

Slide 1: CTA Blue Line Forest Park Branch Feasibility/Vision Study

Village of Forest Park Council Meeting
Presented by Carole Morey, CTA Chief Planning Officer
October 13, 2015

Slide 2: Purpose and Study Process

Purpose of the study

- The 55-year old Forest Park Branch is beyond its useful life
 - Evaluate existing conditions and infrastructure options
 - Evaluate markets and service options
 - Conduct outreach to project stakeholders
 - Identify policy and funding options
 - Coordinate planning with IDOT for I-290 corridor

Slide 3: Blue Line Study Area

- Clinton Station to Forest Park Terminal Station
- Madison Street to Roosevelt Road
- Review IDOT transit proposals to Mannheim Rd

A map showing the study area as described above: The Study area captures the complete Blue Line from Clinton to Forest Park, and also allows for the evaluation of alternatives that could continue to Mannheim Road in coordination with I-290 EIS study.

Specifically, a red box delineates the study area from 1 block east of Clinton station at Canal Street (east) to Mannheim Road (west), Madison Street (north) to Roosevelt Road (south).

Slide 4: Forest Park Terminal Area – Background

- Terminal Station for Blue Line Forest Park Branch
- Station rebuilt in 1982 with ADA access
- Terminal serves Pace Buses #301, #303, #305, #308, #310, #317, #318, #320 and #757 (no CTA routes)
- 1,051 existing Park and Ride spaces,
 - 650 spaces on CTA property (397 in main lot, 200 in overflow lot near cemetery, and 53 south of I-290 bridge)
 - 401 on Village of Forest Park property
- Weekday ridership ~3,800 entries/day
- Over 1/3 of weekday riders transfer from bus (37%, March/April 2013)
- Annual 2014 ridership consistent (+0.1%) with 2013 at 1,157,040 entries

Photograph of station from Van Buren St included. Photograph of station platform included.

Slide 5: Forest Park Terminal Area – Pace Bus Routes

A map of DuPage and Cook Counties showing the Pace bus routes that intersect with the Blue Line, including routes #301, #303, #305, #308, #310, #317, #318, #320, #757 (serving Forest Park terminal), routes #307 (serving Harlem station), #311 (serving Oak Park station), #315 (serving Austin station).

Text overlaid on map states:

- 82 percent of Pace / Blue Line transfers occur at Forest Park terminal, where 9 of 12 intersecting Pace routes meet the Blue Line.

Slide 6: Forest Park Terminal Station - Background

Forest Park Branch Ridership, Annual Average 2014

Forest Park Blue Line Station	Average Weekday	Average Saturday	Average Sunday	Annual Entries	Market Share
Clinton	3,748	1,539	1,394	1,116,639	11%
UIC-Halsted	5,836	2,215	1,579	1,695,108	17%
Racine	2,474	1,346	979	757,731	8%
Illinois Medical District	3,703	1,230	856	1,057,932	11%
Western	1,737	1,176	912	556,858	6%
Kedzie-Homan	2,353	1,552	1,235	752,306	8%
Pulaski	1,946	1,509	1,259	647,672	7%
Cicero	1,492	1,042	796	480,685	5%
Austin	2,107	1,065	796	638,728	7%
Oak Park	1,882	809	591	556,353	6%
Harlem	1,179	693	528	367,351	4%
Forest Park	3,803	1,968	1,466	1,157,040	12%
Blue Line - Forest Park Total	32,260	16,144	12,391	9,784,403	100%

Slide 7: Recommend Complete Reconstruction of FP Branch

- Minimal upgrades have been completed as needed
 - Special Trackwork and Signals recently upgraded (except Lathrop)
 - Ongoing maintenance efforts keep tracks in operable condition: 27.3% of Forest Park Blue Line branch in slow zones (Sep 2015); permanent fix not possible w/out full reconstruction
- Remaining elements beyond useful life and severely worn
 - Track: contaminated ballast, deteriorated ties, poor drainage, worn rail
 - Stations: over 50 years old, only 4 of 12 are accessible, narrow platforms
 - Structures: approaching end of useful life
 - Traction Power: substation, cabling, third rail, etc require upgrading
 - Communications System: warrants technical improvements
 - Maintenance Shop and Yard: approaching end of useful life; inadequate track configuration and capacity

Slide 8: Maintain Existing Entrance Locations

- Retain double and triple entry station entrances at Harlem, Oak Park, Austin, Illinois Medical District, Racine, UIC-Halsted

[Image of Austin station, with two head houses at Austin and Lombard, and ramps to center platform]

- Dual headhouses possible for single entry stations with bus connections at Cicero, Pulaski, Western

[Image of Western Ave revised station concept design with dual headhouses on both the east and west sides of Western Ave, both leading down to opposite ends of a CTA platform.]

Slide 9: Improve Customer Experience Conceptual Rendering

A draft rendering of the platform level at Austin station is shown. The platform is wider than existing without any barriers, allowing a long open view of many transit users. There is a partial concrete station covering. The features of the rendering are listed at the bottom of the slide as follows:

- WIDER PLATFORMS
- SHELTER/WEATHER PROTECTION

Slide 10: Improve Customer Experience Conceptual Rendering

A draft rendering of the entrance to Harlem station is shown. There is a plaza in front of the station with a partial covering. There are green trees, a bike rack and many pedestrians in the image. The features of the rendering are listed at the bottom of the slide as follows:

- ADA ACCESSIBLE
- LANDSCAPING
- PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS/REFUGES
- STATION ENTRANCE DESIGN AND LOCATIONS
- REDUCED NOISE VIA STATION DESIGN

- BIKE RACKS
- LIGHTING
- CTA MAINTENANCE & CONSTRUCTION

Slide 11: Forest Park Terminal Station - Conceptual Rendering

An image is included of a draft rendering of Des Plaines Ave facing south looking toward a redesigned CTA station at Forest Park terminal. The rendering shows wider sidewalks with pedestrians and bike lanes on Des Plaines, CTA entrances on the east and west sides of the street, and a redesigned station covering of aesthetically curved concrete.

Slide 12: Forest Park Terminal Station – Improve Terminal Site

Redesign Forest Park terminal, yard, and shop

- Improve site circulation
 - Bus circulation and transfers
 - Bike and pedestrian access to the terminal
 - Highway and traffic flow around the terminal
- Meet increased rail yard and shop needs
 - Inadequate fleet storage
 - Inadequate shop size
 - Improve yard configuration

Two images are one the slide: one image showing customers waiting to board a bus at the Forest Park terminal; and another image showing a photograph of the station and terminal site from the east side of Des Plaines Avenue, just to the south of the south entrance to the station.

Slide 13: Forest Park Terminal – Existing Site Plan

An aerial image of the existing site plan is displayed, with the CTA site map overlaid on top of the aerial image (just in the vicinity of the CTA terminal shop and yard – to improve visibility of these elements). There are text boxes and arrows to point out the location of nearby residential areas, the adjacent cemetery, and the park-and ride lots, kiss-and-ride drop-off area, and the bus transfer area at the CTA terminal.

Slide 14: Forest Park Terminal Station – Proposed Site Plan

An aerial image of the existing site plan is displayed, with an overlay of the proposed configuration of the new rail yard, shop and terminal.

The topography of the proposed site emulates what is there today with minor alteration. There are actually two levels to the present site: track level and grade level. The current yard and shop are at track level, and the current bus terminals and KNR lot are at grade level.

The proposed terminal relies on filling the current KNR lot so that its area can be utilized for yard expansion, so it would ultimately need to be at what is currently called track level. Construction would occur within the existing CTA site. New shop and yard would be isolated from surrounding community.

Slide 15: CTA Proposal - Forest Park Terminal Station Improvement Plan

A diagram of the CTA yard, shop and terminal site is displayed, and description of proposed improvements follows:

The proposed station accommodates entrance/egress from roughly the same area as currently is the case at the north bus terminal, and an additional entry/exit point on the east side of Des Plaines Avenue. Both are envisioned to include stairs and an elevator, and an escalator would be a likely addition for the main station entry west of Des Plaines Avenue. The future bus terminal is planned to be at grade level, so entry to the station would be as is presently, in terms of elevation. The platform would not extend across Des Plaines Avenue due to the track curve east of the station, but a covered pedestrian walkway is proposed to connect from east side of Des Plaines Avenue to the east end of the terminal.

- New signalized intersection at Van Buren/Des Plaines to facilitate lefts, including buses.
- New signalized intersection for highway access from Des Plaines.
- Park-n-Ride on the south side of the platform would be eliminated (all vehicular traffic on the south side of the station would be eliminated in this proposal).
- One 10-car capacity storage track was added in the West Yard, in addition to rail storage over the current location of the south-side Park-n-Ride lot.
- IDOT confirms that a center I-290 Fly over connection for future transit extensions (via bus or rail) is reserved in plans and is shown here.
- Proposed maintenance shop would house 8-car trains (currently limited to 6-cars).
- Truck access to the yard and shop would be from Van Buren Street under the yard structure.

Slide 16: Forest Park Terminal Station – Improvement Plan

- Pros
 - With Forest Park support and funding, this project could be a stand-alone project and advance independent of reconstruction
 - Shop building can be accommodated within the existing footprint of CTA's property
 - Express bus route access from I-290 can be accommodated
 - New terminal can be constructed north of existing terminal
 - Shop and maintenance access can be accommodated via route underneath the new rail yard
- Cons
 - Parking would need to be relocated off site on north side of Van Buren St. (Identified in Forest Park Comprehensive Plan, no work completed to date)
 - Requires realignment of track and new bridge to access the terminal

- Requires shifting of car maintenance to another shop during construction of new shop
- Outstanding elements
 - Traffic analysis of Van Buren Street
 - Environmental obligations to advance planning

Slide 17: Maintain Existing Service

- Long-term
 - Bring service speeds up to state-of-good-repair
 - No 3rd track or express service
 - Already serves as west side express due to current station spacing
 - Remove stations closed in 1970s
 - Continue working with Forest Park and local officials up through construction
- Short-term (immediate)
 - CTA continues to perform interim slow zone maintenance work on branch, which began in spring 2014
 - 5 nights/week, occasional weekends
 - From Clinton to Forest Park, but focusing on west end of branch

Slide 18: Intermodal Coordination

- Continue to work with IDOT on corridor improvements
 - Coordinate on overhead bridges to improve stations and access from street
 - Project may be segmented into track and stations
 - Potential for coordinating long term cost savings for both projects
 - Provide transit alternative during highway construction

Slide 19: Summary of Overall Recommendations

- Complete reconstruction/modernization for the Forest Park branch
 - Rehabilitate infrastructure
 - Maintain existing entrance locations
 - Improve customer experience
 - Improve terminal site
- Maintain existing service
- Continue working with IDOT, municipalities and stakeholders
- Continue seeking policy and funding solutions to advance project

Slide 20: Next Steps

- Present results to public in coordination with IDOT I-290 Public Hearing
- Continue to evaluate funding options and project phasing

[Image of the Blue Line Forest Park Branch Vision/Feasibility Study Schedule including several tasks and their respective work dates, as follows:

- Data Collection: Spring 2013 through Fall 2013
- Station Concepts Development: Summer 2013 through Fall 2013
- Corridor Service Evaluation: Fall 2013 through Winter 2013/14
- Station Concepts Evaluation: Fall 2013 through Winter 2013/14

Public and Agency Outreach Meetings are indicated with a red mark in Fall 2013, and 2016, which will coincide with the Study Completion. CTA participation in IDOT I-290 Corridor Advisory Group Meetings is indicated with green dots in Spring/Summer 2013, 2014, and 2015. An arrow along the bottom of the image reads “Continuous Stakeholder Outreach” and coincides with the entire study period.

Slide 21: More Information

Visit the project web site for more information and updates

<http://www.transitchicago.com/blueweststudy/>

The study team is interested in hearing your ideas and opinions!

- If you have questions or comments about the study or would like to sign up for the mailing list, please write to us at:

Chicago Transit Authority
Attention: Leslie Boucree
Government and Community Relations Officer
567 West Lake Street
Chicago, IL 60661

blueweststudy@transitchicago.com