



Meeting the Moment: Transforming CTA's Post-Pandemic Future



Message from the President

As Summer 2022 winds down, CTA remains focused on improving bus and rail service, implementing new initiatives that directly benefit our customers and upgrading our technologies to improve the reliability and accuracy of the tools CTA riders rely upon—especially our Transit Trackers. During [my August 11, 2022 address before the City Club of Chicago](#), I unveiled our new [“Meeting the Moment: Transforming CTA's Post-Pandemic Future” Action Plan](#), which details the improvements, initiatives and enhancements CTA will be making in 2022 and early 2023. If you haven't seen the video, I encourage you to watch it because it will give you a sense of our agency's direction and the many positive changes we will be making in the near-term.

During my remarks, I identified the five pillars of our action plan, and you can expect regular progress reports on these pillars, like this newsletter, as we continue to improve the CTA travel experience for our customers. On behalf of the CTA family of employees, especially our essential workers that keep our buses and trains moving, I thank you for the opportunity to serve your public transit needs.

Dorval R. Carter, Jr.



Pillar 1: Deliver reliable and consistent service

The return of the #X4 bus route

August 22, 2022 marked [the return of CTA's #X4 Cottage Grove Express bus route](#)—a popular route serving customers on Chicago's South and Far South Side customers. The #X4 route operates between the bus terminal of 95th/Chicago State University on the south and Columbus/Randolph on the north. The #X4 is the third express route to be reinstated under President Carter's leadership, joining the #X9 Ashland and #X49 Western Express routes. This service improvement is part of our larger effort to strengthen bus and rail services on South and Far South sides.

New bus operators join CTA family

The CTA's ongoing, aggressive and multifaceted recruitment campaign to attract and hire new bus operator candidates is bearing results. In August, [CTA welcomed 80 new full-time bus operators into its ranks](#), joining the over 166 bus operators who already joined CTA in 2022. These operators received extensive training that prepared them to safely and ably serve customers across Chicago. Increasing our bus operator workforce is key to delivering reliable and consistent bus service and we are making significant progress, with more employees currently training to join CTA over the coming months.



Pillar 2: Enhance safety and security for riders

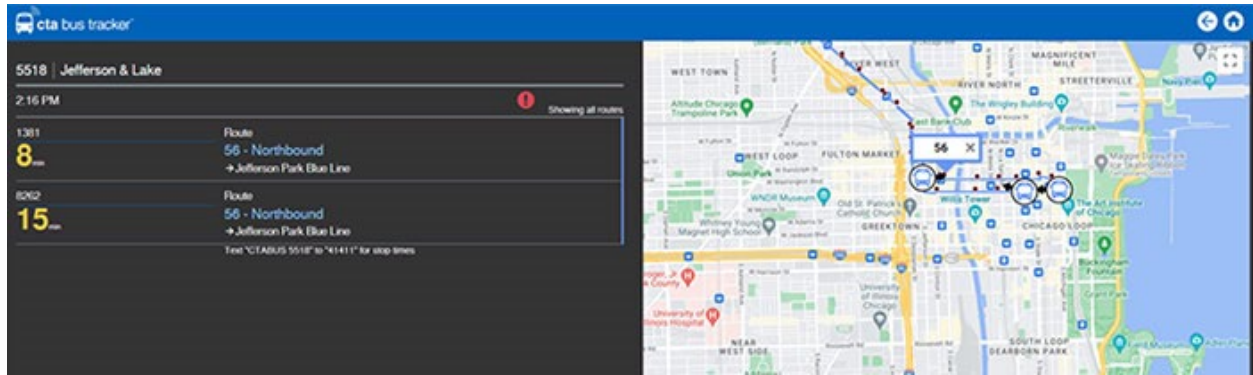
Unarmed, K-9 teams consisting of two, unarmed guards and a canine, have begun patrolling CTA's rail service. Under an 18-month contract with Action K-9, an agreement that will provide up to 100 unarmed guards and 50 canines, per day, will supplement the 300-plus unarmed guards currently working across the system, daily. As part of their patrols, the K-9 teams will be deployed near rail station turnstiles to deter fare evasion and increase overall security presence.



Pillar 3: Improve the customer experience at our facilities

Tactile bus sign pilot launched for people with visual impairments

As part of a new pilot effort, [CTA recently deployed the first 1,300 tactile bus stop signs](#) for customers who are blind, have low vision or are DeafBlind. The 4" X 6.5" signs feature the words "BUS STOP" in Braille and raised type face. This initiative was developed in conjunction with blind and vision-impaired customers, as well as CTA's ADA Advisory Committee. At this time, the new tactile signs can be found along the #20 Madison route. Crews will expand signs to stops along 11 additional routes over the next several months.



Pillar 4: Upgrade our digital tools to improve rider communication

New CTA Bus Tracker released

[CTA recently unveiled a fully redesigned website for CTA Bus Tracker](#), which is now easier to use, has a more modern design and will allow key upgrades to be made into 2023, which will result in more accurate and reliable bus arrival times. Improvements in the design make it more adaptable to whatever device is being used—from smartphones to desktop computers—and new navigation features allow for more detailed views and information. The upgrade also allows Bus Tracker to find nearby stops using smartphone GPS and provides modernized mapping features for improved, real-time viewing of buses across the city.

Pillar 5: Invest in our employees

Ongoing discussion with unions about employee incentives

CTA is continuing to discuss potential new employee recruitment incentives and additional retention strategies for existing workers and will provide more detailed updates as progress is made. We want to ensure that CTA remains an attractive employer for those seeking employment and are equally committed to ensuring that the safety needs and concerns of CTA's hard-working and highly valued frontline, essential employees are addressed.



Customer Engagement

“Ask CTA” in the community

On August 30, 2022, [CTA launched our new “Ask CTA” community engagement program](#), which provides customers with an opportunity to connect with CTA senior management, government and community relations staff and human resources specialists at select rail stations. The events allow customers to ask questions about CTA’s operations and activities, and to learn more about the agency’s job opportunities. [The initial “Ask CTA” events have been very well-received](#) and will continue through October, occurring at three rail stations each week.