



CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY

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MEMO

Executive Vice President
Transit Operations, Ext. 14600

DATE: September 8, 2006
TO: Frank Kruesi, President
FROM: Richard N. Winston
RE: TRANSIT OPERATIONS REPORT – SEPTEMBER BOARD

July was a busy month for Transit Operations. We experienced an increase in system-wide ridership, service enhancement for the University of Chicago/Hyde Park Bus Service, improvement of the #78 Montrose service, modifications to the #7 Harrison service and we reopened the Kedzie and Rockwell stations on the Brown Line. In addition, on August 5 there was a press conference to launch the *Bus Tracker Program* on the #20 Madison route. Also, while we continue to receive 10 New Flyer buses per week, we received our first Optima 30 foot pilot bus on September 6. This bus will be put in service on Monday, September 11.

The July performance indicators showed that for the month of July Transit Operations saw a reduction of complaints, increases in commendations for Bus and Rail Operations and a 1.4% improvement in bus terminal departures. However, there was a decrease in both general cleans and bus reliability due to a reduction of Maintenance positions and the need to prioritize the duties and functions of this department.

1. RIDERSHIP – JULY 2006

▪ System Ridership

Ridership increased 1.2% in July compared to last year, 40.6 millions rides were provided during the month.

Weekdays increased 1.1% in July; Saturdays were up 0.4%; and Sunday/Holidays were down 1.2%. The decrease on Sundays was due to July 3rd falling on a Sunday in 2005, increasing last year's Sunday average. The Sunday/Holiday average would have posted an 8.6% increase if July 3rd was not included.

Year-to-date, CTA has provided 285.2 million rides--an increase of 1.2%. On the year, ridership is up on weekdays and Saturdays. Sunday/Holidays have little change so far in 2006, although there are noticeable differences between bus and rail.

- **Bus**

This year bus system ridership has decreased by 1.5%. The bus system carried 23,597,396 rides in July--a decrease from a year ago (-2.9%). Weekdays were down 2.6%; Saturdays were down 3.6% and Sunday/Holidays were down 3.5%. The recent decrease is attributed to the anticipated effects of the fare changes that occurred in January. Some customers who previously rode the bus with cash and purchased a transfer card, have not made the switch to other media, or have remained with cash, but have stopped taking the last leg of a bus trip that they used with a transfer card. This appears to be particularly true within the reduced fare market, most likely with high school students. However for customers who pay full fares, ridership has been increasing on bus, as those customers have made the transition to passes and the Chicago Cards. Rides paid with cash are 11% of all rides, down from 37% a year ago. Passes are now 56% of all bus rides and Chicago Cards are 11%. On a positive note, the West Side/West Suburban corridors that had improvements implemented in June have shown signs of increased ridership, which we will continue to monitor. In addition, the corridors where we implemented express routes continue to show strong ridership relative to system averages.

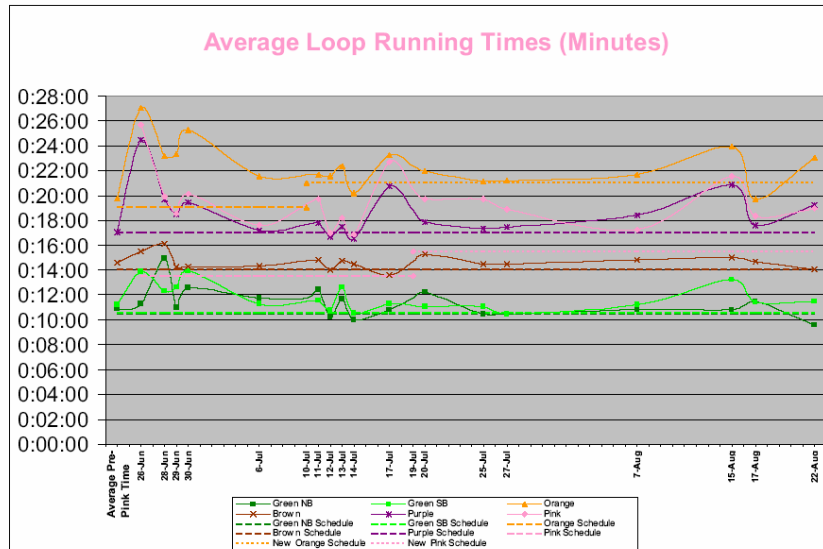
- **Rail**

The rail system provided 17,049,202 rides in July, an increase of 7.7%. Weekdays were up 8.2%, Saturdays were up 7.9% and Sunday/Holidays were up 3.7%. The rail system is up 5.9% for the year. This strong growth trend on rail has been ongoing for some time now, particularly in July. This is due to the service provided to many of the summer events, specifically The Taste, Gay Games, Sox and Cub games.

2. SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

- **University of Chicago/Hyde Park Bus Service** – CTA implemented enhanced service to the University of Chicago and the Hyde Park area on August 28th as approved by the Chicago Transit Board at the August Board meeting. Under an agreement with the University, six services operating through the campus and hospital area will be subsidized up to \$1.8 million annually. This represents an expansion from the previous contract that had only four routes. The hours and frequencies of service will be increased on several of the previous existing services. In addition, the express service (#192) from the West Loop Metra stations to the U of C Hospitals will be placed into this contract. Several of the U of C routes will operate with the new Optima buses upon their delivery.
- **#78 Montrose Service** - Service on the #78 Montrose route was improved on August 22, 2006 to provide better connections to a grocery at the intersection of Sheridan and Montrose. Under this experiment, the #78 will operate east on Wilson to Marine and then return via Montrose and Broadway to Wilson. This will provide a direct connection to the grocery while maintaining the connections to the Red Line Station at Wilson/Broadway.
- **West Side/West Suburban Service Enhancements** – CTA implemented the West Side bus changes on June 18th followed a week later with rail changes on June 25th. While the changes appear to be well-received, a slight modification on one bus route was implemented on August 1, 2006. The #7 Harrison service was modified to operate on Harrison-Wood-Polk-Paulina. The route was moved from Ashland to improve operating conditions allowing for a smoother turn from southbound Paulina to westbound Polk.

After three weeks of operation Loop rail running times have stabilized at levels close to a 35 second increase, on average, of what we previously ran.



This chart shows the results of periodic observations between 4:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. measuring the average running time for each service across/around the Loop.

The Orange Line is measured for the roundtrip from Roosevelt back to Roosevelt after circling the Loop. Similarly Brown and Purple Lines times are measured at the Merchandise Mart and Pink Line at Clinton. Green Line times are from Clinton to Roosevelt for southbound trains and Roosevelt to Clinton for northbound trains.

On another note, the enhanced service to the West Side/West Suburban area, which the Board approved as a 180 day experiment, has resulted in increased train traffic on the Loop. This additional traffic has required high usage of the Tower and signal systems because of a 15.4% increase of traffic in the Loop during peak hours (from 26 to 30 trains). This higher demand on the signal system has resulted in more frequent failures of the interlock plant, and in addition, amplified the affects of delays in the Loop.

For the past two weeks Operations, Planning, Engineering and Signal Maintenance have met to review procedures in order to restore higher levels of reliability to Loop operations. To date this has resulted in a review and improvement of preventive maintenance procedures, troubleshooting techniques and service restoration procedures. In addition, we are working with the Inspector General's Office reviewing past incidents to determine other measures which may be taken to improve reliability of the rail system.

- **Kedzie and Rockwell Stations Re-open on the Brown Line**

On August 16, 2006 CTA re-opened the Kedzie and Rockwell stations bringing the total number of accessible stations to 74 out of 144 stations. A major portion of the construction was completed including new glass houses, platforms, brighter lighting and accessible features that include ramps, tactile edging and accessible gates. A new

auxiliary entrance at the west end of the Kedzie stations at Spaulding Avenue was also completed.

Construction crews will continue to work in the weeks ahead to complete the construction. These finishing touches include permanent station signs, a compass rose to help customers easily navigate the system, and new fencing along the alley.

3. SERVICE QUALITY AND RELIABILITY

▪ Performance Matrix

Transit Operations experienced a significant reduction in complaints and increases in commendations for both bus and rail. As previously mentioned, there was a 1.2% increase in system ridership over 2005 numbers.

A review of the performance metrics have indicated a trend in reduced frequency in general cleans and bus reliability. There was a decrease of 11.2% in mean miles between failures. This was due to a reduction of Maintenance positions and the need to prioritize the duties and functions of the Maintenance Department, as the fleet continues to age. Even though we are currently receiving new bus equipment, 34% of the bus fleet is beyond the industry standard for useful life (12 years). That number will increase to 57% next year. Also the average age of our rail cars is 24 years. Presently 28% of our rail cars are beyond useful life (the industry standard is 25 years). In two years 75% of our fleet will be over 25 years old which may impact rail car reliability. This has occurred at a time of increased ridership and service levels.

To address the reduction of Maintenance positions, Operations is increasing its efforts to address all areas and working very closely with Human Resources to fill those vacancies with staff that has the proper skill levels to meet our needs. It should also be noted that the elimination of rostering in two garages has increased the need for STOs putting further constraints on hiring and training.

▪ Rail Service Delays

CTA customers may experience delays in service due to construction or slow zones. Slow zone information and locations are updated monthly and provided on our website, www.transitchicago.com.

In addition, CTA records other delays that occur for other reasons. During July CTA recorded 110 incidents of delays greater than 10 minutes. These incidents could involve several trains experiencing long delays on the same route or may affect more than one route (depending on location). One such delay was experienced on July 11 in the Blue Line Dearborn subway resulting from a derailment. Due to excessive smoke, the train was evacuated and 153 people received treatment.

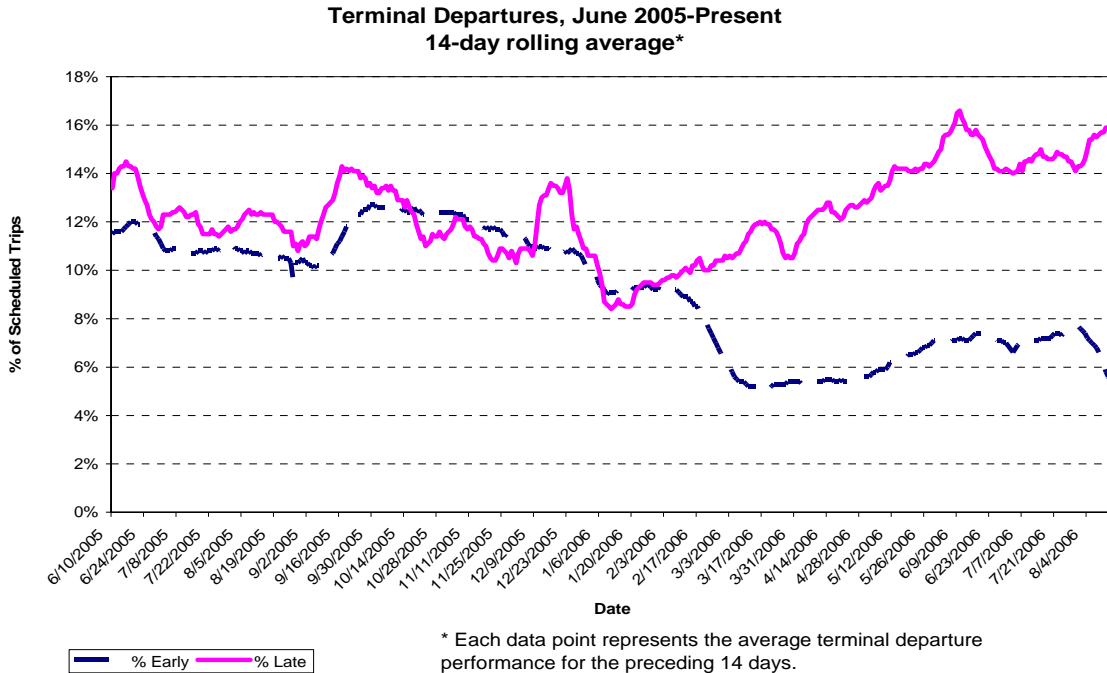
▪ Bus Terminal Departures

In February, Bus Operations launched a management effort to reduce early terminal departures, which can lead to service gaps and bus bunching. This new policy immediately reduced the number of early departures from about 9% to less than 6%. To reverse a recent increase in early terminal departures, management is working individually with bus operators and supervisors to improve on-time departures and

pursue corrective actions as necessary to reduce early running. As a result, early departures dropped significantly in mid-August.

Initially the number of late departures had increased significantly, resulting in a reduction of overall on-time terminal departure performance for the second quarter. However, there has been a 1.4 percent improvement (from 77.1% to 78.1%) during July. Operations and Planning are currently in the process of analyzing data to determine the cause for the increased delays, which may include among other things:

- Increased traffic congestion
- Unpredictable or inconsistent loading patterns and dwell times
- Roadway and other construction projects
- Special event service and detours
- The need to improve schedules to better reflect traffic and ridership conditions



▪ **CTA Bus Tracker Update**

On August 5, 2006 Mayor Richard M. Daley, Board Member Robinson, President Kruesi and other CTA officials held a press conference to launch the Bus Tracker Program. This program uses global positioning satellite (GPS) technology to identify positions to customers via the web site, www.ctabustracker.com. This web site provides a route map with icons indicating the location and direction of buses for stops along the route. Customers can also activate an alarm that will alert them when a bus is approaching their stop.

The CTA is currently testing Bus Tracker on buses and one bus shelter along the #20 Madison bus route. Throughout the test, the CTA will evaluate the performance of the technology and customer reaction to the program.

The Bus Tracker program and other GPS programs were developed through a \$1.3 million contract with Clever Devices. The pilot is scheduled to end December 2006, and the results and funding availability will determine if the Bus Tracker system will be expanded to additional routes.

4. ROLLING STOCK

- **New Flyer Buses**

The Chicago Transit Authority is currently under contract with New Flyer Bus for 265 forty-foot buses, including 20 diesel electric hybrid-powered buses. Production on the diesel buses began in December 2005, with delivery beginning in February 2006. The CTA currently has received 210 buses which are currently in service at Archer and Kedzie Garages. New Flyer is currently producing buses at a rate of 10 per week, and, according to their President, is scheduled to begin delivery of the 20 hybrid buses by the end of 2006.

The CTA Board has approved the exercise of the first option for an additional 165 diesel buses. The current New Flyer schedule has delivery of all base and option 1 buses (450 vehicles) to be completed by the end of March 2007. In addition to the exercised option, CTA has three additional options it may exercise for a total of 1,050 New Flyer buses when funds become available.

- **The Optima 30 Foot Pilot Bus**

The Chicago Transit Authority is currently under contract with Optima Bus of Wichita, Kansas, for 45 thirty-foot buses with an option for up to 75 additional vehicles (that is currently not exercised). The prototype bus was delivered to CTA on June 9, 2006. It remained at CTA for two weeks; during this time the bus ran in limited service at 103rd and North Park Garages. While in Chicago, the completed bus was also reviewed favorably by the ADA community, the University of Chicago, and numerous CTA departments and personnel. The prototype bus is currently back at Optima Bus undergoing testing and auditing by CTA for compliance with the contract specifications. Optima is currently in full production of the CTA buses. The first bus was received Wednesday, September 6. The bus will be put in service Monday, September 11, out of 103rd Street Garage. Optima plans to deliver two buses per week.

- **Rail Car Contract**

The Notice to Proceed was issued to Bombardier for the purchase of new rail cars. Regular Rail Engineering conferences are being held.