

NITA

NORTHERN ILLINOIS TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Meeting of the NITA Board of Directors

September 10, 2026

Welcome! Meeting Starts at 9am

Meeting Agenda

nita.illinois.gov/about-us/board-meetings



1. Call to Order

Pledge of allegiance



NITA Board of Directors Meeting

- Welcome
- Roll call

NITA

NORTHERN ILLINOIS TRANSIT AUTHORITY

3. Appointment of Chair of the NITA Board of Directors

4. Executive Session



5. Vote on the Appointment of an Interim Executive Director of NITA

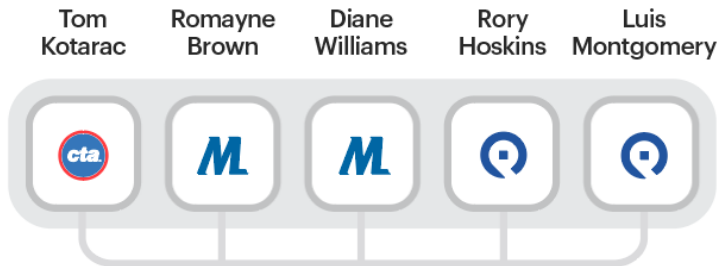
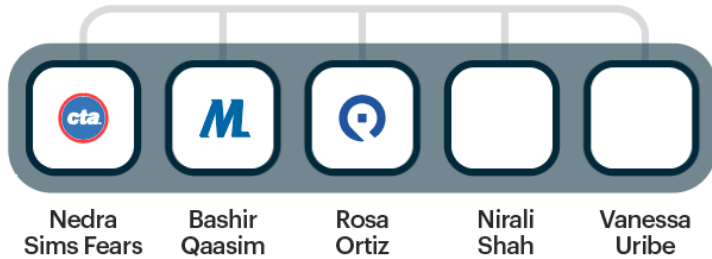
6. Public Comment

7. Chief Transition Officer Report: Introduction to NITA



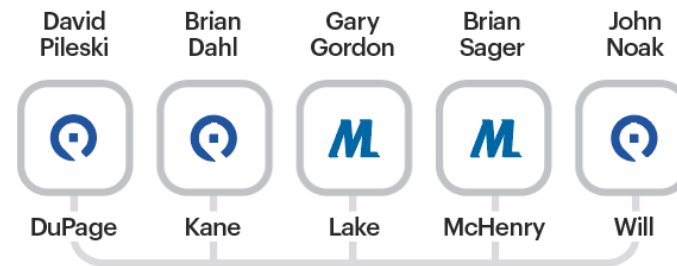
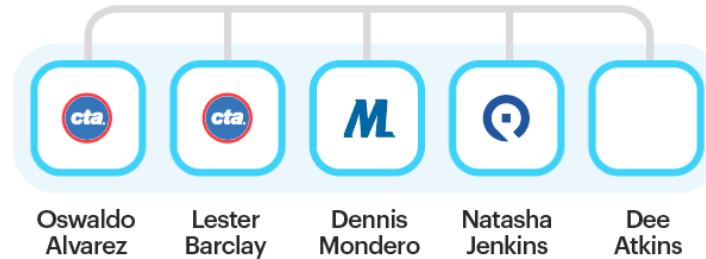
NITA's 20 Board Members

Appointed by Governor



Appointed by Cook County Board President

Appointed by Mayor of Chicago



Appointed by Collar County Chairs

Seventeen of the NITA Board members will hold dual roles concurrently serving on the boards of CTA, Metra, or Pace.



Also serves on Chicago Transit Authority board



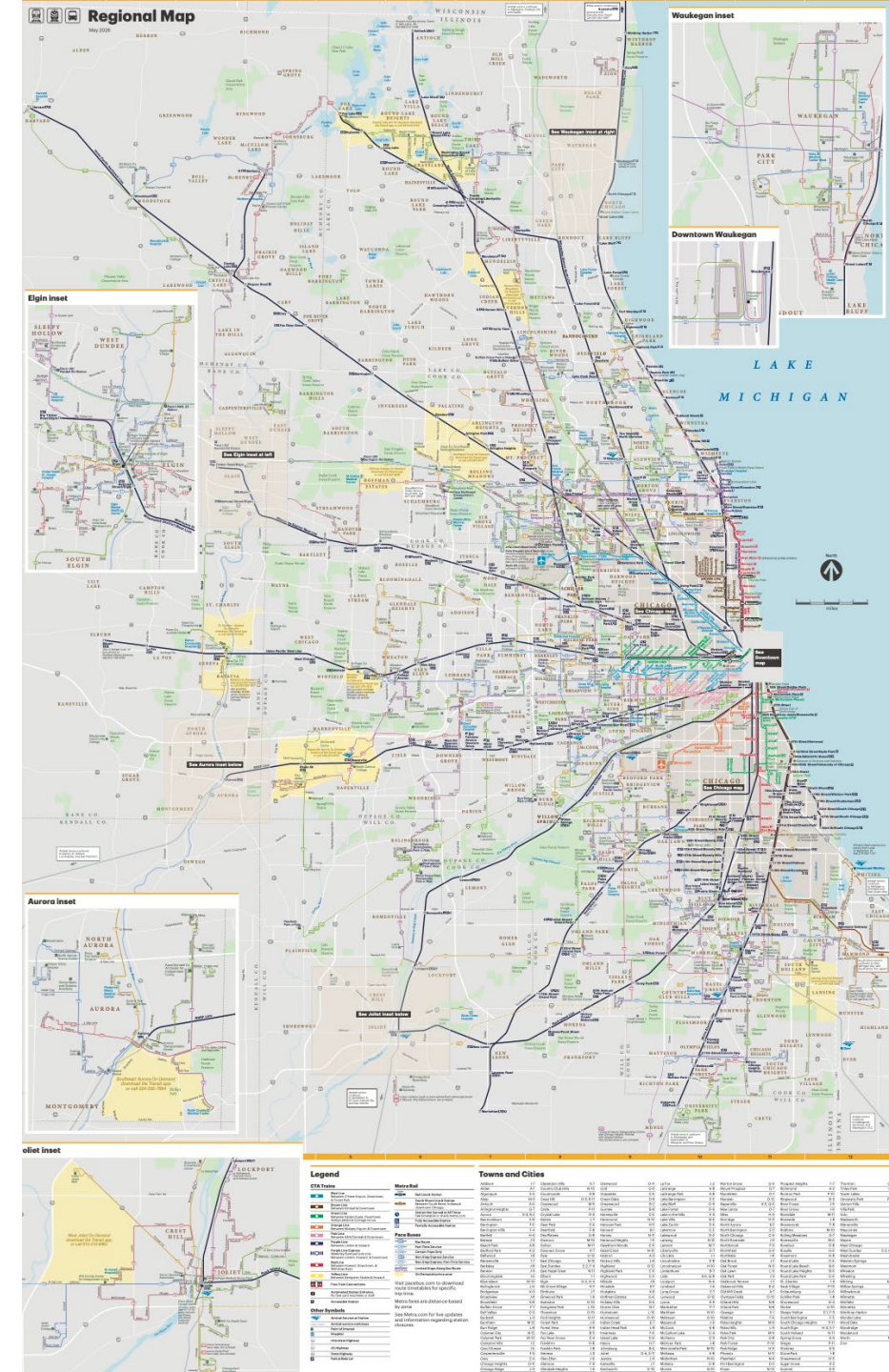
Also serves on Metra Commuter Rail board



Also serves on Pace Suburban Bus board

NITA System at a Glance

- The second largest transit system in the nation providing transit service across the northeastern Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will
- 1.3 million trips per weekday across **CTA, Metra, and Pace**
 - **CTA** operates 8 heavy rail lines and 140 bus routes
 - **Metra** operates Metra operates 11 commuter rail lines on over 450 miles of track
 - **Pace** operates 140 fixed bus routes, primarily serving the suburban areas, and ADA Paratransit service



NITA Capital Assets

- Vast network of capital assets across the 6-county region with a **\$9 billion** 5-year capital program, annual capital investment of over \$2 billion
- Rolling stock consists of **2,517** rail cars and 186 locomotives across CTA and Metra, and **2,604** buses between CTA and Pace.
- **389** rail stations across the region, including 295 fully accessible stations, and 24 bus passenger facilities
- Continued capital investment is critical to maintain system safety and enhance operations, currently **\$30 billion** repair backlog



Operating Agencies at a Glance

CTA

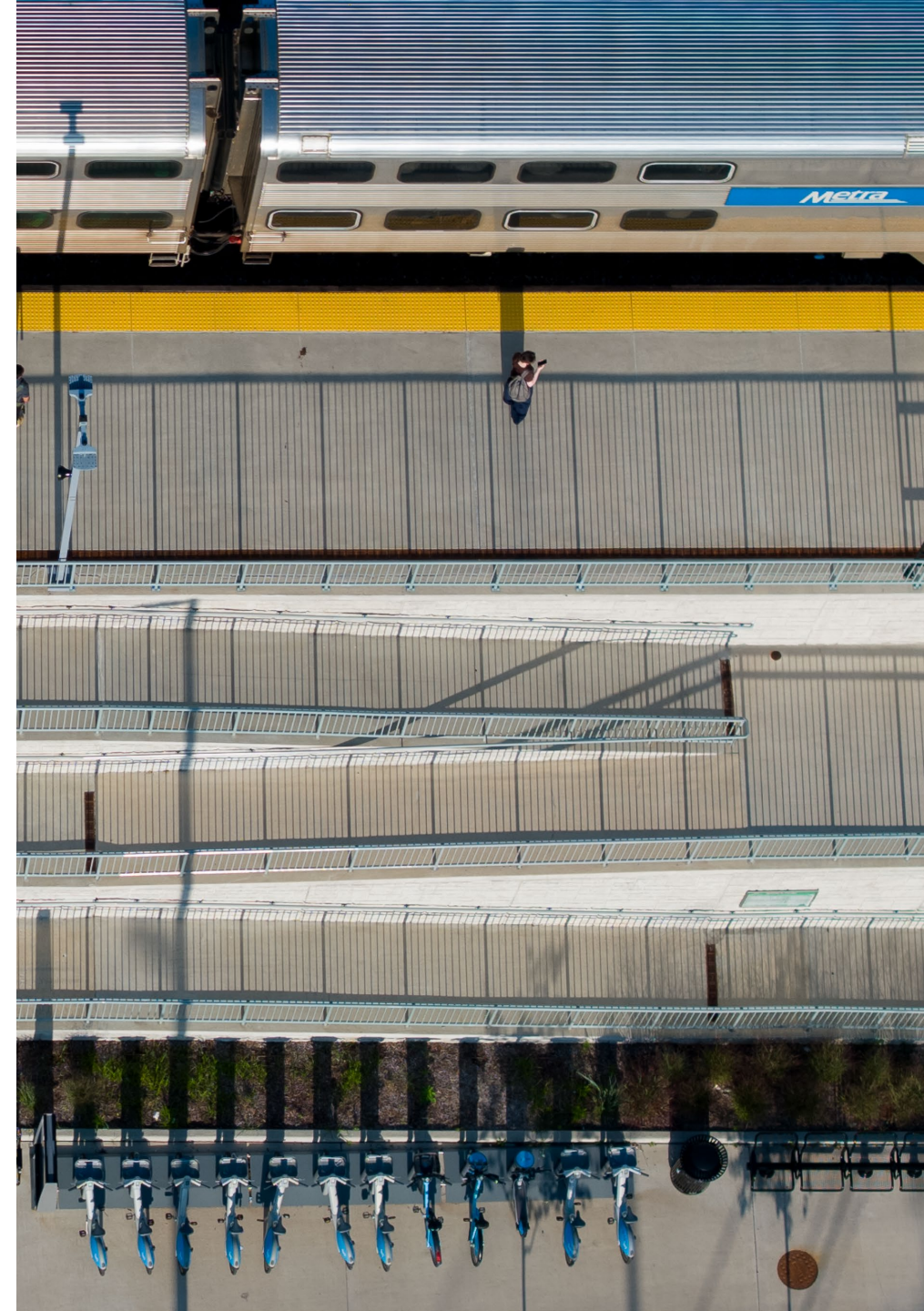
- \$2.3 billion operating budget
- \$6.91 billion 5-year capital budget
- 11,500 employees, 90% unionized workforce in operations and maintenance
- Provides service to the City of Chicago and 35 nearby municipalities



Operating Agencies at a Glance

Metra

- \$1.2 billion operating budget
- \$2.1 billion 5-year capital program
- 4,600 employees, 76% unionized workforce in operations and maintenance
- Provides commuter rail service in all 6 counties in the NITA region



Operating Agencies at a Glance

Pace

- \$372.4 million operating budget
- \$367 million 5-year capital program
- 1,889 employees, with more than 71% unionized employees in operations and maintenance
- Provides fixed-route and on-demand services as well as ADA Paratransit in all 6 counties in the NITA region



Transit enhances the region's economy and communities

Every \$1M invested in transit:

- Supports 35 jobs
- \$1.27M in wages paid
- \$455k in tax revenue

Transit funding contributes to our regional economy

- Annually increases GDP by \$2.7B
- Strengthens the region's position as America's 3rd largest economy



NITA Act Requirements, Deadlines & Expanded Authorities

- NITA Agency Requirements and Additional Staffing Needs
- Operating & Capital Budget
- Transit Supportive Land Use
- Safety & Security
- Fare Programs
- Rider Communications
- Service Planning

NITA Agency Requirements and Staffing Needs

New NITA responsibilities:

- Office of Transit Safety and Experience
- Coordinated Safety Response Council
- NITA Board Safety Subcommittee
- Office of Auditor
- Office of Disability Policy and Planning
- Office of Transit Supportive Development
- Transition Working Group

New annual requirements:

- Rider survey on safety and security
- Regional Service Planning (2027)
- Audit report
- Board reviews of NITA and Service Board executives
- NITA Board trainings

Operating and Capital Budget

2027 Regional Operating Budget

- One regional NITA Budget
- Adoption of funding amounts and recovery ratio (September 15, sunseting)
- Service Boards Proposals due to NITA (November 15, sunseting)
- Additional NITA resources to meet NITA Act requirements, budget growth limit begins in 2028

2027 Regional Capital Budget

- \$180M in new funding from the State (Starting July 1, 2026)
- Updated capital project evaluation criteria and metrics (Fall 2026)
- Implement process for any waivers for zero-emission vehicle requirement (Fall 2026)
- A new process to develop NITA capital program (January 2027)

Transit Supportive Land-use

- People Over Parking Act (POPA) implementation (Fall 2026)
- Transit-supportive development opportunity inventory (June 1, 2027)
- Joint Development program development and launch (Winter 2027)
- Transit-supportive development incentive program
- Pedestrian access to transit

Public Safety & Security

- NITA Law Enforcement Task Force, led by Cook County Sheriff (June 1, 2026)
- NITA Office of Safety and Experience
- Incident reporting app (November 2026)
- Suburban medical response reimbursements (January 2027)
- NITA Law Enforcement Task Force and Coordinated Safety Response Council (March 2027)
- Transit Ambassadors (July 2027)
- NITA Board vote on Regional Police Force (before June 1, 2027)
- Coordinated Safety Response Council report on social service responses to transit safety (June 2027)
- Contracts for outreach and assistance to unhoused riders (November 2027)

Fare Programs

- Regional Day Pass (Ongoing)
- NITA is responsible for fare setting policy (June 2026)
- Improved student fares pilot (August 2026)
- Expanded Access program (Fall 2026)
- Prohibition on fare increases ends (June 2027)
- Launch NITA Transit Benefits Program (2027)
- Begin universal fare procurement process (July 2027)
- Additional free and reduced fare programs and fare capping (July 2028)

Rider Communications

NITA deadlines

- Launch development of Language Access Plan (January 2027)
- Annual progress assessments, plan updated every 3 years
- Centralized customer information systems and infrastructure, trip-planning, and real-time vehicle arrival app (July 2028)

Initial projects and pilots

- Real-time customer information at key inter-agency locations (Summer 2026)
- Multiple pilots and projects underway: GTFS pathways, real-time elevator status, digital standards development (Fall/Winter 2026)

Service Planning

- Regional Dial-a-Ride study (in progress)
- NITA Board Adoption (December 2027)
 - Service Standards
 - Transit Propensity Thresholds
- First Regional Service Plan Call (December 15, 2027)
- A new NITA Strategic Plan to be adopted in early 2028

IDOT Transition Consultant

- IDOT issued an initial award notification for the statutorily required transition consultant contract to a team led by Boston Consulting Group (BCG).
- **The consultant will initially focus on three areas:**
 - Assess the existing organization design of RTA and Service Boards and develop recommendations for a streamlined organizational structure at NITA.
 - Transition responsibility of the 5-year capital program to NITA.
 - Recommend improvements to paratransit, dial-a-ride and on-demand coordination and service across the NITA service area.

Alignment with Transition Plan

(f) As part of the development of the transition plan, the hired third party shall evaluate:

1. *Procurement*, with special consideration given to the consolidation of bulk fuel purchases, information technology services, consulting contracts, and subscriptions;
2. *Service planning*;
3. *Grant administration*;
4. *Marketing*;
5. *Lobbying*;
6. *Communications, media, and graphic design*;
7. *Governmental and legislative affairs*; and
8. *Information technology*.

NITA Transition Consultant: 2026 Work Plan



Operating funding considerations

Process

- NITA Act requires funding amounts for upcoming year to be established by September 15
- Follow a three-step process outlined in the NITA Act for allocations in years 2027-2029
- Service Boards develop budgets utilizing the funding amounts set by the NITA Board

Priorities

- Fund the initiatives included in the 2026 Budget Amendment at an annual level
- Define additional costs from new NITA requirements
- Retain flexibility for NITA Board in 2027 to allocate additional resources

Proposed 2027 operating funding levels

	2026 Amended Budget	2027 Proposed	\$ Change	% Change
CTA	\$1,583.0	\$2,051.6	+\$468.6	+29.6%
Metra	\$685.8	\$943.5	+\$257.7	+37.6%
Pace	\$279.0	\$334.5	+\$55.5	+19.9%
ADA Paratransit	\$336.8	\$336.8	+\$0.0	+0.0%
Debt Service and JSIF	\$59.2	\$62.4	+\$3.2	+5.4%
Existing RTA/NITA Agency	\$40.4	\$41.6	+\$1.2	+3.0%
New NITA requirements and reserves	\$224.6	\$350.0	+125.4	+55.8%
Total	\$3,208.8	\$4,120.4	+\$911.6	+28.4%

Includes Sales Tax, PTF, RETT, State funding for ADA

Capital Marks by Agency

	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	Total Program
NITA	\$180M	\$180M	\$180M	\$195M	\$196M	\$931M
CTA	1,489M	1,627M	1,268M	984M	673M	6,040M
Metra	397M	408M	416M	434M	386M	2,041M
Pace	76M	77M	78M	67M	67M	365M
Total	\$2,142M	\$2,292M	\$1,942M	\$1,680M	\$1,322M	\$9,378M

State PAYGO interest funding – next steps

- NITA staff to provide service boards with feedback and follow up questions on proposals
- Candidate projects to be shared during public engagement in September
- Vetted projects to be included in November budget presentations to the board and counties
- Final projects and budgets to be include in 2027-2031 Capital Program for adoption at the December Board meeting

2027 Budget calendar (tentative board dates)

- May 21 Board Adoption of the 2027 Budget Call
- Aug 20 Board considers adoption of 2027-2031 funding amounts
- Sept Service Boards to present capital program proposals to labor
- Sep-Oct Initial public engagement before full budget proposals released
- Sept 25 Capital Evaluations to be submitted to NITA
- Oct 2 Capital and Operating Budget submitted to NITA
- Sept/Oct Service Boards and NITA develop regional budget
- Early Nov NITA Proposed Budget released, with Service Board Proposals
- Nov 12 Service Board and NITA Staff present proposals to NITA Board
- Nov/Dec NITA Regional Budget and Capital Program public hearing
- Nov/Dec NITA staff present Regional Budget and Program to six County Boards
- Dec 10 NITA Board considers adoption of 2027 Regional Budget and Capital Program

Early NITA Engagement

Shaping the NITA Era: A Regional Transit Workshop Series

- In-person and virtual events in September/October
- Goal: Introduce NITA and begin building public trust in the new agency.
- Key Message: NITA begins a new era for regional transit where all four agencies will plan and invest as one. New funding unlocks opportunities to improve the rider experience, and we need your input to help shape the future of NITA.
- Events will include updates and engagement activities around:
 - **Regional service planning**
 - **Capital investments**
 - **NITA's role and identity**
 - **2027 budget priorities**
 - **Safety and security**

Advisory Councils & Application Process

NITA ADA Advisory Council

- Advise the NITA Board on the impact of NITA policies, programs, and public transportation services on riders with disabilities
- Works Directly with the NITA Office of Disability Policy and Planning
- 5-15 members with 5-year appointments

NITA Riders Advisory Council

- Advise the NITA Board on the impact of policies, programs, and public transportation services on transit riders
- 5-15 members with 5-year appointments

- **Application process for both councils to launch in late September 2026**
- **Targeted outreach to key stakeholders pointing to an online application**

Today's Agenda & Next Steps

Informational:

- Governance of the NITA Board
- People over Parking (POPA) Map

Action Items:

- Board Committee on Governance and Bylaws
- NITA's regional fare structure, Access Program & Student Fares
- National Executive Search Process for permanent Executive Director of NITA

Next Steps:

- Transition Working Group

8. Information Items

8a. Governance of the NITA Board



NITA Board's Governance Opportunity

- **NITA starts with an unusual combination of broad regional authority and a clean slate** creating an opportunity to rethink how decisions are made across the region.
- **Realizing that potential will require intentional evolution** to change funding, capital and decision-making approaches that support a more integrated regional system.
- **Decisions made** in the next 12-18 months will chart the course to determine if NITA becomes a national model in transit governance.

The act expands NITA's mandate across six key areas



One network, one timetable, one ticket

NITA sets fares, schedules, and fare collection so six counties operate as a single network for riders¹



Safety and customer experience

NITA sets regional safety standards and leads a transit ambassador program⁴



Funding and capital programming

NITA controls the regional budget and capital program, and shifts allocations toward service-based allocation²



Accessibility and language access

NITA must expand access for riders with disabilities and non-English speakers⁵



Strategy and service planning

NITA sets the strategic plan and, from 2029, Service Boards operate to NITA's service plan³



Transit-supportive development

NITA gains power to acquire, build, own, and operate development near stations and routes⁶

1. Northern Illinois Transit Authority Act, as amended, §§2.01(d)–(h), 2.04(a); 2. §4.03.3 (Distribution of Revenues); 3. §2.01a (Strategic Plan) and §2.01f (Service Planning) 4. §2.11.15 (Office of Transit Safety and Experience), §2.11.10 (Vote on Sworn Officer Crime Prevention Program), §2.46 (Transit Ambassadors 5. §2.47 (Language Accessibility) 6. §2.43 (Transit-Supportive Development), §2.44 (TSD Opportunity Inventory), §2.45 (TSD Incentive Program)

NITA Board's Three Decision-Making Pathways

1 NITA Board decides directly, with required consultation

- Executive Director appointment
- Strategic Plan
- Service standards
- Operating funding allocation
- Fare structure
- Regional public safety strategy

2 NITA sets the framework, Service Boards provide proposals, NITA Board decides

- Regionwide Service Plan
- 5-Year Capital Program
- Budget and financial plan

3 Service Board decides or executes, with NITA oversight or approval

- Day-to-day operations, staffing, training, maintenance
- Employment contracts and Service Board ED appointment

Principles behind proposed governance structure

1

Start with what the statute requires

- The ADA and Riders Advisory Councils, and the Safety Committee

2

Add standing committees where NITA holds decision rights

- Budget, capital program, service standards and fares

3

Use peer transit boards as a cross-check

- Across eight benchmarked authorities,¹ Finance appears in all eight, Audit and Capital in five

4

Consolidate adjacent responsibilities

- Combine Finance and Audit into a single committee

Committees and Councils

Required:

- Safety
- ADA Advisory Council
- Rider Advisory Council

At Board's Discretion:

- Finance and Audit
- Capital Planning & Delivery
- Service & Fares

Board benchmarking

Most prevalent committees are Finance, Audit, Capital

	#	Governance	HR	Finance	Audit	Capital	Operations	Safety	Divisions	Other committees
Direct Operators										
MTA	10	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	Diversity
SEPTA	4			✓			✓			Admin; Pension
WMATA	3			✓ ^d		✓ ^d	✓ ^e	✓ ^e		Exec. (ethics; officer review)
Regional Coordinating Authorities										
GTEA	5			✓			✓			Comms; Admin; Regional Tech; Regional Transit Planning
ARTM	4	✓ ^a	✓ ^a	✓ ^b	✓ ^b	✓ ^c				Tech ^c ; Ethics ^a ; Service quality
Integrated Regional Authorities										
TfL	7		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Land & Property
Metrolinx	5	✓ ^h	✓ ^h	✓ ⁱ	✓ ⁱ	✓			✓	Risk Mgmt ⁱ ; Real Est.; Customer, Community & Payments
TransLink	4	✓ ^f	✓ ^f	✓ ^g	✓ ^g					Planning, Communities & Comms; IT

Note: Matching superscript letters = one combined committee spanning multiple functions. Board committees only; citizen and advisory bodies excluded. Names simplified; lists may not be exhaustive. WMATA's Exec. Cttee doubles as Ethics Cttee and handles GM/Secretary/IG appointment and review (audit via OIG). MTA has no agency-wide Ops cttee; ops oversight sits in its four divisional cttees. GTEA was created by GA HB 297 (12 May 2026), dissolving GRTA and recasting the ATL; board cut 16→13 and structure may still be in transition. TfL restructured cttees and panels eff. 9 Sep 2024.
Sources: Agency governance pages, bylaws, board manuals and 2026 committee calendars; GA HB 297. As of Aug 2026

Balance representation and expertise on committees

Guiding principles for all committees

- 1 Design committees to produce regional decisions, not to represent constituencies
- 2 Balance representation across appointing authorities so every part of the region can trust the outcome
- 3 Avoid concentrating members who also serve on a single Service Board in any one committee
- 4 Match members' professional expertise to the decisions the committee owns
- 5 Keep committees as small as practical, subject to statutory requirements

Safety Subcommittee

Rider and workforce safety;
policing and social services;
incident and performance data

Finance and Audit

Public finance and budgeting;
audit, controls and independent oversight

Capital Planning and Delivery

Large capital programs;
construction delivery
and procurement

Service Standards and Fares

Service planning; fare policy;
rider experience

8b. People Over Parking Act (POPA)

Mapping Methodology



People Over Parking Act

- Included in NITA Act
- Prohibits municipalities from imposing “minimum parking requirements” on new developments located near transit stations and high-frequency bus routes
- 1/2 mile from a “public transportation hub”
- 1/8 mile from a “public transportation corridor”
- Effective June 1, 2026



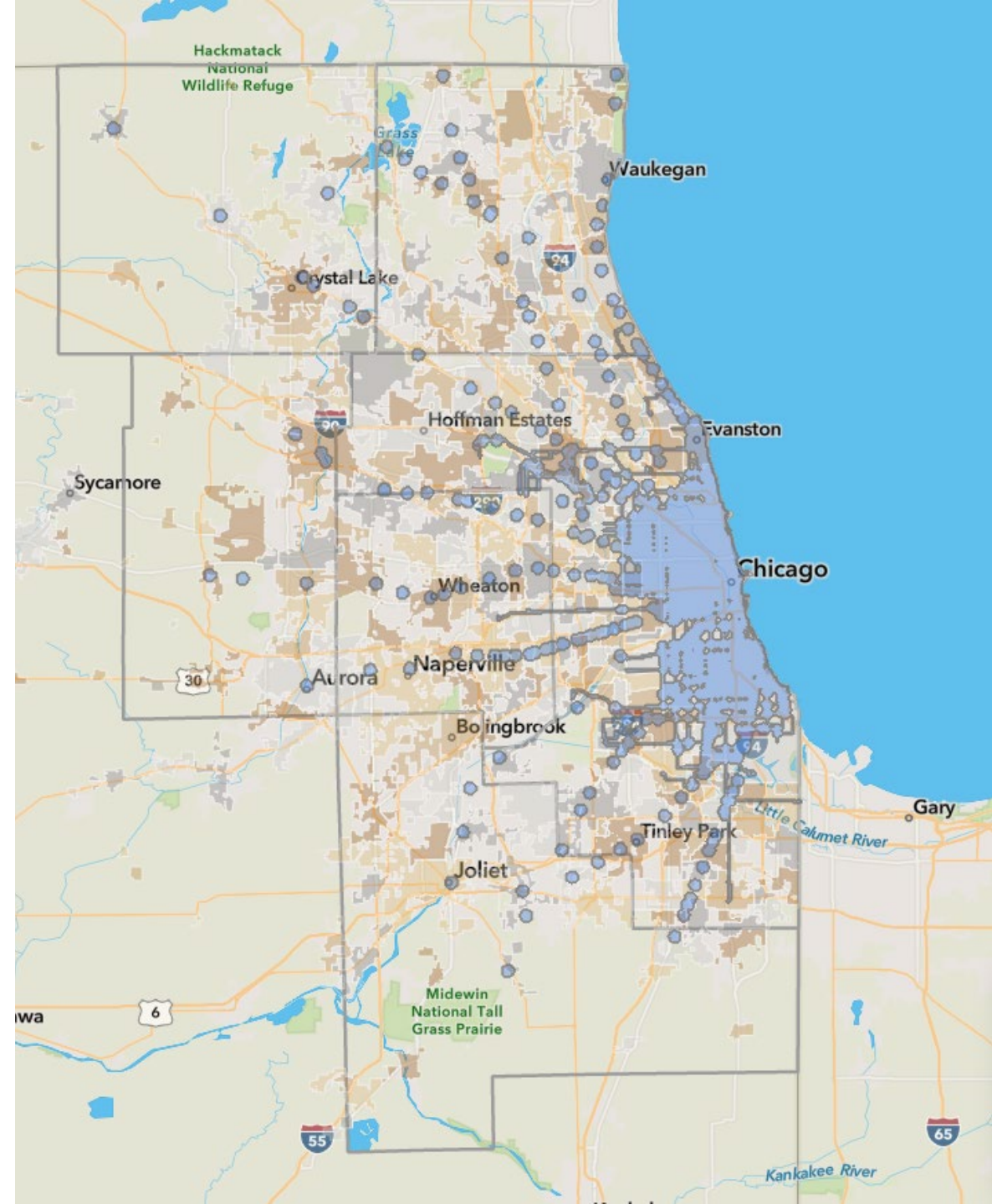
Parking Minimums Defined

- Part of municipal zoning codes
- Mandate number of off-street parking spaces a developer must build for new developments
- Required spaces varies by type of development (residential, commercial)
- Impact on Equitable Transit Oriented Development



Mapping Impacted Areas

- NITA staff led this effort
- Developed in coordination with CTA, Metra, Pace and CMAP staff
- Policy interpretation and methodology documented and available with the map
- Map is interactive and searchable



Release and Updates

- Circulate the draft map for public engagement
- Map to be available on NITA website
- Includes service as of January 1, 2027



Implementation Resources

- Map of impacted areas
- Model zoning and parking regulation ordinance
- Zoning update assistance



Questions



9. Action Items

9a. Ordinance approving the creation of a Board Committee on Governance and Bylaws



9b. Ordinance authorizing approval of NITA's regional fare structure and rates, including the approval of fare pilots for a more seamless and affordable fare policy



Access Pilot Expansion

- Residents of the six-county region receiving Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits can enroll
- Reduced fare extended to CTA and Pace services
- NITA will continue to administer program, May budget amendment funds lost revenue and administrative expenses
- Pilot can be made permanent through 2027 budget process



Student Fares Pilot

- Harmonizes student fare programs between CTA and Pace for students age 7-20 years old
- \$.75 fare and free transfers between CTA and Pace
- Student fares offered 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year
- Metra student fare program is not impacted by this change
- Pilot can be made permanent through 2027 budget process



Next Steps

NITA sets fare policy for the region

- Adoption of ordinance establishes first NITA fare table
- Service Boards will continue to manage fare collection, vendor contracts
- Complies with NITA Act moratorium on fare increases through June 2027

Future improvements to fares

- Further expansion of income-based reduced fare program
- Fare-capping and universal fare
- Next generation fare collection system and mobile ticketing application

9c. Approval of the National Executive Search Process for the permanent Executive Director of NITA



9d. Approval of travel expense reimbursement(s)



10. New Business

Adjournment

The next meeting of the NITA Board of Directors is scheduled for Thursday, October 15.

Stay connected



nita.illinois.gov



On Track : A blog from NITA – nita.illinois.gov/blog



facebook.com/NITACHicago



instagram.com/nita_chicago



linkedin.com/northern-illinois-transit-authority



threads.net/nita_chicago



tiktok.com/nita_chicago



x.com/nita_Chicago



@nitachicago.bsky.social



@NITACHicagoland



@NITABoardMeetings

Board of Directors meetings