



**Regional
Transportation
Authority**

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RTA Board of Directors Approves Funds for Pace Paratransit Services

Compromise closes budget gap that totaled \$20 million

CHICAGO – The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Board of Directors approved today a modified proposal to address a shortfall in ADA paratransit service funding in northeastern Illinois.

“Working with the Service Boards, the RTA Board has developed and approved a funding plan for 2009 which secures funding for vital Pace paratransit services for citizens throughout our region, while balancing the transportation interests and needs of the other Service Boards,” said Jim Reilly, Chairman of the RTA Board of Directors. “We have also acted to implement some key reforms that will improve the service and make it more efficient.”

Under the new plan, Pace will contribute \$9 million of its capital funding, and impose a modest fare increase to \$3, equalizing fares across the region which currently vary from \$2.25 to \$3. Also, Pace will implement a series of efficiencies previously identified by an outside auditor. The remaining funding gap will be covered through \$4 million from the Innovation, Coordination, and Enhancement Fund (ICE), which was initially reserved by the Board due to the current financial emergency. The RTA will also provide Pace with up to an additional \$4 million as a working cash loan, which will be tapped only if worsening economic conditions make it necessary.

The agreement will also implement a series of operational improvements recommended by an independent outside auditor, including the establishment of a central dispatch system that will not only save money and increase efficiency, but improve consistency of service for riders.

“Due to this unprecedented economic crisis, transit agencies across the country are facing difficult financial challenges, just like the shortfall facing paratransit. We believe this solution is a responsible and innovative way to maintain the service and limit the impact on the Chicago Transit Authority, Metra and Pace – which are already facing very difficult circumstances,” Reilly said. “We will continue to work to make certain the regional transportation system is offering comprehensive and coordinated transit service throughout the region in a financially sound manner.”

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Over 40,000 people with disabilities in our region depend on paratransit service in the RTA's six-county region of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will.

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About the RTA: The RTA provides financial oversight, funding and regional planning for the three public transit operations 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.