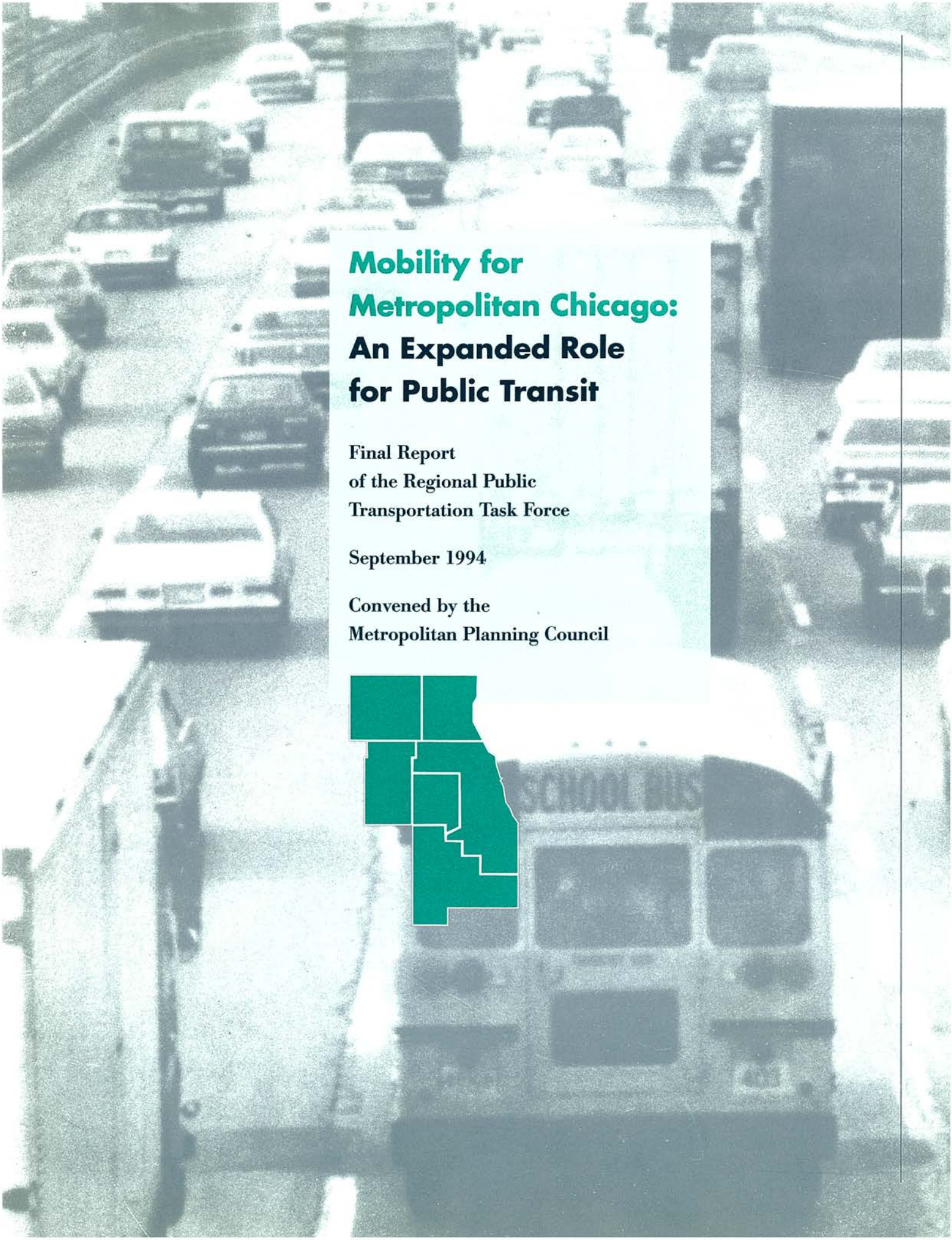


Mobility for Metropolitan Chicago: An Expanded Role for Public Transit

Final Report
of the Regional Public
Transportation Task Force

September 1994

Convened by the
Metropolitan Planning Council

Contents

Daily traffic jams and regular budget crises for public transit agencies were two of many reasons that the Metropolitan Planning Council* convened the Regional Public Transportation Project in June 1993. Funded primarily by the Regional Transportation Authority, the project brought together a 27-person Task Force, a technical steering committee, and an advisory panel of public officials. The Task Force assessed and recommended a role for Chicago regional public transit that addresses mobility and access needs of all residents.

*The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC), a non-profit civic organization, works in the public interest to assure that public policy and planning support a vital Chicago metropolitan region. The MPC bases its positions on objective, nonpartisan analysis; builds cooperative partnerships of business, civic, government, community and professional leaders; advocates public participation in policy and planning decisions; and promotes implementation of its recommendations. MPC has been active on regional transportation issues since the mid-1960s and will work over the course of the next year to achieve the policy changes and other reforms that are required to address the region's mobility needs into the next decade.

MPC served as the facilitator and manager of this year-long study effort, which convened a 27-member Task Force to develop a blueprint and guide future decision-making relating to our region's public transit. MPC's Board of Directors and its Transportation Committee have provided guidance throughout the project.

Section 1: Reinventing public transit

Traffic congestion and poor access to jobs threaten the region's economy and quality of life. Traffic delays cost the region almost $2 billion per year, and continuation of suburban development patterns is reducing access to jobs for low- and moderate-income residents. Unless changes are made, congestion will worsen considerably, environmental damage will increase, and the local economy will suffer.

An enhanced public transit system can help solve these problems by attracting more ridership in established transit markets and providing new services in underserved suburban markets. Many proven approaches to increasing ridership already exist and should be expanded. New types of experimental transit are also needed to serve low-density suburban areas.

Section 2: Paying for an enhanced system

Improving transit will require a financial restructuring of the current system, which represents a $17.6 billion capital investment. Inadequate operations financing has contributed to falling ridership in many primary markets, while an existing $4 billion backlog of unmet capital needs threatens the system's long-term viability.

The Task Force compared a Status Quo scenario, with no major changes in financing or operations, to an Enhance Transit scenario,

which included major capital reinvestment, service expansions, and systemwide efficiencies and improvements. The status quo approach would lead to continued ridership declines and financial decay, despite average annual spending of $1.87 billion. The Enhance Transit scenario would attract new ridership, improve job access, and reduce growth in traffic congestion.

During the period 1996-2005, the Enhance Transit program would require annual average spending of $2.64 billion, a 40 percent increase over the expected level of spending during this period.

The Task Force identified a menu of options for funding an expanded transit program for the Chicago region. The increase should come from cost savings and new revenues. Productivity increases of one-half of one percent per year through 2005 could save an estimated $45 million annually. New public funding sources that together could provide more than $700 million in funds include: a gas tax increase; higher motor vehicle registration fees; a region-wide one-cent sales tax; and/or reallocation of federal and state transportation funds. A peak-hour congestion fee, similar to a toll, could also be used.

Section 3: Underlying problems

Financial restructuring and service expansion are more likely to succeed if the region tackles three difficult issues that contribute to the current mobility problems: 1) land use should support transportation investments; 2) public funds for transportation should provide incentives to achieve regional goals; and 3) regional governance structures should be reworked to be more responsive to changing transportation needs. Strategies for accomplishing these changes, and lessons learned from other cities, are presented.

Section 4: Short-term solutions

Many improvements can be implemented in the short term to make transit more competitive with the auto. They should be developed as clusters of changes and implemented systemwide so that they make a significant impact on ridership and congestion.

Service – Improve existing service to increase core ridership. Target growth markets with responsive, coordinated services. Test innovative services in markets with low transit market share.

Finance – Streamline service and boost system productivity. Increase capital funds for infrastructure and equipment. Find adequate and reliable funds for transit operations.

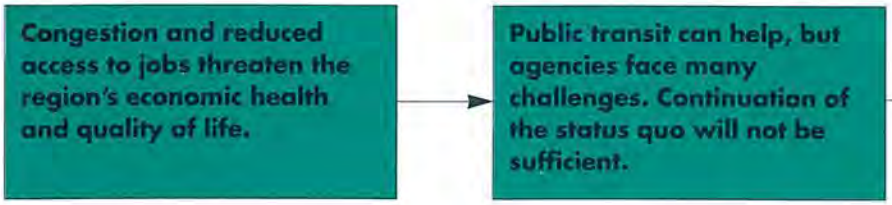
Policy – Strengthen regional commitment to providing travel alternatives. Coordinate planning and decision-making for all transportation modes. Rework transportation funding to reflect new mobility criteria.

Section 5: Moving forward

The future of public transit in the Chicago region depends on actions by the region's leaders over the next two years. Immediate coordinated efforts are needed to develop policies and funding proposals for presentation at the federal and state levels. Transportation agencies must participate in this process and commit to working together.

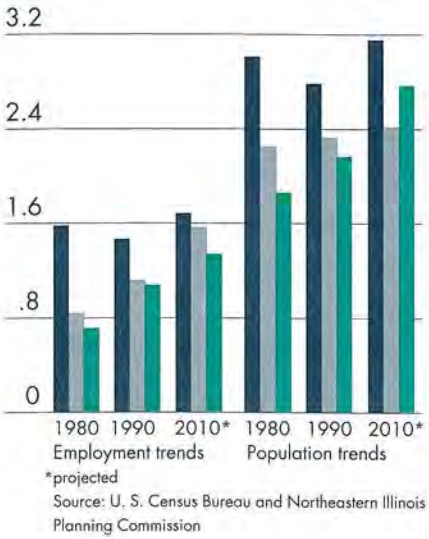
The Metropolitan Planning Council and members of the Task Force will assist in this public dialogue by developing an agenda and building a consensus of support for change into the next decade. To help guide implementation efforts, the report defines the responsibilities of the region's transportation agencies and political leaders.

Overview of findings and recommendations for achieving mobility in metropolitan Chicago:




New strategies are needed to make transit more competitive with the automobile.
New funding sources and efficiencies can provide the resources needed to strengthen transit's role.
The Task Force identified necessary long-term changes.
It also developed short-term strategies to enhance transit.
And outlined the next steps needed to implement its recommendations.
Policy: Develop a unified approach to land use and transportation.
Funding: Revise criteria for allocation of transportation resources.
Governance: Consider governance changes to address mobility needs.
Service: Be more responsive to changing markets.
Funding: Increase funding, but expect agencies to do more with less.
Policy: Revise regional policies and strategies to enhance mobility.
Define roles for different levels of government and the private sector.
Identify MPC's next steps to achieve long-term change.

Fig. 1
Trends in Employment and Population
in millions



*projected
Source: U. S. Census Bureau and Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission

Facing new realities

The Chicago region's public transit system was built as a hub-and-spoke network to transport workers to and from downtown Chicago. That system is no longer sufficient. Today, jobs and people are spread over a 3,700-square-mile metropolis with major activity centers beyond the reach of traditional public transit (see fig. 1). The region's economy and quality of life are suffering as a consequence.

Evidence of the problem can be seen any weekday morning or afternoon, when Chicago-area highways and arterial roads slow to a crawl under the burden of traffic. Area residents make about 16 million trips by automobile each workday, filling many roads beyond design capacity. The resulting delays, measured in loss of work time, late shipments, wasted fuel, and increased insurance premiums, cost the region almost $2 billion annually (see fig. 2).

Equally serious is the deterioration in access to jobs as suburban development has grown beyond transit's reach. Many new employment centers are completely inaccessible without a car, while others are an arduous three-hour-a-day commute from moderate- and low-income communities. The lack of adequate transit for working-class residents drains vitality from communities and undercuts the ability of businesses to expand their workforces.

Finally, the Chicago region's automobile dependence is environmentally unsustainable and detrimental to the quality of life for 7 million area residents. Crowded highways, access roads, and parking lots create noise, polluted runoff, habitat destruction, and

Fig. 2
Costs of Congestion in Metropolitan Chicago
millions of dollars annually

Recurring delay	**$ 530**
Incident delay	**620**
Recurring fuel	**90**
Incident fuel	**100**
Insurance premiums	**540**
Total	**$ 1,880**

Source: Texas Transportation Institute, *Roadway Congestion in Major Urbanized Areas, 1982 to 1988.*

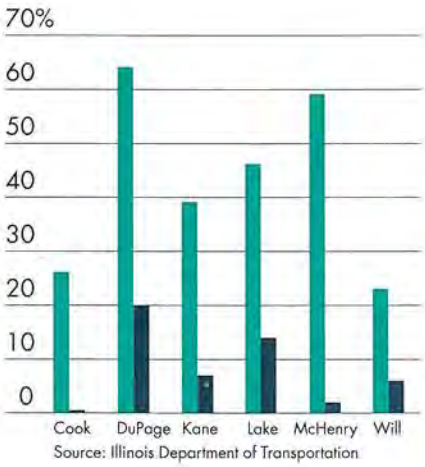
flooding. According to the American Lung Association, air pollution from motor vehicle sources costs the Chicago region a minimum of $123 million annually in health care costs. Pollution also creates an economic burden for 6,000 of the region's largest employers because the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 require businesses with 100 or more employees to discourage workers from driving.

Congestion expected to worsen

Building more roads or adding lanes to existing roads will not solve these problems. While a new highway or tollway may temporarily relieve congestion, local and national experience has shown that the road soon fills again to capacity because it lures drivers from alternate routes, attracts former transit riders, and encourages people who had "avoided the rush hour" to change their travel times. Housing and commercial developments along the new thoroughfare add to the congestion, and because they are built for access by car instead of transit, problems of congestion and pollution are perpetuated.

Like Los Angeles and other traffic-mired regions, the Chicago region has tried to build its way out of the problem for 30 years, adding new tollways, widening arterial roads, tinkering with coordinated traffic signals, and rebuilding older expressways. But as employment and populations shifted from the transit-served city into the car-oriented suburbs, the improvements proved inadequate. Automobile ownership in every collar county has grown dramatically since 1970, so that today most suburban households own from two to five cars. Vehicle miles traveled during the 1980s grew by 60 percent in DuPage and McHenry counties and by about 40 percent in Kane and Lake, far outstripping the growth in the miles of road available (see fig. 3).

Fig. 3
Change in Daily Vehicle Miles of Travel and Miles of All Roads
1980–1990
travel miles
road miles



Source: Illinois Department of Transportation

Congestion and related pollution will not only increase in intensity but will also burden a wider area. Unless current trends can be reversed, the area affected by heavy congestion will double by the year 2010. Traffic jams are expected to increase in southern DuPage County, central Lake County, many parts of suburban Cook County, and some areas of Will, Kane, and McHenry counties.

Restoring the transit advantage

The most expedient and promising approach to reversing these threats to the region's well-being is to build on the public transit advantage that helped create the current metropolitan area.

Despite weaknesses, the Chicago regional system has been and remains one of the most extensive, efficient, and well-integrated

Fig. 4
What Is Our Public Transit System Now?

Regional Transportation Authority

The RTA is the funding and oversight agency for three operating agencies, the Chicago Transit Authority, Metra, and Pace. The RTA has no operating responsibilities. It provides comprehensive planning, develops and allocates financial resources according to legislative formulas, and monitors and evaluates performance of the operating boards.

Chicago Transit Authority

The CTA provides bus and rapid rail transit service generally within Chicago and 38 close-in communities. The rail lines converge downtown and include service to O'Hare and Midway Airports. Bus service is provided on a grid pattern, so that most residential areas are within two blocks of a bus route.

Bus system:
- 74% of CTA riders
- Grid route structure
- 140 routes, 2,135 route miles
- 12,800 bus stops

Heavy rail system:
- 26% of CTA riders
- 6 radial rail lines, 224 route miles
- 144 stations

Metra

Metra provides commuter rail services from downtown Chicago to 68 other Chicago locations and 100 suburban communities. It provides park-and-ride service at its suburban stations and works with Pace to provide feeder bus service. Express trains run on some lines during peak periods.

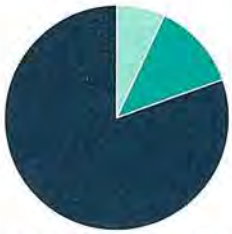
Commuter rail system:
- 13 radial lines to Chicago Loop
- 502 route miles
- 230 stations in 100 communities
- 663 weekday trains
- 800 parking lots with 63,830 spaces

Pace

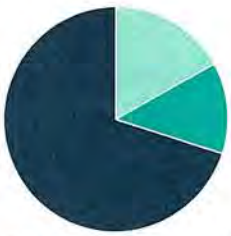
Pace provides fixed-route bus and other services (including subscription bus, van pool, and special services for people with disabilities) in 200 suburban communities. It offers inter-suburban and suburb-to-Chicago routes as well as feeder and distribution service from Metra and CTA rail lines to residential and commercial centers.

Fixed route system:
- Almost 250 routes
- 96% of Pace riders

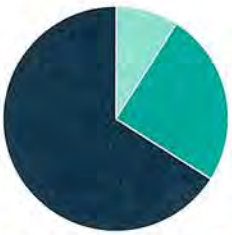
Other services:
- 60 dial-a-ride services and 200 Pace-owned vehicles in service
- 132 van pools
- Subscription services



1993 Unlinked Trips
555 million total
- CTA 447 million
- Metra 70 million
- Pace 38 million

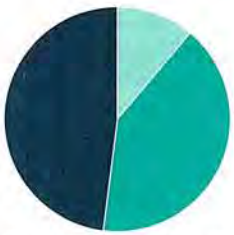


1993 Revenue Miles
183 million total
- CTA 128 million
- Metra 24 million
- Pace 31 million



1993 Operating Expenses*
$1,295 million total
- CTA $ 857 million
- Metra $ 326 million
- Pace $ 112 million

*RTA's 1993 operating expenses were $17 million



1994 Capital Budget*
$ 308 million total
- CTA $ 150 million
- Metra $ 125 million
- Pace $ 33 million

*RTA's 1993 capital outlay was $3 million

public transit networks in the United States. Its commuter trains, buses, elevated trains, and subways provide 550 million passenger trips per year, serving about 2.1 million passengers on an average weekday. The system represents a capital investment of $17.6 billion in replacement value dollars (see fig. 4).

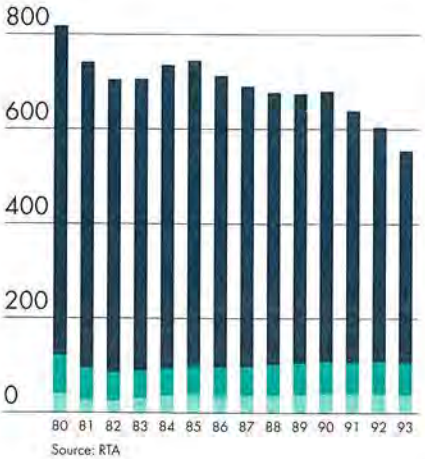
Public transit remains the clear favorite for journeys to and from Chicago's central area, accounting for more than 75 percent of all work trips. It also provides direct rail access to both O'Hare and Midway airports; strong bus service in most close-in suburbs; and high-speed (up to 79 mph) commuter trains serving 100 suburbs. Other strengths are its park-and-ride facilities (70,000 spaces), its transfer centers between buses and trains, and its express services.

Despite these strengths, transit ridership is down dramatically, declining from 816.7 million trips taken in 1980 to 554.8 million trips taken in 1993 – a 32 percent decrease – this during a period when overall travel in the region increased significantly (see fig. 5). At the same time, the financial condition of the transit system has deteriorated, and a major financial crisis is likely, forcing shutdowns of facilities and reductions in the number and quality of transit services. Though it is tempting to require transit fare increases to meet budget shortfalls, decision makers should observe that fare increases are partially responsible for the falloff in transit ridership, as transit riders shift to auto travel.

If these negative trends continue, public transit will be increasingly less able to meet the Chicago region's mobility needs. The Regional Public Transportation Task Force is calling for action by the region's leaders to address mobility needs and strengthen the role of public transit in the region's overall mobility strategy.

The enhanced transit system recommended by the Task Force calls for building on the existing transit strengths and taking on the underlying issues that have contributed to mobility problems – land use, funding allocations, and governance. The Task Force recommends a significant new investment of public and private funds in transit, but at the same time, requires that transit agency management and labor become more consumer responsive and oriented to the financial "bottom line."

Fig. 5
Trends in System Ridership
1980 – 1993
in millions of unlinked trips



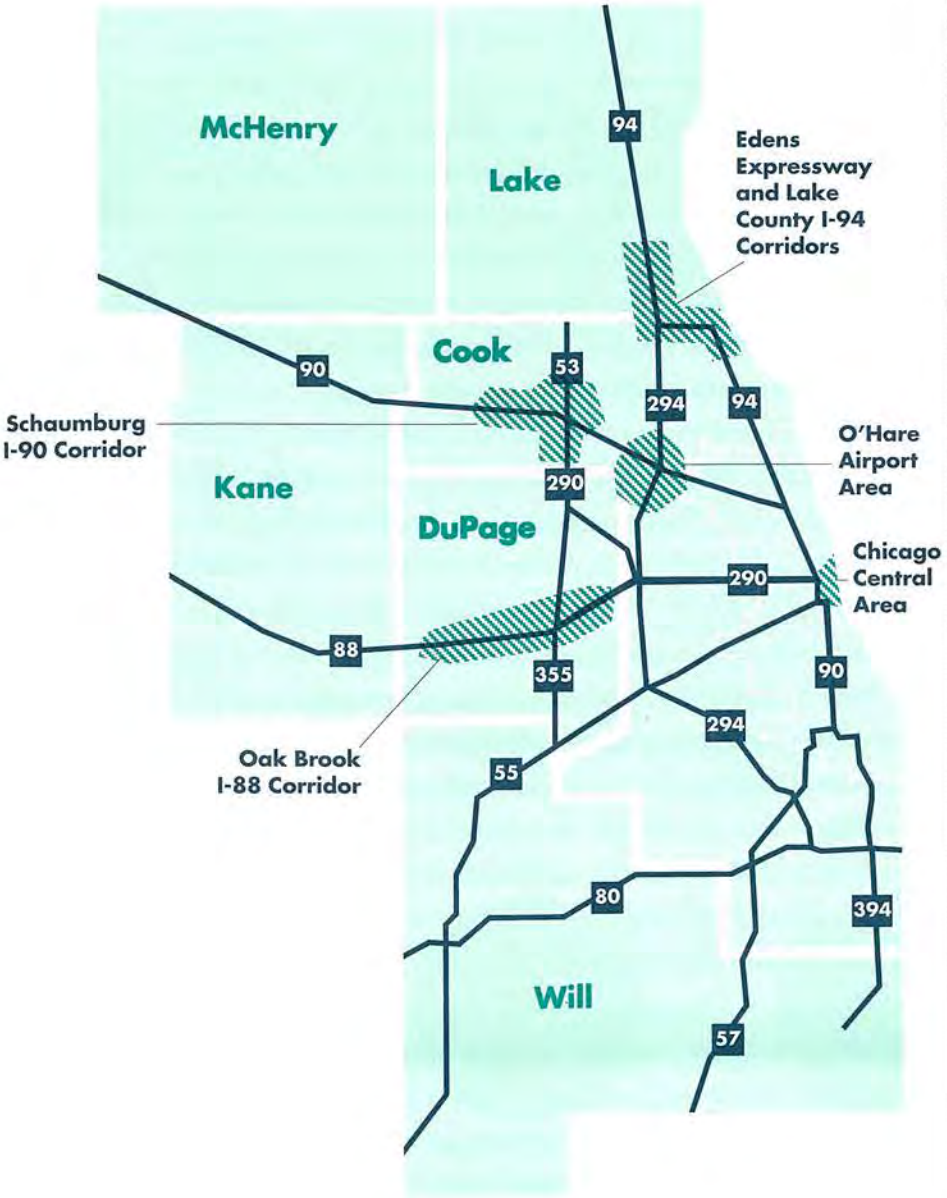
Source: RTA

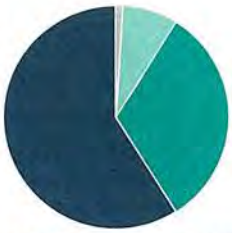
New landscape includes "edge cities"

The need for new investment is closely tied to shifting population and employment patterns over the past 20 years. Where once downtown Chicago served as the preeminent employment hub for an arc of suburban "bedroom" communities, today the downtown area is just one of six principal employment nodes and corridors

Fig. 6
Regional Employment Centers

Sources:
Real Estate Research Corporation;
U.S. Census Bureau and
Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission





Distribution of Office Space
Chicago Metropolitan Region
1991

Chicago Central Area	**59 %**
Edge City submarkets:	**32 %**
Edens Expressway Corridor	3 %
Lake County I-94 Corridor	4 %
O'Hare Airport Area	7 %
Schaumburg I-90 Corridor	8 %
Oak Brook I-88 Corridor	10 %
Other Suburban:	**8 %**
Other Chicago:	**1 %**
Total	**100 %**

(see fig. 6). These job centers together contain 91 percent of the region's office space and have experienced billions of dollars of private and public investment over the past 10 to 20 years. All six centers currently have a four- to 15-year oversupply of office space, which means they are likely to remain the region's dominant employment centers for the foreseeable future.

Transit improvements to serve these areas represent a prudent economic development strategy with excellent prospects for success.

1. Chicago's Central Area – With about 680,000 jobs, the Chicago central area remains the largest employment hub in the region. Excellent transportation and proximity to labor and business resources make it an employment center of choice. Though well served by feeder transit, the area lacks effective internal distribution service. The planned Central Area Circulator is designed to provide such service, with light-rail trains linking the central core to McCormick Place, commuter stations, North Michigan Avenue, and Navy Pier.

2. Edens Expressway Corridor – This long-established business center along the Edens Expressway (I-94) in Cook County provides good access to downtown Chicago, O'Hare Airport, and Lake County business centers. The area has strong commuter rail links to Chicago and good bus service in close-in suburbs, but service is less developed in the north and west ends of the corridor.

3. Lake County I-94 Corridor – Corporate centers and industrial complexes built in the last 20 years have transformed former farmland along Lake-Cook Road and further north in Libertyville, North Chicago, and Waukegan. More growth is expected. Two commuter rail lines connect the county to downtown Chicago, but large areas including some business parks remain inaccessible by transit. The planned Wisconsin Central commuter rail line, expected to open in 1996, will bring new service to some areas.

4. O'Hare Airport Area – A major job hub for industrial, transportation and office workers, this area has strong long-term prospects because it surrounds the world's busiest airport. Transit to downtown Chicago is excellent, with two commuter rail lines and the O'Hare elevated train. New bus links between the rail lines and employment centers have been successful, but many businesses remain beyond transit's reach. Bus and train access from west and south of the airport is also poorly developed.

Fig. 7a
Transit Service That Works

CTA's Orange Line
provides 25-minute rail service between the Loop and Midway Airport. With 876 park-and-ride spaces and connecting buses at each of nine stations, the service has attracted 35,000 daily riders including 8,000 who previously commuted by car on the Stevenson Expressway.

5. Schaumburg I-90 Corridor – One of the first "edge cities" to emerge around Chicago, this commercial center sprawls across Schaumburg, Arlington Heights, and Elk Grove Village, extending west along I-90 to Hoffman Estates and the Sears corporate campus. The area offers quick access by car to O'Hare and the western suburbs, but transit service is poorly developed. New bus links to rail stations and reverse-commute train schedules have been instituted; recent experiments with van pools and subscription buses have also been successful.

6. Oakbrook I-88 Corridor – Anchored by Oakbrook on the east and Naperville and Aurora on the west, this center of corporate headquarters, industrial parks, and research facilities is strengthened by the new North-South Tollway (I-355) link to Schaumburg and O'Hare Airport. Transit service is strongest along the commuter rail spines and in Aurora. Many businesses and corporate campuses lack access to bus or rail service.

Competing with the auto

Providing transit to these job centers means competing with the automobile on speed, convenience, and price. The automobile was a clear winner in that competition in the 1980s, when road miles traveled by car in the region increased by at least 33 percent while transit use declined 17 percent.

Reversing that trend and luring drivers out of their cars is not an unreasonable goal. Many transit services in the Chicago region already provide competitive service, as demonstrated by increased ridership on Metra commuter trains, recent successes by Pace buses to job centers, and the attraction of 8,000 new riders daily from the Stevenson Expressway onto new CTA Orange Line trains. The key in each case: good service that takes people where they want to go (see figs. 7a, 7b, and 7c).

A range of strategies can induce more residents to choose transit:

• Make "transit first" a primary regional goal.

Transit can become the preferred mode of travel if public policies and funding strategies make transit more convenient and/or economical compared to travel by auto. Regional goals and funding priorities should be revised to reduce congestion, improve job access, and enhance environmental quality: a "transit-first" approach.

Fig. 7b
Transit Service That Works

Pace Subscription buses link Sears Roebuck employees from communities across the region to the corporation's new campus in Hoffman Estates. Thirteen buses collect passengers who live close to each other and have signed up for the service in advance; the buses run nonstop via the Northwest Tollway to the worksite. Another Pace subscription bus runs from a church park-and-ride lot in Naperville to the Sears catalogue facility in Skokie. That service's $60 monthly fee covers 60 percent of operating costs.

Express bus connections have been well received by passengers on long "reverse commute" and suburb-to-suburb routes. The Pace 606 Northwest Limited connects 1,400 passengers a day from the CTA River Road rail station to Arlington Heights and Schaumburg, via the Northwest Tollway. The 888 Tri-State Flyer provides peak hour service on private coaches between south suburban Homewood and the Oakbrook/ Yorktown area.

• Promote land use that is "transit-friendly."
Residential and commercial development that is clustered around a transit node or spine makes transit service faster, less expensive, and easier to use. New developments should be designed with transit in mind, and redevelopment of older areas should incorporate transit improvements.

• Make existing services faster, more convenient.
CTA track and station improvements, combined with redevelopment of station areas as commercial hubs, can increase ridership and system efficiency. Improvements to Metra track and signals to allow higher train speeds will foster increases in commuter ridership. Expansion of park-and-ride opportunities is another proven ridership draw. Ongoing evaluation of CTA and Pace bus routing to meet the needs of workers, shoppers, and students is needed to ensure responsiveness of service.

• Coordinate planning for new transit corridors.
Proposals for new services and extensions of existing rail lines should be advanced through corridor planning activities and intergovernmental cooperation. Early involvement of the private sector, especially employers along the proposed route, is key to success. New services that connect the spokes on the current radial system should be a priority. Promising rail projects in the planning stages are a mid-city transitway on the western edge of Chicago and the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern circumferential route in the far-west suburbs. Other, less-costly strategies could also evolve from cooperative planning efforts in congested travel corridors.

• Experiment with new services in emerging markets.
Employer-coordinated van pools have expanded rapidly in the last two years and should be further developed because they provide cost-efficient and flexible service. Pace now provides 132 vans for more than 1,250 riders. Subscription bus routes should be expanded to provide more service to clusters of work sites. Trip-reduction strategies, including car pooling, telecommuting, and four-day-a-week work schedules, are also worth supporting because they reduce the number of cars on the road and thus speed all types of travel.

Fig. 7c
Transit Service That Works

Pace van pool service provides leased 14-passenger vans to groups of five or more commuters from the same workplace. The program provides a primary liability insurance policy for the driver (who rides for free) and all passengers. It also provides reimbursement to passengers who need to take alternative transportation for emergency purposes (a "guaranteed ride home"). Pace has 132 vans in operation with a goal of 200 by the end of 1994. The service recovers more than 100 percent of operating costs.

Metra park-and-ride service provides inexpensive parking in 63,000 spaces per day near commuter rail stations. Usage of most Metra lots exceeds 90 percent; many lots are at capacity. Nearly 10,000 new spaces added between 1987 and 1992 were quickly put to use; Metra projects a need for 35,000 more spaces by 2010.

Federal laws provide opportunities and challenges

Many U.S. cities are investing in public transportation systems and other traffic-reduction strategies in response to two major pieces of federal legislation that discourage auto use and provide economic incentives for investing in transit.

The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) designate the Chicago metropolitan region as a "severe ozone non-attainment area" because of emissions from automobiles and other sources. The CAAA's Employee Trip Reduction provision requires Chicago-area businesses with 100 or more employees to reduce the number of employees driving to the work site. With about 6,000 work sites and two million workers affected, thousands of employees could be shifted from auto to transit, but new revenues will be needed to provide coordinated system improvements and an increased level of services.

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) directs states to make better use of existing transportation systems and improve connections among roads, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. The legislation strongly encourages expansion of transit and other strategies that result in reduced use of the auto, particularly for commuting, so that road capacity can be preserved for freight and personal trips. The legislation provides a modest level of new funds for public transit and permits states to divert federal funds to transit from sources that were historically earmarked for highway use. However, demand for more and better roads is likely to keep most of these funds out of transit's reach in Illinois.

Another federal mandate that affects transit is the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which requires transit agencies to provide wheelchair access to transportation services. While the law may create a modest increase in transit ridership, it entails major financial investments for lift-equipped buses, accessible rail cars, and reconstructed stations. Disabled persons who cannot access mainline services must have access to comparable, but more costly, door-to-door service. No new federal funds were provided to help implement the act.

Mobility as a regional priority

The Task Force examined several approaches to addressing the transit system's needs before selecting the improvements advocated in this report (see fig. 8). It considered reductions in service (Economize Transit), a scenario to Protect Transit, and a continuation of the status quo, but rejected these options because each

Fig. 8
Scenarios Considered by Task Force

- **Status Quo***
- **Economize Transit**
- **Protect Transit**
- **Enhance Transit***
- **Mobility Approach**

*Financial analysis conducted for these two scenarios

would exacerbate current traffic congestion, further weaken access to jobs, and undercut the region's economic health.

The Task Force also considered an ambitious scenario (Mobility Approach) in which public transit would become a top regional priority, with major repercussions on land use planning, state and regional transportation policy, and lifestyle choices of area residents. Though the Task Force recognized clear economic and environmental benefits of this approach, it felt that such a proposal had little chance of being implemented in the 10- to 15-year time frame being studied.

The scenario chosen, Enhance Transit, is a middle ground. It recognizes that a major shift away from the automobile culture is unlikely in the short term, but it seeks to limit the financial, environmental, and social consequences that continued disinvestment in transit will create.

The rest of this report provides detailed discussion and recommendations for substantial improvement of the regional transit system. Section 2 outlines the current financial constraints and a financial strategy for renewing and expanding the system. Section 3 outlines the underlying problems affecting mobility. Section 4 details nine types of short-term improvements that can enhance transit service. Finally, Section 5 identifies the key actors needed to implement changes, and suggests responsibilities for each.

2

Once again, financial solutions needed

Regular financial reorganization has been a characteristic of Chicago's transit systems since the introduction of the automobile. In 1945, the Chicago Transit Authority was created to take over operations of private transit companies that faced bankruptcy. Both private and public carriers faced an economic crisis again in the early 1970s, prompting the Illinois Legislature to create the Regional Transportation Authority. That new agency stabilized services, but funding was restructured in 1979, when the gas tax for transit was eliminated. Transit governance was reworked in the early 1980s, when Metra and Pace were established to provide commuter rail and suburban bus operations, respectively, and financial controls were put in place.

Public transit financing must again be reworked. Failure to do so would allow the system to degenerate at a time when expansion is needed.

Continuation of the current funding approach – one of incremental decline – cannot be supported on financial or public policy grounds. Current trends in expense and revenue growth will require transit service cutbacks to balance budgets in the near term, leading to ridership losses and further financial decay. Funding for capital is also inadequate. Most of the system's track, bridges, and other structures are at least 50 years old. To protect the system's $17.6 billion in capital assets, worn-out infrastructure must be rebuilt, and if service is to improve, new capital projects must be funded.

Without renewed financial support, public transit will become a less effective tool for addressing economic growth opportunities, traffic congestion, access to jobs, and environmental quality. These problems undercut the quality of life in the region and reduce its competitiveness with smaller cities and other metropolitan areas.

Stopgap measures not enough

Regional transit's financial situation deteriorated in the 1980s as fares increased and ridership declined in many primary transit markets. The economic recession of the early 1990s took a further toll by reducing revenue growth from the regional sales tax, which is the primary source of public support for transit. As sales tax revenues stagnated, the transit agencies drew on financial reserves and used short-term loans to bridge the gaps between expenses and revenues.

Several studies have shown that such stopgap measures will not be sufficient in the coming years. While demand is rising for specialized transit services over a larger geographic area, the sales tax is expected to grow slowly or stagnate. The "RTA Financial Futures Study" in 1992 predicted that expenses would far outstrip revenue growth throughout the 1990s. A separate financial analysis developed for the Task Force predicted "considerable attrition of the system" if it continues to rely on the sales tax and other current sources of operations funds (see fig. 9, How Do We Pay For Public Transit Services Now?).

The sales tax is a principal source of weakness in the current financial structure for three reasons:

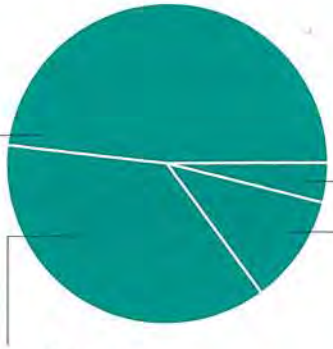
• **Growth of sales tax revenues** is not expected to match growth in transit operations budgets, according to projections prepared for the RTA.

• **Revenue is distributed based on where it is collected,** with most suburban revenue going to Metra and Pace while city-generated revenue goes primarly to the CTA. Because suburban retail sales are growing more quickly than city sales, the allocation-by-geography structure has provided a stronger revenue stream for Metra and Pace than for the CTA.

• **Most state support is tied to the sales tax.** The state transit contribution for general operating purposes is set at 25 percent of the total sales tax volume. Therefore, the state share, like the sales

Fig. 9
How Do We Pay For Public Transit Services Now?

1993
Operating Revenues
(budgetary basis):
$1.25 billion total



Fares and other sources
$598 million
Share: 48%

Passenger fares:
Illinois law requires total passenger revenue to meet one-half of the RTA's operations needs. The agencies meet this mandate with periodic fare hikes, sometimes at the expense of ridership.

Other revenue:
A relatively small contribution, this represents receipts from charters, advertising, real estate rental, investments of idle funds, and concessions.

Chicago/Cook County:
The City of Chicago or Cook County contributes $5 million each year and provides snow removal and other services, as a condition of the RTA Act.

Local sources
$462 million
Share: 37%

Chicago sales tax:
Levied at 1% in the City of Chicago; 15% goes to the RTA and the remainder to the CTA.

Cook County sales tax:
Levied at 1% in Cook County suburbs; 15% goes to the RTA, and the remainder is allocated as follows: CTA, 30%; Metra, 55%; Pace, 15%.

Collar County sales tax:
Levied at 1/4%; 15% goes to the RTA and the remainder is allocated as follows: CTA, 0%; Metra, 70%; Pace, 30%.

RTA share of sales tax:
The 15% RTA share covers RTA expenses, with the surplus (about $50 million annually) allocated to operating agencies depending on need.

Operating agency balances:
Any balance is retained by that operating agency for use on operations or capital projects.

State sources
$139 million
Share: 11%

Public Transportation Fund:
This annual subsidy is set at 25% of locally collected sales tax revenues. It is paid to the RTA for distribution to agencies based on need, with about 94% going to CTA and 6% to Pace. It is paid only if the RTA budget is balanced, and farebox revenue equals 50% of the RTA budget.

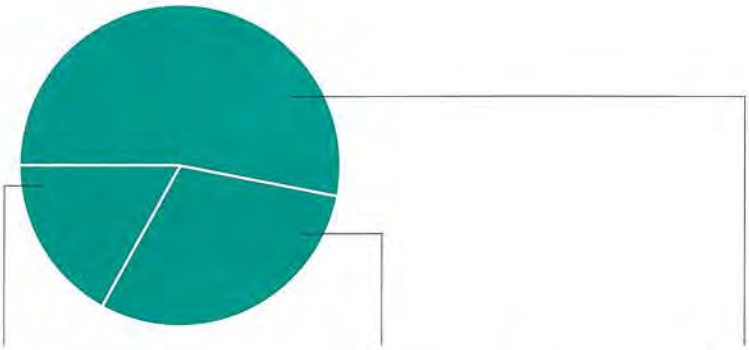
Reduced Fare Subsidy:
This is a state reimbursement for the cost of fare discounts to students, senior citizens and persons with disabilities. It is allocated to the agencies based on number of discounted rides provided.

Federal sources
$49 million
Share: 4%

Federal Transit Act Section 9:
This federal subsidy is allocated nationwide based on factors such as population, population density, and revenue vehicle miles of transit service. It may be used for capital or operating expenses, up to certain limits. The RTA always uses the statutory maximum for operations, allocating it to the agencies based on number of unlinked trips, as follows: CTA, 82%; Metra, 11%; Pace, 7%.

Fig. 10
How Do We Pay For Public Transit Infrastructure Now?

1993 Capital Program (budgetary basis): $305 million per year



Local sources
$52 million
Share: 17%

RTA Discretionary Funds:
Any funds remaining after disbursements for operating needs may be applied to capital projects.

RTA Bonds:
A 1989 authorization by the Illinois Legislature expanded the agency's bonding authority to $1 billion, of which $500 million was for the Strategic Capital Improvement Program (SCIP), which requires state approval and matching funds (see ASA, right). Funds have been split among agencies as follows: CTA, 50%; Metra, 45%; Pace, 5%. This bonding authority is nearly exhausted.

State sources
$91 million
Share: 30%

Series B Bonds:
These general obligation bonds have been issued every five years, with the last authorization for $200 million in 1989. These bonds are supported by general revenues of the State. The 1989 authority was renewed this year through June 1995.

Additional State Assistance:
The ASA is a state contribution equal to debt service on SCIP bonds.

Operation Greenlight:
This 1989 congestion reduction program authorized $75 million in bonding authority for transit projects. The five-year program is almost entirely obligated.

Federal sources
$162 million
Share: 53%

Federal Transit Act Section 3:
RTA service boards are eligible for two programs: 1) rail modernization and 2) bus and other. New transit projects such as the Central Area Circulator may apply for "new start" funds. Historically, modernization funds have been split as follows: CTA, 58%; Metra, 34%; Pace, 8%.

Federal Transit Act Section 9:
The RTA may use these funds for operations or capital, up to certain limits. The maximum amount is used for operations, with the remainder split among agencies as with Section 3 funds above.

ISTEA Flexible Funds:
Significant shifting of highway funds towards transit is encouraged under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. Many areas have used this flexibility for transit, but Illinois has not yet done so.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality:
Targeted for air quality improvements, this funding has been used for new shuttle services, the Metra Wisconsin Central rail project, bike paths, and station improvements.

tax it is keyed to, will continue to provide less revenue than needed for transit operations growth.

Capital funding nearly exhausted

Long-range prospects for capital funding for transit are equally uncertain (see fig. 10, How Do We Pay For Public Transit Infrastructure Now?). Although the Illinois Legislature in 1989 addressed some of the system's capital needs through a $1 billion bond authorization for the RTA, those funds have been virtually exhausted. Another traditional source of capital funds, the state's Series B bonds, are authorized through June 1995. Series B bonds are vital to public transit as these funds serve as the match for federal transportation grants. Also, the state's Operation Greenlight, a $75 million congestion-reduction program that has provided support for transit, is nearly depleted.

On the federal side, the outlook for capital funding has improved under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991. The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program, though relatively small, has provided funds for Metra's new Wisconsin Central rail line and several new rail-bus-pedestrian links to suburban employment centers. The much larger pool of flexible federal highway/transit funds, however, has not been tapped by Illinois for transit. The flexible program allows metropolitan areas to reallocate traditional highway construction money into transit projects. Other regions, including San Francisco and New York, have allocated some of their federal highway funds for transit improvements. The Chicago region has shifted only small amounts to transit because priority has gone to planned highway improvements.

The lack of capital funding comes at a time when an additional $4 billion is needed just to bring the system to recognized industry standards by the year 2000. Longer-term needs will be even greater unless a financial restructuring takes place.

Choices for moving forward

A financial model developed for this project permitted a comparison of the system's long-term financial performance under two approaches: a continuation of current trends and policies, the Status Quo scenario, vs. the implementation of a series of actions that would enhance public transit in the Chicago region, the Enhance Transit scenario.

Status Quo scenario

Assumptions

Current land use development and mobility trends will continue without any policy or financial intervention. No further loans or other stopgap solutions are available to address transit operating shortfalls. Existing transit revenues grow at traditional rates except when likely changes are known, as with the expected decline in federal operating subsidies for public transit. The only new funding for transit capital projects comes from a renewal of the State of Illinois Series B Bonds.

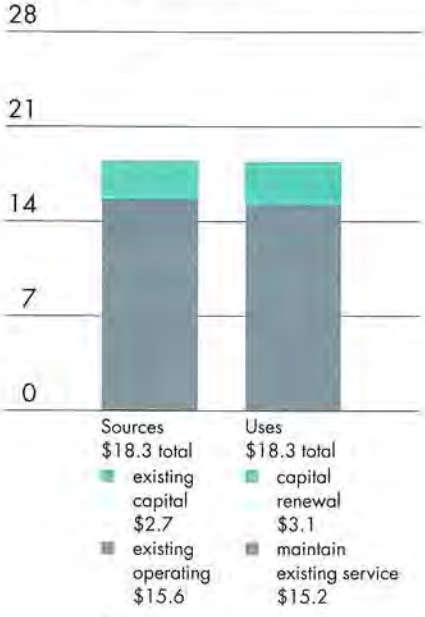
Implications

Piecemeal transit service cutbacks would take place first for the CTA and Pace, with closings of rail stops, elimination of bus routes, and reduced frequency of service. Increased travel times on Metra and CTA rail, due to deterioration of track, combined with more frequent equipment breakdowns due to aging equipment, would discourage people from using transit. Fare hikes would be required to meet funding needs, discouraging even more people from transit travel. Expansion of the public transit system would be unlikely unless the private sector provided more funds than it has traditionally. Regional mobility and air quality would worsen as people travel more by auto.

Financial Requirements

Over the ten-year period from 1996-2005, transit funding requirements would be $18.3 billion, or $1.83 billion annually, in inflated dollars (see fig. 11).

Fig. 11
Status Quo Scenario
Sources and Uses of Funds
1996 – 2005
in billions of inflated dollars



Source:
MPC, "RPTP Technical Paper #4"

Assumptions

Decision makers commit to some changes in regional land use practices, adjust auto fees to cover auto travel costs, and place a higher priority on transit as a mobility strategy. New transit management and financial frameworks are put in place, and transit agencies agree to stronger cooperation and joint strategic planning and investment. Transit services are reworked, and up to 10 percent of existing services are eliminated or replaced with less-costly services. Funds are committed to undertake system-wide renewal of existing transit and to invest strategically in new transit services.

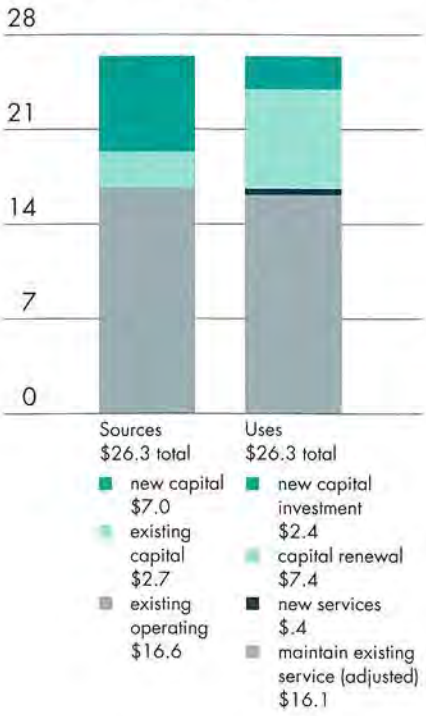
Implications

Transit service becomes more responsive to consumers, and growth in costs is contained. New revenues are committed to support transit through tax increases, leverage of private funds, shifting of highway funds, and/or higher auto-related fees. As service quality improves, the number of people riding transit increases moderately, generating new fare revenues. Regional mobility and air quality improve as more people live closer to work, and transit becomes a preferred mode of travel.

Financial Requirements

Over the ten-year period from 1996-2005, transit funding requirements would be $26.3 billion, or $2.63 billion annually, in inflated dollars (see fig. 12).

Fig. 12
Enhance Transit Scenario
Sources and Uses of Funds
1996 – 2005
in billions of inflated dollars



Source:
MPC, "RPTP Technical Paper #4"

The Enhance Transit scenario, supported by the Task Force, will require a major new funding commitment to public transit, on the order of a 40 percent increase over current funding levels. In the next sections, service efficiencies, labor productivity increases, and new public and private funding are assessed as ways of addressing the funding needs of this scenario.

Service efficiencies must be implemented

The Task Force assumed ongoing efforts by the transit agencies to streamline services and reallocate resources for more efficient use. A service realignment built into the Task Force's financial projections calls for 10 percent reductions in CTA and Pace fixed-route services and a five percent reduction in Metra services. The fixed-route cuts would be replaced with more flexible or different services, such as expansion of the existing van-pool program and increased reverse-commute rail service.

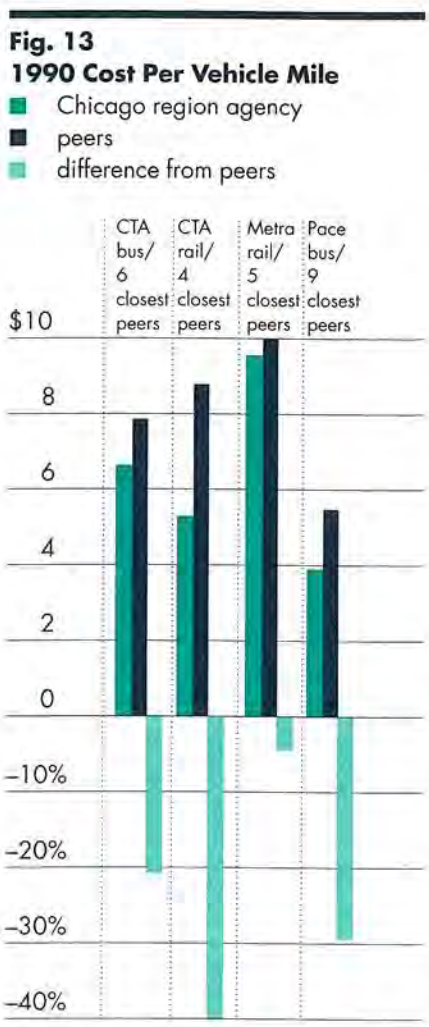
Rather than across-the-board reductions or cutbacks that would cause hardship for people with no other transportation choice, each agency should examine all aspects of operations so that least-productive services are modified, streamlined, or eliminated in favor of less-expensive and/or more-flexible alternatives. For instance, bus routes with consistently low ridership might be replaced with van pools, jitneys, or smaller buses running the same route. Trains and crews with low ridership at midday might be reassigned to early-morning and mid-afternoon reverse-commute routes, or be replaced with express bus service.

All three of the operating agencies have developed service standards to guide such reallocation of resources. Typically these standards take into account ridership, frequency of service, and crowding, with adjustments made to expand or reduce service. These evaluation measures may need to be reviewed to accomplish cost reductions. An interagency evaluation process to eliminate overlapping services is also needed, as the agencies compete with each other in a number of transit corridors. Though service changes are often unpopular with the public, they can be implemented if similar service remains available. The CTA, for instance, phased out four local and express bus routes in 1994, and rerouted many others, to avoid redundancy with new Orange Line train service.

Productivity gains can cut revenue need

Raising $783 million annually in new taxes or fees has little chance of success unless current transit dollars are used more effectively.

Fig. 13
1990 Cost Per Vehicle Mile



Source: RTA

Transit operating agencies, like businesses worldwide, must continuously find ways to deliver more service at lower cost through efficiencies, technology improvements, and more aggressive management.

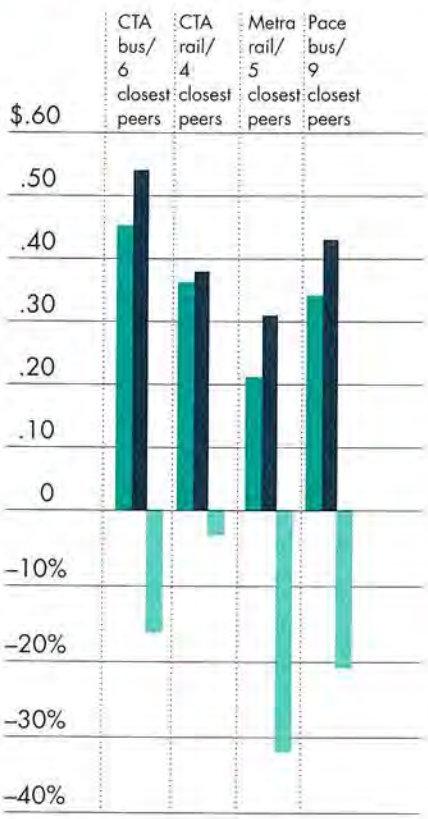
The Chicago region's transit operators are already among the most efficient in the country when measured against their peer agencies (see figs. 13, 14), and hourly wage rates are lower than in many other large transit cities. However, additional productivity gains of at least one-half of one percent per year should be a goal because such an increase could produce first-year savings of $7 million, compounding to $83 million by 2005, for a total savings of $378 million. The one-half of one percent annual goal is reasonable in light of private sector productivity gains as high as three to five percent annually. Sources of productivity gains could be:

• Better management and use of labor –
Labor productivity can be increased through cooperative labor-management efforts and cost-conscious planning. New signals and track improvements identified for several Metra lines, for instance, would allow the same crew to make one extra trip each morning and afternoon rush period. On CTA's Orange Line, trains are operated with a one-person crew and stations require exact fare, freeing personnel for other duties. Additional use of part-time employees and reclassification of some job categories could also provide savings.

• Renewed capital to reduce costs –
The transit agencies spend millions each year on emergency maintenance of vehicles and structures because of inadequate capital improvements. The CTA Green Line rehabilitation, which will renew all track, structures, and stations, is expected to save $15 million annually as trains run faster and emergency maintenance decreases. Likewise, new or rehabilitated buses and trains operate at a lower cost per mile than older vehicles.

• Savings through new technologies –
New systems such as automated fareboxes increase productivity by improving audit trails and reducing the need to hand-count money. Other promising technologies include automated fuel islands and in-tank sensors for buses, and higher-efficiency engines and air-conditioning units for buses and trains.

Fig. 14
1990 Cost Per Passenger Mile



Source: RTA

Funding sources for transit

Assuming that annual productivity gains can be achieved, more than $700 million in new revenues would still be required annually under the Enhance Transit scenario. The Task Force identified six traditional sources of funds, including the sales tax, motor vehicle fees, and a personal income tax, that could generate more than $700 million per year. Alternatively, a new-style "congestion fee," levied on vehicles using certain roads during peak hours, could yield $1.1 billion.

This "menu" of seven possible funding sources should be the starting point for discussion among local governments and the Illinois Legislature. Potential yields from each option are stated in annual average revenue over the period 1996-2005, in inflated dollars (see fig. 15).

• Motor fuel tax

A regional tax of one cent added to the current motor fuel (gas) tax in the six counties could discourage automobile use while raising $23 million per year. A three-cent increase could produce $69 million. Because gasoline price increases have trailed the inflation rate, this increase might be more accepted than other taxes.

• Regional sales tax

Raising the one-fourth of one percent sales tax for transit in the collar counties to the Cook County level of one percent would yield about $328 million per year. This approach would spread the cost of transit more evenly across the region. A general increase for all counties could also be used, though it could push the sales tax to over nine percent in the city of Chicago.

• Personal income tax

The Chicago region could follow the example of other regions that levy a local income tax, and designate its proceeds for transit use. A regional tax at one-tenth of one percent of income could yield about $123 million per year.

• Motor vehicle registration fees

A 10 percent increase in motor vehicle registration fees (for all vehicles), levied against residents of the region, could yield $31 million per year.

• Federal transportation funds

The region can now devote more of its federal transportation funding to transit purposes under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). The law allows the governor to shift highway funds to transit projects to promote overall mobility and efficient use of federal funds. Shifting about 30 percent of eligible ISTEA funds could yield $97 million annually through the year 2005. Any such shift would reduce new road construction and could draw opposition.

• State contribution to transit

The state contribution to transit for general operating purposes is set at 25 percent of the amount generated by the transit sales tax. Doubling that contribution to 50 percent could produce an additional $181 million per year. This would require reallocation of state general revenue funds and possibly a new funding source at the state level.

• Congestion fees

This new approach would charge a fee for all autos passing predetermined points on major arteries during peak periods (and thus be similar in many ways to toll bridges and highways). It could generate $1.1 billion per year at 15 cents per mile. Automated fee collection through "smart cards" purchased by motorists would reduce slowdowns at toll gates. Such a system is under study in several metropolitan areas primarily because it is seen as an effective way to discourage auto travel. It also shows potential for generating substantial revenue streams, which could be used for tax rebates, road projects, transit improvements, or a combination of regional needs.

Fig. 15
Menu of Potential Funding Sources and Estimated Yields
average annual revenue, in millions of inflated dollars, for 1996 to 2005

New taxes and fees (traditional)		**$ 783**
Motor fuel tax, regional (1¢/gal)	$ 23	
Personal income tax, regional (.1%)	123	
Regional sales tax (to 1% in all counties)	328	
Federal transportation funds	97	
State contribution increase	181	
Motor vehicle registration fees	31	
Congestion fees (new)		**$ 1,111**
Fee for peak hour auto use ($.15 x 905,700 trips x 20-mile avg. round trip)		

Source: MPC, "RPTP Technical Paper #4"

Fig. 16
Economic Benefits From Transit Improvements

Economic benefits from transit improvements have been documented and fall into two main categories:

- **Increased sales and economic activity**
A 1991 study for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority found that continued disinvestment would cost the region more than it would save because of declines in retail sales and other economic activity; by contrast, full reinvestment provided the highest benefit-to-cost ratio. A 1991 study for the American Public Transit Association found that the benefit-to-cost ratios for transit spending exceed those for highway spending.

- **Larger transit-related job base**
A $100 million transit capital improvement can generate about $315 million in economic benefit in a wide range of industries, including construction, primary and fabricated metals, wholesale and retail trade, business services, and chemicals, according to a 1984 study for the American Public Transit Association. Research in Germany found that a $580 million investment in highways yielded only 14,000 to 19,000 jobs, compared to 22,000 for a heavy rail project and 23,000 for a light-rail project. Because Chicago is a manufacturing center, it is likely to capture more than its share of transit-related work, as a recent Metra rail car rehabilitation project shows.

Other funding strategies considered by the Task Force, with their estimated average annual potential yield, were: sales of assets, $12 million; joint development contributions, $9 million; privatization of some services or functions, $123 million; and a regional $25 per employee head tax, $89 million. These sources were considered less appropriate and/or less likely to be accepted by taxpayers, transit agencies, or legislators.

Returns on the transit investment

These financial calculations do not incorporate the substantial economic benefits that transit improvements bring to the communities they serve (see fig. 16). The Central Area Circulator in downtown Chicago, for instance, is expected to increase retail sales in the area by $64 million annually and boost tourism and convention-related spending by $18 million a year. In addition, the project will create a $775 million economic benefit during engineering and construction, though some of that spending will be for products from outside the region.

The ample benefits of transit – and the costs of congestion – have convinced dozens of metropolitan areas around the country to fund new transit projects, including: express bus lanes in Pittsburgh; light rail in San Diego, St. Louis, and Portland; and new subways in Baltimore and Atlanta. New York and Los Angeles – whose transit systems are on the same scale or larger than Chicago's – have committed to multi-billion dollar improvement plans. Similar investments are being made worldwide because public transit adds value to the regions it serves.

Chicago owes much of its early economic success to the access provided by both private and public transit. By reinvesting in its transit system, as it has done many times before, the Chicago region will be following a proven approach to increasing economic development while improving the quality of life.

3

Hard choices on path to mobility

Better public transit is only part of the solution to the region's problems of congestion, job access, and environmental quality. To have a lasting impact in each of these areas, the region must make far-reaching and difficult changes that will challenge historical development patterns and the current structures for transportation decision-making (see fig. 17, Transportation Decision-Makers in the Chicago Region).

Task Force members identified three areas where fundamental changes in outlook are required:

1. Develop a unified approach to land use, transportation.
The Chicago region does not have sufficient resources to pay for the new road and transit infrastructure needed to support continued dispersion of people and jobs throughout the region. Incentives and other mechanisms should be considered to promote more efficient land use.

2. Revise criteria for allocation of transportation resources.
Growth in traffic congestion in both the suburban and urban areas of the region demonstrate that current approaches are not working. More strategic use of public funding can result in changed travel behavior, better use of existing transportation facilities, and better linkage among transportation modes.

3. Consider governance changes to address mobility needs.
Because current governance encourages fragmented solutions, new governance options should be considered.

The Task Force recognizes that change of this type and magnitude will not come easily, and that it may be politically infeasible or undesirable to some of the region's residents or leaders. A minority of members on the Task Force argued against such changes, but the majority felt that public transit improvements could not be fully implemented without concurrent efforts to resolve these issues. The recommendations presented here are intended as a starting point for regional improvement efforts.

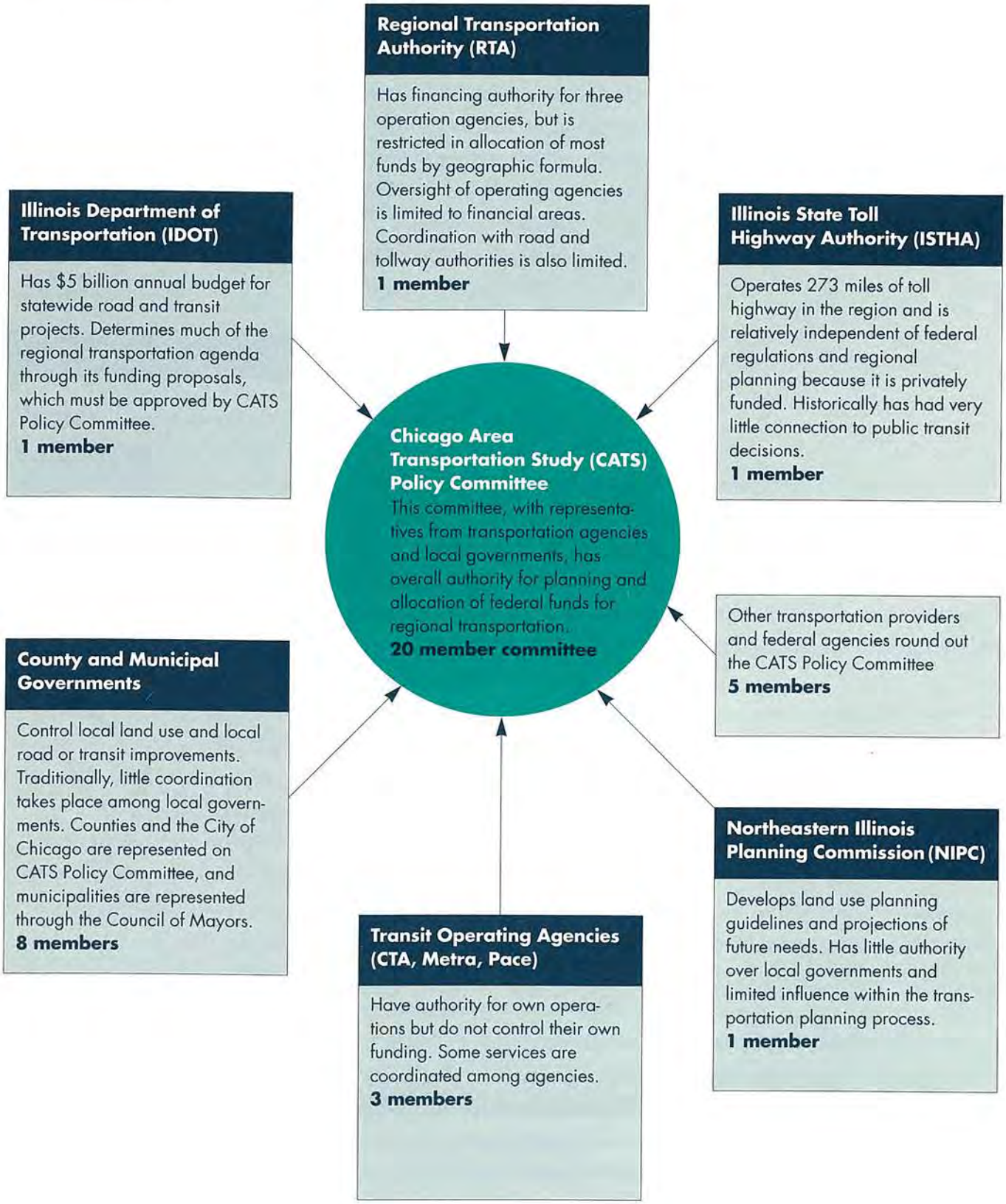
1. Develop a unified approach to land use, transportation

The Chicago region is unique in the nation for its large number of local governments – about 1,200 – and their relative independence in decision-making. While this has contributed to the region's vitality, it also has led to sprawl, competition among neighboring municipalities for commercial development, and a lack of mechanisms for effective regional decision-making. Coordinated transportation and land use policies will benefit the region for two reasons: 1) public transit does not work well in low-density areas or those developed solely around auto access; and 2) projected revenue streams are inadequate to provide upkeep of the current (uncoordinated) road and transit systems.

- **Change tax structure to slow development sprawl.**
Reduce dependence of local governments on the property tax, so that development site decisions are based not on tax revenue projections, but on infrastructure capacity, environmental, and quality of life considerations. Promote cooperation among groups of municipalities and counties to reverse the current pattern of uncoordinated development.

- **Promote land development that reduces transportation costs.**
Consider financial incentives and changes to state law that could promote cooperative strategies among local governments, as outlined in the 1994 report of the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission's Blue Ribbon Panel on Intergovernmental Agreements. Adopt joint land-development strategies in growth

Fig. 17
Transportation Decision-Makers in the Chicago Region



areas or transportation corridors, as the Corridor Planning Council of Central Lake County has done for the proposed northward extension of Illinois Route 53. Strongly encourage developers and local governments to incorporate public transit orientation into all new development and redevelopment projects, as recommended in the Pace "Development Guidelines" and Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission's "Strategic Plan for Land Resources Management."

• Update the 2010 Regional Transportation Plan.
Fast-track the planning process to update the Chicago Area Transportation Study's 2010 Regional Transportation Plan and integrate it more closely with the region's land-use goals. Adopted in the late 1980s, that plan is based on outdated information and does not take into account the latest federal mandates on clean air or transportation. As part of developing the plan, negotiate new regional agreements on transportation priorities and congestion-reduction approaches.

2. Revise criteria for allocation of transportation resources

A significant amount of the Chicago region's federal highway/road funds is passed through to local and county governments without any tie to regional priorities. Transit funds are similarly restricted by geography, with sales tax revenues distributed back to areas where they were raised rather than on the basis of need. Because mobility considerations cross political boundaries, more of the region's transportation funds should be used to support the region's long-term mobility, economic, environmental, and social needs.

• Create new criteria for funding allocations.
Use more public funds on an incentive basis to accomplish desired land use and transportation goals. Develop criteria for transportation spending based on current congestion levels, public transit availability, development patterns, environmental context, and other factors. Follow guidelines in the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act to merge planning for road and transit projects, with funding allocated on the basis of most efficient use.

• Develop performance measures for spending.
Create new ways of measuring potential and actual benefits of proposed transportation improvements to replace or supplement the current use of infrastructure condition ratings. Assess costs and benefits by considering factors such as current and future congestion levels, number of people moved per dollar spent, number of people moved per hour, and ease of access to the transportation improvement.

• Tie annual allocations to long-range needs.
Use annual transportation spending decisions as a means to implement the new regional transportation plan.

3. Consider governance changes to address mobility needs

No regional vision for transportation improvements exists in Chicago, perhaps because no one agency is responsible for addressing both freight and personal travel. Transportation governance is highly fragmented – nearly 400 units of government spend transportation funds – and has poorly developed mechanisms for public accountability. Agencies that provide transportation funding or services, including the transit agencies, Illinois State Toll Highway Authority, and the Illinois Department of Transportation, do not always share compatible goals. The structure for public transit, with four separate agencies, also discourages timely response to market needs.

• Provide stronger regional agency to lead mobility efforts.
Reconfigure the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) Policy Committee or create a new entity to provide stronger regional leadership on transportation issues. Provide the committee or new entity with authority to allocate funds based on goals and needs. At a minimum, promote accountability to the public by requiring the CATS Policy Committee to provide an annual report to the General Assembly and the public on strategies and achievements.

• Consider establishment of regional mobility authority.
Evaluate the feasibility of an integrated regional authority with responsibility for all surface transportation needs. Develop a framework for merging or integrating functions and budgets of road and transit agencies, including the region's toll road authority.

Fig. 18
A Unified and Accountable Transportation Structure: New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority

The NYMTA has financial and operating authority over two city transit agencies, three commuter rail agencies, and one suburban bus system.

Unified program:
NYMTA has strong statutory authority for developing and implementing a unified mass transportation policy for the region.

Coordination of services:
The NYMTA's 17-person board of directors is also board of directors for the city transit agencies, assuring close coordination among agencies.

Accountability:
Detailed annual requirements for planning, programming, and reporting to the New York Legislature and the public add accountability across the entire regional network.

Auto-based revenues:
Tolls collected by an NYMTA affiliate, the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, create a direct disincentive to auto use and provide a substantial revenue flow for transit operations, about $530 million in 1993, or 10% of the NYMTA budget.

Include authority to oversee new-style mobility tools such as car pooling, telecommuting, and incentive pricing mechanisms.

• Consider transit agency restructuring.
Evaluate alternatives to the current four-agency structure for public transit governance to improve response to market changes and stop the decline in transit's market share. Consider merging or consolidating funding and operations into one authority, as Los Angeles did when it expanded its commitment to public transit and as Minneapolis and St. Paul are now doing to eliminate redundancies and improve accountability. Evaluate the New York region's approach, which maintains separate agencies but charges one agency with primary responsibility for meeting mobility needs with transit (see fig. 18). At a minimum, consolidate or better coordinate operations among the three operating agencies to avoid overlap, competition for riders, and duplicative management, and create a joint strategic plan for transit improvements.

• Support state role as leader on mobility.
The governor and the Illinois Department of Transportation should provide leadership in adopting new policies, strategies, and approaches. They should seize the opportunity created by the federal mandate to develop a statewide intermodal transportation plan as a first step, using the new plan to set out mobility goals and strategies for reaching them.

4

In the near term, many options

Transit ridership in the Chicago region can be increased within a short timeframe through a combination of proven and innovative strategies. Higher train speeds on Metra lines and direct service to employment centers, for instance, have strong prospects for ridership gains. Similarly, integration of schedules between buses and trains, combined with additional service where needed, can reduce travel times and attract new riders who would otherwise drive.

Service improvements on the scale needed cannot be implemented, however, without simultaneous short-term advances in transit financing and public policy. Streamlining and productivity gains are essential to make best use of existing and new funds, and creative approaches to financing, including use of private-sector and local-government contributions, must be pursued.

Just as important are revisions of land use and transportation policies. Despite new federal requirements and regional needs, most state and regional policies do not yet encompass the priorities of mobility, access to jobs, and environmental quality. Incremental, small-scale revisions to the current planning framework can lay the groundwork for the larger-scale restructuring proposed in Section 3.

Clusters of recommendations

No single improvement will make a major difference in transit ridership or the number of cars on the road. In the book *Stuck in*

Traffic, Anthony Downs suggests the strategy of a lumberjack who faces a large tree with a single axe. While one swing won't bring the tree down, one hundred small cuts can. Similarly with transit, one improvement will not shift the tide, but dozens or hundreds will.

While some improvements will require development of completely new approaches or use of new technologies, many are already in use in other cities or are outlined in planning and research documents developed by the RTA and its operating agencies. To reduce costs, increase service, and better coordinate among transit agencies, these documents are the place to start (see Appendix A).

Of the hundreds of improvements warranted, most can be grouped in one of three categories – service, finance, or public policy. This report presents three clusters of improvements in each of the three categories. It does not put a priority on one over another, because most improvements must be implemented in coordination with each other or with longer term changes such as those described in Section 3.

Improve existing services to increase core ridership

Many parts of the current system compete favorably with the auto and show potential for growth if service quality is improved. Service to and from the central business district in particular shows excellent prospects for ridership gains. Other areas with strong potential are major suburban employment centers, close-in suburban markets, and major in-city activity centers beyond the central area.

- **Increase transit speed.** Continue to improve track and signaling for higher train speeds on both Metra and CTA routes. Extend rail lines or use fast feeder buses to outermost stations. Expand use of express buses where rail service is not available. Pursue technology enhancements that improve transit times, such as signal-preemption systems that allow buses or light-rail vehicles to change traffic signals to clear intersections. Pace, for example, is conducting a trial of signal preemption on its #307 Harlem Avenue route.

- **Experiment with more responsive services in existing markets.** Expand experiments such as the CTA's new pulse-point nighttime service, which coordinates bus arrivals and departures at State and Washington to provide no-wait transfers to and from rail lines. Perform trials of new services that connect major activity centers.

- **Improve public perception of transit.** Address the public perception that transit is unsafe by improving lighting and security and disseminating information on the relative safety of transit. Improve signage throughout the system to make it easier for new riders to negotiate the system, as CTA is doing with its color-coded rail lines. At transfer points, provide signs, timetables, maps, and other information so that passengers are aware of the transit network's scope. Be more customer-oriented by providing more training for transit employees and regularly assessing customer need/satisfaction.

Service #2

Target growth markets with responsive, coordinated services

Suburban growth areas and other growing travel markets could support expanded transit service if that service provides efficient links between residents and their destinations. Though some market research has been conducted, the first step in serving these new areas is to learn more about potential riders. The second step is to implement coordinated new services on a trial basis and to continuously refine the service to match riders' needs.

• Cooperatively identify and prioritize regional travel markets. Conduct targeted market research that includes not only origin and destination information, but also respondents' views on transit, parking, congestion, convenience, car pooling, and other factors in the auto/transit choice. Use results to determine priority markets and ways to provide coordinated services in them. Work with transportation management associations to develop information on travel patterns, and with employers to determine the needs of their workers.

• Look to employers for transit partnerships. Expand working relationships among transit agencies and large and small employers to develop car pools, transit feeder routes, van pools, and other intermodal services. Support rideshare matching programs that use computerized employer databases to match riders among multiple worksites, such as that developed by the Transportation Management Association of Lake-Cook with Dean Witter, Discover & Co.; Baxter Healthcare Corp.; Commerce Clearing House, Inc.; and Zenith Data Systems. Coordinate transit and ride-sharing services with major employers such as Sears at Hoffman Estates, which has bus links to CTA and Metra rail lines, as well as 47 van pools, 13 subscription buses, and 215 car pools, serving a total of 2,100 workers.

• Revise and integrate schedules. Evaluate Metra train schedules and revise as needed to improve reverse-commute opportunities to suburban work centers, with an emphasis on providing earlier morning trains. Provide coordinated feeder and distribution service linking employment centers and bus or rail routes. Coordinate bus-to-bus and bus-to-train services to reduce waiting time

continues

Target growth markets with responsive, coordinated services

for transferring passengers. Use mirrors, closed-circuit video, and direct sight lines to allow trains and buses to see and wait for transferring passengers.

- **Create regional travel centers.** Expand use of integrated transportation centers that allow residents to transfer quickly and easily from any mode to any other mode, including rail, bus, auto, auto drop-off ("kiss-and-ride"), bicycle, and pedestrian. Such coordinated service is in place at CTA's River Road station in Rosemont; Metra's Wisconsin Central line will go further by including retail and other services at some stations. Investigate car-pooling networks, day care centers, telecommuting centers, and other amenities that can further diversify travel hubs. Explore the feasibility of extensive travel "hubbing" as proposed in Pace's Comprehensive Operating Plan, which recommends 18 major transportation centers and 75 additional transfer centers.

Service #3

Test innovative services in markets with low transit share

Traditional transit service works best in high-density corridors or between residential areas and nodes of commercial activity. It is less effective at linking highly dispersed populations to equally dispersed destinations, which is the current landscape in much of the suburban ring. Another market with relatively low share of transit ridership is the city-to-suburb reverse commute. New approaches to transit service have been successful under such conditions, typically using vans (carrying 9 to 15 passengers) and jitney services, because they stress flexibility, customized routing, and strong links to employers.

• Experiment with non-traditional services.
Develop trials for door-to-door subscription services, which are arranged in advance and routed so that the van is filled in a residential area and brings passengers to a cluster of employers or other destinations. Promote creation of private on-demand services, which work best between residential/commercial clusters and major destinations such as O'Hare Airport. Experiment with jitney services, which are licensed private-sector variations on pooled cab rides; they feature regular service on major arteries with passengers able to get on and off at any point.

• Forge partnerships with private and non-profit sectors.
Support non-profit and private operators that have created efficient reverse-commute bus and van services to suburban employers, such as Chicago-based Suburban Job Link Corp. Integrate such services with the public transit network and investigate mechanisms for providing financial subsidies where appropriate. Define promising but unserved market niches for such services. Investigate potential for using these operators to incubate new transit services, with the possibility of transition to public service when passenger volume is sufficient.

• Add highway park-and-rides and custom express services.
Create park-and-ride linkages at major highways to allow motorists to ride express buses to their destinations. Experiment with "pure express" buses, as proposed by Pace, to eliminate the slower local service segment from existing express routes. Develop custom and luxury services that charge a premium price for services beyond those typically provided by public transit.

Streamline service and boost system productivity

Increasing productivity and streamlining of underused services are essential to any financial restructuring plan. As in the private sector, consistent year-to-year gains in system productivity should be expected. Transit agencies must remain aware of the needs of transit-dependent riders whenever making service revisions.

• Revise service to reflect demand. Eliminate service redundancies and replace low-volume routes with more efficient services. Engage the public early on when identifying service alternatives. Combine any cutbacks with simultaneous service improvements in other areas. Increase frequency of service in areas with very high load factors to maintain existing ridership and attract new passengers.

• Create cooperative labor-management strategies. Implement programs that maintain service levels while reducing operating costs, as the Burlington Northern commuter service has done by reorganizing work routines, train yard layouts, and job duties. Further develop management-labor teams and expand employee suggestion and reward programs. Improve employee supervisory and motivational skills through expanded management training. Reduce unnecessary personnel on trains and in stations through automation of ticketing and one-person operation of CTA trains, as has begun on the CTA Orange line. Revise personnel policies and contracts, seeking changes in federal regulations if needed, to allow more part-time workers and more flexible deployment of employees.

• Invest in new technologies. Improve use of computerized scheduling and dispatching systems to save money and streamline operations. Automate bus fueling islands and install in-tank sensors. Choose high-efficiency equipment when purchasing new or rebuilt rolling stock if the payback period is favorable. Evaluate expanded use of signal preemption equipment for major bus routes.

• Experiment with privatization. Identify functions within management and operations that are suited to private-sector operations, and contract out such work on a trial basis, as suggested in the 1992 "RTA Financial Futures Study" and other reports. Consider private sector participation in travel markets that are difficult to serve with conventional transit. Develop partnerships with private bus and/or train operators for specific markets, as Pace has done with reverse-commute routes operated by private bus companies.

Finance #2

Commit capital funds for infrastructure and equipment

Efficient and cost-effective regional transit cannot be achieved until current equipment and infrastructure are brought up to modern standards – a $4 billion job – and new infrastructure is built to expand service. Deteriorated bridges, rail, stations, maintenance facilities, and rolling stock are first priorities because they drain day-to-day operating costs and will cost more the longer they remain in disrepair. Additional capital is needed for development of circumferential and other services, new fleets, and construction of new stations, travel centers, and maintenance facilities.

• Renew existing commitments and develop new funding sources. Renew and expand existing debt financing programs for transit to address system renewal needs, as the General Assembly did with the now-exhausted $1 billion 1989 debt authorization. Pursue flexible use of federal highway funds for transit under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, and look to new funding sources as outlined in Section 2. Consider use of auto-based fees such as congestion "tolls" or parking taxes.

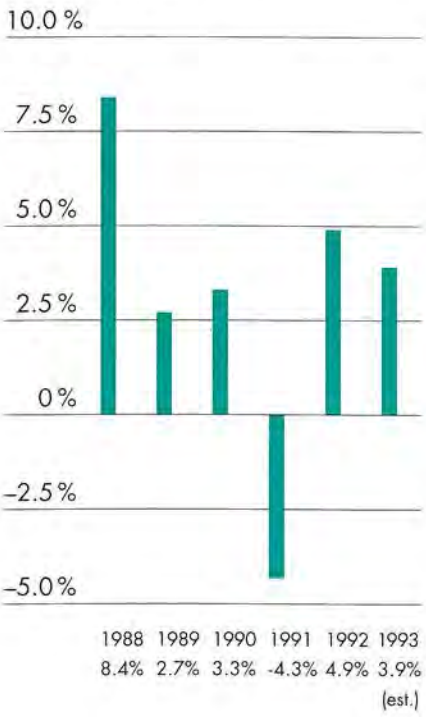
• Invest in promising markets. Adopt interagency investment criteria for capital projects based on protecting existing markets or developing promising future markets. Continue existing large-scale capital improvements where population density and funding arrangements are adequate, such as Metra's Wisconsin Central commuter line linking Antioch to O'Hare Airport/Franklin Park and downtown Chicago. Develop circumferential services to provide connections across Chicago's hub-and-spoke system.

• Seek financial partners for renewal and expansion. Foster cooperative development strategies with local municipalities or commercial interests, as on the Wisconsin Central line and the Central Area Circulator. Consider new ways to generate revenue where substantial transit access provides benefits to nearby businesses, using methods such as special taxing districts, developer contributions, special zoning, and parking pricing mechanisms. Encourage expanded transit agency involvement in real estate development near stations, and use transportation funds to encourage transit-oriented development.

Find adequate and reliable funds for transit operations

Farebox revenues cover only about half of operations costs, and the regional sales tax that provides most of the remaining funds has been unable to meet the system's expanding needs (see fig. 19). New sources of reliable funds for transit operations must be locked in to protect capital investments and to encourage people to ride transit.

Fig. 19
RTA Sales Tax
1988-93
annual rate of growth



Source: RTA

• Tie new funds to management improvements.
Develop parameters for tighter transit management as part of negotiations for new operations funds. Create ongoing accountability structures to ensure efficient long-term use of new funds. Direct transit agencies to pursue least-cost technologies or methods (such as van pools vs. traditional buses) when either choice can provide adequate service.

• Create new sources for operations funds.
Analyze new sources for operations funds as developed in Section 2, and pursue those with the most potential. Develop regional information on costs associated with building and maintaining local highways and roads to more fairly compare transit and highway costs. Analyze long-term potential for use of auto-based fees including congestion tolls, and develop strategies for implementing such fees.

• Generate private and local revenue.
Work with employers and developers to forge private subsidy agreements for bus or van services, as Pace has done with Ameritech, Sears, and the Chancellory development. Seek operations funds from local municipalities to maintain transit services whose ridership would otherwise be too low to justify service.

Policy #1

Strengthen regional commitment to travel alternatives

Like metropolitan areas throughout the country, the Chicago region must scale back its support for auto-centered development and create new policies centered around mobility, environmental quality, and job access. Major structural changes may be required, as suggested in Section 3, but many smaller-scale policy initiatives can be implemented in the shorter term.

Fig. 20
Rail Rehab Revives Historic "Pullman" Plant

A $379 million Metra rail car contract produced a major economic impact for the region. As part of the contract agreement, Morrison Knudsen Corporation invested $16.9 million to reopen the former Pullman railcar plant on Chicago's south side. The company used more than 120 Chicago contractors to rebuild the plant and identified 273 suppliers for the rail car work. By May 1994, Morrison Knudsen had placed $70 million in purchase orders with local companies, and had $40 million in additional orders pending. Employment at the plant reached 331 workers. An additional 50 workers are to be hired to fulfill a 1993 contract to build Amtrak sleeper cars.

- **Reduce emphasis on roads.** Invest in telecommunications, rail, and transit to generate economic return comparable to road programs. Analyze and publicize regional economic impact of transit vehicle construction, such as at McCook's GM Electromotive factory, where diesel locomotives are built, and Morrison Knudsen Corp.'s railcar rehab plant in Chicago (see fig. 20). Predict reduced health care costs and improved environmental conditions as growth of auto use is reversed in favor of transit.

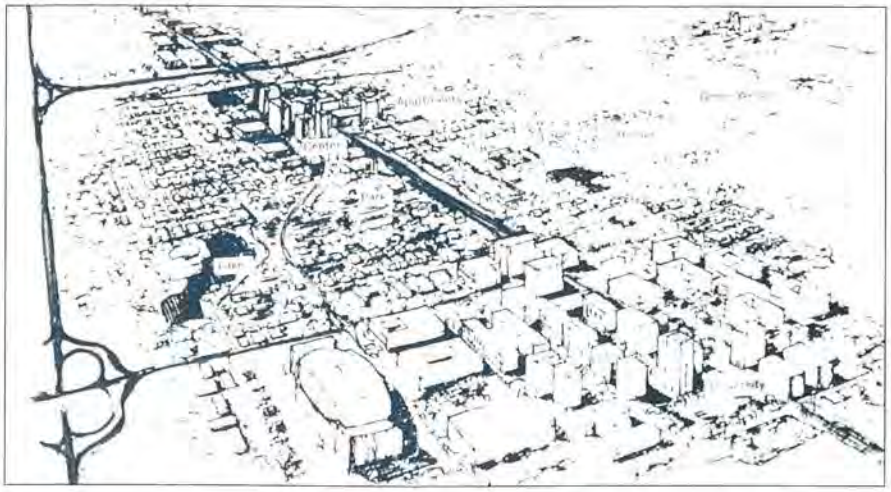
- **Provide more financial incentives.** Expand use of existing incentives such as the $60 per month RTA Transit Check, which employers may purchase as a tax-free benefit for employees (and a tax-deductible business expense for themselves). Consider a state tax credit or other incentives to supplement the federal incentive for use of Transit Checks. Consider other taxes and fees to discourage unnecessary auto travel, including higher motor fuel taxes, parking fees, and vehicle registration fees. Businesses with 100 or more employees that are implementing Employee Commute Option programs mandated by the Clean Air Act Amendments should take an active role in developing travel alternatives.

- **Encourage citizen involvement.** Promote grassroots support for regional transit improvements and financial restructuring. New York City-area residents organized the Straphangers coalition and helped create a $9.6 billion rebuilding program. In St. Louis, residents formed Citizens for Modern Transit and raised $750,000 to market that region's new Metrolink rail line.

Policy #2

Coordinate planning and decision-making for all transportation modes

Planning and control of transportation and land use in northeastern Illinois are divided among several oversight agencies and further fragmented at the local level. Local governments have broad control of local land use and traditionally have not coordinated development with neighboring municipalities. Efforts by those governments and at the regional level can help lay the groundwork for large-scale cooperation.



• Build bridges among local governments.
Use corridor planning projects as vehicles for guiding land-use development, as is being done on Metra's Wisconsin Central rail project, where local communities are helping to market the project and build new stations. Promote public forums on transportation issues in areas facing congestion, with an emphasis on finding common interests.

• Conduct multi-modal corridor planning.
Develop model corridor planning approach under direction of the Illinois Department of Transportation, as required by new federal law.

• Expand participation in transportation decision-making.
Develop new mechanisms for requiring public input or sign-off on transportation decisions through the Chicago Area Transportation Study, Illinois State Toll Highway Authority, and Regional Transportation Authority. Enhance the role of the private sector, citizens, and interest groups in "visioning" exercises and development of alternative transportation approaches.

Policy #3

Rework transportation spending to reflect new mobility criteria

Transportation funding in the region is in a state of flux because of expiration of several state bonding programs and new flexibility in use of federal highway funds. New criteria must be developed for allocation of both capital and operating funds for all transportation modes.

- **Use public funds as incentives.** Create incentives within new transit capital programs to require local governments to provide transit-oriented development, infill housing, or amenities such as a park-and-ride facility, child care center, or commercial area at regional travel centers.

- **Encourage competition for public funds.** Move away from funding formulas that allocate transit dollars on a percentage basis. Provide more funds for demonstration projects that agencies compete for, encouraging innovation.

5

Crucial time for public transit

Over the next two years, the future of public transit in the Chicago region will be decided. The leadership in the region and the state can learn from other metropolitan areas and commit to a major program of renewal and expansion. Or it can allow the system to continue on as it has over the past decade: in fits and starts, with ridership declining and its financial infrastructure decaying. To take no action on the evolving transit crisis will be a decision to de-emphasize transit in the region's overall mobility strategy.

After one year of meetings and discussion, the Regional Public Transportation Task Force reached a clear consensus that to allow the system to continue its decline would be detrimental to the region's economic health and quality of life. The Task Force's vision of an enhanced system is spelled out in this report, but the final details of that system, and the financial and governance structures needed to make it work, have not been decided. That job belongs to the region's leaders (see fig. 21).

The Illinois General Assembly will likely face a number of transportation proposals during its 1995 spring session. The Illinois Department of Transportation is planning to seek multi-year approval for a statewide road and transit investment program. The RTA will seek renewal and expansion of its transit investment program, while the CTA, Metra, Pace and the City of Chicago will propose individual transit projects. A key City of Chicago project that requires immediate attention by the General Assembly is the Central Area Circulator. New funding will be needed to undertake

any of these proposals, and hard choices will have to be made. New players will be involved in this debate as federal ISTEA and Clean Air Act mandates have rallied new interest in transportation decisions.

The Illinois General Assembly, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Chicago Area Transportation Study, and the RTA all must play central roles in crafting a workable, affordable mobility strategy. Local mayors and county boards, the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority, and the transit operating agencies must be actively involved, offering proposals, rejecting continuation of the status quo, and working together – however challenging that may be – to create needed solutions.

Promoting regional dialogue

The Metropolitan Planning Council, which convened and staffed the Regional Public Transportation Project, is committed to making this regional dialogue productive and fruitful. In the coming year, as the transportation community develops proposals for federal programs and for the 1995 spring session of the Illinois General Assembly, the Metropolitan Planning Council will develop an agenda and will work to build a consensus of support for changes that are needed to address personal mobility into the next decade.

Fig. 21: Summary of Task Force Recommendations

Recommendation directed at	Services/Strategies	Financial	State and/or Regional Policy
Transit agency management and labor force	Improve quality of services in established travel markets through additional investment in facilities, signage, security, and related measures Target new ridership in growing travel markets with increased coordination of existing services and experimentation with different types of services Capture new riders in emerging travel markets through experimentation with new services and partnerships	Implement a long-term strategy to contain growth in transit operating costs Implement small, regular increases in public transit fares that keep pace with growth in inflation Pursue more joint development and other creative financial opportunities Raise new public and private revenues for infrastructure; provide a unified and compelling case for renewal of key transit infrastructure Adopt joint strategic plan and agree to capital investment criteria to guide future investment decisions	Work proactively to build a coalition of public support for public transit Require transit-supportive land development as a condition of major public transit investment or reinvestment Seek broader statutory authority to participate in regional transportation decisions and offer mobility solutions
Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) Policy Committee	Proactively address federal Clean Air Act mandates relating to transportation and the federal ISTEA opportunities Lead in developing model for "multi-modal" corridor planning consistent with federal ISTEA Report to the General Assembly and the public on an annual basis regarding performance in meeting regional mobility needs	Consider the use of criteria other than the formula allocation of public funds for transportation so that funds can be used as an incentive to achieve land use and other goals Strongly link annual spending decisions to the priorities established in the long-range transportation plan Establish and use cost/benefit criteria for determining major transportation investments in the region	Update regional policies and strategies by completing a new regional transportation plan (the 2020 Plan)

Recommendation directed at	Services/Strategies	Financial	State and/or Regional Policy
Illinois General Assembly and Illinois Governor	Consider legal and funding strategies that would facilitate new private and not-for-profit transit providers to serve mobility needs Consider alternative transit agency governance to assure that public transit regains its role in addressing mobility needs Strengthen oversight of state and regional transportation agencies to assure accountability Consider reworking existing regional and state transportation governance to assure that regional mobility needs are met	Implement a long-term strategy to contain growth in auto-related capital and operating costs Commit new public funds to renew transit infrastructure and support strategic new transit investments; provide reliable funds to support transit operations Consider increased auto-related charges to support road programs and/or provide travel alternatives Adopt new package of financial incentives designed to reduce auto travel and encourage transit usage Provide incentives, more statutory flexibility, and other measures to leverage more private sector resources to support transit	Adopt mechanisms to assure that land use development in the region supports existing transportation investments Use the new state transportation plan, currently being developed by IDOT, as an opportunity to chart new direction in state policy and strategy
U.S. Congress and federal agencies	Provide stronger guidance and leadership in implementing the new ISTEA priorities	Provide additional transportation funding	
Municipal Governments	Use zoning, land use powers, and economic development activities to support transportation investments Use local transportation funds to attract efficient, transit-friendly land use development Engage the private sector in local transportation problem-solving	Consider increased auto-related charges to support road programs and/or provide travel alternatives Support increased public funding for transit infrastructure renewal and strategic new investment Support changes in current funding practices that would designate more of the region's federal funds as "regional" to be allocated on a competitive rather than formula basis	Support financial changes that would reduce sprawl in the region, including changes to the region's local tax structure Support land use law changes that would reduce sprawl in the region, including concurrency requirements and other techniques

Fig. 21: Summary of Task Force Recommendations – continued

Recommendation directed at	Services/Strategies	Financial	State and/or Regional Policy
Private Sector	Proactively assess employee travel needs, participate in transportation planning efforts, and develop public/private partnerships to address regional mobility issues Locate facilities adjacent to existing transportation infrastructure when possible; design facilities to encourage transit usage and consider travel reduction strategies such as telecommuting	Be financial partners in providing transit services and developing facilities for transit Offer financial incentives and support services to employees to encourage transit usage if situated at transit-accessible site	Support financial changes that could reduce sprawl in the region, including changes to the region's local tax structure Support land use law changes that would reduce sprawl in the region, including concurrency requirements and other techniques

A.
Task Force
Background Materials

Many documents were reviewed and could be referenced as part of the final report. The primary materials used for the project were a series of background papers and a forum that provided Task Force members with information to guide their deliberations. The background materials that were prepared for the Task Force include:

- Briefing Book:
  Regional Public Transportation Project Task Force
- Technical Paper #1:
  The Future of Regional Public Transportation
- Technical Paper #2:
  Regional Public Transit: A Status Report
- Technical Paper #3:
  Transit Service Goals, Standards, Markets and Planning
- Technical Paper #4:
  Regional Transit Funding Options and Management Strategies

In October 1993, MPC hosted a public forum on the topic "Transportation Challenges for Metropolitan Regions." Panelists included: William Millar, Executive Director of the Port Authority of Allegheny County; Sharon Neely, Director of Policy for the Los Angeles Transportation Authority; David Schulz, Director of Northwestern University's Infrastructure Technology Institute; and Deborah Stone, MPC Executive Director.

Various documents considered by the Task Force:

Metra's Extended Transportation Agenda (1992) outlines hundreds of track and signal improvements, station additions, storage yard needs, and line extensions that could help commuter rail compete more effectively with the auto. The plan provides ridership and operational information on each Metra route and proposed improvements to allow higher speeds, more frequent service, and better use of crews and equipment.

Pace's Comprehensive Operating Plan (1992) provides extensive recommendations and rationale for new transit centers, additional bus routes, new express services, and experiments with subscription buses and van pools. The plan documents expected increases in congestion throughout the suburbs and proposes a larger and more flexible transit network to improve mobility.

The Chicago Transit Authority and City of Chicago have identified major capital projects and smaller service revisions in a number of documents including an extensive 1993 assessment of the system's infrastructure condition. The City of Chicago has also studied a mid-city transitway that would provide a cross-town connection between CTA's radial rail services, and is now initiating a citywide transportation planning effort.

The RTA Strategic Plan (1989) provides a framework of strategies for marketing, operations, capital improvements, and financing. The 1994 update to this plan outlines policy goals and strategies for meeting mobility needs.

The RTA Financial Futures Study (1992) provides long-term forecasts of financial trends and identifies opportunities for privatization of services and other efficiencies to mitigate financial shortfalls.

The Central Area Circulator Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (1994) describes the light-rail system, now in its engineering phase. Its vehicles will provide circulation service for all downtown commuter stations as well as most downtown CTA stations. When the Circulator begins operations around the year 2000, CTA bus service will be reconfigured to integrate with the Circulator service.

B.
Public Outreach

As part of this project, the MPC convened or met with a variety of interested groups and individuals to gain input on surface transportation needs and public transit goals and solutions. The public outreach meetings consisted of:

Focus Group Discussions –
Nearly 50 people attended five separate focus group discussions led by members of the Task Force. MPC extends its appreciation to the participants in these sessions for their valuable ideas. The five groups that were convened include:

- Environmental and public interest representatives
- Senior and disabled representatives
- Land use and development representatives
- Economic development representatives
- Community development representatives

Project Briefings –
Discussions were held with approximately 16 government and business groups as recommendations evolved. In most cases, meetings were held with transportation committees of these organizations. MPC thanks all of these groups for their input to the project.

- Northwest Municipal Conference
- Will County Municipal League
- South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association
- DuPage Regional Plan Commission
- McHenry County Board
- Northwest Suburban Association of Commerce and Industry
- DuPage Mayors and Managers Association
- Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce
- Metropolitan Transportation Association
- Illinois Corridor Transportation Management Association
- Will County Chamber of Commerce
- Kane County Board
- Lake County Board
- City of Chicago, Department of Transportation
- DuPage Association of Business and Industry
- DuPage County Board

MPC contacted several other groups that were unable to offer meeting dates; MPC hopes to make contact with these groups and others as it promotes needed reforms during the coming year.

C.
Acknowledgements

MPC would like to thank the Regional Transportation Authority for its leadership and financial support in undertaking this long-term assessment of regional transit from the perspective of the stakeholder. Similarly, MPC appreciates the assistance and/or participation of the CTA, Pace, and Metra in the development of background materials for the Task Force.

MPC would also like to thank the following organizations for in-kind contributions to the project:

American National Bank
Jasculca/Terman & Associates
Inland Steel Industries, Inc.
Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Mayer, Brown & Platt
McKinsey & Co.
Northern Trust Bank
Regional Transportation Authority

D.
Task Force Members
1993 Biographies

Leadership

Mr. Frank Luerssen
Task Force Chair
Mr. Luerssen is the retired Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Chicago-based Inland Steel Industries, Inc. He is the President of the Metropolitan Chicago Information Center, Trustee of Northwestern University and a member of the Board of United Way of Chicago. Mr. Luerssen lives in Munster, Indiana.

Ms. Maxine Hansen
Task Force Vice Chair
Ms. Hansen has served as president of the DuPage County Regional Planning Commission and a member of the Wichita-Sedgwick County (Kansas) Metropolitan Planning Commission. Ms. Hansen is currently active in DuPage County planning and environmental causes. She lives and teaches in Wheaton.

Mr. Cordell Reed
Task Force Vice Chair
Mr. Reed is Senior Vice President of Commonwealth Edison. His affiliations include: Trustee of the John G. Shedd Aquarium, Executive Committee member of the Chicago Community Trust, and President of the Illinois Facilities Fund. He is a life-long resident of Chicago.

Members

Mr. Richard Abrams
Mr. Abrams is the Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer at Seaway National Bank of Chicago. Mr. Abrams lives in Oak Park.

Ms. Esthel Allen
Ms. Allen is Dean of the College of Business and Public Administration at Governors State University, University Park. She is a member of the Advisory Board and Board of Directors of South Suburban Hospital, the Board of Directors of the Chicago Southland Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Trustees of the Illinois Council on Economic Education, and the Matteson Quality of Life Committee. Ms. Allen lives in Matteson.

Mr. Joel Asprooth
Mr. Asprooth is Vice President for Business and Finance at the Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago. Previously, he served as City Manager for the City of Evanston (1982-1990) and Assistant Village Manager of Glenview (1978 to 1979). He is also a member of MPC's Transportation Committee. Mr. Asprooth lives in Bartlett.

Mr. Willard Boyd
Mr. Boyd is President of Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History. He is also President Emeritus and Professor of Law at the University of Iowa. Mr. Boyd is active in state and local arts and cultural affairs activities. Mr. Boyd lives in Chicago.

Mr. Walter Cherry
Mr. Cherry is founder of the Cherry Corporation and Cherry Display Products Corporation of Waukegan, and served as President of both businesses until 1992. He serves as a Board member of various not-for-profit organizations. Mr. Cherry lives in Winnetka.

Ms. Lynne Cunningham
Ms. Cunningham is Executive Director of the Southeast Chicago Development Commission. Ms. Cunningham lives in Chicago.

Ms. Ruth Calvert Fitzgerald
Ms. Calvert Fitzgerald is President and Chief Executive Officer of the Will County Chamber of Commerce, located in Joliet.

Ms. Marion "Robin" Foote
Ms. Foote is Senior Vice President for the First National Bank of Chicago's Community Banking Group. She serves as a Board member or active participant in several not-for-profit organizations. Ms. Foote lives in Glencoe.

Mr. Donald Haider
Mr. Haider is Director of the Northwestern University Kellogg Graduate School of Management's program in public and nonprofit management. Mr. Haider has served at the federal and local levels of government including as Budget Director and Chief Financial Officer, City of Chicago and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Treasury. He is a member of the Board of several not-for-profit organizations and serves as Co-chair of the MPC's Transportation Committee. Mr. Haider is a resident of Chicago.

Ms. Barbara Hayskar
Ms. Hayskar is the President of the Northbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry. She is a member of the Employee Trip Reduction Task Force and Chair of the Illinois Employee Commute Options (ECO) Advisory Board. She is actively involved in civic and transportation issues. Ms. Hayskar lives in Palatine.

Mr. Ron Hoefle
Mr. Hoefle is Secretary and Treasurer of Walter Deuchler & Associates in Aurora and serves on the public works committee of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Nevada Lumpkin
Ms. Lumpkin is a sales agent with Chicago-based Innovative Realty Group. She is active in numerous community initiatives and is a member of the Neighbors of Fuller Park and the South Corridor Transit Coalition. Ms. Lumpkin lives in Chicago.

Mr. Hal McAninch
Mr. McAninch is the President of the College of DuPage, in Glen Ellyn. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce. Mr. McAninch lives in Naperville.

Ms. Donna Moore
Ms. Moore is the President of the Suburban Area Agency on Aging, based in Oak Park. Ms. Moore serves on several boards and is active in civic and social service agencies in the south suburbs. Ms. Moore lives and works in Flossmoor.

Ms. Joyce O'Keefe
Ms. O'Keefe is Policy Director of the Openlands Project, a not for profit organization concerned with preserving open space in the Chicago metropolitan region. Ms. O'Keefe is active in environmental and social services agencies and served as City Councilman for several years in her community. Ms. O'Keefe lives in Highland Park.

Mr. Kenneth Packer
Mr. Packer is Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Packer Engineering, Inc. in Naperville. He is President of the East-West Corporate Corridor Association and serves on the boards of various not-for-profit organizations. He is also a member of the MPC Board of Directors. Mr. Packer lives in Naperville.

Mr. Bruce Petsche
Mr. Petsche is Vice President of Sales for Chicago Blow Pipe Company, which specializes in air pollution control systems and industrial metal specialties. He is active in several employment and transportation issues affecting the west side of Chicago. Mr. Petsche, a long-time resident of DuPage County, currently lives in Burr Ridge.

Mr. Ron Shropshire
Mr. Shropshire is Executive Vice President of the Bank of Homewood.

Mr. John Sterling
Mr. Sterling is President of the John Sterling Corporation located in Richmond. He is Chairman of the Transportation Subcommittee of the McHenry County Economic Development Commission.

Mr. Phoebe Tupper
Ms. Tupper is the Central Region Director of the Chicago office of Service Employees International Union. She is a resident of Chicago.

Mr. Arturo Vasquez
Mr. Vasquez is Executive Director of the 18th Street Development Corporation. He serves on the board of the Chicago Association of Neighborhood Development Organizations. He lives in Chicago.

Ex-Officio Members

Mr. Art Hill
Member, Board of Directors
Chicago Transit Authority

Mr. Frank Miller
Member, Board of Directors
Regional Transportation Authority

Mr. Charles Zettek
Member, Board of Directors
Pace

E.
Technical Steering Committee

Members of this committee guided development of a Briefing Book and four Technical Papers that were provided to Task Force members. MPC thanks each of the members of the committee for their contributions of time and effort. The listing of these individuals does not imply their endorsements of the final Task Force report.

Ms. Deborah Stone, Chair
Executive Director
Metropolitan Planning Council

Members

Ms. Rita Athas
Executive Director
Northwest Municipal Conference

Mr. Scott Bernstein
President
Center for Neighborhood Technology

Mr. Robert Belcaster
President
Chicago Transit Authority
Staff: Jud Lawrie

Mr. Aristide Biciunas
Executive Director
Chicago Area
Transportation Study
Staff: Linda Bolte

Dr. David Boyce
Director
Urban Transportation Center
University of Illinois
at Chicago

Mr. Kirk Brown
Secretary
Illinois Department of Transportation
Staff: Carla Berroyer
and Stephen Schindel

Mr. Martin Buehler
Director
Division of Transportation of Lake County

Mr. Bruce Deason
Intergovernmental Affairs Officer
Homebuilders Association of Greater
Chicago

Mr. Joe DiJohn
Executive Director
Pace
Staff: Jim Jarzab

Mr. Ed Fauth
Fauth and Associates Consulting

Mr. Bernard Ford, Sr.
Vice President
McDonough Associates, Inc.

Dr. Donald Haider
Professor & Director
The Kellogg Graduate School of
Management
Northwestern University

Ms. Susanne M. Hogan
Executive Director
Illinois Corridor Transportation
Management Assn.

Ms. Laura Jibben
Executive Director
Regional Transportation Authority
Staff: Toulla Constantinou

Mr. Timothy Morgan
Transportation Director
Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Anthony Pagano
Executive Director
Metropolitan Transportation Assn.

Mr. Phillip Peters
Executive Director
Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission
Staff: John Paige

Mr. John Plunkett
President
Suburban Job Link

Ms. Joanne Schroeder
President
Vlecides-Schroeder

Mr. David Schulz
Director
Infrastructure Technology Institute
Northwestern University

Mr. Melvin Sierakowski
Traffic and Operations Engineer
Illinois State Toll Highway Authority

Mr. Joseph Starshak
The Civic Federation

F.
Advisory Panel

Members of this panel provided feedback and offered suggestions as the project progressed. MPC thanks each of the members of the panel for their candid and helpful input. The listing of these individuals does not imply their endorsements of the final Task Force report.

Ms. Mary Sue Barrett
Chief of Policy to the Mayor
City of Chicago

Mr. Wallace Brown
Member, DuPage County Board

Mr. Jerry Butler
Commissioner
Cook County Board

Mr. Mike Cabonargi
Staff Assistant
Office of Senator Paul Simon

Mr. William F. Dwyer
Member, McHenry County Board

Ms. Jo Ann Eckmann
President
Village of Libertyville and
NIPC Representative

Mr. Joel Ettinger
Regional Director
Federal Transit Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation

Mr. Art Hill
Member, Board of Directors
Chicago Transit Authority

Mr. Warren L. Kammerer, Jr.
Chairman
Kane County Board

Hon. Michael J. Madigan
Speaker
Illinois House of Representatives

Mr. Frank Miller
Member, Board of Directors
Regional Transportation Authority

Mrs. Sharon Morelli
Member, Will County Board

The Hon. Richard Welton
Mayor, Village of Gurnee and
Lake County Representative

The Hon. Jack B. Williams
President
CATS Council of Mayors

Mr. Charles Zettek
Member, Board of Directors
Pace

G.
Metropolitan Planning Council

Project Staff:

Jean Allard
President

Deborah Stone
Executive Director

Jeanette Corlett
Transportation Director

David Urbanczyk
Associate

Laura Zuckert
Communications Director

Consultants and
Project Support

technical support:
Fred Schoenfeld
Joseph Schofer

communications
support:
Jaseulca/Terman
& Associates, Inc.

project design:
McKinsey and Co.

writing:
Patrick Barry

graphic design:
Susan Johnson
Design

photographs
courtesy of the RTA
with the following
exceptions:
page 1 from the
Chicago
Transportation Study;
pages 13, 14 from
Sears Roebuck and
Company;
page 44 from
Northeastern Illinois
Planning Commission

Metropolitan Planning Council
220 South State Street
Chicago, Illinois 60604
312.922.5616

Printed with
soy-based inks
on recycled paper