours.com.

RTD Flatiron Flyer Begins 1-3-2016

As our new rapid transit bus between Denver and Boulder, the Flatiron Flyer will provide reliable, comfortable, and frequent service for simple, schedule-free travel all day.



You will experience more frequent bus service, the convenience and comfort of new stations, and new branded buses. These benefits, combined with the highway improvements of express lanes and the ability for RTD buses to drive on the shoulder will improve your commute with reliable, frequent, predictable service.

The service plan, bus routes and schedules will be available soon.

Stops

Anschutz Medical Campus

Civic Center Station

Union Station

US 36 and Sheridan Park-n-Ride (formerly US 36 and Westminster Center)

US 36 and Church Ranch Park-n-Ride

US 36 and Broomfield Park-n-Ride

Omnibus Society of America
PO Box A3051
Chicago IL 60690

SECRET

05/10/2015 7:41:00 L



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US 36 and Flatirons Park-n-Ride

US 36 and McCaslin Park-n-Ride

US 36 and Table Mesa Park-n-Ride

Downtown Boulder Station (formerly Boulder Transit Center)

Boulder Junction at Depot Square Station

New vehicles to arrive this summer

The Flatiron Flyer vehicles will begin to arrive this summer. You may see them operating as a part of the regular RTD fleet, prior to the beginning of the Flatiron Flyer service. Don't be alarmed – just treat these buses like a regular RTD bus. Payment and service will operate as normal.

