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CITY COUNCIL APPROVES PROPOSALS THAT WILL PROMOTE USE OF CITY METRA STATIONS, FUTURE BUS RAPID TRANSIT ROUTE

Part of long-term strategies to improve public transit in Chicago, City Council approved today a pair of proposals that will finance planning initiatives involving local Metra stations and a future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route.

"Chicago's public transit network is already one of the most expansive and efficient in the nation. These initiatives will make it even better," Mayor Emanuel said.

Metra Typology Study

The \$125,000 study will establish "typologies" for the 76 Metra stations in the city according to their development potential and needs. Each designation will reflect specific characteristics involving area land uses, densities, employment and other neighborhood traits that will help developers and community stakeholders to evaluate and coordinate future infill projects, especially those that promote the use of public transit. The study will complement and build upon the "Transit Friendly Development Guide" completed in 2009 for the 144 Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) rail station in the city, which resulted in each station being designated as one of seven types.

The City of Chicago will fund 25 percent of the plan's cost and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) will fund the rest. If approved, the plan could be completed by the end of the year.

BRT Land Use Development Plan

The \$200,000 plan will analyze and identify improvements to local land use policies that will support the eventual development of a BRT route on either Ashland Avenue or Western Avenue. The proposed BRT route, currently under consideration by the CTA and city agencies, will have

traffic-signal priority at intersections to increase bus speeds by more than 80 percent during peak travel times, among other transit-friendly amenities.

The plan will recommend land use policy changes, where needed, along the length of the route to promote BRT ridership and improve the pedestrian environment.

The City of Chicago will fund 20 percent of the plan's cost and the RTA will fund the rest. The planning process will commence after the selection of a final route.

The RTA is the financial and oversight body for the three transit agencies in northeastern Illinois; the CTA, Metra, and Pace.

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