



# **Regional Transportation Authority**

## **For immediate release**

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### **RTA SAYS FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION REPORT VALIDATES REGION'S CAPITAL NEED FOR TRANSIT**

*Chicago among seven of the nation's largest transit systems that are underfunded*

CHICAGO - In response to the Federal Transit Administration report released yesterday, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) agreed with their findings, citing that the report confirmed the need for federal and state capital investment programs.

"This report confirms what we have been saying all along. We need to invest in our aging infrastructure," said RTA Executive Director, Steve Schlickman. "The northeastern Illinois region depends on our transit system, but that system is in desperate need of new buses and trains, new tracks to reduce slow zones, and repair of many stations. We also need to enhance and expand the system to provide people access to jobs, limit traffic congestion on our roads, and reduce our dependence of foreign oil."

The FTA report stressed the need to increase federal investment in our aging urban rail transit systems. It showed that one in three vehicles and facilities of the largest transit agencies were not adequate and were underfunded. Chicago is one of seven rail systems cited in the report where the condition is less than adequate.

The RTA commends U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) for requesting the report and making transit a priority.

"We sincerely appreciate Senator Durbin's commitment to rehabilitating our region's transit system, the second largest in the nation," said Schlickman. "Senator Durbin understands how important mass transit is to the quality of life in Illinois."

"We have done a good job managing the current physical condition of our transit system with the limited funding available, but it's been a real challenge. This report shows the effects of underfunding, and highlights the need for and benefit from making adequate investments in mass transit," Schlickman noted.

Senator Durbin, who requested the study, announced his plans to draft legislation for the next surface transportation bill which will bring the nation's largest transit systems into good repair.

"Today's FTA report estimates that we are underfunding our nation's oldest rails systems by \$5.9 billion per year," said Durbin. "The current transportation bill is set to expire in five months, and I plan to introduce legislation what will create a new federal commitment to our transportation infrastructure that has been subject to heavy use and neglect."

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Additionally, the RTA also released its 2007 Regional Performance Measures Report Card, which also underscores the challenges to maintain the system's infrastructure. The report was developed as part of the RTA's oversight function to help manage the region's public transit system. It evaluates service coverage, service efficiency and effectiveness, service delivery, service maintenance and capital investment, and service level solvency. Through aggregated data from the Chicago Transit Authority, Metra and Pace, the RTA can better assess how these agencies are collectively meeting their mission, as well as the transit needs for the region. The Report Card clearly displays the need for additional capital investment in order to achieve state of good repair and thus, sustain and improve performance.

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*About the RTA: The RTA provides financial oversight, funding and regional planning for the three public transit operators in Northeastern Illinois: The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) bus and train, Metra commuter rail and Pace suburban bus and paratransit. For more information, visit [www.rtachicago.com](http://www.rtachicago.com) and [www.MovingBeyondCongestion.org](http://www.MovingBeyondCongestion.org).*