CTA Blue Line Forest Park Branch Feasibility/Vision Study

Village of Forest Park Council Meeting

Carole Morey, Chief Planning Officer
Tuesday, October 13, 2015
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
Study Area
Forest Park Terminal Station - 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
• 82 % Pace / FP Blue Line transfers occur at Forest Park Terminal, where 9 of 12 intersecting Pace routes meet FP Blue Line.
## Forest Park Branch Ridership, Annual Average 2014

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

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

- Dual headhouses possible for single entry stations with bus connections
  Cicero, Pulaski, Western
Improve Customer Experience: Conceptual Rendering

- Wider Platforms
- Shelter/weather protection

Draft Conceptual Rendering
Improve Customer Experience: Conceptual Rendering

- ADA accessible
- Landscaping
- Pedestrian crossings/refuges
- Station entrance design and locations
- Reduced noise via station design
- Bike racks
- Lighting
- CTA maintenance & construction

Draft Conceptual Rendering
Improve Customer Experience: Conceptual Rendering

Draft Conceptual Rendering
Redesign Forest Park terminal, shop and yard

- 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
Forest Park Terminal Station – Proposed Site Plan

CTA BLUE LINE VISION STUDY
CTA Proposal – Forest Park Terminal Station Improvement Plan

Village option to pursue additional parking/mixed use

CTA Prairie Path Lot Parking

Retaining wall
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
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
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
Summary of 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
Next Steps

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