

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Chicago Transit Board – June 10, 2009

Thank you Chairman Brown, members of the Board.

I'd like to start with an update on BusTracker.

Last month, with the launch of the final phase of Bus Tracker, we introduced a new feature that allows customers to sign up for customized e-mails that provide estimated bus arrival times. E-mails can now be sent to phones as text messages making the benefits of Bus Tracker accessible to more customers. Although only available for a few weeks, more than 1,200 customers have already subscribed to the system.

We continue to make progress in finalizing the two-way text-messaging feature that I mentioned last month will launch this summer. In addition, we plan to initiate a campaign to increase awareness of Bus Tracker with all its new robust features now that all the regularly scheduled routes are active.

The CTA is proud to host the 2009 APTA Rail Conference and International Rail Rodeo. This year's theme is "Quality Transit - Now," and the conference is a great opportunity for us to learn about the newest innovations in the rail industry as well as share ideas and best practices with our counterparts from across the country. Various CTA employees will be participating as panelists and speakers during the conference, and both CTA and Metra will also be offering technical tours of some of our facilities and rail lines. Our industry peers have already starting arriving in Chicago in preparation for the International Rail Rodeo, which marks the commencement of the event this Saturday at our Skokie Yard.

We are moving full speed ahead with our federal stimulus projects. The Blue Line track work is divided into three phases, and we are well into Phase 1. There has been some inconvenience to customers because we've had to introduce new slow zones as a result of track demolition and reconstruction. We reached the peak for Phase 1 and, as of last week, crews removed nearly 14,500 feet of those slow zones. Slow zones will be eliminated each week over the next month as we wrap up this phase and begin preparation for Phase 2.

Currently, the CTA is going through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) New Starts process to secure funds for building the proposed Red Line Extension. The New Starts program requires transit project proposals to proceed through a process of planning, design, and construction.

The first step of the process is the Alternatives Analysis phase, which is designed to examine all the transit options available and determine a locally preferred alternative, essentially where the extension would actually run and how.

Last week, two community meetings were held to receive further comment on the possible options. Comments will be accepted through June 18. The project team will then continue to refine the options based on public input and conduct additional technical analysis and interaction with the FTA and other stakeholders to finalize a recommendation that will be presented to this Board.

Going through the New Starts process is required in order to apply for federal funding; however, it does not guarantee that funding will be available.

To conclude my report, I have an update for the Board on ridership.

In May, 45.1 million rides were provided, a decrease of 1.1 percent compared to May 2008.

Ridership on the bus system was at 28 million for May, down 3.3 percent compared to 2008.

Meanwhile, ridership on the rail system continued to be strong and increased 2.7 percent compared to this time last year.

As I mentioned last month, we started seeing a slight decline in ridership, which led us to believe that we were experiencing the impact of a weakened economy.

After reviewing May's results, we see the greatest losses in ridership have been during the weekday rush hours, leading us to conclude that there are less people commuting to work due to the recession. The fact that weekend ridership is up is a good sign that we can attract new customers in some markets. We will continue to watch this trend closely in the weeks to come.

Year-to-date, ridership is still ahead of last year by 1.8 percent system-wide.

Whether it's weekday commuters or families riding the system on the weekends, we continue to be focused on providing service that is on time, clean, safe, and friendly.

Thank you. This concludes my report.