

**February 14, 2024. Chicago Transit Board Regular Meeting Minutes.**

Noticed for 10:00 a.m. Commenced at 10:00 a.m.

AGENDA: The posted agenda for the meeting is available at [www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com), "Chicago Transit Board", "Meeting Notices, Agendas, and Minutes", (02/14/2024) (Regular Board Meeting), "Agenda".

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lester Barclay at 10:00 a.m.

There was a roll call vote.

ROLL CALL: Directors: Lester L. Barclay (Chairman), Neema Jha, Michele Lee, Johnny Miller and Bernard Jakes were in person.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Chairman Barclay then advanced the agenda to Public Comments. One public comment was made by phone by Courtney Cobb. Five public comments were made in person by the following persons:

- Caroline Pavlecic of Commuters Take Action and a member of the CTA Citizens Advisory Board;
- Nik Hunder of Commuters Take Action;
- Bill Morton of the Rogers Park Chamber of Commerce;
- Isaac Campbell; and
- Branden McFadden of Commuters Take Action.

There were questions and discussion following the public comments regarding the FOIA process and the CTA plan to become 100% wheelchair accessible in every station.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

President Carter presented his report:

- President Dorval Carter requested that Molly Poppe give a report on CTA's plans short- and long-term plans for bus service. The presentation addressed the following topics:
  - So, first, I just want to start with a couple key facts about our bus service. Importantly, we have 127 bus routes that transverse the entire city and including many of our surrounding suburbs.
  - This map here shows the nearly 11,000 bus stops that we have throughout the city. There are nearly 1,900 buses in our fleet and nearly 3,400 bus operators currently operating our bus service.
  - We have over 350 million passenger miles ridden on CTA buses annually. That is longer than a trip to Mars and back, which I think is just a really important point to note of how much our bus service does deliver service hours across the city and how many customers rely on us on a daily basis with our bus service.

- Ninety-six (96%) percent of Chicagoans live within a half mile of a bus stop. Thirty (30%) percent of Chicagoans live within a half mile of a CTA rail station.
- And another important point as we think about bus, and we think about the connection point  
is a lot of our riders are transferring. So many of our riders are taking a bus to a rail line to get where they need to go or taking a bus -- a bus to a bus in order to get where they need to go. The bus really does expand that grid of our rail system and ensures access for our riders.
- We see a higher ridership on bus than we do on rail Roughly 58 percent of our rides that we delivered in 2023 are delivered on bus. That comes out to about 162 million rides taken on bus last year alone. That is a 15 and a half percent increase in bus ridership over 2023 -- in 2023 compared to 2022.
- There are four components of bus that we like to think about. And this covers every aspect of the agency. So this is not just the planning and innovation department. This is the administration department under Tom McKone, this is operations under Don Bonds, infrastructure under Bill Mooney. And, really, the entire agency is invested in bus and has key components of making our bus system work.
- There's also the bus priority infrastructure. This is primarily done in partnership with the Chicago Department of Transportation. But this also includes investments that we do on our own as it relates to infrastructure.
- There's vehicle fleet, so how does our vehicle fleet -- how do we manage uptime? How do we continue to improve our fleet to ensure that it's a modern, accessible fleet for everyone. Lastly, there is technology. As we continue to think about investments in bus, we don't just think about it from a -- service on the street, you know, how many buses do we have out there, what does the infrastructure on the street look like....
- We really want to make sure that we have a holistic technology approach around bus that does focus on how do we ensure people get the right information before they even get on the bus, how are we communicating with them to help them make the decisions, and then how do we communicate and provide good service on the bus. We will talk about digital bus screens, things like that. And then it goes to how do we make our system more efficient, so transit signal prioritization and other investments.
- Some of the key projects that we have coming up. Bus Vision is one project that we will be kicking off in earnest in the next couple of months around public engagement. Bus Vision is really about the bus network. It is going to be engagement with the community, engagement with our riders about what type of service do they want to see, what do they see as the strengths and weaknesses of our service, and what are those tradeoffs.
- As we talk to riders, as they tell us we want less bus stops because we think that will make the service faster, you know, what does that mean from accessibility or vice versa, we want more bus stops, so what does that mean potentially for speed.
- We will have those conversations with our community to understand what they want to see around our bus service and what the network can do to support them in where they want to

go. And I just want to point on the map here. This map shows an analysis of how many more jobs in Chicago can be reached from any point in 45 minutes. And this is compared to the number of jobs in the general vicinity. So as I mentioned, you know, bus really does add -- and transit in general does add that access to jobs, access to, you know, the economy that may not be available within walking distance. So as we think about our bus network and we think about our rail network, we really think about the access that we can provide for health care, for jobs, for school, and we want to make sure that that Bus Vision does reflect how the community wants to use our service. Better Streets for Bus is a really important partnership that we launched with CDOT at the end of last year. And it really is a downpayment on Mayor Johnson's transition plan and what he called for in his transition plan is prioritizing the development of a citywide network of bus rapid transit and dedicated bus lanes that gives buses priority over car and truck traffic.

- So Better Streets for Bus is really about the infrastructure, so it's about that -- what's happening on the street. We launched this comprehensive framework back in November and December of last year -- excuse me -- and it really builds on a lot of key projects that we've already launched with CDOT. So, it builds on Loop Link, the Jeffery Jump, and some priority bus zones that we've seen pop up throughout the city recently.

There are 17 corridors that are identified in Better Streets for Bus. And it really lays that groundwork for how are the infrastructure investments that we want to make in those corridors. And those investments come from a whole toolbox.

Potential investments include:

1. Dedicated bus lanes or BRT;
  2. Bus stop treatments or bus-friendly intersections – like transit signal prioritization;
  3. New jumps and better boarding.
- In 2024 the CTA will be studying three bus corridors and identify the types of infrastructure improvements that are needed along those corridors to improve the speed and reliability of that service.
  - CDOT (Chicago Department of Transportation) is a critical partner as we think about everything happening on the street – like Transit Signal Prioritization or “TSP.”
  - The CTA and CDOT have launched TSP on Western, South Ashland and Jeffrey. We are looking to do some additional investments along Ashland to Irving Park in 2024 to run through early 2025.
  - The CTA is also development the next generation of TSP which is a centralized TSP and looking at more corridors and more ways to improve TSP across the city.
  - **ACCESSIBILITY:** Accessibility is a critical component of our bus service. There are two key pieces that the CTA has started to work on and will be seeking to make additional investments:
    - The CTA partners with CDOT to achieve accessibility improvements at key bus stops targeting 100 bus stops annually – extending bus stops so that they are more accessible. CDOT is updating approximately 100 bus stops each year.
    - Expanding tactile bus stop signage. The CTA has installed 2,000 signs to date across 16 routes throughout the CITY.

- BUS TECHNOLOGY:
  - We have new digital signage on our buses. It is being installed on all buses that enter our fleet.
  - It provides more information to the rider about the upcoming bus stops and it helps show transfer points.
  - It does not replace audio announcements.
  - We are looking to expand and put digital bus stop signage at key bus stops throughout the city that will enhance accessibility. The goal is to have signage that can do text-to-speech and do alerts.
  - There is also an active detection collision avoidance system that we have deployed on all of our new buses.
  - BLIND SPOT: Most cars not have in their systems technology that tells you when someone is in your blind spot.
  - BUS TRACKER: We have ongoing enhancements to bus tracker. Most importantly this includes adopting the industry standard, GTFS-RT feed which is more accurate and third parties really understand how to utilize the communication because it is an industry standard.
  - DISRUPTION MANGEMENT: This is a tool that the CTA is launching.
    - The Technology Department is leading this effort under the direction of Caroline Gallagher.
    - The goal is to better communicate to riders about alerts.
  - NEW FAREBOXES: Our CTA fareboxes are 37 -38 years old. They are an entirely mechanical system.
    - We are transitioning them to a seamless integrated system on the bus.
    - Ur fareboxes previously didn't talk to any other system on the bus.
    - Now we will be integrating those fareboxes with Ventra.
    - It will also be integrated with our CAD ADL system: a more seamless experience for the operator and a more seamless payment system for cash-paying riders.
  - TRANSFORMATIONAL PROJECTS:
    - North DuSable Lake Shore Drive: CTA has been working with the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Chicago Park District for probably 8-10 years to identify how to transform LSD/DuSable to a corridor that can serve bus riders, vehicular traffic, pedestrians and address some of the safety concerns that exist on North DuSable Lake Shore Drive?
      - NOTE: North DuSable Lake Shore Drive is CTA's highest bus corridor. We have the most bus riders on that corridor than any other area of the city.
      - There are seven (7) routes on LSD that are serviced.
      - North LSD/DuSable carries more people than a Metra line – so it is a high ridership corridor.
      - Mayor Johnson's Transition Report has said that the priority for DuSable/LSD is prioritizing the movement of people – not cars.
    - E-Bus: We have talked a lot about this with the CTA Board and the Board is familiar with this.
      - We launched a study in 2022 called Charging Forward that laid out the path for a full electrification of our bus system in 2040.

- The most important benefit of electrification is the limiting of the health impacts of diesel emissions.
- It can also reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.
- It can also ensure that an already sustainable system – CTA – is a more sustainable, more environmentally friendly way to get around the city than everyone driving their own personal vehicle.
- This transformation will involve 1,900 buses and 127 bus routes. Here are some key challenges:
  - Sufficient funding. It is a mandate that we want to convert our bus fleet to all electric buses by 2040.
  - This requires a significant amount of funding and power upgrades from ComEd and others,
  - The other issue is vehicle supply.
  - How do we ensure that we can have enough vehicles supplying the e-bus demand?
  - CTA is not the only transit agency who is transforming their bus fleet from gas to electric by 2040 – that is the goal of almost every other transit agency in the country – and there are not a huge amount of bus manufacturers in the county to deliver the buses.
  - Also, there are things that happen in extremely cold weather to battery range – which we saw in the news with Tesla this past winter. It is something we are aware of and have to think through given that we operate in cold weather.
- President Carter has been working on a roundtable on clean bus manufacturing, He has been working with the heads of major transit agencies from across the country, including New York, LA, Philadelphia and others.
- There is a real conversation that is happening with the White House Climate Policy Office as well as the transit industry as a whole – both from the operator side as well as the FTA side. The issue that they are exploring is how do we start to build that capacity in the US around manufacturing of clean buses and ensuring that we’re able to keep up with that demand.
- CTA being at the forefront and leading that effort is critically important because in order to deliver on our strategy, we have to make sure that there’s capacity throughout the country in order to deliver.
- That concluded the presentation of Molly Poppe, CTA Chief Planning & Innovations Officer on the future of bus service delivery at the CTA.

Members of the Board had questions:

There were questions:

A. Director Jha asked how is CTA managing its plan to convert to electric buses?

- President Carter responded that the White House has convened a work group comprised of transit

agencies, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Energy, and others to hear about the resources needed by transit agencies to convert to electric buses. President Carter stated that a couple of decades ago there were 10 bus manufacturers. Currently there are a total of two (2) bus manufacturers supplying the entire country. There is also one bus company that is in bankruptcy named Proterra. We still have a number of buses that Proterra owes us, and CTA is a claimant in their bankruptcy action.

- B. Chairman Barclay asked whether the 2040 goal to be 100% electric regarding buses is realistic?
- President Carter stated that he can't answer that question yet. There are too many variables that are still outstanding. Also, the bus companies are frustrated because too many transit agencies are requiring a level of customization in terms of the design of the buses that is slowing down production.
  - The customization issue, requirements we put on the bus manufacturers is also resulting in a very costly product.
- C. Director Miller asked how is the White House assisting in enlarging the number of bus manufacturers?
- D. Molly Poppe advised that the State of Illinois is having critical conversations with ComEd – our utility provider – about how more electric grids will be brought online and how they will be funded.
- E. Michele Curran advised the Board on the status of the conversations with ComEd and the State of Illinois

MINUTES: Chairman Barclay asked for a motion to approve the regular Board meeting minutes from January 18, 2024. After being moved by Director Miller and seconded by Director Jha, the minutes were approved with five (5) votes in the affirmative.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: CTA's General Counsel Kent Ray explained that it was necessary for the Board to move into closed session pursuant to the Illinois Open Meetings Act, Section 2C, Subsections 2, 11 and 21.

Chairman Barclay requested a motion to recess into Executive Session for the reasons stated by Counsel.

Director Miller so moved, and the motion was seconded by Director Jha.

The motion passed unanimously following a roll call vote. The Board recessed to Executive Session at 10:58 a.m.

The Board returned to Open Session at 11:38 a.m.

Chairman Barclay requested a motion to return to Open Session. Director Miller moved that the Transit Board move back into Open Session and the motion was seconded by Director Jha. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

The next item on the agenda was Item 6A which was the review and adoption of the Closed Meeting Minutes from December 13, 2023. Director Miller moved that the minutes be adopted as submitted. The

motion was seconded by Director Ortiz. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 6B: The Board discussed in Executive Session the reviewed the recommended findings and decision of the Hearing Committee appointed in connection with a review of the discharge of CTA employee Kevin McCormick under Section 28 of the Metropolitan Transit Authority Act. Director Miller moved that the Board approve the Hearing Committee’s recommendation to sustain McCormick’s discharge and Director Ortiz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously following a roll call vote.

BOARD MATTERS: Chairman Barclay asked whether there were any Board Matters? Secretary Greenlee advised that there were no Board Matters.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE, AUDIT AND BUDGET: The Finance, Audit, and Budget Committee interim chair Director Jakes presented the report. The committee reviewed the monthly Finance report and approved the January 18, 2024, FAB committee minutes. Director Jakes stated that all Committee agenda items, listed on the Board agenda, were presented, reviewed, discussed, and recommended by the Committee, for Board approval. Director Jakes stated that all the approved committee items, 3 ordinances and 9 contracts, were placed on the omnibus for approval by the Board. Director Jakes concluded his report.

Chairman Barclay asked for a motion to approve the omnibus as stated by Director Jakes.

After being moved by Director Miller and seconded by Director Jha, the motion was approved with five yes votes.

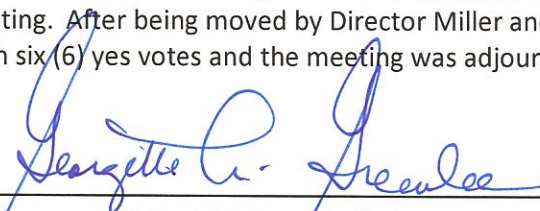
All approved February 14, 2024, Board ordinances are available online, at [www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com), “Chicago Transit Board”, “Board Ordinances”, Ordinance numbers 024-010– 024-027.

CONSTRUCTION REPORT: The Construction Report was given by Bill Mooney, IV, Chief Infrastructure Officer. He was joined by JuanPablo Prieto, Director of Diversity Programs.

CONSTRUCTION REPORT: The Construction Report was presented and can be found at: <https://www.transitchicago.com/board/presentations/>

NEW BUSINESS: None

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chairman Barclay asked for a motion to adjourn the February 14, 2024, Chicago Transit Board meeting. After being moved by Director Miller and seconded by Director Ortiz, the motion was approved with six (6) yes votes and the meeting was adjourned at 12: p.m.

APPROVED:   
Secretary of the CTA Board of Directors

Date: 03/13/2024