

Public Comments

Please note - the public comment is organized by date. The lanugage submitted via the webpage was not altered; the "Meeting - Public Comment" was pulled directly from meeting transcripts.

| Online / Meeting | Last Name of Submitter | Date | Comment |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Online | Olson | September 3, 2013 | In follow-up of discussion at the hearing of NE Illinois public transit task force, below are 3 recommendations for developing world class Transit (and wider passenger and freight Transportation) systems as part of a world-competitive Advanced Communication Economic Region for southern Lake Michigan, centered in NE Illinois and including SW Wisconsin and NW Indiana where Metra/Amtrak run directly or by contract.1. Use Transportation Service Assembly models and communication tools for both initial Public Hearings in the region, and for structuring subsequent combined RTA/METRA/CTA/Pace Service Quality Assemblies for transit and related sustainable Annual Assemblies for service quality and priority planning. Service assemblies, including along the lines of CMAP and America Speaks models, are low-cost, low-bureaucracy, high visibility and high credibility venues for "co-ovisioning, outreach, planning and service quality review" involving cross-sections of communities and transit users. It is recommended such assemblies be hosted in well-known locations such as community colleges, with good public transit, in South, West and North suburbs (including Cook) and City of Chicago. Using tools like keypad polling devices (long used in CMAP and other planning for local feedback for 2040 plans) means that "oeall voices in the room are heard" and recorded, since results of "oeissue discussions" polling is immediately displayed in summary form, letting the audience as well as Task Force members know the areas of "oeconsensus" and "oedifference of view" and whether strongly or moderately held. These "oe straw polls" are good topics for local news coverage, and contribute to community transparency, which play important role in setting the baseline of a cross-section of views to guide the accountability of elected and appointed directors of transit agencies. 2. Use ROW cooperation among transit agencies, and other ROW holders (public and private landowners, public works, public and private surface transportation providers, utilities and communication companies) for major cost cutting in construction and services (including consumer-friendly visualization devices) while generating steady revenue for transit and related public works maintenance and keeping taxes down. Transit, Transportation, Utility and Public Works cooperation in fiber-based communications (fiber and fiber-to-wireless-tower) will enable metropolitan Chicago gain productivity advantages and add employment, including employees in transit-dense TOD development, and further reducing costs of government services. Such fiber is slated for substantial expansion in City of Chicago's planned Broadband Infrastructure Expansion cooperative public works along job-generating Gigabit Corridors, as the Chicago region works to maintain competitive advantages in relation to fiber-linked areas of developed countries in Asia and Europe. Such ROW cooperation will provide operational and revenue support for "oevirtual infrastructure software" tools needed for infrastructure and building maintenance, including linking with smart grid-linking tools for residents, employees, employers and public bodies.3. Use cooperative transit and transportation planning in RTA/METRA/CTA/PACE and CMAP, and linking with Federally-supported regional planning for transportation, population projections and land use, and integrate "oeutility and communication planning", including under today's CMAP/RTA Local Implementation planning program. Such planning will link with IDOT-led state "oeone trench, one tower" state laws along highways and tollway and high speed railroads, and assist local counties and municipalities with cost-saving, economic development-building "oeone trench public works cooperation" ordinances and training of staff and economic development teams for TOD, including in today's "lesser-invested areas that lack good transportation. The Illinois Broadband Deployment Council and our state's public-private broadband and economic development partnership (Partnership for a Connected Illinois or Broadband Illinois) could assist with this process, including via a number of IDOT-led initiatives for ROW cooperation. Major universities and communication companies have major investments in Advanced Communications, and Big Data and Economic Development planning have been major topics of APA-related events in Chicago this spring, at NSF-funded US Ignite National Applications Summit this summer and upcoming Civic Hackathon and Broadband Communities events this fall. With the assistance of parties such as Cong. Lipinski and Kinzinger, advanced manufacturing competitiveness districts along transit lines, can proceed in Federal surface transportation authorizations and funding, including the low-cost, high payoff inclusion of "oeadvanced communication and utility planning" as "oeallowable costs" as "allowable costs" in Federal planning funding for our region.Submitted on behalf of Safe and Healthy Communities Project, Internet Public Trust, Chicago, in follow up of comments to City of Chicago Broadband Infrastructure Expansion RFI in fall 2012. 312-263-3001Other resources: What is a Community Service Assembly (2006) and Saving 7 Minutes as comments on links between Civic Engagement tools, communication assets and quality of life. |
| Meeting | Staton | September 3, 2013 | Funding, Service, Governance |
| Meeting | M. Fitzgerald Ozog | September 3, 2013 | Suggestion and concern about board member selection. |
| Meeting - Public Comment | Powell | September 3, 2013 | Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Jamal Powell, and dovetailing on what representative Riley said, I am a member of the riding public, and that is why I came here because I am hearing all of this talk about what agencies are to be restructured and how this that and the other should go on. But I am very concerned that those of us who use PACE, Metra and CTA may be left out in the cold, and I kind of agree with the lady ahead of me. I frankly think that any talk of reform of the service boards should deal with the issue of electing service boards. I frankly think what should happen is that the RTA board should be a 15 member elected board based on region and population. For example, the City of Chicago should have four members from each geographical part of the city. Suburban Cook should have four members from each geographical region, two members apiece from DuPage and Will Counties and one member apiece elected from Kane, McHenry and Lake. And I frankly see the geographical representatives should have the task of recommending members through the service boards with a two-thirds confirmation from the entire RTA board, and this would do two things. A, it will force accountability; and, B, the riding public will have a chance to have a say in their transit agencies, because right now, you got County Chairman left and right making all of these appointments; and political agendas are being tacked and not the people's agenda. I frankly think that the elected RTA board should also be elected nonpartisan, and I also think that any requirements on transit board members was the RTA or even the service board members they should be required not only to serve on the board but use the service of these 10 hours a month to see what is going on, because it seems that in these debates the concerns of the riders have gotten lost, and we have an opportunity to improve this system. Let's do it right. And I thank you for your time. |
| Meeting - Public Comment | Fitzgerald | September 3, 2013 | Good afternoon. Thank you for your service. My name is Mary Fitzgerald, no relation, as far as I know. [Laughter.] I am a 27-year resident of DuPage County. On August 1st, the day after the DuPage member of the Metra Board resigned, I sent a letter and resume to the Dupage County Board Chairman asking to be considered for the DuPage Metra board position. I am currently an elected member of the Glenbard High School District 87 DuPage School Board, the third largest school district in the State of Illinois. During my two years on the Board we have hired a superintendent, negotiated a five-year teacher contract and managed the financial affairs of the district with a 150 million dollar budget. My background includes a degree in political science from the University of Michigan with an urban studies concentration and studies at the University of Illinois graduate programs in transportation planning. I worked as a planner at both the CTA and Metra. I even completed the bus driver training and drove a CTA bus in service on Ashland and Halsted. At Metra I worked on station improvement projects and probably made on-site visits to 99 percent of the stations. I was called by the DuPage Chairman's office for an interview on the afternoon of Thursday August 29th. An interview was scheduled for September 17th. Imagine my surprise when I read a news alert around 4:00 p.m. on Friday, the day after my interview was scheduled, that the candidate for the DuPage Metra Board member would be voted on by the DuPage County Board at their September 10th meeting, a week before my scheduled interview. I called the Chairman's office and was told they were about to call me to cancel my interview. There were, quote, "many applicants." They were about to call me to cancel my interview. There were quote "many applicants," and the Chairman had selected a candidate. Unlike Kane and Cook county, there was never a public call for applicants. Kane County I believe has asked for applicants to apply by today September 3rd and has promised to publish a list of all applicants. Interviewees will be selected by a Kane County Board Committee. I may not have even been selected for an interview if this method was used in DuPage, but Kane and Cook Counties are seeking transparency in their interview process for their Metra Board replacement members. I asked the Chairman to call me this morning, but my call was not returned. I am here today to ask you, as you consider how transit is to run in this region, to consider, for instance, making these positions elected positions. I would also like to add that you might want to consider the lead of the Metropolitan Transit Authority in the New York City region. Members there are appointed by a mix of State and local officials; but for at least 20 years there is no salary attached to these posts, only a transit pass. By state statutes school board members in Illinois may not receive compensation. At the very least it creates the specific requirements for both the qualifications necessary and the process used to select all transit board members. I know that Mr. Fitzgerald is originally from New York, so I am sure you understand the importance of public transit as to the economic well-being of an entire region. I am from Detroit where commuter rail service pieced together by Amtrak was disbanded 30-odd years ago, and we all know what has happened to Detroit. For the good of our entire region, please consider serious changes to how all of the transit boards in Northeastern Illinois are selected. It really matters. Thank you. |

Public Comments

Please note - the public comment is organized by date. The language submitted via the webpage was not altered; the "Meeting - Public Comment" was pulled directly from meeting transcripts.

| Online / Meeting | Last Name of Submitter | Date | Comment |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Meeting - Public Comment | Riley | September 3, 2013 | <p>Good afternoon. It's really good to be here, Chairman Schnieder, Co-Chairman Ranney. Three minutes, you know I need more than three minutes. Let me just simply say that a lot of problems got us here. A lot of what we thought was good planning in the past got us to where we are right now. The only thing that I would say is that whatever you do, think about the riding public. I think many times the riding public is the lost person. We will talk planning. We will talk about different transportation models. We will talk about all of that kind of stuff. But we don't talk about other people who ride the trains, ride the buses. These are the people that I see everyday. We talked about the dearth of transit in the southwest suburbs. Let's talk about the south suburbs, too. A large group of people who have the longest times to work in the entire region and the longest times to work is a proxy for there is not a lot of business and industry out there. So they have to go other places.</p> <p>Anthony Downes a long time ago coined a phrase talking about benign neglect, and that is what many of my constituents see when it comes to the south suburbs, benign neglect. We don't talk about the Redline extension to 130th Street. We don't talk about a whole lot of other things. So one of the problems that I have always had was things like maintaining rolling stock in a state of good repair, which is a euphemism for we just don't give a dam about you and your region. Whether that is real, whether that is contrived, a lot of people think that. So, I think that we have a great opportunity going forward to really make this transit system a world class system. We always have to think about equity, equity in funding and equity in policy being sure that all of the regions get their fair share. These are all residents. They are all the riding public and so I will be there with you from the legislature. I will be there with you to be sure that this job is done the way I think you want it to be done. In closing, let me just say this: You have a daunting task, of course. I have heard it said many times today that we have an aggressive agenda. Okay. It's aggressive. Wherever you come from you have aggressive agendas. We in Springfield have an aggressive agenda. Don't let that be a euphemism for we are really not going to take this to the public. I had a bill this year in the legislature that dealt with a service board not taking their policy development to the public. Let's be sure that that doesn't happen. You can still involve people. It's all kinds of groups and all kinds of folks that can be a part of this process, and I hope that we do that. Thank you so much. You do have a daunting job; and, again, I am here to help in any way that I can. I thank you.</p> |
| Online | Sims | September 4, 2013 | <p>First off you need to combine all three agencies under one board. Then split the board into government style where no one group can make decisions without having like congressional approval. Checks and balances on all groups associated with the board. The judicial part weighs in on matters on such things if matters should go through the court or it can be handled by the entire board. Money should be distributed evenly or how ever much each group needs cause one is bigger than the other. There should be no more hiring friends and family or political ties. It should be who is qualified and will do what is right. All meetings should be taped and available for review this way the proof is on paper and tape what is happening the public can weigh in more if it seems unfair. The board should also have a few regular people no politics or friends to keep it fair.</p> |
| Online | Schuth | September 4, 2013 | <p>Key area is the installation of independence and conflict of interest rules on appointments and in appointees decision-making process. Reading the articles on the Metra and how all these appointed positions were relations of each other or appointed by former political contacts was an embarrassment. Especially when it was clear as day their prior experience would seem to provide no insight on how to run or oversee such an organization. One document to leverage is Sarbanes Oxley and/or COSO's rules on corporate governance and independence rules. To clarify what I'm getting at, how is it possible that anywhere in government we are OK with lawmakers or chief decision makers to reach conclusions when they are not objective due to conflict of interests or have a lack of independence from part of the process? (e.g. voting for a contractor to win a contract when the Board member worked for that company a year ago, or his or her brother works there now, etc...) How does allowing this to happen serve the public and the users of Metra? The whole point of Metra/RTA is to provide the best service possible to its patrons. Allowing conflicts of interest and lack of independence, nepotism, etc, into the decision making process is the clearest way to ruin that key guiding mission and I'd consider this Task Force to be a failure if this isn't clearly and effectively addressed. In any event, feel free to contact me, I'm happy to help out in any way. I have about 8 years experience in audit, internal controls, etc, for public and private companies and am a CPA.</p> |
| Online | Keaton Stubbiefeld | September 4, 2013 | <p>The City of Chicago, its Suburbs & the State deserve a well-run, efficient transportation that links ALL working classes and choice riders to their choice of convenient public transportation. And the current RTA structure isn't one to accomplish this gargantuan, yet crucial feat! While CMAP was borne out of the inefficiency of the service boards and RTA (isn't that a sad reasoning?!), an organization much like CMAP should replace RTA! And the service boards (CTA, Pace, Metra) should, at the very least, have their planning/scheduling divisions joined (along with a few others - much like the OIG oversight for the three). I live in the City, work in two suburbs and I cannot take transit without it being cumbersome, convoluted, expensive and quite a hike! So, I have to add to the erosion of the fabric of our environment and drive! I'd much prefer to take public transit. Additionally, funding for transit should follow the population shifts (and I'm not talking about elimination, per se of smaller populated areas), as well as the proper and equitable funding of reduced rides! It is a FARCE for the public to even be lulled into thinking that fare hikes aren't realistic. The funding support of transit is CRUCIAL to its existence and expansion in areas of technology, repairs, new service, etc. But then again - the adage: you get what you paid for is apropos! And forgive me, but it€™s a DAYUM shame that the universal fare card has just arrived (and Metra STILL isn't a part of it). In closing, I'd like to see us get a world-class transit - anything short, in my estimation, makes this board seem like an election-year ploy. Please don't be a ploy!</p> |
| Online | Schuth | September 4, 2013 | <p>Key area is the installation of independence and conflict of interest rules on appointments and in appointees decision-making process. Reading the articles on the Metra and how all these appointed positions were relations of each other or appointed by former political contacts was an embarrassment. Especially when it was clear as day their prior experience would seem to provide no insight on how to run or oversee such an organization. One document to leverage is Sarbanes Oxley and/or COSO's rules on corporate governance and independence rules. To clarify what I'm getting at, how is it possible that anywhere in government we are OK with lawmakers or chief decision makers to reach conclusions when they are not objective due to conflict of interests or have a lack of independence from part of the process? (e.g. voting for a contractor to win a contract when the Board member worked for that company a year ago, or his or her brother works there now, etc...) How does allowing this to happen serve the public and the users of Metra? The whole point of Metra/RTA is to provide the best service possible to its patrons. Allowing conflicts of interest and lack of independence, nepotism, etc, into the decision making process is the clearest way to ruin that key guiding mission and I'd consider this Task Force to be a failure if this isn't clearly and effectively addressed. In any event, feel free to contact me, I'm happy to help out in any way. I have about 8 years experience in audit, internal controls, etc, for public and private companies and am a CPA.</p> |
| Online | Benedict | September 4, 2013 | <p>Business Development is probably one of the most important assets that a transit agency can, and should have. Having to connect businesses with transit, and with individuals who are critical to that success is important for the success of economic development in the region. What I have witnessed, overall, is that Pace does a tremendous job making the links to the businesses with their branding and their organization. If anything, the suburban agency does a great job promoting their programs to everyone, including the 'best kept secret' of the agency (and the region): RideShare. If a merger is ever to come about, it would be a very good idea to maintain the staff in Business and Community Development, but also have them serve as viable project managers to outreach and planning staff. Strong and talented individuals who are focused in helping the region's economy is critical to the success of all three transit boards.</p> |
| Online | Hedrich | September 4, 2013 | <p>I live along a PACE bus route (Randall Road corridor in Kane County) and always see busses designed to hold 25-30 passengers transporting two or three people. The overcapacity of the busses seems like an incredible waste of resources (smaller busses equals less money...) that should be studied and addressed.</p> |
| Online | N/A | September 4, 2013 | <p>It might have been nice if people had known about this yesterday before the meeting</p> |
| Online | Rojek | September 5, 2013 | <p>Please as a citizen of Illinois, make this the first step to purge this government of the waste from a home to political hacks and lackies and contributors to the insane union rules that the private sector would not tolerate in everyday businesses.</p> |
| Online | Jones | September 6, 2013 | <p>We wish to thank Governor Quinn for forming this critically important task force. Restoring public confidence in public transit and its governance will benefit the public for decades to come. This process must begin with a recommitment to Federal rules associated Affirmative action, civic rights and ADA rules, Title VI and Section 3 rules and higher DBE/MBE goals. The task force must also recognize the significant role and utilization of rail companies within the METRA - RTA process. The railroad companies are far removed from public accountability through METRA and the function of the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC). The task force must address this matter alongside the work of Senator Dick Durbin and the Federal Railroad Administration. Also, the task force must update the contributions made by City of Chicago and Cook County to the transit board. The annual contributions have not increased since 1976. New York City contributes far more public dollars to its transit agency than Chicago and Cook County. More would be shared at the public hearing. www.sustainableinglewood.org</p> |

Public Comments

Please note - the public comment is organized by date. The lanugage submitted via the webpage was not altered; the "Meeting - Public Comment" was pulled directly from meeting transcripts.

| Online / Meeting | Last Name of Submitter | Date | Comment |
|------------------|------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Online | Shanley | September 6, 2013 | Hi - I recently relocated to Chicago from Boston (although I work in DC). At Easter Seals, I direct several national projects funded by the Federal Transit Administration, with a focus on disability, accessibility, and coordinated transportation systems (mobility management). I hope in your work these topics will be embedded and people with disabilities are part of your reform decision-making - I didn't see any reference to these topics in any of the materials currently produced. Would love to help you in anyway I can to ensure that this work aligns with coordination and accessibility. Has another public meeting for the task force been established?ThanksJudy L. Shanley Ph.D.Director, Student Engagement & Mobility ManagementEaster Seals Transportation GroupOffice of Public Affairs1425 K Street, NW, Suite 200Washington, DC 20005Office: 800-659-6428Office Direct: 202-403-8354TDD: 202-347-7385FAX: 202-737-7914Cell: 202-210-1228email: jshanley@easterseals.comWebsites: www.easterseals.comwww.projectaction.org |
| Online | N/A | September 6, 2013 | Randy Blankenhorn, the Executive Director of CMAP, should be included on the task force. |
| Online | N/A | September 6, 2013 | I wish to be an advisor on Doing A Combination Real Time Survey Market Study OF ALL land, regardless, wh, or what owns/rents/leases, or ground rents it, in preparation for A Single Economic Rent of Land Value Tax. & prepare me for a combination Mayor of Chicago, Governor of ILLinois, & Resident President of US to put all US/ILLinois/Chicago Transit Systems, as well as the economy, & stop poverty in it's tracks, so no one has starve to death for either lack of housing, jobs, or food. |
| Online | Korzen | September 7, 2013 | On September 3, 2013, I sent the following message to Mr. Randy Blankenhorn. It remains unanswered. I wonder whether your Task Force would consider my proposal, review it, and setup cooperation.Your email contact format does not allow me to send attachments; however, I will be happy to as soon as I may know your regular email address. Mr. Randy Blankenhorn, CMAP Fellow Directors:It is not the first time we are contacting your organization. On April 22, 2013 I sent email to Ms. Margaret McGrath, Erin Aleman, Jill Leary, and Mr. Gerald Bennett proposing a power-point presentation on the most recent renewable and energy-saving technologies, and on May 2, 2013 we signed up to partner with CMAP. In your lame "response" we are being treated now with your impersonal Weekly Update emails. Well, THANK YOU for keeping us posted.This time, I would like to take an opportunity of your request for comment on the proposed amendment that pertains to Illiana Corridor. We would like that amendment to include the following:a) your own vision, Mr. Blankenhorn: "Collaborative planning should lead to clear transportation priorities. To accomplish this, Illinois needs to lead the national effort to implement "performance-based funding" of highway and bridge projects. CMAP believes the approach should apply to all modes of transportation." b) President Obama's vision: "Our country should move swiftly to a system of high-speed rail travel. It will relieve congestion, help clean the air and save on energy. The money will go to high-speed rail development planning and then a commitment to help in the execution of those plans far into the future when the stimulus funds are no longer available." c) Chicago Department of Planning Letter of Interest - attached;d) U.S.WAY commitment to build the <Natrix> manufacturing plant in Calumet Industrial Corridor - PRESENTATION attached. That means hundreds of permanent JOBS!The future of MagLev trains spanning our cities is inevitable. They can carry cargo, too. They barely exert any impact whatsoever on surrounding land uses, and they can replace the envisioned wheeled vehicles traffic along the Illiana Corridor altogether. Current cost to build MagLev infrastructure amounts up to \$20 million per mile. I wish CMAP took a serious look at our MagLev Train and adopted it as its Project. As your Partner already, I am willing to take responsibility for that Project and handle it within your organization. I will be looking forward to hearing your comments.Sincerely,Victor KorzenU.S.WAY Corporation - CEOU.S. Green Building Council - Technical Committee adviser on renewable energy technologiesDepartment of Energy - Energy Star Partner and SpeakerThe International Maglevboard e.V. (IMB) - Private Sector Advisory BoardUW Advanced Materials Industrial Consortium - Affiliated Research ScientistTel.: (312) 493-1503 |
| Online | Watkins | September 9, 2013 | With Illinois Gov. Quinn appointing a Task Force to examine Public Transit in Northeastern Illinois. With longtime questions of the responsibility and oversight of the Regional Transit Authority (RTA); the continuing issues and any real oversight of Metra; the on-again/off-again service issues and again oversight with both Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and Pace Suburban Bus (and Paratransit services). The examining of the Board of Directors, Senior Staff, and departments and their roles at RTA, CTA, Metra, and Pace. As a Public Transit Advocate (and public transit geek) over the last decade for People with Disabilities having served on various Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory Committees/Boards for RTA, Pace and CTA, Pace Paratransit Blue Ribbon Committee, RTA AD-Hoc Paratransit Transition Committee, and as past Chair of the RTA Regional ADA Advisory Committee (2006-2010) there must be at least the understanding of public transit in general, and the relationships with the public. The Transit Agencies of Northeastern Illinois also have different forms of Advisory Boards/Committees such as Citizens and ADA Advisory Boards/Committees. The formation, responsibility to, and treatment of such Advisory Boards/Committees vary from purpose, responsibility, and oversight with the transit agencies, and their Board of Directors. The acknowledgement and responsibility of the transit agencies are diverse, even with there own Advisory Boards/Committees purpose. The appointments to such Advisory Boards/Committees vary from transit agency, and within each transit agency itself. By definition members of such Advisory Boards/Committees are "officers" of the transit agencies, and at the minimum the transit agencies have the responsibility of complying with the Illinois Open Meetings Act, and Illinois Code of Ethics Act's. The responsibility of the Transit Agencies vary, and with no one verifying if such accordance is within place at the transit agencies. In closing, while the purpose of the Task Force is to examine the diverse and complicated Public Transit entities, consider that diverse Advisory boards and committees within our system. The Board of Directors, and senior staff of the transit agencies have responsibility to the public, and one of the relationships are the Advisory Committees/Boards that can and do offer opinions for the public transit system of Northeastern Illinois.Sincerely,James Watkins; Exec. Director Ability Chicagojimwatkins@abilitychicago.infoSept. 09, 2013 |
| Online | Watkins | September 9, 2013 | With Illinois Gov. Quinn appointing a Task Force to examine Public Transit in Northeastern Illinois. With longtime questions of the responsibility and oversight of the Regional Transit Authority (RTA); the continuing issues and any real oversight of Metra; the on-again/off-again service issues and again oversight with both Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and Pace Suburban Bus (and Paratransit services). The examining of the Board of Directors, Senior Staff, and departments and their roles at RTA, CTA, Metra, and Pace. As a Public Transit Advocate (and public transit geek) over the last decade for People with Disabilities having served on various Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory Committees/Boards for RTA, Pace and CTA, Pace Paratransit Blue Ribbon Committee, RTA AD-Hoc Paratransit Transition Committee, and as past Chair of the RTA Regional ADA Advisory Committee (2006-2010) there must be at least the understanding of public transit in general, and the relationships with the public. The Transit Agencies of Northeastern Illinois also have different forms of Advisory Boards/Committees such as Citizens and ADA Advisory Boards/Committees. The formation, responsibility to, and treatment of such Advisory Boards/Committees vary from purpose, responsibility, and oversight with the transit agencies, and their Board of Directors. The acknowledgement and responsibility of the transit agencies are diverse, even with there own Advisory Boards/Committees purpose. The appointments to such Advisory Boards/Committees vary from transit agency, and within each transit agency itself. By definition members of such Advisory Boards/Committees are "officers" of the transit agencies, and at the minimum the transit agencies have the responsibility of complying with the Illinois Open Meetings Act, and Illinois Code of Ethics Act's. The responsibility of the Transit Agencies vary, and with no one verifying if such accordance is within place at the transit agencies. In closing, while the purpose of the Task Force is to examine the diverse and complicated Public Transit entities, consider that diverse Advisory boards and committees within our system. The Board of Directors, and senior staff of the transit agencies have responsibility to the public, and one of the relationships are the Advisory Committees/Boards that can and do offer opinions for the public transit system of Northeastern Illinois.Sincerely,James Watkins; Exec. Director Ability Chicagojimwatkins@abilitychicago.infoSept. 09, 2013 |

Public Comments

Please note - the public comment is organized by date. The lanugage submitted via the webpage was not altered; the "Meeting - Public Comment" was pulled directly from meeting transcripts.

| Online / Meeting | Last Name of Submitter | Date | Comment |
|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Online | Campbell | September 10, 2013 | I would like to offer several comments on the state of Public Transportation in Northeastern Illinois to the Governor’s Task Force looking at issues surrounding it. I am currently Chair of the Pace Suburban Bus Suburban ADA Advisory Committee, and I served on the Pace Blue Ribbon Committee (2008-2009) on Paratransit Service. I currently represent DuPage County on the Metra Citizens Advisory Board, and have served in the past as a member of Metra’s Accessibility Committee. I served, from 2003-2005 as a member of the RTA ADA Advisory Committee, and have been an advocate for better transportation options for people with disabilities for over 20 years, mostly in DuPage County. I was a member of the Interagency Paratransit Coordinating Council which put in place the Ride DuPage program which has been operating for over 9 years. My comments will focus in three areas: Universal Fare, the State of Paratransit, and Suburb to Suburb access. First, any effort to reform public transit in Northeastern Illinois must include enforcing requirements signed into law by Governor Quinn that all entities providing transit implement a universal fare system by 2015. While Pace and CTA are currently doing this through roll-out of the Ventra fare card system on fixed route busses and El trains, there is no date certain as to when Paratransit users will be able to pay their fares using Ventra, and Metra continues to seemingly not want to be part of any system. I and others have been told that Ventra will, eventually, be able to be used to pay paratransit fares, but we’ve not been given a date by which this is expected to be implemented. One recommendation I’d give to the task force is that Metra be ordered to participate in implementation of Ventra, so that by 2015 as is included in state law, users will truly have a seamless fare system which will allow them to move easily between Pace, Metra and the CTA. If this means changes in how Metra sets and/or collects fares, so be it. Metra already misses much fare revenue each year from people who travel on their service suburb to suburb because conductors often do not come around and collect fares for such trips. I’ve traveled on several occasions from Glen Ellyn or Wheaton to Elburn and no fare has been collected. Also, remember that Metra had to be dragged kicking and screaming into the 21st century to accept credit cards, it’s high time they be forced to move forward with universal fare as is required by law. The second issue I wish to discuss is Paratransit. A bit of history. From 1992 when the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit Regulations were published until 2006, Pace and CTA each provided paratransit services per the requirements of the ADA to meet the needs of riders who needed it. Also starting in about 1993 or 1994, the RTA took on the process of certifying riders for paratransit per the requirements of the ADA. In 2006, Pace took over operations of all Paratransit service in the region, while the RTA still retains paratransit certification and travel training. While I believe that things have improved under Pace’s management of regional paratransit, there are still issues. Paratransit still is forced to compete with other priorities in Pace’s budget. While Pace’s board and staff are committed to providing paratransit as mandated under the ADA the fact is they are not experts in paratransit service. Meanwhile, the process of certifying paratransit users competes with other priorities in the RTA Budget, and said certification process remains separated from the provision of paratransit service. Paratransit, especially regionally, is a service unto itself. Therefore, I recommend to the task force that a separate or 4th service board be established under the RTA’s structure. This board would be the Regional Paratransit Service board. It would work through the RTA’s processes for procuring its annual budget, with the important exception that paratransit has to be funded since it is a Federally man gated service. The Paratransit Board would oversee all aspects of providing paratransit service, including certifying individuals for the service, letting contracts to provide service on the street, and other activities. The board would be composed of experts who understand Federal law and how to provide the most efficient, reliable regional paratransit service. Staff would be hired with similar qualifications, along with understanding contracts and other things. As part of implementation of this new service board, the RTA would be required to set a farebox recovery mark or ratio that reflects the nature of paratransit service, that it by nature is a more expensive service to provide. Finally, I want to address the issue of suburb to suburb transportation. This is a huge issue, particularly in places like DuPage County. Right now for example, in DuPage, it seems much of the emphasis of public transit is to get people from their homes to jobs in Downtown Chicago in the morning, and back again in the evening. This relies on two assumptions which are fast becoming things of the past. First, that there are few jobs in the suburbs, and second, that everyone works a 9 to 5, traditional work day. As your background documents assert, the reverse commute, from city to suburb, has grown rapidly in recent years. Public transit has not kept up with this growth. And, more and more people do not work the traditional 9 to 5 work day. Northeastern Illinois’ transit system needs to adapt to what people are doing today and what they will do in the future. In addition, while much emphasis needs to be placed on getting people to and from jobs, suburb to suburb transit options need to be provided that allow people to get to and from educational opportunities, civic events, medical appointments, shopping or just to visit family and friends. Services need to be made available not only on weekdays during morning and evening rush periods, but during the mid day hours and somewhat on weekends. Here are some ideas. Suburb to suburb transit needs to be restructured to allow people to go to major activity centers and back again, not only for work but also for other things such as those I’ve mentioned. For example, while I can fairly easily access activity centers such as downtown Glen Ellyn, Downtown Wheaton, and Downtown Elmhurst, I cannot easily find a bus or other mode of travel to get me to Naperville, DuPage County’s largest activity center. If I wanted, say, to go to the Hollywood Casino in Aurora, it would take me hours on fixed route. If I wanted to access the jobs, shopping and other things available in Schaumburg, again, it would take hours on fixed route. How do we implement better suburb to suburb transit? There are several ways. The DuPage Mayor’s and Managers conference in 2002 and 2003 authored the DuPage Area Transit Plan which put forth many good ideas. Some of these have been implemented, but more needs to be done. I recommend the task force take a look at this plan and see how much of it still applies so we don’t have to reinvent the wheel. Some of my ideas would be:1. Expand the use of call and ride vehicles such as those operating in Wheaton. These could circulate throughout communities, providing on-demand transportation access within the community and to areas to catch other forms of transit. Expanded call and rides could also be coordinated |
| E-mail | Merrell | September 13, 2013 | I’m writing to tell you that despite the recent scandals at Metra, what concerns me most is the quality of transit in our region and the underreported list of profound, long-term problems that directly threaten it. These problems include: > > • Chronic funding shortfall necessitating repeated fare increases — including Metra’s largest ever in 2011; • Transit funding that is insufficient — despite those fare increases — to cover even 25 percent of the cost of keeping our buses, trains, and rails in a state of good repair; > > • The need for new and expanded transit service given that only 12 percent of suburban residents can get to a typical job in less than 90 minutes on transit, according to the Brookings Institute. > > • And where are modernizations craved by Metra riders? A unified CTA and PACE fare card so riders can skip ticket lines? What about real-time train trackers? How about WiFi on trains? > > As the region begins to discuss transit reforms, I urge you to not just fix transit leadership to prevent future scandals, but address the deep problems facing public transit in our region. > |
| Online | Vermont | September 20, 2013 | There is no doubt that the present four agency transit arrangement is not the most effective or efficient way to provide transit. These agencies are hidebound, inflexible, wasteful, corrupt and constantly whining about insufficient funding. Ever notice how much drama emanates from the transit agencies? The last so-called transit reform was less about reform, and more about a tax/fee increase for transit. The legislative proposals being offered in dribs and drabs by RTA Chairman Gates are nothing more than a last desperate attempt to maintain the status quo. The transit agencies that we have need to be replaced by something new and different. That said, combining transit oversight or operations, or both with CMAP is not a good idea; for two reasons. First, the size and scale of transit on any number of measures is much larger than the regional planning/MPO portfolio, and would quickly overwhelm “and possibly destroy these important functions. On the matter of annual budget, CMAP is about \$16 million whereas the operating budgets of the transit agencies add up to almost \$2 billion. However, CMAP does provide a good example of how two moribund, hidebound agencies (CATS and NIPCA) can be successfully eliminated and something new more vibrant created in their place. Second, our area needs a strong, independent regional planning agency/MPO. As an essential part of its role, CMAP is called upon to perform objective technical analysis of major transportation projects in order to guide regional decision-making about transportation system expansion, and commitment of scarce resources. Currently, CMAP staff is doing just this type of critical analysis of the Illiana Expy. CMAP cannot possibly be both the objective analyst, and an overseer/operator of transit. CMAP has found its legs and is doing an admirable job of regional planning for our area. Let it be. Three possible ideas to pursue to reorganize transit. 1) build around the CTA as the core agency. 2) Make NE transit a unit within IDOT. 3) Leave CTA as it is and combine Metra/Pace into one agency. The RTA would be eliminated under any of these ideas. |
| Meeting | | September 23, 2013 | |

Public Comments

Please note - the public comment is organized by date. The language submitted via the webpage was not altered; the "Meeting - Public Comment" was pulled directly from meeting transcripts.

| Online / Meeting | Last Name of Submitter | Date | Comment |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Meeting | Staton | September 25, 2013 | Written testimony to the Northeast Illinois Public Transit Task Force: Spenser Staton, Chicago: September 25, 2013: Who is NOT here today? The City of Chicago. Most of the capital construction for CTA is done by the City of Chicago using federal funds. The City, I believe, retains ownership and responsibility for the subway portion of CTA rapid transit, so that if, or better, when the Clark and Lake station receives an overhaul, it would be the City's responsibility to get the funds and oversee the work. In any given year, the City may receive and spend hundreds of millions of dollars on mass transit infrastructure. While they may work closely with the CTA, we should not believe that the CTA speaks for the City of Chicago. 2. Do the proud citizens of the Hegewisch community in the City of Chicago have an advocate? They are primarily served by the South Shore line. Does Northeast Illinois include them or should they petition to join the Hoosier state? More seriously, who has authority to negotiate with the Northern Indiana Commuter Transit District? If the NICTD drastically cut service or went out of business altogether, would we care? If the answer is yes, which I believe it is, then they are part of the Northeastern Illinois Transit equation that needs to be taken into account. 3. Who represents Metropolis? I may be mistaken, but I believe only chairwoman Schneider, (and the Governor's underwear) maintain a residence outside of Northeastern Illinois. Yet all citizens of the state support public transit in Northeastern Illinois through taxes. And all of the citizens representatives are going to get a say on any reforms that may be enacted through the work of this committee. I don't want to go too far out on a limb here, but I believe they will say that not one more dime from Metropolis should go to Northeast Illinois public transit and if they had their druthers, they would prefer none of their money be sent this way. |
| Meeting | Staton | September 26, 2013 | About medrics- currently no public funding tied to performance. Measure availability of transit - not usage. Also, let us agree CTA shall continue to offer 24/7 Service. |
| Meeting | Hilligoss | September 26, 2013 | Metra does not allow discounted fares to employees who commute on their trains. Most employees who commute are trained in emergency preparedness as well as general duties. It is suggested that the Task Force consider reduces fares as an incentive to employees for providing service when needed while not on duty. Students, elderly persons and others are entitled to reduced fares. Employees should be considered for similar reductions. |
| Meeting - Public Comment | Staton | September 26, 2013 | The comment I want to make is asking about the performance measures you have been talking about. I just caution that we look at measures that include ridership, you then put a squeeze on services which are less than rush hour or less populated. So the measure that we came up with a number of years ago is the availability of service. That's a measure which I believe is useful metrics service available to the public whether they've actually use it or not. It's the availability of service that we should be looking at in terms of overall metrics. Currently recognizing also that currently none of the funding is actually tied to any measures, so it is just we're needing money. Those are two comments I wanted to make about the metrics. Thank you. |
| Online | N/A | September 27, 2013 | When did this meeting notice for a monday get posted!?!? Over the weekend? |
| Online | Oglesby | September 27, 2013 | I would like to know if there will be any transcripts or a youtube video made available for the September 25, 2013 public hearing. |
| Online | Renfro | September 27, 2013 | And there is nothing in Northeastern Illinois but downtown Chicago? Could we have some meetings please at a location people can get to? Like outside of downtown Chicago? Oak Brook, Joliet, somewhere else in the metro area? |
| Online | Coughlin | September 27, 2013 | Is there an address that we may send correspondences to the members? If so what is that address? |
| Online | Stone | September 30, 2013 | Orseno lied about fuel at your first meeting. Reference his statement : "Metra Interim CEO Don Orseno agreed, noting that even in something as simple as diesel purchases, the CTA and Metra don't necessarily buy the same types of fuel. Metra is too complex to simply consolidate it with the other three agencies, officials said, citing as an example negotiating with freight railroads over schedules." (emphasis added) Now reference Metra bid document IFB Q17455showing Metra's specification for fuel--Cetane is 40 which is #2 diesel which you can use in ANY diesel powered car, truck or CTA bus. Elaborating, CTA, Pace & Metra could consolidate purchasing of the following to get better pricing based on volumes:ElectricityNatural GasPurchases of support vehicles such as trucks and passenger autosRepairs of support vehicles such as trucks and passenger autosInternally, accounting functions could be combined.As for offices, Metra owns the 547 W. Jackson building. I believe RTA and CTA rent their offices. Metra rents out unused space, so why not at a minimum place the RTA in the 547 building?And ask Orseno about the free train he ran at tax payers expense in May 2013-Metra spent over \$2000 of my money on fuel and crew expenses for Orseno to show off-I can e mail the documents if you e mail me at moparandcubs1@yahoo.com |
| Online | Petro | October 2, 2013 | Mr. Gates was right to say there should be one board overseeing the operations, management and planning for the transportation system. I would also like to make a complaint that not one person on the task force is disabled. If you want to fund the projects, you might start by consolidating all of the administrative functions like human resources, purchasing, payroll, accounting, claims and legal. Then consolidate the operational functions like planning, dispatch, maintenance and logistical staff. Customer service functions are already consolidated. This should streamline operations and give a clearer picture of the way the transportation system operates by eliminating levels of bureaucracy and supporting the staff. It will mean terminating some employees and reassigning others. Use the money to fund capital expenditures. |
| Online | Brannon | November 13, 2013 | I would encourage the Task Force members to read TCRP report 58. We need to re-think our overall approach to providing public transportation services in the region. The current model does not serve us well and is not sustainable. http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_58.pdf |
| Meeting | G. Armstrong | November 22, 2013 | Speaking on Safety issues. |
| Meeting | H. Armstrong | November 22, 2013 | No data entered (I would like to comment at today's meeting, if time allows) |
| Meeting | Staton | November 22, 2013 | Governance, funding. |
| Meeting - Public Comment | Staton | November 22, 2013 | Thank you. I've spoken to you guys a few times before. There are just a few things I want to say today based on what I've heard. One of the comments from Mr. Schlickman was that this was no way to run a business. I would just like to remind you again that if we accomplish nothing else here, it should be that we stop talking about transit as a business, but rather as a public service, that it's paid for and benefits everyone. The business model has gotten us into a lot of trouble, and it's caused us a lot of problems when talking about public transit through the years. And if we can do nothing but to move away from talking about transit as a business, but rather a public service, I think that would be a great accomplishment. Following up on something Mr. Downey said, he was talking about how the local airport in Washington was collecting monies for the capital costs for building the line. He also mentioned that when they were originally constructing the system, they went through some areas in Arlington that had been somewhat economically disadvantaged. And then now, 20, 30 years later, they are boom areas. What that tells you is that as an economic development engine, transit is huge. A lot of that resides in the value of property that's around the transit systems that we have. What I would like to find out is when we talk about the jurisdictional system -- I guess what I would like is we could ask CMAP or someone to tell us what would that look like here. What if we scrap the sales tax and the other systems outside of the fares and let's go to a jurisdictional system in the region. What would that look like. Because that would in part, I think, provide a better sense of people paying for the service that they are receiving and also provide more accountability for the service that we have. And then finally I would just like to say that the idea of moving from four boards to one board, I can see where it is appealing. But maybe four boards isn't enough. Maybe we need fifty so the concerns that Garland and Heather have, they can go to a more local jurisdiction where that board and that group can more directly address the route drivers and the people that service their particular lines and stations to get their issues resolved. Maybe we need to push governance out instead of pulling it all in in order to provide a better system. That's all I have today. |
| Meeting - Public Comment | Armstrong | November 22, 2013 | Good afternoon. My name is Heather Armstrong. I'm on the Pace 88 committee, and I'm also on the Metra 88. My problem is with CTA all the time. A lot of times, I can't get a seat on the real crowded routes. I get on the bus, but it's hogged up by those stupid baby strollers, by those baby strollers all the time. They refuse to give up their seats. I have to point to the sign all the time. But the bus driver refuses to get out of his seat and tell them to fold up their baby strollers and move so I could sit down, you know. Maybe you should have Pace take over the CTA buses just like you did with Pace taking over the paratransit because they're doing a great job. Pace is doing a great job with their bus system because they don't allow baby strollers to be hogging up the aisles or the disability section. They have to fold it up and then be put up so nobody gets hurt. And the second thing I have a problem with is the bikes on the Metra because they hog up the disability section on the Metra so whatever wheelchair or anybody else that has a disability cannot get on the Metra. That's a hard thing for us people with disabilities. I think you guys need to do something about that too. |

Public Comments

Please note - the public comment is organized by date. The language submitted via the webpage was not altered; the "Meeting - Public Comment" was pulled directly from meeting transcripts.

| Online / Meeting | Last Name of Submitter | Date | Comment |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Meeting - Public Comment | Armstrong | November 22, 2013 | Yes. Hi. I'm Garland Armstrong. I'm on the CTA and Metra's 88 advisory committee, and I'm also a volunteer for Access Living and a former Pace 88 advisory committee representing west Cook. And I think, for this right here, they should also be put in there for people with disabilities because people with disabilities is also part of it too. It's always safety issues because every time me and my wife go on a CTA bus, there are people with big three-wheel baby strollers on there. One time it struck the leg on my wife. And one of them with the baby strollers did not even apologize or did not say sorry at all. Because we have these different people with disabilities and different languages. They don't want to say nothing. They're trying to use code of silence to themselves so they can get away with it. And CTA should know about this because we have been on this hot issue about the three-wheelers. And also try to take up for the senior citizens who are disabled and also for those who have crutches and canes. And they should know about it because sometimes they just really don't care, especially the general public who takes public transportation. I think there's a hot issue on it. And then every time when we're on Metra too, there are some people with some bikes on there that they don't want to have no tie-downs. They could turn over the bikes. And they want to put in the other sections not where the bicycles sign is posted on there. And then they think they have their individual rights. Where does individual rights consist of for themselves? What do they think of? And they don't understand about people with American Disabilities Act. So I think they need to reeducate themselves. They are uneducated. And I think they need to be reeducated and think twice what about people with special needs. They don't even care about it. They're all thinking about themselves, and they're trying be isolated so they don't want to be caught or nothing. So I think the task force needs to work on there for people with American Disabilities Act. So they should get on and be sure to enforce it because the general public doesn't know about it and they are trying to dodge it. So I think you-all should get into it and make sure that this is definitely enforcing so we don't have to go through this all over again. |
| Meeting | Walsh | December 12, 2013 | (I would like to comment at today's meeting, if time allows) |
| Meeting | G. Armstrong | December 12, 2013 | No data entered |
| Meeting | Plante | December 12, 2013 | caveat regarding the MTA model |
| Meeting | Plant | December 12, 2013 | John Plant indicated that he has looked at the group's interim report and has listened to comments. He posed several questions directed at Mr. Pendergast including questioning whether or not MTA was still in debt and if they have addressed state of good repair for their transit system. Mr. Prendergast explained that state of good repair is always part of MTA's planning process. Mr. Plant expressed that northeastern Illinois has a unique situation with the infrastructure being utilized and shared for public transit and freight. He also warned of adopting a large models like New York, because with increasing size comes increasing responsibilities. . Mr. Plant said the current system cannot economize enough to generate needed revenue, and other systems have found revenue due to crisis situations. He encouraged the group to craft a program for the area, and noted that the fact that we have three separate service boards does not mean we cannot do the greater good for the region. |
| Meeting | Armstrong | December 12, 2013 | Mr. Garland Armstrong, noted that he used to live in New York. He asked what percent of transit service at MTA could accommodate ADA. Mr. Prendergast responded that the bus fleet is 100 percent accessible to wheelchairs, and that about 82 stations were accessible. |
| Online | Staron | January 1, 2014 | Will the System Performance goals and draft recommendations be made publicly available on the Task Force website? |
| Meeting - Public Comment | Staton | January 14, 2014 | My name is Spencer Staton. Currently within the region, I would say that the total amount for operating capital that is spent is somewhere in the neighborhood of 1.5 to 2 billion on an annual basis covering all the service boards. And again, capital is primarily raised from the sales tax base, fares, state dollars, federal dollars. When you talk about state of repair, you said that 31 billion may be overstating it, but if you add in what we need to do for construction, maybe it's understating it, but just say \$30 billion, right, over a 10-year period that would be adding 1.5 billion to -- no, over a 20-year period would be adding 1.5 billion each year that we need to raise. I am pretty sure that the management techniques discussed here in Southwest Airlines are more efficient work are not going to get us anywhere near the one and-a-half billion we need to be able to move the transit you talk about being a world-class system. So that comes back to again the ugly chart, right, the one with sales taxes and how it's divided and how it's done, how the sales taxes are moved around. This I think is going to be the key in understanding this and how we will move forward. There's no way to do this without, in fact, raising more revenue from the public, raising taxes. Probably both. So it comes back to again sort of the history of this sales tax chart and what are the political actors and the political forces that make up the different factions and voices and battles that will have to be done in order to fundamentally change the way we are going to raise revenue and increase revenue for public transit in the region. That's the issue which I think absolutely we need to focus on because that's where you are actually going to drive the biggest change from this whole process. That's all. |
| Meeting - Public Comment | Biss | January 14, 2014 | Let me structure my comments as follows. Thank you for the opportunity. I'm thrilled to work with all of you and other stakeholders on this issue, which I have an extremely strong personal interest in. You made reference to the paper that my office put out, you know, there's no -- I mean there's no great massive insight in there. It depicts I think what everyone would agree with is that if one had the benefit of time travel, one wouldn't probably have built the transit governance model that we've kind of evolved into during the course of the last century. And I actually really appreciate your point, Dr. Mudge, which was properly interpreted not as a joke, though it was funny, which is that the recent news out of New Jersey is evidence in support of the MTA model, not in opposition to the MTA model. So what we propose in this document is something very simple and naive, which is simply to put the four service boards as a single entity. I don't have any illusions about the procedural simplicity of such a task but I think the fundamental goal is really critical, which is to your point. The case for more revenue is built by a series of adjustments to structure that enhance the returns to revenue. I think very early in your presentation, Dr. Mudge, you talked about the 1 importance of strategic structures and planning and visions around transportation, which is one that has incredible impact on value, and I think this comes fundamentally in the planning around transportation on one hand and equally important planning around revenues on the other hand. Planning around transportation is done by this Byzantine governance, Board members, entities, and therefore no accountability (inaudible), where Dr. Sen made reference to the CTA. The decisions are made far more Byzantine because it enforces many, many, many, many hundreds of entities, and what I view as my project as a state legislature, which I again welcome any opportunity to partner with anybody in this room, is to change the governance, change the state's relationship to these entities in such a way as to consolidate and unify planning visions both on the transit side and on the governance side. So when I look at you, Director, I see somebody with a lot of resources, and resources that I think are best used as a tool to encourage cooperation in the policy and cooperation in transit planning, and I think that requires changes to the actual governance structure of these boards. I think it requires changes to the mechanism by which state funds are disbursed to municipalities, particularly in cooperation with planning projects, transportation projects, whether they are transit or road, and simply in the policy I think there's an awful lot of untapped power there. As you can tell by this rambling coming at you, I don't have a simple way to articulate it to put in a bill and make it be, but there's untapped power to do real good from the point of creating a world-class transit world that we need to find a way to leverage. I think that graph in your presentation with the hobos and tragedy where development is taking place over the course of 30 years away from the transit shed is important not primarily because we should think about how to get transit there, it's important because we should try to understand how we screwed up, how we should build our land use policies and transit policies going forward and not make that mistake again, and that fundamental goal is what brings me here today. |
| Online | Payne | February 1, 2014 | My name is Mike Payne, I will be attending the next meeting of Gov. Quinn's Transit Task Force on the 28th of this Month, I will be bringing literature about the CTA Gray Line Project to Distribute: http://bit.ly/GrayLineInfo And I will be bringing a large-scale model of a new Metra Electric Highliner II modified for Rapid Transit operation: http://www.grayline.20m.com/photo3.html The Gray Line is included in CMAP's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP ID# 01-02-9003): http://bit.ly/1bqrja3 and it could be implemented for 1/7th the cost of the Red Line Extension: http://www.grayline.20m.com/photo.html In their recent "Getting-on-Track" release -- CTAQC and CNT ranked the Gray Line as "the most sensible and worthy transit idea out of all transportation projects being proposed for Chicagoland." (see pages 13 through 20): https://app.box.com/CTA-Gray-Line However as has been pointed out -- the current POLITICAL climate prevents the Project from even being discussed (You dare not speak it's name). |
| Online | N/A | February 1, 2014 | Please look at the coordination of bus schedules in under-served places such as Waukegan. I cannot tell you how many times I have taken a Pace bus from Zion to the Waukegan bus terminal near the Waukegan Metra station, and missed my connecting bus because the first bus either showed up a few minutes late, or the connecting bus left the terminal a few minutes ahead of its schedule. Then I have to wait one full hour at an outdoor bus station for my connecting bus to arrive again, causing me to be an hour late for work. The only other option is to leave one hour early and either show up to my destination an hour early, or sit at the outdoor Waukegan terminal for an hour earlier than I need to travel. |
| Online | Rion | February 1, 2014 | The 3 independent service boards are not needed. There should be only one agency with one board responsible to the Governor and IDOT only instead of the counties or city of Chicago. That would make relations between interests easier. This board can then determine what works best to decrease transit deserts and improve access to transit. I would use transit more but it is only useful for peak time trips to the Chicago Loop not anything else. More thru services on Metra like what has been done in London with Crossrail and Paris with RER would help to decrease transit times. Also, a way to remove freight thru traffic to have more room for Metra off peak services might help also. |

Public Comments

Please note - the public comment is organized by date. The lanugage submitted via the webpage was not altered; the "Meeting - Public Comment" was pulled directly from meeting transcripts.

| Online / Meeting | Last Name of Submitter | Date | Comment |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Online | Schabas | February 1, 2014 | The Task force may wish to see the review of Toronto's public transport plans, http://www.neptis.org/publications/review-metrolinx-big-move which I prepared for the Neptis Foundation and which are attracting substantial attention from local policymakers. A similar analysis might be useful for the Chicago region. |
| Meeting | Powell | February 28, 2014 | Service board members appointment: How could it be guggested that service board members be appointed by elected officials when they got us in this mess in the first place? Pennsylvania? Highways convert into toll lanes. TOD, Elected board- appt. members to other boards. |
| Meeting | Poders | February 28, 2014 | Infrastructure concerns. More public input, wants public forums (county & municipality) Conductors not collecting revenue, station-by station approach. |
| Meeting | Staton | February 28, 2014 | Review of work to date. D.C. study. |
| Meeting - Public Comment | | February 28, 2014 | <p>Please allow me to review, from my perspective, where the Task Force stands today to achieving the laudable goals set before it. Following your committee structure, I will briefly comment on each area.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ethics. Has the Ethics committee developed or proposed any legislation or reforms that would have prevented or detected the two most egregious public trust betrayals to date? Just to be clear, the two instances I am aware of are the recent pilfering of funds by the Metra Chief and the insider trading scandal of Mr. Belcaster and other top CTA executives from the 1980's. In both of these instances, top executives of area transit agencies used their position to illegally increase their personal wealth. Has the committee examined the particulars of these cases and identified what positive measures can be taken to assure the public that all reasonable steps have been taken to prevent their recurrence? If so, I have not seen it documented or heard it discussed in the meetings so far. 2. Finance. Everyone seems to agree that current funding levels are not adequate and that the funding scheme is too complex. This problem has existing for decades. Again, reading the materials and listening to the meetings, I have not seen nor heard one proposal that begins to seriously address the issue. I did ask at one meeting if we could get a study to see what a financing scheme similar to Washington DC's, where surrounding communities pay into the system for transit service, what this would look like for our area. I thought, when I asked the question, that Ms. Brown also was interested in exploring that idea. I also testified at the initial meeting that the current funding system was not a progressive tax structure. Again, I hav n't seen anything that begins to address fairness of the funding structure or identify any alternative tax revenue streams that might support transit. And I will repeat my earlier testimony that any discussion of "world-class" transit system that does not address the funding issue is nothing more than wishful thinking and a waste of everyone's time. 3. Governance. Recall the testimony of Mr. Prendergast, our distinguished speaker from New York. He said, the governance structure of the MTA was established in 1965. In 1980, the state of the transit system was a disgrace. Today, the MTA is attracting record ridership, after the investment of nearly \$100 billion in capital. What Mr. Prendergast did not say was that the governance structure of the MTA had any material impact to the change of fortunes for the transit system. To quote Mr. Downey, to make effective changes you "need cooperation and a basis of support from a wide variety of stakeholders". To me, it would seem, in order to develop a governance model, first you need to identify and describe the stakeholders. From my review, this work remains largely incomplete. 4. System Performance. There is currently one, and only one, key performance metric that affects system performance. That is the 50% farebox recovery ratio requirement imposed by the legislature in 1983. Our friend from Delcan brought colored charts and graphs about various aspects of system performance. But nowhere in the document did it identify and address the impact of the farebox recovery ratio requirement. In short, much of the decline in ridership comes from the elimination of CTA bus routes because the CTA is forced to cut service to maintain the farebox recovery ratio. Doesn't affect Metra. Pace's farebox recovery ratio is in Please allow me to review, from my perspective, where the Task Force stands today to achieving the laudable goals set before it. Following your committee structure, I will briefly comment on each area <p>24/7 system, more bus routes are cut. The bus routes we are cutting would be at the top of Pace's utilization and it effectively kills any new or innovative services that can't achieve high recovery ratios right off the bat. So why do we have a farebox recovery ratio requirement? Four simple words, "They should pay half." If taxdollars from Cairo, Effingham, and Galena are going to be sent to Chicago to pay for public transportation, "They should pay half." Somehow, we have had hours of discussion, reams of documents, a parade of experts, and not once has the issue of race come up. Maybe we believe we live in a post-racial society, but it would be damn foolish to ignore its legacy in the delivery of public services in the City of Chicago. One of those legacies, much to the detriment of providing effective public transit service, is the farebox recovery ratio requirement. I look forward to seeing your final report. Thank you.</p> |
| Meeting - Public Comment | Poders | February 28, 2014 | <p>I'll be very brief. My name is Eric Poders. I live in Morton Grove. I'm a fourth generation Chicagoan and used to be down the street from Union Station -- well, actually, across the street from Union Station, down the street from Metra offices. And I just want to thank everybody for allowing me to speak and the other two people as well. I think a lot more input needs to be undertaken by the public. The public are the people that feed the system. Everybody is nodding their heads. And I have personal experience riding trains since I was seven years old. I took the CTA down here today. And I'd just like to just ask, if I could, just a show of hands just the people in the audience, not the people here on the board, who took the Metra to come down here today? Who took the CTA to come down here today? Who took a Pace bus to get down here? Now, I don't know how you people came here today and who might have been paying for your parking and what have you, but I really think that public input is probably the most important aspect of this task force. You were talking about e-mails and what have you. I think a public forum should be held, jotting notes down, both countywide and municipalitywide. I live in Morton Grove. And because of the -- I guess, the outlot by the Metra station has caused an influx in the area, as the gentleman from MPC was talking about, creating transit areas. If you look at areas around where I live in Morton Grove, like Des Plaines, Ashton Park, Arlington Heights, he hit the nail on the head. But there's got to be checks and balances. I've been on several trains since I was seven years old where conductors were not collecting revenue from anybody on the train. And if you people are going to try to raise the rates and the fees and everything else that's associated and not have accountability as far as credit card receipt and what have you -- With the Metra scandal that happened last year, I'll tell you right here, right now, bottom line, I was behind that. And that became internationally. I've had media practitioners contacting me (unintelligible) information. It needs to stop. There needs to be accountability by zip code, and infrastructure repairs need to be done by a station by station with Metra or by outlots with CTA and Pace and other, I guess, entities. And the revenue from a certain area needs to be contained in that area for infrastructure improvement. Morton Grove needs to excel. We cannot excel until Mr. Orseno, who now has a great relationship with our village administrator, comes to the table and says, Look, we can move this outlot, and you guys can create a downtown and -- like everybody is saying. I mean, everybody is nodding their heads. We don't have a downtown. And until we have a downtown, I'm going to keep coming to these meetings. So I apologize for being late. I was held up downstairs for about 20 to 25 minutes by your security. This is a public meeting. This is a public building. And I'm sorry I'm not in a suit. I'm off right now. I'm on sabbatical. So I'll be here next month. I'd like to see the findings. And I'm going to tell you I've got a lot of experience, and I've got a lot of people behind me that are going to give you a lot of input. But I really think it needs to be in a public forum like this where people can come to speak. The gentleman here in the third row on the end knows me from the Metra meetings. I've had letters drafted by Mr. Orseno with Metra. I've had conversations with Mr. Orseno. I think Metra's on the right track. I'm not so sure about the CTA. But if you people start raising rates in the economy that we're living in and start going off with idealism from -- I don't want to say centuries ago, but a hundred, 150 years ago and laws that are attacked -- We need to basically change everything. We need to look at business models. We need to look at checks and balances. Everything basically needs to be changed. This is 2014. This is not the '50s and '60s. The schools -- The trains that I've been sitting on are the same trains that I've been sitting on since the mid '70s. We're talking almost 30 years. So I appreciate the time. I know I'm a little bit over three minutes. I know there's two other people that want to speak. Thank you.</p> |

Public Comments

Please note - the public comment is organized by date. The lanugage submitted via the webpage was not altered; the "Meeting - Public Comment" was pulled directly from meeting transcripts.

| Online / Meeting | Last Name of Submitter | Date | Comment |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Meeting - Public Comment | Powell | February 28, 2014 | <p>Yes. Thank you for availing me of this opportunity to speak. I have very interesting comments I heard at this task force meeting. And I must say when it comes to the issue of bold ideas and revenue, just saying, for example, that, Well, we don't know how we're going to solve the capital needs isn't going to cut it, or we may not have the money for service expansion in the future isn't going to cut it. Maybe if you want a bold idea -- and they actually -- this was actually attempted in Pennsylvania, but I think it ought to be looked at here and maybe refined a little bit -- Maybe take a look at some of the highways in the northern part of the state where the transit issues are and convert some lanes of major interstates like I-57 or I-55 or I-94, the Bishop Ford Expressway, into tollways with the proceeds going to upgrade mass transit. So we can encourage more expansion, thus encouraging more people to ride.</p> <p>I also agreed with the gentleman from the Metropolitan Planning Council when he talked about land use. Certainly more transit-oriented development in these municipalities is necessary to encourage more people to use mass transit. And the third thing about ethics, slash, governance, now, I heard a comment today where people were saying, Well, we don't necessarily want to take the appointing authority away from the elected officials; however, it is the appointing authority of the elected officials, whether it's the county board or even giving it to the mayor of Chicago or governor, which got us, frankly, in this mess in the first place. You want to solve the issues of appointing authority? I'll say this. I, frankly, think the RTA board should be elected, and they, the elected board, should have the power to appoint the members of the service boards under them. That way, you have one set of accountability via the public. And the riders, those of us who ride, feel we have input, because, quite frankly, if we let county board chairmen or even the governor appoint service boards or even the RTA, those members aren't accountable to anybody but the politicians. And until the politicians are neutralized, we're still going to be arguing about this 10, 20, 30 years down the road. But I thank you for your time.</p> |
| Meeting - Public Comment | Staton | February 28, 2014 | <p>Just -- You know, I've come here before, and I just want to review, from my perspective, where we stand based on what I've heard and read from the committee. And I'll just go through it in the order of your committee structure. First, with ethics, the question is, has the ethics committee developed or proposed any legislation or reforms that would have prevented or detected the two most egregious public trust betrayals to date? To be clear, the two instances I'm aware of are the recent pilfering of funds by Metra chief and the insider trading scandal of Mr. Belcaster and other top CTA executives from the 1980s. In both these instances, top executives of varying transit agencies used their positions illegally to increase their personal wealth. So has the committee examined the particulars of these cases and identified what positive measures can be taken to assure the public that all reasonable steps have been taken to prevent their recurrence? And if so, I will just say I have not seen that so far discussed or documented. In terms of finance, from the documentation and what I've heard, everyone seems to agree that the current funding levels are not adequate and that the funding scheme is too complex. This is a problem we've had for decades. Again, in reading the materials, I have not really seen or heard one proposal that really begins to seriously address the issue. I did ask at one meeting if we could get a study to see what -- a financing scheme similar to Washington, D.C.'s where the surrounding communities paid into the system of transit and for what that would look like in our area. And I believe Ms. Brown also was very interested in that idea as well. I also testified at the initial meeting that the current funding system is not a progressive tax structure. And, again, I haven't seen anything that begins to address the fairness of the funding structure or identify any alternative tax revenue streams that might support transit. And just to repeat, you know, if we're talking about a world-class system, we need revenues. And it's silly to talk about a world-class system without talking about seriously a 50, 60, 70, 80 percent increase in the revenues we're talking about for this system. For governance, I recall the testimony of Mr. Prendergast, our distinguished speaker from New York. He said that the governance structure of the MTA was established in 1965 and is largely unchanged today. In 1980, the state of the transit system was a disgrace. Yet today, the MTA is tracking record ridership after an investment of nearly \$100 billion in capital. What he did not say was that the governance structure of the MTA had any material impact for affecting the change of fortunes of the transit agency and the transit system. To quote Mr. Downey, who also spoke that day, "To make effective changes, you need, quote, cooperation and a basis of support from a wide variety of stakeholders." To me, it would seem that in order to develop a governance model, that first we need to identify and describe those stakeholders. And that -- From my perspective, I think this work still remains largely incomplete. And then, finally, system performance -- And I apologize if there was a presentation on this earlier. I didn't see it. I came a little bit late. CO-CHAIRPERSON SCHNEIDER: No. It was actually a couple meetings ago. MR. SPENCER: Okay. There's really currently one and only one key performance metric that affects performance system, and that's the 50 percent farebox recovery ratio that was imposed by the legislature in 1983. Our friend from Delcan brought color charts and graphs about various aspects of system performance, but nowhere in the document did it identify and address the impact of the farebox recovery ratio requirement. In short, much of the decline in ridership comes from the elimination of CTA bus routes because the CTA is forced to cut service to maintain a recovery ratio. Doesn't affect Metra. Pace's farebox recovery ratio is in the 20 percent range. because CTA is such a large part of the system, they must maintain a farebox recovery ratio of very close to 50 percent. This is the biggest threat to overnight service. To maintain the 24/7 system, more bus routes are eliminated. The bus routes we are cutting would be at the top of Pace's utilization. And this also effectively kills any new or innovative services that cannot achieve a recovery ratio right off the bat. Why do we have a 50 percent farebox recovery ratio? I think it's four simple words: They should pay half. If tax dollars came -- are coming from Cairo or Cairo, Effingham, Galena and sent to Chicago to pay for public transportation, they should pay half. I believe that was the discussion that was happening in 1983 when this was passed in the legislature. Can't find it in the documents. It's not in the written testimony. I believe it was there. I think it's foolish to believe it's not there. This has been one of the most insidious 18 things driving public transportation policy in this region for 30 years. We need to understand it and deal with it. The idea they should pay half in order to receive taxpayer assistance is a fundamentally racist idea which came from the legislature in funding public transportation in Chicago, and we need to eliminate it. Thank you very much.</p> |
| Online | Payne | March 1, 2014 | <p>http://www.myfoxchicago.com/story/24812017/chicago-transportation-a-mess-rta-has-no-oversight There is a CMAP Major Capital Project that would create 10,000 New Permanent Illinois Jobs, and SIGNIFICANTLY reduce both Metra and CTA's Capital and Operating Costs. But they (CTA and Metra) REFUSE to even look at, or consider the idea (because as Steve Schlickman said: "it's a four-headed monster".... with NO accountability"). The CTA Gray Line Project (CMAP RTP ID# 01-02-9003) : http://bit.ly/GrayLineInfo and https://app.box.com/shared/2iuoc4khd1 would create 10,000 New South Side Jobs -- Billions in New South Side Economic Development -- And serve all the South Side Tourist Attractions and Destinations:http://www.myfoxchicago.com/story/17826841/group-wants-cta-gray-line-on-metra-electric-line BUT alas, it is NOT to be -- because of OUR long-time and cherished NE Illinois "Transportation Mess" A big part of the problem with the present mess of four Agencies competing for funds from Washington, and Springfield is as Mr. Schlickman said "it defies organizational principles. It confuses accountability. It prevents seamless coordination of services. It doesn't allow us to speak as one voice when we're in pursiut of funding either at the federal or state level" There are several projects and goals that are sorely needed here in the Chicago area; Metra needs to install federally mandated Positive Train Control system-wide very soon (but they don't have the \$300M or so needed).The Far South Side and South Lakefront Corridor are without CTA "L" rail transit. And the \$1.5B the CTA wants for the Red Line Extension seems to be out of reach. During the recent winter storms, ancient equipment such as the A2 junction near Grand & Western caused many Metra problems and delays, and would cost close to \$300M to replace. The Metra Electric District (which also carries South Shore Line trains downtown to Kensington) also has problems during winter and summer with the overhead catenary that supplies power to the trains that sags from heat expansion in the summer, and shrinks and breaks during extreme winter cold. Installing Constant Tension Catenary (Google it) on the entire MED system might also cost about \$300M, and it would eliminate weather caused problems. Instead of creating some new single Agency to oversee all transit -- why couldn't Metra and CTA try WORKING TOGETHER to accomplish both of their goals? If instead of Metra separately seeking \$300M for PTC, and CTA separately seeking \$1.5B for the Red Line Extension (that's 1.8 Billion dollars total Capital costs). What if they (Metra and CTA) decided to work together to accomplish their stated goals! Seek that \$1.8 Billion TOGETHER from the feds and the state (the feds and the state might look upon them kindly for making sense). Implement the CTA Gray Line (Google it) for \$300M to serve the Far South Side, and the South Lakefront Corridor -- instead of the 1.5 Billion dollar Red Line Extension (which obviously cannot serve the South Lakefront Corridor) \$1.5B left..... Install Positive Train Control over the entire Metra system for \$300M. \$1.2B left.... Install the new Interlocking at Tower A2 for \$300M. \$900M left.....Install the Constant Tension Catenary over the entire Metra Electric District for \$300M. \$600M left..... How about creating a rail shuttle connection from McCormick Place/DePaul Arena to Chicago Union Station for \$300M. \$300M left..... How about a study to connect CUS to O'Hare by Metra in addition to the Blue Line "L", and maybe find away to implement the project -- or lots other things you could do with that remaining \$300 Million. By NOT working together -- Metra and CTA deprive the Chicago Area of all these things that could possibly be accomplished, and still within the amount of funding both are presently seeking.</p> |
| Online | Cobbs | March 4, 2014 | <p>I highly encourage the taskforce to recommend (and in any way possible, encourage through policy) building affordable housing near transit. In my short time here in Chicago I've noticed that housing near transit costs more than housing far from transit. There are two ways to address this: build up transit (which I wholeheartedly support) and/or build more affordable housing near transit. Affordable housing is a huge need in Chicago and if we want to reduce our carbon output, put less wear and tear on our roads, etc we need to invest in transit AND policies that support transit ridership.I work for a social service agency and cannot take public transit due to the time factor. Taking public transit should be competitive with car travel and should really be BETTER than driving. For most people, it's more time advantageous to drive their car. I am a firm believer of "If you build it, they will come" when it comes to public transit. Build up the system and you'll see more riders.</p> |

Public Comments

Please note - the public comment is organized by date. The language submitted via the webpage was not altered; the "Meeting - Public Comment" was pulled directly from meeting transcripts.

| Online / Meeting | Last Name of Submitter | Date | Comment |
|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------|---|
| Online | Paine | March 1, 2014 | I agree with Patrick Fitzpatrick's recommendations for the board members of Pace, CTA and the RTA. I have used many public transportation systems both in the US and in foreign countries, and I would have to rank Chicago's at the bottom of the list. I have lived in Chicago 16 years and in that time, if anything, the public transportation service here has deteriorated. Just last week someone tried to mug a friend on a Green Line train in broad daylight. Service is terrible and the new Ventra cards are just another stupid misstep. The lack of transportation expertise on the boards of the transit agencies is appalling and one of the main factors they provide a third rate service to the public at best. I wonder how many board members use public transportation? I take public transportation less and less because it is so bad, and I used to commute downtown. The fact that public officials don't care about public transportation is obvious from the fact that Forest Claypool, a man with no transportation experience, is head of the CTA. Of course, I realize this was his reward for dropping out as a candidate on the Democratic ticket a few years back. I cannot remember the last time I saw CTA security on the Blue Line or Green line, though there was a security officer on the Metra train I took Tuesday night. A city the size of Chicago should have a world class public transportation system on par with that of Berlin or Prague. I know it would be too much to expect to have one on par with Paris, but it is embarrassing for Chicago to have such poor public transportation and not something that is likely to increase tourism. |
| Online | Bennett | March 1, 2014 | No data entered |
| Online | Alexander | March 1, 2014 | As a member of the Regional Citizens' Advisory Board -RCAB, I would not be in favor of eliminating the RTA nor turning the RTA over to IDOT and would be totally against giving total control over to one board. Strengthened RTA would be the way to go. Why not look at what is working within the RTA and hear their suggestions on how to fix some of the problems such as Planning a Project there is NO communication such as what happen to the customers/riders during the Dan Ryan Reconstruction Project. The RTA has suggested combing Planning activities into one department so during the project one voice would enable coordination with IDOT. Not eliminate the RTA. Thank you, JoAnne Alexander -working for the people of the Southland. |
| Online | Franklin | March 15, 2014 | I do agree that members of transit boards should not be paid. |
| Meeting | Staton | March 17, 2014 | What happened to the Mayor of Chicago? |
| Meeting - Public Comment | Staton | March 17, 2014 | Just to follow up on something Carole had downplayed a little bit, which is the role of the City of Chicago as a provider of transit. She had mentioned they provide security services. I think more importantly if you look at the City of Chicago's capital budget as I did for 2013-2017 time frame, they have over \$300 million worth of projects in their capital budget for the benefit of the CTA. Part of that comes from the fact they have, I believe, an ownership of the subway. The subway lines which go on State Street and Dearborn do not actually belong to the CTA. They belong to the City of Chicago. The City of Chicago built them. So when you talk about a governance change, it's not so easy just to move the CTA out without dealing with the City of Chicago part. When we talk about 47 board members, you also have one mayor and 50 alderman who are also at the table in this larger picture. One thing you might want to consider is that in a consolidation scheme, one might be looking at consolidating the CTA under the City of Chicago rather than have it divided. Now it's a separate authority. One idea is we talked about moving all the transit, say, to IDOT, would be just moving the CTA part under the City of Chicago, so there's more clear accountability for the dollars and how the transit is provided within the city and to its surrounding area. Thank you. |
| Online | Rion | March 18, 2014 | I support the suggestion of the regional transit being under IDOT. Consider expanding the scope to include Illinois Tollway and the Chicago Airports into this transit org also. Adding these will increase coordination. These assets serve all of north east Illinois not just the city of Chicago or the suburbs. Consider also trying to better incorporate the work of the IDOT rail office that is building the Amtrak high speed network. |
| Online | Haas | March 24, 2014 | To the Members of the NEIL Public Transit Task Force, I am writing to urge inclusive public consideration and discussion of the importance, to prospects for improving public mass transit services in the Chicago region, of systematically insisting on more open, honest, and accountable government throughout the State of Illinois. I was the RTA Controller in 1983-84 before, during, and for a slight while after the 1983 Illinois State legislatively mandated and affected reorganization. As its Controller, I was the RTA's Chief Accountant and the head of its Accounting Department. I was hired to provide previously lacking technical sophistication regarding the purposes, principles, practices, and politics of governmental accounting, auditing, reporting, and related financial management requirements and practices. I was responsible for all accounting and financial reporting activities and the establishment and maintenance of sound internal control. I planned with a public accounting firm the RTA's first external financial and compliance audit pursuant to requirements of the federal Single Audit Act. I was responsible for ensuring ongoing compliance, with legal and contractual financing arrangements, by the six-county region's various public and private sector providers of scheduled, and special needs paratransit on-demand, mass transit services. As the RTA Controller, I was immersed in sorting through the voluminous contractual and pro bono external professional and technical advice, which accompanied the 1983 legislatively and politically imposed reform mandates and restrictions; as we sought to establish, refine, and extend responsive internal control objectives, policies, and procedures within the RTA, the CTA, and the newly created Suburban Bus and Commuter Rail Divisions (now known as Pace and Metra, respectively); to encourage, facilitate, and ensure sound management, sound governance, and sound organizational performance consistent with legal and contractual provisions, responsible ethics, and the public interest. Although many diverse well-intentioned individuals and organizations were involved in the entire reorganization reform process, no one could or did apparently feel comfortable supporting my own internal effort to incubate and ensure ongoing inclusive informed stakeholder consensus support for a practically idealistic and realistic commitment to moving toward more open, honest, and accountable government. I have learned lessons, which I am certain it is important to share. It is useful to visualize our public quest to provide sound public mass transit services in the Chicago region as a big ocean going ship. We will remain unable to lastingly improve public services throughout the ship until we have strengthened the climate for open, honest, and accountable government within, and surrounding, Illinois State government and our entire fleet of thousands of Illinois local governments. This climate consists of the awareness, attitudes, and actions of each and all of us; in our multiple roles as various types of stakeholders; toward our separate and shared responsibilities and opportunities for insisting on open, honest, and accountable government. In our system of government, planning and decision making are supposed to be timely influenced by inclusive informed public consent. This is necessary to ensure government integrity and competence, and to encourage and facilitate sustainable shared prosperity. It is ironic that the people of the State of Illinois are having trouble sustaining effective ongoing means of ensuring open, honest, and accountable government. Illinois has traditionally been a leader in the development and application of such means. But, for a variety of reasons in recent decades, meaningful public participation in our public affairs has lagged, and comity in our politics has all but disappeared. We have unique advantages and proven reliable tools, which are more than sufficient to enable us to insist on open, honest, and accountable government. These include the political science design genius of our unique system of limited representative self-government; the public administration application genius of presently neglected traditional state and local governmental fund accounting, auditing, and financial reporting requirements and practices; and real public interest institutional transparency and accountability centered on an ongoing process of sound internal control. We can change the number of decks on the ship again, and move the deck chairs around on them, but doing so is even less likely now than in 1983 to produce lasting improvements in the soundness of our provision of public transportation services within, to and from, and outside of the region. The players have changed, but the game is mostly the same. We have quite a problem here. Our climate supporting open, honest, and accountable government is generally less sound from a public interest perspective now, than it was 10, 20, and 30 years ago; and we are not moving in the right direction. We have generally blurred our focus on our shared public purpose objectives and our institutional memory of how we have previously successfully used open, honest, and accountable government to accomplish them. This Task Force has the ability and opportunity to inform, inspire, and lead us back. If we the people understand open, honest, and accountable government and what's at stake in establishing and maintaining it, we will support it. Indeed, we will increasingly insist on it. I urge the Task Force to help us out in this regard. I will help in any way I can. I will be happy to provide more information, or to respond to questions anyone has. I can be reached at dick@dickhaasmail.com; 815-419-6185; or P.O. Box 781, Pontiac, IL 61764. Our famously expressive Founding Father, Thomas Paine, was telling it like it still is, when he proclaimed and hinted, "We have it in our power to begin the world over again. If we try together, we can and will restore comity to our politics and render our system of government vibrantly inclusive again." |
| Meeting - Public Comment | Campbell | March 31, 2014 | Concern: No data entered |
| Meeting - Public Comment | Mann | March 31, 2014 | Recommendations 1. Monorail, streetcar/tram 2. Everyone on field & office staffs must speak 10 languages ins- 10 years so 3. Insiders top Leap Frog development in Chicago's Suburbs by "motivating" and owner etc. 4. To Pay \$900 Trillion to all public treasuries 5. Have me, David M. Mann as the super agency head & move the Legislative capital to Chicago |
| Meeting - Public Comment | Poders | March 31, 2014 | Continuing comments from last month. |
| Meeting - Public Comment | Mann | March 31, 2014 | Made 5 Suggestions |
| Total | | 75 | |