

Critical History of Rapid Transit Planning and Decisionmaking

Transit planning and decisionmaking in the Chicago area has been significantly influenced by factors dating back to shortly after the turn of the century. Three events are noteworthy because they shape the context in which Chicago's transit planning activities were conducted.

In 1913 four rapid transit companies, one of which dated back to the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, began coordinated service with a unified scheduling of trains and a single fare over the elevated Union Loop track. (The four rapid transit companies were consolidated into the Chicago Rapid Transit Company in 1924.)

The city of Chicago stimulated the coordination of all surface transit lines in 1914 by enacting an ordinance which provided for single management and coordinated service of the many surface line transit companies.

Finally, bus transit service, which started in 1917 and expanded significantly during the 1920's, was consolidated into a single institutional structure, the Chicago Motor Coach Company, in 1922. It continued as the principal bus transit system within the city until it was acquired by CTA in 1952. Even earlier, in 1935, intercompany transfers permitting continuous trips were started.

Thus, Chicago had a long history of unified and coordinated transit service when the Chicago Transit Authority took over the rail rapid transit system and surface streetcar and trolley bus lines in 1947 and the bus transit system in 1952.

This narrative discusses several specific transit planning and decisionmaking activities whose conduct and outcome carry lessons for other metropolitan areas:

- Planning and construction of the State Street Subway, the Milwaukee-Dearborn-Congress Subway, and the Elevated Lake Street Transit Line prior to 1962;
- The several early examples of joint transit-expressway planning, particularly the Congress Expressway;

- Planning of the Skokie Swift;
- The Central Area Transit Project;
- The Crosstown Expressway; and
- The 1995 Transportation Plan,

The following discussion is organized under headings corresponding to these planning activities.

EARLY TRANSIT PLANNING IN CHICAGO

The Chicago transit system is unique in that significant capital improvements in both facilities and rolling stock were made periodically prior to the availability of Federal capital grants resulting from the Mass Transportation Act of 1964. Some of these improvements are specifically mentioned because they clearly demonstrate the involvement of the city of Chicago in transit planning and improvement programs prior to the period of public ownership, operation, and responsibility.

One such example is the planning and construction of the State Street Subway in the late years of the Depression and immediately prior to World War II. As the first of Chicago's subways, 4.9 miles in length, it was planned and constructed by the city even though the rapid transit system was privately owned and operated. The operator, the Chicago Rapid Transit Company, assisted in the planning, design, and implementation.

The State Street Subway was built at a cost of \$34 million. It was financed by the city of Chicago largely through its Traction and Transit Fund, with significant contribution from the Federal Government through a combination of grants resulting from Depression-oriented economic stimulation and development programs. The subway was completed and went into operation in October 1943.

One significant feature of the State Street Subway project was that the Chicago Rapid Transit

Company had to assume the responsibility of repaying the city for the fixed transportation equipment investments built into the subway. These investments totaled \$4,349,231. The liability subsequently was transferred to CTA as a part of the purchase of the private transit company.

The second Chicago subway, the Milwaukee-Dearborn-Congress Subway, was completed in a similar manner after CTA took over ownership and operation responsibilities from the private company. Notwithstanding ownership of the system by a public authority, the second subway project was carried forward by the city and the planning, design, and construction was the city's responsibility with CTA participation. The 3.99-mile Milwaukee-Dearborn-Congress Subway was completed at a cost of \$40 million and went into operation in February 1951. The CTA, like its private predecessor, had to assume the responsibility of repaying the city for fixed transportation facility investments, which in this case totaled \$4,874,811.

A third capital facilities project, along Lake Street, also is worthy of note because it involved a wider range of public institutions in the planning, design, and construction of a transit facility.

The project involved removal of surface, street-level transit tracks and loading platforms and their relocation to an adjacent elevated structure for ^{2-1/2} miles. The primary purpose of the project was to eliminate severe congestion and conflicts in operation between the transit line and the street system. A total of 22 grade crossings were eliminated, thus reducing the conflict between transit trains and motor vehicles as well as pedestrians.

The \$4 million project was financed with \$600,000 from the city of Chicago, \$800,000 from the Village of Oak Park, \$1 million from Cook County, \$1 million from the State of Illinois, and \$600,000 from CTA. The project was completed and placed in operation in October 1962.

Construction of the Lake Street Transit Line elevated section was noteworthy because it involved close cooperation and coordination with the Chicago and North Western Railway. The new elevated line utilized rights-of-way owned by the private railroad through realignment of two of the railroad's tracks and construction of a short section of new track and elevated station platforms. The railroad, while paying the capital costs for the improvements to its trackage, receives an annual

rental fee from CTA for the use of its rights-of-way and facilities common to both systems.

JOINT TRANSIT-EXPRESSWAY PLANNING

Although overlapping in time and related to other improvements, a new era of transit planning and development began in Chicago in the early 1950's that extends to the present.

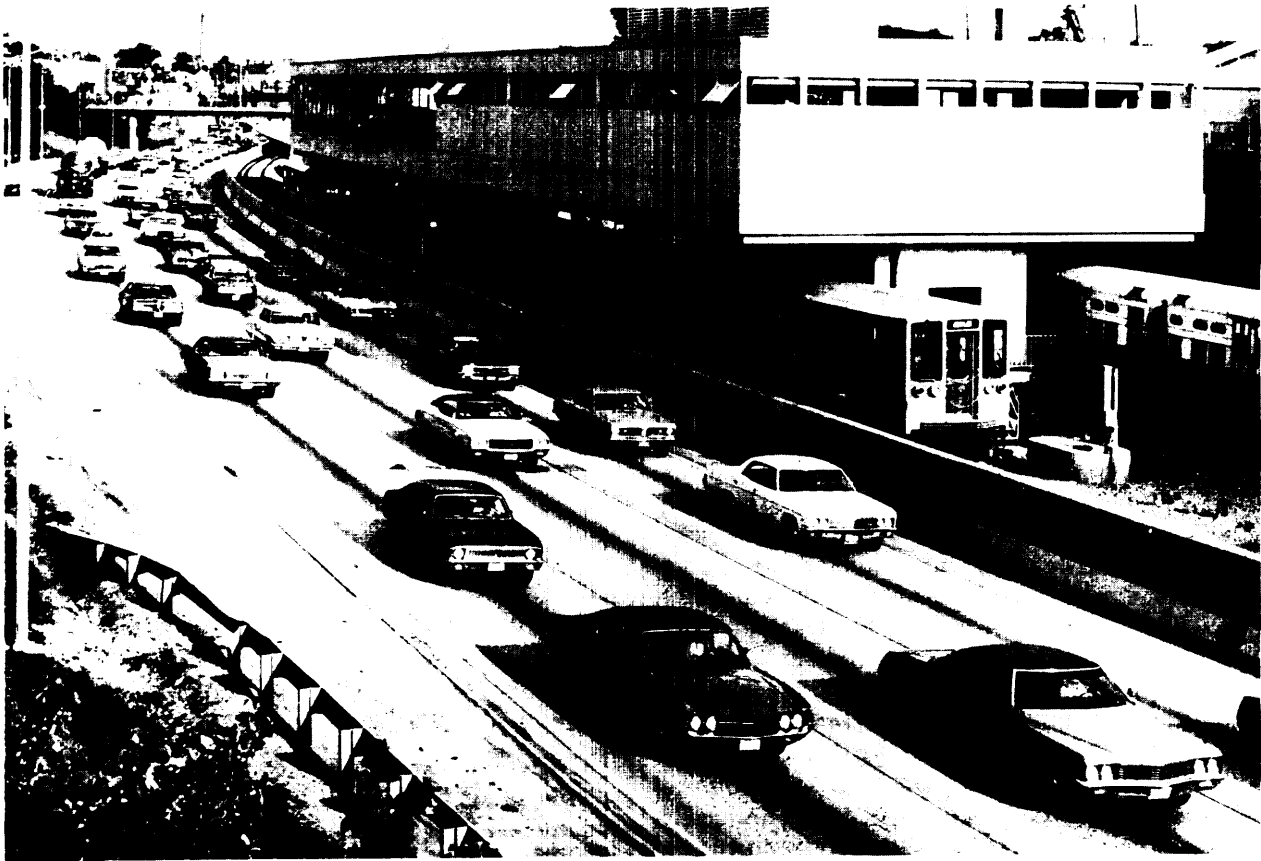
Chicago, unlike any other city in the United States, saw the opportunity of utilizing the burgeoning highway construction program as a mechanism to improve its rail rapid transit system. As a result, Chicago has completed and put into operation nearly 24 miles of rapid transit service in the medians of expressways. Space is available for an additional 19 miles of transit service should transit demand increase and funds become available.

The utilization of publicly owned rights-of-way, particularly streets, for fixed guideway transit is a concept as old as transit service itself. Almost without exception, early transit service provided by horse-drawn carriages and tracks and subsequently by streetcars utilized streets for right-of-way.

With the growing need for more transit capacity, faster service, greater safety—and to increase the capacity of the streets to carry automobile traffic—rail transit was either elevated or depressed. To obtain the grade-separated rights-of-way, transit service was placed in subways, particularly in the most congested and expensive central business districts, or only elevated sections wherever it was feasible and acceptable.

The design concept of building grade-separated transit lines into open-cut depressed and closed subway sections or elevated sections on structure dates back into the last century. But the concept continues to be utilized in the most modern of systems such as BART in San Francisco and the new systems being constructed in Washington and Atlanta. Chicago is the only U.S. city which has deviated from the traditional design concept and has systematically exploited the highway planning and development program as a mechanism to expand and improve its rail transit system at relatively low cost.

The first example of joint highway-transit use in Chicago was the planning development of the



Chicago is the only U.S. metropolitan area to systematically build transit lines and expressways jointly.

Congress Street Expressway in the early 1950's prior to the start of the interstate highway program. The Congress Street Expressway subsequently has been renamed the Eisenhower Expressway and has been incorporated into the interstate highway system as I-90. Most of its cost was paid without 90 percent Federal interstate program funds because the expressway was planned, designed, and partially constructed before the interstate highway program was enacted in 1956.

The Congress Rapid Transit Line connects with the Milwaukee-Dearborn-Congress Subway near the west bank of the Chicago River. It extends westward for about 9 miles, about two-thirds of the distance in the median of the highway and about one-third along the south edge of the highway right-of-way. Space next to the transit tracks also is utilized by a double track freight line railroad, the Baltimore and Ohio Chicago Terminal Railroad.

The Congress Transit Line replaced the old Garfield elevated route, which for most of its length used a right-of-way and structure built in 1895 for the West Side Elevated Railroad. The right-of-way for the old elevated transit line, ranging up to 75 feet wide, was far from wide enough to accommodate the 550-foot highway right-of-way, but it was continuous for the entire distance of the highway and therefore was the single most important parcel of property along the highway route.

In the planning and design of the highway, alternatives were considered for replacing the old elevated Garfield transit line. The design concept that was selected called for joint use of the right-of-way, with transit partially alongside and partially in the median, thus giving birth to the modern concept of joint transit-expressway service in the same corridor.

There are other examples of joint or combined use of rights-of-way in the United States. But none are as complete or systematically planned and designed as those in Chicago. One example was the relocation of a portion of an old Pacific Electric Railway route in the Hollywood Freeway in Los Angeles, but service on that route was abandoned long ago. Another transit median route had been planned as a part of the Interstate 66 in Northern Virginia. This route, part of the Washington Metro System, now is in doubt because of a Federal Government decision not to build the freeway.

One of the significant results of the Congress planning and design studies was the conclusion that rail rapid transit lines could be built in the medians of freeways much less expensively than on independent rights-of-way. The approximate division of cost between the highway and the transit line in the Congress corridor was about 80 percent highway and 20 percent transit. The transit facility occupied a relatively small portion of the rights-of-way—about 43 feet out of a total average width of more than 500 feet. It also is important to note that modern freeways, even without transit in the median, are designed with as much separation of the opposing traffic lanes as can be economically justified. The length and width of structures on such expressways constitutes a significant portion of the total cost. In many instances, the median width of urban expressways is 36 feet. Thus, if transit utilizes rights-of-way which would be provided anyway, at least in part, the provision of transit does not significantly increase the cost of structures which carry the expressway over or under intersecting roadways.

The new Congress Rapid Transit Line was completed in stages between 1958 and 1960, with the first service starting on June 22, 1958.

The Congress Line was constructed before there was any authority to utilize highway funds for transit costs. Thus, there was a careful accounting of full costs and a strict division of costs allocated to the transit improvement, which totaled about \$27 million, including the cost of the fixed transit facilities and equipment. The improvement was paid for with \$25 million raised by the city of Chicago, through the sale of general obligation bonds and about \$2 million from the sale of revenue bonds. CTA, as with the improvements mentioned previously had to assume the responsibility of repaying the costs of the fixed transit equipment and facilities, which totaled about \$11.7 million.

The relatively low cost of the expressway median transit line is best demonstrated by the per-mile cost of about \$4 million, including the cost of stations, signalization, and other fixed facilities as well as the incremental cost of rolling stock. Even though costs have rapidly escalated since 1956-58, it is unlikely that any rapid transit surface line could be built on its own grade-separated right-of-way in a major metropolitan area for a similar amount, even discounted to 1958 prices.

The success of combining highway and transit planning, design and construction in the Congress corridor led the city of Chicago to the policy decision that all future expressway and freeway construction would include similar facilities or provide for future development of rail transit lines in the medians of all new expressways.

There followed in succession the development of rail transit lines in the Dan Ryan and Kennedy Expressways and the reservation of space for future development of transit lines in the Stevenson and Calumet Expressways.

The Kennedy Expressway, connecting the central business district with O'Hare Airport and the northwestern suburbs, opened in 1961. The Dan Ryan Expressway, connecting the central business district with the southern suburbs, opened to traffic in 1962. Both were built as part of the interstate highway system with 90 percent Federal funding.

No funds were available for developing transit lines in the median strips of the Kennedy and Dan Ryan Expressways as these highways were constructed, but space was reserved for future transit use. The subsequent availability of Federal transit funds through the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964 made possible the construction of both lines.

The new Dan Ryan Transit Line was combined with the old Lake Line to form the present west-south route, which extends service from the Loop to Forest Park, a distance of about 9 miles. The line began service in 1969, 7 years after the highway was opened to traffic. The Dan Ryan Line was built by the city of Chicago at a total cost of \$40 million, with two-thirds of the money coming from Federal capital grants.

The 5-mile extension of CTA'S West-Northwest route from Logan Square to Jefferson Park, utilizing the median of the Kennedy Expressway,

was completed in 1970. The total cost was \$48 million, with two-thirds of the funds provided by Federal capital grants.

In each of the examples of combined expressway and rapid transit planning, design, and construction, several institutions were involved. Federal funds, either 50 percent or 90 percent, were invested in the highway facilities and administered by the old Bureau of Public Roads, subsequently incorporated into the Federal Highway Administration. Thus, all planning, design, and construction activities had to meet the stringent tests of acceptable Federal design standards. The Federal-Aid highway program was administered in Illinois by the former Illinois Highway Department, now an integral part of the Illinois Department of Transportation.

In most States, the State highway agency is directly responsible for the planning, design, and construction of all interstate and U.S.-signed highways, and this nominally is true in Illinois. Yet, the city of Chicago, primarily through its Department of Public Works, actually took the leadership and dominated the process that resulted in the combined expressway and transit facilities. The Chicago Area Transportation Study played an

important technical support role through its assigned responsibility of analyzing and forecasting traffic usage of the facilities.

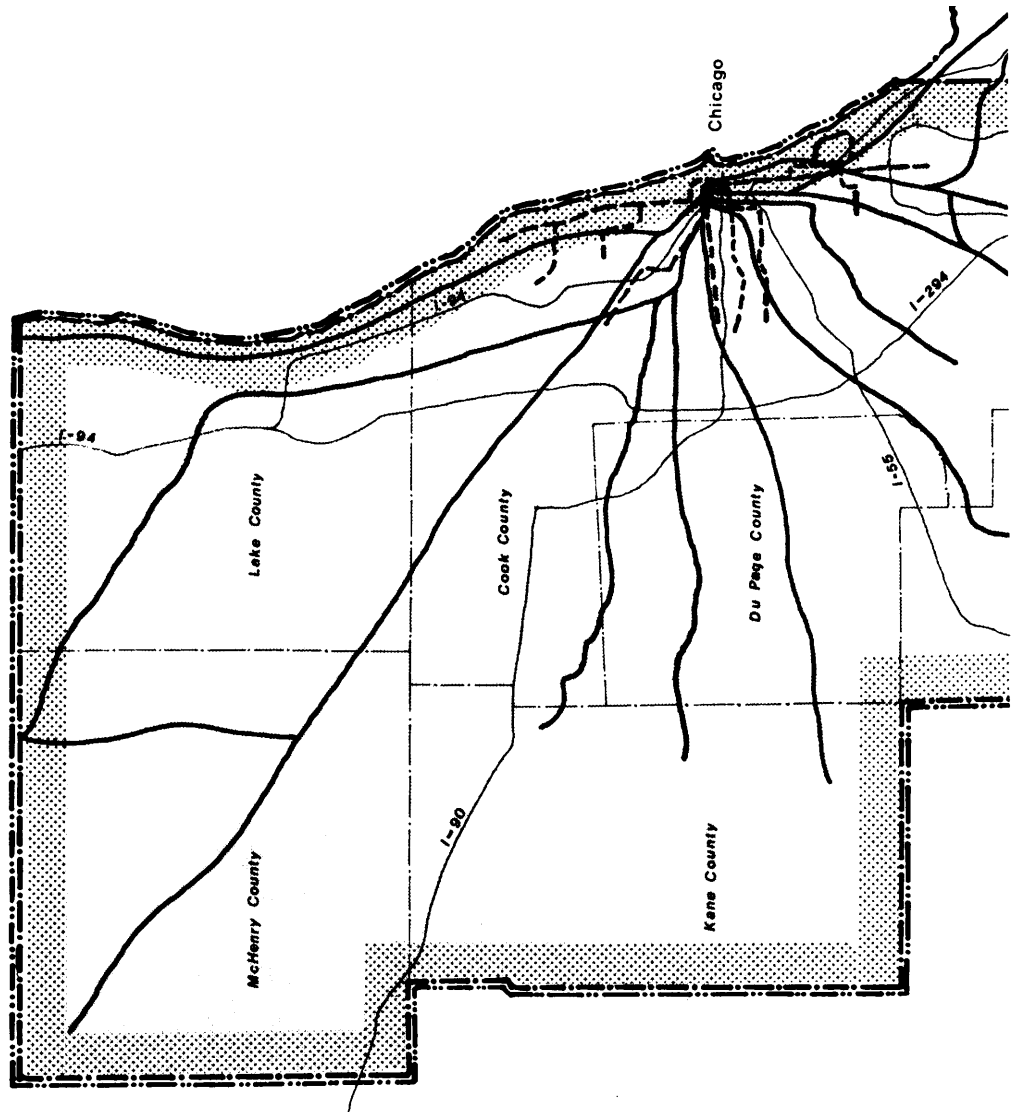
CTA, of course, was deeply involved in the planning and design of the transit facilities that occupied the median strips of the expressways. CTA did not initiate or guide the planning, however, and its role essentially was one of technical support.

THE SKOKIE SWIFT

Another example of transit planning and decisionmaking in Chicago is the development of an express-type suburban rail transit service popularly known as the Skokie Swift. It is cited not only because it involves an important link in the Chicago area transit service, but also because of the way in which it was brought about.

Transit service from the Howard Street station in Chicago to the Dempster Avenue station in suburban Skokie, a distance of about 5 miles, began in 1925. The route was operated by the Chicago Rapid Transit Company, the predecessor of CTA. Seven intermediate stations were intended to serve





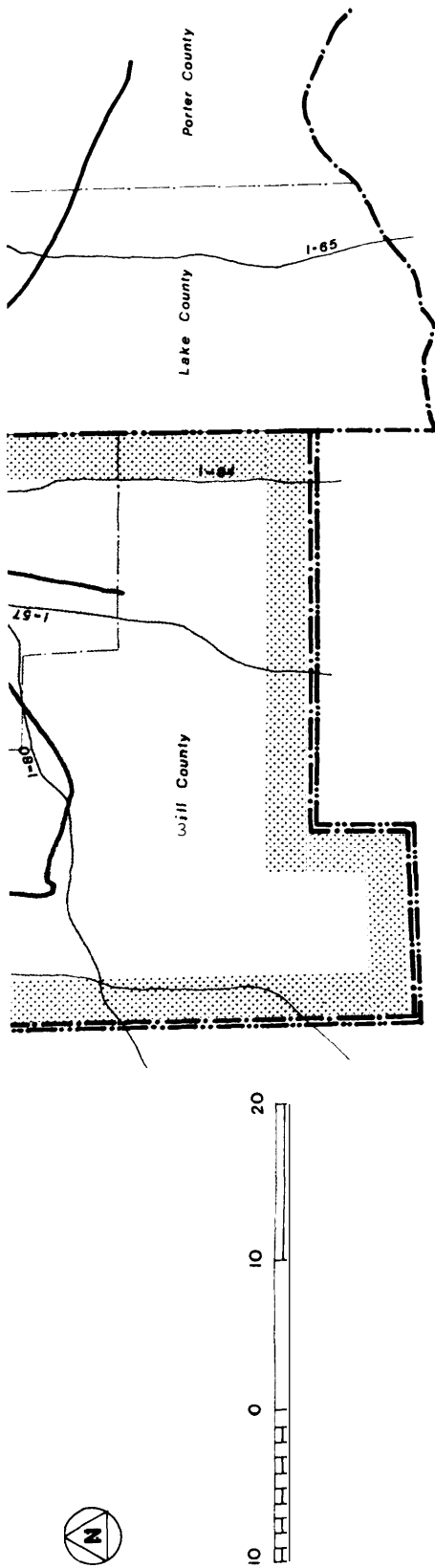


FIGURE 1: CHICAGO METROPOLITAN AREA

A Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) includes a center city (or cities), usually with a population of at least 50,000, plus adjacent counties or other political divisions that are economically and socially integrated with the central area.

	Northern Illinois Planning Commission		Rapid Transit
	Illinois-Indiana Bi-State Commission		mm Rail
	Regional Transit Authority		County Boundary
	SMSA Boundary		Major highways

the booming land development in the late 1920's. The Depression intervened, and the rapid transit line, serving a maximum of about 700,000 passengers annually, never was successful. The Chicago North Shore and Milwaukee Railroad utilized the same tracks starting in 1926 to provide commuter service through the Skokie Valley to Milwaukee. The North Shore Company owned the tracks and right-of-way.

CTA ceased its rapid transit service to Skokie in 1948 and substituted bus service to the connecting rapid transit lines in Chicago. Patronage on the CTA line had fallen off to about 1,700 riders per day at the time service was abandoned. The North Shore Railroad continued its commuter railroad service until 1963, after 5 years of attempting to abandon the line. One of the factors influencing the decision to abandon it was the completion of the parallel Edens Expressway. Ridership on the commuter trains had fallen to about 1,500 riders per day by the time service was discontinued over the strong objections of the Village of Skokie and other communities served.

With the cessation of both rapid transit and commuter rail service to Skokie, the village began a campaign for restored service. CATS also suggested restoration of transit service to Skokie as part of its study and analysis of transportation system plans. In addition, CTA had a direct interest in these planning and promotional activities. CTA still had to lease facilities and operating rights from the North Shore Railroad in order to operate trains from the Howard Street connection over a portion of the Skokie Line tracks to CTA'S yards and service facilities near Skokie. The halt to transit service meant CTA would have to take on the extra responsibility of operating and servicing the electrified lines.

The abandonment of all transit service in 1963, the campaign of the Village of Skokie for renewed service, and CTA'S need to maintain and operate part of the line led to the development of the Skokie Swift demonstration project in 1964.

The project also was made possible, in part, by the fact that Congress, as a part of the National Housing Act of 1961, authorized a program of loans and demonstration grants for mass transit purposes. This modest program, aimed primarily at preserving failing rail transit and commuter rail services in the Northeast, was the forerunner of the Mass Transportation Act of 1964. It was administered by the Housing and Home Finance

Administration, which subsequently became the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Skokie Swift project originally was budgeted at a net project cost of \$524,000, a very modest amount for the resulting service. The low figure did not include any of the costs of right-of-way acquisition or construction of buildings since the Federal program at that time did not allow Federal participation in these capital costs. CTA picked up the entire cost of these items, as well as certain other facilities and equipment that would have been required anyway in order to continue the link to its yards and maintenance and repair shops.

Disregarding these expenditures, the net cost of the Skokie Swift project during its 2-year demonstration period was only \$483,000, even though capital outlays were higher than anticipated. Unexpectedly high patronage and fare income were the major factors in bringing the project 8 percent under the original budget. The net project costs were shared two-thirds by the Federal Government, 26.23 percent by CTA, and 7.10 percent by Skokie.

The Skokie Swift project, therefore, was an overwhelming success. The project originally was planned to provide service from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. weekdays with 10-minute headways during the peak period and 30-minute headways during the off peak. Two single cars were to make 50 trips in order to accommodate the expected 1,000 passengers per day.

Instead, nearly 4,000 passengers used the service the first day. Five cars were put in operation instead of two. Headways were cut from 10 minutes to 5 minutes in the peak period and from 30 minutes to 15 minutes in the offpeak. Operations were increased from 50 trips to 75 trips the first day, to 94 trips the next week, and ultimately to 115 trips per day. Evening service was extended an hour to 11 p.m. Saturday service was initiated, and special trips were added on Sundays for special occasions, including football games.

A significant feature of the project was the provision of nonstop shuttle service between Skokie and the Howard Street station of the CTA system. The 5-mile trip was scheduled for 67.4 minutes of running time. Patrons were charged 45 cents for the trip with free access, at no additional charge, to the full CTA system at the Howard Street station.

The Village of Skokie, as a participant in the project, built a 385-space parking lot at the station which soon had to be expanded to its present capacity of 555 spaces. All other project planning, design, and construction activities were the responsibility of CTA.

The success of the project was measured by the high initial passenger response, and continued growth in patronage has been widely reported. An important aspect of this success was the ability of the CTA engineering department and its shops to modernize and adapt older PCC transit cars for the Skokie Swift service. Initially, four single cars were equipped with higher performance electric motors and drive systems and adapted to operate both with "third rail" and overhead trolley electric pickup, a necessity on the Skokie line. Subsequently, as demand for equipment rapidly increased, four other PCC cars were adapted. It soon became apparent, however, that passenger demand would exceed the system capacity with single car service, so CTA converted its 3-unit, 94-passenger articulated PCC cars to the Skokie service. The higher-capacity trains accommodated more patrons, particularly during the peak period, without compromising running time and train frequency.

Subsequent analysis demonstrated clearly that relative travel-time savings were the most important factor behind the unexpectedly high patronage on the Skokie Swift demonstration. Nonstop shuttle service over the 5-mile distance was scheduled to take only 6-1/2 minutes. The 45-cent fare was found to have been relatively less significant. It is important to note that high patronage resulted even though the service used an old existing right-of-way and renovated operating equipment originally built for a different type of service.

THE CENTRAL AREA TRANSIT PROJECT

Whereas the Skokie Swift was one of the most modest projects undertaken in the Chicago area, measured in financial terms, the proposed development of the Chicago Central Area Transit Project is the most ambitious.

The central area project envisions the replacement of the elevated Loop with a Loop subway, the addition of a downtown transit distributor, and the

extension of the subway system to the west, northeast, and southeast of the business district. Most recent unofficial cost estimates for the project range up to \$1.642 billion. While the estimate is subject to further change, it is clear that the project now would cost more than triple the originally estimated \$478 million.

Proposals to replace the elevated Loop, from which Chicago gets the name for its central business district, date back to 1927. Earlier plans proposed or conceptualized varying amounts of new rapid transit subways, but a specific proposal to replace the elevated Loop with a subway was not made until that year. From then until 1968, however, no plan repeated the Loop replacement proposal; they either proposed only partial replacement or ignored the Loop system altogether.

It is interesting to note that essentially all transportation plans for the Chicago central area through 1939 proposed major and fairly extensive construction of streetcar subways. In some instances, plan proposals emphasized streetcar subways instead of extensions or replacements for the heavy rail transit system.

In 1958, CTA, on behalf of the Chicago Plan Commission, published a plan called *New Horizons for Metropolitan Chicago*, which contained the city's first proposal for a bus subway to extend under Washington Street from the Illinois Central Railroad station east of Michigan Avenue westward to Chicago and Northwestern Railroad station west of the Chicago River. The 1958 plan, the most comprehensive attempt by CTA to develop a metropolitan-scale plan for the city, also proposed the elimination of several miles of elevated transit lines, including the lines that form the Loop. The CTA plan, however, would not have replaced the Loop, but instead would have constructed a new north-south subway route through the central area along Wells Street and a new east-west route, in addition to the bus subway along Jackson Street, extending from near the University of Illinois Circle Campus to east of the railroad yards near the lake front.

The CTA plan, the first comprehensive transit plan in the post World War II era, also contained a number of other proposed improvements, many of which have been subsequently carried out. These include the transit line in the Congress Expressway and extensive improvements to stations, train control, signalization, and other operating and equipment improvements.

The publication of the CATS plan in 1962 was a milestone in Chicago area transportation planning for both highways and transit. The CATS effort was the most innovative planning study ever undertaken up to that time and many of the techniques, methodologies, and analyses have been incorporated in urban area transportation planning throughout the world.

The comments in this case study, however, are limited to those portions of the CATS study that relate directly to mass transportation and specifically to the central area.

The CATS 1962 report began its discussion of its public transportation plan with these words:

Any realist can see that planning for future mass transportation facilities—buses, subway and elevated lines, and suburban railroads—is a particularly difficult task. Historical trends continue to show passenger losses. Risk capital is scarce. The increasing dispersion of riders and the harsh economic fact of serving a more dilute market area cannot be ignored.

Yet the need for mass transportation and the problems created by increasing use of the automobile cannot be ignored. Many people in the Chicago area are completely dependent upon public transit for transportation. The economic well being of large parts of the central city—particularly the core area—is at stake. Any accelerating decline in the availability of public transportation would be reflected in lower property values and increased congestion.

Strong efforts are needed to maintain and improve public transportation services. This is the policy of the plan presented here—a policy concurred in by most public officials of this area. This policy must be effectuated, however, in full view of the difficulties, and with a realistic appraisal of problems and opportunities.

The CATS study evaluated the then existing commuter rail and rail transit system, the CTA plan, a modification of the CTA plan, and one proposed by CATS,

The proposed plan, which ultimately was recommended in the 1962 report, differed in some respects from all previous reports, including the CTA plan. However, the major difference was in the central area. The CATS plan proposed

operating all rail transit service through the existing Lake and Dearborn subways and, instead of adding any new central area subway segments, it proposed development of an extensive system of grade-separated moving pedestrian walkways. The moving sidewalks would connect to the commuter railroad stations as well as the transit stations. It consisted of one central north-south segment and two east-west segments.

The CATS report contained many cautionary statements that its plan and analysis were preliminary in nature and subject to much more refined and detailed planning, design, and analysis as well as other nontransportation considerations. Notwithstanding, it indicated that the plan would achieve an order-of-magnitude saving of more than \$1 million per year in total costs compared with continued operation of the existing system through 1980. The proposed CTA plan, on the other hand, would have cost an annual total of about \$3.7 million above the cost of operating the existing system.

The proposed bus subway from the earlier CTA plan and the moving pedestrian walkways from the CATS plan never received further serious consideration in central area transportation planning.

The Central Area Transit Project, as it is known today? dates from 1968 when the city of Chicago, with cooperation from Federal, State, and local agencies, produced the *Transit Planning Study, Chicago Central Area*. The study was financed largely with funds from the Community Facilities Administration of HUD rather than its Office of Mass Transportation, which was a constituent HUD agency at that time.

The city of Chicago dominated leadership of the study. It was conducted by the city's Department of Development and Planning (DDP), the Department of Public Works (DPW), and CTA. The chairman of the coordinating committee for the study was the Commissioner of DDP, and the study director was the Deputy Commissioner of DDP. The Commissioner of Public Works was responsible for the engineering work program, and other city agencies and CTA were responsible for all other aspects of the project except one. The lone exception was that CATS was responsible for patronage and revenue projects. (CATS was limited to this type of technical support role until about 1973.)

The 1968 Central Area Study reviewed all of the comprehensive transportation plans for or affecting the central area dating from 1909, when the Burnham Plan was produced. In several of the subsequent plans, in 1916, 1923, 1927, 1930, 1937, 1939, 1958, and 1962, components of the plans which specifically proposed replacement of the elevated Loop or made it possible are specifically noted. The 1962 plan, produced by CATS, deserves special note.

The Central Area Study report, in commenting on the CATS plan, notes:

The recommended plan proposes a network of highways and transit extensions for the Chicago metropolitan area in a broad and general manner, leaving detailed solutions to future studies. . . . The purpose of the report was to propose the nature, arrangement and location of future transportation facilities, in a very general form, to provide projected capacity needs with consideration of safety and operating and construction costs based on projected land developments. Generally, the report recommends a plan of transportation for 1980.

Further, the Central Area Study report comments:

The possibilities of removal of existing elevated Loop structures are treated relatively lightly. No evidence was presented that alternatives were studied for central area transit improvements, which would eliminate or improve problems inherent in the proposals made in the report.

The Central Area Study review of the 1958 CTA Plan simply ignores the proposed bus subway along Washington Street.

The dominant factor in the Central Area Study was the importance of allowing continued development and redevelopment of the central business area by providing adequate transportation support services. The study report states:

The transit plan for the central area proposed herein embodies four principles aimed toward reinforcing the vitality of Chicago's core area as the center for employment, education, and culture.

1. Adequate distribution of passengers with all weather connections to commuter

railroad stations and other traffic generators.

2. Expansion of transit service to present and planned centers of activity such as the University of Illinois—Chicago Circle Campus, the Gateway area, railroad stations, Illinois Central Air Right's Development, Wolf Point, the near North Side, the cultural and recreational area to the south along the lakeshore, and the McCormick Place complex.
3. Reduction of the volume of vehicular traffic in the central area not only by promoting greater use of transit, but also by encouraging the use of fringe parking facilities for those who continue to drive.
4. Removal of the existing Loop elevated structure.

The study developed 14 sketch plans, from which 5 were selected for further analysis and evaluation. In light of the four principles listed above, plus nine additional functional or engineering criteria, all plans were found wanting in some respects.

The recommended plan assembled components of the five rejected plans into subway and distributor extensions from the Loop area to serve McCormick Place and Walton Place to the north and south and Circle Campus. It also proposed an extensive system of subway pedestrian connections.

The recommended plan was significantly more extensive than any of the five earlier plans—and more expensive. It was estimated to cost \$478 million. The study report conceded that "a public works project such as this should provide an economic gain to justify its cost."

The economic analysis conducted as a part of the project concluded that the project was justified, but presented no detailed analysis that showed the recommended alternative to be a public investment in which the benefits would outweigh the costs. Neither did the economic analysis compare the costs and benefits of the alternative plans.

The summary report of the project instead referenced the economic and social impacts, the cultural and recreational potential, the esthetic considerations, expanded employment opportunities, and other factors.

The economic analysis concluded that the Central Area Transit Project might generate an increase in assessed value of property in the central business district of as much as \$1.8 billion "The gross tax revenues from this increase in property values alone will be an amount equivalent to the total cost of the project improvement in a period of 10 years," the report concluded.

The economic analysis did not indicate the relative increase in property value associated with each alternative, including leaving the Loop system intact, but it did note that keeping the 70-year-old elevated Loop in operation would cost in excess of \$20 million or about 4 percent of the cost of the recommended plan.

The Central Area Study reported that the development of a specific and detailed financing plan had been beyond the scope of the study. Notwithstanding, it reported on four alternative financing schemes including the potential of creating a special transit district which would be supported by property taxes on the property within the district. Although the study did not make a recommendation, the special transit district was authorized by the Illinois Legislature in its 1970 session and subsequently was approved by referendum. The special district, Chicago Urban Transit District (CUTD), was challenged in the courts as unconstitutional and eventually was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which held that the act was valid in 1972.

The CUTD applied for an UMTA capital grant for the Loop and distributor subways in 1971 in the amount of \$500.4 million, the proposed Federal share of the cost. Technically, the application is still pending before UMTA, but the CUTD has received additional study and planning grants in the subsequent years. The original 1968 study was updated in 1971 with identical findings.

The recommended project has been highly controversial, not only because of its high cost and the fact that the local share of costs would be obtained through property taxes on central area owners, but also because of charges and counter charges of who would benefit and whether the project was being used to delineate an area of the city that would receive development and redevelopment benefits to the detriment of adjoining areas.

During the initial planning of the project and up until quite recently, there was no attempt to carry out a structured citizen participation program in

the ordinarily accepted meaning of the term. Instead, there were many meetings with business and civic leaders primarily interested in the growth and development of the central business district. Most recently, there has been a modest effort to get more citizen input into the project through surveys and similar activities.

Primarily in response to pressure from the Federal Government the CUTD started a new study in 1973 in which 12 alternative plans were considered and evaluated. Four were selected for detailed analysis. The study concluded that the original 1968 plan was the best alternative.

UMTA, however, did not fully accept the results of the restudies and submitted a list of questions to be answered separately by the city of Chicago, CUTD, CTA, and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). Instead, all four wrote a joint letter of response in which they said the project should go forward with Federal funding and that remaining problems could be resolved during detailed planning.

For the remainder of 1974 and the first half of 1975, little progress was made in resolving disagreements and no additional funds were provided by UMTA. In June 1975, CUTD organized an interagency task force to review the controversial portions of the plan and try to agree on a solution.

The task force, which was headed by CUTD, was supposed to conclude its work in time to report to the CUTD board July 28, 1975. The work was to be undertaken by staff of the participating agencies. The staff met on a semiweekly basis. The agencies represented were DDP, DPW, CTA, and IDOT. The newly created RTA was invited to participate, but it deferred and reported that CTA would represent its interests.

The task force developed five alternatives for the Monroe distributor portion of the plan and four for the Franklin portion of the plan. These were presented to the senior task force of agency heads on July 25, 1975, but no agreement was reached.

There were numerous meetings in the following month, and, unofficially, alternate plans were worked out in which portions of the central area plan could be carried out at a significantly reduced cost without abandoning the entire concept. But even reduced plans, as unofficially reported, are substantially beyond the capability of presently identified sources of funding. However, later in

August, the CUTD board met and issued a statement indicating that it would continue planning for the Loop-distributor subway and for a north-south subway running generally along Franklin Street. At this writing, the outstanding problems still remain unresolved.

THE CROSSTOWN EXPRESSWAY

The Crosstown Expressway project illuminates other important aspects of the institutional structure of transportation and transit planning in the Chicago area as well as questions pertaining to the future implementation of Chicago area transportation plans.

The proposed Crosstown Expressway is the last unconstructed segment of the Chicago area's interstate system routes. The proposed Crosstown, now estimated to cost more than \$1 billion, would connect with the Dan Ryan south and southwest of the central area, extend westward to the vicinity of Cicero Avenue, and then go directly north about 5 miles west of the central area to a connection with the Kennedy Expressway in the northwestern portion of the city.

The expressway project has been controversial for many years, but the controversy reached a new height when present Illinois Governor, Daniel Walker, made opposition to the expressway project one of his prominent campaign issues in 1972 in opposition to the policies of Chicago Mayor, Richard Daley. While the State and city have been at odds on a number of issues, differences over the Crosstown Expressway have been the foremost issues in the transportation sector of public policy.

The transit planning activities in the Chicago metropolitan area have not included any concerted effort to develop a citizen participation program either at the overall regional systems level or in individual projects. Ironically, the greatest citizen participation in the Chicago area in recent years involved the planning for the Crosstown Expressway, and the program was devised largely to overcome significant citizen and other opposition to the project.

The Crosstown Expressway, through the development of a second generation plan, now contains a transit component in the form of an exclusive busway. The transit component, however, is not the focus of the disagreement. Rather,

the controversy consists of an open and protracted disagreement over the expressway itself. The State takes the position that the expressway should not be built, whereas the city advocates the project.

The outcome of the dispute is important to the area transit program. The State's opposition is based on its desire to take advantage of the provisions of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1973, in which interstate system highway funds can be transferred to transit projects. The State sees the transfer of funds as the only realistic source of sufficient funds for building some form of the Central Area Project as well as for making other improvements in the area's transit system.

The stalemate over the Cross town Expressway is reflected in the 1995 Transportation System Plan for the Chicago area, as adopted by CATS and NIRPC. The corridor that contains the proposed Crosstown Expressway has been designated as a "high accessibility corridor" without any definition of what the term means or what kind of facilities eventually would be provided. A second controversial proposed highway corridor, the North Avenue Corridor from First Avenue in the western portion of Cook County to Fox River in DuPage County, also has been designed as a "highway accessibility corridor." While not as directly or deeply involved in the Chicago rapid transit planning dispute, the North Avenue corridor is opposed by IDOT in part because it would cause disruption and in part because it would be a radial freeway providing additional highway capacity into Cook County and Chicago. IDOT fears the highway facility would compete with and therefore cause some diversion from the Chicagoan Northwestern commuter rail service.

THE 1995 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLAN

The 1995 Plan is the first plan that addresses the eight-county metropolitan area of northeastern Illinois and northwestern Indiana. It was developed in cooperation with the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission. The report is intended to replace the interim plan adopted in 1971 that was a composite of official public transportation plans for the eight-county bi-State metropolitan area.

A formal attempt at citizen participation was made in connection with the announcement of the

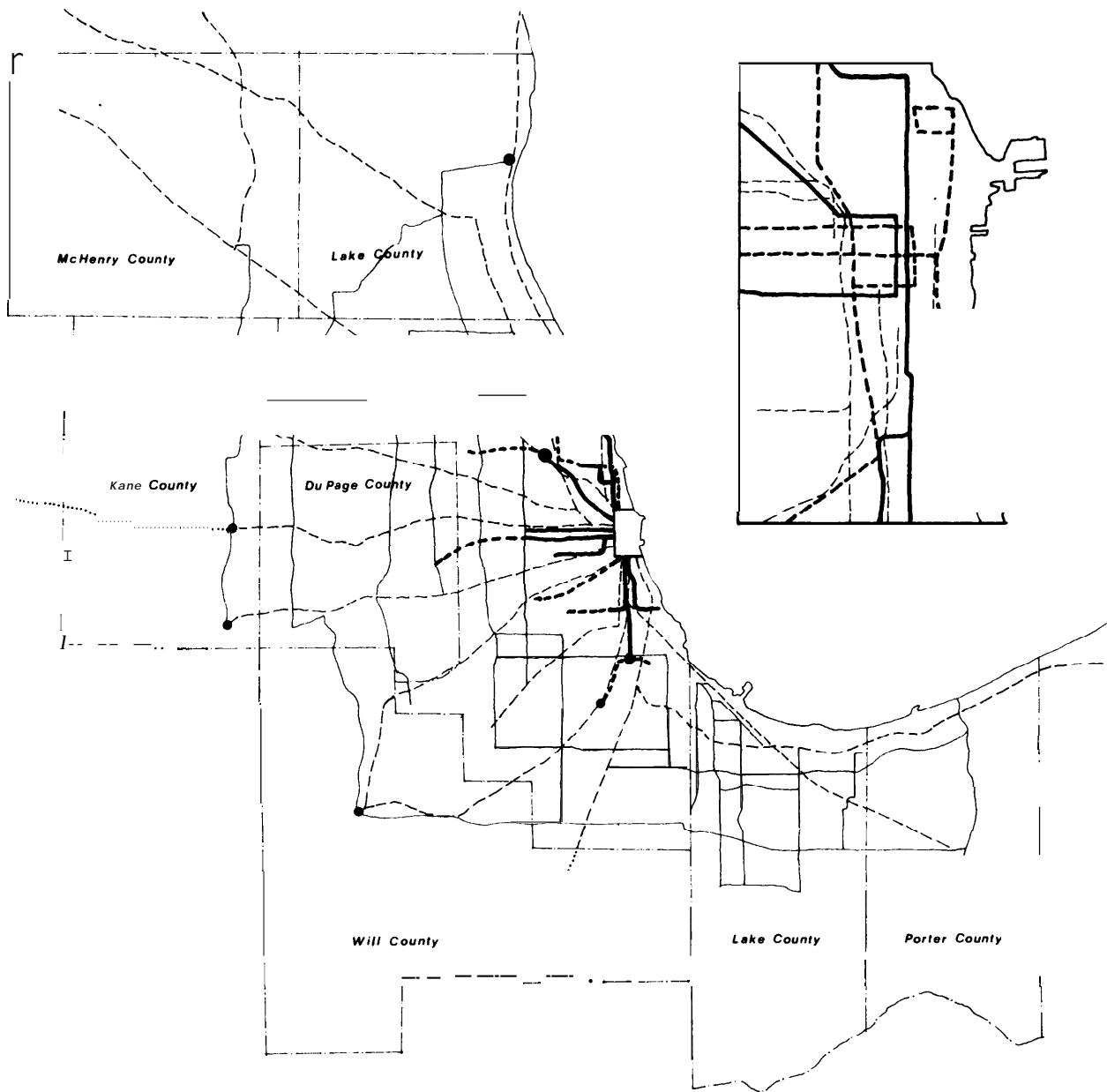


FIGURE 5 : ADOPTED 1995 TRANSIT PLAN

Source: 1995 Transportation System Plan, Northern Illinois Regional Planning Commission and Chicago Area Transportation Study, September 1974.



1995 Transportation System Plan for the region. The plan was presented to the public in a television program with the opportunity for the public to either telephone questions during the presentation or submit questions or comments in writing following the program. No significant involvement resulted and no changes were made in the plan. NIPC, however, reported that it made 30 changes in the text as a result of citizen comments.

The 1995 Plan is the first plan in the Chicago area that covers all transportation modes, including public transit, highways, aviation, and freight. The plan proposes a fairly extensive network of new freeway construction, but almost all of the proposed new routes are in the most outlying areas of the metropolitan region. No new freeways are proposed in the city of Chicago. The plan does propose a very short, controlled-access connector along Franklin Street in the downtown lakefront area of new development, a project which is largely noncontroversial and on which some work has already been accomplished. A significant feature of the 1995 freeway plan is that almost all routes are beltway or circumferential highways in character and service.

The public transportation plan, however, is essentially the opposite. It proposes extensions of three commuter rail lines further into the outlying areas of the region. It also proposes an extensive

expansion of rail rapid transit routes, including the plan to replace the Loop and construct the Archer Avenue distributor with extensions as put forth in the CUTD plan. Other parts of the proposed network expansion include extension of the Kennedy Line to O'Hare Airport, extensions of the service in the Congress (now Eisenhower), the Dan Ryan, and Calumet Expressways and an extension to Midway Airport that would utilize part of the median of the Stevenson Expressway. In addition, the 1995 Plan proposes the development of a new subway along Archer Avenue from Harlem Avenue to the Franklin Street connector, a corridor that now has the most densely utilized bus service of any bus route into the CBD.

The 1995 Plan also proposes two new transit lines: one from the Skokie Swift Terminal in Skokie to the Jefferson Park Station on the Kennedy Expressway Line; and the second servicing the Chicago Loop by way of Lawrence Avenue, connecting to the east-west leg of the present Ravenswood Line to the Howard Line at Wilson, and then south along Sheridan Road and Lake Shore Drive to a new connection in the Loop.

⁵Some transit lines in expressway medians bear a different name from the expressway whose right-of-way they share. In this discussion, the names of the expressways are used uniformly.

