



Building the New Red Line Tracks: The Gantry System Sept. 22, 2021 Public Meeting Q&A

The CTA held a virtual public meeting to provide the public with an update of upcoming construction activities for the Lawrence to Bryn Mawr Modernization Project, which is a part of the Red and Purple Modernization (RPM) Phase One project. Below is a summary of the questions and answers discussed at the meeting and/or provided to CTA for response.

Lawrence to Bryn Mawr construction questions

Q. Why was Ardmore chosen for this work? It's a residential side street with no setbacks. You have project sites at Hollywood and Bryn Mawr, commercial arterials that would cause far less disruption to the people who actually live in the neighborhood.

A. CDOT and CTA limited what streets can be closed for extended periods to avoid widespread congestion. Ardmore was chosen due to the linear nature of the project, where elements must be constructed sequentially. Both Hollywood and Bryn Mawr are feeder streets to Lake Shore Drive and would not be able to be closed for an extended period of time without significant disruptions to traffic both within and outside of the immediate neighborhood.

Q. Can ALL work, including the gantry-assembly equipment move-in, take place during the designated work hours of 7am-7pm Monday-Saturday? Why do you need to do anything outside of those hours?

A. Generally, the work will be limited to the times/days listed in the question. Some operations, such as bridge construction over Hollywood, will require around-the-clock work to fit the operation within allowable weekend closures.

Q. Can we see a schematic showing how the smaller gantry lifts a segment up to the main gantry?

A. We will post visuals for the gantry operation on our web site. We do not currently have a schematic for this.

Q. In the concrete modules placed together - there is incredible room to walk through - will that be utilized for anything?

A. The center of the box structure contains space that will be used to house the suspension cables and electrical systems for the new track as well as provide access for structure inspection.

Q. How will the segments be delivered and how many can you install in a day?

A. Trucks will deliver segments from their manufacturer in Morris, Ill., to the construction site. We expect six segments to be delivered daily, though there could be as many as 12 delivered daily.



Q. Will the accessible features (like elevators) be available after the completion of phase A?

A. The new stations will be built in Stage B along with the two westernmost tracks. After the completion of Stage B, the stations will open and each station will have an elevator and escalator for customers.

Q. Will the platforms be the same width as the current ones? How will the escalators, elevators, and platform space fit?

A. The new platforms will be 22' feet wide to provide ample room for customers and access to escalators and elevators. The new track structure will span over the alley east of the tracks to allow for construction of the new wider platforms between the innermost tracks.

Q. It looks like there will be no place where there is a platform between the inner north and south tracks, is that correct?

A. There is one platform at each station — a center island platform that is 22 feet wide.

Q. The noise barriers are to send sound upwards. What are you placing there to diffuse the sound altogether?

A. The new structure will reduce train noise in the community through the use of noise barriers that will redirect and disperse some of the train sound upward. In addition, the new concrete structure will feature continuously welded rails and resilient track fasteners that also contribute to a reduction in noise.

Q. Why can't a lot of the waste concrete be ground up into aggregate to be used in new concrete somewhere? It's been done.

A. Concrete from the demolition is going to an aggregate processing facility where it is recycled into new aggregate products.

Q. Why is the area under the new tracks walled off? If the CTA IS confident that the structure will be safe and sound for decades to come, then "safety" is not a reason to install new walls to cordon off the under-track area. How often will the screen walls need to be repaired from garbage trucks and other vehicles hitting it?

A. The vast majority of the existing retaining wall will remain in place – there really isn't any "open" area under the tracks that we are closing in with a wall or a fence as part of RPM. What we are doing is taking down about 3 to 4 feet off the top of the existing wall, and we need to put a fence up there to allow access for CTA inspections but keep unauthorized people out from the embankment/underneath the new structure.

Q. Can the housekeeping be improved on the lot west of the Hollywood viaduct where workers park their cars and presumably have lunch and drop their bottles and litter. T and -- lots of garbage that doesn't get cleaned up. What is the current cleaning schedule? There's a lot of weeds too, but mainly the litter that never seems to get picked up.



A. Yes, we have notified the contractor, which will make this cleanup a priority and reinforce the need to maintain cleanliness.

Q. Can you talk about the next set of temporary stations for stage B and where they will be?

A. We will continue to have temporary station entrances at Argyle and at Bryn Mawr during Stage B, though Bryn Mawr will only provide southbound. The Bryn Mawr temporary station platform will be located between Bryn Mawr and Catalpa, with the temporary station entrance on the south side of Bryn Mawr, just east of the tracks. The Argyle temporary station platform will be located between Winona and Foster, with entrance at Winona.

Q. Can we see a picture of what the finished structure will look like from the sides?

A. Here is a contractor rendering of the wall.



Q. Isn't there some way we can utilize the demolished concrete here to build out the lakefront?

A. Concrete from the demolition is going to an aggregate processing facility where it is recycled into new aggregate products.

Q. How can you provide more opportunity for residents' involvement in [construction plan] decision making? Everything feels very top down, and there's often little to no advance notice.

A. We always want to hear from you! We have held dozens of community meetings since 2014, when we first announced the project, to update the public on the design and construction plan for the project. The designs for the new stations were developed with input from the local communities, for example, as will aesthetic features such as lighting and streetscaping. We also post notification of upcoming construction activities on our web site, in RPM construction emails to subscribers and physically in the community. We encourage you to reach out to us anytime if you have a question or comment to share with us.

Q. What can you do to minimize the noise generated by construction vehicles backing in from Sheridan? Can you bring them in from Broadway instead? Can you close Ardmore to other traffic between Winthrop and Sheridan so the vehicles can drive forward with flagger assistance?



A. The overhead clearance of the existing viaducts limits prohibits large equipment from access via Broadway until Stage B. As the work for Stage A is occurring on the east side of the viaduct, access must come from the east.

Q. Can you disable the vehicles' backup alarms since they are always accompanied by flaggers?

A. For the safety of the community and for our workers, we are unable to disable backup alarms.

Q. Will we see how the platforms will be configured?

A. Yes, the new platform configurations will be communicated to the community and customers before the new stations open.

Q. How is the design of the Bryn Mawr station reflecting the historic district? Design looks modern and only keeps a couple of columns.

A. Bryn Mawr, like the other three Red Line stations being reconstruction in RPM Phase One, will feature glazed terra cotta facades that are consistent with other buildings in the community.

Q. The new Lawrence, Argyle, Berwyn and Bryn Mawr stations as part of the RPM Phase One project – why don't the auxiliary exits aren't also entrances; why they don't have also have elevators and escalators, as the new main stationhouses will; and are the new auxiliary entrances being built to accommodate elevators at a later date?

A. The RPM Phase One project is rebuilding all four Red Line stations (Lawrence, Argyle, Berwyn, and Bryn Mawr) to be fully compliant with accessibility standards for customers with disabilities for the first time in their 100-year history. Specifically, Lawrence, Argyle and Berwyn will have a main stationhouse that is accessible with an elevator and escalator, and each station will have an auxiliary exit for added convenience, as numerous stations do. The new Bryn Mawr station will be different in from the other three stations because it will have two accessible entrances: one at the main stationhouse and one on Hollywood Avenue, as well as a third auxiliary entrance/exit. Bryn Mawr is getting a third entrance because it will improve access to the Bryn Mawr business district and contribute to economic development and there was available space to do so. There was no such available space for a third entrance for Lawrence, Argyle and Berwyn.

Building accessible stations as part of the RPM project is part of the CTA's All Station Accessibility Plan (ASAP) to make 100 percent of all CTA rail stations fully accessible. The design decisions for each station within the RPM project intentionally meet or exceed federal and local requirements for entrance accessibility, including the requirement that at least 60 percent¹⁴⁶ of entrances to a public transit facility are accessible to people with disabilities. Since Bryn Mawr has three entrances and two of the three (66 percent) of them are accessible, we are permitted to make the third access point an entry as well as an exit. And because Lawrence, Argyle, Berwyn and Bryn Mawr only have one of two access points, or 50 percent, that are fully accessible, the auxiliary station can be exit-only under local code.

Additionally, accessible entry points require a lot more space, and cost more to build, given the elevators, escalators, and fare equipment needed. Therefore, given the space and cost constraints, it is not feasible to convert all station exits into accessible points of entry. As we work toward our goal of making all CTA rail stations fully accessible, CTA's priority is to find funding to make



additional stations accessible. **Q. We are experiencing vibrations and have for some time. It is affecting mortar and foundation currently. Do you expect this to continue? Get worse?**

A. The contractor is required to monitor and not exceed noise and vibration thresholds. The project has recommended limits for vibration based each property's type of construction and range from 0.2 to 0.5 ppv (peak particle velocity). If recommended vibration limits are exceeded, the contractor has modified demolition logistics to avoid working multiple crews in a location, performed additional sawcutting, used alternate demolition equipment (rock splitters), or stopped work to design alternate shoring around underground obstructions.

As of today, the embankment demolition is essentially complete for Stage A between Thorndale and Berwyn. The most disruptive activities include installation of sheetpile (now complete for Stage A), and demolition of concrete viaducts and retaining walls (over 70% complete for Stage A). Vibration impacts are greatly reduced once adjacent embankment/viaduct demolition is complete. Additionally, ahead of construction starting last spring, the contractor offered residents in the project area the chance to fill out pre-construction surveys.

Q. A suspension bridge's cables end up anchored on either side of the bridge. Where will the cables be anchored in this project?

A. The cables are anchored at the ends of the spans, directly above the columns.

Q. Is there an opportunity to provide public parking under the tracks?

A. CTA is working on that with the 46th and 48th ward aldermen. If a constituent is interested in parking, they should contact their alderman.

Q. Where do all the dump trucks take all the rubble?

A. The rubble is trucked off site to various landfills or quarries, depending on the material being hauled offsite.

Q. Will the clearance of the underpasses be higher than it is today? What is the new clearance?

A. Yes, the new structure will be raised to a minimum of 14'9" from the current level, roughly 11-12 feet.

Q. When finished, is there any sound control with the new tracks that will make the CTA trains sound lessened across the adjacent community?

A. Yes, the new structure will reduce train noise in the community through the use of noise barriers that will redirect and disperse some of the train sound upward. In addition, the new concrete structure, the use of continuously welded rails and resilient track fasteners will also contribute to a reduction in noise.

Q. What is being done to repair the damage to the roads used by the heavy construction equipment and added rerouted traffic, ie. Winthrop and Kenmore?

A. The contractor will perform temporary patching to roads and sidewalks as the project progresses. Upon completion of Stage B construction in 2024, the contractor will reconstruct sidewalks and roadways under the newly constructed viaducts.



Q. How will the trains operate? Are you demoing one side -- eg, removing existing tracks on one side and then operating both north- and southbound trains on one set of tracks?

A. Throughout construction, we will continue to provide Red and Purple Line service, which is why we have divided reconstruction of the four Red and Purple Line tracks into two stages. Currently we are in Stage A construction, during which we are demolishing and rebuilding the two easternmost tracks – the northbound Red and Purple Line tracks. We have relocated Red and Purple Line trains to the westernmost tracks during this stage. When we begin Stage B in early 2023, we will move all train traffic to the new easternmost tracks and then demolish and rebuild the westernmost tracks – the southbound Red and Purple Line tracks.

Q. The question about the sound was answered for lower level buildings, but what about the taller buildings, like Park Tower with over 1,000 residents?

A. The new structure will reduce train noise in the community through the use of noise barriers that will redirect and disperse some of the train sound upward. In addition, the new concrete structure will feature continuously welded rails and resilient track fasteners that also contribute to a reduction in noise.

Q. Since a majority of the construction is precast concrete construction, will there be any ornamental designs put in the formwork so that the new work looks beautiful as well as functional?

A. Yes, the precast noisewalls and street-level screen walls are designed with aesthetic treatments.

Q. Will the width of the alley from homeowner's garages to new wall remain the same?

A. Generally yes, though there will be locations about 120 feet apart where the piers will encroach into a small part of the alley.

Q. Is the schedule still on track to be complete in 2024?

A. Yes, we expect to complete and open the new stations and tracks in 2024.

Q. Have any of the original wooden trusses been located during the demolition?

A. Sections of trestle have not been encountered so far in the demolition or excavation.

CTA service questions

Q. Will there be bus turnarounds or something to accommodate the #146, #92 and other routes?

A. The #146 route has not changed under Stage A and will still have a stop/layover at Berwyn east of Broadway. The #92 Foster has been rerouted to stop at the Bryn Mawr Red Line station to provide customers convenient transfer access to the Red Line.

Q. What is taking so long to move the #78 Montrose stop east of the Wilson station to in front of the station?

A. CTA relocated the eastbound #78 bus stop to the current location of the #81 bus stop at Wilson 'L' Station on Sept. 24.



As to the length of time to move the bus stop location, with every request or otherwise decision to relocate a bus stop, CTA reviews these very closely to make sure that the locations best serve customers. Once a decision is made to relocate, the CTA works internally with signage and other departments to create new signage. CTA has more than 10,000 bus stops, so these changes can take some time to process.

Q. Is the reduced speed we are experiencing between Sheridan and Wilson due to the RPM project?

A. There are slow zone requirements in place for safety reasons due to the condition of the tracks not related to RPM.

Q. Why have CTA automated rail announcements not yet updated to reflect which side the doors open on?

A. The change to the pre-recorded announcement sequence for the hundreds of rail cars that are used on the Red and Purple lines is underway. In the interim, operators have been making manual announcements.

Q: With the Berwyn station closed now through 2024, why hasn't the #146 been rerouted to connect with the Bryn Mawr Red Line station?

A. Anytime we change the service on any CTA route, we put a lot of thought into the benefits and drawbacks of doing so. After careful consideration, we determined that altering the #146 bus route would not benefit the majority of our customers, and could in fact contribute to traffic disruptions in the community.

Our analysis found that the number of #146 bus riders who transfer to the Red Line is low -- on average, there are only 23 daily transfers from the #146 bus route to the Berwyn Red Line station. Based on this analysis there is not a substantial enough number of transferring riders to justify lengthening or complicating the express route to downtown. By contrast, CTA did reroute the #92 Foster bus to the Bryn Mawr station because it has 10 times as many daily transfers between the Red Line as the #146 bus route (more than 250 a day).

Aside from the fact that the ridership doesn't support rerouting the #146 bus to Bryn Mawr, doing so would add more congestion to a street that is narrow and already very heavily traveled, including carrying the #84 Peterson and the #92 Foster bus routes.

Q: A reroute of the #146 route for the Foster viaduct demolition 8/20-8/23 was not included in a project update and there were no signs on nearby N Marine Drive and W Foster Ave.

A. We make it a high priority to notify our customers of any service change. Our process for those notifications includes posting paper alerts at the affected bus stops and digital alerts on CTA's website in the Alerts section and on the bus route page. Alerts also appear on digital screens in stations served by the bus route and Decaux shelter LED displays along the route during the reroute. The alert also gets syndicated out on CTA's APIs and RSS feeds, so any website, app, etc. (such as Google Maps) that takes in CTA's alert data stream will also show it. Subscribers to CTA service alerts also receive this information. We appreciate you bringing this issue to our attention. In this instance, we don't know what happened to the paper alerts that were posted on the streets that were referenced, but will closely monitor paper signage for future reroutes so we can replace alerts that fall or are torn down – as well as continuing to post digital alerts.



Small businesses in the RPM project area

Q. How are businesses being supported with the Open for Business campaign?

A. The CTA created the RPM Open for Business program in 2020 to support local businesses during construction and encourage people to shop, eat, play and explore locally. The program includes banners and other signage in the community; a dedicated web page transitchicago.com/isupportlocal/; a series of small business videos on the RPM social media channels and more.

Future phases of RPM

Q. After this project is complete - will it proceed with stations going north?

A. RPM has always been envisioned as a multi-phase project that will eventually rebuild all of the Red and Purple Line stations and track structures between Belmont and Linden stations. Future phases of RPM, including which stations will be rebuilt in the various phases, are still be determined.

Red-Purple Bypass questions

Q. When is the Belmont flyover scheduled for completion?

A. By the end of 2021.

Q. Now that the Vautravers greystone building north of Belmont has been moved, what is the timing of straightening the adjacent tracks?

A. The demolition and reconstruction of the Red and Purple Line tracks between Belmont and Cornelia is expected to begin in late 2021/early 2022 and be fully completed by 2025.

General questions

Q. Who is the contact person to talk to about dispersal of parcels of land freed up by the project?

A. The CTA working with the local communities and elected officials created a Transit-Oriented Development plan for parcels of land that will be available for development when RPM Phase One is completed in 2025. That plan is posted at transitchicago.com/rpm/todplan/ and you can contact Jeff Wilson, Director of RPM Government and Community Relations at jwilson@transitchicago.com.

Q. Will the recording of this meeting be available online?



A. Yes, we will post the presentation and a recording of the virtual meeting online on transitchicago.com/rpm/outreach.

--Responses current as of Sept. 28, 2021