

***CTA Blue Line Forest Park Branch
Feasibility/Vision Study***

June 29, 2016

Presentation Script

Welcome to the Open House for the CTA Blue Line Vision Study, for the Forest Park Branch.

Today, we'd like to share with you the status of the project, and our recommendations for improvement of the Forest Park Branch of the Blue Line. We also hope to gather input from the community, which will help inform our design concepts.

The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) initiated the Blue Line Forest Park Branch Vision Study in 2013 to determine a long-term planning strategy for the Branch.

So, why are we doing the study?

The Forest Park branch is more than 55 years old and beyond its useful life. The design dates back to the 1940s, with the western extensions added in the 70s and 80s.

The CTA assessed transit and highway integrated enhancements, regional mobility issues and potential funding sources, as well as future collaboration opportunities with the Illinois Department of Transportation. Improved station design concepts include station access, redesign opportunities, and right-of-way needs at specific stations along the corridor. The study considered innovative solutions that preserve transit, while integrating highway and transit operations to maximize mobility in this important transportation corridor.

Since the initiation of the study in 2013, the CTA has:

- documented existing conditions,
- evaluated transit markets around the stations and potential station areas,
- developed station concepts and service recommendations
- continued to refine these recommendations over the past year with feedback from stakeholders.

We will continue our community outreach efforts as we refine the station concepts in preparation for a public hearing in 2017, held by the Illinois Department of Transportation and the CTA, for the joint reconstruction of the expressway and the Forest Park branch of the Blue Line.

The CTA knows the importance of customer feedback in transit planning. Over the course of the study, the CTA has had continuous outreach to the various communities in the study area, which has helped us develop our recommendations. In conjunction with the Illinois Department of Transportation, we have held 2 public meetings, 5 Corridor Advisory Group meetings, 7 meetings with municipalities and several one-on-one meetings with aldermen.

We are here today to present our recommendations to you, the community, and get your input as we refine station access and design concepts.

Based on our study findings, the CTA recommends modernization and reconstruction for the Forest Park Branch of the Blue Line.

Specifically, these recommendations include:

- Infrastructure rehabilitation, beginning with track work
- Wider platforms and elevator access
- Reduction of noise and weather impacts for riders through innovative station designs
- Maintenance of double entry stations and evaluation of opportunities for single-entry stations
- Inclusion of a turn-back track west of IMD to accommodate construction phasing and provide opportunities for service increase to IMD
- Modernization of the Forest Park Terminal with improved bus and pedestrian connections

These station design concepts show the types of features that will be included, though the station may look different. Each station will be ADA accessible.

Additional updated features may include:

Landscaping

Pedestrian crossings and refuges

Updated station entrance design and locations

Noise reduction features

Bike racks

Improved lighting

The study also recommends evaluating single-entry stations to improve pedestrian crossings, transit connections and station access. New designs may include reopening auxiliary entrances or dual head houses, meaning station entrances on both sides of the street.

Another option for the Pulaski and Cicero stations would be to evaluate re-opening auxiliary entrances at Keeler Avenue and Laverne Avenue.

The Vision Study is an important part of the planning process and is necessary in order for IDOT and CTA to apply for federal funding and approval of the project.

Once we gather input from you and other stakeholders in the community, the CTA will then incorporate your ideas in developing the final station design concepts. Our final recommendations will then be presented, along with the Eisenhower Expressway preferred alternative, at a public hearing in 2017.

The CTA invites you to be part of the study process. There are several ways to participate:

- Email or mail in your comments, using the comment form provided or email directly to bluweststudy@transitchicago.com
- Visit our website for updates
- Follow us on Facebook and Twitter
- Sign up for the mailing list to receive project updates
- Attend the public hearing in 2017

Thank you for joining us today and being part of the CTA Blue Line Forest Park Branch Vision Study. We value your input.

The presentation will restart momentarily.