

February 11, 2026. Chicago Transit Board Regular Meeting Minutes.

Noticed for 10:00 a.m. / Commenced at 10:08 a.m.

AGENDA: The posted agenda for the meeting is available at www.transitchicago.com, "Chicago Transit Board", "Meeting Notices, Agendas, and Minutes", (02/11/2026) (Regular Board Meeting), "Agenda".

There was a roll call vote.

ROLL CALL: Directors: Lester L. Barclay (Chairman), L. Bernard Jakes, Rosa Y. Ortiz, Roberto Requejo, and Neema Jha.

There was a quorum with 6 members present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Chairman Barclay advanced the agenda to Public Comments. Secretary Greenlee advised that the Board Office received several requests for public comments and received one (1) written comments that were forwarded to the Board.

The written public comments were submitted by John Paul Jones, president of Sustainable Englewood Initiatives.

The public speakers were the following persons:

- Mito Mohan
- Nia Garza
- Keith Hill
- Jack Schuleman

ADA ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT: Laura Saltzman, Chair of the CTA ADA Advisory Committee gave a report on the ADA Advisory Committee Meeting held on January 12, 2026.

The committee received a construction update from Bill Mooney, CTA's Chief Infrastructure Officer, on the All-Stations Accessibility Program. He stated that the RPM Project has completed stations at Lawrence, Brynn Mawr, Argyle and Berwynn. Replacement benches have been installed at all four stations following customer feedback. She appreciates that CTA has resolved this problem.

Also presented was January 5, 2026, State and Lake Elevated Station closure, which is a three (3) year reconstruction project to make the station more ADA accessible.

The committee also learned about the Western Brown Station Line project which includes two (2) modernized elevators and a fully accessible bus turnaround. Design work for the rail elevator rehabilitation program will start this year and features 16 system wide elevator fixes. There was a discussion about other elevators and what would be required for planning for future repairs.

David Miller from the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) presented the city's new pedestrian accessible signals program. These are the signals designed to provide non-visual cues for when people can cross the street. Following the May 2025 Finalized Remedial Plan – CDOT is retrofitting the 2,800 signalized intersections citywide over the next 15 years. There will be 70 intersections targeted for year one. Public requests will be the highest priority for determining installation locations, followed by intersections near CTA bus terminals and trains. The committee discussed the importance of coordinating APS installations near transit stops and encouraged members of the public to submit requests through www.chicagoaps.org or the city's 311 call center.

Quinton Shipley Melon, Traffic Planner, presented on CTA's Bus Stop Accessibility Improvement Program. Since 2021 three hundred previously inaccessible bus stops have been made accessible. One hundred and fifteen bus stops were upgraded in 2025 alone. The CTA is updating the guidebook on bus stops. The committee discussed other coordination challenges with other streetscapes.

A concern was raised that there have been changes made to the approval process for projects funded by the bond that may affect the Inaccessible Stop Repair Program work and delay the number of stops made accessible. It may be worth it to have proactive conversations with the city council. She believes the community will support CDOT in that effort if support is needed.

Jason Nita, Senior Manager of Bus Strategic Planning, presented the Bus Priority Corridor Study, which is exploring ways to make bus travel faster and more accessible across five (5) corridors. The committee encouraged disabled riders to participate in the ongoing public survey to ensure that accessibility concerns are reflected in the final design recommendations in December 2026.

Under New Business the committee discussed the importance of ensuring that accessibility improvements continue during the Northern Illinois Transit Authority transition.

She then concluded her report.

Director Requejo asked what progress the ADA Advisory Committee is making on supporting people with disabilities. Also, some of the worst moments for a person from the disability community is when they are encountering streets and sidewalks repairs that are a problem but are the responsibility of the city and the state. What is the forum where these multiple players come

together to respond to the needs of the disability community?

Laura responded that there are changes being made to training to improve some of the issues around people, and there is also the Safe Rides Specialists Program that hopefully we are onboarding that can help certain kinds of disabilities. Also, there is the question about how Transit Ambassadors will look under NITA. Perhaps some will be like Senior CSAs who get better pay and have better skills and stay around longer in order to help people with disabilities. Also, there is the issue of how we collect and manage complaints and whether we are following up on complaints.

There were no other questions or comments from the other board members.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Acting President Nora Leerhsen gave the President's Report and began by thanking CTA's employees for managing through very unpredictably, cold and changing weather during the winter season. The past few weeks have been very complex with every day presenting a new set of circumstances with CTA's system. She thanked CTA employees for their commitment to the work.

CTA's ridership over the past three weeks is up four percent from the same three weeks in the prior 2024 year. Acting President Leerhsen believes that the increase in ridership is a telling example that despite the deep cold and the winter, people are coming to CTA continuously in increasing numbers in this year compared to last. She thanked everyone for all the work they did to increase ridership on the system.

There have been notable developments in the past few weeks around the 95th street corridor and the request for proposals in collaboration with the Department of Planning and Development (hereinafter "DPD"). CTA has partnered with DPD to release a request for proposals (hereinafter "RFP") for the CTA-owned land at 95th-and-State and this RFP was posted on the website earlier this week. The intention for the site is for it to become a mixed-use development with affordable housing. Notably, this marks a year since the release of the 95th Street Corridor Plan, which was a community-led plan for equitable, transit-oriented development on the two-mile stretch of 95th Street between Halsted and Cottage Grove. We are excited to see where this goes next and Acting President Leerhsen thinks it's a great symbol and testament to the Authority's commitment to development communities around out stations.

Regarding our locations and our infrastructure, we are moving forward with the installation of children's furniture in twelve (12) stations at the CTA in the upcoming weeks. These installations are a part of an exciting initiative to promote children and CTA and family use of CTA. We are excited to move this initiative forward.

On January 29, 2026, sixty-two (62) individuals were celebrated at our CTA Second Chance Program completion ceremony. Acting President Leerhsen delivered a keynote address and it was a moving gathering of honorees, families, friends, delegate partners and the mayor's office to recognize this program, which we are so proud of here at CTA. In 2025 the CTA had a record number of permanent hires totaling 135, which is the most we have ever had in a single year. In 2008 the total number of permanent hires was ten (10), so we're very proud of our increasing numbers and the CTA's commitment to the program.

The CTA has had over eight hundred (800) permanent hires since the program started and the position titles range from frontline employees to managerial positions, with over sixty (60) different titles of those positions. She thanked all the staff that works on the program, which she feels in many ways is the soul of CTA.

On February 6, 2026, on Rosa Park's birthday, Acting President Leerhsen, along with CTA Planning staff attended an event hosted by the Active Transportation Alliance and the Transportation Equity Network. Acting President Leerhsen brought remarks. The event brought together planners, elected officials, and advocates to talk about bus service and improving bus street infrastructure. It showcased the work of the outreach that CTA as done for its Bus Priority Corridor Study and included a ride along together on Western Avenue.

Acting President Leerhsen is committed to keeping an eye on using the momentum of advocacy and collaboration that brought forth the recent transit bill to move forward with transit improvements more generally. One area where advocacy and collaboration are impacting the partnerships that have been configured through the Northern Illinois Transit Act (also known as "NITA") is bus service, in terms of the bus infrastructure. She assured the Board that she is committed as CTA's Acting President to dedicating leadership to the query what needs to happen to make real improvements in bus service happen?

Northern Illinois Transit Act

Acting President Leerhsen stated that we are at a key point in the year in the transition to NITA. She acknowledged that there is a lot of work happening in terms of working groups with the RTA. CTA staff is on several different working groups that are working towards a smooth transition to the new oversight Board and the collaboration between agencies.

As we enter into new contracts, we are highlighting regional synergies. We are using fresh eyes and putting on our NITA hat to identify where it is appropriate to collaborate with METRA and PACE to employ regional contractual solutions. CTA staff is using their skills to look at work in a new way and from a broader, more regional perspective.

In closing Acting President Leerhsen recognized that February was Black History Month. The CTA is conducting a series of events, as it has in past years, to celebrate this month throughout the agency with Spirit Day celebrations music, and cooking demonstrations featuring chefs from throughout the region. The CTA will be closing out Black History Month with a forum featuring “J-Dilla” also known as Sherman Dillard Thomas, which we are very excited about at CTA. Acting President Leerhsen thanked everyone for the work done on those efforts to make Black History Month an exciting month at CTA.

Acting President Leerhsen then concluded her remarks.

Chairman Barclay thanked Acting President Leerhsen for her report and commended the team for great work during the recent stretch of cold weather. He noted that during that time of extreme weather conditions, our employees did not pause and neither did CTA’s service.

“Operators, maintenance crews, supervisors, support staff all showed up in difficult conditions to keep the City moving. This was not a one-time event. The team extensively prepares our systems to continue service for winter conditions every year. That consistency matters to our riders, and on behalf of the Board, I want to extend my appreciation to the entire team, especially our frontline and operational teams, for their efforts to make that possible.”

He stated that he was encouraged in his briefing to hear about CTA’s updated approach to counting ridership by incorporating rides not reflected at the fare box. His understanding is that this approach is consistent with current industry practices by other transit agencies. He stated that having a methodology that accurately reflects how CTA’s service is being used is important, not only for transparency, but for decision making. Good policy begins with good data, and by improving how the CTA measures ridership, the Authority is strengthening the Board’s ability to make sound decisions.

Regarding NITA and the transition process, the Chairman stated that he had an opportunity to attend a meeting with the governor’s office and the service Board. He looks forward to partnering with them to ensure a smooth transition period when the law becomes effective. He also will continue to emphasize that it is essential that this regional process prioritizes the security concerns for our riders.

Chairman Barclay inquired how the methodology to secure better ridership counts will be implemented? He also inquired whether the union was a part of the safety planning process.

Acting President Leerhsen advised that she will meet with Union President Keith Hill about his concerns about the effectiveness and quality of the discussion in the Joint Labor Safety Committee. She is aware that he is dissatisfied with the quality of the conversations.

Molly Poppy, Chief Planning and Innovations Officer, addressed the Chairman's question about the implementation of the new methodology to more accurately measure ridership. She stated that beginning January 2026 in the Ridership Report, the CTA will be including an update for unpaid rides, and it will be reflected across our branch level for rail. The CTA will have a factor for bus that will show a bus-wide number as well as a number that is route specific. The team is also going to go back and update all of 2025 as well with the same methodology, so that we are certain that we are doing apples to apples comparisons.

Following Molly Poppy's explanation there were questions and comments from Director Roberto Requejo.

There was discussion.

MINUTES: Chairman Barclay asked for a motion to approve the Board meeting minutes from January 14, 2026. Director Requejo moved that the minutes be approved. The motion was seconded by Director Jha. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

CTA's Acting General Counsel Sisavanh Baker stated that the Board would recess into Executive Session pursuant to the Illinois Open Meetings Act, Section 2 (c) (11) and (21).

Director Requejo moved that the Board recess into Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Director Jha and the motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

The Board moved into Executive Session at 11:12 a.m.

At 11:40 a.m. Director Requejo moved the Board recess from Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Director Jha. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

After the Board returned from Executive Session Chairman Barclay requested a motion to approve the closed session minutes from January 14, 2026. Director Requejo moved, and the motion was seconded by Director Jha. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

BOARD MATTERS: Chairman Barclay asked whether there were any Board Matters? Board Secretary Georgette Greenlee responded that there were two Board Matters for consideration.

The first was for the Board to consider an ordinance appointing Sonja Noble as the Assistant Treasurer of the Chicago Transit Authority. Director Requejo moved to appoint Sonja Noble as the Assistant Treasurer of the Chicago Transit Authority and Director Jha seconded the motion. It passed by

unanimous roll call vote.

The second was for the Board to approve an ordinance appointing an alternate to the CTA Board of Trustees for the Retirement Plan for the Chicago Transit Authority. Director Requejo moved to appoint Sonja Noble as the alternate to the Board of Trustees of the Retirement Plan for the Chicago Transit Authority Employees and Director Jha seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE, AUDIT AND BUDGET: The Finance, Audit, and Budget Committee report was presented by Director Bernard Jakes. The committee reviewed the monthly finance report and approved the January 14, 2026, FAB committee meeting 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 the committee approved the following two (2) ordinances:

1. An ordinance authorizing a first amendment to the sublease with National Able Network, Inc. for space located at 56 West Lake Street, Chicago and
2. An ordinance authorizing an assignment, assumption, and amendment to the amended and restated easement agreement for the property located at 1801 West Grace Street in Chicago.

The Committee also reviewed thirteen (13) contracts.

The Committee placed two ordinances and 13 contracts on the omnibus. The Committee approved and recommended for Board approval two ordinances and 13 contracts.

Director Jakes concluded the Finance, Audit and Budget Committee report.

Director Requejo moved that the omnibus be approved, and the motion was seconded by Director Jha. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote of five Board members: Chairman Barclay, Director Jakes, Director Jha, Director Requejo and Director Ortiz.

CONSTRUCTION REPORT: The chair entertained a motion to amend the agenda to move the Construction Report to the next month. Director Jakes moved to defer the Construction Report and Director Jha seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

NEW BUSINESS: Secretary Greenlee stated that there was no new business, but did note that Asst. Treasurer Sonja Noble had entered the Board Room and offered to her congratulations.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chairperson Barclay asked for a motion to adjourn the February 11, 2026, Chicago Transit Board meeting. After being moved by Director Requejo and seconded by Director Jha, the motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:44 p.m.

APPROVED: _____


Secretary of the CTA Board of Directors

Date: _____

