Please Add Your Voice to the Emerging Vision

Provide your feedback by March 11
on the vision, principles, and outcomes for the Chicago region's transit system.

Emerging vision, principles, and outcomes

Transit spurs economic growth, mitigates climate change, and enables opportunity in ways and at a scale nothing else can. **The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is developing a strategic and financial plan to guide our region's irreplaceable transit system over the next five years and beyond.** We have developed a vision, principles, and outcomes for the plan based on six months of engagement and want your feedback.

Provide feedback on the vision, principles, and outcomes by March 11.

Vision

Safe, reliable, accessible public transportation that connects people to opportunity, empowers equity, and combats climate change.

Principles

Open to change
Equity
Stewardship

Outcomes

There are six outcomes this plan will help accomplish. Three outcomes are focused on the kind of transit system we want to work toward and three are focused on the kind of region a great transit system can help build. The outcomes are paired with questions to help determine the strategies, activities, and projects needed to achieve these outcomes.

In the future **our region's transit system** will be:

Safe, accessible, reliable, and useful for riders

How do we create a more seamless rider experience that operates consistently in the face of possible disruptions?

In a state of good repair

How do we maximize benefits of infrastructure investment and use limited resources efficiently and effectively to maintain the system today while planning for tomorrow?

Financially stable

How do we find new balance in funding so that the transit system can continue to operate while also remaining affordable for riders?

In the future **our region** will be:

Connected

How can we connect people and communities to more opportunities to improve their quality of life?

Healthy and Resilient

How can we best leverage transit as a tool for regional climate action?

Thriving

How do we work with communities to improve access to and create more equitable development to support transit?

What we heard from initial engagement

For the last six months, we have been asking our partners and the public what they think is important for us to focus on in this plan in four key areas: opportunities for impact, transit system adaptation, funding, and equity. The questions and responses below summarize what we have been seeking to understand and common responses we've heard.

What is currently the greatest opportunity for impact that the strategic plan process should address?

Continue to invest in strengthening the system by bringing stations, tracks, vehicles, and other infrastructure to a state of good repair.

Leverage transit as a tool for climate action by both getting more people out of cars and onto transit and through green transit initiatives such as bus electrification.

Take a rider-centered approach by making transit easier to use and by communicating the planning process and its outcomes transparently.

What types of transit system changes should be the focus of this process?

Increase the system's flexibility to better serve destinations outside of downtown Chicago and hours outside of the traditional commute.

Better integrate and coordinate fares between the CTA, Metra, and Pace.

Improve speed, reliability, and overall quality of service.

Ensure all riders feel safe on transit.

Which key financial issues should be addressed through this process?

Pursue additional funding sources for transit.

Rely less on fares for transit operations by rethinking how the system is funded.

Find new ways to communicate the value of transit.

What are some productive ways for RTA to define, understand, and incorporate equity during this process?

Prioritize access for those who need it most, for example by income, employment, and race.

Seek to remedy inequities in the transit system caused by historical and current structural racism by using race as factor when measuring progress.

Advocate for increased federal and state funding to leverage transit's inherent advantage in providing equitable access to opportunity compared to other modes of transportation.

About the RTA

Who is the RTA?

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) coordinates the Chicago region's transit system, oversees financing, and conducts planning in collaboration with the region's transit providers: the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra, and Pace.

How has the pandemic affected public transit?

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in historic declines in ridership and therefore the amount of revenue the transit system receives from fares, which usually make up about half of the cost of operating the system with the other half coming from sales tax and other state sources. To make up for lost fares, the federal government has provided, and the RTA has distributed, pandemic relief funding that will stabilize regional transit operations through most of 2025.

The last step of the RTA's Three-Step COVID Recovery Strategy, which began in 2020, was to conduct long-term regional strategic planning for the future of transit in northeastern Illinois. The RTA kicked off its new regional transit strategic plan in August 2021.

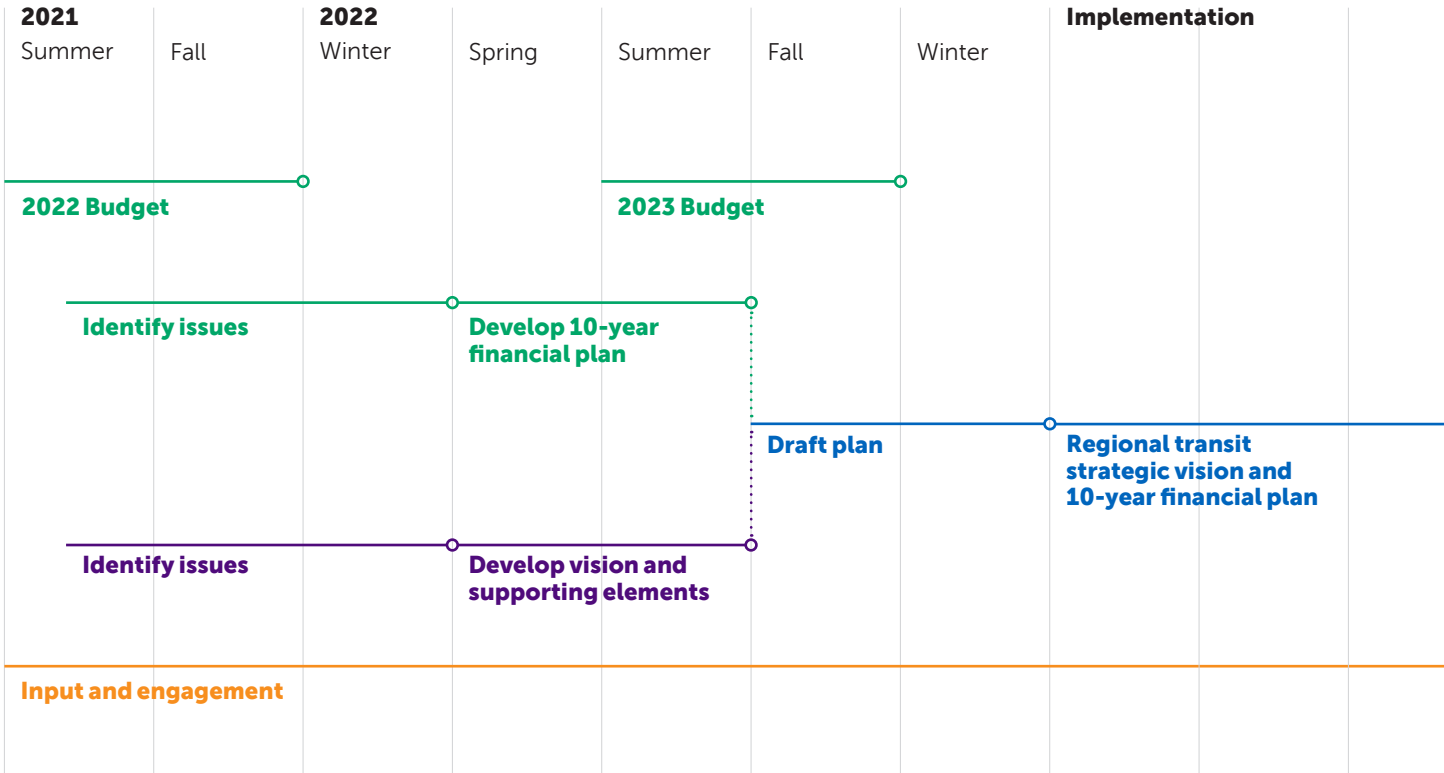
Learn more and stay involved

Dive deeper into the feedback we have already heard during initial engagement with an RTA staff produced memo and presentation. Respond via a questionnaire by March 11 to help the RTA develop a five-year regional transit strategic plan and a 10-year financial plan along three tracks.

A **financial track** will include yearly budgeting while analyzing potential ten-year funding scenarios to prepare decision-makers for needed future actions to ensure financial sustainability.

The **strategic planning track** will weigh the trade-offs between ideals and funding realities. It will develop a vision for the region and transit system and the projects and strategies needed to achieve it.

The **communication and engagement track** will continually inform and seek input on the process and recommendations of the plan.


2021
Summer
Fall
2022
Winter
Spring
Summer
Fall
Winter
Implementation
2022 Budget
2023 Budget
Identify issues
Develop 10-year financial plan
Draft plan
Regional transit strategic vision and 10-year financial plan
Identify issues
Develop vision and supporting elements
Input and engagement

Provide your feedback by March 11 on the vision, principles, and outcomes for the Chicago region's transit system.

Click here to respond

Regional Transportation Authority

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Subscribe to the RTA's bi-weekly Regional Transit Update newsletter to stay informed about the plan and to provide your input as it's developed.

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