

# The Big Transit Win in Illinois – Passage of the Northern Illinois Transportation Authority Act

**FIXED IT ✓**  
**FUNDED IT ✓**

**NITA ride?**  
**Take public transit!**

# Active Transportation Alliance advocates for walking, bicycling, and public transit to create healthy, sustainable and equitable communities



## TRANSIT

We need world-class transit that connects people with jobs, services and businesses.



## BICYCLING

Riding a bicycle should be safe and easy — no matter your age, ability or where you live.



## WALKING

We want walkable communities where people can get active as they get around.

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**Executive Director**  
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# 3 Intertwined Problems We Sought to Solve

# 1. Transit Services Were Not Meeting Community Needs



## Stateline

HEALTH CARE EDUCATION DEMOCRACY ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY CRIMINAL JUSTICE

BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT TRANSPORTATION

### 'Ghost Buses' Haunt Transit Agencies and Frustrate Riders

BY: JENNI BERGAL - JANUARY 31, 2023 12:00 AM

A group of people, including a person in a wheelchair, are waiting at a bus stop. They are wearing winter coats and hats, and the weather appears to be cold and possibly snowy.

### Pace proposes pulling the plug on 69 suspended routes, making most transfers free

The budget calls for doing away with most transfer fees, making all current CTA-only passes valid on Pace, and permanently eliminating 69 routes suspended during COVID.

By Igor Studenkov  
5:38 PM CDT on October 19, 2022

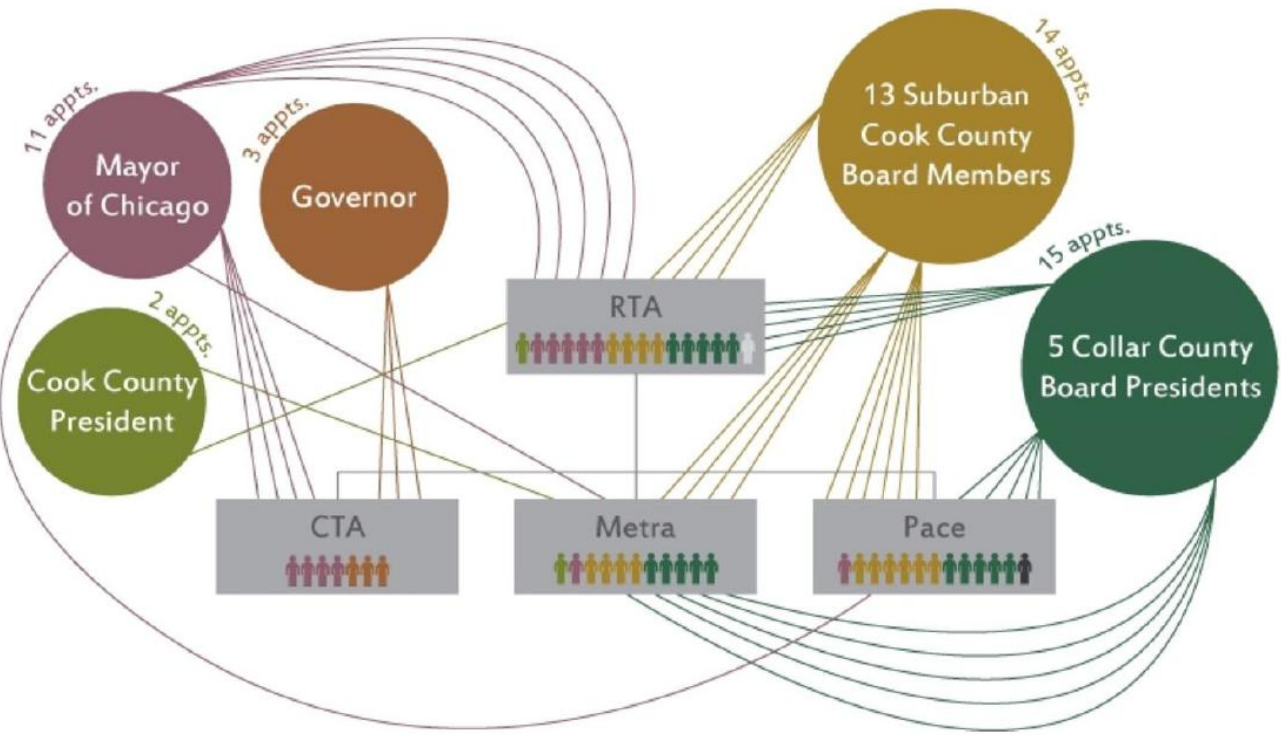
A blue Pace bus with "250 EVANSTON" and "342" on its front is stopped at a station. A person in a green jacket is walking towards the bus.

A Pace Route 250 bus at the Dempster-Skokie CTA Yellow Line station park-n-ride. Photo: Igor Studenkov



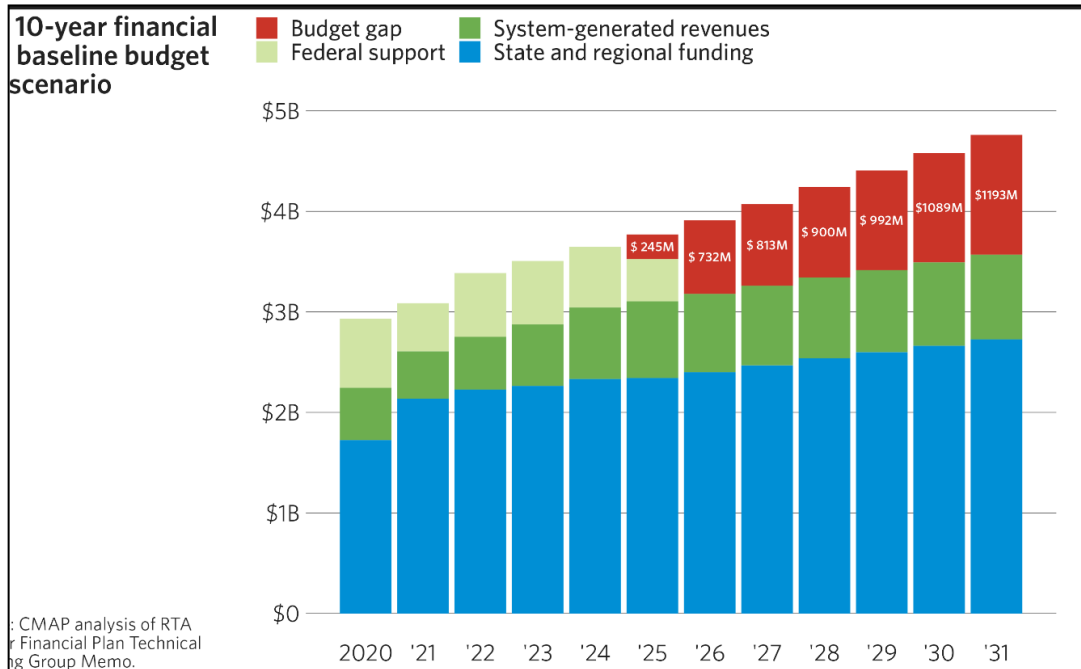
OUTDATED

# 2. Outdated Governance & Funding Formulas Prevented Delivering the System We Wanted



- Governance structure is 40 years old
- There are multiple governing boards with overlapping representation and different missions
- Funding is distributed by old statutory formulas
- Transit agencies compete instead of coordinating
- There is a lack of partnership with state and regional entities
- Four Independent Reports Have Recommended Governance Changes

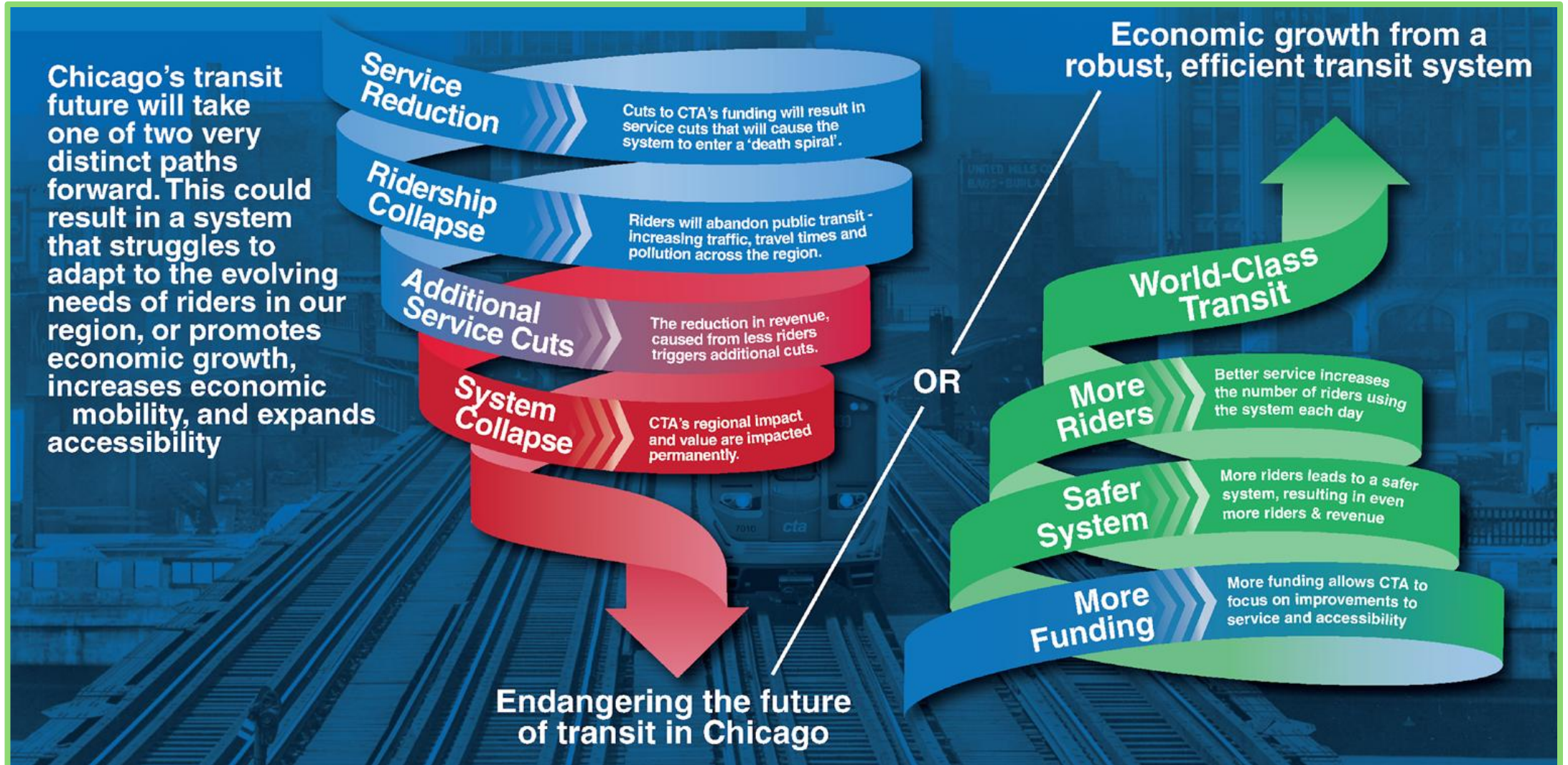
# 3. Transit System Faced a Looming Fiscal Cliff that Would Result in 40% Service Cuts



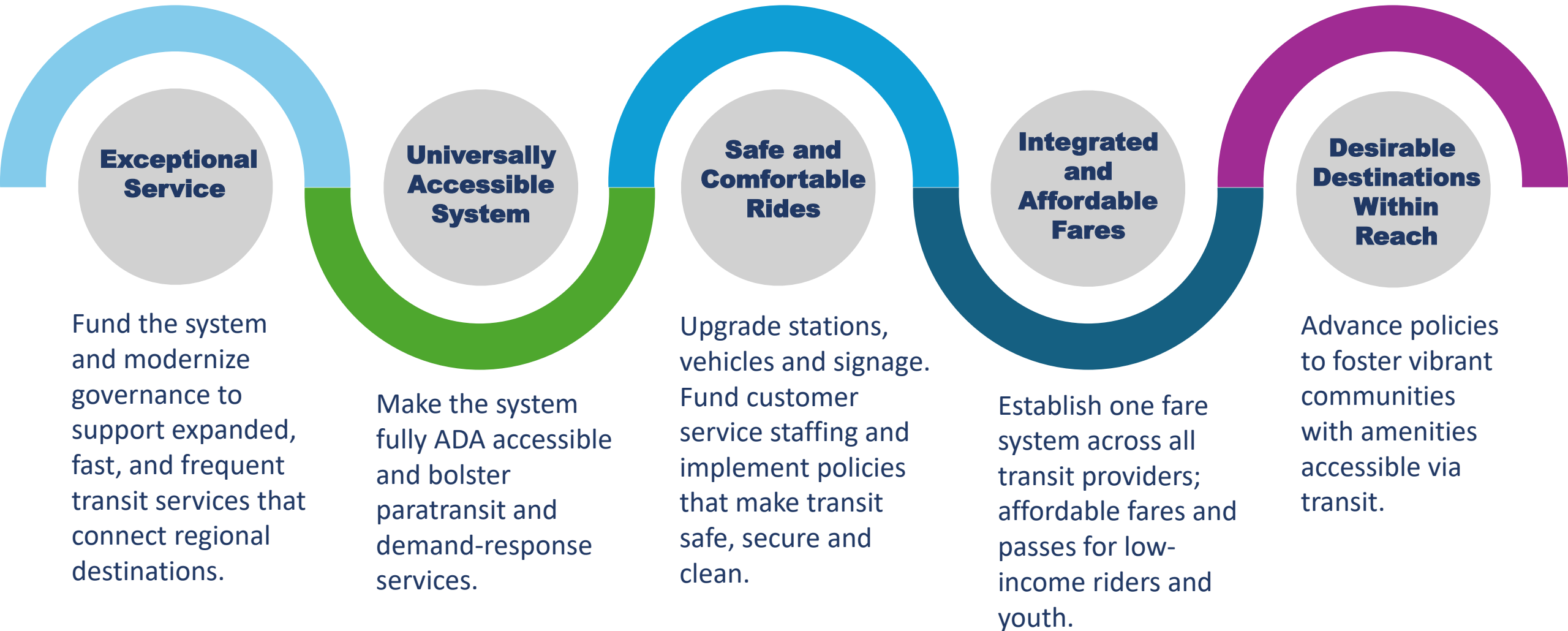
- 83 suburban bus routes affecting 58,024 weekly riders
- 61 city bus routes cut affecting 331,000 weekly riders
- 4 CTA train lines cut affecting 300,000 riders weekly.
- 6 commuter lines cut affecting 236,152 monthly riders.
- 41 higher education institutions losing convenient access to bus or rail transit service
- Approximately 568,520 older adults in the region risk loss of their right to receive ADA paratransit service because of the elimination of bus routes in the vicinity of their residences

**Our Call to Action: Fix the  
System and Fund the  
System at a Level that is  
Transformative**

# The Choice That was Facing Illinois: Transit Death Spiral or Virtuous Cycle



# Getting to the System We Want and Need: Invest an additional \$1.5B Annually and Orient the System to be Regional and Rider-Centered



# Built a Transit Package That Would be a Win Win for Illinois

## EQUITY

A stronger transit system will enable equitable access to opportunities for all

Illinoisans want and need more affordable transportation choices. A monthly transit pass is 20 – 30 times cheaper than monthly car ownership costs.

Chicago's transit system delivers nearly \$13 in economic output for every \$1 invested through access to jobs, attracting talent and business, and strengthening the property tax base.

## ECONOMY

Strong transit is a powerful tool to make the region and state more attractive to investment to and boost economic health

## ENVIRONMENT

Meaningful transit investment will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate change

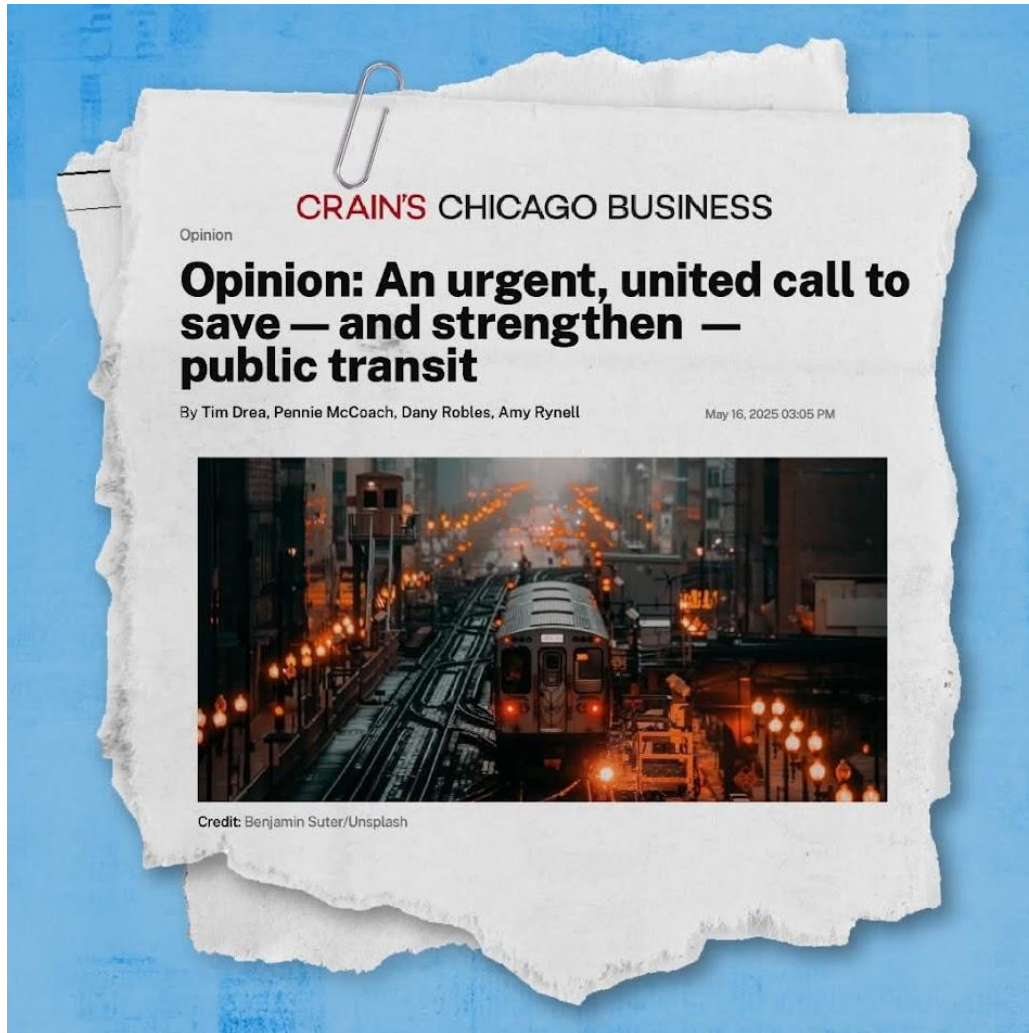
Transit both enables more environmentally sustainable land use and development patterns and reduces vehicle miles traveled and the corollary GHG emissions.

**So How'd We Do It?**

# We Stuck with it! High Level Timeline of Transit Campaign:



# We Developed Unified Messages and Actions with the Transit Labor Coalition (LAPT)



# We Created a Bold, Credible Policy Proposal

## Plan of Action for Regional Transit

*for Northeastern Illinois*

16,000 some hours of research, meetings and input went into to creating the visionary roadmap for funding and reform

### The system we want



#### Focus on transit service.

Stable funding to maintain and expand transit service levels; a more robust funding framework that would allow regional transit service providers to make targeted investments that improve the quality and availability of transit throughout the region.



#### Provide integrated and affordable fares.

Fare integration across the region's transit providers and other complementary modes; a commitment to keep fares on pace with inflation and provide more affordable fares and passes for low-income travelers and youth to balance any required fare increases.



#### Enable faster and more reliable bus service.

Planning, funding, staff capacity, and enforcement necessary to advance bus priority initiatives.



#### Bolster public confidence.

Physical investments, funding for staff, and new policies to improve the safety, security, and cleanliness of the regional transit system.



#### Build back a ridership base.

Incentives and policies that can foster more transit-supportive land use and development decisions, as well as support for Metra's evolution to a regional rail service model.



#### Invest in a universally accessible system.

Planning and funding to accelerate physical system accessibility on the transit system and at crucial access points; investments to bolster existing paratransit and demand-responsive transit services.



The steering committee met five times over the course of this year. For a list of members, meeting agendas, minutes, and presentations, visit [cmap.is/PART](http://cmap.is/PART).

# We Made the Case for Statewide Investment

\$100 -200M in downstate funding will improve transit for:

54 public transportation agencies

12 urban and 42 rural

Provide 30 million annual transit rides

Fix gap between sales tax collected and the statutory allocation to downstate agencies



# We Engaged with Elected Leaders: Hearings, Townhalls, and lots of Debate

- Delegation trip to Germany to learn from their transit
- 10 Senate hearings with over 50 hours of testimony
- 40+ Townhalls throughout the region
- 6 Legislator briefings and breakfasts
- 20 + House Transit Working group sessions
- 18 bill negotiation sessions



# Engaging the Public

# We Went to the Places and People Most Impacted: Train and Bus Stop Outreach

**No one deserves  
to get  
ghosted  
by transit!**



CTA, Metra, Pace, and RTA are facing a budget deficit that could cut transit service by 40%. That means:

- Longer wait times
- Potential cuts to entire routes
- Increased traffic when more people turn to personal vehicles to get around

The **Metropolitan Mobility Authority (MMA) Act** (SB5/HB1833) will make our transit system fast, frequent, reliable, clean, and safe. Illinoisans deserve a world class transit experience, and the MMA does just that. **Lawmakers must support the MMA and a \$1.5 billion investment in transit.**

**Support the  
MMA! Email your  
legislators** →



Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition



**¡Nadie merece  
ser ignorado  
por el  
transporte  
público!**



CTA, Metra, Pace, y RTA están enfrentando un déficit presupuestario que podría reducir el servicio de tránsito en un 40%. Esto significa:

- Tiempos de espera más largos
- Posibles recortes en rutas enteras
- Aumento del tráfico cuando más personas recurren a vehículos personales para desplazarse.

La **Ley de la Autoridad de Movilidad Metropolitana (MMA)** (SB5/HB1833) hará que nuestro sistema de transporte sea rápido, frecuente, confiable, limpio y seguro. Los habitantes de Illinois merecen una experiencia de transporte de primer nivel, y la MMA ofrece exactamente eso. **Los legisladores deben apoyar la MMA y una inversión de 1.5 mil millones de dólares en transporte.**

**¡Apoye la MMA! Envíe  
un correo electrónico  
a sus legisladores** →



Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition

# We Tested Suburban Digital Engagement Messages: Saving money, expanding job opportunities, and having a choice in how to get around work best



# We Inspired a Comedy Show to Educate the Public about the Need to Fix & Fund Transit

## SAFE STREETS: THE COMEDY SHOW

WHY IT SUCKS TO WALK OR DRIVE IN  
CHICAGO AND HOW WE CAN FIX IT.

SUNDAYS @ 6PM  
FEBRUARY 8, 15 & MARCH 8, 15, 22  
DONNY'S SKYBOX AT SECOND CITY



**Watch here!** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GugpZrjiOk&t=443s>





So About the \$\$\$\$...

# October Surprise: Our Rational for Preventing a Stop Gap Funding Solution



**Stopgap only solves problem for 2026.** Will have much larger gap in 2027.



Additional revenue vote – between \$650 - 800M -- will be needed by end of 2026 spring session to prevent layoff notices and 2027 cuts.



Nothing will have changed in system by the time next revenue vote is needed.



Transit will be competing for revenue in 2026 with other basic needs programs.



Stop gap provides no funds to support transition to new regional entity (NITA) or for downstate transit.



New NITA investments may need to be removed from the bill or delayed pending other revenue.

# Roller Coaster Journey of Revenue Discussions

	Funding Option	Rough Revenue Estimates
Transportation-related	<b>Regional Transit Authority .25% Sales Tax Increase</b>	<b>\$450 M</b>
	<b>Tollway Surcharge</b>	\$429 M
	Tax on Vehicle Sales	\$334 M
	Speed Camera in the RTA Region	\$266.7 M
	<b>Redirect Sales Tax on Purchasing Motor Fuel</b>	<b>\$890 M</b>
	<b>Rideshare Tax</b>	\$169.4 M
	Motor Vehicle Registration Surcharge	\$130.7 M
	<b>Share of Interest on Road Fund</b>	<b>\$200 M</b>
	Commercial Parking Lot Fee	\$80 M
	Motor Vehicles Sales Surcharge	\$60 M
	Auto Rental Fees	\$12.77 M
	<b>EV Charging Fee</b>	\$3.2 M
	Auto Lease Sales Tax	\$2.12 M
	Sales Tax for E-Bikes, E-Motos, E-Scooters	\$1.5 M
Non-Transportation	Sales Tax Modernization	\$2.7 B
	Payroll Tax	\$688 M
	<b>Statewide Amusement Tax</b>	\$500 M
	<b>Billionaire Tax</b>	\$148 M
	Reforming Illinois Estate Tax	\$135 M
	<b>Retail Delivery Fee</b>	\$102.87 M
	<b>Real Estate Transfer Tax</b>	\$82 M
	<b>Large Event Ticket Surcharge</b>	\$75 M
Hotel Tax Expansion to RTA Region	\$54.2 M	

# Saving Transit

The package passed with a super majority in both chambers at 4 AM on 10/31 (the last day of veto session), the Governor signed it 12/16, and it goes into effect June 2026



**BREAKING NEWS**

# ILLINOIS PASSES \$1.5 BILLION TRANSIT FUNDING BILL



A historic package averts massive CTA, Metra, and Pace cuts, reshaping how Chicago's transit system will be governed.

# So what is in the Legislation in Addition to \$\$?

Creation of a new regional body, integrated boards, leadership oversight

Improved safety and rider experience

Integrated fares and related improvements

Transit oriented development policies

Better Service: More integrated, faster buses, additional service

Support for the transition of commuter rail to include regional rail service

Increased accountability for service delivery

More focus on accessibility

# Key Ingredients to Our Success

## Smart & Bold Public Policy

Plan of Action for Regional Transit served as the blueprint for the legislation and kept us all pushing for big change and big dollars. We made a strong case that addressing the fiscal cliff alone was insufficient.

## Strategic and Coordinated

We embedded the effort within a sophisticated and resourced statewide coalition, our core team was rock solid, we leveraged the unique expertise of the different organizations at the table, and we kept the coalition aligned.

## Adequate Resources

This was a substantial multi-year effort by a number of organizations. Financial resources were essential to keep this a top priority, and so we could employ more sophisticated communications and organizing activities.

## Access & Credibility

Our government affairs team had high level of credibility with Governor's office, kept the core team in weekly communication with sponsors, and got us in the 'rooms where it happened'.

## Constant Drumbeat

We kept the pressure and visibility up in all sorts of ways and managed the message from lobby days to many social media campaigns, townhalls, hearings, mailers, videos, action alerts, canvassing, and at the end, phone banking.

**So What's Next?**

# 3 Policy Goals of the Clean & Equitable Transportation Campaign



1. **Fix and Fund Transit:** Implements long overdue transit funding, service, and governance reforms to establish a unified regional agency capable of delivering the **safe, reliable, and frequent transit system riders deserve.**
2. **Increase Transportation Choices:** Establishes targets to reduce emissions from the transportation sector to be **100% carbon-free by 2050** and aligns state spending to support **clean and equitable transportation.**
3. **Incentivize Zero Emissions Transportation:** Establishes standards that increase the availability and reliability of **zero-emission vehicles**, move our public fleets to zero emissions, and increase the **buildout of charging infrastructure while facilitating a race to the top for vehicle workers.**