



To Elected Leadership and Transportation Agency Executives:

Our organizations strongly support starting a demonstration project to improve public transit service on the south side of Chicago and South Suburbs. We encourage you to implement a pilot program to lower fares in the city to CTA levels on the Metra Electric and Rock Island lines, make fares more affordable in the South Suburbs, and offer low cost transfers between Metra Electric, Rock Island, Pace, and the CTA, as soon as possible.

Portions of the south side and South Suburbs are heavily dependent on mass transit, but often lack access to high quality, affordable, frequent transit service. Commute times for residents in the area are also longer than other parts of the region. These challenges have contributed to lower transit ridership and reduced access to opportunity. Testing new and improved mass transit services on the south side and South Suburbs is a good way to find long-term solutions to transportation problems that have persisted in the region for too long.

Preliminary analysis shows lower fares, free transfers, and improvements to Metra's Electric and Rock Island routes are likely to increase overall transit ridership, reduce travel times, and may have a net positive revenue impact. These data-driven conclusions are promising and a demonstration project should be the next step, with appropriate mechanisms in place to help the individual transit agencies adapt to any short-term changes in revenue. A successful pilot should include an evaluation component to adjust the pilot project itself as well as inform further study and implementation of similar projects throughout the region.

This pilot program will require unprecedented coordination between Metra, CTA, Pace, and the RTA to be successful. Our region has struggled with offering integrated transit service, but this pilot program is an exciting opportunity to implement true fare integration, and offer seamless transfers between services. These are enormous benefits for users of the transit system and another reason all government agencies involved in transit should participate fully in this pilot.

Each of our organizations is excited about the potential benefits of this pilot program: this initiative can meaningfully improve the quality, affordability, sustainability, and equitability of our transportation system now. We stand ready to help you achieve these goals in any way we can and look forward to the successful launch of this project.

Sincerely,

Active Transportation Alliance • Chicago Jobs with Justice • Center for Neighborhood Technology • Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce • Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago • Coalition for a Modern Metra Electric • Environmental Law and Policy Center • Midwest High Speed Rail Association • Metropolitan Planning Council • International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (Transportation Division)