

INVEST IN TRANSIT

The 2018-2023 Regional Transit
Strategic Plan for Chicago and
Northeastern Illinois

Chicago and Northeastern Illinois are built on transit and our investment is *still* at risk.

In January 2018, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Board adopted *Invest in Transit*, the 2018–2023 Regional Transit Strategic Plan. The plan brings attention to the importance of transit in the region and the need to address the infrastructure deficit currently being faced by the transit agencies. *Invest in Transit* has shaped the activities of the region's Transit Agencies-- the RTA, Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra, and Pace-- throughout the year, and has served as the basis for a campaign seeking additional capital funding. Unfortunately, little has changed over the past year and our investment is still at risk for three major reasons:

STATE CAPITAL FUNDING IS STILL NON-EXISTENT.

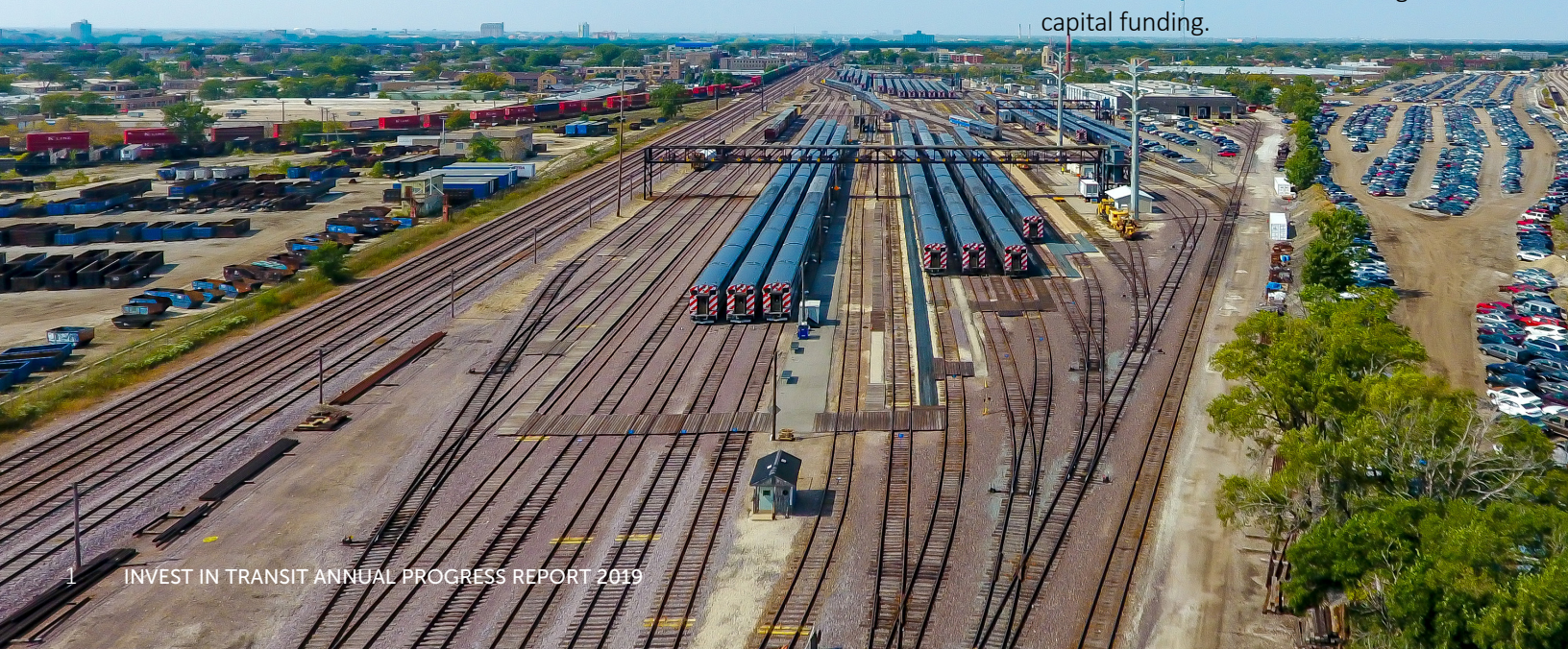
Despite efforts to communicate our need and plans for capital funding, the State has not passed an infrastructure bill. The Transit Agencies have received a small increase in federal formula funds this year, but the federal role in public transit remains unpredictable as well. These circumstances leave the transit capital program funding well below even the most basic levels.¹

MOST OF OUR ASSETS CONTINUE TO GET OLDER.

CTA, Metra, and Pace developed Transportation Asset Management (TAM) Plans for the first time this year, as required now by Federal rule. The TAM Plans indicate that the Transit Agencies continue to have significant state of good repair needs that will take several decades to address.² At current spending levels, 37% of our assets will still be beyond their useful lives in 20 years.

TRANSIT RIDERSHIP IS DOWN.

Transit ridership was down 2.5 percent or 14.7 million rides in 2018, the sixth consecutive year of a decreasing ridership trend.³ It's down across the nation, so the region's Transit Agencies are not alone, but this is still an issue that affects the bottom line. Farebox revenue and public funding, which has been impacted by State budget cuts since 2017, fund a significant portion of the transit operating budget. Thus, operations funding continues to be threatened along with capital funding.



Our vision is public transit as the core of the region's robust transportation mobility network.

Bad news aside, transit is still a critical and productive investment for the region. We continue to operate the second largest public transit network in the nation.⁴ No other mode provides 571 million rides per year as safely and efficiently. A Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) study completed last year found that the region's transit-accessible locations outperform on job growth and commercial development.⁵ Indeed, several new developments throughout the region were announced in 2018. The Old Post Office redevelopment, Union Station development, Lincoln Yards, and The 78 will provide a significant amount of office, commercial, and residential space near transit stops and stations in the City of Chicago. Moreover, Americans seem to be embracing multi-modality. APTA's publication *The Transformation of the American Commuter* reported that more than three in four respondents (77%) see public transit as the backbone of a multi-modal lifestyle that includes ride-hailing, bikesharing, carsharing, autonomous vehicles and other emerging technologies.⁶ New modes and new technologies appear to be here to stay, but they have neither supplanted nor alleviated the need for robust public transit in a mega region like Northeastern Illinois. Thus, *Invest in Transit's* vision remains fresh and prescient.

The RTA agencies provided

571M

transit trips in 2018³

60% Of jobs added in the region between 2005 to 2015 are in areas with high-quality transit service ⁵

Metra provides congestion relief to some of the nation's most crowded highways by accommodating hundreds of thousands of daily commuters who prefer taking the train to being stuck in traffic.

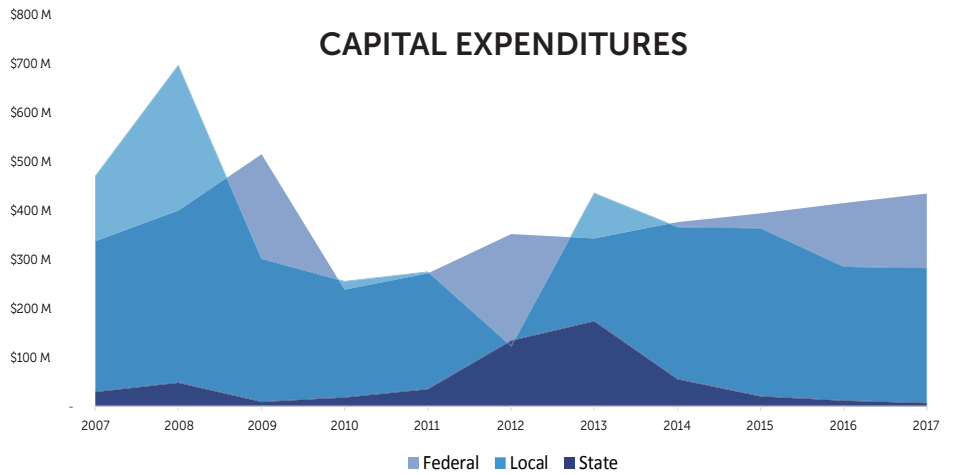
CTA connects millions of people to jobs, amenities, and recreation. Chicago properties near transit are more valuable than properties further away.

Pace meets the mobility needs of residents across the entire region through fixed route buses, ADA Paratransit services, Pace On Demand, and vanpools.

How Did We Do in 2018?

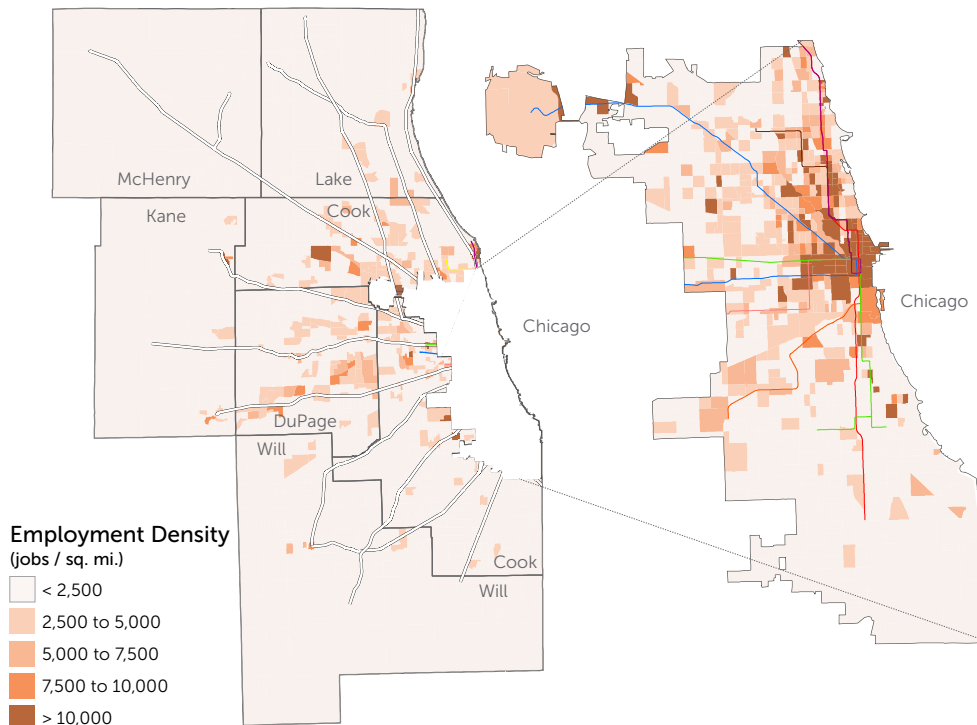
1 DELIVER VALUE ON OUR INVESTMENT

The RTA and Service Boards spent 2018 advocating for dedicated, reliable capital funding. A State infrastructure bill was not passed, which continued to destabilize capital funding for the agencies. The agencies used existing funding to make valuable improvements including transformative reconstructions at several CTA stations, upgraded vehicles and facilities for Pace riders, and installation of federally mandated PTC on Metra's system.



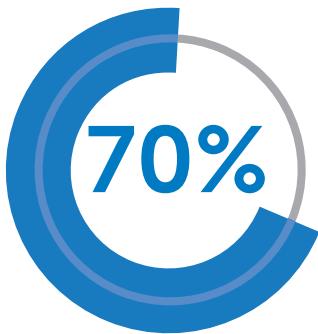
2 BUILD ON THE STRENGTHS OF OUR NETWORK

The RTA and Service Boards continued to advocate for transit-friendly policies and made focused investments on the existing transit system in 2018. The RTA's Community Planning Program provided insights into economic development opportunities around the Jefferson Park transit station and along Harlem Avenue bus line. The RTA worked to launch the region's first public-private microtransit pilot to take suburban workers from Metra to office parks. The City of Chicago began the process to amend its Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) ordinance to include high-capacity bus lines, a measure that was passed by City Council in January 2019. The Transit Agencies also dedicated resources toward priority projects, as covered on pages 5 and 6.

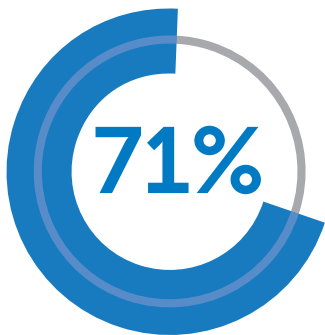


3 STAY COMPETITIVE

The RTA and Service Boards worked to better understand travel preferences and explore strategies to stem ridership declines. Meanwhile, the RTA conducted a small on-line customer satisfaction survey and found that 70% of respondents were satisfied with the value of service for fare paid, while only 62% were satisfied with the transit infrastructure. The Service Boards made investments in their vehicles and operations, but cultural and technological changes continue to press the agencies to provide maximum regional mobility in an increasingly competitive environment.



70% were satisfied with the value for fare paid



71% were likely to recommend public transit to others



62% were satisfied with the transit infrastructure in the region

Priority Projects Update

over **\$30B** of priority projects are not fully funded today

Invest in Transit includes \$30B of priority projects that would be completed if the agencies had additional capital funding. Given the continued shortage of capital funding, little progress could be made toward the projects and the need continues to grow. That said, the Service Boards did work to advance several of them. Three are highlighted here.

RED PURPLE MODERNIZATION (RPM) - FUTURE PHASES

Advancement of the Red and Purple Modernization (RPM) Program, the largest line rebuild and capital improvement project in CTA history



The purpose of the RPM Program is to improve capacity, travel time, ride quality, accessibility, comfort, and safety in one of CTA's highest ridership corridors. In 2018, CTA continued improvements to track and support structures adjacent to the recently reconstructed Wilson Station and began assembling property for the Belmont bypass. Future phases are still not fully funded and will include reconstructing the Red and Purple Lines between the future Bypass and Wilson station and between Bryn Mawr and Howard, as well as the Purple Line from Howard to Linden in Evanston and Wilmette.

Current Phases Underway, Future Phases in Planning. The funded amount includes all of RPM Phase One (not limited to the 2017-2021 CIP). Total need represents a hypothetical next phase of RPM, the specific components of which have not been fully defined, that could occur within the 10 year time frame. Ideally, 50% of this project cost would come from the federal Core Capacity program and the region would support the local match.

10-Year Project Cost
\$8.7 Billion

\$6.6 Billion Unfunded Need

\$2.1 Billion Funding Included in Capital Program

Funding

75TH STREET CORRIDOR

Reconfigure track shared by Metra, Amtrak, and freight trains



Metra's 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project is a major project to fix a tangle of railroad tracks just north of 75th Street to improve the fluidity of Metra Southwest Service (SWS), freight and Amtrak traffic in the area. In 2018, the CREATE project partners broke ground on a \$474 million portion of this project, funded through \$132 million of federal INFRA grant funding and contributions from project partners including \$24 million from Metra. This action will move the project forward. An additional portion remains unfunded.

10-year project cost and existing funding is inclusive of all project partner contributions. Metra's contribution to current funding is \$24 million.

10-Year Project Cost
\$1.5 Billion

\$1 Billion Unfunded Need

\$474 Million Funding Included in Capital Program

Funding

PULSE INFRASTRUCTURE

Enhance Pulse service



Pace future Arterial Rapid Transit (ART) routes will have limited-stop express service to improve travel times. They will also have specially designed stations with passenger amenities such as real-time signage and snow melt systems. Pace made progress on design of the future Dempster Pulse service during 2018 and programmed funding for this project in their 2019-2023 capital program. The future Pulse deployments remain largely unfunded.

The Pulse Milwaukee Line is under construction. New funding is needed to continue the expansion of Pulse Lines throughout the region.

10-Year Project Cost
\$51 Million

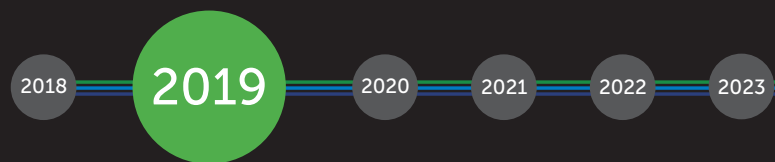
\$37.6 Million Unfunded Need

\$13.4 Million Funding Included in Capital Program

Funding

Transit capital investment makes sense for the transit system, the economy, and the region.

Now is the time to act.



In 2019, the Transit Agencies will continue a capital funding campaign to increase the level of capital investment to \$2 to \$3 billion annually as described throughout *Invest in Transit*. Additional funding will provide the means for the Transit Agencies to pursue the projects and strategies outlined in the plan and to prepare for the opportunities ahead.

Read *Invest in Transit* and related documents at StrategicPlan.RTACHicago.org

1. Regional Transportation Authority, *Adopted 2019 Operating Budget, Two Year Financial Plan and Five-Year Capital Program*
<https://www.rtachicago.org/sites/default/files/documents/businessandfinance/operatingbudget/2019%20Budget%20Booklet%2012.14.18.pdf>
2. Chicago Transit Authority, *Transit Asset Management Plan*, October 2018
Metra, *Transit Asset Management Plan*, September 2018
Pace Suburban Bus, *Initial Transit Asset Management Plan*, October 2018
3. *4th Quarter YTD Systemwide Ridership 2004-2018*
<https://www.rtachicago.org/plans-programs/performance-measures/performance-dashboard>
4. Regional Transportation Authority, *2017 Regional Peer Review February 2019*
<https://www.rtachicago.org/plans-programs/performance-measures/peer-performance-reports>
5. Metropolitan Planning Council, *Transit Means Business*
https://transitmeansbusiness.metroplanning.org/?utm_source=%2ftransitmeansbusiness&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=redirect
6. American Public Transportation Association, *The Transformation of the American Commuter*