Meeting of the RTA Board of Directors

January 15, 2026

Welcome! Meeting Starts at 9:00 a.m.

Meeting Agenda: rtachicago.org

Regional Transportation Authority

1. Call to order

Pledge of allegiance

RTA Board of Directors meeting

- Roll call
- Approval of minutes

4. Public Comment

5. Executive Director’s report

Legislative update

Today’s agenda

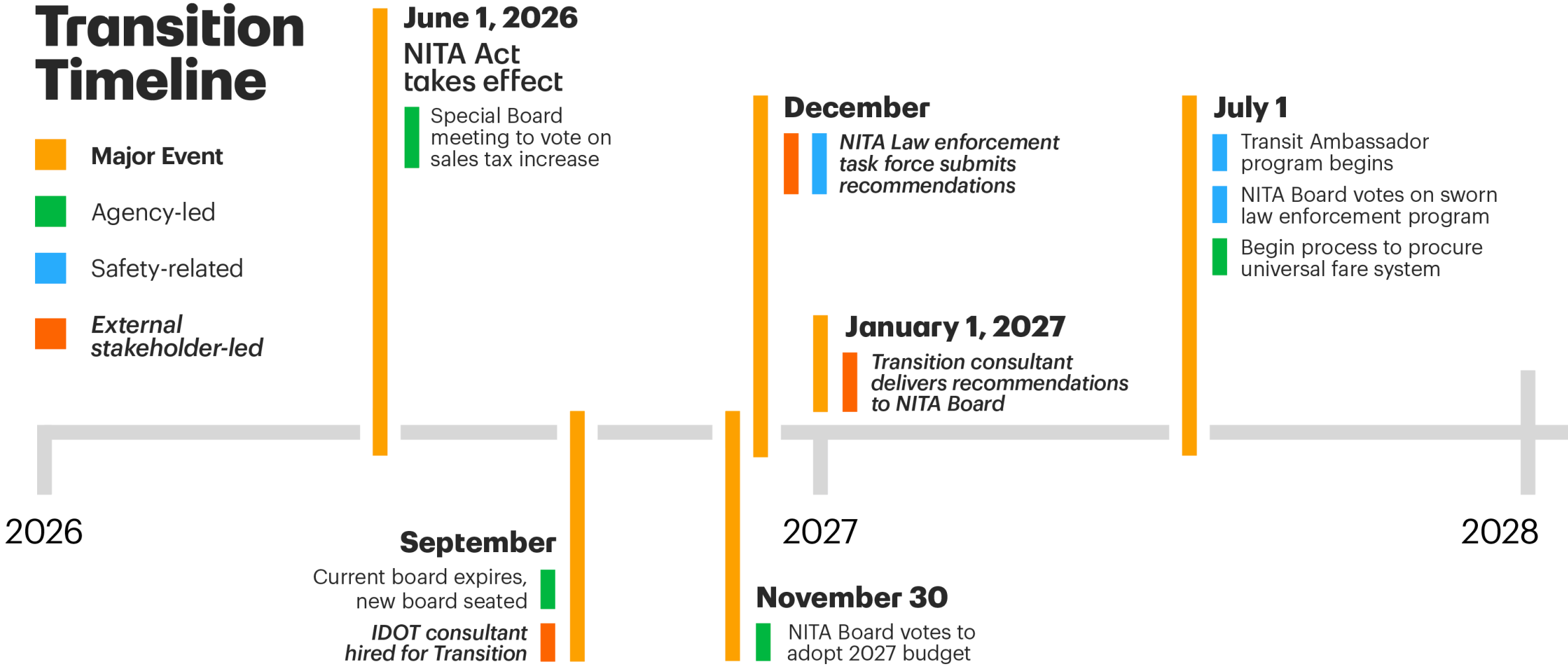
6. Information items

6a. NITA Implementation Timeline and Next Steps

Transition milestones ahead

- Agency responsibilities for transition
- IDOT/Consultant deadlines
- Safety deadlines
- New fare system and programs
- New service, stations, and studies
- Policy changes as of June 1

NITA Transition Timeline



Agency responsibilities for transition

NITA Act (PA104 – 457) goes into effect on June 1, 2026:

- By July 31: Board must act to raise the RTA Sales Tax .25% in Cook and the Collar Counties
- September 1: All current Board appointments expire
- September 29: All new board appointments (33 total) must be seated. All state appointees must be confirmed by the Illinois Senate. Chair will be selected at first meeting after September 1, must be confirmed by Senate.
    - NITA Board appoints Executive Director, who must be confirmed by Senate
    - NITA Chair and ED involved in hiring process for any new Service Board EDs
- October 1: NITA appoints members of Transition Working Group

Agency responsibilities for transition (cont.)

- October 1: Implementation of efficiencies and cost-savings
- November 30: 2027 Regional Transit Budget Adoption Deadline
- December 2026: Board appoints Chief Internal Auditor
- January 1, 2027: Transition consultant recommendations delivered to NITA Board
- January 1, 2027: New process for 5-year Capital Program

IDOT/Consultant

- September 1: IDOT contracts with a third-party consultant to assist with the transition
- January 2027: Transition consultant recommendations delivered to NITA Board. Components:
  - New process and coordination for 5-year Capital Program
  - Process for a universal fare and necessary coordination by July 1, 2027
  - Possible transition from NITA Law Enforcement Task Force to sworn law enforcement program
  - Evaluation of procurement for potential consolidation
  - Evaluation of paratransit programs and recommendations for improved coordination
  - NITA implements transition plan and final report due to ILGA by July 1, 2027

Public Safety

- Cook County Sheriff's Office establishes NITA Law Enforcement Task Force
- NITA establishes Office of Transit Safety and Experience and NITA Executive Director designates full-time Chief Transit Safety Officer
  - Responsibilities include developing and implementing a regional safety strategy and coordinating across law enforcement agencies
  - Assemble and manage Coordinated Safety Response Council, which includes representatives from NITA, Service Boards, Cook County State's Attorney's Office, law enforcement agencies, social services organizations, and more
- December 2026: NITA Law Enforcement Task Force submits report of recommendations to the Coordinated Safety Response Council

Public Safety

- January 1, 2027: CTA employees to become Transit Ambassadors undergo training. Customer-facing Metra employees undergo the same training.
- March 2027: Coordinated Safety Response Council issues a report on using sworn law enforcement officers to respond to crime on public transit
- July 1, 2027: Transit Ambassador Program and training program implemented
- July 1, 2027: NITA board vote to implement a sworn law enforcement crime prevention program on public transit

New fare system and programs

- July 1, 2027: Process for procuring a universal fare instrument established; procurement begins January 2028
- June 1, 2028: New fare programs implemented
  - Fare capping
  - Free and reduced fare program for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault
  - Income based reduced fare programs for returning residents, veterans, and individuals experiencing homelessness

New service, stations, and studies

- December 2027: New service planning process begins with NITA requesting proposed service plans from Service Boards
- January 1, 2027: Metra implements a regional rail scheduling pilot program on the Rock Island
- January 1, 2029: Two new CTA stations open, one on the Blue Line (Austin) and one on the Green Line (Englewood)
- Metra completes study on expanding Metra Electric from University Park to Kankakee
- IDOT conducts study on improvements needed at Joliet train station for potential extensions to Peoria and other locations outside the region

Policy changes

- The following policy changes go into effect on June 1:
  - NITA is responsible for all fare-setting policy, no fare increases for 2026
  - Recovery ratio reduced to 25%, waiver for 2026
  - Zero-emission bus mandate in effect, with exceptions based on availability of funding, vehicles, and equipment
  - Agency budget limit lifted, new departments within the agency:
    - ADA
    - Safety

2026 Key Priorities

Key Early Priorities

Budget:

- Board can allocate remaining 2026 revenues at any time. Staff is working to pull together a proposal in Q1 2026 to allocate operating and capital revenues
- Reporting and implementation of 2026 efficiencies is required by October 1, 2026
- 2027 Budget kick off, public funding allocation to occur by September. This will include the new operating formula allocation starting 2027

Capital Planning and Prioritization:

- Discussion of process updates to the development of the 5-year capital program
- RTA to work on proposals for new and updated project evaluation metrics to meet updated criteria
- Implement a process for any waivers for zero-emissions mandate
- Allocate the new $180M of annual state capital funding

Key Early Priorities

Public Safety:

- An app to report incidents must be operational by end of November 2026
- NITA coordinate with CTA, Pace, and labor to install bus shields in 2027
- Transit ambassadors training be available at Service Boards by end of 2026

Fare Policy and Programs:

- Starting June 1, 2026, fare policy and programs can begin to be consolidated at the regional level
  - Board can consider allocating 2026 funds to expand the Access program to CTA and Pace
- Development and analysis of a regional fare structure will require significant time before policies can be brought to the NITA Board in 2027

Key Early Priorities

Transit Supportive Development and Land-use:

- Parking mandate changes are effective June 1, 2026. Staff and consultant assistance will be needed to work with communities collaboratively on implementation
- Joint Development authority is granted in the bill. Staff is modifying our existing study to align more closely with the legislation

Service Planning:

- Ensure regional coordination in future service planning processes
- Service enhancements could be added starting mid-to-late 2026 with new revenues before the NITA Service Planning process begins in 2027

Customer Information:

- Requires that NITA and Service Boards develop a language access plan by Jan 1, 2027
- Implement the RTA Customer Information Action Plan priorities that align closely with NITA with the goal for eventual centralization of customer information at NITA

Pathways to achieving these priorities during transition

Working Groups

- Staff will meet with Service Board in 6 working groups in Q1 to put together timelines, processes, and cost estimates

Budget Amendment

- Board can allocate funding through a budget amendment to these priorities at the regional level and to the Service Boards

Work Plans and Procurements

- Staff work plans for the year reflect these priorities. We are preparing future procurements and possible scope changes to existing contracts for alignment.

Support Appointing Authorities and IDOT

- As transition officially kicks off, Staff will ensure that our current work aligns closely with the transition activities

Transparency and accountability

- NITA bill analysis memo released today
- Blog series over the next few months to dive deeper into timelines and key topics of the bill
- NITA Transition Hub website to launch in Spring and be updated frequently
- Will continue to engage Transit is the Answer coalition through meetings, webinars, or informational sessions

6b. Joint Development Study Update

eTOD in Chicago Region

- Community Planning program
- Access to Transit program
- Transit-Friendly Communities Guide
- Joint Development Study underway

Defining Joint Development

- Real estate development that occurs on transit agency-owned property.
- Transit agencies actively participate in joint development projects.
- Partner with private entities through property sales, ground leases, air rights, rent concessions, etc.
- Physically or functionally related to a transit facility and often involves the coordinated improvement of the transit facility and the affected real property.

Common Joint Development Priorities

Generate revenue to support transit operations

Increase access to affordable housing

Encourage ridership

Joint Development Study Objectives

WHAT

An effort to assess the opportunity for joint development across the system and establish the program framework.

WHY

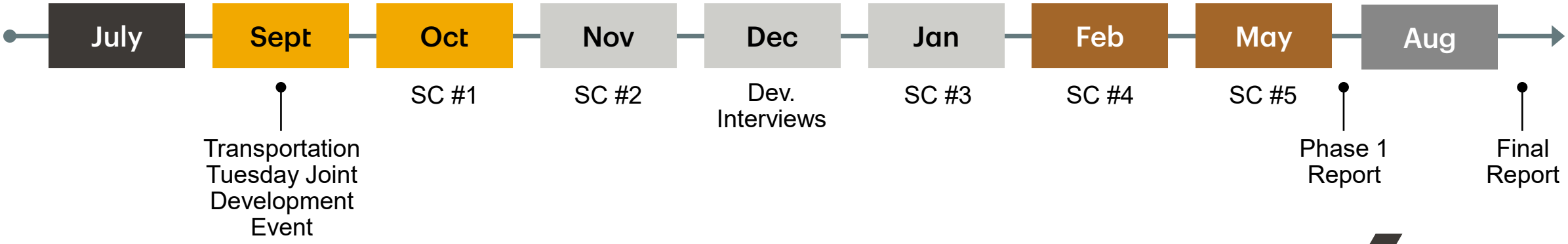
To actively advance goals related to equitable transit-oriented development

HOW

Inventory existing land owned by the Service Boards, explore market readiness, and test the financial feasibility of new development on key sites

Project Approach

Define joint development; research national best practices and local opportunities and challenges	Establish criteria to evaluate development potential; inventory service board properties	Assess TOD readiness of individual sites; identify goals and objectives of JD program	Test site capacity for priority sites; conduct pro forma analysis; extrapolate findings to system-wide portfolio	Establish implementation pathway; outline process for site disposition; evaluate TOD feasibility for additional sites
JD Challenges & Opportunities, Case Studies	**Document Service Board Real Estate Land Holdings**	**Explore and Evaluate JD in the RTA Region**	**Analyze Financial Cost Benefit of JD**	**Establish RTA JD Approach**



SC = Steering Committee

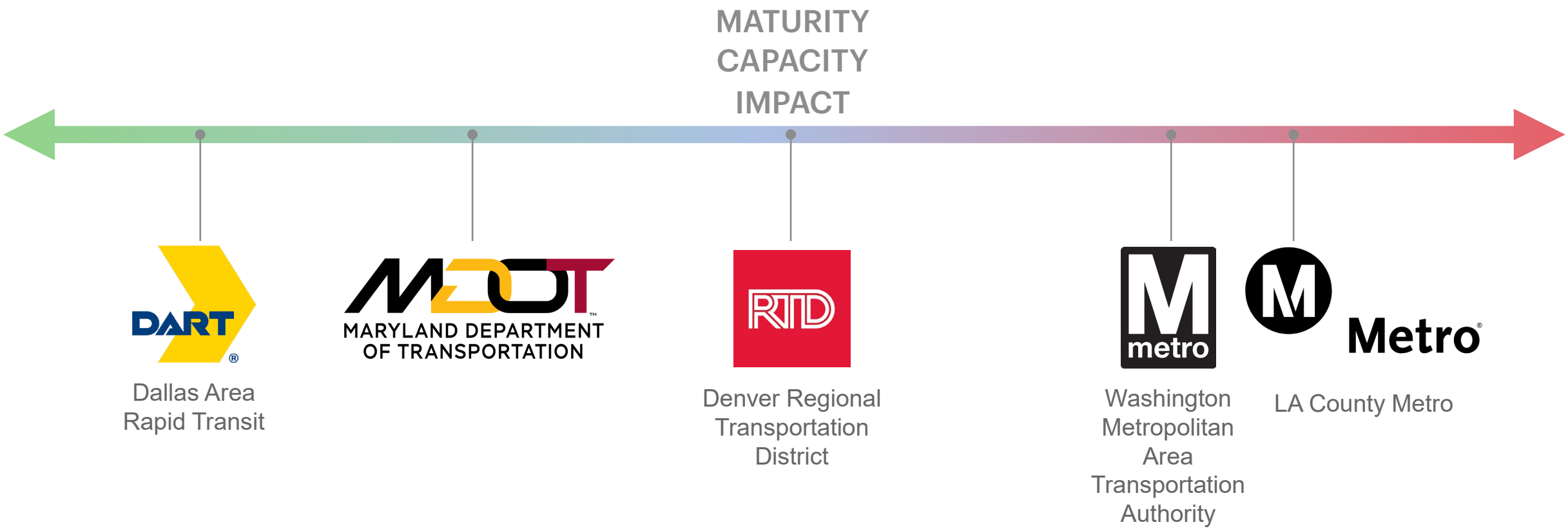
NITA Act and Transit-Supportive Development

- Half mile of public transportation station or 1/8 mile of bus stop along public transportation route
- NITA is given authority to:
  - Pursue joint development
  - Acquire, sell or transfer property or rights for transit-supportive development
  - Enter into contracts to pursue transit-supportive development
  - Borrow money for the purposes of transit-supportive development projects (JD)
  - Use condemnation, but only by local resolution

NITA Joint Development Responsibilities

- NITA must develop inventory of all real property owned by the Authority or the Service Boards
- NITA may establish a transit-supportive development incentive program for operating or capital grants or loans
- NITA must follow all applicable land use laws
- Our study is one of the components that will allow NITA to meet some of these obligations in a timely manner

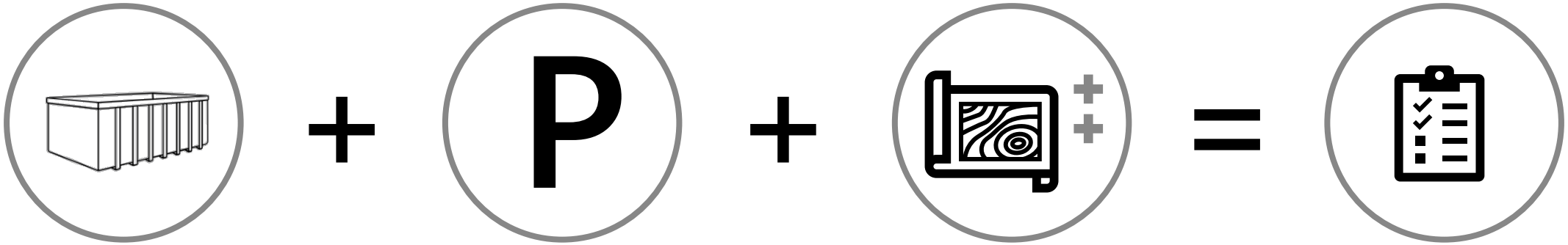
Joint Development Programs Case Studies



Case Study Takeaways

1. Land Ownership Drives Scale of Program
2. Opportunity for New Revenue is Limited
3. Dedicated Staff is Critical to Program Success
4. Partnerships are Crucial

Developable Site Inventory



Storage Yards

Limited, mobile storage-related use

Park n' Rides

Parking lots serving transit-service locations

Surplus and/or Vacant Land

Vacant land owned by Service Boards

Developable Site Inventory

Properties that can be leveraged for joint development

Service Board Land Inventory

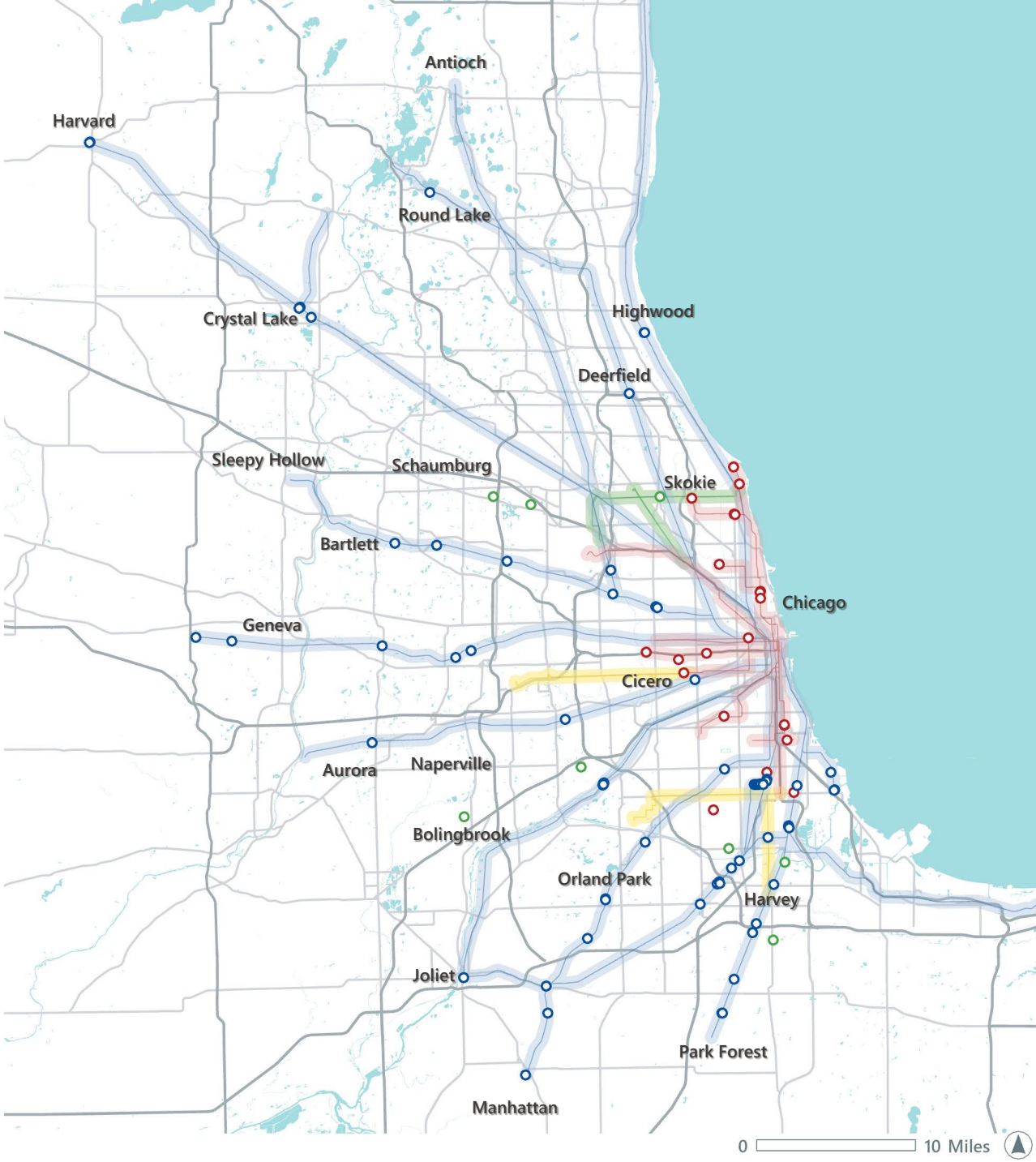
92

DEVELOPABLE SITES [1]

- **19** CTA
- **65** Metra
- **8** Pace

[1] In some cases, developable sites may include multiple parcels directly adjacent to each other.

Source: CTA, Metra, Pace



Scope and Budget Adjustments

- The remainder of the study will align with the NITA Act
- Pivot the scope to focus on how we should pursue a Joint Development program
- Model financial approach for affordable housing
- More parcels than anticipated
- Transit-supportive incentive fund

Questions

6c. ADA Action Plan Implementation Update

ADA Action Plan

Implemented on October 1, 2025

- TAP/RAP 30 rides per month cap
- TAP/RAP $3.25 fare restoration
- FREE fixed route rides across the system for ADA certified riders
- RTA Paratransit Certification Review

Future Changes

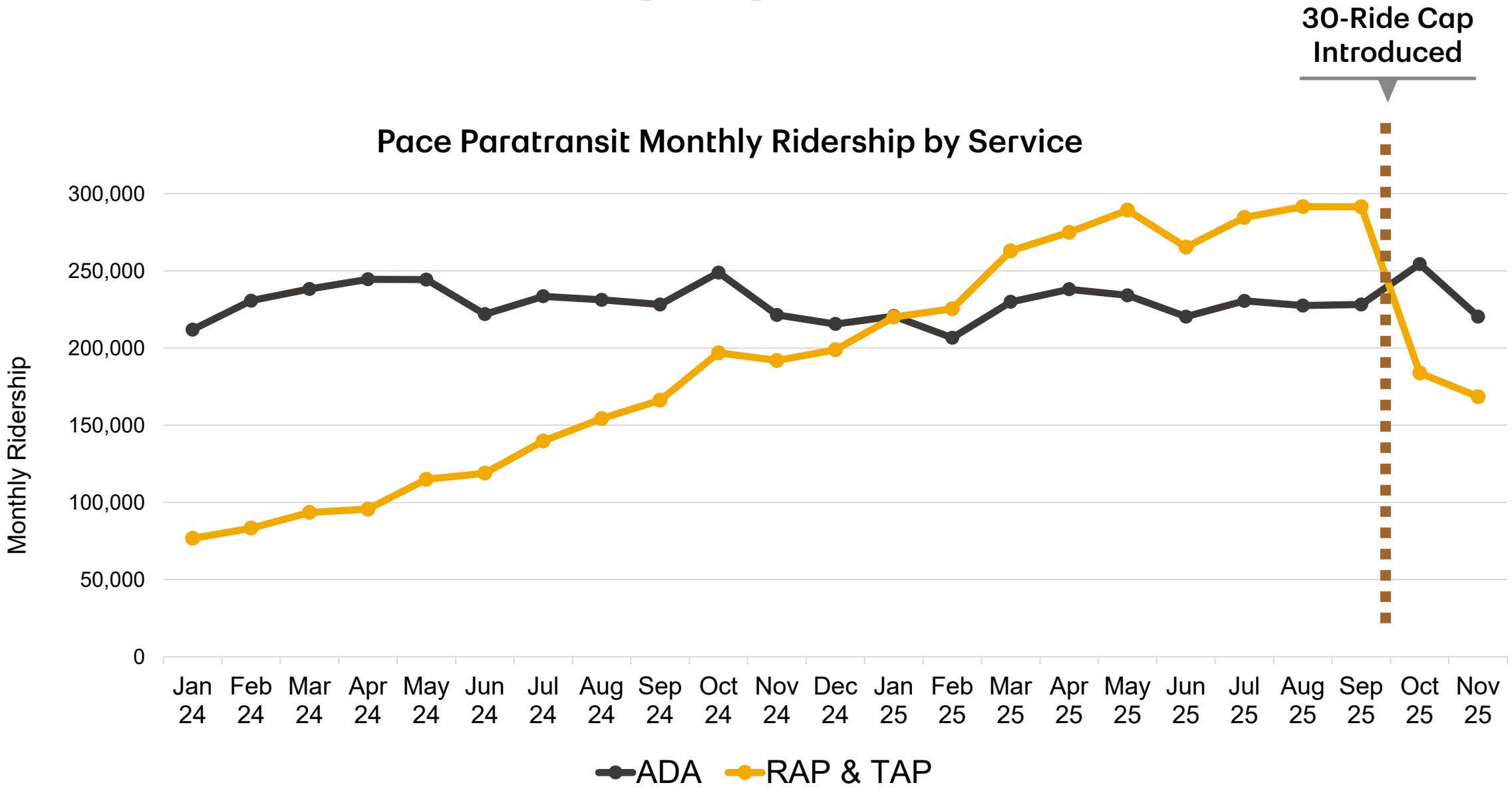
- Assess further program changes to TAP/RAP based on additional analysis
- Align county RAP programs via Human Service Transportation Plan (HSTP) process and part of larger effort to consolidate

Fixed route ridership impact

Ride Free on fixed routes for all ADA eligible riders has grown ridership

- Fixed routes carries the most ADA eligible riders of any mode of transit
- 40% increase in weekly ADA eligible taps on CTA bus and rail
- Metra monthly ridership for ADA eligible doubled between Oct – Dec 2025
- More accessible trips on fixed routes is the most cost-effective way

ADA Paratransit ridership impact



ADA Paratransit ridership impact

October 2025 RAP/TAP ridership:

- 183,908 trips
- 37% lower than September 2025
- 7% lower than October 2024

October 2025 Traditional ADA ridership:

- 254,437 trips
- 11% higher than September 2025
- 2% higher than October 2024

November 2025 RAP/TAP ridership:

- 168,478 trips
- 42% lower than September 2025
- 12% lower than November 2024

November 2025 Traditional ADA ridership:

- 220,336 trips
- 3% lower than September 2025
- 1% lower than November 2024

RAP/TAP rider impacts

- Over 60,000 ADA eligible riders across the region
- 2nd largest Paratransit operation in the US
- 12,000 active monthly RAP/TAP users
- Fixed route carries the largest number of ADA eligible trips

September 2025, before the 30-ride cap:

- 9,176 users took 30 or fewer RAP & TAP trips (91,021 trips total)
- 3,172 users took more than 30 RAP & TAP trips (200,512 trips total)

October 2025, after the 30-ride cap:

- 10,246 users did not hit the cap of 30 RAP & TAP rides, (111,080 trips total)
- 2,419 users took all 30 RAP & TAP trips in October (72,828 trips total)

Summary

- More than 100,000 decrease in TAP/RAP ridership
- Majority of TAP/RAP users were not impacted by the monthly cap
- Net program cost is down as RTA projected
- TAP/RAP ride cap has induced demand for Traditional ADA and fixed route transit
- Rider sentiment in public comment says TAP/RAP ride cap is a barrier for riders that travel frequently

Recommended next steps

ADA Paratransit Audit

- Covering the period 1/1/2024 – 11/30/2025, beginning January 2026.

Action Plan 2

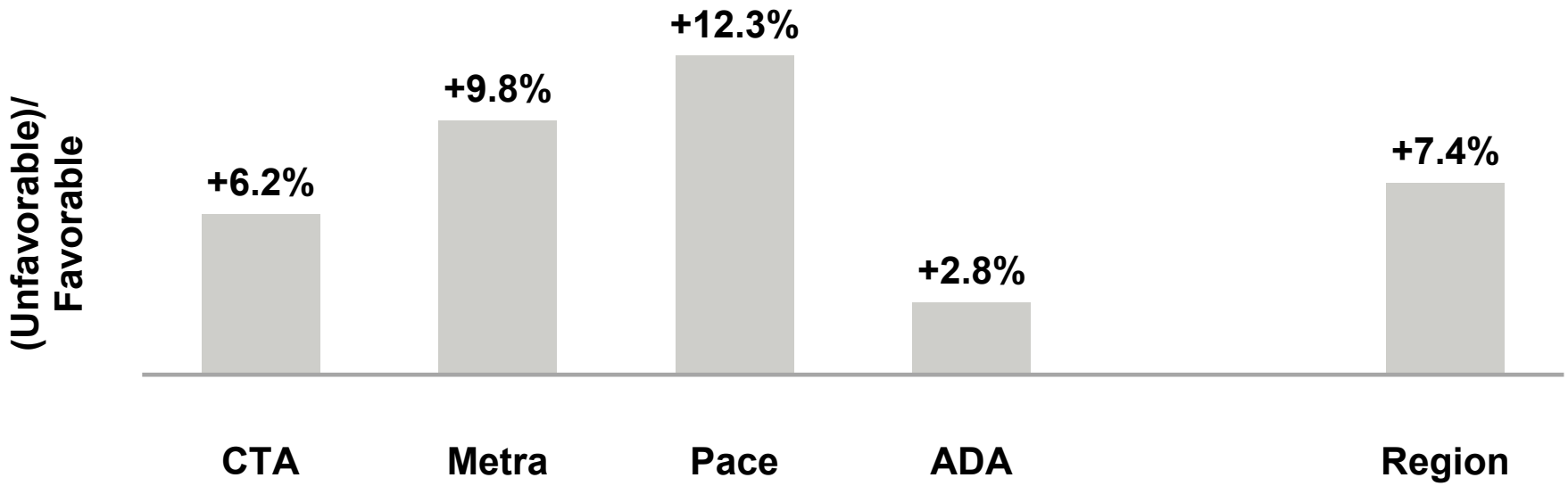
- Keep the 30-ride cap in place
- Create a process by which riders can request a 40-ride cap to meet specific needs
- Explore changes to vendor contracts

Transition to NITA

- Implement Regional Dial-a-Ride study
- Consolidate and coordinate local programs at county level
- Creation of a new NITA Department for Accessibility and Paratransit Planning

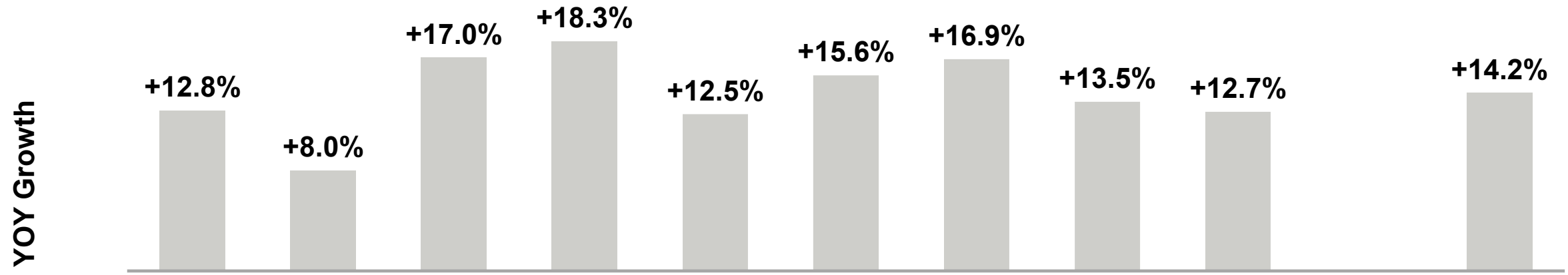
6d. Monthly Financials

Operating deficit variances from budget YTD through November 2025



(in millions)	CTA	Metra	Pace	ADA	Region
Budget OD	($1,549.9)	($756.4)	($261.9)	($284.3)	($2,852.4)
Actual OD	($1,454.3)	($682.4)	($229.7)	($276.4)	($2,642.7)
Variance	$95.5	$74.0	$32.2	$7.9	$209.7

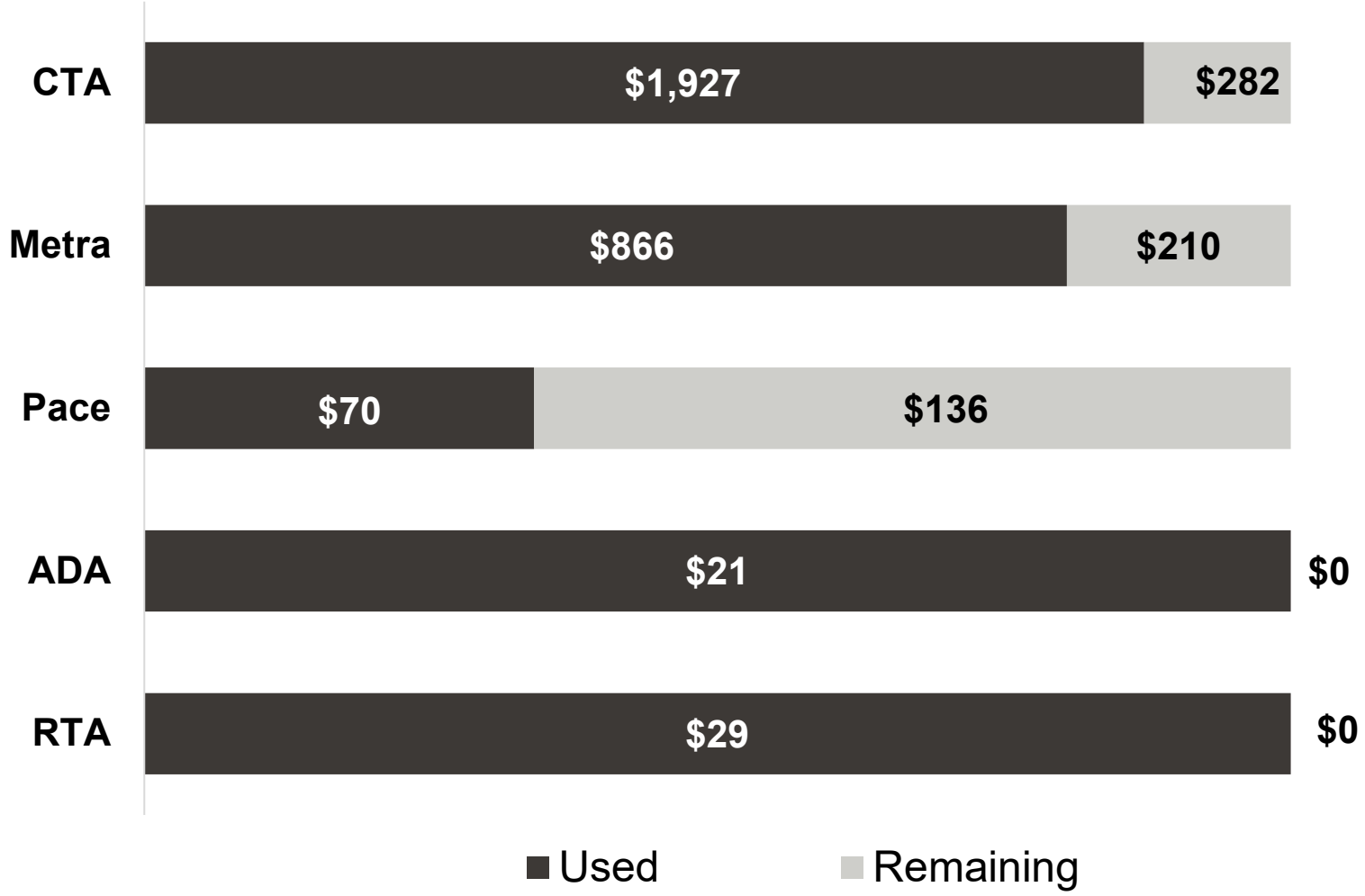
Monthly sales tax growth through September 2025

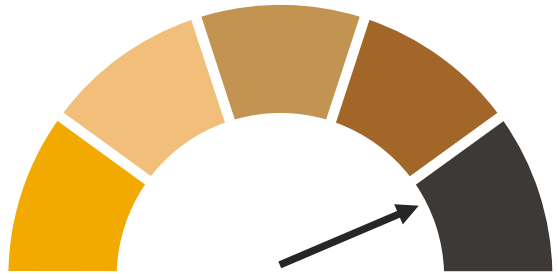


(in millions)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	2025 YTD
2024 receipts	$121.9	$119.7	$138.5	$132.3	$146.1	$142.6	$143.7	$145.7	$145.9	$1,236.4
2025 receipts	$137.4	$129.2	$162.2	$156.5	$164.3	$164.9	$168.1	$165.4	$164.4	$1,412.4
Growth	$15.6	$9.6*	$23.6	$24.2	$8.2	$22.3	$24.3	$19.7	$18.5	$176.0

*YOY growth was reduced by the leap year of 2024

Relief funding used (in millions)





Region Total Used = 82.3%

$2.912B of $3.540B

7. Action items

7a. Resolution honoring Director John Yonan

7b. Approval of travel expense reimbursement(s)

8. New Business

9. Executive Session

IOMA Sections 2(c)(8), 2(c)(11), and 2(c)(21)

Adjournment

The next meeting of the RTA Board of Directors is scheduled for Thursday, February 19.

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