

# Transit Uncovered:

*How to Improve Public Transit  
in Your Community*

October 2006



**JOBLINKS**  
CONNECTING PEOPLE TO THE WORKPLACE



**Work, Welfare & Families**

*An Illinois Coalition Working to End Poverty*

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## **Acknowledgements**

*Work, Welfare and Families* has prepared a series of briefs for those interested in public transit issues, engaging in public transit planning, identifying and advocating for public transit improvements, and representing those who rely on public transit in their communities across Illinois.

### **Transit Uncovered: How to Improve Public Transit in Your Community** (October 2006)

*An introduction to public transit in Illinois: what it is, how it's funded, who the major stakeholders are and how to get involved. Includes a glossary of transit terminology.*

### **Accessing Area Jobs: New Opportunities in Transportation-To-Work Projects in Illinois** (October 2006)

*An overview of the Job Access and Reverse Commute program in Illinois and other funding sources for transportation-to-work initiatives. Also includes five Illinois JARC projects.*

### **How Illinois Developed State Transportation Coordination: A Case Study** (December 2006)

*An overview of Illinois' process in developing a state-level initiative to coordinate planning and funding of transportation for disadvantaged populations.*

*Work, Welfare and Families* will also post these briefs, other related information including the Illinois Interagency Coordinating Committee on Transportation's **Coordination Primer**, and links to federal regulations and the Framework for Action. You can access this information at [www.workwelfareandfamilies.org](http://www.workwelfareandfamilies.org).

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# Executive Summary

*This brief serves as an introduction to the complex world of public transit. It provides the general public and transit-interested stakeholders some basic information about public transit in Illinois: what it is; how it's funded; who the major stakeholders are; and most importantly how to get involved with local or regional planning in your area. This information will serve as a resource to make the world of public transit more accessible to all stakeholders interested in improving public transit regardless of their expertise or background.*

## **Why Public Transit? What You Need to Know and Convey to Local Decisionmakers.**

**T**he U.S. is an auto-dependent society. People want the most convenient way to live their lives and currently cars provide that convenience. There are consequences of this lifestyle however that often go unnoticed and unchallenged and should be reexamined as we develop regional, state and national transportation plans in years to come. Specifically, auto dependency leads to:

- Intensified **congestion**
- Longer **commutes**
- Increasing rates of **pollution**
- Higher costs for businesses
- Restricted **mobility** for **transportation disadvantaged groups** that limits their ability to access jobs, school and basic life sustaining services.

**Transit Creates Social, Economic and Environmental Benefits.** Adequate public transit, on the other hand, is sustainable, affordable and can benefit almost everyone. Whether you are a businessperson, **senior citizen**, student, worker, person with a disability, or person who lives in a city or in the country, public transit benefits you. It reduces congestion on roads and highways, increases

accessibility to goods, services and jobs, saves money in lost time and gas, increases mobility for those who do not own or cannot drive a car, and reduces pollution to create a cleaner and safer environment for us all to live in. Despite its numerous benefits, public transit systems across the U.S. remain underfunded in most **urbanized** areas (relative to highways and streets) and non-existent in many **rural** communities.

## **Expanding or Creating New Transit Services Requires Several Tools.**

While the world of transit can be complex, there are several key things that stakeholders need to know and can do to create, expand or improve transit in your area:

*Coalitions* create the broad support and political will that are necessary to improve public transit in any given area and provide a mechanism to incorporate the broad and diverse interests of the many **transit-interested stakeholders** in the community (e.g., seniors, environmentalists, business, students, low-income families, disabled persons, etc). Without coalitions, transportation officials often hear feedback in the form of single recommendations about a bus stop or a particular area from one particular group that does not match the concerns of another.

**Funding.** To break even, public transit systems receive funding from local, state and federal government as well as generate revenue through fares and advertisements. Urban and rural areas receive different combinations of these funds. The U.S. Congress determines federal funding for public transportation through the federal transportation law, **SAFETEA-LU** (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users). Federal funding streams require a local or state **match** of 50% for **operating projects** and 20% for **capital projects**. Federal funds also underwrite transit services for the transportation-disadvantaged groups, e.g., the elderly, low-income families, disabled persons, and people who live in rural areas. Nonprofit, local government, and private transportation providers also furnish services that are partially funded through these sources as well as other sources.

**Planning. Metropolitan Planning Organizations** (MPOs) and the **Illinois Department of Transportation** (IDOT) are the two primary planning organizations in the state for public transit. Together they, along with transportation providers, human services agencies and the general public, develop the **long-range transportation plans** and **transportation improvement programs** (TIP) that shape and decide all major transit decisions and projects in the state. Many of the projects that are included in state and MPO plans derive from plans for new service that local transportation providers maintain.

**As Stakeholders Work to Improve Transit in Your Area, You Must Involve Elected Officials.** Elected officials at the local, state and federal levels are involved in making decisions about how to fund transit and what services are necessary in your area. Feasible recommendations to improve or create transit require a strong coalition and local and/or state elected officials to champion your coalition's proposal. Involving elected officials can be done by establishing relationships with them, keeping them informed and giving them a role in the decision making process.

As congestion, gas prices, and pollution continue to increase at accelerating rates, it is important that we work together to come up with sustainable, cost-effective alternatives to driving that provide equitable service to all communities. In order to be effective in redesigning our transportation system to incorporate public transit and other **intermodal** forms of transportation, transit-interested stakeholders need to get involved in the process. Support from elected officials and diverse coalitions that represent the interests of low income families, businesses, transit operators, disabled persons, seniors, commuters and other members of the community can challenge the status quo and strengthen the economic and social fabric of our communities.

Note: The glossary provides definitions of all transportation related terms.

# I SECTION

## Why Public Transit?

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### What is public transit?

A system of local public transportation. The most common examples include transportation by rail, bus, or subway, but can include other vehicles such as ferries or on-demand vehicles such as a vans or taxis. Synonymous terms include: mass transit, transit and public transportation.

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**W**e live in an auto-dependent society. According to the 2000 Census, 90% of Americans households own a car or truck, and 88% of American workers use a car to commute to work.<sup>1</sup> People want the most convenient way to live their lives and currently cars provide that convenience. There are consequences of this lifestyle however: one is that many of our nation's urban roads and highways are over-capacity leading to intensified congestion, longer commutes and increasing rates of pollution. Because we haven't provided our public transit systems the necessary funding or infrastructure to provide a viable transportation alternative to cars in most communities, people continue to drive despite the fact that many of them would rather take public transit if it were as convenient.

The fact that most communities are designed for cars presumes that cars are widely accessible to most people, and this betrays another consequence of our auto-dependent lifestyle: it is inherently inequitable for individuals who cannot drive or do not own a car.

The lack of adequate public transit service significantly restricts the **mobility** of those who are **transportation disadvantaged**, which includes senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals and rural communities. When public transportation cannot offer the disadvantaged a basic level of mobility they are unable to access jobs, school and basic life sustaining services. This raises questions on the equity of the design and function of our transportation system.

Adequate public transit, on the other hand, is sustainable, affordable and can benefit almost everyone. Whether you are a businessperson, **senior citizen**, student, worker, person with a disability, or person who lives in a city or in the country, public transit benefits you. It reduces **congestion** on roads and highways, increases accessibility to goods, services and jobs, saves money in lost time and gas, increases mobility for those who do not own or cannot drive a car, and reduces **pollution** to create a cleaner and safer environment for us all to live in. Despite its numerous benefits, public transit

systems across the U.S. remain underfunded in most **urbanized** areas (relative to highways and streets) and non-existent in many **rural** communities.

  
**Did you know?**

95.7% of miles in the U.S. road system are *not* served by public transit.<sup>ii</sup>

Our role as concerned citizens with specific needs—who understand the benefits of public transit but require a more convenient and efficient public transit system before we trade in our cars—is to have our voices heard by the transportation professionals who create and shape transportation projects in our community. It is our responsibility to let them know what types of services they should prioritize and where the current gaps in the transit system are.

The following seven sections will provide the transportation tools, strategies, and resources necessary to influence transportation projects in your area. After reading this brief, you will know how to speak the language of transportation, be familiar with its planning and funding process and know how best to go about influencing transit decisions in your area. To ease your transition into the world of transportation, we have provided a glossary with many of the most commonly used or referenced transportation terms and organizations.

  
**Did you know?**

According to the 2002 National Association of Realtors' Smart Growth National Survey, the majority of Americans are willing to pay \$0.05 more per gallon on gas and an additional 1% on sales tax in order to reduce congestion.

# II

SECTION

## Keeping the Economy Moving: *Why Transit Is Important*

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### Did you know?

According to the 2005 Urban Mobility Report, if public transit was discontinued, the 85 largest urban areas in the U.S. would have an additional 1.1 billion hours of delay adding an additional cost of 18 billion dollars to citizens and businesses in those areas.

**P**ublic transit is vital to our nation. It reduces congestion and pollution, encourages economic growth, connects workers to jobs, minimizes household costs, connects transportation disadvantaged populations to services and generally leads to growing and healthy communities. The benefits of transit largely go unheralded in our society because most of us (whether we use public transit or not) do not realize the full extent to which public transit improves our lives and our communities because most of the benefits of public transit go unnoticed. For example, it is hard to observe **abatement** or a reduction in congestion, and as a result we often take for granted the many benefits of public transit.

The best way to fully understand the importance of transit in our community is to imagine life without it. For the 80% of us who live in urbanized areas, if we eliminated all buses, trains, subways, and other forms of public transit what would happen? How would that impact your commute? Your job? Your business? Your kids' lives? What would happen to pollution? The economy? People living in poverty? You probably have a vague notion that more people on the roads would increase commute times and pollution but without knowing the statistics behind transit, you are

probably grossly underestimating the impact of congestion on your life and the lives of the people around you.

Listed below are seven of the most common benefits of public transit. This list will provide the basic scaffolding that you can use to build your argument for a transit project in your area. Before visiting your local or regional transit planning agency, use this list as a springboard to create your own list of the benefits your transit project will bring to your community. For further information on the planning process, please see Section VI.

### **Benefit #1:** Transit is good for the economy

One of the hidden benefits of public transit is its galvanizing effect on local economies. By generating jobs, development, and improving business **revenues** in the transit-stop vicinity, transit provides an economic stimulus for any local or regional economy.

### Did you know?

It has been estimated that for every 1 billion invested in transit operations 60,000 jobs are generated, leading to a return on investment as high as 9 to 1.<sup>iii</sup>

**Benefit #2:** Transit is good for business

By reducing congestion, increasing foot traffic around businesses, and providing affordable transportation, public transit increases profits for local businesses by:

- increasing customer and worker accessibility to the business location;
- reducing employee and shopper commute times;
- reducing transportation costs for businesses;
- reducing inventory costs.<sup>iv</sup>

**Did you know?**

In **Northeast Illinois**, businesses could save at least \$1.2 billion a year in higher business productivity with a 10% reduction in road congestion.<sup>v</sup>

**Benefit #3:** Transit is good for students, workers and families

Students, workers and families rely on transit to get to school, their jobs and to other critical services such as the grocery store, bank, or hospital. For many of these groups, car ownership is not a viable option as private vehicles are expensive to own and maintain (see *Did You Know?* below). Currently, over 10% of households in the U.S. do not own or have a vehicle available to use.<sup>vi</sup>

**Did you know?**

The average household in the U.S. spends \$7,233 per year on their car or truck.<sup>vii</sup>

**Benefit #4:** Transit assists disadvantaged groups in getting to work and other life sustaining services

Currently, 10% of all Americans, 94% of welfare recipients<sup>viii</sup>, 7% of rural Americans<sup>ix</sup> and 21% of seniors<sup>x</sup> do not own or drive a car and transit provides them with their only means of getting to work, to the store, to the doctor, or to any other life sustaining service or activity.

**Did you know?**

The poorest 20% of households in the U.S. spends over twice as much as the average American family on transportation, spending 40% of their take home pay on transportation.<sup>xi</sup>

**Benefit #5:** Transit is affordable

Whether you are a student, a CEO, or a senior citizen, transit provides an affordable way to get to and from work, cultural events, and life sustaining services. As mentioned above, saving money and reducing household costs is advantageous to both disadvantaged transportation groups as well as those who are transportation advantaged.

**Did you know?**

Households that use public transit to commute back and forth to work spend \$6,468 less a year than households that use a private vehicle to commute.<sup>xii</sup>

**Benefit #6:** Transit is good for our health

The annual health care cost associated with pollution produced by surface transportation totals \$41 billion.<sup>xiii</sup>

Transit reduces these costs by providing safer, more efficient modes of ground transportation that don't emit as much pollution as the average private car or truck (which account for about 50% of air pollution nationwide<sup>xiv</sup>). Transit also increases the amount of daily physical activities for public transit users as their average walking time is nearly 25 minutes per day.<sup>xv</sup>

**Did you know?**

Public transit saves over 1 billion gallons of gasoline and reduces harmful emissions by over eight million tons annually.<sup>xvi</sup>

**Benefit #7:** Transit is good for communities

In addition to the economic, environmental and socioeconomic benefits of transit, transit also sustains, nurtures and strengthens communities. Employment, housing, retail and leisure activities all grow around transit stations revitalizing and bolstering communities. In addition, transit encourages use of recreational and cultural opportunities when parks and cultural centers are located within walking distance of public transit and encourages changes in land use from roads to walkable environments. Transit also discourages sprawl and fosters density by creating efficient and affordable transportation. This also reduces infrastructure costs for both the city and its taxpayers as public utilities are less expensive to provide when the city and its people are more condensed.

# III

SECTION

## Coalition Building— *Essential to Improving Transit*

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Improving transit in your community can be an uphill battle for several reasons in addition to the fact that we are a car-oriented society. Transit requires all the support it can get because, in some communities, it is viewed unfavorably. At the same time, the world of transit poses significant challenges for even the most dedicated interest group seeking to develop new services; it is filled with idiosyncratic processes, procedures and even politics. And public transportation is indeed a world governed by federal, state and local processes that require certain steps to be followed.

Coalitions create the broad support and political will that are necessary to improve public transit in any given area, whether you are seeking to enhance services or create a mass transit district. Coalitions can also enhance the transportation planning and funding decisions precisely because public feedback is required for any transportation plan, though often the public entities that carry out these plans do not have sufficient resources to coordinate adequate feedback and consensus building processes. However, most transportation planning entities look for ways to create cost effective services and will be sensitive to serving multiple interests at the same time.

Certainly, influencing the planning table or securing funds for a project requires the involvement of a broad base of stakeholders to develop one voice on proposed service, establish relationships across interested organizations and with decision makers, such as transportation planners and providers and elected officials, and to maintain the coalition.

Although transit may not be viewed as a highest priority in many communities, there are several distinct constituent groups that actively seek to improve transportation for their members. Such groups often include business interests, seniors, persons with disabilities, and low income communities. Other transit-interested stakeholders may be environmentalists or bicyclists. While these groups hold transit in common, they often compete for endorsement of their plans by transportation planners and elected officials. Building a coalition integrating as many of these groups as possible will ensure a more successful campaign to improve transit. Keep in mind that transportation officials often hear feedback in the form of single recommendations about a bus stop or a particular area from one particular group that does not match the concerns of another. That is why the world of transportation planning can be influenced by a group of broad and diverse stakeholders.

Most transit planners accept the role of coalitions in transportation decisions. After all, they have dedicated their professional well being to transit and it is in their work to see enhanced services, which often require action by local and state deliberative bodies, such as city councils, county commissioners and the state legislature. Furthermore, as government employees, most transportation planners and administrators are often unable to

initiate advocacy campaigns to improve investments in transportation.

Having an understanding of who are the core stakeholders and potential allies in public transit can help build support and contribute to the success of a coalition:

**Core Stakeholders—organizations or entities that are responsible for planning, funding, implementing or administering public transit**

**Potential Allies—organizations or entities that share an interest in adequate, affordable and convenient public transportation**

The table below identifies core stakeholders, what their general role is and what they have to gain by the work of a coalition seeking to enhance transit. It also identifies allies that can strengthen the work of a coalition.

**Table 1:  
Core Stakeholders and Potential Allies of Public Transportation**

| Core Stakeholders  | What They Have to Gain   |
|--|--|
| <b>Metropolitan Planning Organization</b>                | Develops and maintains regional transportation plans in urban areas that both forecast growth and seek to meet the needs of local stakeholders. The MPO will be most interested in creating plans that key stakeholders view as legitimate and valid. Federal law also requires that they host sessions to garner feedback on plans through public involvement or local hearings. The MPO will want to be sure that it meets these criteria in order to pass its federal review which occurs every three years. See the appendix for a list of MPOs. |
| <b>Illinois Department of Transportation</b>             | IDOT, like most state agencies, must comply with the requests and oversight of the state legislature and the governor. Its performance will on some level rely on meeting the needs of local stakeholders.<br><b>Rural and small urban communities</b> — IDOT furnishes planning expertise for areas that do not have MPOs, and consequently will be subject to similar concerns discussed above, in addition to being held accountable through the legislative process and state chain of command.  |
| <b>Transit District</b>                                  | Spends a significant amount of time making the case for transit and seeking increased funding for services. Transit districts benefit from new allies who can assist in efforts to increase investments.   |
| <b>Transportation Provider</b>                           | Most receive public funding for their services, and like transit districts seek increased investments.   |
| <b>Regional Transportation Authority (only in NE IL)</b> | Funds and coordinates transportation in the 6 county Northeast region of Illinois. The RTA has the tough job of crafting a sustainable comprehensive funding proposal for approval by the state legislature to support transit, which includes CTA, Pace and Metra.  |
| State Legislature  | Both the Illinois House and Senate convene committees to examine transit service and funding, solicit comments from interested stakeholders and render decisions on the level of funding of certain services. Each member is accountable to his or her district and, if serving on a subject matter committee, is in the position of representing the broad interests of Illinois citizens.  |

*(continued)*

| Core Stakeholders                                      | What They Have to Gain  |
|--|---|
| County Commissioners                                   | Many counties fund and administer transportation services. Like the state legislature, they are also accountable to the local voters.   |
| City Elected Officials                                 | Similar to counties.  |
| Township Supervisor                                    | Similar to counties.  |
| Community Based Organizations (CBOs)                   | Often serve on committees advising MPOs and transit districts. CBOs represent a variety of constituent groups interested in expanded transit. The most common include seniors, individuals with disabilities, low income communities, environmental concerns, and business interests.   |
| Other Potential Allies                                 | Motivating Factors to Joining a Transit Coalition   |
| Businesses   | Want convenient and reliable transportation for their workforce that gets them there on time and that brings consumers to their businesses.   |
| Local and state workforce investment boards            | Selling a workforce to attract and retain businesses requires adequate transportation for workers to jobs and related supports such as education and training as well as childcare.   |
| Chambers of commerce and economic development councils | Similar to workforce boards, these entities are trying to attract and retain business, so they support transit because it can increase the flow of consumers to commercial areas, reduce congestion and reliably support the local workforce in the work commute.   |
| Community Colleges                                     | Are set-up to educate, train and retrain the workforce to obtain and retain jobs. Not only is it important to see that the workforce get to jobs, but that they can get to their classes.   |
| Advocacy and public policy organizations               | Representing a variety of interests and geographical areas, these organizations can coordinate campaigns to improve transit, provide timely and relevant research and facilitate relationships with elected officials in a given region or across the state.  |
| Unions   | Many transit districts have a unionized workforce (frequently they may be the Amalgamated Transit Union or the Teamsters); increased service will ensure new jobs are created. Other non-transit unions are concerned that their members have affordable transportation.  |
| Foundations and funders                                | Fund the work of coalitions as well as research and technical assistance. They seek to invest in initiatives for the public good often along the lines of creating systems change, enhancing civic engagement and invigorating the local economy. While transit advocacy can be a tough fit for some funders, a strong coalition can help to make the case for funding. |
| Universities   | Often host departments or institutes that work on public transportation and can serve as technical assistance providers, researchers and experts for a project.   |
| Media (print, radio and television)                    | Has the unique role of establishing the need for enhanced public transit to the community at large. Elected officials, in particular, are responsive to news stories.   |

# IV SECTION

## The Door to Transportation Decisions is Planning: *An Overview of Transportation Planning in Illinois*

**T**he planning and funding of transit in Illinois is a complicated process with multiple actors at the local, state and national level. Most of the planning and funding for urbanized areas in Illinois go through Illinois' fourteen Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). Rural transportation planning and funding is the responsibility of IDOT.

To understand transit planning in urbanized Illinois, you must understand MPOs. MPOs are organizational bodies made up of

representatives from local and state governments, transit agencies and other stakeholders as determined by state or local law. They shape regional transit goals, develop and prioritize projects and track the use of public funding. Some MPOs also receive and administer federal and/or state funds for projects. In order to qualify for federal funding, MPOs in cooperation with the state and local transit operators must approve and submit a **long-range transportation plan** for their region. The plan must cover at least a twenty-year time frame but contain short-term as well as long-term projects and activities. Federal law requires that MPOs and states give all interested citizens an opportunity to comment on the plan and that public information about the plan is made available online.<sup>xvii</sup> In addition, federal law requires that transportation plans must be updated at least every five years.

### *Model Strategic Plan in an Urbanized Area: RTA's Moving Beyond Congestion*

**Moving Beyond Congestion** is a funding plan and implementation campaign launched by the RTA working with CTA, Metra and Pace to develop an integrated transit system in Northeast Illinois. The strategic plan will be designed with extensive public input to solve the current transit funding challenge, ensure financial viability and accountability, and meet the region's changing and growing transportation needs. The strategic plan is innovative both in its effort to improve and integrate transit in Northeast Illinois and in its outreach and use of technology (i.e., the internet) to educate and solicit feedback both from public leaders and from the general public. For more information, go to their website: <http://movingbeyondcongestion.org>.

### **Did you know?**

Before the current federal transportation law, SAFETEA-LU, only 6% of federal transportation funds were being suballocated to MPOs.<sup>xviii</sup>

In addition to a transportation plan, MPOs and states must also create a **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**. A TIP is a document that consists of the regional MPO's or state's list of construction and transportation projects it wants to implement in the next four years with federal funding. Projects selected for inclusion in the TIP must be in accordance with the region's transportation plan and must be selected via a process that allows interested citizens to comment. After approval by the MPO or IDOT, the TIP is then reviewed for approval by the Governor and forwarded on to the **United States' Department of Transportation (US DOT)** to determine appropriations of transportation funds. The TIP then must be made readily available to the public for dissemination.

In rural areas in Illinois, defined as **non-urbanized areas** with populations of less than 50,000, currently there is no regional planning authority. As a result, transit planning is facilitated at the county level with limited if increasing coordination with contiguous counties. Because counties often do not have the capacity to fund, plan or run a transit district on their own, many of the rural counties in Illinois, while they may have private and community-based organizations providing transportation services, do not have public transit.

As of 2006, 28% of the counties in Illinois do not have countywide funded public transportation service, with an additional 12% of the counties having countywide funded public transportation in city locations only.<sup>xix</sup>

**Table 2:**  
**Illinois' Counties With and Without County-Wide Funded Public Transit as of 2006**  
(Courtesy of the *Rural Transit Assistance Center*)

| Counties with County-wide Funded Public Transit Service  | Counties without County-wide Funded Public Transit Service  | Counties with County-wide Funded Public transit in City Locations Only   |
|--|---|--|
| Alexander, Bond, Boone, Bureau, Clay, Clinton, Coles, DeKalb, Douglas, Edgar, Edwards, Fayette, Ford, Franklin, Gallatin, Grundy, Hamilton, Hardin, Henry, Iroquois, Jackson, Jefferson, Jo Davies, Johnson, Kankakee, Lawrence, Lee, Livingston, Marion, Marshall, Massac, McLean, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Moultrie, Peoria, Perry, Piatt, Pope, Pulaski, Randolph, Richland, Saline, Scott, Shelby, Stark, Tazewell, Union, Vermillion, Wabash, Warren, Washington, Wayne, White, Williamson, Woodford | Brown, Calhoun, Carroll, Cass, Christian, Clark, Crawford, Cumberland, DeWitt, Effingham, Fulton, Greene, Hancock, Henderson, Jasper, Jersey, La Salle, Logan, Macoupin, Mason, Menard, Mercer, Ogle, Pike, Putnam, Schuyler, Whiteside | Adams (Quincy), Champaign (Champaign, Urbana), Knox (Galesburg), Macon (Decatur), Madison (includes Alton, Edwardsville, Granite City, Collinsville & several smaller communities), McDonough (Macomb), Rock Island (includes Rock Island, East Moline and several smaller communities), Sangamon (Springfield), St. Clair (includes E. St. Louis, Belleville, O'Fallon, and several smaller communities), Stephenson (Freeport), Winnebago (Rockford) |
| <b>Total Number = 57 (60%)</b>   | <b>Total Number = 27 (28%)</b>  | <b>Total Number = 11 (12%)</b>   |

Attempting to remedy the fragmented planning process in rural and **small urban** areas and to encourage cooperation and public involvement in the transit planning process, Congress included in the most recent federal transportation law (SAFETEA-LU) a **Human Service Transportation Plan (HSTP)** as a requirement for receiving certain federal transit funds for human service transportation. The HSTP must be locally developed and coordinated among all transit-interested stakeholders in the region or state, which generally includes all transportation providers, human service providers, and the public. The HSTP promotes coordination to encourage cost efficiency and to enhance transportation access for transportation-disadvantaged populations (seniors, individuals with

disabilities, low income communities and rural areas). Without a HSTP, direct recipients of certain federal monies will not be able to access their allocated money.

HSTP should benefit small urban and rural regions in Illinois, as it encourages a holistic approach to integrating the multitude of federal funding streams with state and local sources. By mandating an integrated plan for the region that has been allotted federal funds (e.g., non-urbanized regions in Illinois), HSTP encourages integration and cooperation within and between counties and between human service, transit, business and other transit-interested stakeholders in rural areas. This should help to reduce costs and encourage cross-county coordination of transit services.

# V SECTION

## Show Us the Money: *How Transit is Funded in Illinois*

Understanding funding for transit means that you largely need to know three things: 1) *what type* of funding is necessary; 2) *where* the funding comes from; and 3) *what combination* of funds is used in your community. The world of transit funding divides into two general project categories, operating and capital. **Operating projects** are projects that fund all costs associated with the maintenance and operation of a transportation system. These might include wages, gas, interest on loans, property taxes, and monies paid to maintain equipment. **Capital projects** are those that fund the purchase or construction of long-term asset such as vehicles, building or property.

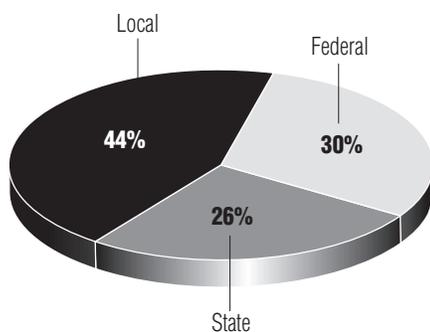
The source of funds, particularly federal and state funds, carries stipulations on what portion of project expenses they cover, and to a large extent determine what the remaining balance is. This section provides information on primary sources of funding for transit systems and how those sources vary by region in Illinois. While every community hosts a variety of nonprofit, private and local government (e.g. counties and townships) transportation services that often receive funding from similar sources to transit systems, currently no single repository exists in Illinois to capture those

services or the funding they use. However, one example is the YWCA-McLean County (IL), which has provided transportation to area jobs for its clients since 1999 (see *Accessing Area Jobs*). Another example is RIDE DuPage, discussed on page 20, which coordinates such services. For more information on how to identify those services in your community consult the Coordination Primer of the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Transportation of Illinois.

### Transit Funding by Source

There are four general sources of transit funding in Illinois: (1) the federal government (via the Federal Transit Administration), (2) the state government (via the state legislature and IDOT), (3) local sources (tax revenues via counties, municipalities, townships), and (4) **system-generated revenue** (via fares, municipal contributions, advertising and service contracts with businesses, nonprofits, etc.). Local funding and system-generated revenue often make up the largest percentage of operating funding in Northeast Illinois, while federal and state sources provide the largest share for most downstate systems. All federal funding streams for transit require a state, local or non-U.S. DOT federal **match** of 50% for **operating projects** and 20% for **capital projects**.

**Pie Chart 1:**  
Percentage of Transit Funding  
in Illinois by Source<sup>xx</sup>



**Table 3:**  
**Illinois Transit Funding Sources, FY 2006 - 2008<sup>xxi</sup>**

| FUNDING SOURCE | 2006               | 2007               | 2008               | 2006 - 2008        | %           |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| <b>Federal</b> | \$608 million      | \$562 million      | \$584 million      | \$1.8 billion      | 29%         |
| <b>State</b>   | \$489 million      | \$564 million      | \$579 million      | \$1.6 billion      | 27%         |
| Local          | \$918 million      | \$872 million      | \$877 million      | \$2.7 billion      | 44%         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>\$2 billion</b> | <b>\$2 billion</b> | <b>\$2 billion</b> | <b>\$6 billion</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Northeast Illinois is a six-county region and includes Chicago as well as Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties. Downstate Illinois makes up the rest of Illinois.

As transit relies heavily on population density to be cost-effective, transit funding in Illinois is almost exclusively allotted to urbanized areas. Currently, 98% of all transit operating and capital funds for fiscal years 2006–2008 are allocated to urbanized areas in Illinois—most of which are allotted to **Northeast Illinois** where 95% of all transit trips in Illinois are taken.<sup>xxii</sup> The lack of funding and planning resources available to **Downstate Illinois** plays a significant role in the lack of transit options in rural and small urban regions of Illinois.

The U.S. Congress determines federal funding for public transportation and highways through the federal transportation law, currently called **SAFETEA-LU**. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) administers all public transportation funds while the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) administers funds for roads and highways. Most of the funds allocated through SAFETEA-LU are called **formula funds**, as the funds are distributed in amounts based on population density, geographic and other transportation related factors. The funds are apportioned to MPOs, **urbanized areas**, states and other qualified direct recipients based on the formulas.

There are several different federal funding streams, which are fully defined in the appendix. These streams primarily fund transit programs that provide capital or operating assistance for urbanized areas (**Sections 5307 and 5309**) and rural areas (**Section 5311 and 5309**), target transportation-disadvantaged groups (the **elderly**, low-income families, disabled persons, and people who live in rural areas, Sections 5310, 5316 and 5317), but also provide funding to reduce emission-based pollution (**Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program – CMAQ**), and increase coordination and planning between counties, state agencies and nonprofit organizations (**Sections 5303 and 5304**).

**Table 4:**  
**Distribution of Illinois' Federal, State, and Local Funding Streams, FY 2006 - 2008<sup>xxiii</sup>**

|                            | 2006               | 2007               | 2008               | Total              | %           |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| <b>MPOs</b>                | \$2 billion        | \$2 billion        | \$2 billion        | \$6 billion        | 98%         |
| <b>Rural and Statewide</b> | \$31 million       | \$37 million       | \$39 million       | \$101 million      | 2%          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>\$2 billion</b> | <b>\$2 billion</b> | <b>\$2 billion</b> | <b>\$6 billion</b> | <b>100%</b> |

**Table 5:**  
**Illinois' Federal Dedicated Transit Funding Sources, Fiscal Years 2006 - 2009**<sup>xxiv</sup>  
*(Program descriptions can be found in the appendix)*

| Federal Fund Type   | 2006          | 2007          | 2008          | 2009          |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>Urbanized Area</b><br>(Section 5307 & 5340)                  | \$224 million | \$233 million | \$253 million | \$269 million |
| <b>New Starts - Capital Investment Grants</b><br>(Section 5309) | \$147 million | \$152 million | \$161 million | \$168 million |
| <b>Non-Urbanized Areas</b> (Section 5311)                       | \$12 million  | \$12 million  | \$13 million  | \$14 million  |
| <b>Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC)</b><br>(Section 5316)      | \$5 million   | \$5 million   | \$6 million   | \$6 million   |
| <b>Elderly and Persons with Disabilities</b><br>(Section 5310)  | \$4 million   | \$5 million   | \$5 million   | \$5 million   |
| <b>Metropolitan Planning Section</b><br>(Section 5303)          | \$4 million   | \$5 million   | \$5 million   | \$5 million   |
| <b>New Freedom</b><br>(Section 5317)                            | \$3 million   | \$4 million   | \$4 million   | \$4 million   |
| <b>State Planning Section</b> (Section 5304)                    | \$1 million   | \$1 million   | \$1 million   | \$1 million   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | \$402 million | \$416 million | \$448 million | \$473 million |

In addition to the dedicated federal streams listed above, the Northeast Illinois and East St. Louis regions also receive federal monies from the CMAQ, which is a formula program that provides funds to MPOs, State DOTs, and transit agencies to invest in transportation projects that reduce air pollutants. Funds can be used for highway or transit projects and can only be used in **non-attainment regions** with high pollution rates. **Surface Transportation Program** funds have also been used in these urbanized areas for public transportation projects in addition to federal highway projects.

The second primary source of funding, accounting for 44% of transit capital and operating expenses in the state of Illinois, is local and system-generated funds. Local funds come from a variety of sources that include tax revenue from local jurisdictions such as counties, municipalities, and cities as well as private donations, state allocated and locally imposed **motor fuel taxes** and **RTA funds** (which only cover the Northeast region). The largest source of system-generated funds is fares. Transit fares or fare box receipts comprise a substantial

portion of funding for the three transit providers in the Northeast region, averaging about 50% of the budget. In contrast, fare box recovery for the thirteen\* downstate urban transit providers (either transit districts or municipalities) averages approximately 16% and can be as high as 25%. Fare box recovery for rural systems also runs the spectrum and averages a little over 13%.

The State of Illinois plays a significant role in funding transit. The General Assembly determines the level of state funding for both operating and capital projects, and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) administers these funds for urban and rural areas.

IDOT partners with the fourteen Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in Illinois to plan and implement transit projects in urbanized areas in Illinois. In addition, IDOT manages the planning and funding of rural, non-urbanized areas in Illinois. Currently there are fourteen urbanized areas in Illinois that are defined as metropolitan regions (i.e., they have populations over 50,000). They include the **metropolitan areas** of Bloomington, Champaign/Urbana, *Chicago*, Danville, Decatur, DeKalb-Sycamore, Kankakee, Pekin, *Peoria*, *Quad Cities*, Rockford, South Beloit, Springfield, and *urbanized areas of St. Clair and Madison Counties*. The italicized areas are all **large urban**

\*All funding information is based on FY05 data obtained from the Illinois Department of Transportation. DeKalb-Sycamore became an urban transit system in FY06.

because they have populations greater than 200,000. The remaining nine are **small urban** because they have populations greater than 50,000 but less than 200,000. The contact information for each region's MPO is included in the appendix.

### **State Funding Sources**

The seven primary state funding sources of transit available in Illinois are **SCIP Bonds, Series B Transportation Bonds, Public Transportation Funds, Reduced Fare Subsidy, State Assistance,**

**Downstate Operating Assistance Program (DOAP):** Funding to local governments or mass transit districts outside Northeast Illinois to support operating, capital, and administrative costs of public transit systems in urbanized and rural regions. These funds are based on 7.5% (80% of 3/32) of the sales tax generated in the service area and are allocated to the local government or MTD through the state's General Revenue Fund.<sup>xxv</sup> The Illinois legislature determines the portion of funding through the appropriation process on an annual basis to be allocated to each eligible recipient.

**General Revenue Funds:** Operating funds used to account for all financial resources and normal recurring activities for the state except for those accounted for in another fund. DOAP and PTF funds are allocated through the General Revenue Fund.

**Public Transportation Funds (PTF):** PTF funds are allocated from the state's General Revenue Fund to the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) to be used at its discretion for the benefit of the CTA, Metra, and Pace. The amount equals 25% of the RTA Sales Tax collected in the previous month.

**Reduced Fare Subsidy:** Money provided to subsidize reduced fare discounts to seniors, students, low-income and disabled persons.

**Series B Transportation Bonds:** State Transportation Bonds used as all or a portion of the local share required to match federal funds for public transportation capital projects.

**State Assistance (Additional State Assistance/Additional Financial Assistance):** Investment income used by the state as supplemental financing for RTA's SCIP bonds.

**Strategic Capital Improvement Program (SCIP) Bonds:** Bonds for public transportation projects approved by the Governor of the State as part of RTA's SCIP.

**General Revenue Funds and Downstate Operating Assistance Program (DOAP) funding.** RTA funds and SCIP Bonds are limited to Northeast Illinois and DOAP funding is limited to Downstate Illinois.

\$363 million dollars of state funding in Illinois is available through Series B Transportation bonds.<sup>xxvi</sup> IDOT uses the bonds to leverage the 80% federal match for capital projects. For DOAP funding, IDOT may make grants to any city, county, mass transit district, or village not to exceed 55% of operating expenses.

### **Regional Use of Funding Streams**

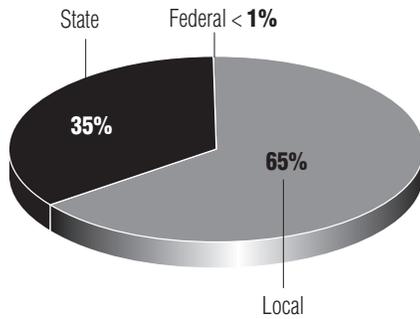
Illinois is home to both the second largest transit district in the nation and to 27 counties that do not have any form of publicly funded transportation. These vast regional differences are primarily determined by population, and population in turn determines what funds are available for projects.

#### **Northeast Illinois**

Northeast Illinois is unique in that its three major area transit providers—**Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra,** and **Pace** receive almost no money from the federal government to cover operating expenses. The two federal funding streams, **Urbanized Area** and **New Starts**, that account for over 92% of federal transit

apportionments to Illinois, can only be used for capital projects in **large urban** regions. Consequently, as seen below on Pie Chart 2, the federal government furnishes less than 1% of funds required for operating expenses of the three major area transit providers in Northeast Illinois; the majority of *operating* expenses are covered by other state and local sources such as sales taxes and system-generated revenue.<sup>xxvii</sup>

**Pie Chart 2:  
Northeast Illinois' Operating  
Funding Sources, FY 2004<sup>xxviii</sup>**



In the city of Chicago, the 1% RTA sales tax goes directly to the CTA. In Suburban Cook County, the 1% RTA sales tax is split between the three transit agencies. In each of the five **Collar Counties**, the 0.25% RTA sales tax is divided between Metra and Pace. Each transit agency also receives system-generated revenue that includes fare box revenue plus funds from other sources (e.g., municipal contributions, advertising and service contracts).

**Table 6:  
Northeast Illinois' Sales Tax  
Percentages for Transit by  
Subregion<sup>xxix</sup>**

|                    | Cook County | Collar Counties |
|--------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| RTA sales tax rate | 1%          | 1/4%            |

**Table 7:  
Northeast Illinois' Distribution of Sales Tax Revenue by Subregion<sup>xxx</sup>**

*(Only 85% of the sales tax funds go directly to the transit agencies. The other 15% goes to the RTA's discretionary fund which is used by the CTA and Pace to balance their budgets.)*

|       | Chicago | Suburban Cook County | Collar Counties |
|-------|---------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Metra | 0%      | 55%                  | 70%             |
| CTA   | 100%    | 30%                  | 0%              |
| Pace  | 0%      | 15%                  | 30%             |

### Downstate Urban Areas

There are fourteen downstate urbanized areas outside of Northeast Illinois. All fourteen areas are eligible to receive **Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5307)** from the federal government for capital investments and/or operations. These areas include 10 small urban and 4 large urban areas. Small urban areas are defined as areas that have populations between 50,000 and 200,000; large urban areas have populations greater than 200,000. Bloomington, Champaign/Urbana,

Danville, Decatur, DeKalb-Sycamore, Kankakee, Madison County, Pekin and South Beloit are all regions in Illinois defined as **small urban areas** eligible to use urbanized area formula grants to cover their a portion of their capital *and* operating expenses. The four **large urban areas** outside of the Northeast Region in Illinois—East St. Louis, Quad Cities, Greater Peoria and Rockford—can *only* use urbanized area grants for capital expenses.

### **Model Capital Investment Project: The Red Line Extension**

The Red Line Extension, one of Illinois' five New Starts projects, is a strategic attempt to revitalize the Chicago neighborhoods of Roseland, Pullman, Riverdale, West Pullman and Morgan Park through capital investment. By extending the Red Line from 95<sup>th</sup> to 130<sup>th</sup> street and adding four additional transit stops, the Red Line extension (at a projected cost of \$700 million) will significantly help to revitalize the economically hard-hit Greater Roseland communities by connecting willing workers to job opportunities in the Lake Calumet industrial area, Chicago's Central Business District and other employment and business centers in the greater Chicago metropolitan area. Moreover, it will induce economic development in the region. With access to transit, and a major public investment of \$700 million dollars, businesses will have the incentive to reinvest in Greater Roseland, providing the housing and services necessary to bring families and businesses back to the region.

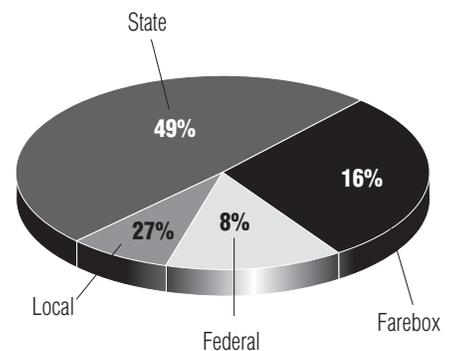
The Red Line Extension is a model project because it demonstrates the political and logistical challenges of planning, funding and implementing capital investment projects. The Red Line Extension was originally proposed in 1973 as a way to connect the entire city of Chicago from its northern to southern border. The plan has been more or less tabled over the last thirty years until it was included in the most recent Northeast Illinois' TIP in 2003, the 2030 Shared Regional Transportation Plan. Currently, according to the updated (as of July 2006) 2030 Shared Regional Transportation Plan, the planning process will be finished sometime within the next five to ten years with discretionary federal grants used to fund the construction of the extension.

(Based on information prepared by Lou Turner, Developing Communities Project.)

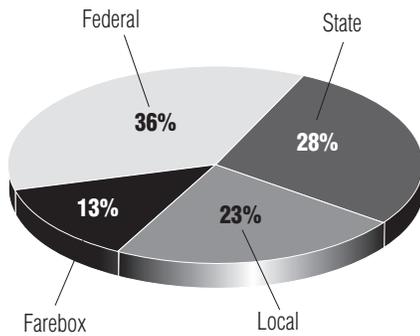
Below is a distribution of funding sources for operating expenses in the urbanized areas of downstate Illinois. Please note that the State of Illinois funds approximately half of all operating expenses through **DOAP** in these urbanized areas.

Cities or towns with populations less than 50,000, although urban in an everyday sense, are considered rural by the FTA and are only eligible for **Non-Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5311)** which provide operating and capital grants to "non-urbanized" areas in the state.

**Pie Chart 3:**  
**Downstate Urban Operating Funding Sources FY 05<sup>xxxxi</sup>**



**Pie Chart 4:  
Rural Operating Funding Sources  
FY 05<sup>xxxiv</sup>**



### Rural Illinois

As of 2004, there were 30 rural public transportation operators in Illinois that received federal and/or state funding.<sup>xxxii</sup> Only five of those areas (RIDES Mass Transit, South Central Illinois, Jackson County Mass Transit Districts and the Cities of Galesburg and Quincy) received state funding in Fiscal Year 2005.<sup>xxxiii</sup> At right is a breakdown of the distribution of funding sources for rural areas of Illinois. Please note that unlike downstate urbanized areas, which only receive 8% of their operating expenses from the federal government, the federal government provides 36% of all operating expenses to rural areas in Illinois and is thus the largest funder of rural transit in Illinois.

Of the monies provided by the federal government, over 72% of their marketing, **capital**, and **operating costs** are covered by FTA grant programs as seen in Table 8. The four FTA grant programs include: **Bus Discretionary Program (5309), JARC, Elderly Persons and Persons with**

**Table 8:  
Aggregated Funding Streams in Rural Illinois, FY 2006 - 2008<sup>xxxv</sup>**

| Program(s)  | Federal               | State                 | Local                 | TOTAL                  |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Bus and Bus Facility Grants (Section 5309)  | \$18 million          | \$4.5 million         | \$2.1 million         | \$24.6 million         |
| Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities (Section 5310) <i>Vehicles and Facilities</i> |                       |                       |                       |                        |
| Other Than Urbanized Area (Section 5311) <i>Administrative Operations</i>                   | \$21 million          | \$24.8 million        | \$29 million          | \$74.7 million         |
| Job Access and Reverse Commute (Section 5316) <i>Capital or Operating</i>                   | \$ .8 million         | \$0 million           | \$ .8 million         | \$1.5 million          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>\$39.7 million</b> | <b>\$29.3 million</b> | <b>\$31.9 million</b> | <b>\$100.8 million</b> |
| <b>Percent</b>  | <b>39%</b>            | <b>29%</b>            | <b>32%</b>            | <b>100%</b>            |

### Model Rural System: RIDES Mass Transit District

As the largest rural public transportation provider in downstate Illinois, RIDES Mass Transit coordinates transportation for all residents in the far southern eleven-county area. RIDES is nationally recognized for excellence in providing human service transportation in rural regions and provides most of the human service agency transportation in the region. One of the things RIDES has done very effectively is eliminate the inefficiencies of empty vehicles and unnecessary miles. By creating a single regional system in the eleven-county area, and providing services to the general public, senior citizens and persons with disabilities, RIDES has been able to maximize the capacity of its vehicles and service delivery. By developing "residential routes" that mix general public riders and clients on any route, RIDES has created a transit system that responds to customer demands and is affordable, with rides within county costing only \$2.00. For more information on RIDES, please contact: Bill Jung, Executive Director, (618) 634-9717, ceo@ridesmtd.com.

**Disabilities (Section 5310), and Non-Urbanized Areas (Section 5311).** Please see the appendix for more information on each grant.

In addition, rural operators also receive money from state and local sources such as system revenues, series B bonds, private donations and general revenue funds.

# VI SECTION

## Applying What You Know to Improve Transit in Your Area

**T**he first step in any planning or political process is to get informed. In urbanized communities, this begins with getting to know your local MPO and area transit providers: who they are, how they work, and what the public's role is in planning for new services. Note that in many smaller urbanized areas, the MPO may defer to the transit agency's own professional staff for identifying projects and priorities. For rural communities not in an MPO area, there

may be no entity responsible for regional planning; however, transit providers, local officials and stakeholders, and the state all play important roles in planning. Learning about the planning processes and approaches of each partner is important to finding a way to have your constituency's transportation needs heard. For more information on providing input in rural and small-urban regions, please see the next section on rural transit.

### *Model County-Wide Coordination: Ride DuPage*

Ride DuPage represents a successful example of county-wide coordination of transit organizations, counties, human service agencies, municipalities and townships to reduce inefficiencies and improve the quality of services offered to disadvantaged populations in a densely populated urban county. Ride DuPage is a paratransit service provider that uses taxicabs and Pace buses to transport its clients to government offices or medical facilities within county limits. Implemented in 2004, Ride DuPage created a one-stop service for paratransit users by consolidating dispatching and scheduling for all forty different transit services in DuPage County under one roof. In consolidating services, Ride DuPage was able to enhance service flexibility and eliminate some of the barriers that limit access to transportation services for disadvantaged populations by providing ease of use and door-to-door transportation services to any person residing in DuPage County with a disability or who qualifies as a low income resident. For more information on Ride DuPage please contact: Mary Keating, Assistant Administrator, (630) 407-6457, Mary.Keating@dupageco.org.

### **Urban Areas**

Listed below are steps to get you started with providing input in urban areas. These steps are by no means exhaustive. They are merely suggestions to get you and your organization thinking about the first steps in the planning process.

#### **Step 1: Getting to Know Your MPO**

1. Call the regional office of the FHWA or FTA and ask which MPO covers your area (see Appendix for complete list of MPOs in Illinois.)
2. Ask your regional MPO for copies of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and **State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)** for your region and state. They are legally required to furnish these.

3. Log on to their website and read up on their current activities, policies and planning protocol.
4. Join their mailing list to receive notices of their news, activities or events.
5. Attend their meetings, activities or events (if open to the public or public officials).
6. Ask them to address your group or organization about their role in the planning process in your region.

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Once you have researched your MPO and its policies, you are ready to get involved in the transit planning process. Below is a list of steps to participate in and influence the decisions made by the MPO in your area. These steps are just suggestions and may or may not be right for your region depending on the structure of the policies that govern the MPO in your region, the size of the MPO, and the willingness of its leadership to engage in the public planning process. An alternative is to work directly with the area transit provider.

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### **Step 2: Working with Your MPO to Shape Transit Decisions or Projects**

1. Most MPOs will have a planning liaison. Ask the liaison how best to provide input to the planning process.
2. Place someone in your organization or who shares your perspective on the MPO's project study team or task force.
3. Select someone in your organization or who shares your perspective to be present at the team meetings (if open to the general public or public officials).

4. Submit testimony to the TIP public hearings.
5. Pack the TIP hearings w/ supporters of your cause.
6. Encourage people to call and write the MPO members and staff supporting your cause or viewpoint.
7. Contact the media to disseminate your or your group's perspective on transportation planning in your area.
8. If you think the MPO has failed to fulfill the requirements of the public involvement process contact the FHWA and FTA civil rights officers and tell them the requirements are not being met.

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In some areas of the state, it will make more sense to work with the transit provider.

### **Alternative: Getting to Know Your Transit System**

1. Contact the area transit provider(s) in your community.
2. Learn about their current services, policies and plans.
3. Join their mailing list to receive notices of their news, activities or events.
4. Attend their meetings, activities or events.
5. Ask them to address your group or organization about their current services and future plans.
6. Ask to be involved in advisory committees or other activities.

## **Rural Areas**

Rural areas are any non-urbanized city or region with a population less than 50,000 persons as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Currently there is no standardized regional planning organization or planning process for non-urbanized regions, counties or cities as there is with **metropolitan statistical areas**. As a result, the best thing you can do if you are interested in influencing transit decisions in your non-urbanized region, is to contact the Illinois Department of Transportation and county commissioners, and establish a relationship with your area transit providers who maintain their own short- and long-range transportation plans. You can ask them who is in charge of regulating and planning rural transportation policy in your area and move forward based on their recommendation. For additional information, you can also contact your regional **Mass Transit District**—if your region has one—or the Rural Transit Assistance Center to find out more about the planning process in your area.

A good place to start is with the Rural Transportation Assistance Center (RTAC) or IDOT's Bureau of Downstate Area Programs. Their contact information is below:

- Illinois Rural Transit Assistance Center (RTAC)  
Ed Heflin, Manager  
(800) 526-9943
- Illinois Department of Transportation Bureau of Downstate Area Programs  
Erica Interrante  
Project Manager, HSTP  
(312) 793-3532

If your interest is not just to influence, but to initiate or expand transportation services in your community, there is a primer available through the

**Interagency Coordinating Committee on Transportation**

**(ICCT)** entitled, *Coordination Primer: A Guide to Help Your Community Navigate Transportation Coordination*. This Primer offers technical support and step-by-step directions to coordinating available funding, and will walk you and your organization through the funding and planning process. Below is an abbreviated version of the ICCT’s Four Phase Plan.

For more information about the Primer or to order a copy, please contact Dawn Maye, Transit Coordination Specialist of the Illinois Rural Transit Assistance Center, at DC-Maye@wiu.edu.

For more information on the starting up, funding and operating a small transit system, visit the National Rural

Transit Assistance Project’s on-line resource database at [www.nationalRTAP.org](http://www.nationalRTAP.org).

**What is transportation coordination?**

Efforts at the federal, state and local levels to foster the integration of transportation funds and/or services to broaden service coverage and reduce duplication. Over 62 different federal funds support public transportation for a variety of different populations and purposes. State and local governments also play a role in funding transportation. As a result, services in any given community can often seem fragmented and unconnected. Recently, new attention has been paid to coordinating all these funding streams to create broader coverage and reduce duplication. In Illinois, the General Assembly created the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Transportation, which since 2004, brought together both key state agencies and statewide nonprofits to improve the collaboration and integration of these services. Since 2004, the federal government has also been working on coordination through the initiative United We Ride ([www.unitedweride.gov](http://www.unitedweride.gov)).

**Table 9:  
How to Plan a Coordinated Transportation System**

|  | Transportation Coordination Steps:  | Parties Involved   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>PHASE 1: Transit Planning Group</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organize/create a <b>Transit Planning Group (TPG)</b>.</li> <li>Develop Transit Planning Guide.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transit Planning Group</li> </ul>   |
| <b>PHASE 2: Needs and Resources</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send out Community and Agency Surveys.</li> <li>Compile Inventory of Resources.</li> <li>Compile Results.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transit Planning Group</li> <li>Current transit providers</li> <li>Community agencies</li> <li>Local individuals</li> </ul> |
| <b>PHASE 3: Action Plan</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete <b>Framework for Action</b>.</li> <li>Develop <b>Shared Framework for Action</b> with your TPG.</li> <li>Develop and prioritize <b>Community Action Plan</b>.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transit Planning Group</li> </ul>   |
| <b>PHASE 4: Funding</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send letter of intent to IDOT.</li> <li>Request Non-Urbanized Area Formula Program Grant Manual from IDOT.</li> <li>Transit Plan meets all requirements.</li> <li>ODAP requirements certified by IDOT.</li> <li>Contact <b>Illinois Public Transportation Association (IPTA)</b>.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transit Planning Group</li> <li>IDOT staff</li> <li>IPTA staff</li> </ul>   |

# VII SECTION

## Don't Stop at the Planning Table: *Working with Elected Officials to Shape Transportation Projects*

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**T**he planning table is not the only place that decisions are made. Elected officials at all levels of government—local, state and federal—make funding decisions that directly impact the resources available to your community. MPOs, transit districts and IDOT are all responsive to elected officials. Securing an elected official as a champion for your project can help you determine what funds might be available for your project. They can also help you navigate the planning

process as you advocate for your coalition's project or service needs. In addition, elected officials want to know what issues their constituents are concerned about and what issues are being discussed in the news. For instance, communication with public officials from riders and transit advocates about the value of current services, as well as the need for additional services, can reinforce the benefit of transportation in the community.

### ***Model Legislation: The Business Location Efficiency Incentive Act***

Passed by the Illinois legislature in 2006, the Business Location Efficiency Incentive Act (SB 2885) is an innovative attempt to generate business development in communities with public transit and affordable housing. The Act creates economic development incentives for businesses to locate close to affordable housing and/or public transit. The bill allows companies to receive up to 10% more in corporate income tax credits under Illinois's Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) program. By increasing economic incentives for businesses to locate or stay located near affordable housing and/or public transit, this law will help to reduce sprawl, promote affordable housing and create more job opportunities for workers who cannot afford a car or are unable to drive. The law will go into effect January 2007.

Below are eight simple steps you can take to influence these actors and transit decisions in your area. These steps can be repeated as many times as you need them to be, and don't have to be conducted in order. Some steps focus

on building a good relationship with your elected officials, others seek to engage the broader public, yet they all will help you make your case and secure a champion for your project.

**1. Join with your friends and allies.** Include transit providers, community-based organizations, local advocates and other stakeholders who support your ideas as part of your coalition when meeting with elected officials and other target audiences.

**2. Introduce, inform and update.** Meet with your state representative and senator to introduce your coalition and explain your proposed project. Find out how he or she can assist your coalition and what role s/he plays in making funding decisions. Ask for recommendations of other elected officials that you should meet with. As your campaign progresses, keep your state representative and senator informed of your progress and process.

**3. Meet with other elected officials.** Based on the recommendations of your state representative or senator, meet with local and federal officials. Or identify additional elected officials to meet with. Follow the steps discussed in 1.

**4. Invite your community to support your project.** Schedule community meetings to brief potential allies on your project. Bring people together to talk about transit in your community and how best to improve it. Share information about some of the hidden benefits of transit (and hidden costs of driving).

**5. Spread the word.** Develop a listserv, website or newsletter to inform stakeholders about your project and progress. Talk about transit. Share what you have learned. Explain your position and get their feedback.

**6. Establish "the ask".** Once your coalition has determined the details regarding your proposed project (e.g. how much will it cost, services for

whom, taking place at what time of day, etc.), it is time to secure a champion or champions for your project by inviting one or more elected official to work on your project. Your "ask" may be to have that person seek funding, or to help in creating a transit district. Whatever the "ask", it must be specific.

**7. Don't forget the press.** Contact a local journalist who has written on transportation or related issues before and let him/her know about your proposed project. Write letters to the editor. Use a related story as a springboard to talk about transit and how the lack of transit funding affects your community. Include examples of similar situations in other states, regions or localities and how transit helped their community.

**8. Always say thank you.** Even with the most modest gains remember to thank the public officials and other supporters for their involvement in improving mobility in your community.

# VIII SECTION

## Who's Who Guide to Public Transportation in Illinois: *Key Agencies Involved in Planning and Funding*

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*Following is a list of the agencies involved in the planning, funding and support of public transit in the state of Illinois.*

*The organizations are a collection of national, state and regional government and not-for-profit agencies that play key roles in transit in Illinois.*

**American Public Transportation Association (APTA):** A national trade association representing the public transit industry. APTA membership includes public bus, rapid transit and commuter rail systems, and the private organizations responsible for financing, planning, designing, supplying, constructing and operating transit systems. APTA works to improve the accessibility and availability of public transportation for all Americans in communities across the country through advocacy and information sharing. [www.apta.com](http://www.apta.com)

**Amtrak:** National intercity/interstate passenger rail system. Amtrak stations are located in thirty-four different cities in Illinois. [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com)

**Brookings Institution:** Think tank that provides in-depth research on multiple transit related topics. [www.brook.edu](http://www.brook.edu)

**Center for Community Change (CCC):** National organization that provides policy and community organizing expertise to community-based organizations in low-income areas to help disadvantaged groups bring about social change in their communities. [www.communitychange.org](http://www.communitychange.org)

**Center for Neighborhood Technology:** Think tank that promotes the development of sustainable and livable communities in urbanized areas. Transportation is one of the primary areas they target. [www.cnt.org](http://www.cnt.org)

**Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) Policy Committee:** Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Northeast Illinois that functions as the transportation planning body of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). CATS carries out urban transportation planning in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). [www.catsmpo.com](http://www.catsmpo.com)

**Chicago Metropolitan 2020:** Business-backed civic organization dedicated to improving the social and economic well being of Northeast Illinois through research, advocacy, and public outreach. One of their five program areas is transportation. [www.chicagometropolis2020.org](http://www.chicagometropolis2020.org)

**Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP):** A regional planning agency for Northeast Illinois in charge of developing and adopting a funding

and implementation strategy for an integrated transportation and land use plan. In the near future, CATS and Northeast Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) will be gradually incorporated into CMAP with CATS acting as the transportation planning body and NIPC as the comprehensive planning body. [www.rpbchicago.org](http://www.rpbchicago.org).

**Chicago Transit Authority (CTA):** One of three primary public transit operators in Northeast Illinois, CTA is an independent government agency that operates Chicago's elevated train (the "El"), subway and metropolitan bus system. The CTA is overseen by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). [www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com).

**Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA):** National association committed to removing barriers to isolation and improving mobility for all people. The Association offers professional development training and certification for transportation professionals and serves as a national information station for up-to-date information on federal legislation, programs that offer technical assistance and transportation policy and programs. [www.ctaa.org](http://www.ctaa.org)

**Federal Highway Administration (FHWA):** Division of US Department of Transportation that funds highway programs and some transit programs. [www.fhwa.dot.gov](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov)

**Federal Transit Administration (FTA):** Division of US Department of Transportation that funds mass transit programs such as subways, buses and light rail. [www.fta.dot.gov](http://www.fta.dot.gov)

**Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT):** IDOT is responsible for the coordination, planning and maintenance of intercity passenger and rail freight systems, highways airports, transit systems and traffic safety in the state of Illinois. They are the primary source of funding for transportation in Illinois receiving financial support from the federal government and the state of Illinois. [www.dot.state.il.us](http://www.dot.state.il.us)

**IDOT, Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation (DPIT):** DPIT is a division of IDOT that provides technical assistance and administers state and federal funding to public transit systems throughout Illinois. [www.dot.state.il.us/org3.html](http://www.dot.state.il.us/org3.html)

**Illinois General Assembly:** The legislative body for the state of Illinois. It consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate two bodies that work together to improve transportation services in the state of Illinois through legislation and strategic appropriation of funds. In the House of Representatives, the Committee on Mass Transit handles most of the issues relating to public transit. [www.ilga.gov](http://www.ilga.gov)

**Illinois Public Transportation Association (IPTA):** An association of organizations comprised of urban and rural public transit operators in Illinois who advocate on behalf of their own legislative interests. The Association works to improve its members' access to technical resources, quality up-to-date research and funding in an effort to improve the quality and accessibility of transportation to all areas and people in Illinois. [www.ipta-net.org](http://www.ipta-net.org)

**Interagency Coordinating Committee on Transportation (ICCT):** *Work, Welfare and Families* originated legislation to establish the ICCT to broaden coverage and reduce duplication of transportation services for disadvantaged populations in order to access life-sustaining activities, like work, childcare, education and training, medical care, etc. Target populations include those not served or underserved by transportation because they are at a disadvantage due to age, income, physical or mental disability, location or by other condition that creates limitations or generates special needs. Key state agencies including the Illinois Departments of Transportation, Human Services, Employment Security, Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Aging, Healthcare and Family Services as well as several statewide associations serve on the ICCT. Governor Blagojevich signed the enacting legislation into law in July 2003. The ICCT carries out its role by:

- Providing technical assistance to localities in addressing gaps in transportation,
- Identifying objectives to providing essential transportation services, reducing duplication of services and achieving coverage for the populations in question, and
- Serving as a clearinghouse of information about funding sources and innovative transportation models addressing the transportation disadvantaged.

**Metra:** One of three primary public transit operators in Northeast Illinois, Metra provides the intercity/intercounty commuter rail system for the six counties. Metra is overseen by the RTA. [www.metrarail.com](http://www.metrarail.com)

**Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC):** Nonprofit organization that promotes sensible development and planning policies in Northeast Illinois. MPC conducts outreach and advocacy and researches and develops policy recommendations to enhance quality of life and equity of opportunity throughout metropolitan Chicago. [www.metroplanning.org](http://www.metroplanning.org)

**Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs):** Organizational bodies that lead transportation planning in metropolitan areas with populations of 50,000 in cooperation with IDOT. MPOs usually consist of representatives from local governments, transit agencies and other stakeholders as determined by state or local law. There are currently fourteen MPOs in Illinois. For a complete list and contact information, see the Appendix.

**Midwest High Speed Rail Association:** Nonprofit organization promoting development of frequent, fast and dependable trains in the Midwest as a way to reduce congestion, improve regional commutes and encourage commerce throughout the Midwest. [www.midwesthsr.org](http://www.midwesthsr.org)

**Northeast Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC):** Regional planning agency for CMAP that is in charge of regional growth management and comprehensive land-use planning for Northeast Illinois. RTA, IDOT, and CATS work collaboratively with NIPC's plans and data to design Northeast Illinois' Regional Transportation Plan. [www.nipc.org](http://www.nipc.org)

**Pace:** One of three primary public transit operators in Northeast Illinois, Pace provides the paratransit and suburban fixed-route bus services for the region. They are overseen by the RTA. [www.pacebus.com](http://www.pacebus.com)

**Regional Transportation Authority (RTA):** RTA's mission is to ensure financially sound and comprehensive coordinated public transportation for the Northeast Illinois region. They are responsible for regional planning and financial oversight of CTA, Pace and Metra in Northeast Illinois. RTA has the authority to apply for and receive grants, loans, and other funds from the state or the federal government for public transportation programs in Northeast Illinois. The RTA allocates certain federal, state and local funds to finance both the operating and capital needs of public transit in Northeast Illinois. [www.rtachicago.com](http://www.rtachicago.com)

**Rural Transit Assistance Center (RTAC):** The rural transit resource center for Illinois. As part of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, RTAC works with IDOT to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public transportation in rural areas in Illinois by providing technical assistance, research, and training via its Rural Transit Assistance Program. [www.ira.org/outreach/rtac.asp](http://www.ira.org/outreach/rtac.asp)

**Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP):** National coalition of organizations and associations working to ensure safer communities and

smarter transportation choices that enhance the economy, improve public health, promote social equity, and protect the environment. [www.transact.org](http://www.transact.org)

**US Congress:** The national legislative body in the United States that consists of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. All national transit policy, which includes laws, funding and program creation, is researched, reviewed, planned and created through Congress through the legislative bicameral process. [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org)

**US House of Representatives:** In the US House of Representatives there are two primary committees and subcommittees that are involved in the funding and planning of public transit in the US: (1) the Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee and its subcommittee on Ground Transportation; (2) the Appropriations Committee and its subcommittee on Transportation. The T&I Committee has jurisdiction over the full national surface transportation program in the U.S., which includes public transit. They make the policy recommendations that must be approved by the House. After approval, the Appropriations Committee ultimately decides which programs and departments will receive funding and the amount they will receive. [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

**US Senate:** In the Senate there are three primary committees and subcommittees that are involved in the planning and funding of public transit in the US: (1) The Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs (BHUAC) Committee and its subcommittee on Housing and Transportation; (2) The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation (CCST) and its subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine and (3) the Appropriation Committee and its subcommittee on Transportation. BHUAC has jurisdiction over transit and planning related to transit and CCST reviews all matters relating to transportation. They make the policy recommendations that must be approved by the Senate. After approval, the Appropriations Committee ultimately decides which programs and departments will receive funding and the amount they will receive. [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)

**Work, Welfare and Families:** *An Illinois Coalition Working to End Poverty.* See back page.

# Appendix:

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## **Model Practices Addressing Transit Needs**

Illinois is a large regionally diverse state with the third most populous metropolitan statistical area in the U.S., but in which most of the counties and communities are rural.<sup>xxxvi</sup> In order to adapt to the challenges of managing both urban and rural transportation systems that are both accessible and affordable to its users, the state of Illinois, and its communities, counties, and MPOs have developed a multitude of innovative ways to address local transportation challenges. These innovations include ways to incentivize private business and local government investment in **transit-oriented development** in both rural and urbanized areas and ways to make transit cost effective in rural areas with low population densities. Listed throughout this brief are some model practices in Illinois today that address some of the challenges of transportation systems in Illinois. These model practices can be found on the following pages:

**Model Strategic Plan in an Urbanized Area:** RTA's Moving Beyond Congestion  
– page 11

**Model Capital Investment Project:**  
The Red Line Extension  
– pg 18

**Model Rural System:**  
Rides Mass Transit District  
– pg 19

**Model County-Wide Coordination:** Ride DuPage  
– pg 20

**Model Legislation:** The Business Location Efficiency Incentive Act  
– pg 23

**Table 9:  
Key Funding Streams for Human Service Transportation in Illinois**

| Agency                                      | Program Name   | Funding Terms  | Who is Served   | Recipients  |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| Federal Transit Administration (FTA)        | Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities Program  | Program that authorizes capital grants to assist in providing transportation for the elderly or people with disabilities.  | seniors and persons with disabilities                   | local government, public agencies and transportation operators, and non-profit agencies |
| FTA   | Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC)          | Program designed to expand employment transportation programs and services in order to assist welfare recipients and low income individuals in getting to work.  | low income individuals and welfare recipients           | local government, public agencies and transportation operators, and non-profit agencies |
| FTA   | New Freedom Program                                    | Program that improves public transportation services and alternatives to public transportation for people with disabilities.                                     | people with disabilities                                | local government, public agencies and transportation operators, and non-profit agencies |
| Illinois Department on Aging                | Community Supportive Services                          | Program that reallocates money to social service agencies and projects that serve the elderly. Services include information and transportation.                  | seniors citizens  | Any type of agency through the Area on Aging Agencies (AAA)                             |
| Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) | Donated Funds Initiative Senior Transportation Program | Program that offers 75 percent matching funds for community organizations that run transportation services for seniors.  | senior citizens   | community based agencies  |
| DHS   | Chicago Transit Authority Card                         | Program allows DHS Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Food Stamp Employment & Training (FSE&T) clients to travel to work, training or treatment. | low income individuals and welfare recipients           | individuals (TANF & FSE&T clients)  |
| Illinois Department of Public Aid           | Medicaid   | Program pays for medically necessary transportation services for people who are disabled or over 65 years old.   | senior citizens and people who are disabled             | public transportation operators, non-profit agencies, and individuals                   |
| Illinois Department of Transportation       | Reduced Fare Program                                   | Program that discounts public transportation fares for seniors and persons with disabilities.  | senior citizens, persons with disabilities and students | downstate local government, public agencies, and public transportation operators        |

## Glossary of Transportation Terminology

*(A large number of the definitions below were adapted from RTA's, "Transportation Terminology Glossary." All definitions are within the context of transportation.)*

### 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP):

The regional transportation plan for the six-county Northeast Illinois region. The plan outlines the major transit and regional highway plans. It is prepared by the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) the region's MPO and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC).

**Abatement:** Reducing the degree or intensity of emissions or pollution.

**Acid Rain:** An environmental consequence of pollution from vehicle emissions.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** Passed in 1990, this federal act requires transit vehicles, operations and facilities to ensure that people with disabilities have access to jobs, public accommodations, telecommunications, and public services, including public transit.

**Accessibility:** The extent to which people who have disabilities can use transit vehicles.

**Base Fare:** Price charged for one transit ride for one adult. It does not include transfer zone, peak, or express service charges or reduced fares.

**Bond (finance):** An interest-bearing certificate of debt issued to raise funds.

**Bus:** A public transit vehicle that can accommodate 15 or more passengers and operates on roads and streets.

### Business Location Efficiency

**Incentive Act (SB 2885):** Passed in 2006, creates economic development incentives for businesses to locate close to affordable housing and/or public transit in Illinois. The bill allows companies to receive up to 10% more in corporate income tax credits under Illinois's Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) program. The law will go into effect in 2007.

**Capacity:** Number of passengers or vehicles that can travel in one or both directions over a specified time period.

**Capital Costs:** Long-term assets of a public transit system such as vehicles, buildings and property.

**Capital Expenses:** Equipment expenses.

**Capital Investment:** Money used to induce development and investment in communities surrounding transit projects by funding transit projects.

**Car:** Vehicle moving on wheels.

**Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>):** One of the primary pollutants from vehicle emissions. It is a significant greenhouse gas that is thought to be a contributor to global warming.

**Carbon Monoxide (CO):** One of the primary pollutants from vehicle emissions, CO is a gas emitted primarily from the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels from vehicles. It decreases the blood's oxygen carrying capacity and is dangerous to people with heart disease.

**Charter Bus:** A bus that provides public transit on a limited basis in which there is a single price for the entire bus trip rather than per passenger.

**Citizen Advisory Committee:** Advisory committee for citizen input utilized by most MPOs for transportation planning.

**Clean Air Act:** Federal regulations that spell out the role of local and state governments in maintaining clean air and define acceptable levels and types of pollution.

**Clean Air Act Amendments:** 1990 amendments created rules for dealing with air pollution in non-attainment areas. These amendments brought air quality control into the political realm of transportation policy.

**Collar Counties:** The five counties surrounding Chicago. They include DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will Counties.

**Commute:** Regular travel in the main flow of traffic between home and a fixed location (usually work).

**Commuter Bus:** Bus that transports passengers from their neighborhood to a place near their work usually traveling from the suburbs to the city.

**Commuter Rail:** Diesel locomotives that typically serve the suburb-to-downtown market.

**Community Action Plan:** A strategic document created by a community group detailing a clear list of steps to improve transit in their region. Plan should include a timeline and a list of who is responsible for carrying out each step.

**Community Mobility Task Force:** A mechanism used by multiple MPOs in Illinois to encourage public participation on issues of community mobility and other transportation issues.

**Congestion:** Overcrowding on roads when the volume of traffic is high enough to reduce vehicle speeds and increase drive times.

**Congestion Management System:** Process used in **Transportation Management Areas (TMAs)** to identify alternative strategies to alleviate congestion and enhance mobility of persons and goods; and to provide information on transportation system performance.

**Congestion Pricing:** Drivers are charged more money during congested periods to use the roads (e.g., rush hour).

**Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ):** Federal program that funds transportation projects in areas that do not meet certain federal Clean Air Act standards.

**Deadhead:** To move a revenue vehicle without fare-paying customers or cargo on board.

**Demand Responsive:** Non-fixed-route service where the transit operator will provide service “on demand” to riders at pre-arranged times.

**Deviated Fixed-Route:** A fixed-route transit service that will deviate from its normal route for prearranged pick-ups.

**Disabled persons:** Any person who by reason of injury, age, illness or other incapacity or disability is unable to use local transit facilities and services to the same extent as persons who are not disabled without specific modifications.

**Discretionary Grant:** Funding awarded both selectively and competitively based on merit.

**Downstate Illinois:** All counties, cities or regions not included in **Northeast Illinois**.

**Downstate Operating Assistance Program:** IDOT program that supports the administrative and operating costs of public transit systems in **Northeast Illinois**. The funds are based on a percentage of sales tax generated in the service area and are available to cities, counties, villages, rural and urban transit districts or systems, and towns.

**Earmarking:** Congressional funding that is to be provided to specific projects.

**Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE):** Tax break program designed to encourage companies to expand or locate operations in Illinois rather relocate to another state. It provides tax credits for qualifying companies as the incentive to stay in Illinois. E.g., the Business Location Efficiency Incentive Act utilizes EDGE tax credits to encourage businesses to locate close to transit and affordable housing.

**Fare:** Authorized payment on a passenger vehicle. The payment can be a token, pass, transfer or cash.

**Fare Box Revenue:** Monies collected from passengers on public transit. Usually covers no more than half of all operating expenses for the transit agency.

**Federal Funds:** Financial assistance from the federal government to subsidize the operating costs of public transit.

**Fiscal Year:** The fiscal year of the State of Illinois extends from July 1 through June 30 of the following year. The fiscal year of the federal government extends from October 1 through September 30 of the following year.

**Fixed Guideway System:** A system of vehicles that can operate only on its own guideway constructed for that purpose (e.g., rapid rail, light rail).

**Fixed-Route Transit System:** Transit that is operated according to a fixed schedule on a prescribed route.

**Formula Funds:** Funds apportioned or distributed to an agency or region on the basis of formulas described in law.

**Framework For Action:** Community self-assessment tool designed by the FTA for communities to evaluate their regional transportation systems.

**General Revenue Funds:** Operating funds used to account for all financial resources and normal recurring activities for the state except those accounted for in a dedicated fund.

**Guaranteed Ride Home:** Program that guarantees participants a ride home in case they cannot take the same mode of transportation that brought them to work. Its purpose is to encourage its participants to walk, bike, carpool, or take transit to work.

**Heavy Rail:** Subway and elevated trains powered by an electrified third rail. Offers the highest capacity and frequency of service.

**Human Service Transportation:** Transportation that is available to people who have trouble utilizing forms of transportation because of age, disability, poverty, or some other form of disadvantage.

**Human Service Transportation Plan (HSTP):** Provision of SAFETEA-LU that requires the establishment of a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan for all FTA programs that target underserved populations. Without a HSTP, direct recipients of FTA monies cannot access their allocated money.

**Hydrocarbons:** Partially burned fuel and one of the primary pollutants from vehicle emissions. It is toxic to humans and is a major contributor to **smog**.

**Illinois FIRST:** Legislation to fund capital improvements for the state's infrastructure, roads, schools and transit.

**Intermodal:** More than one means of transportation. For example, an intermodal trip could be a passenger walking to the train station, taking the train to a bus station and then taking the bus to a destination. Also, see **multi-modal**.

**ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act):** Passed in 1991 by Congress, ISTEA set up a decision making structure and planning process that every state and large city had to use to secure federal transportation dollars. Emphasized "intermodalism" by increasing the funding authorized for public transit and introducing new sources of flexible funds.

**JARC (Job Access and Reverse Commute):** Formula program that provides funding for local programs that offer job access and reverse commute services for low-income individuals.

**Kiss and ride:** Location where commuters are dropped off to board a public transit vehicle.

**Large Urban Area:** An urbanized city, town or region with population over 200,000.

**Light rail:** Electric streetcars, trolley cars or trams that run on tracks on city streets.

**Linked trip:** One-way trip on public transit with one or multiple transfers. May or may not be intermodal.

**Long-range transportation plan:** Plan for regional or statewide transportation improvements that every MPO and state must develop. The plan usually looks 20 years ahead and is revised every five to six years. Also, see transportation plan.

**Low-income:** A household or family whose annual gross income does not exceed 80 percent of the median income for the area (adjusted for family size). Another frequently used measure is 200% of the annual federal poverty guidelines. In 2006, a family of three at 200% of these guidelines would earn \$33,200 annually.

**Mass transit:** Transportation by bus, rail or other vehicles, providing service to the public on a regular and continuing basis.

**Mass Transit Account:** The federal account into which a designated portion of motor fuel taxes is placed.

**Match:** See, matching funds.

**Matching Funds:** When one funding source requires funding from another source as a condition of the funding. For example, all federal funding streams under SAFETEA-LU require a local or state match.

**Metropolitan Statistical Area**

**(MSA):** Area with an urbanized population of 50,000 or more. Commonly referred to as a Metropolitan Area.

**Mobility:** The ability to be moved from place to place.

**Motor Fuel Tax (allocated and locally imposed):**

A tax on gasoline, gasohol, or diesel fuel collected for operating a motor vehicle. A percentage of the money is transferred to municipalities for transportation projects and programs. The current excise tax on gasoline in Illinois as of January 2006 is \$0.201 per gallon.

**Moving Beyond Congestion:**

Comprehensive plan and implementation campaign launched by the RTA working with CTA, Metra and Pace to integrate transit systems in Northeast Illinois. The goal of the strategic plan is to solve the current transit funding challenge, ensure financial viability and accountability, and meet the region's changing and growing transportation needs. <http://movingbeyondcongestion.org>.

**Multi-modal:**

Several modes of travel. For example, a multi-modal trip occurs when a passenger rides a bike to a transit stop and then takes the train to work. Also, see **intermodal**.

**National Highway System:** The U.S. network of highways.

**National Transit Database:** The FTA system used to collect data required by US DOT to run its transportation programs.

**National Transportation System:**

Intermodal system consisting of all forms of transportation in the U.S. that includes public transit, the National Highways System, and access to airports and ports.

**New Freedom Program:** Federal grant program that provides funds to transit programs that address the transportation needs of person with disabilities.

**New Starts:** Competitive federal grant program that provides funding for capital investment projects. This allow transit agencies to purchase or construct bus facilities, rail transit systems, buses, and other transit related vehicles and infrastructure.

**Nitrogen Oxide (NOX):** One of the primary pollutants from vehicle emissions that is monitored by the government and that contributes to both **smog** and acid rain.

**Non-Attainment Area:** Geographic region in the U.S. that has not attained the federal air quality standards for one of more air pollutants (e.g., carbon monoxide and ozone).

**Non-Urbanized Area (Non-UZA):** A city or metropolitan area with a population less than 50,000.

**Northeast Illinois:** Six-county region surrounding Chicago that includes Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties.

**Operating Costs:** The sum of all costs associated with the maintenance and operation of a transportation system. Generally includes interest paid on loans for capital equipment, property taxes on capital items and depreciation on plant and equipment when applicable.

**Operating Expense:** Monies paid by a transit operator or system provider to operate vehicles, settle claims, rent equipment and facilities and maintain equipment.

**Operating Revenue:** Revenue from the operation of a transit service or system. It includes revenue from advertising, charter bus service or interest; operating assistance from governments; and fare box revenue.

**Operation Greenlight:** Plan to address congestion in Northeast Illinois through improved technology and capital improvements of highways and transit systems.

**Paratransit:** Transportation services for people who have difficulty using mass transit, such as the elderly and the disabled. Paratransit utilizes vans, shared-ride taxis and small buses to provide pre-arranged trips to and from specific locations within the service area to certified passengers (e.g., seniors and disabled persons).

**Personal-Use Vehicles:** Vans, cars, pickup trucks, and rental cars.

**Pollutants:** The products of burning fuel in a vehicle's engine that are generally considered to be noxious to people (in large doses) and harmful to the environment. They include hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide.

**Pollution:** The environmental effects of pollutants. Two examples include **smog** and acid rain.

**Public Transit:** A system of local public transportation. The most common examples include transportation by rail, bus, or subway, but can include other vehicles such as ferries or on-demand vehicles such as vans or taxis. Synonymous terms include: mass transit, transit and public transportation.

**Public Transportation:** See public transit above.

**Public Transportation Fund(s) (PTF):** funds allocated from its General Revenue Fund to the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) to be used at its discretion for the benefit of the CTA, Metra, and Pace. The amount equals 25% of the RTA Sales Tax collected in the previous month.

**Rapid Transit:** Motorbus or rail transit service operating on an exclusive right of way.

**Reverse Commute:** Commuting against traffic or between suburbs, usually from the central city to the suburbs.

**Ride Share:** An agreement between two or more passengers to share a vehicle or the cost of travel between fixed locations on a regular schedule (e.g., carpooling).

**RTA Funds:** Formula funds allocated to CTA, Metra, and Pace. The amount equals 85% of the RTA Sales Tax collected in the previous month from the six counties of Northeast Illinois.

**RTA Sales Tax:** Sales tax used in Northeast Illinois to partially fund CTA, Pace and Metra. 85% of the tax goes directly to CTA, Pace and Metra via a formula and the other 15% is used at RTA's discretion.

**Rural:** A non-urbanized region, away from towns and cities with population less than 50,000.

**SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users):** The current national transportation law. Enacted in 2005, this legislation provides \$286.4 billion for all transportation, which includes \$52.6 billion in guaranteed funding for federal transit programs through federal fiscal year 2009.

**Seniors:** Individuals who are 65 years of age or older. Also, see **elderly**.

**Series B Bonds:** State of Illinois Transportation Bonds used as a portion or all of the local share required to match federal funds for public transportation capital projects.

**Service Area:** Area covered and populations served by a transit provider as determined by the reporting transit agency.

**Service Boards:** Term used to refer to the Northeast Illinois' three transit operators: Metra, CTA and Pace.

**Shared Framework for Action:** A synthesis of the findings and solutions for improvement from individual stakeholders' Frameworks for Action.

**Small Urban:** An urbanized city, town or region with population between 50,000 and 200,000.

**Smog:** A type of air pollution caused by a reaction between sunlight and emissions.

### State Transportation

**Improvement Program (STIP):** Statewide list of transportation projects that covers at least a three year period. Required by SAFETEA-LU.

**Strategic Capital Improvement Program (SCIP) Bonds:** Bonds for public transportation projects approved by the State of Illinois as part of the SCIP Program.

**Sub-Region:** The Northeast Illinois region is divided into even regional Councils of Mayors. Each Council area is a sub-region.

**Surface Transportation Program (STP):** Allows for more varied and equitable transportation opportunities by giving local and state agencies authority to decide how best to spend transportation funding.

**System-generated revenue:** Farebox revenue plus funds from other sources (e.g., advertising and freight railroad contributions).

**Taxicab:** A vehicle that serves primarily as a demand-responsive public passenger vehicle for hire.

**Transit:** See public transit above.

**Transit-Interested Stakeholders:** Anyone or any sector interested in transit. This includes families, workers, disabled persons, seniors, commuters, businesses, government, nonprofit organizations, etc.

**Transit-Oriented Development:** Development in which public transit, biking and walking are designed to play a large role in the mobility of members of the community.

**Transportation Disadvantaged:** People who are unable to purchase transportation or transport themselves due to income status, age or disability.

**TEA-21 (Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century):** Six-year reauthorization of ISTEA. Signed into law in 1998. Attempted to fill gaps in transportation services that constitute barriers to low-income people accessing job opportunities and related services such as childcare and training. Established higher funding levels for transit and highway programs.

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** A one to three year work plan that consists of the regional MPO's list of construction and transportation projects it wants to implement with federal funding. Projects can appear on the TIP only if funding has already been secured.

**Transportation Management Area (TMA):** All U.S. urbanized areas with populations over 200,000 and boundaries contiguous to a MPO. TMAs must include a congestion management system in their planning process and are responsible for project selection under the Surface Transportation Program.

**Transportation Plan:** The federally mandated long-range MPO transportation plan that includes both short term as well as long term projects and activities. Transportation plans must be developed with the input of elected officials, public agencies and citizens. Also, see **long-range transportation plan**.

**Transportation Planning Group (TPG):** A partnership of all transit-interested parties in a region that should consist of a wide range of stakeholders including public transportation users, community leaders, employers, public officials, humane service representatives, regional entities, business owners, religious leaders, consumer advocates, local government officials, healthcare providers, education groups, etc.

**Trip:** One-way movement of a vehicle or person between two points.

**Urbanized:** A city or metropolitan area with a population greater than 50,000.

**Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC):** Another name for hydrocarbons. VOC reduction is one measurement to determine the benefits of projects submitted for CMAQ Program funding.

**Walkway:** Transportation facility built for use by pedestrians including persons in wheel chairs. Walkways include paths, paved shoulders and sidewalks.

**Zone Fare:** Fare determined by the length of the trip measure in terms of zones.

## Select Federal Funding Streams for Public Transportation

*For the full text on SAFETEA-LU or detailed fact sheets on different federal funding programs, go to [www.fta.dot.gov/index\\_4696.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/index_4696.html)*

**Bus and Bus Facility Grants (Sections 5309 and 5318):** Provides funding for the acquisition of buses and bus related facilities such as terminals, passenger shelters and transfer facilities as well as for bus testing. Funds are allocated to specific projects in the statute.

**Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ):** Formula program that provides funds to MPOs, State DOTs, and transit agencies to invest in transportation projects that reduce air pollutants. Funds can be used for highway or transit projects and can only be used in non-attainment regions with high pollution rates.

**Metropolitan and Statewide Planning Programs (Sections 5303, 5304, 5305):** Provides planning funds for MPOs and State DOTs for metropolitan and statewide planning. Helps to fund the Long-Range Transportation Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs.

**Urbanized Area (Sections 5307, 5336j, 5340):** Formula program that provides funds for capital and operating expenses in urbanized areas. Transit systems in regions with populations greater than 200,000 receive the funds directly from the FTA. Those in regions with populations between 50,000 and 200,000 receive them through the state.

**New Starts – Capital Investment Grants (Section 5309):** Competitive program that provides funding for Major Fixed Guideway Capital Investment projects (New Starts) and Capital Investment Grants of \$75 million or less (Small Starts). It authorizes discretionary grants

to public transit agencies for capital projects such as bus facilities, rail projects and buses.

**Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities (Section 5310):** Formula program that provides funding for capital improvements in transit programs that increase the mobility for the elderly and people with disabilities. Funds are available to operators in rural and urban areas who are either lead agencies in coordinated transportation programs or nonprofit organizations.

**Non-Urbanized Area Formula Program (Sections 5311 & 5340):** Formula program that provides capital and operating assistance for rural and small urban public transportation systems with populations less than 50,000.

**Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) (Section 5316):** Formula program that provides funding for local programs that offer job access and reverse commute services for low income individuals. For more information on JARC, see this brief's companion brief: "Accessing Area Jobs: Illinois' Experience in Transportation-to-Work Projects."

**New Freedom Program (Section 5317):** Formula program that provides additional funds to address the transportation needs of person with disabilities.

**Surface Transportation Program (Sections 1101, 1103, 1113, 1603, 1960, 6006):** Provides flexible funding that may be used for transit capital projects in urbanized areas or federal highway projects.

## Additional Resources

Illinois MPOs as of October 2006:

- (1) McLean County Regional Planning Commission  
Bloomington, IL  
(309) 828-4331  
[www.mcplan.org](http://www.mcplan.org)
- (2) Champaign/Urbana Urbanized Area Transportation Study  
Urbana, IL  
(217) 328-3313  
[www.ccrpc.org](http://www.ccrpc.org)
- (3) Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS)  
Chicago, IL  
(312) 454-0400  
[www.catsmpo.com](http://www.catsmpo.com)
- (4) Danville Area Transportation Study (DATS)  
Danville, IL  
217-431-2325  
[www.cityofdanville.org/COD/Maps/DATS%20home.htm](http://www.cityofdanville.org/COD/Maps/DATS%20home.htm)
- (5) Decatur Urbanized Area Transportation Study  
Decatur, IL  
(217) 424-2790  
[www.ci.decalur.il.us/citygovernment/duats.htm](http://www.ci.decalur.il.us/citygovernment/duats.htm)
- (6) DeKalb-Sycamore Area Transportation Study  
DeKalb, IL  
815-748-2367
- (7) Dubuque Metropolitan Area Transportation Study  
East Dubuque, IL  
(319) 556-4166

- (8) Kankakee Area Transportation Study  
Kankakee, IL  
(815) 937-2940  
<http://planning.k3county.net>  
(go to transportation section)
- (9) Tri County Regional Planning Commission  
Peoria, IL  
(309) 673-9330  
[www.tricountyrpc.org](http://www.tricountyrpc.org)
- (10) Bi-State Regional Commission  
Quad Cities, IL  
(309) 793-6300  
[www.bistateonline.org](http://www.bistateonline.org)
- (11) Rockford Area Transportation Study (RATS)  
Rockford, IL  
(815) 987-5570  
<http://cityofrockford.net>
- (12) East West Gateway Coordinating Council  
St. Louis, MO  
(314) 421-4220  
[www.ewgateway.org](http://www.ewgateway.org)
- (13) State Line Area Transportation Study (SLATS)  
South Beloit, IL  
(608) 364-6702  
[www.ci.beloit.wi.us](http://www.ci.beloit.wi.us)
- (14) Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission  
Springfield, IL  
(217) 535-3110  
[www.co.sangamon.il.us/Departments/planning.htm](http://www.co.sangamon.il.us/Departments/planning.htm)

## Endnotes

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- <sup>vi</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census.
- <sup>vii</sup> Bureau of Transportation Statistics. *Commuting Expenses: Disparity for the Working Poor*, BTS Issue Brief, No. 1. March 2003.
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- <sup>xxii</sup> Illinois Department of Transportation, *Illinois State Transportation Plan: Transportation Policies and Goals for the 21st Century*, 2005.
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- <sup>xxvi</sup> Illinois; Transportation Bond Act, 30 ILSC 415/2 from Ch. 127, par. 702.
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- <sup>xxviii</sup> Illinois Department of Transportation, *Proposed FY 2004-2008 Public Transportation Improvement Program*, Spring 2003.
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- <sup>xxx</sup> Illinois House Committee on Mass Transit, *Is the 1983 Transit Funding Formula Ready for Reform?* 2005.
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**About Work, Welfare and Families: An Illinois Coalition Working to End Poverty**

*Work, Welfare and Families* is a coalition of organizations working together to educate about and promote public policies that improve the well-being of low income families in Illinois. The organization represents a network of over 200 human service, advocacy, religious, and civic organizations throughout the state. Through its transportation-to-work initiative, *Work, Welfare and Families* originated legislation to create the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Transportation to broaden coverage for the transportation disadvantaged and currently serves as its co-chair along with the Illinois Department of Transportation. The organization has also secured close to \$1 million in Job Access Reverse Commute funds for communities across Illinois and has led a five city community engagement process to close gaps in transportation to area job centers.

[www.workwelfareandfamilies.org](http://www.workwelfareandfamilies.org)



**About the Community Transportation Association of America**

The Community Transportation Association is a nonprofit, membership association committed to removing barriers to isolation and improving mobility for all people. The Association is involved in several projects to provide information and technical assistance to communities, transportation providers, and other groups to increase mobility and improve the quality of community transportation.

1341 G Street, NW, 10th Floor, Washington, DC 20005  
202.628.1480 or 800.891.0590 <http://www.ctaa.org>



**About the Joblinks Employment Transportation Initiative**

*Getting to work. It's one of the basics of community life. Public and community transportation play a critical role in moving Americans to employment sites, training facilities, educational programs, interviews, child care, and back home. For some, it's a standard commute on a train or bus; for others, it might be a third-shift vanpool to a nearby factory; and for still others, it can be a connection to new skills through the local technical college.*

Through a partnership with the Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, and the Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, the Community Transportation Association of America provides technical assistance designed to help communities overcome one of the most significant barriers preventing low-income individuals and others from obtaining and keeping jobs—transportation. This program, known as the Joblinks Employment Transportation Initiative, or simply Joblinks, includes demonstration projects, technical assistance, conferences, and publications.



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