



Regional Transportation Authority

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RTA SETS RECORD ATTENDANCE AT PUBLIC HEARINGS *Now more than ever, public transportation on peoples' minds*

Chicago -- Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) officials announced today at its Board of Directors meeting the success of a series of public hearings held around the six-county region. Thirteen public hearings were held August 4-14 attracting over 230 attendees with more than 65 of those individuals providing comments. The hearings were launched by the RTA to help inform transit riders and non-riders alike – about the 2009 budget outlook, the implementation of reforms from the new transit legislation, the status of updating the regional strategic plan and the critically needed capital investment to fund transit projects.

“We are committed to obtaining meaningful input from the public as we work to implement new legislative reforms to improve public transportation in northeastern Illinois,” commented Steve Schlickman, RTA Executive Director. He added, “And we have heard people tell us – throughout these hearings – that they want more and better transit. That’s why we continue to work with our Service Boards to implement better service while working with Illinois lawmakers to approve a comprehensive capital bill.”

High gas prices have been a contributing factor to increased ridership on the CTA, Metra and Pace as well as more people that are ridesharing. As more people use their cars less, they are looking to the RTA and its Service Boards for alternative transportation options.

The RTA will conduct another round of public hearings in November before the agency’s 2009 budget is finalized. The preliminary round of hearings just completed were intended to allow the public to be involved earlier in the budget process and to offer meaningful input. Comments received will be responded to by either the CTA, Metra and Pace or the RTA. For more information, visit *MovingBeyondCongestion.org*.

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About the RTA: The RTA provides financial oversight, funding and regional planning for the three public transit operators in northeastern Illinois: The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) bus and train, Metra commuter rail and Pace suburban bus and paratransit. For more information, visit www.rtachicago.com and www.MovingBeyondCongestion.org.