Adopted 2026 Operating Budget, Two-Year Financial Plan, and Five-Year Capital Program

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Regional
Transportation
Authority

This document contains the 2026 Regional Operating Budget, Two-Year Financial Plan, and Five-Year Capital Program to be adopted by the RTA Board on December 18, 2025.

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Introduction

A new era has begun for transit in the Chicago region. For the first time in years, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is not preparing for a looming crisis, but instead optimistic for the opportunities ahead. The Illinois General Assembly's October 31 vote to approve Senate Bill 2111 – a significant transit funding and reform package that will bring an estimated $1.2 billion in new annual operating funding to the system – marks a historic investment that will protect the essential service of today and lay the foundation for the transit of tomorrow. This milestone fulfills the central goal of *Transit is the Answer*, the region's 2023 strategic plan, which called for sustainable operating funding to protect and improve transit service.

The RTA has a responsibility to oversee the financing of, plan for, and coordinate the Chicago region's transit system, which is operated by CTA, Metra, and Pace—known as the "Service Boards." Annually, all four transit agencies collaborate to develop the Regional Operating Budget, Two-Year Financial Plan, and Five-Year Capital Program. Preparation of the 2026 budget came as the region stared down an operating fiscal cliff that threatened the system's future. Public Act 104-0457, or the Northern Illinois Transit Authority (NITA) Act, was signed into law by Governor JB Pritzker on December 16 and means riders will not experience service cuts or fare increases in 2026 and instead will benefit from continued improvements to frequency, reliability, and safety.

The transit system arrives at this moment because riders, transit operators, advocates, local leaders, business and civic institutions, and elected officials insisted that transit is essential to the region's future. Thank you to everyone who fought for transit over the last five years and those who helped get a solution across the finish line. In doing so, Illinois became one of the only states in the nation—alongside New York—to take decisive action to structurally avert the post-pandemic fiscal cliff facing many large legacy transit systems. The Chicago region now can set an important example across the country, showing what public transit can be with proper investment.

This document describes a 2026 budget that will not begin to see new funding streams flow until late in the year but will be a year of investment, stability, and planning for what is ahead. The 2026 regional operating budget totals $4.352 billion, encompassing the operating budgets of CTA, Metra, Pace, ADA Paratransit, and the RTA.

When full funding from SB2111 arrives, the RTA region can expect an additional $1.2 billion in annual new operating funding from a combination of sales taxes on motor fuel and an increase in the regionwide RTA sales tax. The current RTA board must vote to approve the 0.25% increase to the RTA sales tax within sixty days of June 1, 2026. That change is expected to generate an estimated $478 million for the system. Additionally, a significant portion of the existing state sales tax on motor fuel will be dedicated to transit operations throughout the state with an 85 percent to 15 percent split for the Chicago region and downstate, generating an estimated $731 million annually starting on July 1, 2026.

A new 25 percent recovery ratio requirement – lowered from the previous highest in the nation ratio of 50 percent – is waived for 2026 and further reduced to 20 percent in 2030.

This budget ensures continuity across the region with no fare increases and no service cuts, but also supports Service Board improvements in reliability, safety, frequency, and cleanliness while positioning the system for larger changes ahead.

Stronger, more efficient system will build on ridership momentum

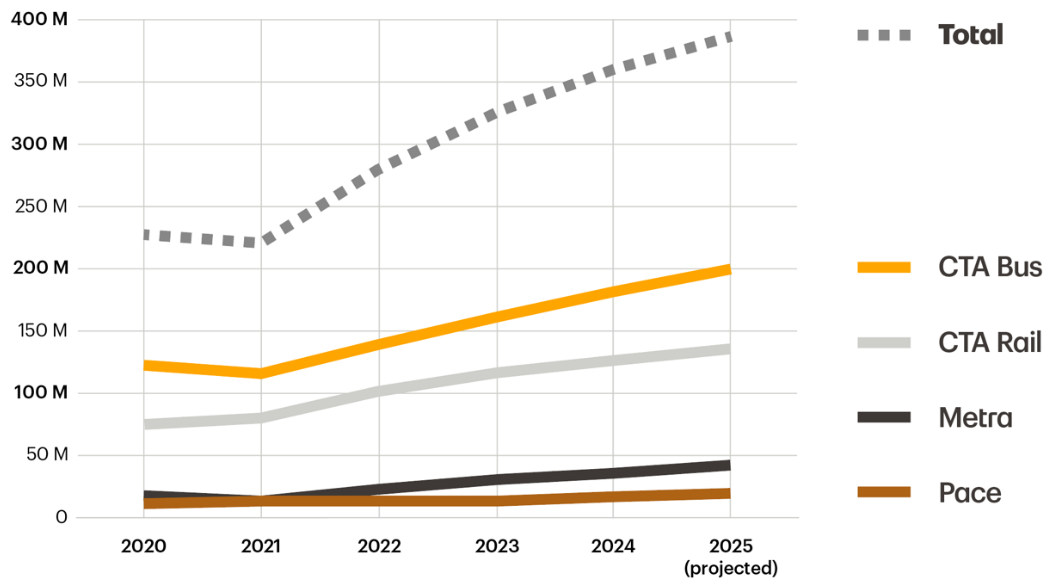
The Chicago region already runs one of the most efficient transit systems in the nation, but the RTA required each Service Board to identify additional efficiencies this year prior to the passage of SB 2111, which calls for $46.9 million in efficiencies in the 2026 budget year. The 2026 Budget Call required the Service Boards to incorporate operating efficiencies into their budgets.

In its 2026 budget process, Pace identified $21.7 million in annual savings through service efficiencies, office space consolidation, and converting the South Division garage. CTA reported that over the past 10 ten years it has realized $819 million in savings and revenue growth through efficiencies such as technology investments, energy efficiency, position eliminations and freezes, changes to procurement management, healthcare changes, fare collection enhancement, and more. In the 2026 budget process, CTA identified up to $70 million in efficiencies, cost avoidance savings, and sustainable revenue growth in areas like scheduling and advanced data usage. Metra identified approximately $25 million in efficiencies for 2026 as well, with a focus on fuel efficiencies, as well as administrative and operational cost savings. Additionally, funding from the RTA sales tax for the RTA Agency budget remains flat with the 2025 budget funding level, contributing to an efficient transit system.

A more efficient system means more dollars can go directly toward what riders want: more frequent and more reliable transit service.

With increased efficiency and quality of service, ridership has grown steadily across CTA, Metra, and Pace over the past several years, with double-digit percentage increases since the depths of the pandemic. Recovery has not been simple – travel and work patterns have changed, in some cases permanently – but riders have shown that when transit is reliable, frequent, and welcoming, they will return. That knowledge and the reality of a future with increased transit investment paints an optimistic picture for ridership growth in 2026 and beyond. The RTA system is expected to end 2025 with 384 million passenger trips and grow to 393 million trips in 2026. The agencies have experienced the strongest ridership momentum in places where service has visibly improved.

Figure 1. Annual Fixed Route Ridership, 2020-2025



For example, CTA has focused on hiring rail and bus operators to restore scheduled rail service across the network, improve reliability, and implement 10 minutes or better service all day on 20 frequent network bus routes, carrying 227,000 riders each day. As seen in Figure 1, CTA Bus ridership has experienced the strongest post-pandemic recovery. Metra continues to evolve rail service to better serve riders, adding all day and weekend service across the network, unlocking rapid-transit headways on the UP-N and BNSF lines, and re-opening four upgraded stations on the Metra Electric.

Pace stands ready to implement ReVision, restructuring suburban service and adding routes to eliminate gaps in coverage while also expanding the Pulse network to provide faster, more frequent corridor service. ADA Paratransit is providing certified riders with more trips across the region than it ever has previously on three modes including traditional paratransit and subsidy programs including Rideshare Access (RAP) and Taxi Access (TAP).

The common thread has been that making an investment in transit service has strong returns and the transit agencies expect that trend to continue as investment grows.

RTA transitions to Northern Illinois Transit Authority

Aside from investment, the newly signed NITA Act reorganizes the region's transit system under a new regional authority replacing the RTA on June 1, 2026 – the legislation's effective date. The Authority will take on new responsibilities including setting fares, enhancing and coordinating service, overseeing long-term capital planning, and leading implementation of unified rider-focused tools such as more seamless mobile ticketing.

A new NITA Board with 20 members will be seated by September 2026, with five members appointed by the Governor, five by the Mayor of Chicago, five by the President of the Cook County Board, and five by the county chairs of the collar counties of DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will. A Chair and executive director will be selected by the NITA Board and must be confirmed by the Illinois Senate. Most NITA Board members will concurrently sit on the boards of either CTA, Metra, or Pace in a way that ensures increased regional collaboration. The bill calls for a third-party transition consultant to be managed by the Illinois Department of Transportation and a Transition Working Group to oversee the administrative changes to the agency. While those changes will be important for transit governance, the results for riders will be significant.

Once the 2026 Regional Operating Budget is approved, the Service Boards will begin moving from protecting and maintaining service to improving service. Without the threat of the fiscal cliff, CTA, Metra and Pace can focus on providing the service riders deserve. Some changes have already been proposed, including CTA's plans to provide 24-hour service on the Orange Line to Midway Airport, expand the Frequent Bus Network that provides service every 10 minutes or better to more routes, and a 50 percent increase in deep cleanings of bus and rail stations. Other possible improvements in 2026 could include accelerating operator hiring and training to support increased frequency, expanding the Access Pilot Program to CTA and Pace riders so more people experiencing low incomes can ride transit at a reduced fare, and expanding Access to Transit projects that improve sidewalks, crossings, shelters, lighting, and accessible station access.

The NITA Act also calls for improvements that will take time to develop and execute, but planning for many of them will get underway in 2026. For example:

- Affordability improvements such as the development of a unified fare system to make traveling across CTA, Metra, and Pace simpler, along with income-based fare programs and fare capping will ensure riders do not pay more because of when or how they travel.
- Capital planning and prioritization will be coordinated regionally to align investments with the greatest impact on reliability, accessibility, and future demand.
- Safety improvements including establishing a regional Transit Ambassadors program, hiring a Chief Transit Safety Officer, and forming a NITA Law Enforcement Task Force will explore best practices for improving security on the system.
- Accessibility improvements like the establishment of a Regional Dial-A-Ride program and development of a Language Access Plan and forming an ADA Advisory Council will ensure the needs of all riders are being heard.
- Accountability standards for CTA, Metra, and Pace will directly tie funding to performance through a service standards model that measures metrics such as on-time performance, ridership, equipment failure rates, crowding, cleanliness, and customer satisfaction.
- Regionally coordinated service planning will improve connections between modes and operators and minimize gaps in service across the region.

Overall, these new initiatives, which will help the region meet objectives on safety and accessibility, could cost between $240 million to $310 million when fully implemented, which would come out of the regional operating budget in future years. For a full review of what is included in the NITA Act, see the a November 2025 memo summarizing the legislation and timeline of future milestones.

Capital Program makes significant infrastructure investments

A world-class transit system requires more than stable operating funding. It depends on tracks and bridges that can support reliable train operations; signals and power systems that meet modern requirements; stations that are clean, customer friendly, and accessible; buses and railcars that are modern, reliable and comfortable; maintenance facilities that support efficient operations and new technologies; all leading to a system that meets the needs of riders.

The 2026–2030 Five Year Regional Capital Program totals $9.246 billion in planned improvements focused on returning the system to a state of good repair, making all stations accessible, transitioning to zero-emissions and providing limited expansions and upgrades. After accounting for CTA debt-service payments, the region has $8.269 billion for capital projects in the five-year program. The Capital program builds on sustained work to bring the transit system into a state of good repair and prepares the network for operational growth.

Major investments across CTA, Metra, and Pace will continue during the years covered by this capital program, including the CTA Red Line Extension, modernization of Metra's rolling stock and bridges, electrification of CTA and Pace's bus fleets and facilities, and continued work to make all CTA and Metra rail stations accessible. These projects will not only strengthen service reliability but enhance access to opportunities throughout the region and improve the day-to-day rider experience.

Despite these investments, the long-term capital needs of a large legacy transit system like Chicago are great. The 10-year regional capital funding need articulated in the report is $44.6 billion. RTA's Strategic Asset Management group has calculated that it would take an annual investment of $4 billion per year over the next 20 years to bring the system into a state of good repair and additional funds are needed to expand and improve the existing system. The current five-year program averages less than $2 billion per year, leaving a big gap compared to the capital need. The current capital program relies heavily on CTA bonds, which has proven to be an unsustainable funding source. The region needs to continue to develop more sustainable funding streams to increase capital funding to maintain and improve the transit system. The NITA Act does include new capital revenue in the form of interest on the Road Fund balance, which means an additional $180 million for the RTA region annually. That increase is not reflected in this budget but will be added to the program through the capital budget amendment process in 2026.

A shared victory for riders and the region

The progress represented in this budget was made possible through shared commitment. The RTA is deeply grateful to Governor JB Pritzker, House Speaker Chris Welch, Senate President Don Harmon, Senator Ram Villivalam, Representative Eva-Dina Delgado, Representative Kam Buckner, and members of the General Assembly whose sustained leadership made the NITA Act possible. The RTA also recognizes county and municipal partners, labor organizations, disability and rider advocacy groups, business and civic organizations, and residents whose voices shaped the path forward. The region owes particular gratitude to the frontline workforce of CTA, Metra, Pace, and ADA Paratransit services, whose daily work ensures that transit remains a reliable public service.

The work that led to the NITA Act was also shaped by the lived experience of riders. Over the past five years the RTA spent countless hours engaging and listening to riders and elevating their voices in the conversation. From stakeholder working groups that helped develop the 2023 strategic plan *Transit is the Answer*, to the resulting Transit is the Answer Coalition that meets regularly to discuss important issues facing transit, to a revamped Citizen Advisory Board that put riders at the forefront, to storytelling across all channels that shared why transit was worth saving – all voices mattered. From April to October 2025, more than 20,000 letters were delivered to state lawmakers through the Save Transit Now campaign and thousands of residents used that platform to share personal stories and messages that ensured this issue could not be forgotten.

Riders consistently said that transit is critical for them to access work, medical care, education, childcare, and community. It is what led many to move to Chicago and is a core part of what they love about this region. Thousands of people brought their passion for transit to this conversation, and those rider perspectives will be at the center of new investment.

The 2026 Operating Budget, Two-Year Financial Plan, and Five-Year Capital Program reflect a shift from crisis to renewal. With sustainable operating funding secured and a strengthened framework for regional governance, the transit agencies can now focus on improving reliability, expanding service, modernizing infrastructure, advancing accessibility, and delivering a transit experience that is more seamless, intuitive, and equitable. 2026 will be a year of building the foundation for what comes next – with riders at the forefront.

"This moment reflects years of sustained effort, partnership, and belief in what transit means to the Chicago region. We have secured long-term stability and now the responsibility is to deliver on that promise. The work ahead is both complex and full of possibility. I am confident in the commitment and collaboration of the transit agencies moving forward. Together, we are ready for this next chapter."

— Leanne Redden, RTA Executive Director

Regional Operating Budget

This section summarizes the 2026 Regional Operating Budget and Two-Year Financial Plan, which is comprised of each Service Board's operating budget and the RTA Agency budget. This first section of the document contains high-level summaries of the regional budget. More complete details may be found in the subsequent CTA, Metra, Pace Suburban Service, ADA Paratransit, and RTA Agency sections.

Regional Operating Budget

The passage of SB2111 by the Illinois General Assembly in late October will provide more than $1.2 billion in projected new funding for transit operations in the RTA Region. This new funding has resulted in revised Service Board budgets from what was originally proposed for 2026, each of which avoid the fare increases and service reductions the region had previously expected. The Service Boards' remaining $509 million of reserves related to federal COVID-19 relief funding are projected to fully exhaust during the second half of 2026, followed by the timely initiation of funding flows from an increased RTA sales tax and from the existing State sales tax on gasoline.

The 2026 regional operating budget totals $4.352 billion of expense, a 4.9% increase from the adopted 2025 regional budget, and a 7.2% increase from the most recent estimate of 2025 actual expenses. The Service Boards' 2026 operating budgets reflect operating expense increases due to higher service levels, added security, and inflationary increases in labor, material, and other expenses.

Unless otherwise noted, growth rates in this document are calculated by comparing 2026 Budget figures to 2025 Estimate figures, which the Service Board finance teams have reforecast based on the most recent financial results, ridership, and operating trends of the current year. Such a comparison generally provides a more useful and meaningful view than comparing the (2026) budget to the prior year (2025) budget.

Ridership

In 2025, RTA system ridership continued a steady recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Total ridership reached 72% of pre-COVID levels over the summer and is forecasted to finish the year at about 384 million. As shown in Table 1, ridership for 2026 is budgeted to continue recovering to 393 million, an increase of 2.2% from 2025, and 71% of the pre-COVID 2019 level of 550 million rides. Each Service Board is projecting ridership increases, ranging from a 1.3% gain at CTA to an 11.4% gain for ADA Paratransit. Compared to pre-COVID ridership results, Metra's budget assumes ridership at 66% of 2019 levels, CTA and Pace at 71%, and ADA Paratransit at 167%.

Table 1. Regional Ridership Forecast

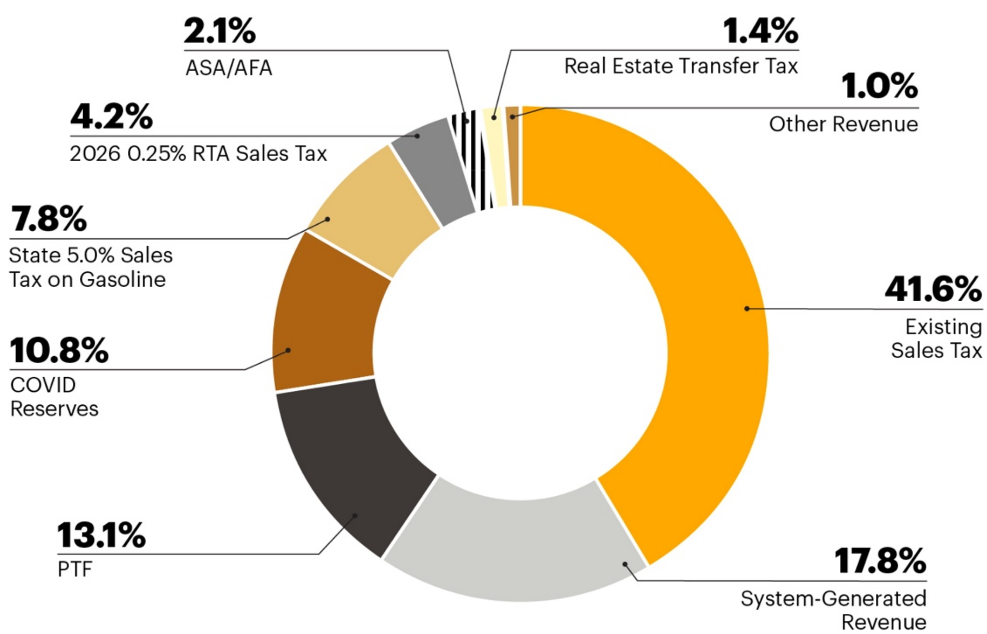
Ridership (in millions)		2025 Estimate	2026 Budget	Growth
CTA		320.8	324.9	+1.3%
Metra		38.6	40.5	+5.0%
Pace Suburban Service		18.5	20.2	+9.4%
ADA Paratransit		6.4	7.1	+11.4%
System		**384.3**	**392.8**	**+2.2%**
	% of 2019	**70%**	**71%**	

System-Generated Revenue

System-generated revenue consists primarily of passenger fares as well as ancillary revenue from sources such as the lease of space, advertising, and investment income. It also includes the state reduced fare reimbursement funding, which partially compensates the Service Boards for mandated free and reduced fare programs. In accordance with the requirements of SB2111, no general fare increases are included in the 2026 CTA, Metra, Pace, and ADA Paratransit budgets.

The Service Boards' 2026 budgets anticipate $836.0 million of system-generated revenue, a decrease of $16.9 million, or 2.0%, from the 2025 estimate, due to lower levels of ancillary revenue. As shown in Figure 2, system-generated revenue accounts for only 18% of the $4.691 billion of total revenue now estimated to be available for 2026 operations, with the balance coming from public funding sources and federal COVID-19 reserves, discussed next.

Figure 2. 2026 Revenues: $4.691 billion



Public Funding

Overall public funding for the 2026 budget is projected at $3.347 billion, an increase of $626.2 million or 23.0% from the 2025 estimate. About 42% of the region's revenue for operations is budgeted to come from the existing regional RTA sales tax imposed at 1.25% in Cook County and 0.5% in the collar counties. Existing RTA sales tax receipts are expected to finish 2025 at $1.897 billion, an increase of 11.0% from 2024 due primarily to the extension of RTA sales tax to more online purchases. As established with the 2026-2028 funding amounts adopted in August, existing RTA sales tax is assumed to grow by 3.0% in 2026, to $1.954 billion, followed by growth of 2.5% in 2027 and 2.0% in 2028, finishing the planning period at $2.043 billion. The existing state surcharge of 1.5% on RTA sales tax collections is assumed to remain in place, reducing RTA and Service Board funding by nearly $30 million per year.

Two new revenue sources for transit operations have been established by SB2111, though no new funding from the bill is expected to flow to the RTA until later in 2026. First, a 0.25% increase to the RTA sales tax in the six-county region is required to be approved by the RTA Board within 60 days of the bill becoming effective on June 1, 2026, and would begin to be collected in August 2026 with first receipts expected to reach the RTA and Service Boards in November. Second, under SB2111 85% of the State's 5.0% component of the existing 6.25% State sales tax on gasoline has been designated to support transit in Northeastern Illinois, effective in July 2026. Combined, these two new sources are projected to yield $564.7 million in 2026, or about 12% of total RTA revenues, before growing to more than $1.25 billion in 2027 and 2028, as their full year impact takes hold.

The majority of state funding received by the RTA is based on a 30% match of existing RTA sales tax and Real Estate Transfer Tax (RETT) receipts. The match funding comes from the State's Public Transportation Fund (PTF), which is expected to provide $614.4 million for 2026 operations. No PTF match is provided on the two new SB2111 revenue sources discussed above. RETT receipts are expected to increase by 3.0% in 2026 to $67.0 million, in line with the sales tax growth assumption. State Financial Assistance (AFA) for state funded reimbursement of debt service on RTA Strategic Capital Improvement Program (SCIP) bonds is budgeted at $99.1 million for 2026. Other miscellaneous revenue sources, including increased state funding support of $11.5 million for Pace ADA Paratransit service, comprise 1.0% of total revenue.

Federal Relief Funding Reserves

A total of $3.540 billion of federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSAA) Act, and American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act COVID-19 relief funding was provided to the RTA region in 2020 and 2021. By the end of 2024, the Service Boards had fully drawn down their individual allocations of federal relief funding to be held in reserve for operating budget support. The Service Boards and RTA estimate that $3.031 billion or 85.6% of the region's federal relief funding and associated reserves will have been used by the end of 2025.

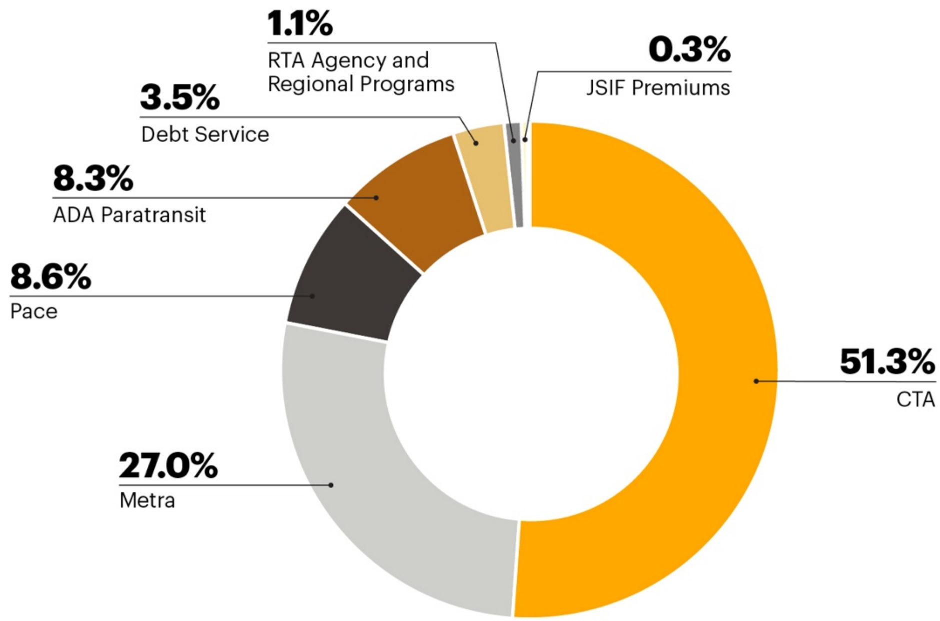
As shown in Figure 2, the Service Board 2026 budgets program the remaining $508.8 million of COVID reserves, representing 10.8% of total revenues for operations. The projected exhaustion of all regional COVID reserves in the second half of 2026 aligns with the timely initiation of new SB2111 RTA funding receipts.

Service Levels and Expenses

As shown in Figure 3, Service Board operating expenses comprise about 95% of the 2026 Regional Budget. The Service Board 2026 operating budgets incorporate service levels, as measured by vehicle revenue miles, generally at or above pre-COVID levels.

Each of the Service Boards anticipates significant 2026 operating expense growth relative to their 2025 estimates. CTA projects a 6.1% increase in expenses, driven primarily by labor, material, and other expenses. Metra operating costs are expected to increase by 10.3% due to higher labor expense and new regulatory requirements. Pace anticipates 12.9% expense growth driven by service additions and associated labor and fringe costs. ADA Paratransit expenses are projected to increase by 9.4% due primarily to continued ridership and expense growth in subsidized services, the Rideshare Access Program (RAP) and Taxi Access Program (TAP).

Figure 3. 2026 Expenses: $4.352 Billion



RTA Agency and Regional Programs expenses are budgeted at $48.8 million, a decrease of 12.9% from the 2025 estimate, due to a year-over-year decrease in grant funded projects. The 2026 RTA Agency net expense, or funding requirement, is budgeted to remain flat from the 2025 level of $40.4 million. The RTA Agency budget represents 1.1% of 2026 regional expenses.

Other regional expenses, which include debt service on bonds issued for Service Board capital funding and Joint Self Insurance Fund (JSIF) premiums, comprise the remaining 3.8% of regional expenses. The projected RTA debt service level of $151.2 million includes principal and interest expense on existing long-term bonds.

When RTA and regional expenses are combined with Service Board operating expenses, total 2026 expenses for the RTA system are projected at $4.352 billion, an increase of 7.2% from the 2025 estimate. However, on a budget-to-budget basis, Service Board and RTA operating expense growth rates are significantly lower, at a combined 4.9%. Total regional operating expenses are subsequently projected to increase by 2.9% and 4.1% in 2027 and 2028, respectively, reaching $4.659 billion by the end of the planning period.

These total regional expense projections do not yet include costs for any expanded NITA responsibilities required by SB2111.

Net Result and Recovery Ratios

In response to the passage of SB2111, on November 6 the RTA Board adopted ordinance 2025-45, amending the Service Board operating funding amounts for 2026 through 2028, allocating sufficient funding to resolve the projected budget shortfalls for CTA, Metra, Pace Suburban Service, and Pace ADA Paratransit, and lowering required recovery ratios to align with the new legislation. As a result, Table 2 shows that the regional operating budget and two-year financial plan is balanced, with a net result of zero after the proposed transfer of remaining operating funding to the RTA. These transfers of $319 million, $375 million, and $292 million in 2026, 2027, and 2028, respectively, are for future funding contingencies including NITA-specific expenses.

The 2026 CTA, Metra, and Pace operating budgets exceed the revised RTA-specified recovery ratios of 20%, 22%, and 12%, respectively, with all revenue inclusions and expense exclusions except security costs now disallowed. The ADA Paratransit budget meets its revised recovery ratio of 5.0%.

The resulting RTA regional recovery ratio for 2026 is budgeted at 21.8%. SB2111 established a revised regional recovery ratio requirement of 25% for the 2026 through 2029 budgets but also provided relief from this requirement for fiscal year 2026 only. The regional operating budget will be unable to meet the 25% recovery ratio requirement for 2027 and 2028, due in part to the prohibition of a previously proposed fare increase and to the new requirement to include previously excluded debt service in recovery ratio expenses.

For purposes of considering the two-year financial plan for adoption, non-specific regional-level revenue credits of $190 million and $212 million have been included in the recovery ratio calculation for 2027 and 2028, respectively. This proposed approach self-discloses the inability to meet the new requirement while elevating the budgeted recovery ratio to the 25% required for RTA Board adoption. These regional-level credits also represent the potential penalty for non-compliance of the 2027 and 2028 NITA budgets unless a legislative remedy can be found in advance of those budget cycles.

Table 2. Statement of Regional Revenues and Expenses (in thousands)

	2024 Actual	2025 Estimate	2026 Budget	2027 Plan	2028 Plan
Revenues					
Service Board Revenues					
CTA	440,661	477,445	455,683	457,158	461,665
Metra	240,200	307,400	305,100	256,300	268,200
Pace	54,595	49,274	50,765	49,370	48,744
ADA Paratransit	16,054	18,813	24,451	25,073	25,667
Total System-Generated Revenue	**$751,510**	**$852,932**	**$835,999**	**$787,901**	**$804,276**
Public Funding					
RTA Sales Tax	1,708,658	1,896,764	1,953,666	2,002,508	2,042,558
Public Transportation Fund (PTF)	531,316	585,275	614,390	631,020	644,274
2026 0.25% RTA Sales Tax	-	-	199,167	520,720	531,134
State 5.0% Sales Tax on Gasoline (85%)	-	-	365,500	731,000	745,620
Real Estate Transfer Tax (RETT)	58,691	65,091	67,043	70,395	73,915
State Financial Assistance (ASA/AFA)	108,925	103,358	99,131	99,216	99,322
State Funding for ADA Paratransit	9,108	10,020	11,500	11,500	11,500
RTA ADA Paratransit Reserve	25,501	8,260	-	-	-
Federal Discretionary Funding	10,224	5,916	5,436	-	-
ICE Carryforward[1]	-	16,598	17,390	19,304	19,883
Other RTA Revenue[2]	42,969	29,148	13,410	18,617	19,101
Total Public Funding	**$2,495,393**	**$2,720,429**	**$3,346,632**	**$4,104,281**	**$4,187,307**
Agency Reserves					
Agency Reserves[3]	564,156	512,483	508,783	-	-
Total Agency Reserves	**$564,156**	**$512,483**	**$508,783**	**$0**	**$0**
Total Revenues	**$3,811,059**	**$4,085,844**	**$4,691,415**	**$4,892,182**	**$4,991,583**
Expenses					
Service Board Expenses					
CTA	1,938,541	2,103,003	2,231,565	2,300,144	2,377,733
Metra	1,002,400	1,065,000	1,175,000	1,195,000	1,255,000
Pace	274,950	333,039	372,412	381,082	402,118

	2024 Actual	2025 Estimate	2026 Budget	2027 Plan	2028 Plan
ADA Paratransit	277,528	330,098	361,263	379,647	400,129
Total Service Board Expenses	**$3,493,419**	**$3,831,140**	**$4,140,240**	**$4,255,873**	**$4,434,980**
Region/Agency Expenses					
Debt Service	177,834	163,297	151,218	151,432	151,349
RTA Agency and Regional Programs	53,241	56,013	48,775	57,694	59,425
Joint Self-Insurance Fund (JSIF)	10,997	11,547	12,125	12,731	13,367
Total Region/Agency Expenses	**$242,072**	**$230,857**	**$212,118**	**$221,857**	**$224,141**
Total Expenses	**$3,735,491**	**$4,061,997**	**$4,352,359**	**$4,477,730**	**$4,659,121**
ICE funding not used for operations - transfer to capital	-	-	-	(19,304)	(19,883)
ICE funding retained by RTA for future distribution	(17,390)	(19,304)	(19,883)	(20,381)	(20,788)
Other transfers[4]	(18,607)	-	(319,173)	(374,767)	(291,790)
Net Result	**$39,571**	**$4,543**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
Regional Recovery Ratio (Statutory)[5]	**46.9%**	**43.0%**	**21.8%**	**25.0%**	**25.0%**

[1] RTA distribution of 2024, 2025 actual and 2026, 2027,2028 estimated ICE funding.

[2] Includes income from financial transactions and investments, sales tax interest, and revenues from RTA programs and projects.

[3] Resulting from previous drawdowns of federal CARES Act, CRRSAA, and ARP Act funding. Authorized for inclusion as revenue for recovery ratio purposes only through 2025.

[4] 2024 Includes DSDA revenue and transfers to RTA reserves. 2026 through 2028 tentatively retained by RTA for regional funding contingencies and future NITA expenses.

[5] 2027 and 2028 include non-specific revenue credits of $190 million and $212 million, respectively, to achieve 25% requirement.

Innovation, Coordination, and Enhancement Funding and Projects

Table 3 summarizes the Service Board uses and amounts of Innovation, Coordination, and Enhancement (ICE) funding. Allocation of ICE funding resumed in 2025 following a two-year pause. As a result, allocated 2026 ICE funding is sourced from 2024 actual results, and 2027 and 2028 ICE funding is associated with estimated 2025 and 2026 amounts, respectively.

Before the new legislation was passed, the RTA Board was committed to delaying potential service cuts as long as possible. In August, the RTA Board declared an ICE emergency with the initial 2026 funding amounts and allocated all $17.4 million of 2026 ICE funding to CTA for operating budget support. Following the passage of SB2111, CTA, Metra, and Pace have each programmed 2027 and 2028 ICE funding in their capital programs, with estimated funding amounts and projects also shown in the table.

Table 3. Proposed Uses of ICE Funding (in thousands)

		2026	2027	2028
CTA				
	Operating:	17,390	-	-
	Capital:			
	Purchase Articulated Electric Buses	-	797	855
	Upgrade Technology Systems	-	1,912	1,279
	Train Tracker Digital Signage Upgrade	-	6,557	7,410
	CTA Total	**17,390**	**9,266**	**9,544**
Metra				
	Capital:			
	Zero-Emissions Trainsets	-	7,529	7,755
	Metra Total	**-**	**7,529**	**7,755**
Pace				
	Capital:			
	Fixed Route Electric Buses	-	2,510	2,585
	Pace Total	**-**	**2,510**	**2,585**
	Total ICE Funding	**$17,390**	**$19,304**	**$19,883**

Primary RTA Public Funding Sources

RTA Sales Tax Part I: The original RTA sales tax, levied at 1.0% in Cook County and 0.25% in the collar counties of DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will. 85% of Sales Tax I receipts are distributed to the Service Boards according to a statutory formula. The remaining 15% of Sales Tax I is initially retained by the RTA to fund regional and agency expenses before being allocated at the direction of the RTA Board.

RTA Sales Tax Part II: Authorized by the 2008 funding reform, an additional sales tax of 0.25% in all six counties of the RTA region. Sales Tax II is distributed to the Service Boards according to a statutory formula after deducting funds for ADA Paratransit, Pace Suburban Community Mobility, and RTA Innovation, Coordination, and Enhancement (ICE). After these deductions, CTA receives 48%, Metra 39%, and Pace 13%.

***New* 2026 0.25% RTA Sales Tax**: Authorized by SB2111 in late 2025, an additional sales tax of 0.25% in all six counties of the RTA region. Expected to be effective in August 2026 and will be allocated by the NITA Board within the revised funding formula for 2027 and beyond.

***New* State 5.0% Sales Tax on Gasoline**: Also authorized by SB2111, the RTA region receives 85% of the 5.0% State portion of the existing 6.25% State sales tax on gasoline. Expected to be effective in July 2026 and will be allocated by the NITA Board within the revised funding formula for 2027 and beyond.

Real Estate Transfer Tax (RETT): The 2008 funding reform also increased the City of Chicago RETT by $1.50 per $500 of property transferred and dedicated this additional tax revenue to directly fund CTA operating expenses.

Public Transportation Fund (PTF) Part I: PTF Part I is State-provided funding comprised of a 25% match of Sales Tax I receipts. 100% of PTF I is retained by the RTA and combined with 15% of Sales Tax I to form the basis for funding to be allocated at the direction of the RTA Board.

Public Transportation Fund (PTF) Part II: PTF Part II, authorized by the 2008 funding reform, is State-provided funding equal to a 5% match of Sales Tax I receipts and a 30% match of Sales Tax II receipts and RETT receipts. After allocating 5/6 of the PTF on RETT receipts to CTA, the remaining PTF II is distributed to the Service Boards by the same statutory formula used to allocate Sales Tax II.

State Financial Assistance: State-provided assistance to reimburse the RTA’s debt service on Strategic Capital Improvement Program (SCIP) bonds. Beginning in State FY 2026, it consists of only Additional Financial Assistance (AFA).

State Reduced Fare Reimbursement: State-provided reimbursement to the Service Boards, via the RTA, to partially offset the cost of providing reduced fare and free ride programs mandated by law, including those for seniors and disabled persons.

CTA Operating Budget

The 2026 operating budget reflects the CTA's commitment to improved service and continued growth while not raising fares. Overall operating expense levels for 2026 are $2.232 billion, a 6.1% increase from the 2025 estimate and a 3.5% increase from the 2025 budget, driven primarily by labor costs. CTA's remaining $256.9 million of COVID reserves are expected to be fully utilized in 2026 to balance the budget.

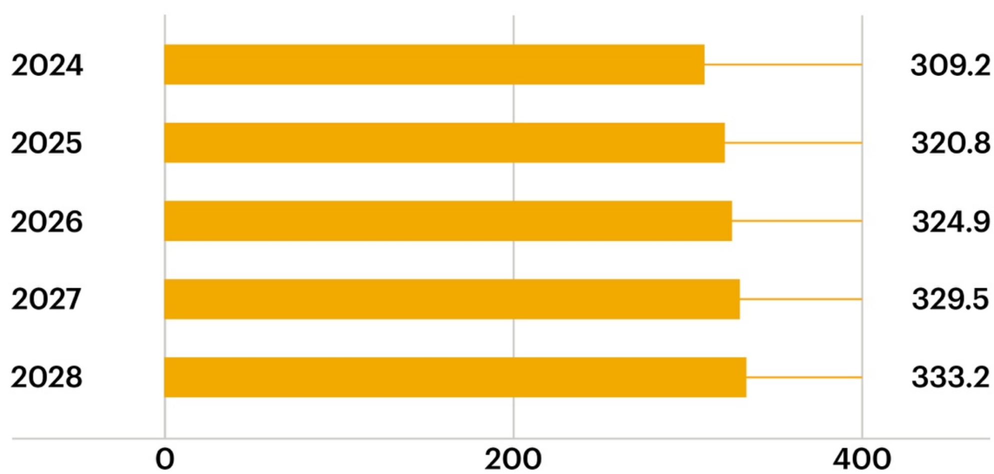
"Under my vision for CTA, we are performance-focused, people-driven, centered in welcoming places, and rooted in dynamic partnerships. Being driven by these principles means that we are making historic strides in terms of analyzing the root causes of service impacts to inform impactful strategies including innovative ways to manage service delivery and target investments in aging infrastructure. It also means we are using data and customer feedback in new ways to inform safety and security initiatives – and advancing key work in areas such as equitable transit-oriented development."

Nora Leerhsen, Acting CTA President

Ridership

While ridership has continued to improve since the pandemic, there has been a definitive shift in the mobility patterns of CTA riders. While weekday ridership continues to have the most rides, weekend ridership continues to increase as a percentage of total rides. CTA's total 2025 ridership is projected to end the year at 320.8 million, or about 71% of 2019 ridership. The 2026 operating budget anticipates ridership growth of 1.3% from the 2025 estimate to 324.9 million rides. Slight growth is anticipated for 2027 and 2028, with total ridership projected to reach 73% of pre-COVID levels by the end of the planning period.

Figure 4. CTA Ridership (millions)



Fares

No fare increases are implemented in the 2026 budget. The full bus fare remains at $2.25 while the full rail fare is $2.50 with no transfer fee, and the 30-Day Pass is also unchanged at $75. CTA's average 2026 fare is projected to decrease by 1 cent to $1.12. CTA's average fare accounts for ridership of all fare types, including a significant number of free and reduced fare rides. Minor fluctuations in average fare may be expected across the planning period as ridership and ticket mix (i.e., pass and multi-day products versus single rides) vary. The price reductions to the 1-Day, 3-Day, and 7-Day passes implemented in 2021 have been instrumental in driving ridership growth and strengthening fare revenues.

Figure 5. CTA Average Fare

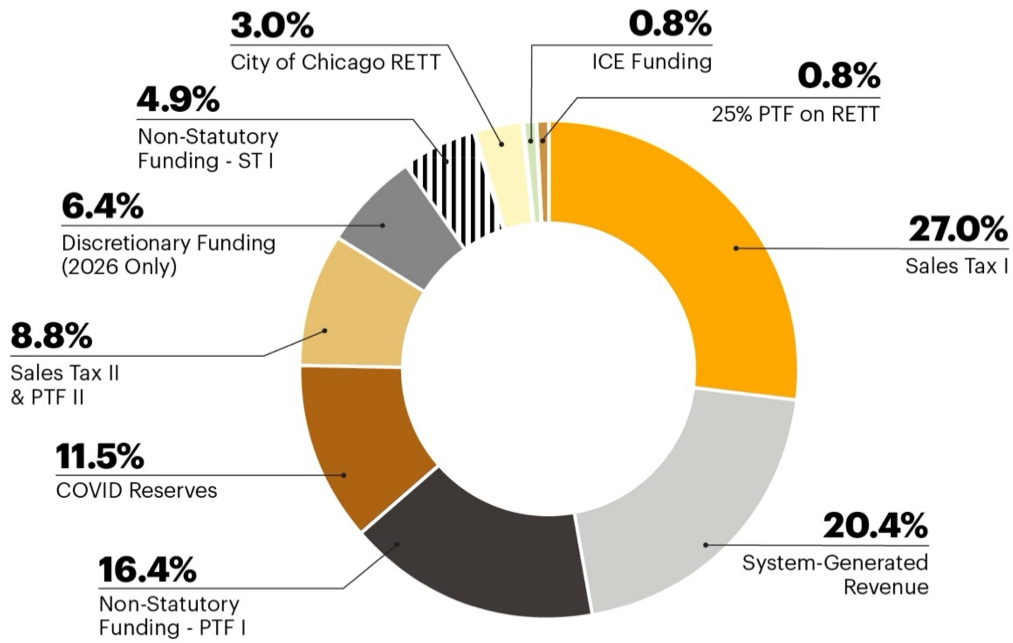
System-Generated Revenue

Total system-generated revenue is projected to decrease by 4.6% to $455.7 million in 2026, driven primarily by lower investment income. Passenger fare revenue is budgeted to grow slightly by 0.3% compared to the 2025 forecast, which is consistent with the budgeted higher ridership.

CTA's share of the State reduced fare reimbursement increased to $19.2 million in 2026 due to an increase in the State FY26 appropriation. This reduced-fare subsidy covers less than 20% of the more than $100 million cost of actual free and reduced rides provided by the CTA annually. CTA's Other Revenue category is expected to decline by 25.4% in 2026 to $72.3 million due to lower investment income as interest rates decline and the operating reserves are exhausted.

System-generated revenue comprises 20.4% of CTA's total revenue for operations, with the balance provided by public funding sources and one-time COVID reserves.

Figure 6. CTA 2026 Revenues: $2.232 Billion



Public Funding

As a result of the continued growth in RTA sales tax receipts and the recently passed legislation, total public funding for CTA operations in 2026 is projected at $1.519 billion, 22.6% higher than the 2025 estimate. CTA's funding assumptions for 2026 through 2028 match the revised RTA Board adopted funding marks. CTA's total public funding also includes Chicago RETT receipts projected at $67.0 million to $73.9 million across the budget and plan years. CTA has reflected $17.4 million of ICE funds to support operations in 2026, followed by the transfer of ICE funds to the capital program in 2027 and 2028.

Federal Relief Funding

CTA was allocated a total of $2.209 billion of combined CARES Act, CRRSAA, ARP Act, and ARP Act discretionary federal relief funding to help offset fare revenue and RTA funding losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. By the end of 2024, CTA had drawn down the totality of its relief funding to be held in reserve for future use. To balance expenses, CTA's 2026 operating budget relies on its remaining $256.9 million of federal COVID reserves, which are forecast to exhaust in the second half of the year.

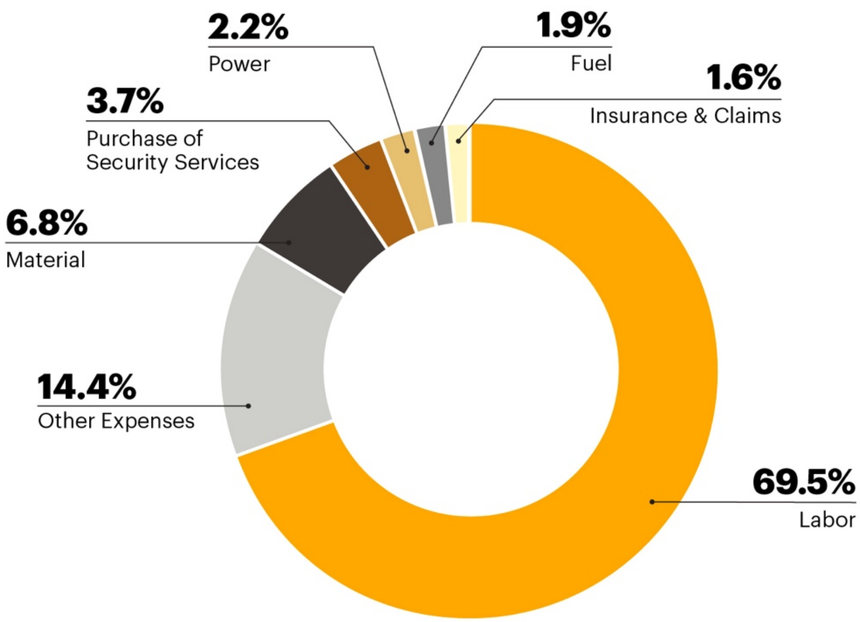
Expenses

CTA's 2026 operating expense level is $2.232 billion, an increase of $128.6 million or 6.1% from the 2025 estimate driven primarily by higher labor and other expenses. Labor, CTA's largest expense category, is budgeted to increase by 6.4% to $1.550 billion from the 2025 forecast due to contractual wage increases and higher health insurance costs and worker's compensation costs. Other expenses are budgeted at $321.5 million in 2026, an increase of 9.2% compared to the 2025 estimate. CTA's other expense category includes expenses such as contractual services, utilities, legal fees, advertising, bank fees, debt service for Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loans and outstanding pension obligation bonds, and consulting services. Total CTA operating expenses are forecast to further increase by 3.1% in 2027 and reach $$2.378 million by 2028.

The 2026-2030 capital program includes proposed CTA bond issuances of $1.542 billion, and CTA has provided estimated financing parameters as required by the Budget Call. CTA's

2026 capital program contains approximately $190.9 million of annual debt service expense, while $106.3 million of existing debt service expense resides in the 2026 operating budget including debt service on pension obligation bonds.

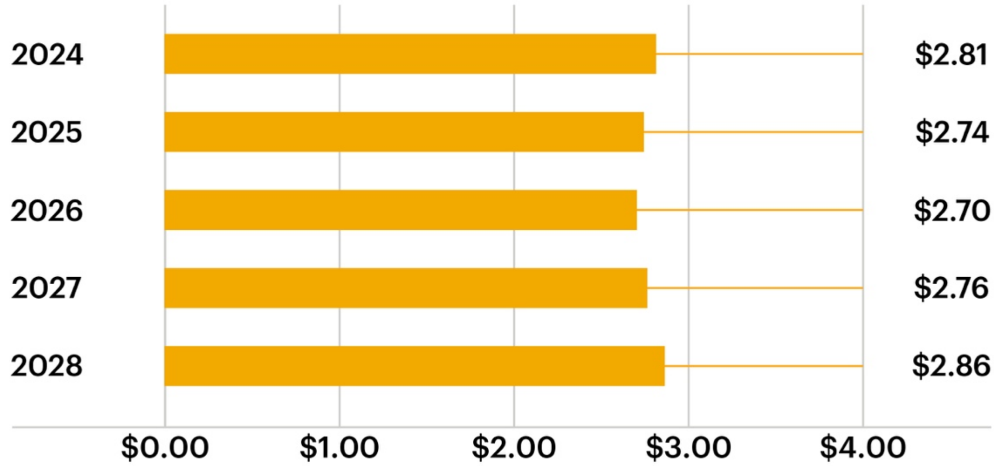
Figure 7. CTA 2026 Expenses: $2.232 Billion



The fuel expense of $43.2 million represents 1.9% of CTA's total expense and is budgeted at $2.70 per gallon, 4 cents lower than the 2025 estimate. By continuing its practice of fixed price purchasing for 2026, and locking in 70% of anticipated consumption in advance, fuel expense has remained stable despite volatility in the diesel market. The planning period assumes flat fuel consumption levels as ridership continues to increase while bus fleet efficiency improves with the rehabilitation and replacement of CTA's oldest diesel buses and deployment of new buses.

Traction power expense, electricity for CTA's rail system, is projected to grow by 29.2% in 2026 to $48.1 million compared to the 2025 forecast. This is because CTA received a credit from ComEd in 2025 that lowered expenses on a one-time basis. While the 2026 budget was based on an estimate of the supply charges provided by CTA's current electricity suppliers, CTA recently finished the review process of an RFP to acquire power supply for 2026, and signed a 3-year contract with Shell, which will provide CTA more cost certainty for 2026 and beyond. The 2027 expenses for traction power are estimated to be $48.5 million, and $48.8 million in 2028.

Figure 8. CTA Fuel Price Per Gallon



Net Result and Recovery Ratio

As shown in Table 4, CTA's operating budget is balanced in 2026 through 2028 by utilizing the remainder of CTA's available COVID reserves. Revenues equal expenditures, producing a net result of zero.

CTA's 2026 recovery ratio of 22.0%, calculated by dividing total operating revenue by total operating expenditures with approved security expense exclusions, exceeds the RTA Board adopted requirement of 20%. CTA has properly excluded remaining COVID reserves as a revenue credit for the purpose of meeting the required recovery ratio.

Table 4. CTA 2026 Budget and 2027-2028 Financial Plan (in thousands)

	2024 Actual	2025 Estimate	2026 Budget	2027 Plan	2028 Plan
Revenues					
System-Generated Revenue					
Passenger Revenue	$351,099	$362,228	$364,214	$ 367,086	$369,120
State Reduced Fare Reimbursement	$16,640	$18,304	$19,176	$19,176	$19,176
Other Revenue	$72,922	$96,913	$72,294	$70,896	$73,369
Total System-Generated Revenue	**$440,661**	**$477,445**	**$455,683**	**$457,158**	**$461,665**
Public Funding					
Sales Tax I	$526,689	$582,964	$602,213	$617,268	$629,613
Sales Tax II	$79,332	$88,182	$86,306	$84,774	$82,395
PTF II	$95,950	$106,276	$110,904	$113,920	$116,249
25% PTF on RETT	$13,726	$15,985	$17,246	$17,599	$18,479
Non-Statutory Funding - PTF I	$311,340	$340,925	$366,095	$368,567	$375,938
Non-Statutory Funding - ST I	$27,739	$39,351	$109,769	$53,157	$54,478

	2024 Actual	2025 Estimate	2026 Budget	2027 Plan	2028 Plan
Innovation, Coordination, and Enhancement Funding [1]	-	-	$17,390	$9,266	$9,544
City of Chicago RETT	$58,691	$65,091	$67,043	$70,395	$73,915
Discretionary Funding (2026 only)	-	-	$141,972	-	
Future SB 2111 Funding Allocation	-	-	-	$517,307	$565,003
Total Public Funding	**$1,113,468**	**$1,238,773**	**$1,518,938**	**$1,852,252**	**$1,925,613**
Agency Reserves					
Agency Reserves [2]	$384,412	$386,784	$256,944	-	-
Total Agency Reserves	**$384,412**	**$386,784**	**$256,944**	**-**	**-**
Total Revenues	**$1,938,541**	**$2,103,003**	**$2,231,565**	**$2,309,410**	**$2,387,277**
Expenses					
Labor	1,350,041	1,456,109	1,549,919	1,596,417	1,660,273
Material	129,197	134,755	151,772	155,688	159,674
Fuel	41,478	44,896	43,244	44,175	45,725
Power	35,802	37,220	48,094	48,522	48,790
Insurance & Claims	29,850	50,349	34,840	45,021	46,822
Purchase of Security Services	91,627	85,148	82,149	84,613	87,152
Other Expenses	260,546	294,526	321,547	325,709	329,299
Total Expenses	**$1,938,541**	**$2,103,003**	**$2,231,565**	**$2,300,144**	**$2,377,733**
ICE funding not used for operations - transfer to capital [1]	-	-	-	(9,266)	(9,544)
Net Result	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
Recovery Ratio	**50.9%**	**47.9%**	**22.0%**	**21.4%**	**20.9%**

[1] Paused for two years beginning in 2023. All 2025 funding (from 2023) allocated to ADA Paratransit. All 2026 funding (from 2024) allocated to CTA.

[2] Resulting from previous drawdowns of federal CARES Act, CRRSAA, and ARP Act funding. Authorized for inclusion as revenue for recovery ratio purposes only through 2025.

Metra Operating Budget

Metra's 2026 operating budget does not increase fares from the simplified zone-based structure implemented in February 2024. The overall operating expense level for 2026 is $1.175 billion, a 10.3% increase from the 2025 estimate and a 3.5% increase from the 2025 budget, driven primarily by projected inflationary and contractual increases in labor, fringe, materials, and other costs. An operating budget gap of $206.1 million for 2026 will be closed with remaining COVID reserves.

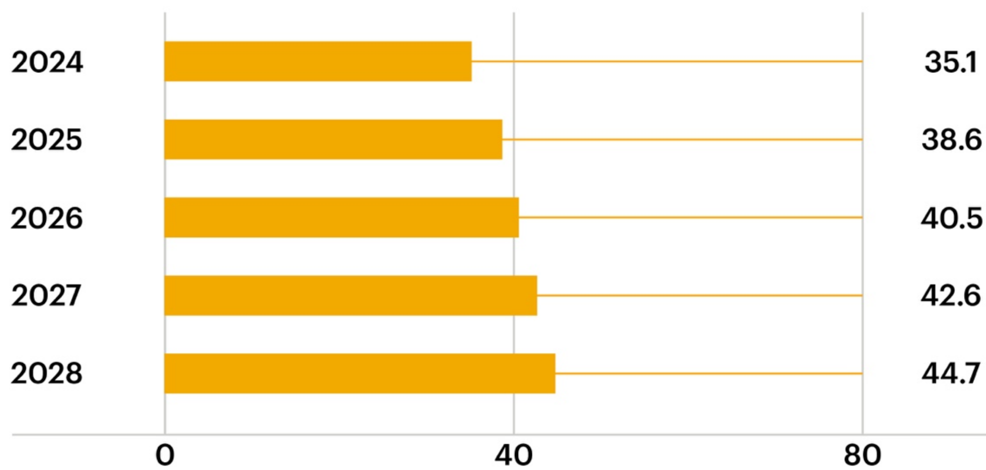
"As part of our current strategic plan, we recognized that we need to transition from 'commuter rail,' a service more oriented to 9-to-5 commuters, into 'regional rail,' a service that provides an all-day transportation option for all trips, not just 9-to-5 work trips. Schedules on many of our lines have moved toward that model. And we are working on a plan, known as the Systemwide Network Plan, that identifies improvements that would be needed to implement more frequent all-day service."

Jim Derwinski, Metra CEO/Executive Director

Ridership

Metra assumes that ridership will increase by 5.0% to 40.5 million rides in 2026, or about 66% of pre-COVID levels. Metra expects slow and steady ridership recovery to continue over the two-year financial planning period, to 69% of pre-COVID levels in 2027 and 73% in 2028, with some uncertainty related to how quickly employers may increase return to office requirements.

Figure 9. Metra Ridership (in millions)



Fares

In 2026, as directed by SB2111, Metra plans no changes to base fare levels or ticket and pass products, and as a result the projected average fare is largely unchanged at $4.64 through the budget and plan years. Metra's Monthly Pass sales have continued to increase due to the zone restructuring in 2024.

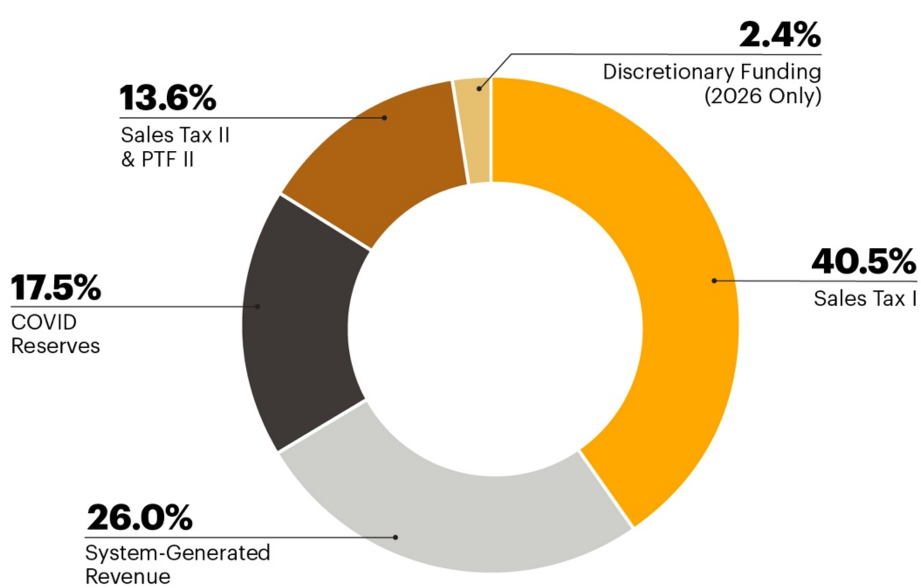
Figure 10. Metra Average Fare

System-Generated Revenue

Metra anticipates that total system-generated revenues will decrease by 0.7% from the 2025 estimate to $305.1 million. Other revenue is expected to decrease by 17.1% in 2026 as interest rates decline and operating reserves are exhausted. Metra's other revenue category includes fees for track usage by other railroads, lease of space, investment income, and advertising revenue. Fare revenue of $187.9 million is budgeted to increase in line with ridership growth and reflects an essentially flat average fare. Metra's $2.1 million share of the State reduced fare reimbursement, other revenue of $60.1 million, and the NICTD reimbursement of $55.0 million round out the system-generated revenue.

System-generated revenues comprise about 26% of Metra's total revenue for operations, with the balance provided by public funding sources and remaining COVID reserves.

Figure 11. Metra 2026 Revenues: $1.175 Billion



Public Funding

Metra's funding assumptions for 2026 through 2028 match the revised RTA Board adopted funding marks. As a result of the continued growth in RTA sales tax receipts and the recently passed legislation, total public funding for Metra operations in 2026 is projected at $663.8 million, 2.1% higher than the 2025 estimate. Metra has reflected the transfer of ICE funds to the capital program in its 2027-2028 fiscal years. When the initial funding amounts were adopted by the RTA Board in August 2025, Metra's normal allocations of non-statutory Sales Tax I and PTF I, as well as ICE funding, were shifted to CTA for 2026 only in order to delay CTA service cuts as long as possible.

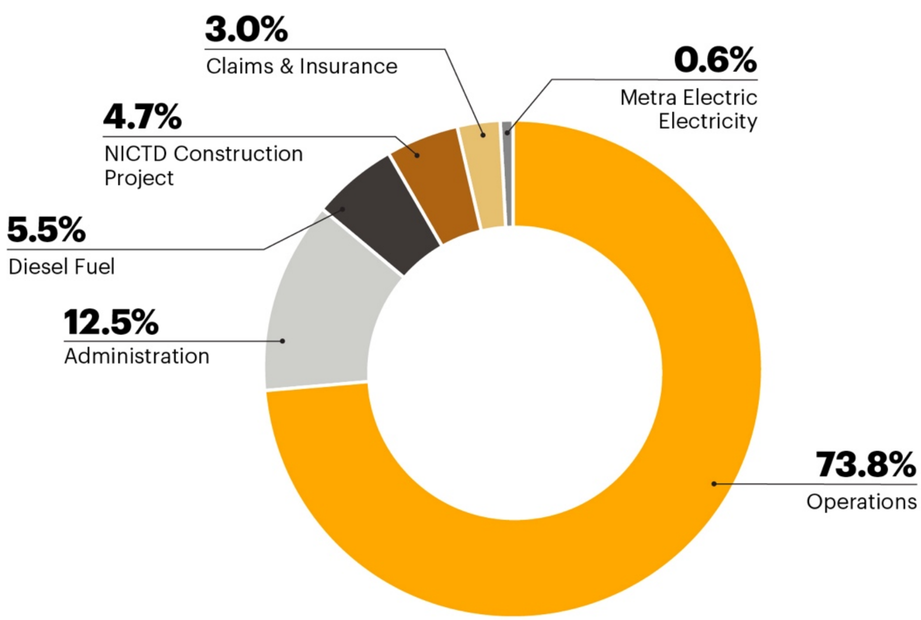
Federal Relief Funding

Metra was allocated a total of $1.076 billion of combined CARES Act, CRRSAA, and ARP Act federal relief funding to help offset fare revenue losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. By the end of 2024, Metra had drawn down the totality of its relief funding to be held in reserve for future use. To balance expenses, Metra's 2026 operating budget relies on the remaining $206.1 million of federal COVID reserves, which are forecast to exhaust late in the year.

Expenses

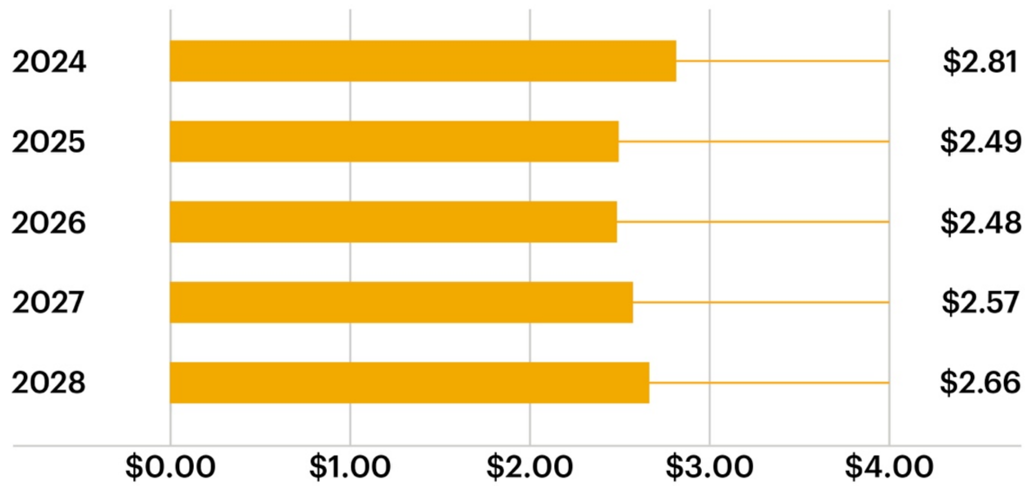
Metra's budget includes operating expenses of $1.175 billion for 2026, an increase of 10.3% from the 2025 estimate, including $55 million of reimbursable costs anticipated to be incurred by Metra related to the NICTD construction project on the Metra Electric District. Metra's operating expense increases are driven by inflationary, contractual, and market-based increases on labor, fringe, materials, and other costs. As a result, Operations, Metra's largest expense category which includes Transportation and Maintenance, is budgeted to increase by 11.1% in 2026, to $866.6 million. Total Metra expenses are forecast to grow at a lower rate of 1.7% in 2027 and by 5.0% in 2028 as the NICTD project wraps up and expenses settle to $1.255 billion by the end of the planning period.

Figure 12. Metra 2026 Expenses: $1.175 Billion



Diesel fuel for 2026 is budgeted at $65.0 million, up 1.9% from the 2025 estimate, and representing about 6% of total operating expenses. While the 2025 estimate assumes fuel at $2.49 per gallon on average, the 2026 budget reflects a fixed-rate, fixed-quantity agreement with Metra's supplier at $2.47 per gallon, with the remaining 11.2 million gallons assumed to be purchased on the spot market at $2.50 per gallon for an average of $2.48 per gallon. Metra's projected fuel expenses are $68.2 million and $71.7 million in 2027 and 2028, respectively.

Figure 13. Metra Fuel Price Per Gallon



Net Result and Recovery Ratio

As shown in Table 5, Metra's operating budget is balanced in 2026 through 2028 by utilizing the remainder of Metra's available COVID reserves. Revenues equal expenditures, producing a net result of zero.

Metra's 2026 recovery ratio of 27.0%, calculated by dividing total operating revenue by total operating expenditures with approved security expense exclusions, exceeds the RTA Board adopted requirement of 22%. Metra has properly excluded remaining COVID reserves as a revenue credit for the purpose of meeting the required recovery ratio.

Table 5. Metra 2026 Budget and 2027-2028 Financial Plan (in thousands)

	2024 Actual	2025 Estimate	2026 Budget	2027 Plan	2028 Plan
Revenues					
System-Generated Revenue					
Passenger Revenue	162,200	177,900	187,900	197,300	207,200
State Reduced Fare Reimbursement	1,800	2,000	2,100	2,100	2,100
Other Revenue	62,300	72,500	60,100	56,900	58,900
NICTD Project Reimbursement	13,900	55,000	55,000	-	-
Total System-Generated Revenue	**240,200**	**307,400**	**305,100**	**256,300**	**268,200**
Public Funding					
Sales Tax I	416,002	460,050	475,653	487,545	497,295
Sales Tax II	64,457	71,648	70,124	68,879	66,946
PTF II	77,959	86,349	90,109	92,560	94,452
Non-Statutory Funding - PTF I	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Statutory Funding - ST I	22,538	31,973	-	43,190	44,263
Innovation, Coordination, and Enhancement Funding[1]	-	-	-	7,529	7,755
Other Funding	1,500	-	-	-	-
Discretionary Funding (2026 only)	-	-	27,900	-	-
Future SB 2111 Funding Allocation	-	-	-	246,527	283,844
Total Public Funding	**582,456**	**650,020**	**663,786**	**946,229**	**994,555**
Agency Reserves					
Agency Reserves [2]	179,744	107,580	206,114	-	-
Total Agency Reserves	**179,744**	**107,580**	**206,114**	**-**	**-**
Total Revenues	**$1,002,400**	**$1,065,000**	**$1,175,000**	**$1,202,529**	**$1,262,755**
Expenses					
Transportation	309,100	313,900	329,800	361,800	380,300
Maintenance of Way	226,900	226,300	297,300	310,400	324,300
Maintenance of Equipment	221,000	239,900	239,500	251,900	266,500
Claims & Insurance	45,000	25,200	35,200	36,500	37,700
Administration	110,100	134,600	146,600	159,400	167,500

	2024 Actual	2025 Estimate	2026 Budget	2027 Plan	2028 Plan
Diesel Fuel	69,700	63,800	65,000	68,200	71,700
Motive Electricity	7,100	6,300	6,600	6,800	7,000
NICTD Construction Project	13,500	55,000	55,000	-	-
Total Expenses	**$1,002,400**	**$1,065,000**	**$1,175,000**	**$1,195,000**	**$1,255,000**
ICE funding not used for operations - transfer to capital [1]	-	-	-	(7,529)	(7,755)
Net Result	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
Recovery Ratio	**45.0%**	**41.8%**	**27.0%**	**22.3%**	**22.2%**

[1] Paused for two years beginning in 2023. All 2025 funding (from 2023) allocated to ADA Paratransit. All 2026 funding (from 2024) allocated to CTA.

[2] Resulting from previous drawdowns of federal CARES Act, CRRSAA, and ARP Act funding. Authorized for inclusion as revenue for recovery ratio purposes only through 2025.

Pace Operating Budget

Pace Suburban Service 2026 operating expenses are budgeted at $372.4 million, an increase of 12.9% from the 2025 estimate and 9.8% from the 2025 budget, due to modest service expansions and the impact of inflation, particularly on labor costs and health insurance. No fare increases are planned for 2026, and the operating budget remains balanced by utilizing reserves associated with COVID relief funding and an $18.9 million allocation of RTA discretionary funding enabled by SB2111. Highlights for the Suburban Service budget include increased frequency on high-demand routes and expanded OnDemand services throughout the six-county region.

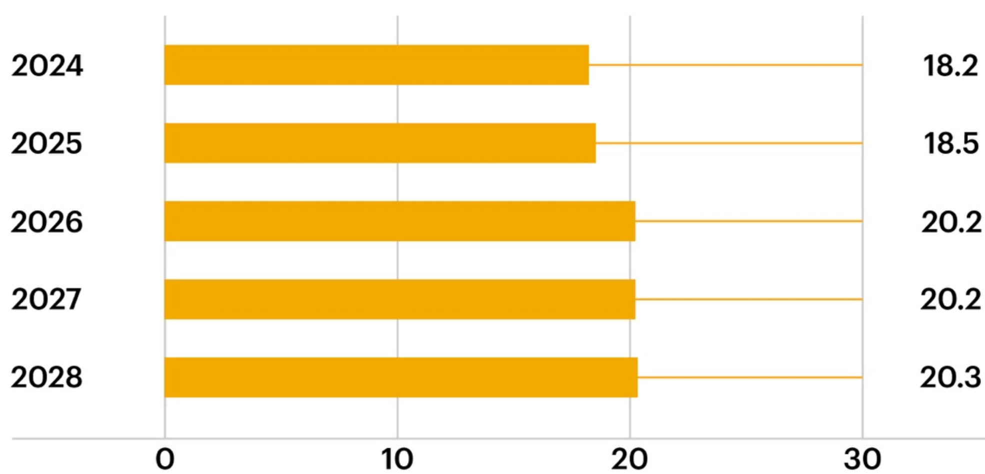
"Our work has never been more important. Together, with the support of our riders, employees, and elected officials, we can meet this moment and build a stronger, more resilient transit system for the future. We are proud to represent the riders and communities who rely on Pace every day."

Melinda Metzger, Pace Executive Director

Ridership

Pace ridership is estimated to finish 2025 at 18.5 million, a 1.7% increase over 2024. Combined ridership for the three Suburban Service modes—Fixed-Route, Demand-Response, and Vanpool—is budgeted to increase by an additional 9.4% in 2026 to 20.2 million, or about 71% of pre-pandemic levels. Pace anticipates ridership gains for each mode in 2026, but total ridership growth is assumed to slow in the subsequent two-year planning period, reaching 20.3 million in 2028.

Figure 17. Pace Ridership (millions)



Fares

As directed by SB2111, Pace's 2026 budget does not incorporate any general fare increases. Single ride cash fare remains at $2.25, or $2.00 using Ventra, with a 30-day pass priced at $75. Pace's average fare across all fare and pass types is projected to remain fairly steady at about $1.17 across the budget and planning period.

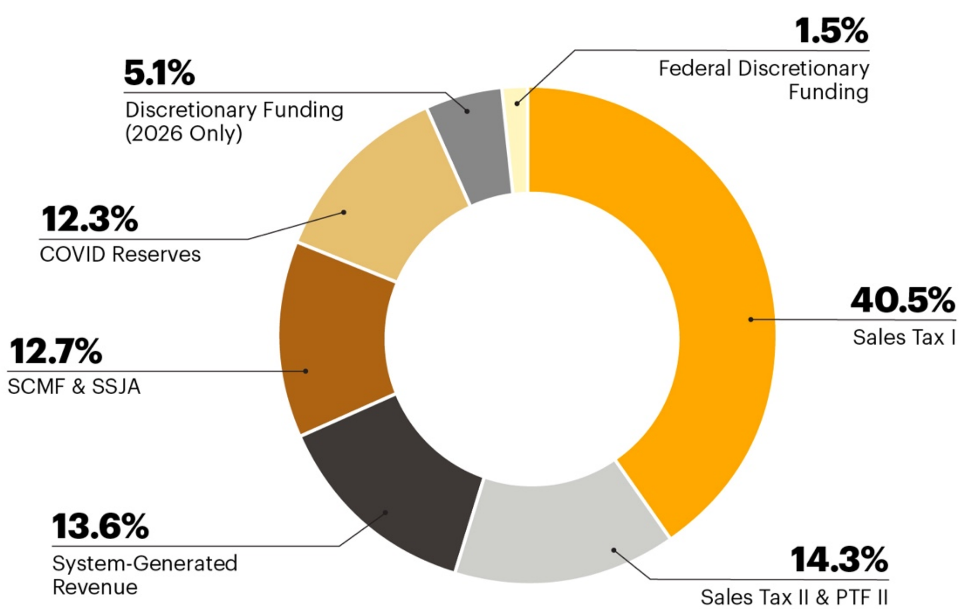
Figure 14. Pace Average Fare

System-Generated Revenue

Pace projects that total 2026 system-generated revenue will increase by 3.2% to $50.8 million, despite an expected decrease in ancillary revenue. Pace has budgeted for passenger fare revenue to increase by 8.7% to $23.7 million in 2026, consistent with forecast ridership growth related to service additions. Pace’s $1.8 million share of the State reduced fare reimbursement has increased over 2025 due to a higher State appropriation. Rounding out Pace’s system-generated revenue is other revenue of $25.3 million, a decrease of 1.2% due to reduced investment income caused by lower interest rates and the planned utilization of reserve cash. This ancillary revenue also includes advertising income and local government contributions for specific Pace services.

System-generated revenue comprises about 14% of Pace’s total revenue for operations, with the balance provided by public funding sources and reserves from prior federal relief funding drawdowns.

Figure 15. Pace 2026 Revenues: $372.4 Million



Public Funding

Pace's total 2026 public funding is projected to increase by 3.9% from the 2025 estimate, to $275.9 million. In addition to statutory sales tax and PTF components, Pace's public funding total includes $5.4 million of federal discretionary funding. When the initial funding amounts were adopted by the RTA Board in August 2025, Pace's normal allocations of non-statutory Sales Tax I and PTF I, as well as ICE funding, were shifted to CTA for 2026 only in order to delay CTA service cuts as long as possible.

Pace's public funding assumptions for 2026 through 2028 match the revised marks adopted by the RTA Board in November for sales tax, PTF, Suburban Community Mobility Funds, South Suburban Job Access Funds, and RTA non-statutory funding and discretionary funding. The revised marks tentatively allocated enough new SB2111 funding to remedy Pace's projected budget shortfalls in 2027 and 2028, and Pace has in turn reflected the transfer of prior-year ICE funds to the Pace capital program in that two-year planning period.

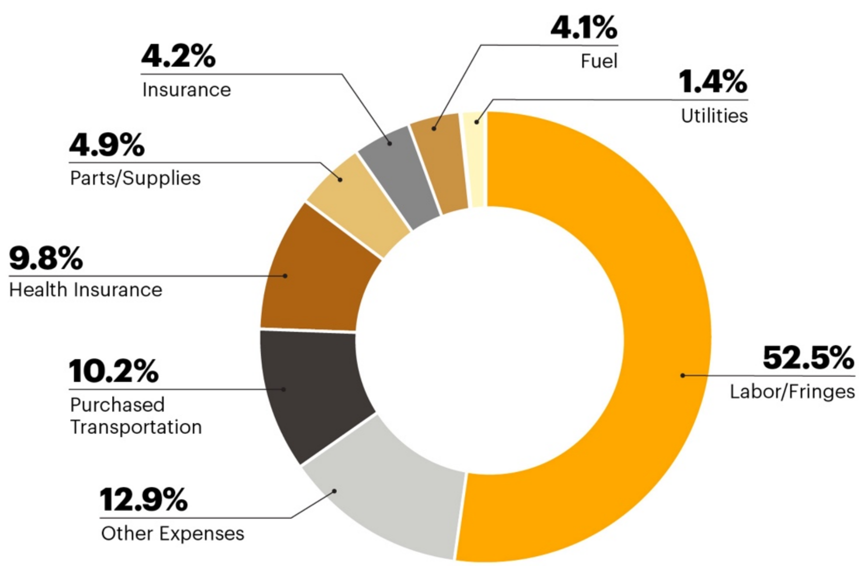
Federal Relief Funding

Pace was allocated a total of $205.5 million of combined CARES Act, CRRSAA, and ARP Act federal relief funding to help offset fare revenue and RTA funding losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. By early 2023, Pace had drawn down the totality of its relief funding to be held in reserve for future use. To balance expenses, Pace's 2026 operating budget relies on the remaining $45.7 million of federal COVID reserves, which are forecast to exhaust late in the year.

Operating Expenses

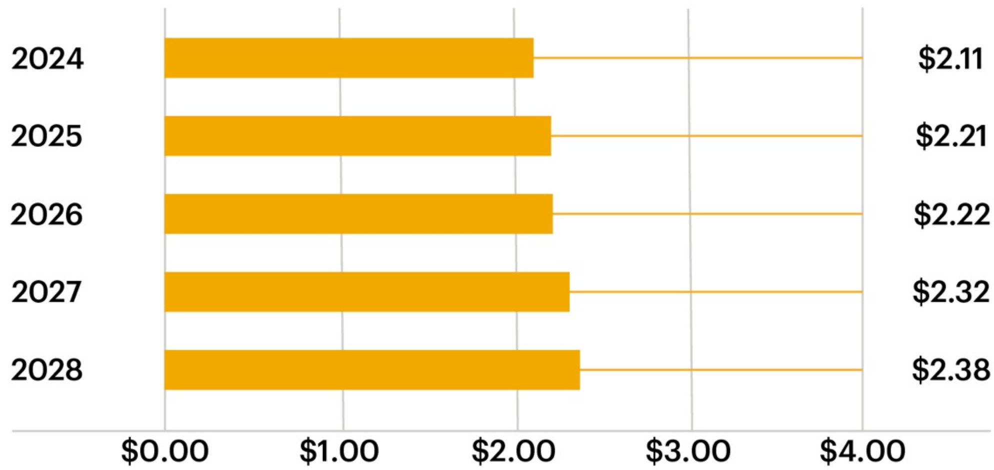
Pace projects that 2026 operating expenditures will increase from the 2025 estimate by $42.5 million, or 12.9%, to $372.4 million. As a result of service additions and wage adjustments, Labor and Fringe, Pace's largest expense category, is expected to increase by 9.5% to $195.4 million. Pace's second largest expense category, Other Expense, is budgeted to increase by $8.9 million, or 23%, to $47.9 million in 2026, comprising about 13% of total operating expenses. Health Insurance and Purchased Transportation are two more areas of significant expense growth, projected to increase by 9.8% and 25.5%, respectively. Beyond 2026, Pace's 2027 and 2028 financial plans project overall expense growth of 2.3% and 5.5%, respectively.

Figure 16. Pace 2026 Expenses: $372.4 Million



Pace's fuel expense is projected to grow by 10.1% in 2026 to $15.4 million. Fuel consumption is expected to increase by about 8% due to service additions, while the overall fuel price is assumed at $2.22 per gallon, up 1 cent from the 2025 estimate and 11 cents per gallon higher than actual 2024 prices.

Figure 17. Pace Fuel Price Per Gallon



Net Result and Recovery Ratio

As shown in Table 6, Pace's operating budget and two-year plan is balanced by utilizing the remainder of Pace's available reserves from prior-year COVID relief funding drawdowns, followed by allocations of RTA discretionary funding in 2026 and tentative SB2111 funding in 2027 and 2028. Revenues equal expenditures, producing a net result of zero through the planning period.

The November 2025 RTA Funding Amendment considered the new recovery ratio requirements of SB2111, which, beginning with RTA fiscal year 2026, lowered the required regional recovery ratio to 25% and removed most previously allowed adjustments. Pace's recovery ratio mark for 2026 was set by the RTA Board at 12% and the Suburban Service budgeted recovery ratios for 2026 through 2028, now calculated by simply dividing total system-generated revenue by total operating expenditures, exceed this new requirement.

Table 6. Pace 2026 Budget and 2027-2028 Financial Plan (in thousands)

	2024 Actual	2025 Estimate	2026 Budget	2027 Plan	2028 Plan
Revenues					
System-Generated Revenue					
Passenger Revenue	$21,717	$21,826	$23,719	$23,779	$23,841
State Reduced Fare Reimbursement	$1,460	$1,760	$1,767	$1,767	$1,767
Other Revenue	$31,418	$25,586	$25,279	$23,824	$23,136
Total System-Generated Revenue	**$54,595**	**$49,172**	**$50,765**	**$49,370**	**$48,744**
Public Funding					
Sales Tax I	$132,006	$146,099	$150,934	$154,707	$157,802

	2024 Actual	2025 Estimate	2026 Budget	2027 Plan	2028 Plan
Sales Tax II	$21,486	$23,883	$23,375	$22,960	$22,315
PTF II	$25,986	$28,783	$30,036	$30,853	$31,484
Suburban Community Mobility Fund	$34,779	$35,850	$39,767	$40,761	$41,576
South Suburban Job Access Fund	$7,500	$7,500	$7,500	$7,500	$7,500
Non-Statutory Funding - PTF I	$6,354	$6,958	-	$7,522	$7,672
Non-Statutory Funding - ST I	$7,513	$10,658	-	$14,397	$14,754
Innovation, Coordination, and Enhancement Funding [1]	$334	-	-	$2,510	$2,585
Federal Discretionary Fund Programs	$8,724	$5,916	$5,436	-	-
Discretionary Funding (2026 only)	-	-	$18,874	-	-
Future SB 2111 Funding Allocation	-	-	-	$53,012	$70,270
Total Public Funding	**$244,682**	**$265,646**	**$275,922**	**$334,221**	**$355,958**
Agency Reserves					
Agency Reserves [2]	-	$15,135	$45,725	-	-
Total Agency Reserves	**-**	**$15,135**	**$45,725**	**-**	**-**
Total Revenues	**$299,277**	**$329,953**	**$372,412**	**$383,591**	**$404,702**
Expenses					
Labor/Fringes	$159,853	$178,332	$195,353	$202,723	$212,965
Health Insurance	$26,140	$33,339	$36,607	$39,536	$42,778
Parts/Supplies	$14,766	$17,152	$18,199	$19,361	$20,607
Purchased Transportation	$28,064	$30,315	$38,041	$39,900	$42,198
Fuel	$13,122	$14,029	$15,439	$16,113	$16,549
Utilities	$4,917	$4,981	$5,205	$5,486	$5,785
Insurance	$2,522	$12,744	$15,621	$16,630	$17,715
Other Expenses	$25,566	$39,061	$47,947	$41,333	$43,521
Total Expenses	**$274,950**	**$329,953**	**$372,412**	**$381,082**	**$402,118**
ICE funding not used for operations - transfer to capital [1]	-	-	-	($2,510)	($2,585)

	2024 Actual	2025 Estimate	2026 Budget	2027 Plan	2028 Plan
Net Result	**$24,327**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
Recovery Ratio	**26.3%**	**20.0%**	**13.6%**	**13.0%**	**12.1%**

[1] Paused for two years beginning in 2023. All 2025 funding (from 2023) allocated to ADA Paratransit. All 2026 funding (from 2024) allocated to CTA.

[2] Resulting from previous drawdowns of federal CARES Act, CRRSAA, and ARP Act funding. Authorized for inclusion as revenue for recovery ratio purposes only through 2025.

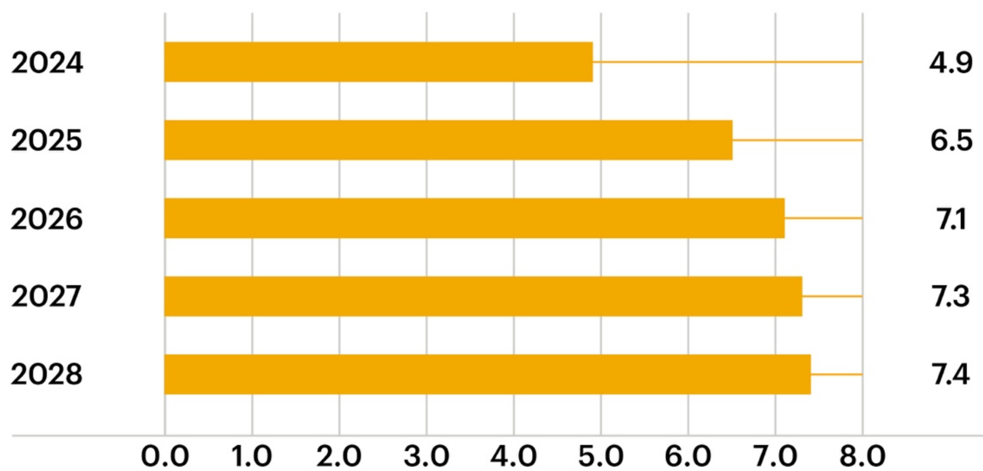
Pace ADA Paratransit Operating Budget

The 2026 ADA Paratransit operating budget of $361.3 million projects 9.4% growth over 2025 estimated expenses and 28.5% growth from the 2025 budget. The budget anticipates further increases in the Taxi Access Program (TAP) and Rideshare Access Program (RAP), which experienced rapid growth in 2025. Ridership in these subsidized services has now surpassed that of the more expensive traditional ADA Paratransit service, but volumes are such that overall expenses have been driven sharply higher. The TAP and RAP programs continue to be presented within the ADA Paratransit budget, although they are not required services under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. No further fare increases are included in the 2026 ADA Paratransit budget.

Ridership

ADA Paratransit ridership, including companions, is projected to finish 2025 at 6.5 million, about 50% above pre-COVID (2019) levels. Pace's 2026 budget assumes that ridership will grow by an additional 10.2% to 7.1 million, or about 167% of 2019 ridership. Subsidized services ridership, comprised of TAP and RAP, is forecast at 3.9 million in 2026, representing 54% of the ADA Paratransit total. The 2026 ridership forecast reflects the RTA Action Plan measures implemented by Pace in the fourth quarter of 2025, but with a modified cap of 40 to 50 rides per month, subject to approval by the RTA Board. Ridership growth is projected to moderate to around 2% per year in 2027 and 2028, reaching 7.4 million by the end of the planning period.

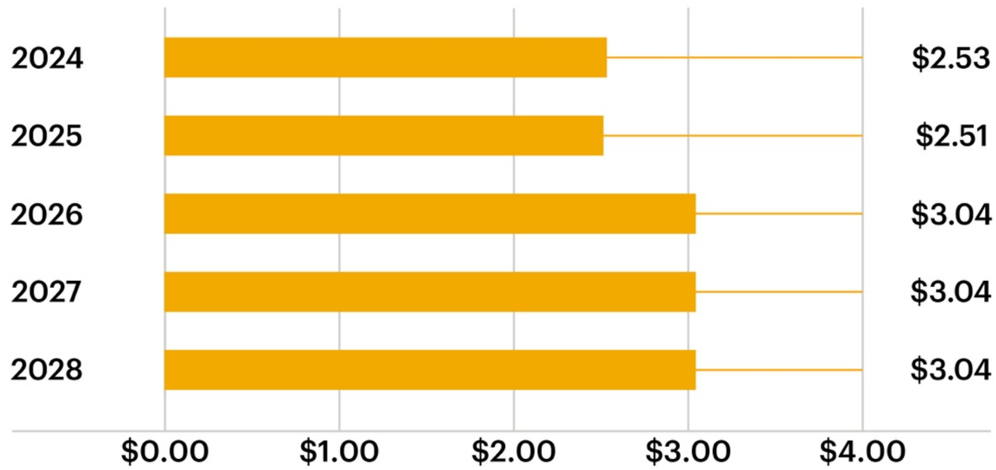
Figure 18. Pace ADA Paratransit Ridership (in millions)



Fares

No general ADA Paratransit fare increase has been included in the 2026 budget, so the base ADA Paratransit fare will remain at $3.25. Fares for the TAP and RAP were restored to $3.25, from $2.00, in October 2025 as directed by the RTA Action Plan. Pace provides a subsidy for TAP and RAP of up to $30 depending on trip length. Because companions count as ridership, but ride free on traditional ADA Paratransit, average fares are somewhat lower than the base fare. The projected average fare for all ADA Paratransit rides increases from $2.51 in 2025 to $3.04 in 2026 due to the full-year impact of the October 2025 TAP/RAP fare increase. CTA, Metra, and Pace each now offer free fares on fixed-route service for ADA Paratransit eligible customers.

Figure 19. Pace ADA Paratransit Average Fare

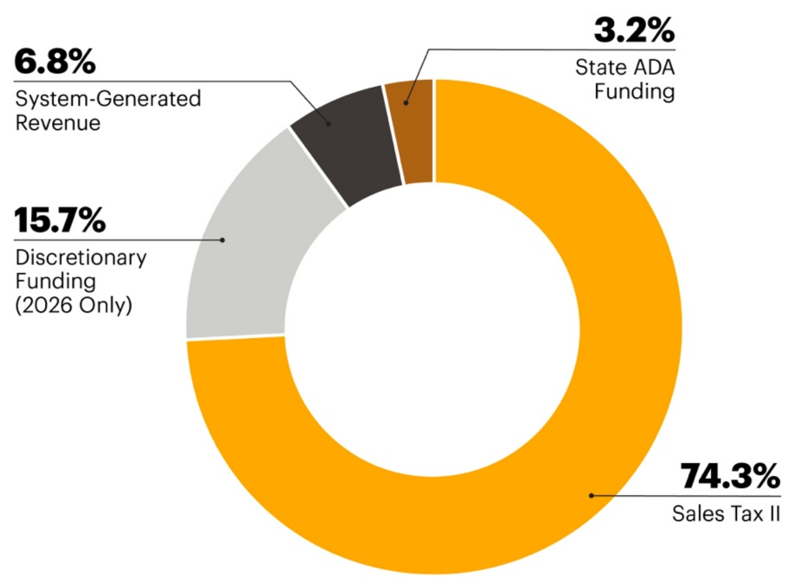


System-Generated Revenue

Pace projects that 2026 ADA Paratransit system-generated revenues will increase by 30.0% to $24.5 million, outstripping ridership growth due to the impact of the October 2025 TAP/RAP fare increase. Projected fare revenue of $21.7 million accounts for 88.9% of the system-generated revenue. Ancillary revenue, comprised of reimbursements for certification trips to RTA Assessment centers and investment income, is budgeted to increase by 6.0% to $2.7 million.

System-generated revenue comprises only about 7% of Pace's total revenue for ADA Paratransit operations, with the balance provided by public funding sources.

Figure 20. Pace ADA Paratransit 2026 Revenues: $361.3 Million



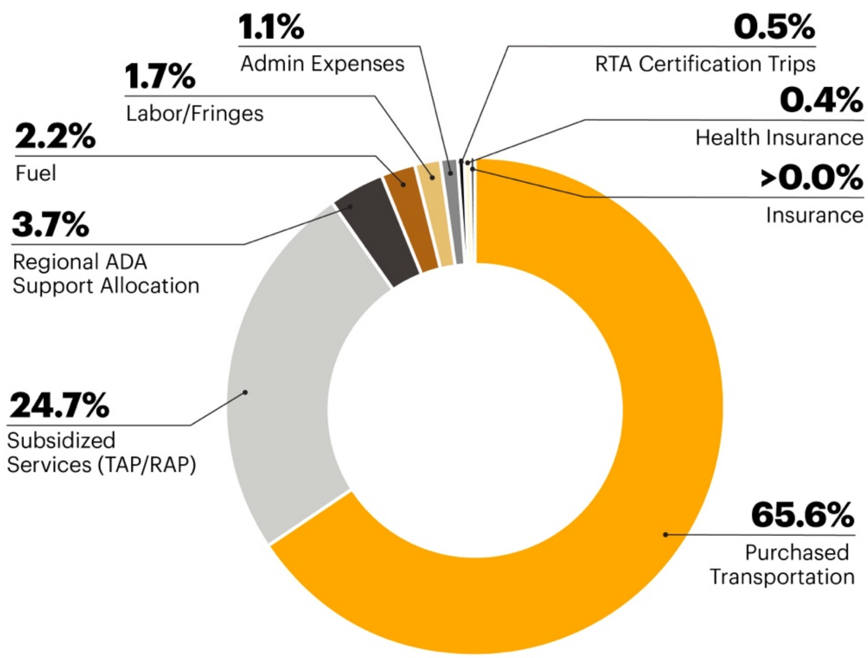
Public Funding

In 2011, the RTA Act was amended to require that the adopted or amended ADA Paratransit budget be fully funded by the RTA each year. In the 2026 budget, Pace projects an ADA Paratransit funding need of $336.8 million which will be satisfied by Sales Tax II funds of $268.6 million, State funding of $11.5 million, and RTA discretionary funding. Although the RTA is not required to fund TAP and RAP since they are not required ADA services, the RTA Board's revised funding amounts of November 2025 allocated $56.7 million of discretionary funding made possible by the new revenue sources of SB2111 in order to continue these popular subsidized services in 2026. The revised marks similarly and tentatively allocated $60.1 million and $65.8 million of future SB2111 funding to remedy the projected ADA Paratransit budget shortfalls in 2027 and 2028, respectively. RTA will continue to pursue an acceptable funding solution for the subsidized services, including the potential use of Pace reserves.

Expenses

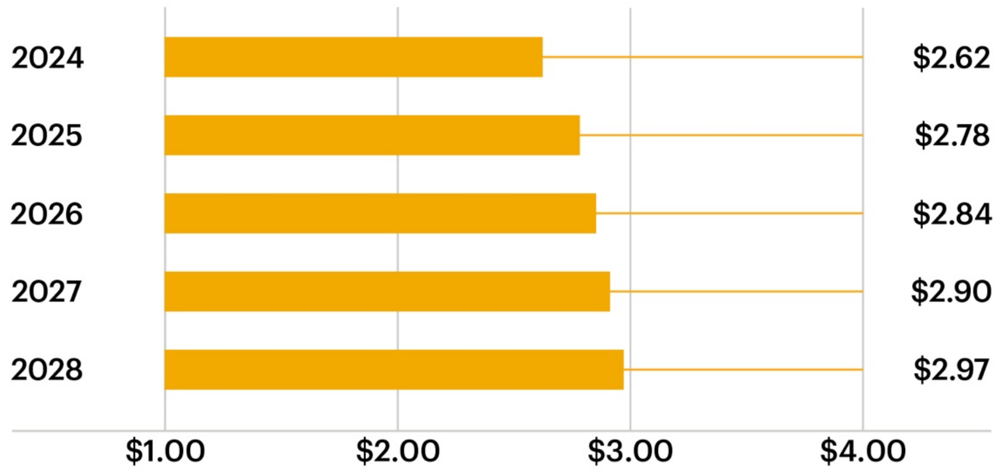
Pace projects that 2026 operating expenditures for ADA Paratransit will increase by $31.2 million, or 9.4%, to $361.3 million, consistent with the assumed 2026 ridership increase, followed by expense increases of 5.1% and 5.4% in 2027 and 2028, respectively, as ridership growth is then expected to level off. Purchased transportation, which accounts for 65% of total ADA Paratransit expenses, is budgeted to increase by 6.7% in 2026 to $236.6 million, due to contractual rate increases. TAP and RAP expenses comprise 25% of 2026 expenses. The regional ADA support allocation, which accounts for work done by other Pace departments in support of ADA Paratransit, is projected at $13.3 million, an increase of 14% from 2025.

Figure 21. Pace ADA Paratransit 2026 Expenses: $361.3 Million



Fuel expense of $7.9 million comprises about 2% of total ADA Paratransit expenses. Fuel price is assumed at $2.84 per gallon in the 2026 budget, about 6 cents higher than the 2025 estimate, and 22 cents per gallon higher than the actual 2024 fuel price.

Figure 22. Pace ADA Paratransit Fuel Price Per Gallon



Net Result and Recovery Ratio

As shown in Table 7, the Regional ADA Paratransit operating budget is balanced in 2026 through 2028, with revenues equal to expenditures, producing a net result of zero in each year. Shortfalls of $25.5 million and $45.1 million in 2024 and 2025, respectively, were solved with a combination of RTA and Pace funding, including the anticipated complete exhaustion of the RTA's ADA Paratransit reserve. The future SB2111 Funding Allocations shown for 2027 and 2028 are tentative and subject to revision by the new NITA Board.

The November 2025 RTA Funding Amendment conveyed the new recovery ratio requirements of SB2111, which, beginning with RTA fiscal year 2026, lowered the required recovery ratio for the ADA Paratransit budget to 5.0% and removed all previously allowed adjustments such as the expense deduction for Capital Cost of Contracting. The ADA Paratransit budgeted recovery ratios for 2026 through 2028, now calculated by simply dividing total system-generated revenue by total operating expenditures, exceed this new requirement.

Table 7. Pace Regional ADA Paratransit 2026 Budget and 2027-2028 Financial Plan (in thousands)

	2024 Actual	2025 Estimate	2026 Budget	2027 Plan	2028 Plan
Revenues					
System-Generated Revenue					
Passenger Revenue	$12,277	$16,260	$21,746	$22,180	$22,623
Other Revenue [1]	$3,777	$2,553	$2,705	$2,893	$3,043
Total System-Generated Revenue	**$16,054**	**$18,813**	**$24,451**	**$25,073**	**$25,666**
Public Funding					
Sales Tax II	$226,864	$256,180	$268,564	$282,966	$297,114
Additional State Funding	$9,108	$10,020	$11,500	$11,500	$11,500
RTA Fund Balance (from 2025 15% Sales Tax I)	-	$17,467	-	-	-
ICE Funding [2]	-	$16,598	-	-	-

	2024 Actual	2025 Estimate	2026 Budget	2027 Plan	2028 Plan
Suburban Community Mobility Fund (SCMF)	-	$2,759	-	-	-
RTA ADA Paratransit Reserve	$25,501	$8,260	-	-	-
Discretionary Funding (2026 only)	-	-	$56,748	-	-
Future SB 2111 Funding Allocation	-	-	-	$60,107	$65,848
Total Public Funding	**$261,474**	**$311,285**	**$336,813**	**$354,574**	**$374,462**
Total Revenues	**$277,528**	**$330,098**	**$361,264**	**$379,647**	**$400,128**
Expenses					
Labor/Fringes	$4,983	$5,769	$6,195	$6,334	$6,670
Health Insurance	$807	$1,310	$1,434	$1,555	$1,687
Admin Expenses	$2,583	$4,129	$3,997	$4,085	$4,176
Fuel	$7,241	$7,574	$7,933	$8,273	$8,626
Insurance	$996	$343	$70	$70	$70
RTA Certification Trips	$1,543	$1,809	$1,982	$2,173	$2,314
Purchased Transportation	$211,681	$221,625	$236,561	$250,072	$265,329
Subsidized Services (RAP/TAP)	$39,616	$75,877	$89,757	$93,083	$96,555
Regional ADA Support Allocation [3]	$8,078	$11,662	$13,335	$14,002	$14,702
Total Expenses	**$277,528**	**$330,098**	**$361,264**	**$379,647**	**$400,128**
Net Result	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
Recovery Ratio	**10.9%**	**11.2%**	**6.8%**	**6.6%**	**6.4%**

[1] Includes investment income and reimbursements for RTA certification trips.

[2] Paused for two years beginning in 2023. All 2025 funding (from 2023) allocated to ADA Paratransit.

[3] Accounts for work done by other Pace departments in support of ADA Paratransit activities.

RTA Agency Operating Budget

In light of SB2111, the RTA's 2026 budget will support current RTA operations in anticipation of the transformation to NITA beginning next summer. The Agency will support the Service Boards in the transition from protecting service to improving service reliability and frequency and increasing ridership. Once the NITA board is established, coordinated service planning and planning for increased public safety programs are expected to begin as outlined in the legislation.

Despite the new funding from SB2111, RTA’s 2026 funding from the RTA sales tax remains level with that of the RTA’s 2025 budget. The resulting 2026 RTA Agency budget is constrained not only by the flat funding level but also by fewer staff. Thus, each department in the Agency will perform its responsibilities with reduced resources—funding, personnel, or both. The Agency will operate more efficiently by implementing process improvements and technological innovations and focusing on existing projects that prioritize staff effort over outside support.

Budgeted funding for the 2026 RTA Agency budget of $40.4 million matches the adopted 2026 funding marks and reflects at zero growth from funding for the 2025 budget. The 2026 RTA Agency operating budget contains gross expenses of $48.8 million, a decrease of 12.9% from the 2025 estimate and from the 2025 budget.

The Agency budget is expected to increase to reflect the broader powers and responsibilities of NITA. As the RTA Agency budget and financial plan do not reflect these changes, budget revisions are expected in late 2026 and the 2027 and 2028 NITA budgets will vary from the current 2027 and 2028 plans for the RTA.

Background

The RTA is the oversight, funding, and regional planning agency for the three Service Boards: CTA bus and rail, Metra Commuter Rail, and Pace Suburban Service, as well as Regional ADA Paratransit.

The RTA’s primary source of operating funding is a regional sales tax matched by the State of Illinois via the Public Transportation Fund (PTF). Most of the RTA sales tax collections and PTF receipts pass directly through the RTA to CTA, Metra, and Pace according to pre-determined, statutory formulas. The remainder of the sales tax and PTF is distributed at the direction of the RTA Board. A portion of this funding covers the RTA agency administrative costs, regional services and programs, and regional debt service expense. As a result of SB2111, the statutory formulas by which RTA distributes sales tax and PTF receipts to the Service Boards will change significantly in 2027.

The 2026 Agency operating budget was developed in two parts to continue the RTA’s support of regional programs and services. First is the RTA Agency Administration Budget, which includes the core agency expenses for staff, facilities, information technology, office services, and professional services to support the funding, planning, and oversight mission of the RTA.

Second is the RTA Regional Programs Budget, which includes Regional Services provided directly to the public by the RTA such as ADA Paratransit Certification Program, Mobility Management Services, Travel Information, Customer Service, Reduced Fare, Ride Free and Transit Benefit Programs. The Regional Programs Budget also includes all the RTA’s grant-funded projects, RTA-funded regional studies and initiatives, and regional capital programs.

RTA Agency Administration Budget

In 2026, total Agency Administration operating expenses of $18.8 million are essentially the same as the 2025 estimate. The 2026 Administration Budget accounts for 38.5% of RTA Agency expenses and is expected to increase by 3.0% in 2027 and 2028. The Administration Budget in 2026 is 49.2% below the 2026 administrative expense cap of $37.0 million set by the RTA Act. Note that per SB2111 the 5% cap on the growth of Agency administrative expenses does not apply to NITA in 2026 and 2027.

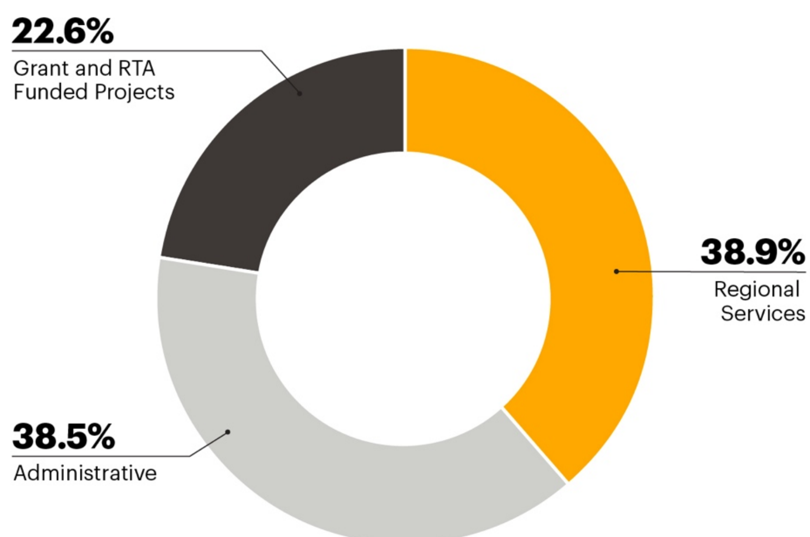
RTA Regional Programs Budget

In 2026, total Regional Programs revenue of $8.4 million is comprised of federal grants of $8.0 million for 5310 projects, $0.3 million state funding for Rebuild Illinois projects, and $0.1 million of Regional Services Operating Revenue generated mostly from the Transit Benefit Program.

Total Regional Programs expenses of $30.0 million, the sum of Regional Services Operating Expense and RTA-Funded Project Expenses, comprise the remaining 61.5% of total RTA Agency expenses. The Regional Services expense of $19.0 million is essentially the same as the 2025 estimate. Regional Programs expense of $11.0 million is 39.3% lower than the 2025 estimate because of lower federal 5310 funding. Regional Programs include all the RTA's grant-funded programs and regional capital programs, as well as RTA-funded regional studies and initiatives such as new community planning projects, Access to Transit projects, and Rebuild Illinois Project Management Oversight.

The overall RTA Agency operating expense of $48.8 million is projected to be $7.2 million or 12.9% lower than the 2025 estimate, due mainly to lower Section 5310 funding because of fewer federal dollars available in 2026 as well as inclusion of only annual award amounts instead of combined two-year funding amounts in 2025.

Figure 23. 2026 RTA Agency Expenses: $48.8 Million



Sales Tax

Sales tax funding level for 2026 remains flat with the 2025 funding level. As shown in Table 8 the combination of operating revenue of $0.1 million, federal and state grants of $8.3 million, and sales tax of $40.4 million comprise total Agency revenue for 2026 and together balance the overall RTA Agency operating budget expenses of $48.8 million. Sales tax receipts comprise 82.8% of total 2026 Agency revenues.

Figure 24. 2026 RTA Agency Revenues: $48.8 Million

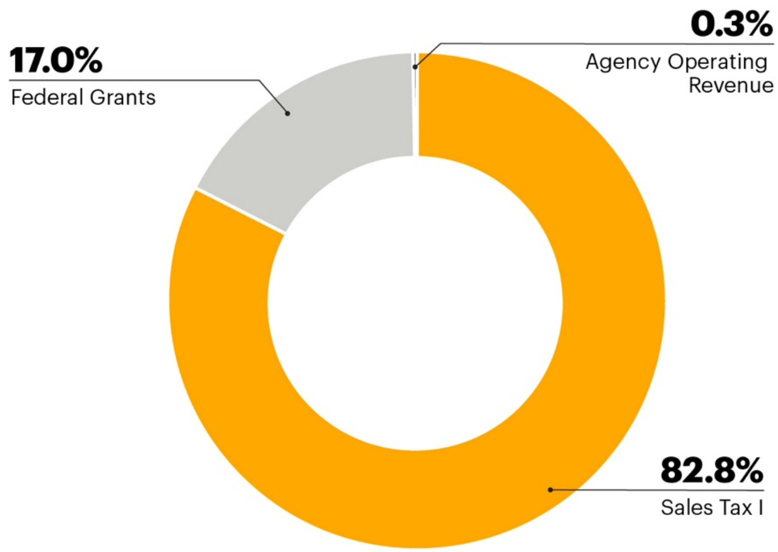


Table 8. RTA Agency 2026 Budget and 2027-2028 Financial Plan (in thousands)

	2024 Actual	2025 Estimate	2026 Budget	2027 Plan	2028 Plan
Revenues					
Operating Revenue					
Administrative Operating Revenue	843	-	-	-	-
Regional Services Operating Revenue	130	130	134	138	142
Total Operating Revenue	**$972**	**$130**	**$134**	**$138**	**$142**
Public Funding					
Federal Grants	13,825	15,518	8,276	8,524	8,780
Sales Tax I	38,443	40,366	40,366	41,577	42,824
Total Public Funding	**$52,268**	**$55,883**	**$48,642**	**$50,101**	**$51,604**
Total Revenues	**$53,241**	**$56,013**	**$48,775**	**$50,238**	**$51,746**
Expenses					
Administrative Operating Expenses[1]	16,813	18,860	18,786	19,350	19,930
Regional Services Operating Expense[1]	17,665	19,002	18,977	19,546	20,132
Program and Project Expenses[1]	18,763	18,151	11,012	11,343	11,683
Total Expenses	**$53,241**	**$56,013**	**$48,775**	**$50,238**	**$51,746**
Net Result	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**

[1] 2024 and 2025 include additional amounts that were set aside for pension contributions, IT infrastructure, and regional programs.

Regional Capital Program

The RTA's Five-Year 2026-2030 Regional Capital Program for transit in the six-county Chicago region includes more than $9 billion in funding for key infrastructure projects from CTA, Metra, and Pace. For the last several years, the RTA and the Service Boards have been working together to deliver projects that alleviate the region's state of good repair backlog, while addressing the key regional goals of making the system accessible, transitioning to zero emissions, and addressing expansions and upgrades when possible.

Capital programming is a core function of the RTA. Section 2.01b of the RTA Act (70 ILCS 3615/) requires the RTA Board to annually adopt a Five-Year Regional Capital Program that is guided by a five-year strategic plan, *Transit is the Answer*, and is fiscally constrained by the annual budget and a two-year financial plan. Once the capital program is adopted, the expenditures of CTA, Metra, and Pace are subjected to continual review, so that the RTA may budget and ensure that funds available to the region are spent with maximum efficiency. The 2026-2030 Regional Capital Program includes $9.246 billion in funding.

Since 2020, the amount of funding available in the regional capital program has seen consistent growth, which has allowed the region to make progress toward lowering the state of good repair backlog and allowed for advancement of other key priorities.

On the federal side, increased funding came from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which provided approximately 40% more capital funding per year from federal fiscal year 2022 through 2026. In addition, Service Boards have taken advantage of various discretionary opportunities to bring more federal funds to the region and advance significant projects. Annual federal allocations have remained relatively flat since IIJA was enacted. As the IIJA funding bill comes to an end, the region will be advocating for another boost in Federal Capital funding to maintain the recent momentum and account for higher costs due to inflation. The federal transportation bill is set to expire in September 2026, and RTA is working with the Service Boards and transit agencies across the country to advocate for sustained growth in transit capital investment.

On the state side, increased funding came from the Rebuild Illinois program that was enacted with the state fiscal year 2020 budget. Rebuild Illinois included $2.6 billion in state bonds as well as annual PAYGO funding derived from the state Motor Fuel Tax. PAYGO funding is indexed to inflation and has seen a 50% increase over the first six years of receipts helping the region to accomplish key state of good repair projects. It is important to note that on average, the state has only issued a new capital program every 10 years, though the funds are programmed as part of a five-year program. Unless a new state capital program is contemplated and renewed in the coming years, the region may see reduction in state funding in the second half of the decade (2025-2029).

In 2025, RTA continued to collaborate with the Service Boards on regional capital grant opportunities. In both 2024 and 2025 RTA was successful in winning Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) funds to transition both revenue and non-revenue vehicles to zero-emissions. In 2026, RTA will continue to work collaboratively with the Service Boards to apply for additional discretionary awards to boost funding for the capital program.

The most recent state action on October 31, 2025, included passage of SB 2111, a landmark transit funding and governance legislation that increased funds for transit operations in Illinois. This bill also includes $180 million of new annual road fund interest allocation to transit capital needs. RTA will collaborate with CTA, Metra, and Pace to program the new funds in a future capital amendment. This legislation will also pave the way for the new NITA agency to centralize capital planning, programming, and evaluation processes for the six-county region.

A key aspect of *Transit is the Answer* is the adoption of regionwide evaluation metrics that are being used to explain the benefits that projects funded in the program will bring to the system, including seven criteria identified in state legislation. Additionally, Service Boards continue to maintain the regional priority project lists, which were first adopted in the region's previous regional transit strategic plan, *Invest in Transit*, and continue to be updated annually as part of the budgeting process to help articulate the large capital needs of the region, show the projects that the Service Boards are planning to advance in the coming years, and illustrate the projects that are funded and those that are in need of more funds. Continuing to articulate these needs and priorities has been key to securing additional capital dollars for the region, which has included positioning the Service Boards to compete successfully for Federal Discretionary Awards.

New for the 2026-2030 Capital Program, projects are being categorized by the key regional goal(s) they are meeting. Each project has been assigned one or two goals from the following: State of Good Repair, Transition to Zero Emissions, Accessibility, Expansion/Upgrade, or Other Need. This budget document will use the key goals addressed as a lens to look at the 2026-2030 Capital Program.

The RTA and Service Boards continue to improve communication about the capital programming process. Continual improvements have been made to the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of the capital program processes. Since 2021, a web-based listing of capital projects and downloadable datasets are available on the Regional Transportation Authority Mapping and Statistics website, RTAMS. In 2022, the RTA released a new map of capital projects to accompany the web-based listing of capital projects. Beginning with the 2024-2028 Capital Program a new evaluation process was put in place to review all projects being included in the capital program. RTA reviews these evaluations when putting together the regional capital program and shares the results in the budget book as well as on RTAMS. In this plan, additional information is being provided on the timeline and steps involved in putting together the regional capital program as well as the funding sources that are available.

The Regional Capital Programming Process

1

Funding: (June-July)

RTA provides the Service Boards with preliminary estimates of funding for development of the 5-year Capital Program (i.e., Federal Formula, PAYGO, ICE).

Service Boards provide RTA with estimates of funds expected from discretionary grants and other Service Board funds including bonds and local funds.

2

Project Evaluation (August-September)

Service Boards evaluate projects based on RTA and individual criteria to determine their proposed Capital Program.

Service Boards submit their proposed list of Capital Projects with evaluations to the RTA.

RTA staff reviews evaluations for regional consistency and project eligibility and then provides feedback to the Service Boards about changes needed to the program.

3

Program and Budget Development (August-November)

Service Boards create their program and submit their Capital Budgets to the RTA.

RTA reviews the proposed Capital Budgets and provides feedback on projects and budgets as necessary to meet regional goals and requirements, budgets, etc.

4

Public Review and Board Adoption (October-December)

RTA staff drafts a proposed Budget Book.

RTA opens a public comment period that includes an RTA Public Hearing as well as presentations to each County Board.

The proposed Capital Program is amended based on public feedback.

The final Capital Program is taken to the RTA Board for final adoption.

5

Modification (Ongoing)

The Service Boards modify their Capital Programs throughout the year as new funding is awarded, project costs change, and priorities are adjusted.

RTA presents quarterly amendments to the Capital Program to the board that incorporate these changes.

Evaluation of projects in the Five-Year Regional Capital Program

In response to State of Illinois legislation (Public Act 102-0573) and feedback from stakeholders and an RTA working group, *Transit is the Answe*r outlined a new evaluation process for capital projects entering the five-year capital program. The plan describes a series of 15 metrics to evaluate projects. These metrics address the 12 evaluation themes that were either provided in state statute, suggested by the Service Boards, or recommended by members of the other strategic plan stakeholder working groups. The evaluation themes and metrics are detailed below. Each new Capital Program is evaluated using this methodology.

The budget book looks at the capital program and assesses how the entirety of the program and the individual projects that are contained within do at addressing each of the regional capital goals.

The detailed evaluation of each project can be found in Appendix A. These metrics provide different lenses for analyzing the capital program and understanding how each project fits into the puzzle of accomplishing a diverse set of regional objectives with the limited funding available. In addition, the priority projects, which are the Service Board's key priorities, continue to be used to group the projects that are included in the Capital Program. The section below details the 12 evaluation themes and the 15 metrics being used to evaluate all the projects in the program.

Evaluation Themes, Metrics, and Measures:

Access to Key Destinations: This theme is evaluated using a metric called **Access to Key Destinations**. The metric will consider the degree to which a project affects access to the region's key destinations, including jobs, retail, education, healthcare, and recreation.

The measures for this metric are:

↑↑	Significantly improves Access to Key Destinations
↑	Moderately improves Access to Key Destinations
↔	Maintains Access to Key Destinations
–	Does not impact Access to Key Destinations

Equity: This theme is evaluated using the metric **Equity Based on Residential Geography** for the location(s) as project benefits. This will be quantified using the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. The specific metric, "Sum of Disadvantage Indicators," combines transportation, health, economy, equity, resilience, and environmental factors.

The measures for this metric are:

↑↑↑	Scores 6-8 in Justice40 metric "Sum of Disadvantage Indicators"
↑↑	Scores 3-5 in Justice40 metric "Sum of Disadvantage Indicators"
↑	Scores 0-2 in Justice40 metric "Sum of Disadvantage Indicators"
–	Project is not location specific or benefits entire service area

Benefit to Riders: This theme is evaluated using the metric **Benefits to Riders**. This metric looks at projects that are visible to riders and directly improve their experience. Benefits could range from new vehicles to station upgrades to speed enhancements on bus routes/train lines. This metric will consider level of benefit the project provides to riders.

The measures for this metric are:

↑↑ Significant benefit to riders

↑ Moderate benefit to riders

↔ Helps to maintain current benefits to riders

– Project does not impact riders

Capacity: This theme is evaluated based on the metric **Capacity Benefit and the Need.** The capacity metric will be defined broadly to include vehicles, stations/stops, transit lines, operating right of way, and storage facilities. The responses will consider how much a project increases capacity and whether the current or planned utilization is near capacity.

The measures for this metric are:

↑↑ Project increases capacity of transit operations or facilities where current or planned utilization is near capacity

↑ Project increases capacity of transit operations or facilities where current or planned utilization is not near capacity

↔ Project maintains/returns system to original capacity

– Not related to capacity of transit operations or facilities

Economic Impact: This theme is evaluated using **Economic Impact** as a metric. Economic Impact is broadly defined to include land use development, construction jobs, and long-term job impacts.

The measures for this metric are:

↑↑↑ Large impact on economic development

↑↑ Moderate impact on economic development

↑ Small impact on economic development

– No Economic Impact

Service Speed and Reliability: This theme is evaluated using the metric **Impact to Service Speed/Reliability**. The measure considers the level of impact on speed/reliability of the project.

The measures for this metric are:

↑↑ Significantly improves speed/reliability

↑ Moderately improves current speed/reliability

↔ Needed to maintain current speed/reliability

– No impact on service speed/reliability

Safety and Security: This theme is evaluated using two metrics. The first is **Impact on Customer and/or Employee Safety** and the second is **Impact on System Security**. The first metric will consider the risk and exposure levels if a project addresses a safety issue. The second metric will consider the level of security enhancement the project makes and if the impacted location has a history of security incidents.

The measures for **Impact on Customer / Employee Safety** are:

↑↑ Project directly provides safety benefit/improvement

↑ Project indirectly provides safety benefit/improvement

↔ Project maintains current safety levels

– Project has no impact on safety

The measures for **Impact on System Security** are:

↑↑ Project implements new security protection and/or prevention

↑ Project enhances existing security level

↔ Project maintains or replaces existing level of security

– Project has no impact on security

State of Good Repair: This theme is evaluated using two metrics, **Asset Condition** and **Vehicle Useful Life**. Asset condition will be measured using ratings from the FTA Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM) on projects where it is applicable. For Vehicles Useful Life, vehicle ages will be compared with Service Board useful life benchmarks.

The measures for **Asset Condition** are:

⚙ Asset(s) Rated below 2

⚙ Asset(s) Rated 2-3

⚙ Asset(s) Rated above 3

– Project does not have an asset rating

The measures for **Vehicle Useful Life** are:

⚙ Over 2 years past useful life

⚙ 0-2 years past useful life

⚙ Not exceeding useful life

– Asset is not a vehicle with a useful life

Climate Impact: This theme is evaluated using two metrics, **Ridership/Mode Shift Impacts** and **Climate Agency Operating Impacts**. The metric **Ridership/Mode Shift Impacts** evaluates the inherent climate benefits from avoided emissions when travelers choose transit rather than driving. **Climate Agency Operating Impacts** refers to efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated from transit operations, including transitioning to near-zero-emissions vehicles.

The measures for **Ridership/Mode Shift Impacts** are:

- ↑↑ Significantly improves transit ridership
- ↑ Moderately improves ridership
- ↔ Maintains assets necessary for transit ridership
- – Project has no impact on transit ridership

The measures for **Climate Agency Operating Impacts** are:

- ↓↓ Directly supports significant reduction/zero GHG emissions from transit agency operations
- ↓ Supports moderate reductions or offsets to GHG emissions from transit agency operations
- ↔ No reduction of GHG emissions from transit agency operations
- – Project does not affect GHG emissions

Accessibility for People with Disabilities: This theme is evaluated using the metric. **Accessibility Improvements**. This will focus on improvements to existing assets to make them partially or fully accessible. For new assets, not applicable should be selected, because new assets must be made accessible by default. The metric can also apply beyond station improvements, including vehicle accessibility and accessible communications.

The measures for Accessibility Improvements are:

- ↑↑ Makes assets fully accessible
- ↑ Makes assets partially accessible/minor accessibility improvements
- ↔ Is needed to maintain current levels of accessibility
- – Project is not related to accessibility/new station

Regulatory Requirements: This theme is evaluated based on the metric: **is project required to comply with regulatory requirements**. The Service Board will provide which requirements are met.

The measures for **Regulatory Requirements** are:

- ✓ Yes
- ✕ No

Operating Cost: This theme is evaluated based on the metric **impact on operating costs**.

The measures for impact on operating cost are:

↓↓ Significant Decrease (>=10%) with Cost Analysis to be submitted by May 15, 2026

↓ Minor Decrease (<10%)

↔↑ No change / increase

– Not applicable or unsure

The capital appendix includes how each project in the capital program has been evaluated and includes details about how the region is doing in meeting the wide-ranging goals laid out for the system.

Capital Funding Goals

For 2026, the report also looks at the key regional goals being addressed. Each project is assigned one or two of the key regional goals:

- **State of Good Repair**: Maintenance, replacement, and rehabilitation projects designed to bring the systems assets to a level at least equal to that called for in their design specifications.
- **All Stations Accessibility**: Projects designed to make all rail stations throughout the system fully accessible.
- **Transition to Zero Emissions**: Projects that purchase zero-emission vehicles or make zero-emission fleets possible.
- **Expansions/Upgrades**: Expansions such as new lines or stations and upgrades such as new technology, upgraded customer amenities at stations etc.
- **Other Needs**: Required projects that do not fit within the other goals.

The budget book will use this lens to look at how State of Good Repair expenditures compare with other key regional priorities based on the constrained funding available.

Priority Projects

In addition to the above evaluation measures, RTA will continue to report on priority projects, which are a set of core capital initiatives largely focused on bringing the regional transit system nearer to a state of good repair, as well as advancing limited expansions. This list is updated each year during the capital programming process.

In describing the capital program through the lens of priority projects, the RTA and the Service Boards provide transparency around how many projects and how much funding is needed to advance each of these specific priorities.

Performance-Based Programming of Capital Funds

RTA and the Service Boards have also continued to partner to make funding allocations more transparent. A Performance-Based Capital Allocation method was approved at the July 2021 RTA Board meeting, which is used to apportion state PAYGO funds and federal formula funds. The goal in implementing performance-based allocations is to use a data driven approach to distribute funds based on three key principles.

The first principle is to address capital reinvestment need. To that end, the region uses the 20-year state of good repair metric to determine the baseline allocation of funds. This measure estimates the amount of funding each Service Board would need to reach a state of good repair for all assets within 20 years. The proportion of need makes up the initial funding split.

The 20-year state of good repair need is determined by the Strategic Asset Management working group which includes both Service Board and RTA staff. The group is tasked with regularly updating the needs assessment with new data to reflect investments that have been made.

The needs-based allocation was initially calculated in 2020 and has seen updates in 2022 and again in 2025. To reduce uncertainty, once the allocation percentage for a specific year is set RTA does not adjust it; for example, the 2025 allocation percentages were set during the 2021-2025 budget and therefore used the original 2020 data. This year the 2030 allocation percentages are being set based on the new 2025 data. The original allocation percentages, which apply to 2026 funds, the 2022 updated allocation percentages which apply to 2027, 2028, and 2029 funds and the latest updated allocation percentages, which apply to 2030 are shown in Table 9. The Strategic Asset Management working group continues to work alongside the Service Boards on updates to the 20-year state of good repair need with a potential update available for the 2030 allocations.

Table 9. 20-year State of Good Repair Needs-based Allocation percentages by Service Board and Year

	2026	2027, 2028 & 2029	2030
CTA	59.7%	59.7%	58.7%
Metra	32.8%	33.2%	34.9%
Pace	7.5%	7.1%	6.4%

The second principle is to incentivize faster completion of projects. Fifty percent of state PAYGO and federal formula funds are allocated based on the 20-year state of good repair needs percentages and then are incremented based on two measures, average age of funds (which has a goal to be under 2.5 years old) and percent of funds spent (with a goal of spending at least 20% of available funds annually); both metrics are built on a three-year average. Service Boards that meet the performance measures have no change to their available funding. If a measure is not met, funds are incrementally set aside for future reallocation. Table 10 shows the average age of funds calculation and Table 11 shows the percent of funds spent calculation.

Table 10. Average Age of Funds (in years)

	2022	2023	2024	3-year Average
CTA	1.73	2.07	2.42	2.07
Metra	2.18	2.75	3.14	2.69
Pace	2.06	2.43	2.85	2.45

Table 11. Percent of Funds Spent

	2022	2023	2024	3-year Average
CTA With Debt Payments	23.82%	29.97%	31.47%	28.42%
CTA Without Debt Payments	17.34%	23.67%	24.54%	21.85%
Metra	13.79%	14.82%	17.84%	15.48%
Pace	15.18%	8.72%	5.27%	9.72%

From 2026-2029, RTA did not implement the withholdings. For the 2030 Capital Program year, based on the performance criteria, $18.8 million of funds will be withheld due to slower spending rates. For 2030, CTA has no proposed withholding, Metra has a proposed withholding of $14.1 million, and Pace has a proposed withholding of $4.7 million. Table 12 details the 2030 proposed withholdings.

Table 12. 2030 Capital Withholdings

	Withholding Amount
CTA	$0
Metra	$14,060,827
Pace	$4,703,406
Total	$18,764,233

RTA is placing the withheld funds in the RTA portion of the Capital Program. As part of implementing the withholdings, the RTA Board directed that Service Boards would be eligible to reduce the withholdings amount via a series of exemptions and adjustments.

Exemption:

- Service Boards may exempt up to 25% of their annual PAYGO allocation that is being used to match a Federal Discretionary award

Adjustments:

- Service Boards may have an adjustment made to individual project start dates based on delays outside of their control exceeding 90 days in the following categories:
    - Permitting/NEPA/Other entity approvals
    - Vendor delays (documented in a change order)
    - Concurrence delays
    - Land acquisition delays

If funds are returned to the Service Boards based on the adjustments, the 2030 program will be amended to include those funds at a 2026 RTA Board meeting.

The remaining withheld funds will be allocated based on direction from the RTA Board.

The final part of the performance-based capital allocation is to advance policy priorities by programming projects that meet specified regional priorities. For 2026-2029, the priorities remain equity and accessibility for people with disabilities. For 2030, the priorities are shifting to projects that reduce operating cost or projects that move the system towards zero-emissions. The Service Boards must program at least 20% of the 2026-2030 federal formula and PAYGO funds to projects that meet at least one of the regional goals outlined for each year. Projects meeting these requirements are outlined throughout the capital section.

Summary

The evaluation themes and metrics identified in *Transit is the Answer* reflect the priorities of the capital program identified through public and stakeholder collaboration and considers state requirements, the need to maintain a state of good repair, provide benefits to riders through expansions and upgrades, address accessibility systemwide and transition to zero-emissions. The evaluations, goals and 10-year priorities communicate how the capital program meets the regional needs, explains the great need for additional funding and how the program is responsive to the stakeholders in the region.

2026-2030 Regional Capital Program

Regional Capital Assets

The graphic below shows a high-level overview of regional capital assets. With the large number of aging assets supporting the transit system regionwide, robust funding is needed to maintain a state of good repair.

On average the region should be replacing 200 buses, 65 rail cars and updating 8-10 stations on an annual basis just to keep up with state of good repair needs. In addition, to meet the goal of achieving accessibility at all stations, there are 81 stops that need to be made accessible as well as an additional 13 stations that need to have additional features added to be made fully accessible. Furthermore, as the region transitions to zero-emissions, just 1% of buses are electric and all 20 garages need investments to support electric buses.

Rail Cars	2,517
Locomotives	186
Total Buses	2,604
Diesel/Hybrid Buses	2,473
CNG Buses	105
Electric Buses	26
Rail Stations	389
Fully Accessible Stations	295
Partially Accessible Stations	13
Bus Passenger Facilities	24
Railyards	36
Bus Garages	20
Bridges	1,041
Grade Crossings	599
Power Substations	79
Miles of Track	1,379

Capital Funding Sources

The region has several funding sources to tap. Below is an overview of the key sources:

Federal Formula

Federal formula funding is allocated annually to the Service Boards through the RTA using the Performance-Based Capital Allocation Process outlined above.

5307/5340 Urbanized Area

- Funding is available to all Service Boards. Eligible activities include planning, engineering, and investments related to facilities, rolling stock, and stations.

5337 State of Good Repair

- Funding is available to CTA and Metra. Eligible activities include maintenance, replacement and rehabilitation of high-intensity rail and bus systems.

5339 Bus and Bus Facilities

- Funding is available to CTA and Pace. Eligible activities include the rehabilitation, or purchase of buses and vans, as well as the construction of bus-related facilities.

Federal Discretionary

Federal discretionary funding is made available on a competitive basis. In each Federal Transportation Bill, grants opportunities are established, and funding levels are set annually.

PAYGO Funds

PAYGO is a state funding source that uses revenue from the Motor Fuel Tax to fund capital investments in public transportation. PAYGO funding was established as part of the Rebuild Illinois capital bill. Like Federal Formula funding, the RTA distributes PAYGO funds to the Service Boards using a performance-based capital allocation process.

State Bonds

The state provides bond funds when new state capital programs are enacted. The state has enacted a new capital program on average every 10 years. The 2019 Rebuild Illinois program provided the RTA system with $2.6 billion in bond funding, which was programmed in 2020 and 2021 and continues to be expended on projects throughout the region.

RTA Innovation, Coordination, and Enhancement (ICE)

The ICE program provides funds to enhance the coordination and integration of public transportation and to develop and implement innovations to improve the quality and delivery of service. The funding is based on state sales tax receipts.

RTA Bonds

The RTA has authority to issue general obligation bonds to provide capital funding. The RTA does not have any plans for new bond issuances in the 2026-2030 timeframe.

Service Board Bonds

The Service Boards have authority to issue bonds independently of the RTA to help finance capital projects. For example, the CTA plans to issue bonds to fund RLE.

Service Board Funds

The Service Boards may use funds from positive budget variances to fund capital projects.

Local Sources

The region's six counties and many local municipalities support capital projects through local grant programs, by providing local match funds, and by creating Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts. For example, McHenry County is providing local match funds for the new Metra Woodstock rail yard.

2026-2030 Capital Funding by Source

The 2026-2030 Regional Capital Program includes $9.265 billion in funding. After accounting for CTA debt-service payments, the region has $8.287 billion for capital projects in the five-year program. Table 13 shows the breakdown of funding sources by Service Board.

Table 13. 2026-2030 Regional Capital Program Funding (dollars in thousands)

	CTA	Metra	Pace	RTA	Total	Total %
Funding Sources						
Federal Formula	2,259,358	1,270,961	267,177	-	3,797,496	41%
Federal Discretionary	1,140,347	374,220	-	-	1,514,567	16%
PAYGO	844,287	461,103	95,054	18,764	1,419,209	15%
RTA Innovation, Coordination, & Enhancement (ICE)	38,571	15,283	5,094	-	58,949	1%
RTA Access to Transit	-	100			100	<1%
Chicago Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	931,900	-			931,900	10%
Service Board	1,050	-	-	-	1,050	<1%
Sub-Total Non-Bond Funds	**5,215,514**	**2,121,667**	**367,326**	**18,764**	**7,723,271**	**83%**
CTA Bond Proceeds	1,541,952	-	-	-	1,541,952	17%
Sub-Total Bond Funds	**1,541,952**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**1,541,952**	**17%**
Total Capital Funding	**6,757,467**	**2,121,667**	**367,326**	**18,764**	**9,265,224**	
Debt Service	-977,982	-	-	-	-977,982	
Total Capital Funding Available	**5,779,484**	**2,121,667**	**367,326**	**18,764**	**8,287,241**	

The $9.265 billion in funding is 2.2% less than the 2025-2029 Capital Program adopted in December 2024. The capital program declined slightly because a large portion of the initial Red Line Extension (RLE) federal discretionary funding was included in 2025. Other changes to the budgeted amount are due to continued uncertainty about anticipated federal allocations. The budget makes a conservative estimate of expected future funds, with 1% growth estimated for 2027-2030 and no growth in 2026. Between 2022 and 2025 regional Federal Formula fund allocations grew slowly, averaging an increase of approximately 1% per year. This lower growth is offset by an increase in state PAYGO funds which are estimated at $270 million per year in 2026 and include a 2.5% annual growth estimate for 2027-2030.

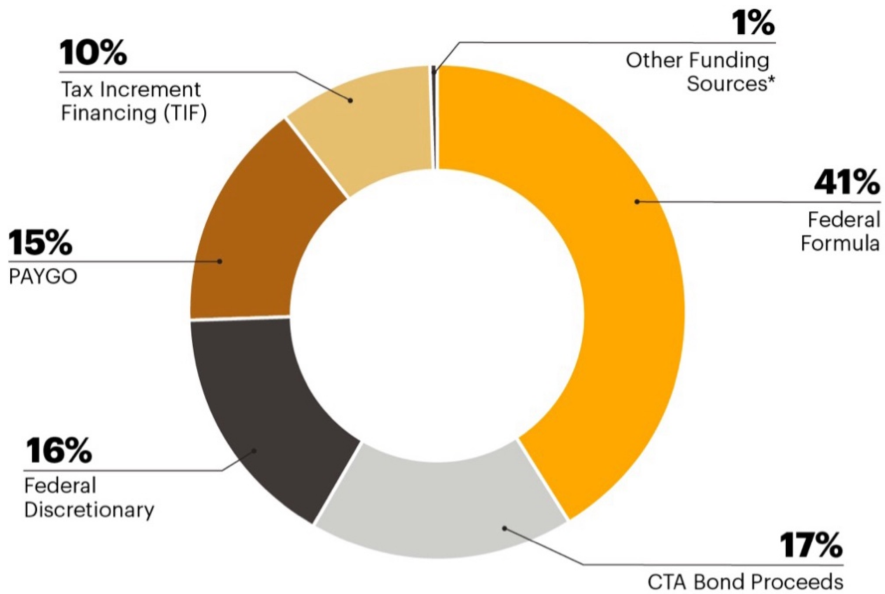
Federal formula and federal discretionary funds continue to be separated in the report as discretionary funds remain an important and distinct part of the program. The region continues to compete for many of the discretionary opportunities that include funds for bus replacement, large regionally significant projects, accessibility, and many other categories.

Additional awards will be presented in the capital program amendments as they are awarded. Over $1.5 billion in anticipated discretionary awards are being included in the program.

For the 2026-2030 program, state PAYGO estimates have been increased to $1.419 billion, increasing by a bit over 5% compared to the 2025-2029 estimate of available funds. Motor fuel tax results have continued to outperform estimates, allowing for an upward revision in the amount expected to be available from the state's main capital funding source. The state also included bond funds as part of the Rebuild Illinois program, these funds were fully programmed and granted in 2020 and 2021. These funds were part of the state's 5-year capital program from 2020-2024. The RTA has continued to work with the state to seek additional capital funding opportunities to supplement PAYGO dollars. The state has provided additional capital funding, from Road and Construction Funds interest, which will be added to the PAYGO allocation. These funds are expected to be programed later in 2026 or as part of the 2027-2031 Capital Program.

Figure 25 shows the detailed funding source split of the 2026-2030 Capital Program.

Figure 25. 2026-2030 Capital Funding: $9.265 Billion



** Other Funding Sources: RTA ICE, RTA Access to Transit, and Service Board funds*

2026 Annual Capital Program Funding

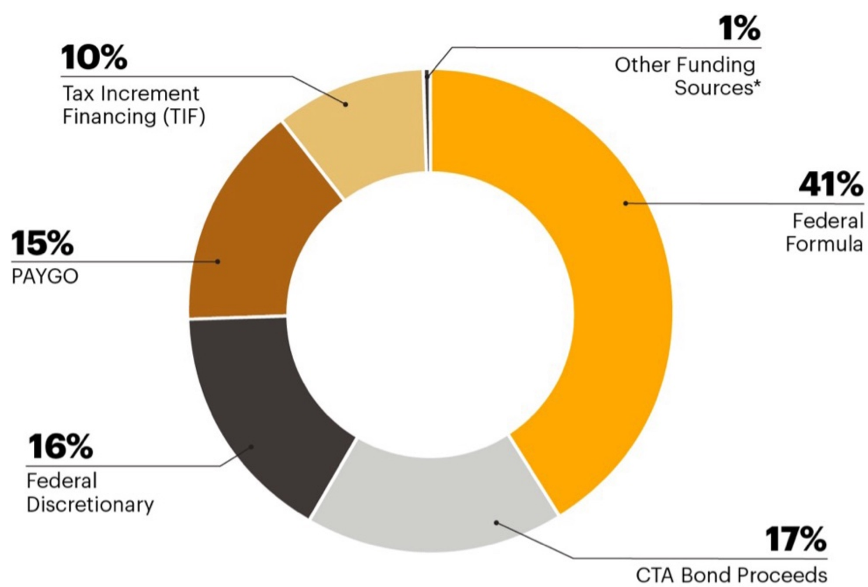
For 2026, the total regional funds are $2.099 billion. After deducting $191 million of CTA debt service payments on previously issued bonds, an estimated amount of $1.908 billion is available for the year. Table 14 and Figure 26 show the detailed split of funds by Service Board and funding source for 2026.

Table 14. 2026 Annual Regional Capital Program Funding (dollars in thousands)

	CTA	Metra	Pace	RTA	Total	Total %
Funding Sources						
Federal Formula	444,443	244,183	55,835	-	744,460	35%
Federal Discretionary	476,901	182,499	-	-	659,400	31%
PAYGO	161,190	88,560	20,250	-	270,000	13%

	CTA	Metra	Pace	RTA	Total	Total %
RTA Innovation, Coordination, & Enhancement (ICE)	-	-	-	-	-	<1%
RTA Access to Transit	-	100	-		100	<1%
Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	173,090	-	-		173,090	8%
Service Board	210	-	2,000	-	2,210	<1%
Sub-Total Non-Bond Funds	**1,255,834**	**515,342**	**78,085**	**-**	**1,849,261**	**88%**
CTA Bond Proceeds	250,000	-	-	-	250,000	12%
Sub-Total Bond Funds	**250,000**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**250,000**	**100%**
Total Capital Funding	**1,505,834**	**515,342**	**78,085**	**-**	**2,099,261**	
Debt Service	-190,871	-	-	-	-190,871	
Total Capital Funding Available	**1,314,963**	**515,342**	**78,085**	**-**	**1,908,390**	

Figure 26. 2026 Capital Funding: $2.099 Billion



** Other Funding Sources: RTA Access to Transit and Service Board funds*

Capital Funding by Priority Project

The following section presents the 2026-2030 Capital Program through the lens of priority projects identified by the Service Boards. All current priority projects, as identified by the Service Boards, are included in the analysis whether they will receive funding in the five-year capital program or not. In addition, there are administrative categories for activities required to execute the capital projects, as well as a category for projects that do not fall into any of the priority projects, called uncategorized projects. Details of the priority projects are shown in the individual Service Board sections of the report.

The 10-year regional capital funding need is $44.6 billion. The current 2026-2030 Capital Program only funds 20.7% of the total 10-year need, which is less than the 22.1% funded in the 2025-2029 Capital Program but remains over 50 percent short of what is needed over a five-year period. If similar funding levels were to continue, excluding onetime allocations and using an estimated 2.5% annual increase in funding per year in 2031-2035, only about 37% of the 10-year need would be funded. The current capital program relies heavily on CTA bonds. This indicates that the region needs to continue to develop sustainable funding streams to increase capital funding to maintain and build upon the regional transit system. The State's new transit funding bill included an additional $180M in annual allocations to the capital program. These funds will be added to the capital program in the future.

Overall, the Service Boards have identified 69 priority projects in the 2026-2030 Capital Program. Twenty-eight projects did not receive any funding, and the remaining 41 projects are partially funded. In addition, there are 5 administrative and uncategorized buckets that are funded in the plan. The inability to fully fund any projects this year and the high level of unfunded projects demonstrate that additional funding is necessary to meet the needs of the region's transit system and users. While the 2026-2030 Capital Program continues to include new funding opportunities, more is needed. The regional estimate is that more than $4 billion is required annually to meet the needs conveyed in the 10-year priority projects list.

With that in mind, the RTA further analyzed the projects using capital evaluation metrics. Detailed definitions of these metrics are in the Capital Program section above.

Capital Evaluations

RTA is continuing to evaluate all projects in the 2026-2030 Capital Program based on 15 metrics defined in *Transit is the Answer*, the regional strategic plan, that evaluates the region's goals associated with the capital program. While it is not expected that many projects will meet all the regional goals, the analysis finds that the projects, as a whole, meet each of the regional goals. More funding is needed to robustly address every goal. Detailed evaluations of each project can be found in Appendix A.

These metrics are based on available funding after payment of debt service ($8.268B). Debt service is not evaluated because these funds paid for capital projects that would have been evaluated in previous programs. Further, the $18.8M withheld by the RTA is not included in these calculations as the funds will eventually be distributed to specific projects.

Table 15 shows all 15 evaluation metrics. Each metric has between two and four possible measurement choices. The table shows the metric, measurement and percentage of dollars in the program that have been evaluated with that measurement. For example, looking at Access to Key Destinations, 54% of funds ($4.46B) significantly improve access to key destinations. Illustrative projects are included in the Service Board sections of the report.

Table 15. Regional Metrics and Evaluations

Metric	Measurements		
Access to Key Destinations	↑↑	Significantly improves access	54%
	↑	Moderately improves access	3%
	↔	Maintains access	34%
	–	Not applicable	9%
Equity based on Residential Geography	↑↑↑	Scores 6-8 for Justice40 Program	53%
	↑↑	Scores 3-5 for Justice40 Program	3%
	↑	Scores 0-2 for Justice40 Program	3%

Metric	Measurements		
	–	Not location specific/benefits entire service area	41%
Benefit to Riders	↑↑	Significant benefit	74%
	↑	Moderate benefit	10%
	↔	Maintains current benefit	10%
	–	Project does not impact customers	7%
Capacity Benefit and Need	↑↑	Increases capacity where utilization is near capacity	59%
	↑	Increases capacity where utilization is not near capacity	3%
	↔	Maintains original capacity	26%
	–	Not related to capacity	12%
Economic Impact	↑↑↑	Large economic impact	53%
	↑↑	Moderate economic impact	9%
	↑	Small economic impact	7%
	–	No economic development impact	31%
Service Speed and Reliability	↑↑	Significantly improves speed/reliability	21%
	↑	Moderately improves speed/reliability	9%
	↔	Maintains speed/reliability	13%
	–	No impact on speed/reliability	57%
Impact on Customer/ Employee Safety	↑↑	Directly provides safety benefit/improvement	3%
	↑	Indirectly provides safety benefit/improvement	81%
	↔	Maintains safety levels	11%
	–	No impact on safety	5%
Impact on System Security	↑↑	Implements new security protection/prevention	4%
	↑	Enhances existing security level	18%
	↔	Maintains or replaces existing level of security	3%
	–	Does not impact security	74%

Metric	Measurements		
Asset Conditions		Rated below 2 for FTA's Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM)	7%
		Rated between 2 and 3 for TERM	9%
		Rated above 3 for TERM	1%
	–	Does not have an asset rating	83%
Vehicle Useful Life		Over 2 years past useful life	11%
		Between 0-2 years past useful life	14%
		Not exceeding useful life	3%
	–	Is not a vehicle with a useful life	72%
Ridership/ Mode Shift	↑↑	Significantly improves transit ridership	64%
	↑	Moderately improves transit ridership	17%
	↔	Maintains asset necessary for transit ridership	14%
	–	Project has no impact on transit ridership	6%
Climate Agency Operating Impacts	↓↓	Directly supports significant reduction/zero GHG emissions	63%
	↓	Supports moderate reductions or offsets to GHG emissions	7%
	↔	No reduction of GHG emissions	6%
	–	Project does not impact GHG emissions	23%
Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities	↑↑	Makes assets fully accessible	55%
	↑	Makes assets partially accessible/minor accessibility improvements	9%
	↔	Maintains current levels of accessibility	17%
	–	Project is not related to accessibility	19%
Regulatory Requirements	✓	Yes, fulfills regulatory requirements	29%
	✕	No, is not a project that fulfills specific regulatory requirements	71%
Operating Costs	↓↓	Significant Decrease (>=10%)	26%
	↓	Minor Decrease (<10%)	10%
	↔↑	No change / increase	61%
	–	Not applicable	3%

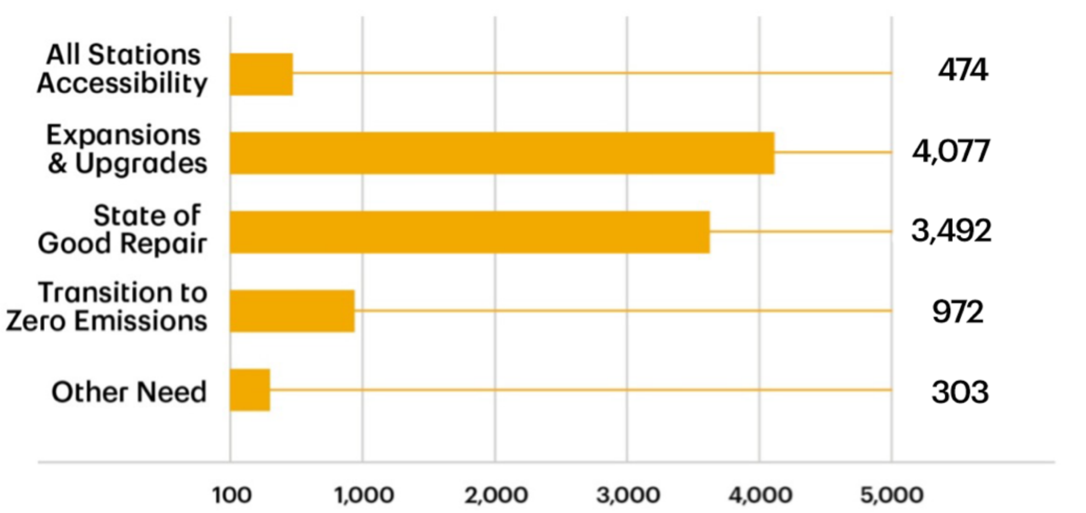
Capital Funding Goals

Capital funding in the region is dedicated to four major types of projects:

- State of Good Repair
- Transition to Zero Emissions
- All Stations Accessibility
- Expansions and Upgrades

In this budget book we have categorized all projects, excluding debt service, based on the four primary types of capital projects listed above. Each project can have a primary goal as well as a secondary goal. For example, a station refresh project might also make the station fully accessible, so it would be categorized in both. In addition, projects that do not fall into one of the categories are included in other need, which might include projects such as administrative and support activities. Figure 27 shows the total dollars being invested into each of the goals. Because 28 out of the region's 199 projects are categorized with multiple goals, the total available funding is $9.318B which means that $1.050B in projects are classified in two categories. This analysis does not include the $18.8M held in reserve by RTA for future distribution.

Figure 27. Regional Goals (dollars in millions)



State of good repair is the core function of the capital program. The region has an extensive rail network, some of which date to the late 1800s in addition to aging rolling stock and many bridges and facilities that need to be maintained. The 2026-2030 program contributes $3.492B towards state of good repair. 152 out of the 199 projects in the program focus on State of Good Repair.

The State of Illinois has mandated a transition to all electric buses, and the Service Boards have laid out an ambitious plan to have an all-electric bus fleet by 2040. This entails significant costs that need to be funded annually to achieve the goal. In addition, Metra is investing in new technologies to provide zero-emission service along their corridors, and the region is looking at reduced and zero emission options when purchasing non-revenue vehicles. The 2026-2030 program contributes $972 million towards the goal of transitioning to zero emissions. With the higher costs of purchasing zero-emission vehicles and the costs associated with electrifying facilities, the analysis shows that there are just 11 projects contributing to this goal, but the projects are impactful in moving the region ahead.

Moving the system towards full accessibility continues to be another regional goal. While all trains and buses are accessible, getting to the stations and bus stops remains a challenge. The region has set out to make all rail stations accessible and to work with communities to improve the accessibility of bus stops. CTA has laid out an extensive All Stations Accessibility Program to plan out full accessibility and Metra is actively working to add accessible stations to the regional rail system. The 2026-2030 program contributes $474 million towards making all stations accessible. This is achieved through 17 projects included in the program.

Expansions and upgrades are another aspect of the program that improves the system for the users. This goal includes new stations, line extensions, upgrades to customer amenities and more. The program includes a limited selection of expansions and upgrades based on available funding, regional prioritization and need. The 2026-2030 program includes $4.077 billion invested towards expansions and upgrades, mainly focused on the Red Line Extension, which was buoyed by a significant influx in federal discretionary and City of Chicago funds for the specific project. 28 projects are classified as expansion and upgrades, with $274 million being dedicated to 27 smaller projects and $3.803 billion going towards the Red Line Extension.

Throughout the report we will highlight these four goals that are key priorities for capital funds in the region. For each of these goals, a more in-depth look at some of the key regional projects is included in the Service Board sections of the report.

Performance-Based Programming

The region’s performance-based programming methodology requires that each Service Board programs at least 20% of funding to projects that are focused on improving accessibility or equity for the 2026-2029 plan years and projects that are focused on reducing operating cost or transitioning to zero emissions in the 2030 plan year. Table 16 shows the projects and dollar value of those projects that are programmed to either equity or accessibility projects for 2026. Projects that make assets fully accessible or partially accessible plus equity projects scoring 3 or greater in the Justice40 index are included in the evaluation. Regionwide, 70% of funding ($1.326B) is programmed to projects that improve equity and accessibility in 2026.

Table 16. Regional Equity and Accessibility Projects (dollars in thousands)

Service Board	Project Description	2026 Funding Amount	Equity	Accessibility
CTA	Bus Turnaround ADA & Site Improvements-Halsted and 79th Street	4,555	•	•
	Forest Park Branch Modernization - Track Design-Lathrop to IMD	25,400	•	
	Red Line Extension	943,464	•	•
	Train Tracker Digital Signage Upgrade	1,033		•
	New Bi-Level Rail Cars Purchase	141,000		
	Zero-Emissions Trainsets	82,575		•
	Car Rehab (Nippon Sharyo 2012-2016 Highliner)	16,625		•
	Bi-Directional Signals ME & NICTD	12,000	•	

Service Board	Project Description	2026 Funding Amount	Equity	Accessibility
Metra	Olympia Fields Station	11,275	•	•
	Car Rehab - Midlife (Amerail)	10,000		•
	95th Street Station CSU	8,000	•	•
	Systemwide Station Signs	7,330		•
	Van Buren Street Station	6,121		•
	Rogers Park Station	5,900		•
	Glen Ellyn Station	4,000		•
	Rock Island Intercity Improvements (RI3)	4,000	•	
	Battery Electric Train Infrastructure	3,000	•	
	Bridge 86 - 78th St Entrance	2,074	•	•
	GPS Train Tracking	1,500		•
	Station Displays (TROI Net)	900		•
	A5 Interlocking Reconfiguration	575		•
	ADA Improvements BNS	330		•
Pace	Purchase 15-passenger Paratransit Vehicles	2,037		•
	Fixed Route Electric Buses	13,500	•	
	River Division Electrification/Expansion	12,000		
	Southwest Division Electrification/Expansion	7,500	•	
	Total Toward Equity and Accessibility	**1,326,694**		
	Total Program Available	**1,908,390**		
	% Toward Equity and Accessibility	**70%**		

Table 17 shows the percentage of funding meeting the goals in the current year plus each of the out years (2027-2030), specific projects are identified in the capital appendix. In 2027-2029 between 60% and 77% of the program meets the accessibility or equity goals. For 2030, 70% of the program meets the reduction in operating cost or reduction in climate impact goals.

Table 17. CTA Percentage of Funding Meeting Performance Based Programming Regional Goals by Year (dollars in thousands)

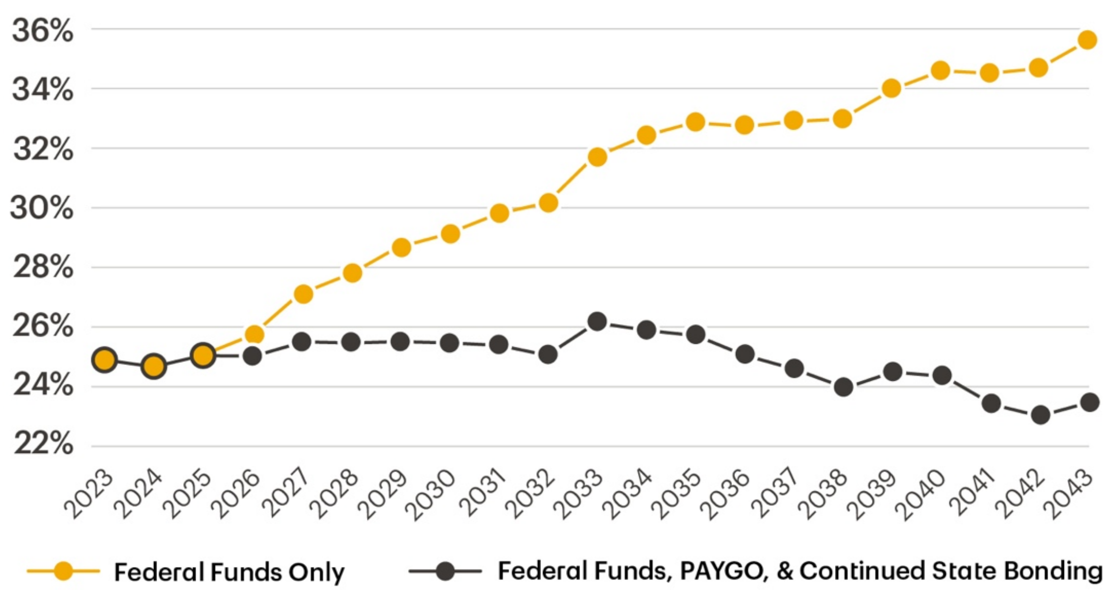
	Accessibility & Equity				Operating Cost & Climate Impact
	2026	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**
Total $ Impact	1,326,694	1,165,618	1,446,926	922,221	885,997
Total Program Available	1,908,390	1,705,717	1,868,667	1,546,319	1,260,149
% Impact	70%	68%	77%	60%	70%

When analyzing available funding based on these metrics, it's clear that the region needs more funding to meet all the regional goals. Despite these funding challenges, the agencies continue to do their best to make a positive impact in as many priority areas as possible while also maintaining the existing system.

Long-Term Funding Need

Overall, the 2026-2030 Capital Program is primarily focused on addressing the region's state of good repair needs, increasing accessibility systemwide, making limited expansions and upgrades and transitioning to zero-emissions. The capital investment in our region from Rebuild Illinois allowed real progress to be made improving our transit system, as the percentage of assets exceeding their useful lives decreased from 31% in 2016 to 25% in 2025. Figure 28 shows the percentage of assets exceeding useful life at around 25% in 2025.

Figure 28. Funding Impact on Percent of Assets Beyond Useful Life



With State support, as shown in the black line on the chart, the start of good repair backlog will continue to decrease, but more funding is needed to help clear the backlog. To bring our transit system into a full state of good repair (without accounting for any expansion) maintaining an average capital investment of around $4 billion per year is needed over the next 20 years, yet the five-year program averages less than $2 billion per year. The RTA continues to lead Strategic Asset Management (SAM) activities for the region to consider the impacts of capital funding and the asset condition outlook beyond the timeframe covered in the capital program. The RTA is currently working with the Service Boards to update the data and models used to estimate the impact of capital funding on the region. Meanwhile, capital funding continues to be insufficient to meet regional needs.

RTA will continue with its work analyzing capital needs and advocating for additional capital funding to better meet the region's significant capital requirements.

CTA Capital Program

CTA's 2026-2030 Capital Program has $6.757 billion programmed for capital expenditures and debt service. CTA has a 10-year need of about $26.6 billion for priority projects that include the Blue Line Forest Park Branch rehab, Red Purple Modernization, bus fleet electrification, replacement of aging rail cars, and state of good repair priorities. CTA's capital program is focused on the Red Line Extension (RLE), with more than 56% of funding being allocated to this project. Other funded projects focus on state of good repair and improving accessibility throughout the system.

Looking at the program in more depth, 15% ($998 million) has been programmed towards revenue vehicles (buses and railcars). This includes $770 million towards the purchase of new railcars and buses as well as $228 million towards ongoing maintenance of the existing fleet. As CTA continues to transition towards zero-emissions technology, $362 million has been programmed towards the purchase of articulated electric buses which will be the first fleet of this type in the United States. To support these new buses, $143 million is being programmed for garage electrification at 103rd Street Garage.

CTA also continues to prioritize their All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP), accounting for $245M worth of projects. The funding will focus on Clybourn (Red), Cicero and Austin (Blue), and Oak Park and Ridgeland (Green) stations as well as elevator and escalator replacement throughout the system.

An additional priority is bus-turnarounds. CTA is programming $57 million to improve facilities for both customers and operators. Work will include ADA improvements, customer amenities and operator restrooms.

Of note, CTA's Capital Program contains debt-service on past debt-issuances. CTA funds many of their capital projects by issuing debt. Some of CTA's debt is repaid using federal capital funding; 14% ($978 million) of CTA's Capital Program is assigned to paying principal and interest on this debt. The RTA and Service Boards continue to advocate for new funding sources so that CTA is not as reliant on debt backed by federal formula funds.

CTA Capital Assets:

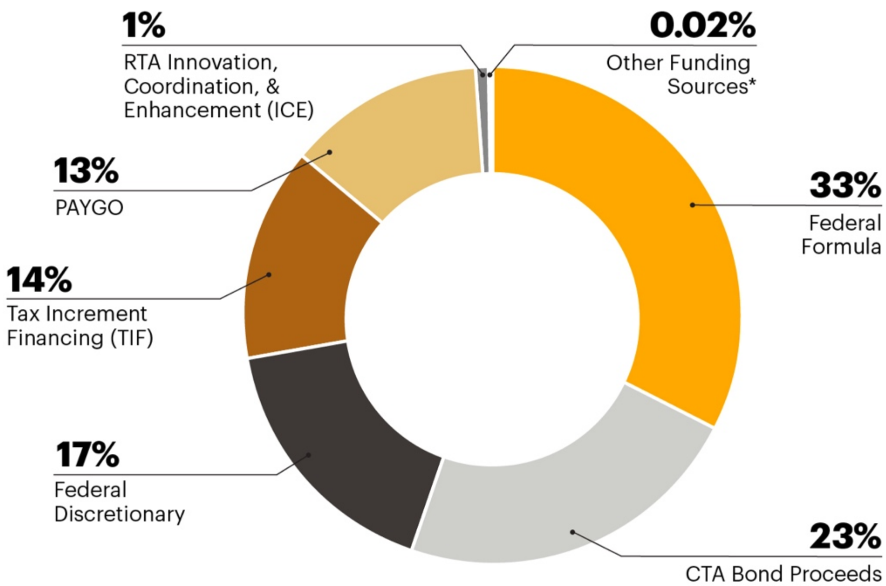
The graphic below is an overview of key CTA assets. CTA requires continual investment to keep up with need that include maintaining and replacing their 1,480 railcars and 1,875 buses, transitioning to a zero-emissions bus fleet and making the remaining 37 stations accessible. A large percentage of the $26.6 billion priority project need over the next ten years comes from investment in keeping CTA's assets in a state of good repair.

Rail Cars	1,480
Total Buses	1,875
Diesel/Hybrid Buses	1,850
Electric Buses	25
Rail Stations	146
Fully Accessible Stations	109
Railyards	12
Bus Garages	7
Bridges	115
Grade Crossings	33
Power Substations	64
Miles of Track	224

Capital Funding by Source

In CTA's $6.757 billion 2026-2030 Capital Program, funding comes from six sources shown in Figure 29. CTA's Capital Program has continued to shift from state funding more towards federal funds as all the Rebuild Illinois bond funds were programmed earlier in the decade. CTA has been successful in bringing in large federal discretionary awards. CTA's program includes $1.140 billion in discretionary funds, which includes $978 million towards the Red Line Extension as well as funding for the Blue Line Forest Park Branch and the purchase of articulated electric buses. In addition, RLE has received dedicated funding from the City of Chicago via a Tax Increment Financing district (TIF) in the amount of $932 million.

Figure 29. CTA 2026-2030 Capital Program Funding: $6.754 Billion



Capital Funding by Priority Project

CTA has identified 34 capital priority projects, shown in Table 18, as part of their 10-year funding need. In addition, there are three administrative/uncategorized buckets that have a need. CTA's total 10-year need including administration is $26.6 billion of which about 25% ($6.757B) is funded in the current five-year program. RTA estimates that an additional $4 billion would be expected in 2031-2035 based on 2.5% annual funding growth and excluding one-time funding opportunities such as RLE funding. Based on this assumption, approximately 40% of CTA's funding needs are expected to be covered over the 10-year period with an additional $15.8 billion needed to meet the additional priorities.

Table 18: CTA Priority Projects

Priority Project	Estimated 10-Year Need for Priority Project	Total 5-Year Funding Programmed
Red Purple Modernization	5,956,152	-
Red Line Extension	4,200,184*	3,802,879
Blue Line Forest Park Modernization - Completion	2,721,600	25,400
Preventive Maintenance	1,240,000	63,131
Electric Bus Infrastructure Program	952,750	133,000
Railcar Purchase	937,858	407,973
Signal Replacement (Systemwide)	716,469	-
Railcar Overhaul (2600s and 5000s)	674,763	147,508
Green Line Improvements	645,293	-
Subway Life Safety Improvements	599,059	12,750
Replacement Buses 40FT - 430 Electric Buses	559,000	-

Priority Project	Estimated 10-Year Need for Priority Project	Total 5-Year Funding Programmed
BRT/Bus Slow Zone Removal/ TSP/Dedicated Lane projects	458,840	-
Brown Line Improvements	436,384	-
Replacement Buses (Articulated) - Electric	425,720	362,210
All Stations Accessibility Program	411,793	244,905
Red Line Improvements	396,400	81,295
Systemwide Track Renewal	394,411	-
Systemwide Structural Renewal	337,400	46,780
Tactical Traction Power Improvements	302,048	-
Mid-Life Bus Overhaul (7900 series)	290,118	61,898
Critical Needs at CTA Facilities	263,900	32,206
Rail Yard Improvements	259,324	-
Bus Garage Improvements	248,090	-
Rail Shops Improvements	225,900	24,094
Blue Line (O'Hare) Traction Power Capacity & Track Improvements	215,740	-
Station Communication Infrastructure	186,233	18,000
Replacement Bus Purchase (4300 series)	140,000	-
Systemwide Station Program	109,158	40,700
Information Technology	90,771	28,590
Bus Turnarounds	72,425	56,580
Radio System Upgrade	64,500	-
Non-Revenue Vehicle Replacement Program	59,990	5,761
Life-Extending Bus Overhaul 430 (1000 series)	38,477	18,305
Tactical Signal Improvements	21,630	-
Administration and Uncategorized Projects		
Bond Repayment, Interest Cost & Finance Cost	1,659,526	977,982
Uncategorized Projects - CTA	160,000	85,000
Administration - CTA	127,314	80,520
Total	**26,599,220**	**6,757,467**

*Total need for Red Line Extension is $5.750 billion with $1.550 billion funded in past programs, $3.083 billion funded in the current program and $397 million remaining to be programmed in 2031.

Looking in more detail, priority projects such as Red Purple Modernization, bus and rail car overhauls and purchases, and the Blue Line Forest Park Branch Modernization are focused on achieving state of good repair of the current system. Projects to purchase electric buses and electrify bus garages are focused on transitioning to zero emissions. Priority projects such as RLE are designed to enhance and expand the system while improving equity in the region.

For 2026, we have revised CTA's priority projects to combine similar projects. The remaining Blue Line Forest Park Branch rehab is now one priority; several short-term maintenance projects have been combined into a new preventative maintenance category, and several administrative projects have been combined into an administrative projects category. In addition, two more projects were fully funded as of 2025: Ventra 3.0 and the diesel bus purchase.

CTA's 2026-2030 Capital Program funds activities in 23 of the 37 priority projects, as shown in Table 18. Fourteen projects have no funding in the 2026-2030 program. This leaves important priority projects like later phases of the Green Line Improvements, Signal Replacement – Systemwide, and Red-Purple Modernization completely unfunded in the 2026-2030 Capital Program. Without funding for these projects, CTA will continue to make smaller repairs to the existing system to keep it in operation, but the apparent funding gap may negatively impact the system's performance. For example, more buses may be out of service or trains may run at slower speeds. CTA's large 10-year need shows that more funding is needed to keep the system rolling, improve service to disinvested areas, improve accessibility, and provide greener service.

One CTA administrative requirement—bond repayment, interest, and finance cost—must be fully funded, as debt service payments are required, and represent the second largest of CTA's funded projects in the 2026-2030 plan: 14.5% ($978 million). CTA's continued use of federal funds for debt repayment limits CTA's ability to execute new projects with said federal dollars and highlights the need for other local and state funding sources that can be utilized as a match to the influx of federal discretionary dollars coming into the region.

CTA plans to issue $1.54 billion in new debt in the 2026-2030 period, all of which is for the Red Line Extension. These bonds are planned to be supported by sales tax receipts but are planned to be paid back using Federal Formula funds.

Evaluation Metrics

RTA is continuing to evaluate all projects in the 2026-2030 Capital Program based on 15 metrics defined in Transit is the Answer, the regional strategic plan, that evaluate the region's goals associated with the capital program. While it is not expected that many projects will meet all the regional goals, the analysis finds that CTA proposed a selection of projects that meets each of the regional goals. More funding is needed to robustly address every goal. Detailed evaluations of each CTA project can be found in Appendix A.

CTA's metrics are based on available funding after payment of debt service ($5.776 billion). Debt service is not evaluated because these funds paid for capital projects that would have been evaluated in previous programs.

Table 19 shows all 15 evaluation metrics. Each metric has between two and four possible measurement choices. The table shows the metric, measurement and percentage of dollars in the program that have been evaluated with that measurement. For example, looking at Access to Key Destinations, 70% of funds ($4.04 billion) significantly improve access to key destinations. In this table, each metric has an illustrative project to give an example of how funds will be used to reach that regional goal.

Table 19. CTA Metrics and Evaluations

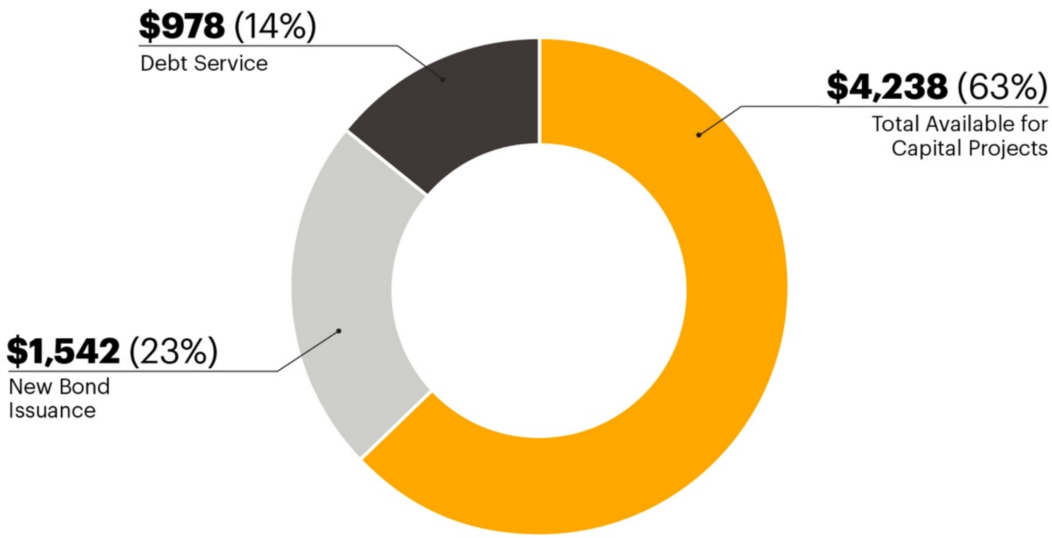
Metric	Measurements			Illustrative Project
Access to Key Destinations	↑↑	Significantly improves access	70%	**All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP)** will increase access to key destinations for populations who require accessible access to the stations.
	↑	Moderately improves access	2%	
	↔	Maintains access	20%	
	–	Not applicable	7%	
Equity based on Residential Geography	↑↑↑	Scores 6-8 for Justice40 Program	72%	**Red Line Extension (RLE)** is one of the single largest investments for the Far South Side of Chicago, bringing 24/7 rapid transit service to the neighborhood residents.
	↑↑	Scores 3-5 for Justice40 Program	0%	
	↑	Scores 0-2 for Justice40 Program	0%	
	–	Not location specific/Benefits entire service area	27%	
Benefit to Riders	↑↑	Significant benefit	86%	**103rd Street Garage Electrification** will add needed capacity to store more buses and expand service in the busy South Side of Chicago
	↑	Moderate benefit	7%	
	↔	Maintains current benefit	2%	
	–	Project does not impact customers	4%	
Capacity Benefit and Need	↑↑	Increases capacity where utilization is near capacity	68%	**RLE** will extend Red Line service to Chicago's Far South Side and add four new stations to increase system capacity versus the current bus service, where some lines run near capacity.
	↑	Increases capacity where utilization is not near capacity	0%	
	↔	Maintains original capacity	22%	
	–	Not related to capacity	9%	
Economic Impact	↑↑↑	Large economic impact	68%	**RLE** is one of the single largest investments in the Far South Side of Chicago and is expected to bring economic benefits including construction jobs as well as long term benefits including new housing and jobs to the area.
	↑↑	Moderate economic impact	6%	
	↑	Small economic impact	3%	
	–	No economic development impact	23%	

Metric	Measurements			Illustrative Project
Service Speed and Reliability	↑↑	Significantly improves speed/reliability	14%	**North Mainline - Special Track and Geometry Improvements** will improve speed and reliability by ensuring optimal track alignment is implemented throughout the system.
	↑	Moderately improves speed/reliability	8%	
	↔	Maintains speed/reliability	6%	
	–	No impact on speed/reliability	71%	
Impact on Customer/ Employee Safety	↑↑	Directly provides safety benefit/improvement	1%	**Bus Turnaround Improvements** will provide for the reconstruction of bus turnarounds at existing terminals and construction of a new terminal to include employee restrooms offering a safe location.
	↑	Indirectly provides safety benefit/improvement	88%	
	↔	Maintains safety levels	8%	
	–	No impact on safety	3%	
Impact on System Security	↑↑	Implements new security protection/prevention	1%	**Security Camera Modernization and Upgrade project** will provide updates to the security cameras and systems in and around rail and bus stations improving the security of both customers and employees.
	↑	Enhances existing security level	7%	
	↔	Maintains or replaces existing level of security	0%	
	–	Does not impact security	92%	
Asset Conditions	⚙	Rated below 2 for FTA's Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM)	3%	**Forest Park Branch Modernization – Track Design – Lathrop to IMD Elevated Track and Structure** project continues to work to improve the Blue Line Forest Park Branch which has significant slow zones.
	⚙	Rated between 2 and 3 for TERM	5%	
	⚙	Rated above 3 for TERM	1%	
	–	Does not have an asset rating	92%	
Vehicle Useful Life	⚙	Over 2 years past useful life	3%	**Life Extending Bus Overhaul (1000 series)** will return a decades old bus fleet to a state of good repair extending the useful life until replacement buses can be purchased.
	⚙	Between 0-2 years past useful life	13%	
	⚙	Not exceeding useful life	1%	
	–	Is not a vehicle with a useful life	83%	

Metric	Measurements			Illustrative Project
Ridership/ Mode Shift	↑↑	Significantly improves transit ridership	73%	**ASAP** will offer new opportunities to use the rail system for customers who require accessible station access.
	↑	Moderately improves transit ridership	13%	
	↔	Maintains asset necessary for transit ridership	10%	
	–	Project has no impact on transit ridership	3%	
Climate Agency Operating Impacts	↓↓	Directly supports significant reduction/zero GHG emissions	74%	**Articulated Electric Bus Purchases and Charging Equipment** will benefit customers with a new and quiet fleet that will accommodate more passengers on higher ridership bus routes.
	↓	Supports moderate reductions or offsets to GHG emissions	7%	
	↔	No reduction of GHG emissions	4%	
	–	Project does not impact GHG emissions	14%	
Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities	↑↑	Makes assets fully accessible	69%	**ASAP** is dedicated to bringing CTA's rail stations to full accessibility. Currently, 70% of CTA's rail stations are accessible.
	↑	Makes assets partially accessible/minor accessibility improvements	1%	
	↔	Maintains current levels of accessibility	19%	
	–	Project is not related to accessibility	11%	
Regulatory Requirements	✓	Yes, fulfills regulatory requirements	20%	**Purchase Articulated Electric Buses and Charging Equipment** addresses the statewide mandate to purchase only zero-emissions buses by 2026.
	✗	No, is not a project that fulfills a specific regulatory requirement	80%	
Operating Costs	↓↓	Significant Decrease (>=10%)	17%	**Purchase Rail Cars - 7000 Series** project ensures that the older fleet of 2600 Series rail cars are replaced with newer 7000 Series rail cars; modern rail cars improve operating efficiency and decrease maintenance and repair costs.
	↓	Minor Decrease (<10%)	9%	
	↔↑	No change / increase	72%	
	–	Not applicable	3%	

As noted, because debt service is a requirement for CTA, they must fund this debt before any other capital projects can be programmed. In the 2026-2030 capital program 15% of CTA's funds directly pay for past borrowing. This reduces CTA's current ability to execute projects. In addition, CTA plans to borrow an additional $1.542 billion (23% of their program) in years 2026-2030. Figure 30 shows available funding for capital projects (both debt and non-debt) versus required debt service as a portion of the program.

Figure 30. Amount of CTA Funding Available for New Spend (Dollars in Millions)

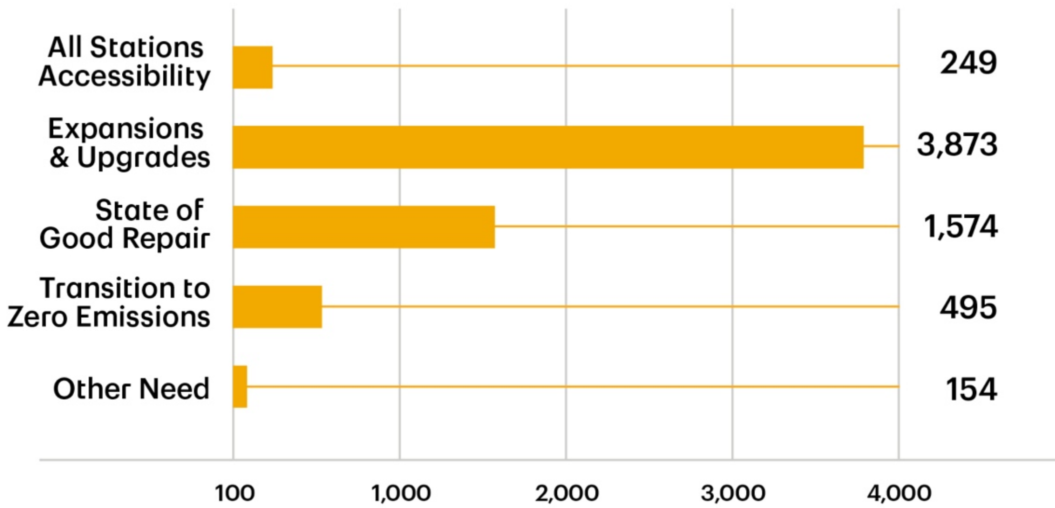


When reviewing CTA's program, it is noted that CTA's projects provide significant benefits to the region by funding rehabilitation, system and accessibility improvements, and expansions. Some of the strongest themes being met include benefits to riders as well as climate impacts. CTA's program includes significant projects that meet these criteria including electrification, Red Line Extension and All Station Accessibility Program. Overall, the measures show that CTA is contributing to all the regionally important areas, but only additional funding would allow CTA to address all these goals to a greater extent.

CTA Capital Funding Goals

In this report, RTA will dive deeper into the four key regional goals that capital funding is accomplishing, State of Good Repair, Transition to Zero Emissions, All Stations Accessibility, and Expansions and Upgrades, to see how CTA's program is impacting these regionally important areas. Each project can have a primary goal as well as a secondary goal. In addition, projects that do not fall into one of the categories are included in other need, which might include projects such as administrative and support activities. Figure 31 shows the total dollars being invested into each of the goals. Because 7 of CTA's 46 projects are categorized with multiple goals, the total available funding for this calculation is $6.342 billion which means that $562 million in projects are classified in two categories. For example, purchase articulated buses falls into both State of Good Repair and Transition to Zero Emissions because the purchase is replacing a worn-out asset and upgrading to a zero-emission option.

Figure 31. CTA Regional Capital Funding Goals (Dollars in Millions)



State of Good Repair

CTA plans to invest $1.574 billion in projects that focus on State of Good Repair and will restore their assets back to their original design and function. Key projects include:

Purchase Rail Cars – 7000 Series: $308 million will be invested in purchasing a new fleet of rail cars to replace the decades-old 2600 series with options to replace some of the 3200 series rail cars. The newer rail cars will decrease maintenance costs and allow for more efficient operations.

Purchase Rail Cars – 9000 Series: $100 million will be invested to purchase the next generation of new rail cars to replace older rail cars including the remaining 3200 series rail cars that are reaching their useful life.

Purchase Articulated Electric Buses and Charging Equipment: $362 million will be invested to replace buses significantly past their useful life.

Transition to Zero Emissions

CTA has programmed $495 million for projects that advance the goal of moving towards zero emissions. These projects include bus garage electrification and purchase of articulated electric buses plus related charging equipment in a continued effort to reduce transit's environmental impact.

All Stations Accessibility

$249 million of CTA's programmed funds are dedicated towards projects that improve station accessibility, all of which are part of CTA's continued efforts to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP) will continue to increase accessibility systemwide with their upgrades and new installations of escalators, elevators, and station-specific ADA-enhancements.

Expansions and Upgrades

Expansions and Upgrades is CTA's largest investment, with $3.9 billion programmed to projects that expand and/or upgrade the existing system including an extension, safety and security upgrades, and improved station amenities. The Red Line Extension project will extend the line from 95th Street Station to 130th Street, facilitating enhanced and more reliable access to jobs and opportunities, and fewer intermodal transfers for community residents, as well as providing four new fully accessible stations at 103rd, 111th, Michigan Avenue, and 130th Street.

Performance-Based Programming

The performance-based programming methodology requires that each Service Board programs 20% of funding to regional priorities determined by the RTA Board. For 2026-2029 at least 20% of funding must be programmed to projects that either achieve full accessibility or improve equity. In 2030, Operating Cost and Climate Impact will serve as the 20% required metric. Table 20 shows the projects and dollar values that are programmed to either equity or accessibility projects for program year 2026. 74% of CTA's projects in 2026 will meet either the accessibility or equity requirement.

Table 20. CTA Accessibility and Equity Project Highlights (dollars in thousands)

Description	2026	Equity	Accessibility
Bus Turnaround ADA & Site Improvements-Halsted and 79th Street	4,555	●	●
Forest Park Branch Modernization – Track Design – Lathrop to IMD	25,400	●	●
Train Tracker Digital Signage Upgrade	1,033		●
Red Line Extension	943,464	●	●
Total Toward Equity and Accessibility	**$974,452**		
Total Program	**$1,314,963**		
% Toward Equity and Accessibility	74%		

Table 21 shows the percentage of funding meeting the goals in each of the out years (2027-2030); specific projects are identified in the capital appendix. In 2027-2029 between 59% and 81% of the program meets the accessibility or equity goals. For 2030, 78% of the program meets the reduction in operating cost or reduction in climate impact goals. Key equity projects in the plan include the Red Line Extension to 130th Street, which reaches a significant population who is currently underserved by transit, as well as electrification projects, which reduce harmful pollutants and provide for a greener transit system. CTA's plan is to electrify garages in more disadvantaged communities first. For accessibility, CTA has dedicated funding to several elevator installations and replacements over the coming years with the goal of making the remaining 37 stations accessible by 2038.

Table 21. CTA Percentage of Funding Meeting Performance Based Programming Regional Goals by Year (dollars in thousands)

	Accessibility & Equity				Operating Cost & Climate Impact
	2026	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**
Total $ Impact	974,452	949,645	1,125,987	632,991	595,505
Total Program Available	1,314,963	1,239,358	1,390,361	1,068,767	762,631
% Impact	74%	77%	81%	59%	78%

Additional funding for state of good repair projects will become more pronounced as a large portion of the capital program is dedicated to RLE. CTA and RTA continue to advocate for funds that will help address important goals such as CTA's All Stations Accessibility Program, electrification of the bus network, and the goal of getting the system back into a state of good repair. The programmed projects build on the system and offer transit to underserved communities, fulfilling an important need for the region. Furthermore, advocating for additional federal and state funding will allow CTA to reduce its strong reliance on funding projects with CTA issued debt, which requires large future repayments of principal and interest with federal or operating funds, which otherwise would be available for new capital needs or service improvements.

Metra Capital Program

Metra's 2026-2030 Capital Program has $2.122 billion in available funding. Metra has an approximate $15.6 billion 10-year funding need for its priority projects, which include key goals of reaching a state of good repair, updating the fleet of railcars and locomotives, repairing and replacing bridges and improving speed and passenger amenities.

Metra has dedicated 47% ($1.02B) of its program towards replacing and rehabilitating rail cars and locomotives, 16% ($331M) towards track and structure improvements, and 15% ($326M) towards replacing and rehabilitating stations across the system. The 2026-2030 program also includes a significant investment in transitioning to zero-emissions with $29M programmed for the conversion of three diesel locomotives to zero-emission battery power and $184M towards the ongoing procurement of zero-emission trainsets, which are expected to begin delivery to the region in 2026. Currently, 11 of Metra's 13 priority projects have some funding dedicated to them in the 2026-2030 Capital Program.

Metra Capital Assets:

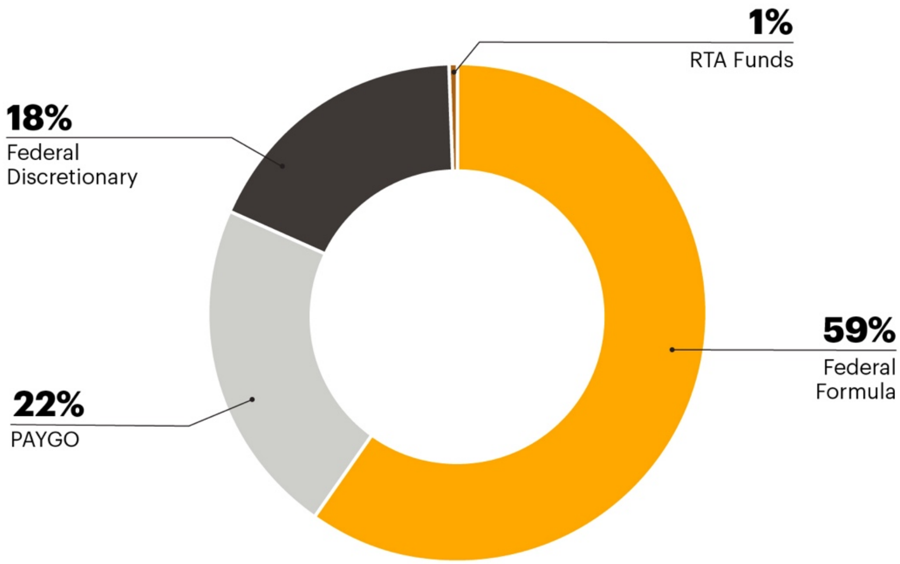
The graphic below is an overview of all of Metra's assets. Metra requires continual investment to keep up with needs that include maintaining and replacing 1,037 railcars, 186 locomotives, and 926 bridges. In addition, a high level of investment is needed to make the remaining 57 stations fully accessible and to explore zero-emission technologies for rail service. A large percentage of the $15.6 billion priority project need over the next ten years comes from investment in keeping Metra's assets in a state of good repair.

Rail Cars	1,037
Locomotives	186
Rail Stations	243
Fully Accessible Stations	186
Partially Accessible Stations	13
Railyards	24
Bridges	936
Grade Crossings	566
Power Substations	566
Miles of Track	1,155

Capital Funding by Source

Metra's $2.122 billion 2026-2030 Capital Program is funded by federal, state, and local funding sources. As shown in Figure 32, Metra's Capital Program is comprised of 59% federal formula funds, 18% federal discretionary funds, 22% PAYGO funds and 1% RTA funds; made up of Innovation, Coordination and Enhancement (ICE) and Access to Transit funds.

Figure 32. Metra 2026-2030 Program Funding Sources: $2.122 Billion



Capital Funding by Priority Project

Metra has identified 13 capital priority projects, shown in Table 22, as part of their 10-year funding need. Also, there are two administrative and uncategorized buckets with needs. Metra's total 10-year need, including administration, is $15.6 billion of which $2.122 billion is funded in the 2026-2030 program. RTA estimates that about $3.0 billion would be expected in 2031-2035 based on 2.5% annual funding growth. Based on this, approximately one third of Metra's funding needs are expected to be covered over the 10-year period with an additional $10.5 billion needed to meet all the state of good repair and enhancement needs.

For 2026, Metra has made some updates to their priorities. The priority project, Fleet Modernization, has been split into two with Fleet Modernization accounting for state of good repair work to the existing fleet and Next-Gen Regional Rail fleet accounting for new vehicle purchases, including zero-emission trains. In addition, the Zero-Emissions project has been removed as it was merged with the Next-Gen Regional Rail fleet project. Finally, the Rail Station Improvements category has been split into Station Modernization and Metra Station Accessibility Initiative to better demonstrate the need for these distinct projects.

Metra's capital priorities involve maintaining the current system through projects such as fleet modernization, bridge replacement and repair, track improvements, and rail station improvements. Notably, the 75th St. Corridor and A2 Interlocker Replacement are unfunded, and only 1% of the funding needs for the Rock Island Line Improvements and Chicago Union Station Improvements have been included in the program. RTA and Metra continue to advocate for additional funding to better meet the needs of these projects, which are designed to bring Metra to a state of good repair, transition to zero-emissions, add accessibility to the system and improve the experience of Metra's riders.

Table 22. Metra 2026-2030 Priority Projects (dollars in thousands)

Priority Project	Estimated 10-Year Need for Priority Project	Total 5-Year Funding Programmed
Next-Gen Regional Rail Fleet	$2,240,000	$746,607
Track Improvements	$2,115,599	$202,366
Bridge Improvement Program	$2,100,000	$98,603
75th Street Corridor	$1,810,529	$0
Rock Island Line Improvements	$1,250,000	$15,537
Signal & Electrical Improvements	$1,165,638	$193,715
A2 Interlocking Replacement	$1,100,000	$0
Fleet Modernization	$880,000	$285,245
Station Accessibility Initiative	$847,035	$114,072
Chicago Union Station Improvements	$602,289	$5,000
Station Modernization	$585,000	$208,227
Yard, Facilities, and Equipment Improvements	$449,138	$90,377
PTC – Systemwide	$75,505	$2,000
Administration and Uncategorized Projects		
Administration - Metra	$359,485	$144,139
Uncategorized Projects - Metra	$41,878	$41,878
Total	**$15,622,095**	**$2,121,667**

Evaluation Metrics

RTA is continuing to evaluate all projects in the 2026-2030 Capital Program based on 15 metrics defined in *Transit is the Answer*, the regional strategic plan that evaluates the region's goals associated with the capital program. While it is not expected that many projects will meet all the regional goals, the analysis finds that Metra proposed a selection of projects that meets each of the regional goals. More funding is needed to robustly address every goal. Detailed evaluations of each Metra project can be found in Appendix A.

Table 23 shows all 15 evaluation metrics. Each metric has between two and four possible measurement choices. The table shows the metric, measurement and percentage of dollars in the program that have been evaluated with that measurement. For example, looking at Access to Key Destinations, 18% of funds ($389 million) significantly improve access to key destinations.

Table 23. Metra Metrics and Evaluations

Metric	Measurements			Illustrative Project
Access to Key Destinations	↑↑	Significantly improves access	18%	Replacement and expansion of the **Homewood Substation** will allow for additional service capacity along the Metra Electric Line.
	↑	Moderately improves access	4%	
	↔	Maintains access	63%	
	–	Not applicable	15%	
Equity based on Residential Geography	↑↑↑	Scores 6-8 for Justice40 Program	3%	Rehabilitation of the **95th St/Chicago State University Station** on the Metra Electric District Line will include replacement of the station platform, warming shelters, and a second station entrance in a disadvantaged community.
	↑↑	Scores 3-5 for Justice40 Program	5%	
	↑	Scores 0-2 for Justice40 Program	12%	
	–	Not location specific/Benefits entire service area	80%	
Benefit to Riders	↑↑	Significant benefit	41%	**Olympia Fields Station** on the Metra Electric Line will be rehabilitated. Improvements benefiting riders include renovating the existing pedestrian tunnels and the existing Kiss & Ride facilities. The station will also be made fully ADA accessible.
	↑	Moderate benefit	14%	
	↔	Maintains current benefit	30%	
	–	Project does not impact customers	15%	
Capacity Benefit and Need	↑↑	Increases capacity where utilization is near capacity	43%	**A20 Interlocking** on the Milwaukee District North Line will be modernized and made more reliable using PTC-compatible control systems. This will improve speed and reliability, leading to greater volume in an area of the line near capacity.
	↑	Increases capacity where utilization is not near capacity	9%	
	↔	Maintains original capacity	28%	
	–	Not related to capacity	20%	
Economic Impact	↑↑↑	Large economic impact	18%	Rehabilitation of **Van Buren Street Station** will include upgrades to the Grant Park and Michigan Avenue pedestrian tunnels, platform replacement, waiting room updates, and warming shelters. The large project will generate over a $100M impact.
	↑↑	Moderate economic impact	16%	
	↑	Small economic impact	20%	
	–	No economic development impact	46%	

Metric	Measurements			Illustrative Project
Service Speed and Reliability	↑↑	Significantly improves speed/reliability	40%	**Substation improvements** in Homewood, Harvey, Jackson, and Vollmer will replace components of the electrical power distribution system and allow for faster, more reliable service as well as additional trains to be scheduled.
	↑	Moderately improves speed/reliability	13%	
	↔	Maintains speed/reliability	20%	
	–	No impact on speed/reliability	26%	
Impact on Customer/ Employee Safety	↑↑	Directly provides safety benefit/improvement	10%	Reconstruction of the **Randolph Street Interlocking** will replace various components on the Metra Electric Line at Millennium Station, enhancing the safety and reliability of operations
	↑	Indirectly provides safety benefit/improvement	73%	
	↔	Maintains safety levels	8%	
	–	No impact on safety	10%	
Impact on System Security	↑↑	Implements new security protection/prevention	13%	**Car and Locomotive Cameras** will replace old technology and add additional surveillance to increase onboard security.
	↑	Enhances existing security level	47%	
	↔	Maintains or replaces existing level of security	0%	
	–	Does not impact security	40%	
Asset Conditions		Rated below 2 for FTA's Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM)	18%	**Rail Renewal** will replace rail and switches with the lowest asset conditions across the Metra system, improving the riding quality of trains and reducing the incidence of slow orders.
		Rated between 2 and 3 for TERM	21%	
		Rated above 3 for TERM	2%	
	–	Does not have an asset rating	59%	
Vehicle Useful Life		Over 2 years past useful life	35%	The procurement of new **Switcher Locomotives** will allow Metra to retire the existing fleet that is more than half a century old and well beyond its useful life.
		Between 0-2 years past useful life	5%	
		Not exceeding useful life	7%	
	–	Is not a vehicle with a useful life	53%	
Ridership/ Mode Shift	↑↑	Significantly improves transit ridership	46%	**New Rail Car Purchase** will include new modern, multilevel railcars that will be equipped with numerous safety advancements and modern amenities. New cars will also enhance service reliability. These benefits will help to drive a ridership increase.
	↑	Moderately improves transit ridership	15%	
	↔	Maintains asset necessary for transit ridership	26%	
	–	Project has no impact on transit ridership	13%	

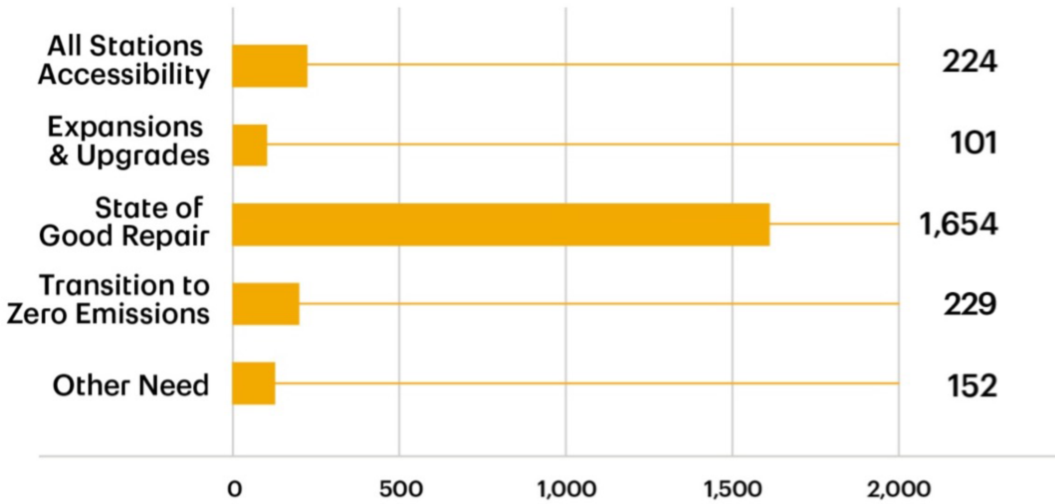
Metric	Measurements			Illustrative Project
Climate Agency Operating Impacts	↓↓	Directly supports significant reduction/zero GHG emissions	35%	**Battery-Electric Trainsets** will produce zero-emissions. These vehicles will greatly reduce Metra's Greenhouse Gas footprint, improving regional air quality.
	↓	Supports moderate reductions or offsets to GHG emissions	3%	
	↔	No reduction of GHG emissions	10%	
	–	Project does not impact GHG emissions	52%	
Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities	↑↑	Makes assets fully accessible	25%	**Station ADA Rehabilitation** will bring stations into ADA compliance. Accessibility will be addressed at the following stations: Rogers Park, Olympia Fields, 95th Street Station, Hubbard Woods, and 111th St Station.
	↑	Makes assets partially accessible/minor accessibility improvements	31%	
	↔	Maintains current levels of accessibility	5%	
	–	Project is not related to accessibility	39%	
Regulatory Requirements	✓	Yes, fulfills regulatory requirements	50%	**Signal System Improvements** will meet FRA requirements for upgrading signals.
	✗	No, is not a project to fulfill specific regulatory requirements	50%	
Operating Costs	↓↓	Significant Decrease (>=10%)	44%	**Rail Car Rehabilitation** will rebuild and upgrade bi-level trailer, cab and gallery cars to help extend the useful life and reduce the annual maintenance cost funded with operating dollars.
	↓	Minor Decrease (<10%)	10%	
	↔ ↑	No change / increase	42%	
	–	Not applicable	4%	

While a significant portion of Metra's funding is programmed for fleet and systemwide upgrades, Metra has also programmed funding for 15 station-specific projects. The 2026-2030 program emphasizes benefits to riders, speed and reliability improvements, and ridership/mode shift. Across the Service Boards the story remains the same, there is a great financial need to meet all the regional goals. Additional funding streams would allow for more work to be accomplished across the region.

Metra Capital Project Goals

In this report, RTA will dive deeper into the four key regional goals that capital funding is accomplishing, State of Good Repair, Transition to Zero Emissions, All Stations Accessibility, and Expansions and Upgrades, to see how Metra's program is impacting these regionally important areas. Each project can have a primary goal as well as a secondary goal. In addition, projects that do not fall into one of the categories are included in other need, which might include projects such as administrative and support activities. Figure 33 shows the total dollars being invested into each of the goals. Because 16 of Metra's 139 projects are categorized with multiple goals, the total available funding for this calculation is $2.361 billion which means that $239 million in projects are classified in two categories.

Figure 33. Metra Regional Capital Funding Goals (dollars in millions)



State of Good Repair

State of Good Repair is Metra's largest investment, with $1.65 billion programmed to projects that will restore assets back to their original design and function. Projects that contribute to this investment include those that address safety concerns, replace rail components, repair bridges, and perform routine maintenance. Key projects include:

Car Rehabilitation: $229 million will be invested in repairing passenger cars. Project scopes include the repair of critical safety components and updating accessibility elements to align with ADA standards for transit rail cars.

Substation Improvements: More than $47 million will be invested in enhancing the reliability and safety of electrical equipment along the Metra Electric Line. Improvements to the electrical power distribution system will enable additional trains to be scheduled.

Bridges and Retaining Walls: Almost $64 million will be invested in repairing and renovating bridges and retaining walls to enhance the safety, reliability, and condition of the guideway structures.

Transition to Zero Emissions

Metra has programmed $229 million for projects that make progress towards a transition to zero emissions. These projects include the conversion of diesel locomotives into battery powered locomotives ($29 million) and the purchase of zero-emissions trainsets ($184 million). In addition, $14 million is dedicated to battery powered train infrastructure. Metra is working to be among the first passenger rail agencies to purchase and operate self-propelled trainsets that do not require the construction and maintenance of wayside power.

All Stations Accessibility

$224 million of Metra's programmed funds contribute towards projects that improve station accessibility. These projects are part of Metra's ongoing effort to bring commuter rail stations into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Improvements include replacing deteriorated tactile surfaces, repairing staircases, ramps, and station doors, and installing new curb ramps. Upon completion, these stations will be made fully ADA-compliant. Stations included in the 2026-2030 program are Riverside, Brookfield, Clarendon Hills, Fairview, Braeside, Beverly (91st and 107th), and Longwood.

Expansions and Upgrades

$101 million of Metra's programmed funds contribute towards projects that expand and/or upgrade the existing system. This includes track and locomotive improvements that increase capacity, safety and security upgrades, and improved station amenities. Key projects include:

Harvey Transportation Center: Redevelopment of the Harvey Transportation Center is a joint venture between Metra, Pace, and the City of Harvey which will redevelop the existing station to form a magnet for new businesses and residents. Improvements include a near station entrance, waiting areas, elevators, an expanded platform, and a kiss-and-ride lane. While this project addresses some state of good repair issues, it also provides a significant upgrade to the station.

Rock Island Intercity Improvements: This project will establish a new third track on the Rock Island Line as well as various improvements between 17th Street and Joliet terminals, allowing for future expansion of Southwest Service and Rock Island District operations.

Shelters: Metra will install shelters at stations across the system to provide passengers with climate-controlled waiting spaces at locations that currently do not provide this amenity.

Performance-Based Programming

The performance-based programming methodology requires that each Service Board programs 20% of funding to regional priorities determined by the RTA Board. For 2026-2029 at least 20% of funding must be programmed to projects that either achieve full accessibility or improve equity. In 2030, Operating Cost and Climate Impact will serve as the 20% required metrics. Table 24 shows the projects and dollar values that are programmed to either equity or accessibility projects for program year 2026. 62% of Metra's projects in 2026 will meet either the accessibility or equity requirement in 2026.

Table 24. Metra Accessibility and Equity Project Highlights (dollars in thousands)

Project	2026	Equity	Accessibility
New Railcars	$141,000		•
Zero-Emissions Trainsets	$82,575		•
Car Rehab (Nippon Sharyo Highliners)	$16,625		•
Bi-Directional Signals	$12,000	•	
Olympia Fields Station	$11,275	•	•
Car Rehab - Midlife (Amerail)	$10,000		•
95th St Station CSU	$8,000	•	•
Systemwide Station Sign Replacement	$7,330		•
Van Buren St Station	$6,121		•
Rogers Park Station	$5,900		•
Glen Ellyn Station	$4,000		•
Rock Island Intercity Improvements	$4,000	•	
Battery Electric Train Infrastructure	$3,000	•	
Bridge 86 - 78th St Entrance	$2,073	•	•
GPS Train Tracking	$1,500		•
Station Displays	$900		•

Project	2026	Equity	Accessibility
A5 Interlocking Reconfiguration	$575		•
ADA Improvements - BNSF	$330		•
Total for Equity/Accessibility	**$317,205**		
Total Program by Year	**$515,342**		
% Toward Equity/Accessibility	**62%**		

Table 25 shows the percentage of funding meeting the goals in each of the out years (2027-2030), specific projects are identified in the capital appendix. In 2027-2029 between 42% and 68% of the program meets the accessibility or equity goals. For 2030, 55% of the program meets the reduction in operating cost or reduction in climate impact goals. Some of the main accessibility projects in 2026 include accessible rail cars and station accessibility improvements at various stations throughout the system. 2026 Equity projects include new stations and station improvements, both of which will provide enhancements to Metra service.

Table 25. Metra Percentage of Funding Meeting Performance Based Programming Regional Goals by Year (dollars in thousands)

	Accessibility & Equity				Operating Cost & Climate Impact
	2026	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**
Total $ Impact	$317,205	$165,226	$273,016	$210,771	$226,676
Total Program Available	$515,342	$390,018	$400,806	$401,582	$413,917
% Impact	62%	42%	68%	52%	55%

Overall, Metra's goals remain focused on maintaining the system and bringing their assets back to a state of good repair. Metra has emphasized work on bridges and stations which includes accessibility improvements. In addition, Metra continues to invest in new cleaner technologies to power their trains. Because many of Metra's projects cover entire lines, there are less projects with specific equity implications. With more funds, Metra would better be able to address all the regional goals.

Pace Suburban Service Capital Program

Pace's 2026–2030 Capital Program includes $367 million in available funding. The agency identified an estimated $2.4 billion in capital needs over the next ten years to advance priority projects focused on state of good repair, fleet electrification and service enhancements.

Approximately $203 million (55%) of available funding in Pace's 2026–2030 Capital Program is dedicated to vehicle and bus replacements, underscoring Pace's commitment to maintaining a reliable and modern fleet. The program also invests $33 million (19%) in the Pulse Cermak/22nd Street Line, which will add 19 stations located from CTA's 54th/Cermak Pink Line Station in Cicero to Yorktown Center in Lombard. An additional $73 million (20%) supports garage projects that include expansions and electrifications.

Pace Capital Assets

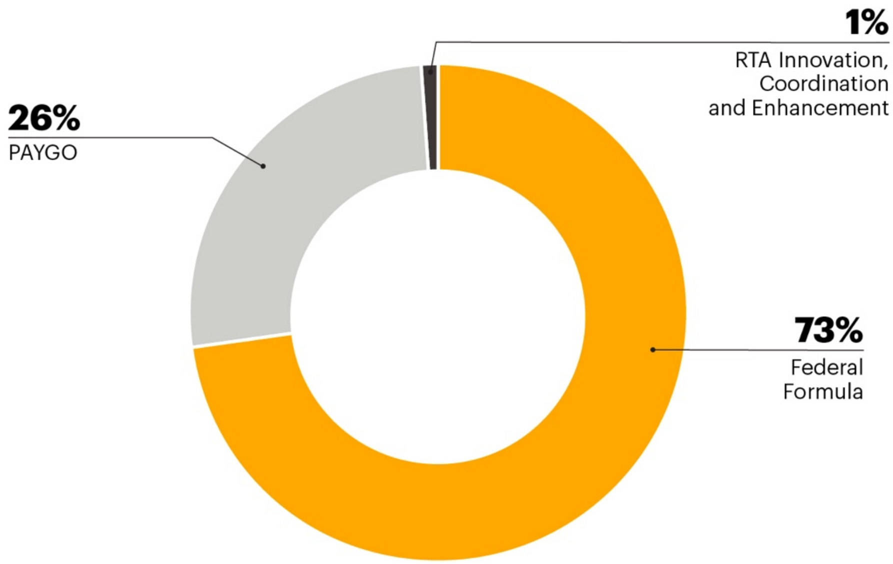
The graphic below is an overview of Pace's assets. Pace requires continual investment to keep up with needs that include maintaining and replacing 729 buses and 12 garages. In addition, a high level of additional investment is needed to transition to zero-emissions. A large percentage of the $2.4 billion priority project need over the next ten years comes from investment in keeping Pace's assets in a state of good repair and transitioning to zero emissions.

Total Buses	729
Diesel/Hybrid buses	623
CNG Buses	12
Electric Buses	1
Passenger Facilities	24
Bus Garages	12

Capital Funding by Source

Pace's $367 million 2026-2030 Capital Program has three funding sources: federal formula funds 73%; PAYGO funds 26%, and RTA Innovation Coordination and Enhancement funds 1%. RTA encourages the Service Boards to diversify funding streams to include federal discretionary plus other state and local sources as to reduce reliance on federal formula funding. Figure 34 shows the breakdown of capital funding by source.

Figure 34. Pace 2026-2030 Capital Program Funding: $367 million



Capital Funding by Priority Projects

Pace has identified 22 priority projects including one bucket for uncategorized projects, as shown in Table 26, as part of their 10-year funding need. Pace's total 10-year need is $2.4 billion of which $367 million, or about 15% of the need is funded in the five-year program. RTA estimates that approximately $450 million would be expected in 2031-2035 based on 2.5% annual funding growth. Based on this assumption, approximately 34% of Pace's funding needs are expected to be covered over the 10-year period with an additional $1.6 billion needed to meet all the state of good repair and enhancement needs.

Pace is investing in 8 of the 22 Priority Projects in the 2026-2030 program. Many of Pace's unfunded projects are in the areas of enhancing services and expanding infrastructure. Pace may be able to advance some of these priorities based on new funding provided by the state.

A significant share of Pace's capital needs is dedicated to fleet replacement, including $142 million for electric buses. The total 10-year funding need for this effort is $555 million, leaving an estimated $413 million need remaining. Pace's bus rapid transit service, Pulse, first launched on Milwaukee Avenue in 2019, continues to expand with the Dempster corridor opening in 2023 and $33 million programmed in the 2026–2030 Capital Program for the Cermak/22nd Street Line. Pace estimates a need of $87 million over the next 10 years to continue rolling out these services.

For 2026 Pace has added a need of $122 million for Fixed Route Bus replacements. This includes CNG and diesel buses that will not be able to be replaced with electric buses immediately. This need is funded with $62 million to keep Pace's fleet in a state of good repair during the transition to zero-emissions vehicles.

Table 26. Pace Priority Projects (dollars in thousands)

Priority Project	Estimated 10-Year Need for Priority Project	5-Year Program
Fixed Route Buses - Electric	555,000	141,594
Improve Support Facilities	554,000	72,633
ADA Regional Paratransit Program	406,982	-
Fixed Route Buses - Replacement	122,040	62,000
Associated Capital Maintenance Items	98,080	-
Paratransit Vehicles - Replacement	98,040	34,510
Pulse Infrastructure	87,000	32,740
Fixed Route Buses - Expansion	83,889	-
Pedestrian Infrastructure/Shelters/Signs	82,795	-
Improve Passenger Facilities - Transportation Centers	67,150	-
Charging Infrastructure	36,000	-
Regional Transit Signal Priority (RTSP)	32,166	-
Security, Computer, Software, and Office Systems Upgrades	31,936	3,948
Intelligent Bus System (IBS) Replacement	29,636	19,060
Community Vehicles - Replacement	26,670	-
Vanpool Vehicles - Replacement	26,010	-
Support Equipment/Non-Revenue Vehicles	22,450	840
Bus on Shoulder (BoS) Infrastructure	17,025	-
Paratransit Vehicles - Expansion	13,000	-
Improve Passenger Facilities - Park-n-Ride Lots	6,250	-
Community Vehicles - Expansion	3,000	-
Admin and Uncategorized Projects		
Uncategorized Projects - Pace	-	-
Total	**2,339,120**	**367,326**

Evaluation Metrics

RTA is continuing to evaluate all projects in the 2026-2030 Capital Program based on 15 metrics defined in *Transit is the Answer*, the regional strategic plan, that evaluates the region's goals associated with the capital program. It is not expected that many projects will meet all the metrics. More funding is needed to robustly address every metric. Detailed evaluations of each Pace project can be found in Appendix A.

Table 27 shows all 15 evaluation metrics. Each metric has between two and four possible measurement choices. The table shows the metric, measurement and percentage of dollars in the program that have been evaluated with that measurement. For example, looking at Access to Key Destinations, 9% of funds ($33M) significantly improve access to key destinations. In this table, each metric has an illustrative project to give an example of how funds will be used to reach that regional goal.

Table 27. Pace Metrics and Evaluations

Metric	Measurements			Illustrative Project
Access to Key Destinations	↑↑	Significantly improves access	9%	**Pulse Cermak/22nd Street Line** will connect customers to major destinations such as schools and shopping centers.
	↑	Moderately improves access	0%	
	↔	Maintains access	89%	
	–	Not applicable	2%	
Equity based on Residential Geography	↑↑↑	Scores 6-8 for Justice40 Program	39%	**Southwest Division Electrification and Expansion** serves communities that score 6-8 in the Justice40 Program.
	↑↑	Scores 3-5 for Justice40 Program	25%	
	↑	Scores 0-2 for Justice40 Program	7%	
	–	Not location specific/Benefits entire service area	29%	
Benefit to Riders	↑↑	Significant benefit	74%	**Fixed Route Buses – Replacement** provides a Benefit to Riders by purchasing new buses providing a smoother, safer, and more comfortable riding experience.
	↑	Moderate benefit	19%	
	↔	Maintains current benefit	6%	
	–	Project does not impact customers	1%	
Capacity Benefit and Need	↑↑	Increases capacity where utilization is near capacity	19%	**Southwest Division Electrification/Expansion** addresses the capacity metric by increasing the garage capacity and provides Pace with an opportunity to add more service to the area.
	↑	Increases capacity where utilization is not near capacity	9%	
	↔	Maintains original capacity	65%	
	–	Not related to capacity	7%	
Economic Impact	↑↑↑	Large economic impact	17%	**Southwest Division Electrification/Expansion** is expected to create a moderate economic impact through construction expenditures.
	↑↑	Moderate economic impact	11%	
	↑	Small economic impact	0%	
	–	No economic development impact	72%	

Metric	Measurements			Illustrative Project
Service Speed and Reliability	↑↑	Significantly improves speed/reliability	9%	**Pulse Cermak/22nd Street Line** provides reliability by installing limited-stop bus service to commuters creating a streamlined route connecting the Western Suburbs to the City of Chicago's Westside.
	↑	Moderately improves speed/reliability	0%	
	↔	Maintains speed/reliability	90%	
	–	No impact on speed/reliability	1%	
Impact on Customer/ Employee Safety	↑↑	Directly provides safety benefit/improvement	0%	
	↑	Indirectly provides safety benefit/improvement	20%	
	↔	Maintains safety levels	79%	
	–	No impact on safety	1%	
Impact on System Security	↑↑	Implements new security protection/prevention	9%	**Southwest Division Electrification and River Division Electrification and Expansion** address the Security metric as these garage renovations will provide added security measures such as cameras and fencing.
	↑	Enhances existing security level	20%	
	↔	Maintains or replaces existing level of security	71%	
	–	Does not impact security	0%	
Asset Conditions		Rated below 2 for FTA's Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM)	8%	
		Rated between 2 and 3 for TERM	10%	
		Rated above 3 for TERM	2%	
	–	Does not have an asset rating	80%	
Vehicle Useful Life		Over 2 years past useful life	0%	**Fixed Route Bus Purchase** addresses Vehicle Useful Life by replacing buses that are approaching 2 years past their useful life.
		Between 0-2 years past useful life	65%	
		Not exceeding useful life	0%	
	–	Is not a vehicle with a useful life	35%	

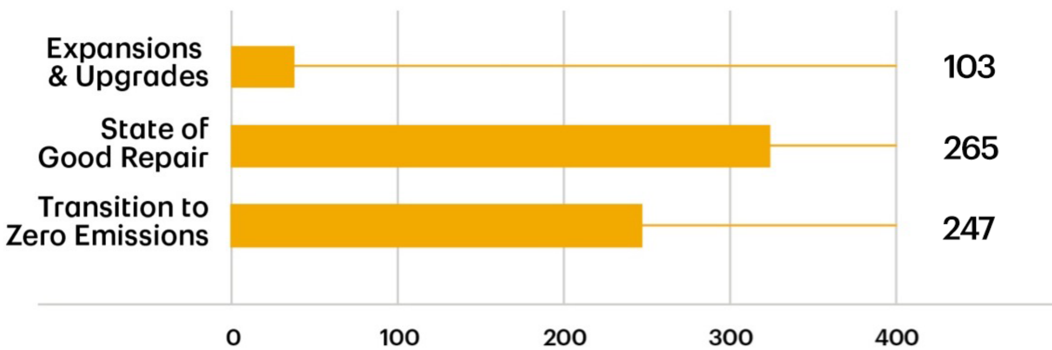
Metric	Measurements			Illustrative Project
Ridership/ Mode Shift	↑↑	Significantly improves transit ridership	9%	**Pulse Cermak/22nd Street Line** impacts Mode Shift, as adding new limited stop, premium service offers new options to those who use the corridor via other modes such as personal vehicles.
	↑	Moderately improves transit ridership	84%	
	↔	Maintains asset necessary for transit ridership	1%	
	–	Project has no impact on transit ridership	6%	
Climate Agency Operating Impacts	↓↓	Directly supports significant reduction/zero GHG emissions	50%	**Fixed Route Electric Bus purchases** will replace diesel buses, which will greatly reduce Pace's greenhouse gas emissions .
	↓	Supports moderate reductions or offsets to GHG emissions	30%	
	↔	No reduction of GHG emissions	12%	
	–	Project does not impact GHG emissions	7%	
Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities	↑↑	Makes assets fully accessible	9%	
	↑	Makes assets partially accessible/minor accessibility improvements	9%	
	↔	Maintains current levels of accessibility	55%	
	–	Project is not related to accessibility	26%	
Regulatory Requirements	✓	Yes, fulfills regulatory requirements	49%	**Fixed Route Electric Bus Purchase** directly addresses the statewide mandate as a Regulatory Requirement to purchase only electric buses starting in 2026.
	✕	No, is not a project to fulfill specific regulatory requirements	51%	
Operating Costs	↓↓	Significant Decrease (>=10%)	53%	**New Revenue and Non-Revenue Vehicle Purchases** will reduce vehicle maintenance requirements, which will help provide operating cost savings
	↓	Minor Decrease (<10%)	29%	
	↔↑	No change / increase	12%	
	–	Not applicable	6%	

When reviewing Pace's program, it is noted that their projects provide significant benefits to the region by funding vehicle replacements and a new Pulse line. Some of the strongest themes being met include reduction in operating costs as well as reduction in climate impacts. Overall, the measures show that Pace is contributing to key regionally important areas, but only additional funding would allow Pace to address all these goals to a greater extent.

Pace Capital Project Goals

In this report, RTA will dive deeper into the three key regional goals that capital funding is accomplishing, State of Good Repair, Transition to Zero Emissions, and Expansions and Upgrades, to see how Pace's program impacts these regionally important areas. All Stations Accessibility is not included in Pace's analysis because this only applies to rail stations. Each project can have a primary goal as well as a secondary goal. In addition, projects that do not fall into one of the categories are included in other need, which might include projects such as administrative and support activities. Figure 35 shows the total dollars being invested into each of the goals. Because 5 of Pace's 14 projects are categorized with multiple goals, the total available funding for this calculation is $615M which means that $248M in projects are classified in two categories. An example, purchase electric buses falls into both State of Good Repair and Transition to Zero Emissions because the new buses replace a worn-out asset, but they also are an upgrade to a zero-emission option.

Figure 35. Pace Regional Capital Funding Goals (dollars in millions)



State of Good Repair

Pace's largest investment in the 2026-2030 program is for State of Good Repair needs at $265 million. Projects include replacement buses and paratransit vehicles along with voice and data radios for Pace's Intelligent Bus System (IBS).

Transition to Zero Emissions

Pace programmed over $247 million in funding to projects supporting the Transition to Zero Emissions. The main projects supporting this goal include $142 million for electric bus purchases and $70 million for t garage electrification projects.

Expansions and Upgrades

Pace dedicated $103 million to projects that are expanding and/or upgrading the suburban bus network. Pace's Pulse corridor at Cermak/22nd Street is a large contributor to this goal for the 2026-2030 program with bus garage expansion and upgrades making up the remainder of funding

Performance Based Programming

The performance-based programming methodology requires that each Service Board programs 20% of funding to regional priorities determined by the RTA Board. For 2026-2029 at least 20% of funding must be programmed to projects that either achieve full accessibility or improve equity. In 2030, Operating Cost and Climate Impact will serve as the 20% required metric. Table 28 shows the projects and dollar values that are programmed to either equity or accessibility projects for program year 2026. 46% of Pace's projects in 2026 will meet either the accessibility or equity requirement.

Table 28. Pace Accessibility and Equity Projects (dollars in thousands)

Description	2026	Equity	Accessibility
Purchase 15-passenger Paratransit Vehicles	$2,036		•
Fixed Route Electric Buses	$13,500	•	
River Division Electrification/Expansion	$12,000	•	
Southwest Division Electrification/Expansion	$7,500	•	
Total Toward Equity and Accessibility	**$35,037**		
Total Program	**$76,085**		
% Toward Equity and Accessibility	**46%**		

Table 29 shows the percentage of funding meeting the goals in each of the out years (2027-2030), specific projects are identified in the capital appendix. In 2027-2029 between 63% and 95% of the program meets the accessibility or equity goals. For 2030, 98% of the program meets the reduction in operating cost or reduction in climate impact goals. Major equity projects include the purchase of buses that will be used in disadvantaged areas and the upgrade and electrification of the southwest garage. New bus purchases are a major driver of operations savings.

Table 29. Pace Percentage of Funding Meeting Performance Based Programming Regional Goals by Year (dollars in thousands)

	Accessibility & Equity				Operating Cost & Climate Impact
	2026	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**
Total $ Impact	$35,037	$50,747	$47,923	$71,709	$62,930
Total Program Available	$76,085	$75,544	$76,644	$75,102	$63,951
% Impact	46%	67%	63%	95%	98%

Overall, Pace's goals remain focused on maintaining the system and bringing their assets back to a state of good repair as well as moving towards zero-emissions. Pace has programmed some conventional buses into the mix in 2026-2028 while moving as rapidly as possible to purchase electric buses and electrify garages. With more funds, Pace would better be able to address important projects that benefit the region and more quickly transition to zero emissions.

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