

Chicago Transit Board  
March 14, 2007

Thank you Chairman Brown.

Good morning.

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During the Olympic Selection Committee's visit to Chicago last week, CTA's recently acquired hybrid buses were provided to transport committee members and city officials on a tour of proposed Olympic venues throughout the city and surrounding area.

The hybrid buses are powered by both a diesel engine and electric motor and are expected to improve fuel efficiency, anywhere from 10 to 40 percent, and can help to reduce emissions by as much as 90 percent compared to a diesel powered engine.

We are currently evaluating the performance of these hybrid buses in Chicago's extreme weather conditions and comparing the two types of drive systems to determine if hybrid buses are suitable as future additions to CTA's fleet.

We are pleased to be a part of the City's efforts in working to bring the 2016 Olympic Games here to Chicago and will continue to offer our support.

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Last Friday, the Francisco station on the Brown Line reopened to customers nearly a week ahead of schedule.

Francisco station reopened after six months of renovation work to completely rebuild the historic stationhouse and install a ramp which now makes the station newly accessible to customers.

Along with a wheelchair accessible turnstile and tactile edging on the platform, additional customer amenities include brighter lighting, windbreaks, security cameras, benches and a new public address system.

Construction crews will continue to work in the weeks ahead to install permanent station signs, original artwork, windows and complete work to build a new auxiliary entrance at Sacramento on the west end of the station.

Francisco is the fourth newly renovated station to reopen as part of the Brown Line capacity expansion project. We have reopened all four stations ahead of schedule.

Kimball station, which also closed with Francisco on September 15, reopened for service in January.

In August 2006, the Kedzie and Rockwell stations reopened for service following a six-month temporary closure.

The Montrose and Addison stations closed in early December for one year and are currently under construction, and the Southport station will temporarily close for construction on April 2 for one year.

The Belmont, Fullerton and Western stations remain open during the entire construction project.

Work also continues at Chicago, Armitage and Sedgwick, which are subject to a few weekend-only closures.

This past Monday we hosted the first of four informational meetings scheduled this month to provide affected customers with details on plans for the upcoming switch to three-track operations.

We want to make sure that customers know that even though rail capacity will be reduced in the affected corridor, there are many good bus options in that area.

In addition, we have been working with Metra and last week they announced plans to add additional service on the Union Pacific North Line.

The overall Brown Line capacity expansion project remains on time and on budget and when completed in 2009, CTA customers will reap the benefits of increased capacity along the Brown Line and accessible, state-of-the-art stations.

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Two weeks ago, I participated in an event to present the Chicago Police Department's Public Transportation Section with 19 new squad cars to replace older vehicles in the fleet.

The vehicles will be used by officers in the Public Transportation Section as they patrol and monitor CTA's system.

The presence of law enforcement on the system serves as a deterrent to crime and also provides a measure of comfort and security to customers.

By being mobile, officers can quickly respond to incidents on both buses and trains, which is why having new, reliable police cars is essential.

In addition, we will be adding equipment so that these vehicles can participate in CTA's Mobile Security Network pilot currently underway.

The network allows images from security cameras on select buses and rail stations to be sent to laptops in the cars via a wireless router.

We are proud to work in partnership with the City by providing these new vehicles to support the police department and enable them to perform their jobs more effectively.

It reaffirms our commitment to the safety of our bus and rail customers as well as to our employees.

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And now, as is customary, I have an update for the Board on ridership.

In January, 39.8 million rides were provided during the month, an increase of 1.1 percent compared to January 2006.

Systemwide, ridership in January increased by 0.9 percent on weekdays, Saturdays were up 3.7 percent and Sundays/Holiday decreased by 0.7 percent.

The rail system provided 15.2 million rides in January, a decrease of 0.8 percent compared to last year.

Weekdays were down 1.2 percent, Saturdays were up 2.5 percent and Sundays/Holidays were unchanged.

The bus system provided 24.5 million rides in January, an increase of 3.1 percent compared to January 2006.

This was the third month in a row of increased ridership on the busy system. Weekdays were up 3.2 percent, Saturdays were up 5.1 percent and Sunday/Holidays were unchanged.

Express routes introduced last year as part of the West Side and near western suburbs service enhancements – namely the X9 Ashland Express, the X20 Washington/Madison Express and the X54 Cicero Express – were catalysts for growth in bus ridership in January.

We remain focused on providing service for our customers that is on time, clean, safe and friendly.

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In closing, as always, I thank the Board for supporting CTA's mission of delivering quality, affordable transit services that link people, jobs and communities.

I thank you and this concludes my report.