

Meeting of the RTA Board of Directors

October 23, 2025

Welcome! Meeting Starts at 9 a.m.

Meeting Agenda: rtachicago.org



1. Call to order

Pledge of allegiance



RTA Board of Directors meeting

- Roll call
- Approval of minutes

4. Executive Director's report



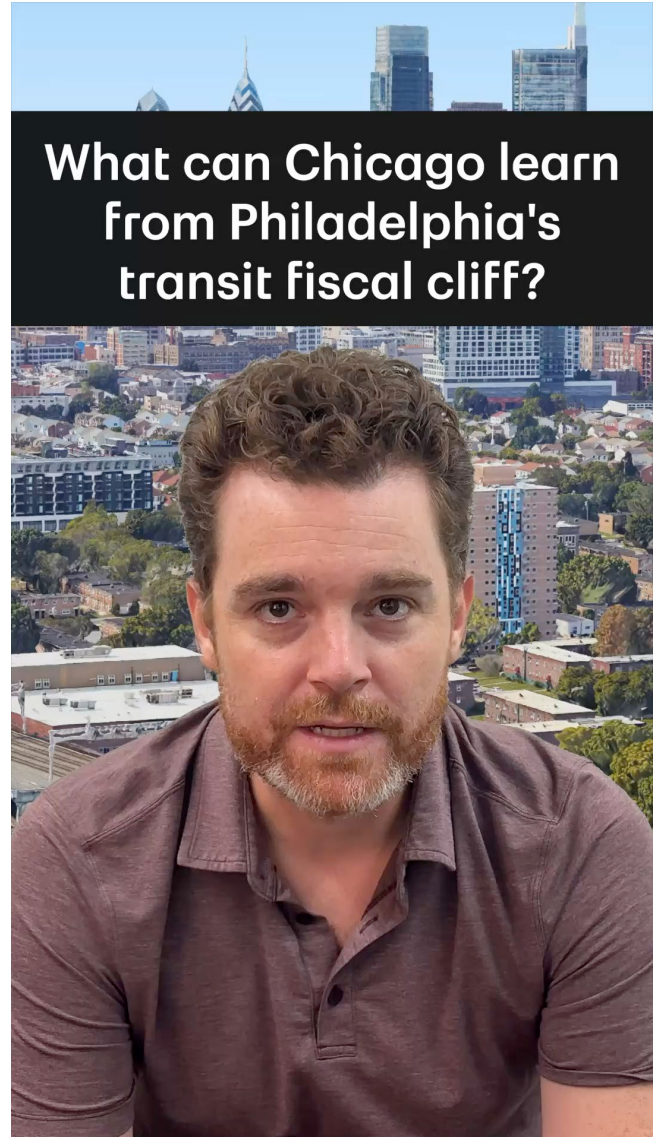
Recent Social Media Videos



Chicagoland residents have sent more than 20,000 letters to legislators asking them to fund transit.



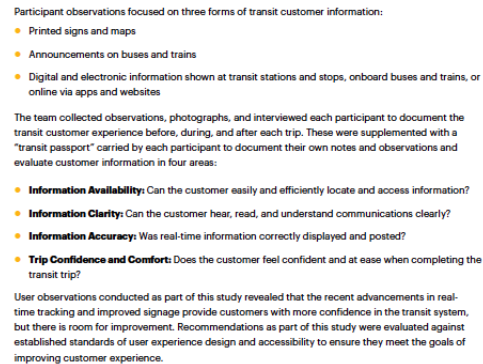
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A Better Ride for All

RTA Travel Information Action Plan
May 2025

rta
Regional
Transportation
Authority



2025 RTA Travel Information Action Plan - Executive Summary

Legislative update



2026 Regional Transit Operating Budget and Capital Program – County Hearings and RTA Public Meeting Dates

- Cook: Monday, November 10, 9:30 a.m.
- DuPage: Wednesday, November 12, 7:00 p.m.
- McHenry: Tuesday, November 13, 9:00 a.m.
- Lake: Tuesday, November 18, 9:00 a.m.
- Will: Tuesday, December 9, 9:00 a.m.
- Kane: Tuesday, December 9, 9:45 a.m.
- RTA Public Meeting: Thursday, December 4, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

Today's agenda

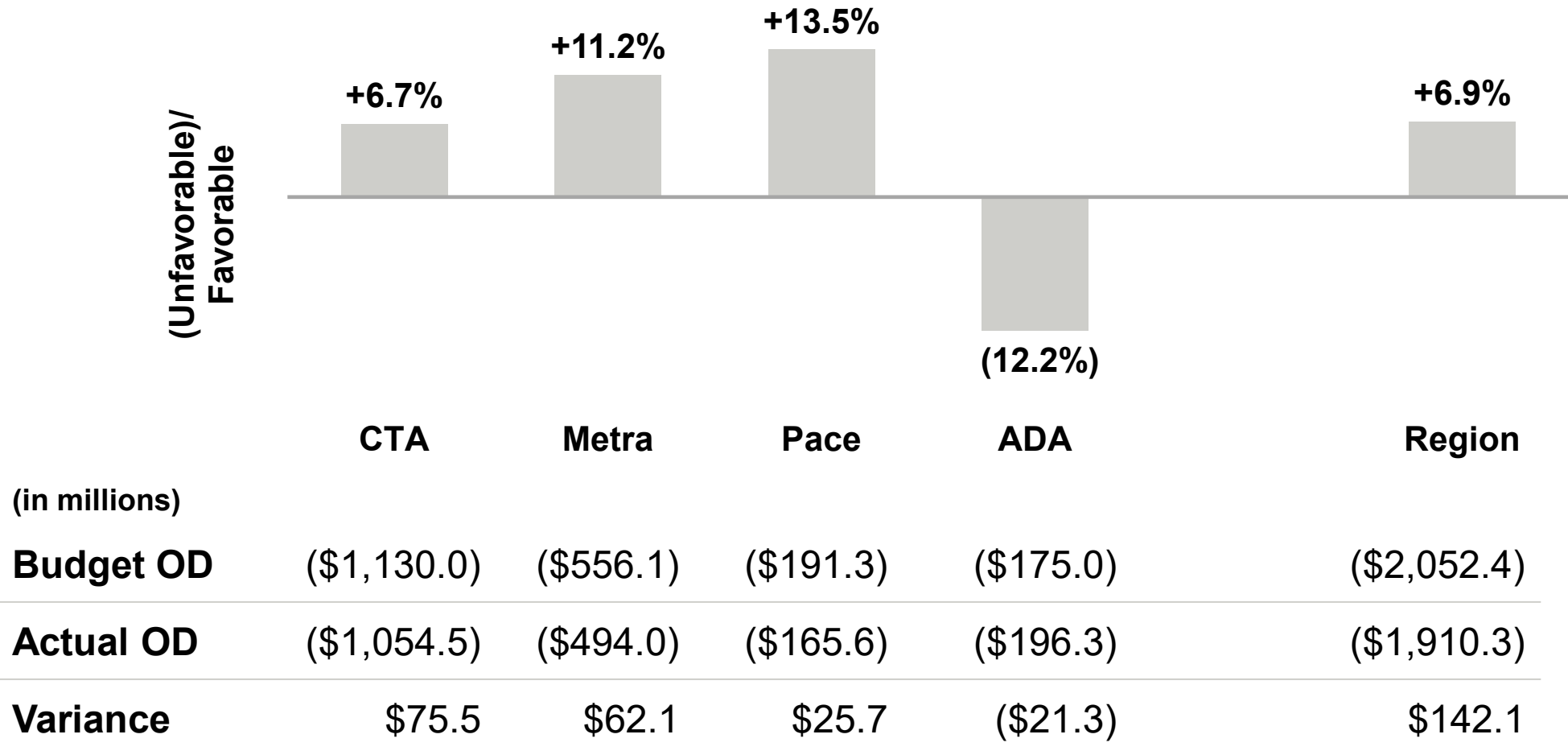


5. Information items

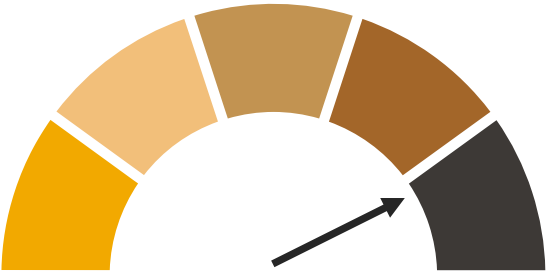
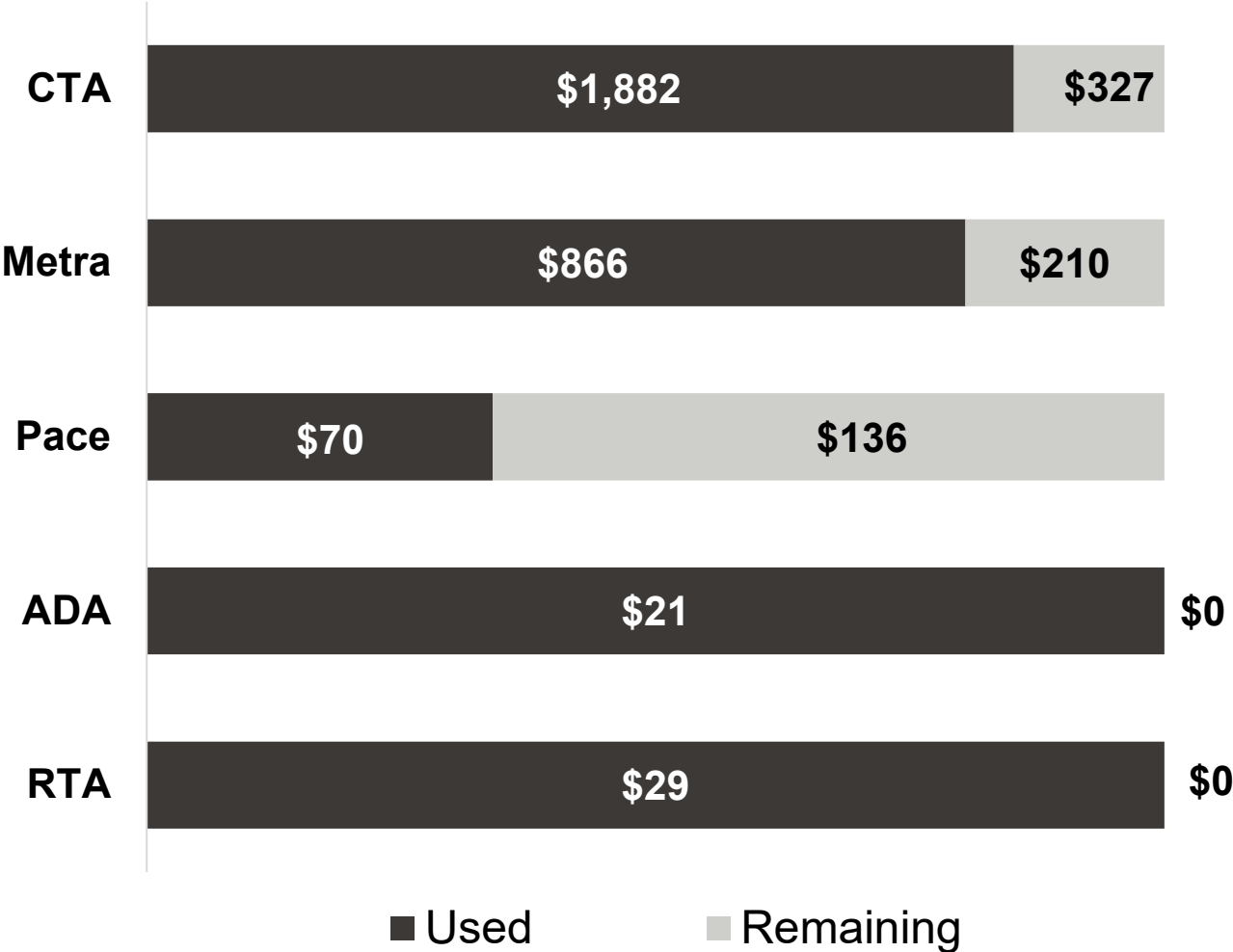
5a. Monthly financial results



Operating deficit variances from budget YTD through August 2025



Relief funding used (in millions)



Region Total
Used = 81.0%

\$2.868B
of
\$3.540B



5b. Legislative update



Legislative Update – Fall Veto Session

- House Executive Committee Subject Matter Hearing on RTA fiscal cliff (Wed 10/15)
- Briefings with Senate Democratic Caucus and staff leadership
- Outreach to legislative leaders and key stakeholders on *Transforming Transit* reform proposal
- CMAP estimates on fiscal cliff and cost of mandatory new initiatives in HB3438
- Challenges with timing of legislative action and fiscal cliff
 - Fall Legislative Session Week 2: Tues 10/28 – Thurs 10/30
- Ongoing issues to consider
 - 2026 recovery ratio requirement and potential penalty
 - Distribution of 2026 operating funding considering fiscal cliff

5c. U.S. DOT Interim Final Ruling on Disadvantaged Business Enterprises Program



Overview of the DBE program

- Established by federal government in 1983
- Purpose is to ensure small, socially and economically disadvantaged businesses can compete fairly for transportation-related projects
- RTA and Service Boards required to have DBE program under state and federal law

A DBE is defined as a for-profit small business:

- 1) that is at least 51 percent owned by one or more individuals who are both **socially and economically disadvantaged**, and
- 2) whose management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more of the **socially and economically disadvantaged** individuals who own it.

Interim Final Rule (IFR), 49 Part 26

U.S. Department of Transportation issued an Interim Final Order, effective date of publication – 10/3/2025

Changes the existing DBE program by:

- Stating that the program is to operate in a nondiscriminatory manner without regard to race or sex
- Removing race- and sex-based presumptions
- Eliminating certain reporting requirements

New criteria to become a DBE certified business

Section 26.67 of the IFR states that an owner must:

- 1) demonstrate that the owner is socially and economically disadvantaged based on his or her own experiences and circumstances that occurred within American society, and without regard to race or sex
- 2) submit to the certifier a personal narrative establishing the existence of disadvantage by a preponderance of the evidence based on individualized proof regarding specific instances of economic hardship, systemic barriers, and denied opportunities that impeded the owner's progress or success in education, employment, or business, including obtaining financing on terms available to similarly situated, non-disadvantaged persons
- 3) state how and to what extent the impediments caused the owner economic harm, including a full description of type and magnitude, and establish the owner is economically disadvantaged in fact relative to similarly situated non-disadvantaged individuals
- 4) state how and to what extent the impediments caused the owner economic harm, including a full description of type and magnitude

Next steps

- All certified DBE firms need to recertify by **November 24, 2025**
- The Illinois Unified Certification Program (IL UCP) is responsible for recertification process
 - Notified all Illinois certified DBEs
 - Providing information needed to recertify
 - Holding town halls and workshops to assist DBEs
- Recertification process includes submitting:
 - Personal Narrative - how are you socially and economically disadvantaged?
 - Personal Net Worth Statement

How is this change impacting the region?

- Suspension of DBE program
- Funding freeze

5d. Summer 2025 customer panel survey results



Customer Surveys

Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS)

- Large scale, onboard and online
- Regional and Service Boards
- 2-4 years
- Demographic data, customer satisfaction
- Used for key planning activities including Title VI analysis

Customer Panel Survey

- Small scale, online only
- Regional only
- Quarterly
- Customer satisfaction, service quality, public safety, special topics
- Longitudinal and timely

Summary

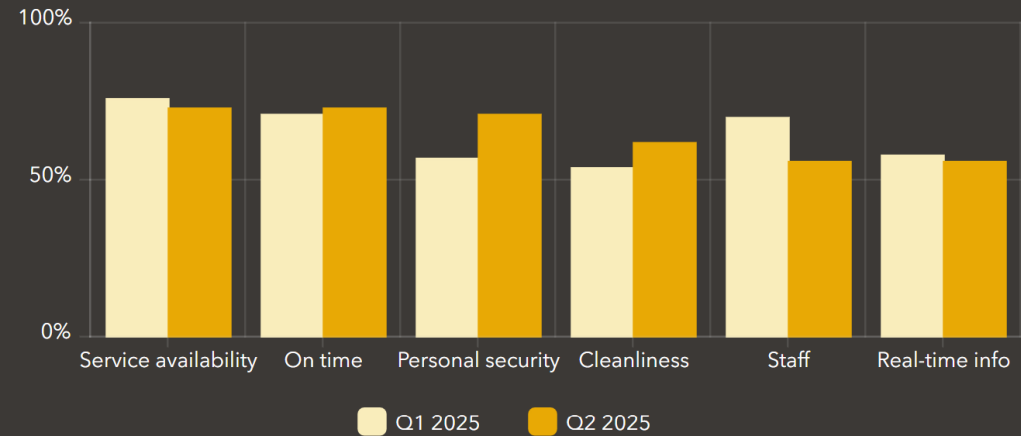
- Responses from 1,493 regional transit users in mid-September
- Results weighted by ridership, additional recruitment
- Public sentiments on safety remain unchanged
- Customer satisfaction remains high
- Special Topics
 - Using transit more
 - Funding and reform priorities
 - Impacts of service cuts

Quarterly RTA Customer Panel Survey Results

Last Update: Q2 2025

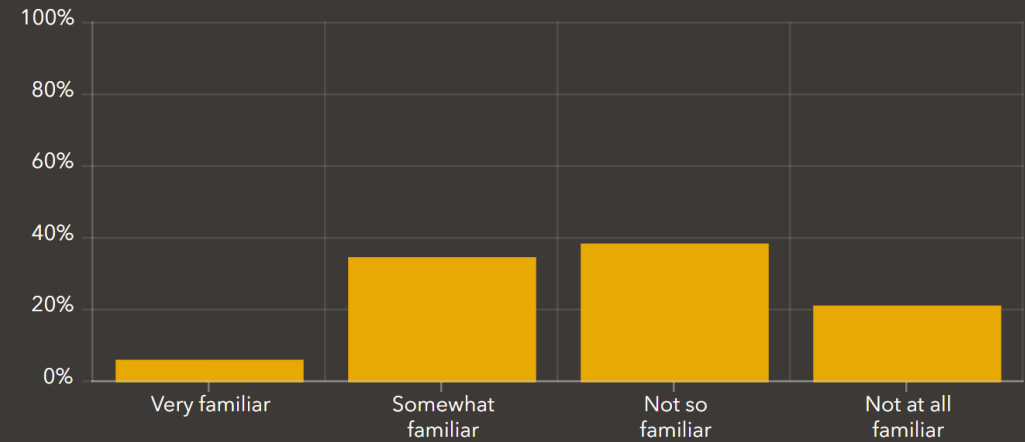
SERVICE QUALITY

Respondents rated their satisfaction with the following service qualities



PUBLIC SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

How familiar are you with the recent efforts to improve public safety?



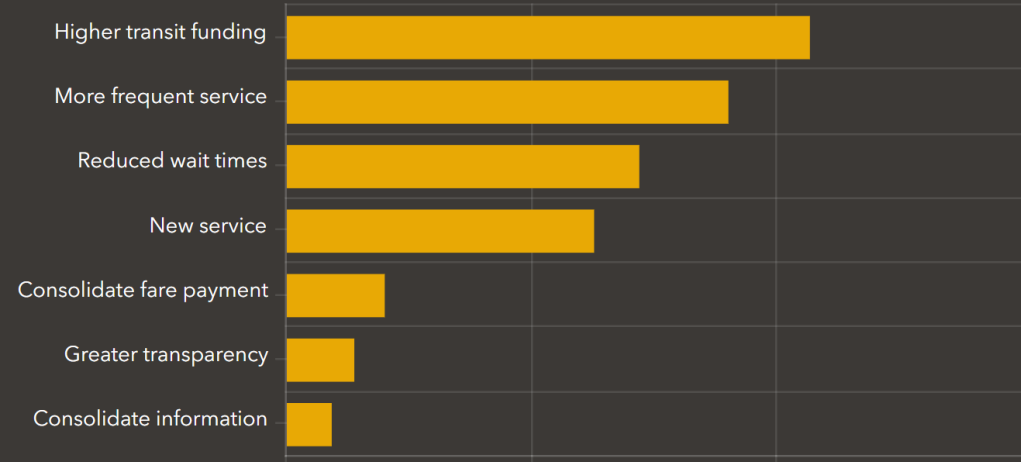
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Overall 74%

↑ 3%

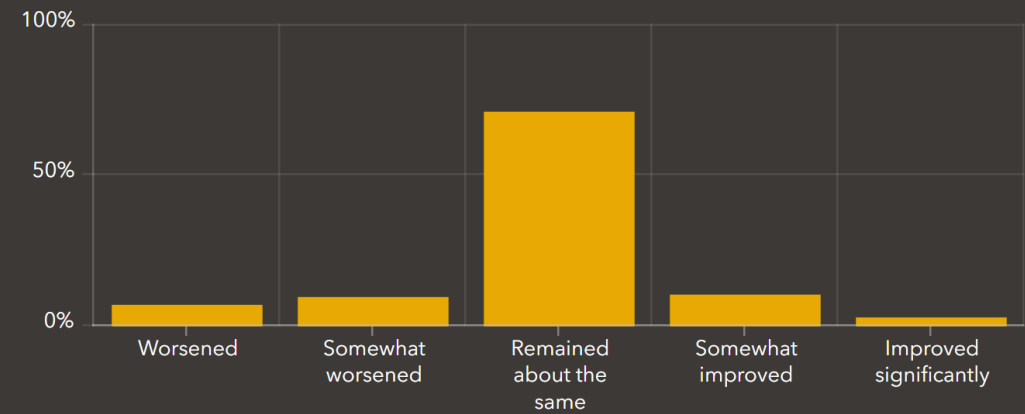
RANKED PRIORITIES

Respondents ranked the importance of the following service qualities



PERSONAL SAFETY

Considering your typical trip, how do you feel your personal safety has changed in the last three months?



Value 82%

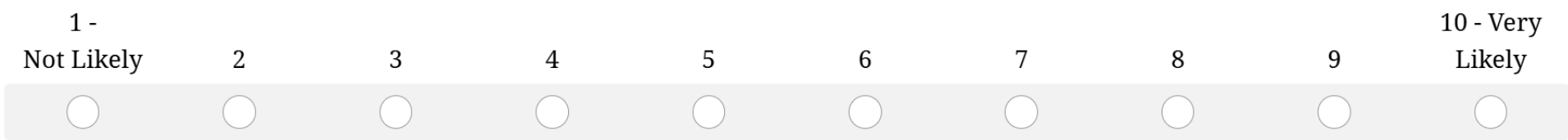
↑ 2%

Loyalty 81%

↑ 2%

Customer satisfaction

Respondents asked to rate their satisfaction on a ten-point scale



Satisfaction has improved and remains high

Scores of six or higher	Q3	Q2	Q1
How satisfied are you with the value of service considering the fare paid?	82.7%	82.3%	80.4%
How likely are you to recommend transit services of the Chicago region to others?	82.6%	80.6%	78.9%
Overall, how satisfied are you with Chicago-area public transit?	74.4%	74.1%	70.9%

Service quality

Consider all transit service in the Chicago region that you're familiar with. On a scale from 1-10, how satisfied are you with...

Scores of six or higher	Q3	Q2	Q1
Staff	77.2%	72.5%	70.9%
Service available when and where you need to go	75.7%	70.8%	75.7%
Getting to your destination on time	74.7%	72.6%	71.2%
Delay / Real-time information	63.7%	61.5%	59.3%
Cleanliness	62.5%	56.1%	53.5%
Personal security	60.1%	55.9%	57.9%

n varies

Public safety

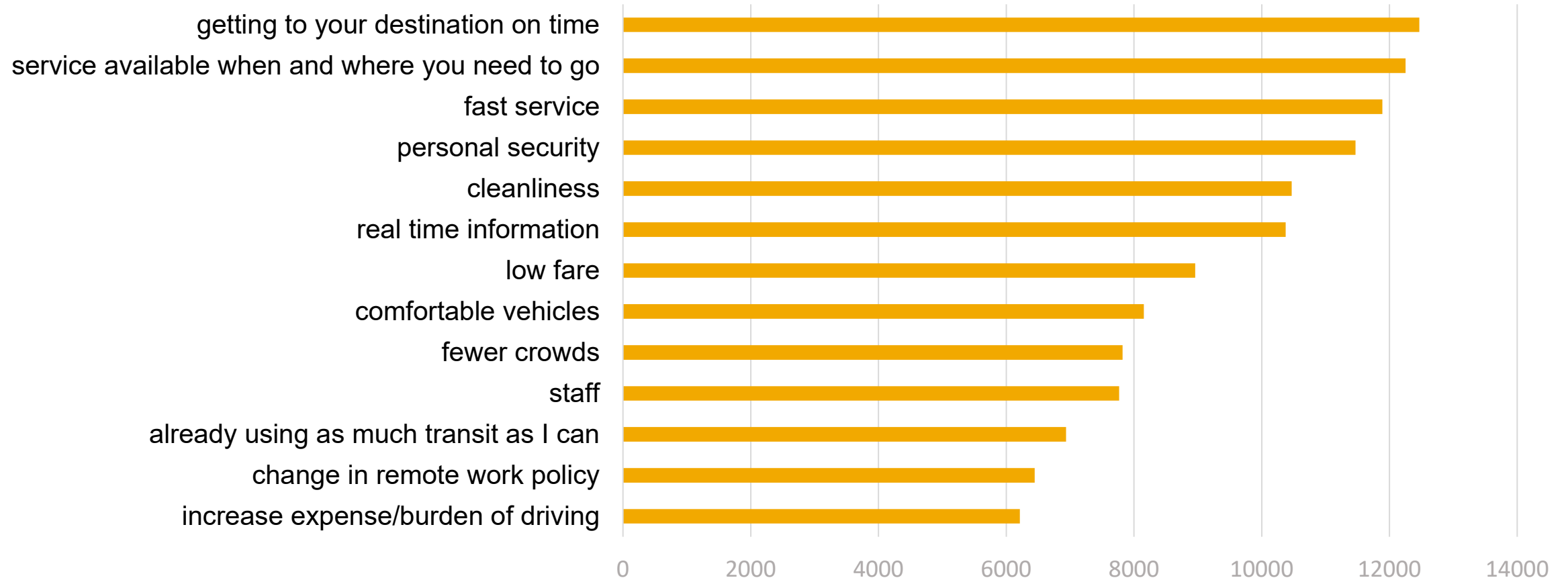
On a scale of 1-10, please indicate how strongly you would agree with the statements below using your primary mode of travel?

Sense of personal safety remains consistent

Scores of six or higher	Q3	Q2	Q1
I feel safe when traveling from home to my first station	70.3%	71.3%	70.9%
I feel safe when waiting at stations/stops	62.1%	63.9%	63.4%
I feel safe on the bus or train	61.5%	63.5%	60.5%
I feel safe when traveling to my final destination from where I get off my bus/train	70.3%	71.5%	71.4%

Using transit more

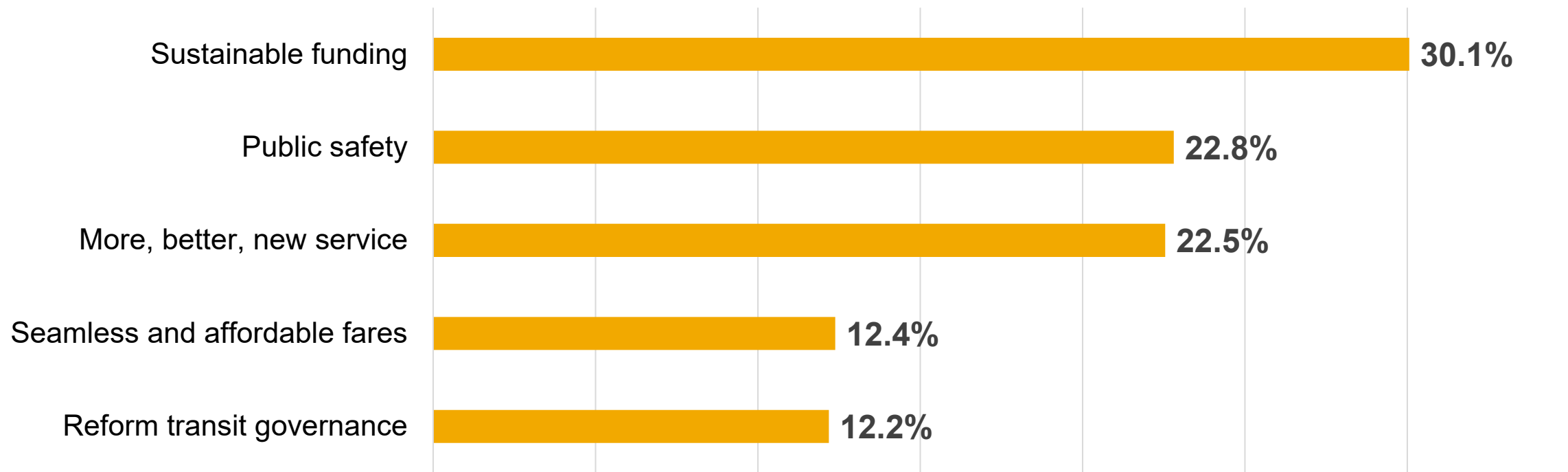
What would encourage you to use transit more often? From the following list, please RANK the following responses. The response that you think would be the MOST SIGNIFICANT should be ranked FIRST.



n = 1,332

Funding and reform: priorities

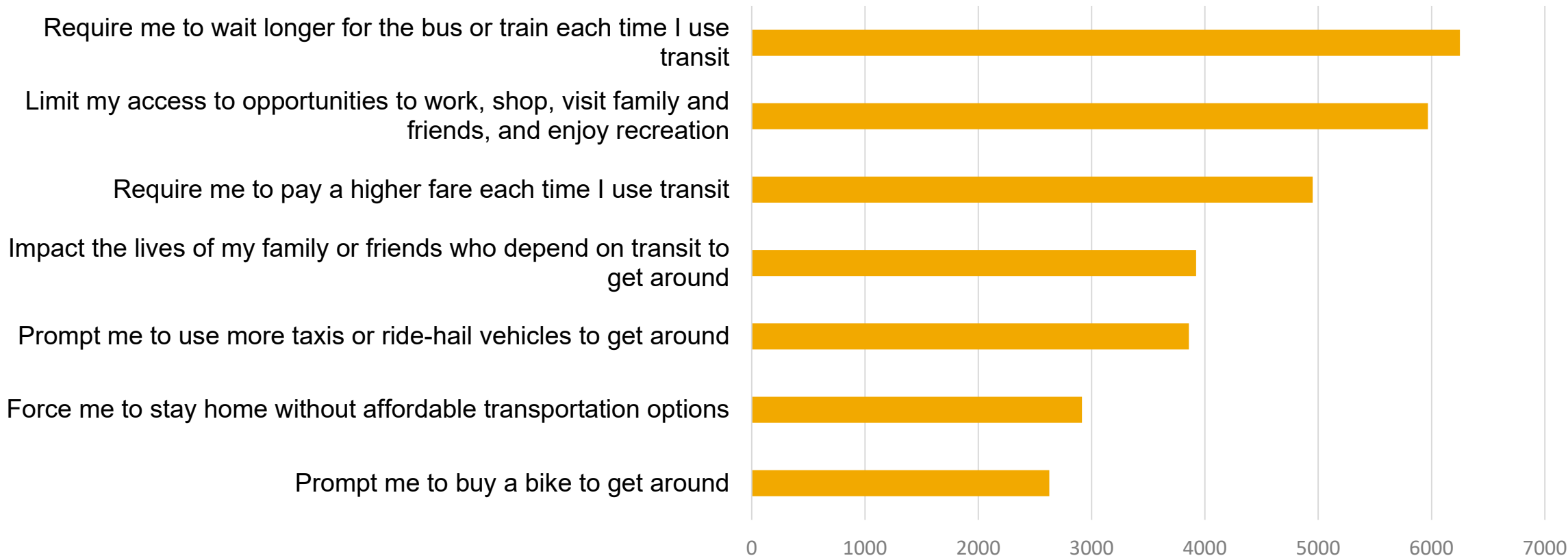
Our regional transit system is facing a fiscal cliff. Currently, our state leaders are debating how to fund and improve our transit network. If you had 100 points to divide between five objectives below representing how important each objective is to you, how many points would you assign each?



n = 1,089

Rider impacts from service cuts

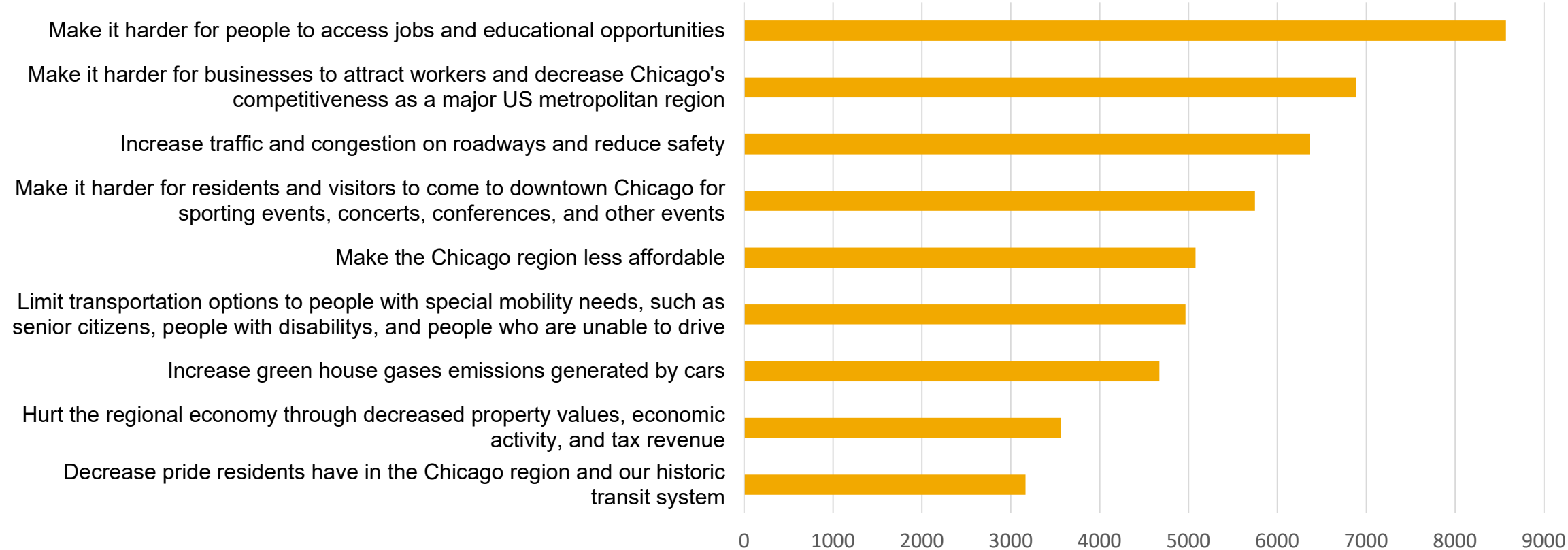
Absent new funding for transit from the state of Illinois, it will be necessary to make significant cuts to our regional system to balance the budget. Cuts to the regional system will have real impacts on riders. Please rank the following impacts in order of importance to you.



n = 1,089

Regional impacts from service cuts

Absent new funding for transit from the state of Illinois, it will be necessary to make significant cuts to our regional system to balance the budget. Cuts to the regional system will have real impacts on the Chicago region. Please rank the following impacts in order of importance to you.

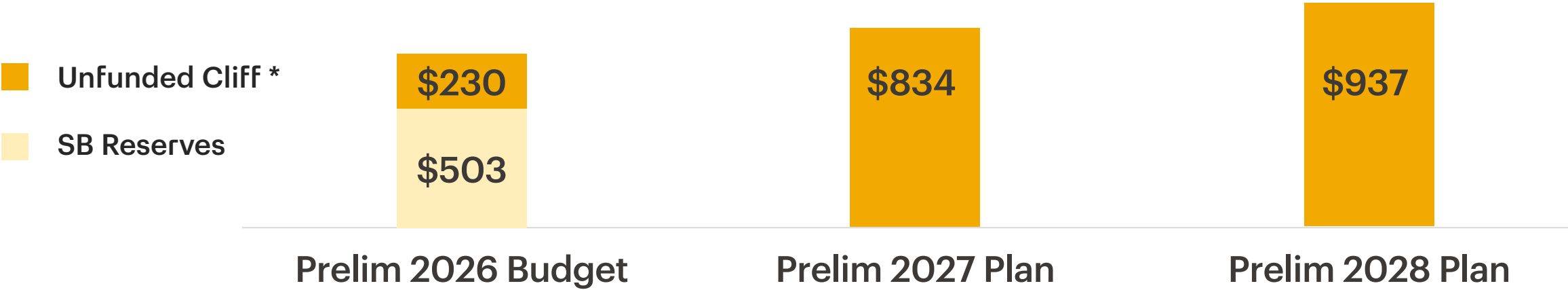


n = 1,089

5e. Service Board 2026 budget submission update



Preliminary estimates of fiscal cliffs 2026 – 2028 (in millions)

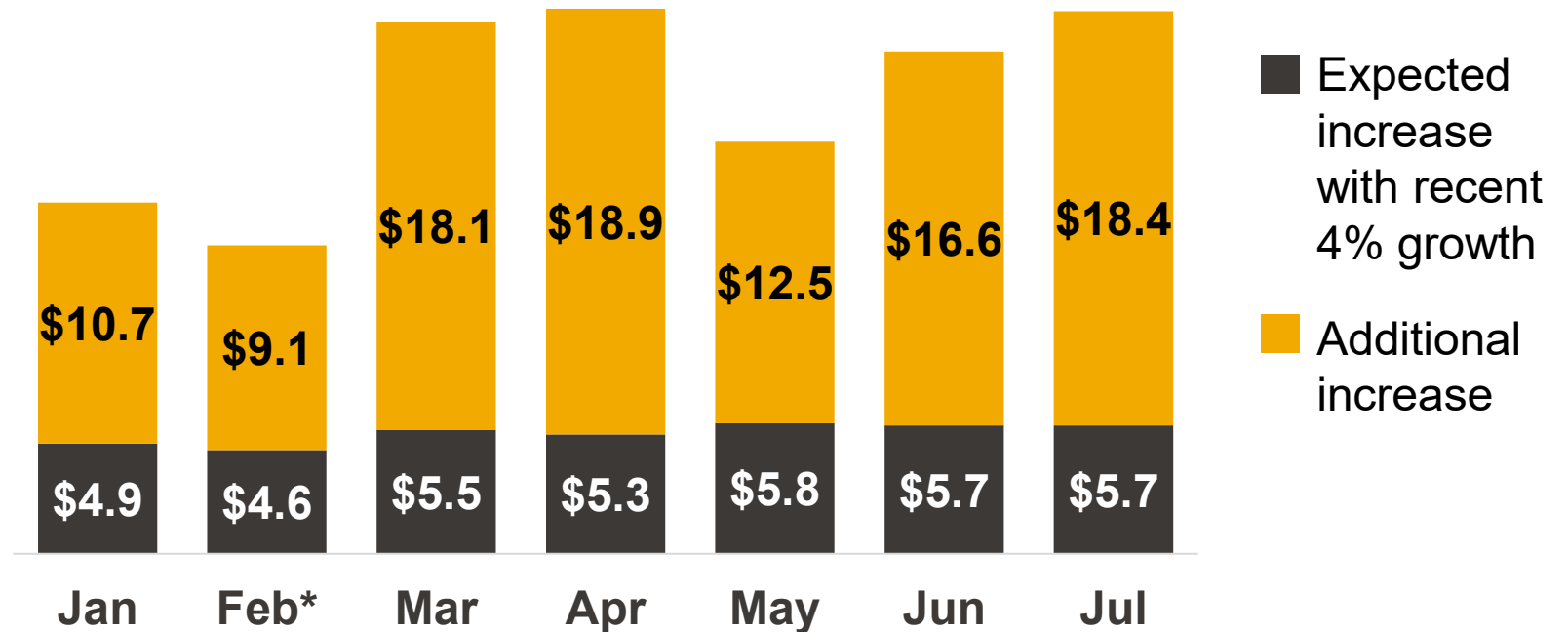


* Includes \$60M annual transfer to capital proposed by Metra

Sales Tax – Impact of P.A. 103-0983

- YTD results suggest an upward RTA sales tax shift between \$10M and \$18M per month in 2025
- These amounts will be added to the sales tax base, but growth will return to normal in January 2026

RTA Sales Tax Receipts – YOY Increase Jan-Jul 2025
(in millions)



* Adjusted for extra day in Feb 2024 (leap year)

What changed – 2026 cliff (updated 10/13/25)

- **Higher Revenue:** Higher Sales Tax from Online Transactions, Reserves, and System Generated Revenues from proposed fare increase
- **Lower Expenses:** Cost controls, lower spending, and efficiencies

	Previous 2026 Plan	Preliminary 2026 Budget	Change vs Previous Plan (in millions)
System-Generated Revenue	\$850	\$887	+\$37
+ Operating Funding	\$2,537	\$2,769	+\$232
+ Service Board Reserves	\$286	\$503	+\$217
= Total Revenue	\$3,673	\$4,159	+\$486
- Total Expense	\$4,367	\$4,329	(\$38)
- Transfers to Capital/ICE	\$77	\$60*	(\$17)
Total shortfall	(\$771)	(\$230)	+\$541

* Transfer to Capital Proposed by Metra

CTA

2026 Operating Budget

Total expense:	\$2.232B, 6.1% growth from 2025 est.
Fare increase:	10% (25 cents on base fares)
Efficiencies:	\$70M
Ridership vs 2019:	70%
Reserve exhaustion:	3Q 2026
Budget shortfall:	\$112M

2026-2030 Capital Program

Total program:	\$6.754B
Debt issuances:	\$1.542B in bonds (Red Line Extension); \$250M in 2026
Capital debt service:	\$978M



Metra

2026 Operating Budget

Total expense:	\$1.107B, 3.9% growth from 2025
Fare increase:	Average of 13%
Efficiencies:	\$25M
Ridership vs 2019:	65%
Reserve exhaustion:	4Q 2026
Budget shortfall:	\$68M

Compliance Issues:

- Transfer of \$60M per year of operating funds to capital

2026-2030 Capital Program

Total program:	\$2.286B
Debt issuances:	\$230M Federal RIFF loan (funds added to the capital program if awarded)



Pace Suburban Service

2026 Operating Budget

Total expense:	\$348M, 5.5% growth from 2025
Fare increase:	10% (25 cents on base fares)
Efficiencies:	\$14M
Ridership vs 2019:	65%
Reserve exhaustion:	2Q 2027
Budget shortfall:	\$0

2026-2030 Capital Program

Total program:	\$364M
Debt issuances:	None

Compliance issues:

- Proposed transfer of \$81.5M in reserves to capital in 2025



ADA Paratransit

2026 Operating Budget

Total expense:	\$355M, 7.4% growth from 2025
Fare increase:	25 cents on base fares
Ridership vs 2019:	160%
Reserve exhaustion:	not applicable
Budget shortfall:	\$49M

Other issues:

- Insufficient funding for provision of RAP and TAP services

Fiscal cliff – preliminary estimates by agency (updated 10/13/25)

Projected shortfalls (in millions)	Service Board Reserve Exhaustion	2026	2027	2028
CTA	Mid-2026	(\$112)	(\$482)	(\$528)
Metra*	Late-2026	(\$68)	(\$276)	(\$305)
Pace Suburban Service	2027	---	(\$22)	(\$47)
ADA Paratransit - Traditional	N / A	---	---	---
RAP/TAP	N / A	(\$49)	(\$53)	(\$58)
Estimated shortfall*		(\$230)	(\$834)	(\$937)

* Includes \$60M annual transfer to capital proposed by Metra



Summary

The Service Board submittals generally adhered to the direction of the RTA's 2026 budget call:

- Budget scenarios 1 (unfunded) and 2 (funded) provided
- Fare revenue \$64M higher than 2025
- Efficiencies/cost savings in excess of \$100M identified and incorporated
- Reasonable expense growth and ridership assumptions
- Recovery ratios met by applying revenue credits

However, there are some significant areas of non-compliance:

- Use of operating funding and reserves for capital
- Absence of RAP/TAP funding solution

6. Action items

6a. Approval of travel expense reimbursement(s)



7. Public Comment

8. New Business

9. Executive Session

IOMA Section 5 120/2(c)(11)

Adjournment

The next meeting of the RTA Board of Directors is scheduled for Thursday, November 20.

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