



December 2008

A Monthly Report of The Regional Transportation Authority

## The RTA Holds Second Round of Budget Hearings

**R**TA staff and Board members held 12 public hearings in November across Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will counties to discuss the regional mass transit budget for 2009 and the capital investment needs of the regional transit system. A final meeting will be held December 15 (details below) for final public consideration before the budget goes before the RTA Board of Directors for approval on Thursday, December 18.

For a copy of the RTA 2009 Proposed Budget, visit [www.rtachicago.com](http://www.rtachicago.com) and download your copy or visit our main offices at 175 W. Jackson Blvd. to get a printed copy.

- Jim Reilly**  
RTA Chairman
- James Buchanan**  
City of Chicago
- Jan Carlson**  
Kane County
- William R. Coulson**  
Suburban Cook County
- Rev. L. Tyrone Crider, Sr.**  
Suburban Cook County
- Patrick J. Durante**  
DuPage County
- Phil Fuentes**  
City of Chicago
- Al Jourdan**  
McHenry County
- Dwight A. Magalis**  
Lake County
- Patrick V. Riley, Jr.**  
Suburban Cook County
- Michael Rosenberg**  
City of Chicago
- J.D. Ross**  
Will County
- Michael Scott**  
City of Chicago
- Judy Baar Topinka**  
Suburban Cook County
- Douglas M. Troiani**  
Suburban Cook County
- Stephen E. Schlickman**  
Executive Director

**Next RTA Board Meeting:**  
December 18, 2008 - 9:30 a.m.  
Committee Meetings begin at 8:00 a.m.

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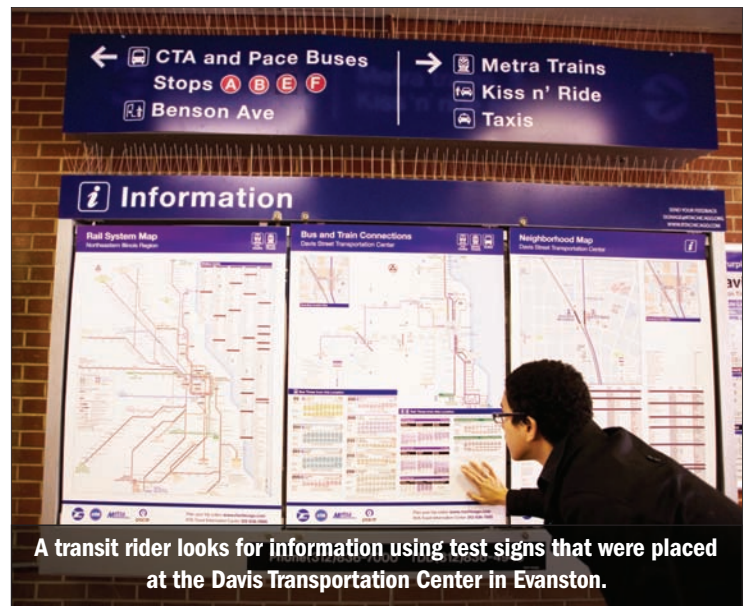
**Final RTA 2009 Budget Public Hearing**  
Monday, December 15, 2008  
9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.  
Loop/River Room - 2nd Fl, University Center Conference Chicago  
525 S. State St., Chicago

## RTA Tests New System Signs

*New signs to help make a seamless transit system*

**T**he RTA recently completed the second round of testing on a new class of information products planned for installation across the region in the near future. The Interagency Transit Passenger Information Design project has been working for the past two and a half years on developing preliminary concepts for wayfinding (directional) signs as well as service information panels (maps, route diagrams and schedules). Funded by the RTA and the federal government, the project intends to create uniform design standards for a system of information products to seamlessly guide transit passengers.

The RTA has worked closely with the CTA, Metra, Pace, and the City of Evanston and chose a place for field testing where all transit services meet: the Davis Street location in downtown Evanston. Temporary prototype signs and informa-



A transit rider looks for information using test signs that were placed at the Davis Transportation Center in Evanston.

tion panels were set up and recruited users were asked to navigate various transfer scenarios. The users were then asked to give feedback on placement of the signs and panels as well as the message content.

All of the feedback will now be used to refine the information products and then deploy them at five interagency locations in the months ahead with user testing throughout the project to verify potentially deploying them as needed throughout the entire RTA system.

## IRS Increases 2009 Transit Benefit Amount

Commuters and their employers will reap greater tax benefits using transit or vanpools next year with the IRS' decision to increase the amount of pre-tax income used to pay for transit.

The IRS is increasing the amount of pre-tax income that employees can set aside and/or businesses can provide as a fringe benefit to cover the costs of public transit or vanpools up to \$120 a month (\$1,440 per year) beginning January 1, 2009. The current maximum amount is \$115 a month (\$1,380).

Employers can offer their employees who commute this tax savings benefit when they enroll in the RTA/CTA Transit Benefit Fare program. This program enables employers to use tax-free dollars to purchase either CTA fare cards or RTA FareChecks which are then distributed to employees to cover the cost of their monthly commute. CTA fare cards can be used to pay for fares on both the CTA and Pace while RTA FareChecks are vouchers that can be used to purchase fares on the CTA, Metra, Pace, the South Shore Railroad, vanpools and on certain Amtrak routes.

For more information on the RTA's Transit Benefit Fare Program, call 1-800-531-2828 or visit [www.rtachicago.com](http://www.rtachicago.com).

## RTA Helps Businesses to do Business

This year's 12th Annual Transportation Symposium & Business Exchange was a success with approximately 475 attendees. The symposium, jointly sponsored by the RTA, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra, Pace, and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) was held on December 2 at the Chicago Hilton & Towers. Approximately 33 exhibitors and over 200 staff representing the RTA, Service Boards and IDOT were also on hand for this year's event.

Denise Rodriguez-Lopez, Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization with the U.S. Department of Transportation, was this year's keynote speaker. The symposium's workshop focused on "Get Bids, Get Contracts and Get Paid" and included a question and answer session with agency representatives. RTA representatives provided information on the Authority's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program and the potential opportunities that exist.

Each year, the symposium provides a valuable forum for attendees to network and meet with procurement and operating staff representatives from the sponsor agencies.

## Greater Regional Collaboration Underway for Public Outreach

The RTA and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) have established an outreach collaborative initiative which seeks to maximize outreach efforts on the part of both agencies so they better serve the public with their respective outreach efforts. The two agencies have discussed ways to collaborate, cross-promote and share information in a manner which best serves the public in the region.

The outreach collaboration committee met, discussed and began implementing ideas with respect to public hearings, the synchronization of public outreach related to the RTA's Strategic Plan and CMAP's Go To 2040 plan, and the RTA's role in CMAP's youth-centered program F.L.I.P. (Future Leaders in Planning). For more information, please call Gil Feliciano at 312-913-3237 or via e-mail at [felicianog@rtachicago.org](mailto:felicianog@rtachicago.org).



RTA Board Director Rev. Tyrone Crider addresses attendees at the 12th Annual Transportation Symposium.



## Focusing on Transit's Capital Need:

## EQUIPMENT

Each month, *In Transit* will feature a specific capital need for the regional transit system. This month's feature is on Metra's need for new train cars. On many Metra trains – it's standing room only. The agency has record ridership amid uncertain gas prices and a slowing economy. Metra has tried to add capacity where it can, but there simply is not enough equipment to keep up with the demand. As a stop gap measure, in late 2008 Metra bought back five 1950s-era rail cars that it had sold to a Virginia commuter line in 2004. The equipment shortage will continue unless Illinois lawmakers agree on a statewide capital funding program that includes funds for mass transit maintenance, enhancements and expansion. Metra's last major purchase of bi-level rail cars was in 2000 with a price tag of \$398.6 million purchased using funds from the expired Illinois FIRST public works program.

To find out more about the need for capital investment in mass transit, visit [www.MovingBeyondCongestion.org](http://www.MovingBeyondCongestion.org).

# Regional Transportation Authority Financial Report

AUGUST 2008 (For comparative purposes, the CTA figures in 2006 do not include expenses for paratransit service)

The combined net results of the Service Boards of \$87.1 million were unfavorable to budget by \$0.3 million or 0.4%. Compared to last year, net results were unfavorable by \$18.8 million or 27.6%.

Year-to-date combined net results for the Service Boards of \$714.6 million were \$3.4 million or 0.5% unfavorable to budget. The combined Service Boards revenue was \$3.4 million favorable, while expenses were \$6.8 million unfavorable to budget. Compared to the prior year, each Service Board had unfavorable results in a combined amount of \$86.5 million.

## Recovery Ratio

The RTA system-generated recovery ratio of 55.0% was 0.7 points unfavorable to budget and was 1.1 points favorable to the prior year's result.

The year-to-date recovery ratio of 54.4% was even

with budget and was 3.9 points favorable to last year's result.

## Sales Tax

August sales of \$64.7 million was \$1.7 million or 2.7% higher than budget and \$1.1 million or 1.7% higher than the prior year.

Year-to-date sales tax through August of \$488.5 million was \$9.1 million or 1.8% lower than budget and \$0.2 million higher than last year's result.

## Ridership

Regional ridership for the month of 56.6 million was 2.6 million or 4.8% higher than budget and was 3.1 million or 5.7% higher than the prior year.

Year-to-date ridership of 431.9 million was 4.5 million or 1.1% higher than budget and was 21.5 million or 5.2% higher than the prior year.

## AUGUST 2008 Operating Financial Report—Regional Summary (in millions)<sup>(3)</sup>

Net Results	Current Year vs. Budget								Current Year vs. Prior Year					
	Month				Year to Date				Month			Year to Date		
	Actual	Budget	Δ Unit	Δ %	Actual	Budget	Δ Unit	Δ %	Actual	Δ Unit	Δ %	Actual	Δ Unit	Δ %
CTA	\$53.2	\$54.5	\$1.3	2.4%	\$440.6	\$438.4	(\$2.2)	(0.5%)	\$37.2	(16.1)	(43.2%)	\$388.3	(\$52.3)	(13.5%)
Metra	\$23.3	\$22.1	(\$1.2)	(5.2%)	\$192.5	\$191.0	(\$1.5)	(0.8%)	\$21.5	(1.8)	(8.4%)	\$171.0	(21.5)	(12.6%)
Pace	\$10.6	\$10.1	(\$0.5)	(4.8%)	\$81.6	\$81.8	\$0.3	0.3%	\$9.6	(1.0)	(10.2%)	\$68.8	(12.8)	(18.5%)
<b>Total (2)</b>	<b>\$87.1</b>	<b>\$86.8</b>	<b>(\$0.3)</b>	<b>(0.4%)</b>	<b>\$714.6</b>	<b>\$711.2</b>	<b>(\$3.4)</b>	<b>(0.5%)</b>	<b>\$68.3</b>	<b>(\$18.8)</b>	<b>(27.6%)</b>	<b>\$628.1</b>	<b>(\$86.5)</b>	<b>(13.8%)</b>

Recovery Ratio (%)	Current Year vs. Budget						Current Year vs. Prior Year			
	Month			Year to Date			Month		Year to Date	
	Actual	Budget	Δ Points	Actual	Budget	Δ Points	Actual	Δ Points	Actual	Δ Points
CTA	53.5%	49.7%	3.8	49.1%	48.8%	0.3	59.9%	(6.4)	51.0%	(2.0)
Metra	59.2%	59.6%	(0.4)	56.3%	55.7%	0.6	58.0%	1.3	56.2%	0.1
Pace	35.8%	36.7%	(1.0)	35.7%	35.3%	0.4	33.9%	1.9	38.3%	(2.6)
<b>System (3)</b>	<b>55.5%</b>	<b>55.3%</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>54.5%</b>	<b>53.9%</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>54.0%</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>50.5%</b>	<b>3.9</b>

Sales Tax Revenue	Current Year vs. Budget								Current Year vs. Prior Year					
	Month				Year to Date				Month			Year to Date		
	Actual	Budget	Δ Unit	Δ %	Actual	Budget	Δ Unit	Δ %	Actual	Δ Unit	Δ %	Actual	Δ Unit	Δ %
Region	\$64.7	\$63.1	\$1.7	2.7%	\$488.5	\$497.6	(\$9.1)	(1.8%)	\$63.6	\$1.1	1.7%	\$488.3	\$0.2	0.0%

Ridership	Current Year vs. Budget								Current Year vs. Prior Year					
	Month				Year to Date				Month			Year to Date		
	Actual	Budget	Δ Unit	Δ %	Actual	Budget	Δ Unit	Δ %	Actual	Δ Unit	Δ %	Actual	Δ Unit	Δ %
CTA	45.6	43.5	2.0	4.6%	348.0	346.9	1.1	0.3%	42.8	2.8	6.5%	330.2	17.8	5.4%
Metra	7.6	7.2	0.4	5.3%	58.8	56.2	2.6	4.6%	7.3	0.3	3.8%	56.0	2.8	5.1%
Pace	3.4	3.2	0.2	5.8%	25.0	24.2	0.8	3.4%	3.4	0.0	0.4%	24.2	0.9	3.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56.6</b>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>431.9</b>	<b>427.4</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>53.5</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>410.4</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>5.2%</b>

Bracketed data represents an unfavorable change. Line item calculations are based on whole numbers, some totals may not sum.

(1) Does not include region wide ADA paratransit service. (2) Sum of service board deficits.

(3) Service Board results exclude certain revenues and expenses that are included in the system calculation. The system calculation excludes certain Service Board revenues but includes the statutory expense credit for 2008 totaling \$200 million.



For more information on this program, visit [www.rtachicago.com/peoplewithdisabilitiesridefree](http://www.rtachicago.com/peoplewithdisabilitiesridefree)

**By The Numbers:**

**40,000**  
Number of applications received

**23,000**  
Number of Circuit Permits issued

**400**  
Number of daily applications

## RTA Job Opportunities

Find out more at [www.rtachicago.com](http://www.rtachicago.com)

**Director, Administrative Services:** This position is accountable for overall strategic and policy direction for the RTA's administrative services which includes human resources (HR), information technology (IT), procurement and office services. Directs HR, IT and Procurement operations ensuring a vision that supports the RTA's strategic plan, positions the RTA as a valued partner with its service boards and provides the RTA with the tools it needs to maximize its effectiveness.

## Recruitment & Employee Development Specialist:

This position recommends, designs, develops and administers recruitment and employee training and development programs and related policies and procedures to attract, retain and motivate employees. Acts as liaison to vendors, health insurance providers, and consultants.

For more information and to apply, visit [www.rtachicago.com](http://www.rtachicago.com).

## 2009 RTA Board Dates

The RTA Board of Directors recently set its meeting schedule for 2009:

- January 15
- February 19
- March 19
- April 16
- May 21
- June 25
- July 16
- August 20
- September 15
- October 15
- November 19
- December 17

All meetings start at 9:30 a.m. following committee meetings and take place in the RTA Board Room, 175 W. Jackson Blvd. - Suite 1550, Chicago, Illinois.

## RTA Staff News

The RTA has welcomed three new employees. Nancy Morales-Cruz holds the position of Outreach Specialist in Regional Services. She began her employment on November 10. Prior to joining the RTA, Nancy worked for the Association House of Chicago where she held the position of Employment Specialist.

Felisha Walker holds the position of Travel Trainer and also started on November 10. Prior to joining the RTA, Felisha worked for Community Alternatives Unlimited where she held the position of RTA Assessor. Felisha earned a Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Science in English and Communications from East-West University.

Tatiana Jane joined the RTA on November 17 as the new Division Manager of Performance Management. For the past nine years, Tatiana has worked at Pace as a Section Manager, Market Research & Analysis. She also worked for the European Humanities University as the Dean of the School of Economics. Tatiana holds a PhD in Economics from Belarusian State University and an MBA from the University of New Orleans.



Nancy Morales-Cruz



Felisha Walker



Tatiana Jane



### ***The Need to Maintain, Enhance and Expand!***

The RTA has recently updated the Mass Transit Capital Funding brochure outlining the need for a capital funding program for our region's transit system. Funding is still needed to replace outdated or worn vehicles, equipment, tracks and facilities. The new brochure is also available in Spanish. Download your copy at [www.MovingBeyondCongestion.org](http://www.MovingBeyondCongestion.org).



## Regional Transportation Authority

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