All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP)

Strategic Plan

Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ACHIEVING ACCESSIBILITY AT THE CTA

At the close of the 25th anniversary celebration of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. announced a new initiative – the All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP) – to establish a blueprint for making CTA's legacy rail system 100 percent accessible to people with mobility impairments over the next 20 years.

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The CTA is committed to making its system completely accessible to people with disabilities in the next 20 years by becoming the first legacy transit system to make all of its train stations accessible.

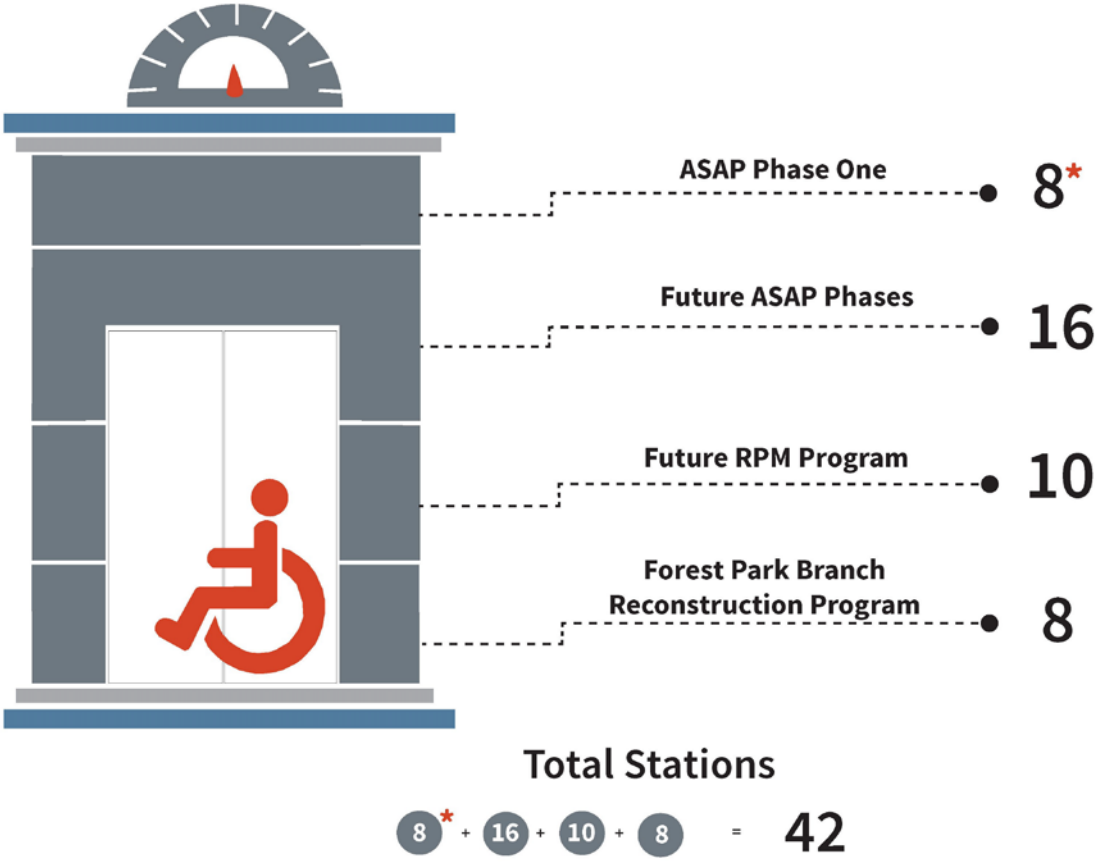
ASAP goes beyond federal requirements to add accessibility across the entire CTA rail system. The ASAP Strategic Plan builds on CTA's most recent successes to add accessibility to the rail system and charts a clear path forward to accomplish the goal of creating a 100 percent vertically accessible rail system within 20 years. The CTA will accomplish this goal by retrofitting or rebuilding its 42 inaccessible rail stations as well as proactively rehabilitating or replacing its 162 existing elevators (as of 2018) throughout the rail system to ensure that those stations maintain their accessibility. The ASAP Strategic Plan includes CTA's proposed station concepts, associated cost estimates, and a phased implementation strategy to steadily add elevators and other accessible features to the rail system and to maintain existing elevators over time.

Accessibility provides greater inclusiveness, benefitting everyone by creating environments that are usable by all people. People come in all shapes and sizes and with a range of physical, sensory, and cognitive abilities. These abilities span a broad spectrum and can also change over the course of a lifetime. ASAP benefits everyone, providing accessibility to all transit riders regardless of one's ability. Though ASAP's emphasis is on making all platforms and stations vertically accessible so that people with mobility impairments can use the rail system, the proposed ASAP upgrades also include accessible entrances/doors, accessible routes from curbs to platforms, improved directional signage, enhanced lighting as appropriate, removal of platform obstructions, and accessible employee facilities. All CTA rail stations include some accessible features and the CTA will continue to examine and improve other accommodations, with the goal of promoting usage of its entire rail system by people of all abilities. The ASAP Strategic Plan also identifies wayfinding options that could make navigating the environment of CTA stations easier and more intuitive for people with a wide variety of disabilities, including people who are DeafBlind, blind, and visually impaired (see Chapter 3).

Given the magnitude of the work that lies ahead, the CTA formulated a phased implementation strategy to achieve accessibility over the next 20 years. Of the 42 stations that are not currently accessible, eight (8) stations are prioritized for ASAP Phase One – over half of which are already partially or fully funded. This means that ASAP will start delivering accessibility to the disability community in the near-term. Sixteen (16) stations are identified for Future ASAP Phases and the remaining ASAP stations are part of two other previously established

CTA program initiatives to modernize and expand capacity of the CTA rail system. These major programs are the Red and Purple Modernization (RPM) Program and the Forest Park (FP) Branch Reconstruction Program, both of which involve substantial infrastructure reconstruction and are currently in various stages of planning and design. The RPM Program is the largest capital improvement project in CTA history and the FP Branch Reconstruction Program requires complete, end-to-end reconstruction of the Forest Park branch. Of the fourteen (14) inaccessible RPM stations, the first four (4) RPM Phase One stations are included in ASAP Phase One, and the remaining ten (10) are considered the Future RPM Program. The FP Branch Reconstruction Program includes eight (8) stations. A summary graphic depicting how inaccessible stations are categorized within ASAP is shown in Figure ES-1.

Figure ES-1 Station Components of ASAP



* Includes four funded RPM Phase One stations and one CDOT-led station.

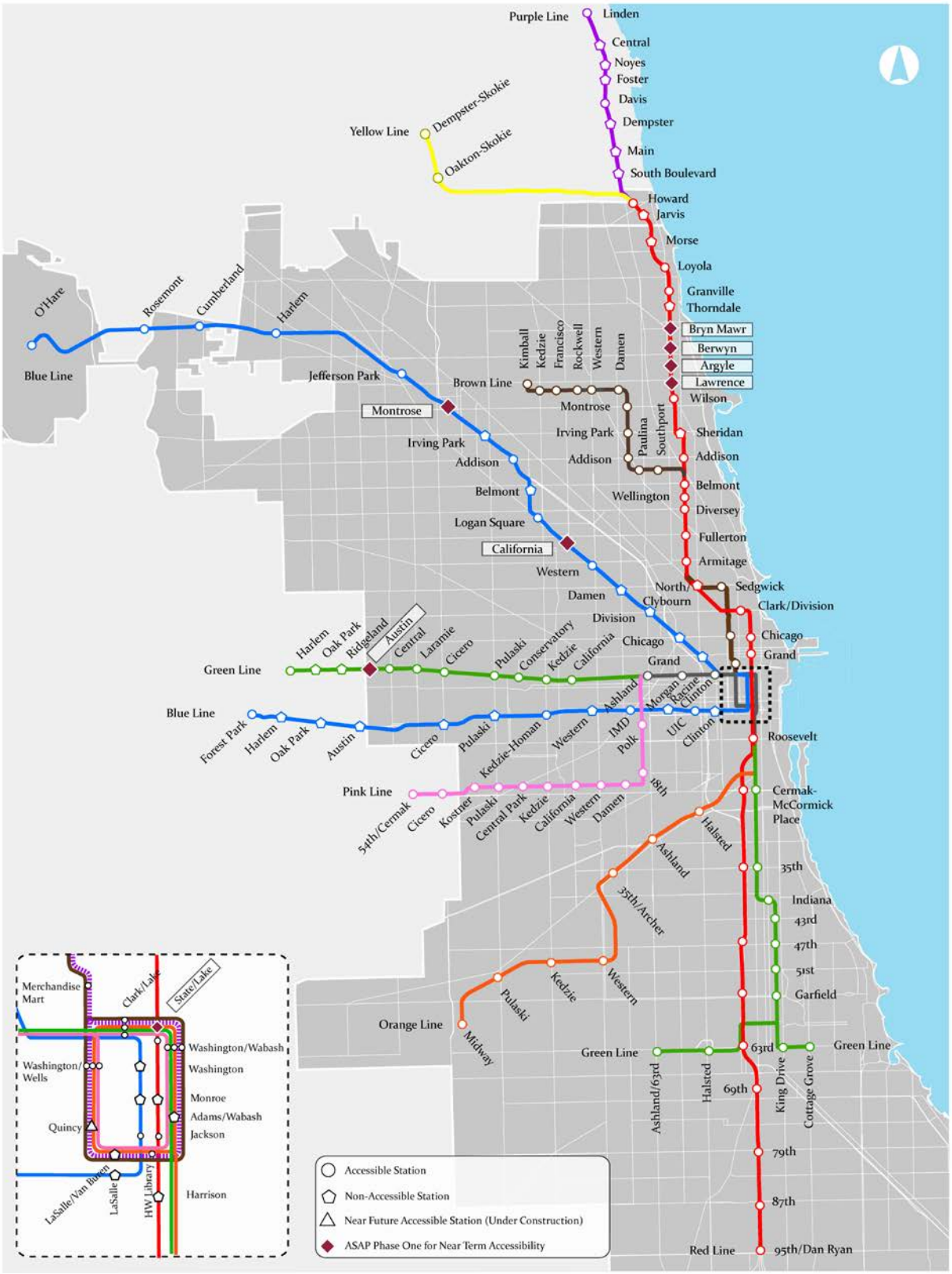
As part of the ASAP effort, the CTA also developed the Elevator Replacement Program to strategically maintain existing passenger elevators across the rail system. The Elevator Replacement Program will rehabilitate or replace 162 existing passenger elevators (as of 2018) within the CTA rail system to ensure the reliability of existing accessible stations. The Elevator Replacement Program prioritization approach provides a near-term roadmap and will be updated every two years to account for new elevators that are added to the system via ASAP as well as respond to current data on system performance and target the highest priority elevators.

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

The CTA executive team has worked closely with Chicago's disability community to pursue a vision of 100 percent accessibility for all customers, making significant progress to improve accessibility throughout the rail system within the City and in neighboring communities that the CTA serves. When the ADA passed in 1990, the majority of the rail fleet was accessible, but less than 10 (about six percent) of CTA's rail stations were accessible, and none of its buses complied with accessibility standards laid out in the legislation's implementing regulation. **Due to CTA's commitment to improving accessibility, today every rail car and bus in CTA's fleet is accessible to people with disabilities and 102 of CTA's 145 rail stations are accessible.** The CTA continues to make progress to add accessibility throughout the system, most recently at the Wilson station (Red Line), the Washington/Wabash station (Loop Elevated), and the Quincy station (Loop Elevated), which is queued up for completion in 2018. After Quincy is complete, 103 rail stations (71 percent) will be accessible.

Figure ES-2 provides a snapshot of how much has been achieved to date and identifies those stations that are accessible, inaccessible, and how the CTA plans to continue this progress into the first phase of ASAP implementation.

Figure ES-2 Station Accessibility Status



APPROACH TO ADDING ACCESSIBILITY

ASAP WORKING GROUP

To develop a comprehensive roadmap to full vertical accessibility, the CTA began collaborating with accessibility experts and third-party architects to develop the ASAP Strategic Plan. The CTA formed a Working Group that included representatives from the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), the Chicago Transit Authority Board, LCM Architects (a Chicago-based design firm consisting of experts in accessibility and universal design), CTA's Manager of ADA Compliance Programs, and personnel from various CTA Departments (e.g., Law, Planning, Infrastructure). This Working Group met regularly to provide input on the ASAP planning process as well as technical guidance related to the proposed station designs. The CTA also regularly updated its ADA Advisory Committee, which serves in an advisory capacity to the CTA and whose members represent various disability-related organizations and interests within the disability community.

PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

While some branches of the rail system are almost entirely accessible, others include numerous inaccessible stations, leaving sections of the City and neighboring communities that people with disabilities cannot reach via the CTA rail system. To determine the order in which stations should be made accessible, the CTA built on an earlier planning effort (2012 Infrastructure Accessibility Task Force (IATF) Report) to add vertical accessibility (i.e., elevators and ramps) to the CTA rail system based on an assessment of station needs. The CTA updated the prior needs assessment and introduced a new criterion called a "complexity factor" to determine ASAP priorities for the first phase of ASAP implementation. Highly complex stations typically are more expensive as they require complex design and engineering solutions to work within the physical constraints of a station. Moreover, highly complex stations typically require more time for planning, design, construction, agency coordination, public processes related to potential impacts (e.g., historic, environmental), and land acquisitions (see design considerations below and Chapter 7 for a typical project development timeline). The complexity factor accounts for these considerations, which are important as CTA evaluates stations that can be made accessible in the near-term. Overall, each inaccessible ASAP station received a need score and a complexity score, which were used to develop ASAP phases (see Chapter 2).

DESIGN PROCESS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Following the ASAP prioritization process, conceptual designs were developed for all the ASAP stations in order to develop costs and understand approach; these concepts will require additional analysis during design to confirm feasibility and conduct the appropriate coordination. Designs for the ASAP Phase One stations (three in total), were advanced to a 10 percent conceptual level. The remaining 16 stations identified for Future ASAP Phases received more basic schematic designs (see Chapter 3). Of course, as ASAP stations are funded and more detailed designs are developed, there will likely be modifications to the proposed designs described in the ASAP Strategic Plan. This is because more information will become available from future land survey and geotechnical survey reports, in-depth engineering and design work, agency coordination, and public feedback.

A number of complexities and constraints emerged as part of the ASAP design process. The age of the CTA's inaccessible stations ranges from 46 to over 120 years old, with some stations dating as far back as 1895. Stations were built in a few different configuration types, and, as a result, each station has unique design features and constraints, making the simple addition of one or more elevators complicated. These differences create site-specific constraints that require site-specific solutions. Some of the factors that must be considered when developing a design to make a station accessible are shown in Figure ES-3.

Figure ES-3 Complexities and Constraints

Platform Widths and Lengths
Many platforms are too narrow or too short to accommodate an elevator or to allow adequate space for wheelchair passing and turning.

Property Impacts
Some stations are located so close to adjacent buildings that many proposed modifications would only be possible if the adjacent structure is modified or removed.

Space Constraints
The size and layout of stationhouses cannot always accommodate elevators and the required space for elevator machine rooms, which are custom-engineered and specially-fabricated machines that need to fit perfectly into the space where they will operate.

Utility Relocation
Relocating utility lines is often necessary; however, many utilities are over a century old and located in the public way, requiring extensive coordination with other City Departments.

Station Type
Station configuration types (subway, elevated, median, at-grade) have unique characteristics that make some configuration types more complex to design, engineer, and construct than others. For example, subway stations require intensive construction activities, such as excavation, utility relocation, and road closures, which make these projects inherently more complex to design and construct.

Adjacent Freight Rail
The location of adjacent freight rail lines sometimes limits the design options available to modify stations.

Age and Condition
Due to the age and condition of some of the CTA's stations, rebuilding the station to meet modern design standards makes sense rather than retrofitting the existing station.

Historic Resources
Some stations or elements of stations are designated as historic resources and cannot be altered in a manner that impacts their historic significance.

COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY

ASAP PHASE ONE

AUSTIN (GREEN), MONTROSE (BLUE), AND CALIFORNIA (BLUE)

ASAP Phase One stations have a higher needs score and a lower complexity score based on the ASAP station prioritization. The Austin Green Line (Lake branch) station and the Montrose and California Blue Line (O'Hare branch) stations are included in the first phase of ASAP implementation. Given their priority status, these three stations were advanced to a 10 percent conceptual design stage, including detailed construction cost estimates, to kick-start the unfunded ASAP Phase One stations alongside the five funded ASAP Phase One stations that are actively moving forward to construction (see sections below).

STATE/LAKE STATION (LOOP ELEVATED)

The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) is currently leading a design effort to completely reconstruct and modernize the existing State/Lake (Loop Elevated) station. The project is fully funded through the design phase. In late 2017, CDOT was awarded a $56.9 Million federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. The CMAQ grant will allow CDOT to accelerate work in collaboration with the CTA to launch the design process for a new station. The $56.9 Million CMAQ grant will not cover the entire projected cost of $119.4 Million. However, CDOT plans to seek additional federal funding for construction in the coming years, so this is not identified as part of the funding needed for ASAP Phase One shown in Table ES-2.

RPM PHASE ONE

Funding in the amount of $2.2 Billion has been programmed for RPM Phase One, so this is not identified as part of the funding needed for ASAP Phase One shown in Table ES-2. RPM Phase One includes full reconstruction of four currently inaccessible stations on the Red Line (Lawrence, Argyle, Berwyn, and Bryn Mawr). Other interrelated infrastructure work beyond station accessibility (e.g., track, support structures, signals, etc.) will also be conducted as part of RPM Phase One. Because accessibility represents just one aspect of the larger infrastructure scope required for RPM Phase One, this translates into a higher cost ($2.2 Billion).

ELEVATOR REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

Along with making inaccessible stations accessible, it is important to ensure that existing elevators on CTA's rail system remain in a state of good repair. When an elevator is unexpectedly unavailable, customers may experience inconveniences and delays; this is especially true in areas of the system where there are long stretches of stations with no elevators. Given the importance of ensuring reliability of CTA's existing elevators, the first five years of the Elevator Replacement Program are included in ASAP Phase One. To meet the 20-year Elevator Replacement Program timeframe, an average of eight elevators per year will need to be rehabilitated or replaced. The CTA has targeted 16 elevators that would be replaced in the first two years of ASAP as shown in Table ES-1.

Table ES-1 Elevator Replacement Program Two-Year Strategy

Line	Station[a]	Number of Station Elevators to be Rehabilitated or Replaced
Loop / Transfer Stations	Clark/Lake Blue, Brown, Green, Orange, Pink, & Purple Line Transfer Station	Rehabilitate or replace all 4 elevators
	Washington/Wells Brown, Orange, Pink, & Purple Line Transfer Station	Rehabilitate or replace 1 of 2 elevators
Red	Jackson	Rehabilitate or replace all 4 elevators
	Loyola	Rehabilitate or replace the only elevator
Blue	Forest Park	Rehabilitate or replace the only elevator
	O'Hare	Rehabilitate or replace the only elevator
	Western (O'Hare branch)	Rehabilitate or replace 1 of 2 elevators
Orange	Midway	Rehabilitate or replace both elevators
Purple	Davis	Rehabilitate or replace 1 of 2 elevators

[a] Stations will be reassessed every two years to ensure that the data remains accurate and the highest-priority elevators are addressed in future years of the Program.

ASAP PHASE ONE COST (UNFUNDED PORTION)

The ASAP cost estimates include financial assumptions that are intended to provide as realistic a picture as possible of future costs given the information at hand. Identifying the exact cost of ASAP is difficult at this early stage of the design process as there are variables for which information is not yet available. As a result, ASAP cost estimates may change as station designs evolve. The same project could also become more expensive to implement due to inflation if funding is not received to maintain the phased implementation strategy that has been identified in Figure ES-4 (see Chapter 7).

As shown in Table ES-2, the total unfunded cost for the ASAP Phase One stations and the first five years of the Elevator Replacement Program is $140.3 Million.

Table ES-2 ASAP Phase One Cost (Unfunded Portion)

	Cost (Year of Expenditure (YOE))
Austin Station	$24.0 Million
Montrose Station	$16.1 Million
California Station	$34.6 Million
Subtotal	**$74.7 Million**
Five-Year Elevator Replacement Program	$65.6 Million
TOTAL Unfunded Cost[a]	**$140.3 Million**

[a] The ASAP Phase One cost includes the first five years of the Elevator Replacement Program. However, the ASAP Phase One cost excludes the partially funded CDOT-led State/Lake station (Loop Elevated) and the four fully funded RPM Phase One stations on the Red Line at Lawrence, Argyle, Berwyn, and Bryn Mawr.

TOTAL ASAP COST

The total estimated cost to implement all inaccessible stations included in ASAP as well as the Elevator Replacement Program is $2.1 billion as shown in Table ES-3.

The Future RPM Program and the FP Branch Reconstruction Program will help the CTA achieve its goal to make the legacy rail system 100 percent accessible. However, given the magnitude – in terms of scope and cost – of these major reconstruction initiatives, planning and design for these Programs is being conducted through separate processes that will address accessibility within the broader context of these Programs. Therefore, cost estimates for these Programs are not included in the total cost of ASAP.

Table ES-3 Twenty-Year ASAP and Elevator Replacement Program Cost

	Unfunded Cost (YOE)	Funded Cost (YOE)
ASAP Phase One Stations	$74.7 Million	
State/Lake Station	–	$119.4 Million[a]
RPM Phase One – Lawrence, Argyle, Berwyn, Bryn Mawr	–	$2.2 Billion[b]
ASAP Phase One Five-Year Elevator Replacement Program	$65.6 Million	–
Future ASAP Phases	$1.7 Billion	–
Future Elevator Replacement Program	$253.0 Million	–
TOTAL Twenty-Year Cost	**$2.1 Billion**	

[a] Reflects the projected cost for this CDOT-led project. To date, CDOT has secured CMAQ grant funds in the amount of $56.9 Million, which will not cover the full projected cost. However, CDOT plans to seek additional federal funding for construction, so this has not been identified as part of the funding needed for ASAP Phase One.
[b] Funding for RPM Phase One only has been programmed; the Future RPM Program remains unfunded. The RPM Program includes a larger infrastructure scope beyond accessibility.

PHASED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Implementing alterations or reconstructing ASAP stations will take time, coordination, and commitment. The proposed phased implementation strategy serves as a roadmap for sequencing stations to meet the 20-year timeframe. ASAP stations are slotted into four phases, which lays out a path for planning, designing, and constructing the proposed accessibility improvements at each station. Construction of the eight ASAP Phase One stations is estimated to begin within the first phase ASAP as shown in Figure ES-4, after which the stations are proposed to be constructed in Phase Two through Four. A full listing of CTA's currently inaccessible stations, by phase and program is shown in Table ES-4.

CALL TO ACTION: ADVOCATING FOR ASAP

Building on the progress and momentum created over the last 30 years, and in partnership with the disability community, the ASAP Strategic Plan lays out the roadmap to deliver complete vertical accessibility to the CTA rail system within 20 years.

ASAP benefits everyone, but funding is a key piece of the puzzle to make ASAP a reality. Funding has already been partially or fully secured for over half of the ASAP Phase One stations (Lawrence, Argyle, Berwyn, Bryn Mawr, and State/Lake). To help secure funding for RPM Phase One, the CTA relied on the support of many individuals and organizations, including those in the disability community, to advocate for funding for this much-needed project. These efforts were ultimately successful, resulting in the creation of the RPM Transit Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. Funding for transit is in short supply and securing funding for ASAP is no small task. The CTA will look to these strong partnerships again to obtain funding for the remainder of ASAP and move this critical program forward.

Long-term funding solutions are needed at both the federal and state level to allow the CTA to meet the accessibility needs of all riders. The CTA is currently facing extraordinary fiscal pressure, as the State of Illinois has reduced operating funds to support regional transit. The CTA, which carries more than 80 percent of the region's transit rides, has shouldered the largest portion of these cuts: more than $33 Million in reduced funding. Meanwhile, limited state and federal capital funding is not sufficient to address the growing backlog of upgrades and repairs required to keep the CTA system in a state of good repair. The CTA continues investing in upgrading or replacing system assets, yet the unfunded capital need continues to grow with each year.

A new federal funding program is needed to incentivize accessibility improvements beyond the ADA requirements. There are currently no major federal funding programs that directly support accessibility-focused transit projects or programs like ASAP. The CTA – like many other legacy transit agencies throughout the country – has complied with the core requirements of the ADA and continues to meet ADA requirements on new projects. But CTA's ASAP initiative is different. ASAP goes beyond ADA requirements to achieve vertical accessibility across the entire CTA rail system. A good public transportation system is a major asset for all U.S. cities; transit supports economic development by providing access to jobs and businesses, reducing road congestion, and lowering transportation costs for individuals and households by providing an alternative to driving. When a transit system is not fully accessible, the benefits it provides are not available to everyone. A long-term federal funding solution is needed to incentivize legacy transit systems to improve accessibility beyond what is required by law and to create a system that is fully inclusive and accessible, embracing the true spirit of the ADA.

A new state capital bill is needed to support the $140.3 Million projected cost of ASAP Phase One. At their current levels, CTA's existing funding sources are not adequate to support ASAP improvements. In the near-term, ASAP Phase One will need to be funded by the State. If a new federal funding program is created, the CTA will require a revenue stream to match federal funds. This revenue stream does not currently exist because the State has not passed a capital bill since 2009. Therefore, new transportation revenues will be needed from state and local sources to support a state capital bill that would allow ASAP Phase One to move forward.

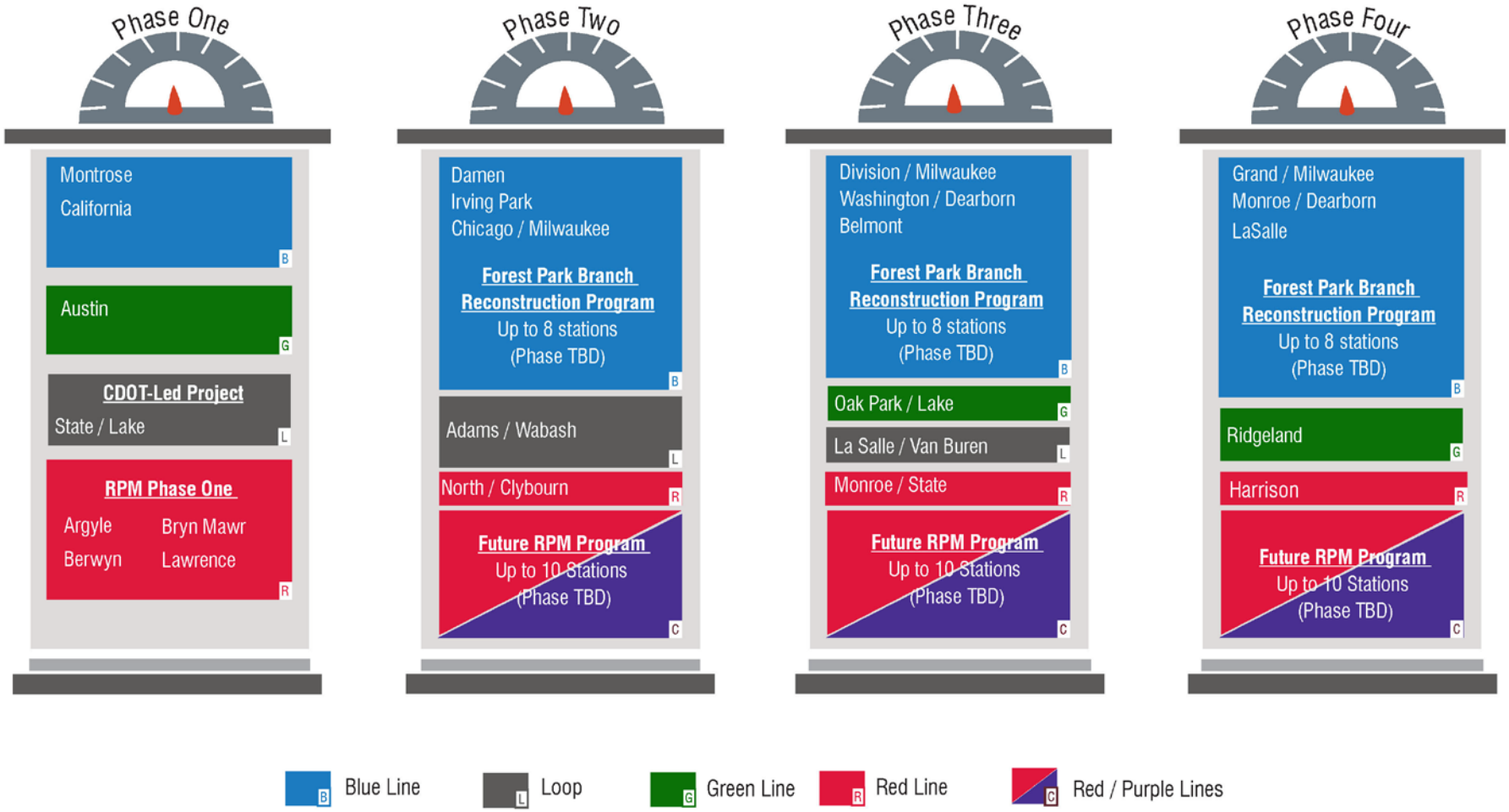
Successful implementation of ASAP Phase One and Future ASAP Phases will heavily rely on a stable and reliable source of state capital funding as well as a new federal funding program. Accessibility will remain a central priority for CTA, even as it seeks to maintain, upgrade, and replace the existing system. Accessibility benefits everyone, and to make ASAP a reality, the CTA looks forward to ongoing collaboration with the disability community, the State of Illinois, and the federal government.

FUTURE ASAP STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATES

The ASAP Strategic Plan will be updated over time to remain consistent with ongoing planning, modernization, and construction work as part of CTA's Capital Program. The following regular updates are currently planned:

- CTA staff will provide annual updates on ASAP to the ADA Advisory Committee;
- The ADA Advisory Committee will include an update on ASAP as part of its annual update to the Chicago Transit Authority Board; and
- CTA staff will update the ASAP Strategic Plan every five years, which will be available on CTA's website: www.transitchicago.com/accessibility/asap.

Figure ES-4 Twenty-Year Implementation Strategy by Phase, Pending Funding Availability



Note: Phases reflect the sequencing in which construction is estimated.

Table ES-4 Inaccessible Stations, by Proposed Implementation Phase

No	Line	Station	Branch	Note / Related Program
Station Currently Under Construction to Add Accessibility				
–	Loop	Quincy	Loop Elevated	Under Construction
ASAP Phase One				
1	Green	Austin	Lake	
2	Blue	Montrose	O'Hare	
3	Blue	California	O'Hare	
4	Loop	State/Lake	Loop Elevated	CDOT-led Project (Partially Funded)
5	Red	Lawrence	North Side Main Line	RPM Phase One (Funded)
6	Red	Argyle	North Side Main Line	RPM Phase One (Funded)
7	Red	Berwyn	North Side Main Line	RPM Phase One (Funded)
8	Red	Bryn Mawr	North Side Main Line	RPM Phase One (Funded)
ASAP Phase Two				
9	Loop	Adams/Wabash	Loop Elevated	
10	Blue	Chicago/Milwaukee	Dearborn Street Subway	
11	Blue	Damen	O'Hare	
12	Blue	Irving Park	O'Hare	
13	Red	North/Clybourn	State Street Subway	
ASAP Phase Three				
14	Blue	Belmont	O'Hare	
15	Blue	Division/Milwaukee	Dearborn Street Subway	
16	Loop	LaSalle/Van Buren	Loop Elevated	
17	Red	Monroe/State	State Street Subway	
18	Green	Oak Park	Lake	
19	Blue	Washington/Dearborn	Dearborn Street Subway	

No	Line	Station	Branch	Note / Related Program
ASAP Phase Four				
20	Blue	Grand/Milwaukee	Dearborn Street Subway	
21	Red	Harrison	State Street Subway	
22	Blue	LaSalle	Dearborn Street Subway	
23	Blue	Monroe/Dearborn	Dearborn Street Subway	
24	Green	Ridgeland	Lake	
Forest Park Branch Reconstruction Program (Phase TBD)				
25	Blue	Clinton	Forest Park	
26	Blue	Racine	Forest Park	
27	Blue	Western	Forest Park	
28	Blue	Pulaski	Forest Park	
29	Blue	Cicero	Forest Park	
30	Blue	Austin	Forest Park	
31	Blue	Oak Park	Forest Park	
32	Blue	Harlem	Forest Park	
Future RPM Program (Phase TBD)				
33	Red	Sheridan	North Side Main Line	
34	Red	Thorndale	North Side Main Line	
35	Red	Morse	North Side Main Line	
36	Red	Jarvis	North Side Main Line	
37	Purple	South Boulevard	Evanston	
38	Purple	Main	Evanston	
39	Purple	Dempster	Evanston	
40	Purple	Foster	Evanston	
41	Purple	Noyes	Evanston	
42	Purple	Central	Evanston	