

1 MS. MILLER: Thank you for being here tonight for
2 this very important public hearing. My name is
3 Jae Miller. I am the public information officer for The
4 Illinois Department of Public Transportation. There are
5 just a few things I wanted to go over before we get
6 started. There will be an opportunity for public
7 comment later tonight. We have staffers here who are
8 willing and ready to help you if you have a question;
9 and, if you want to fill out a public comment, you can
10 do so at those two laptops that are at the top there.
11 You can also manually write a public comment and submit
12 that to any one of the staffers who are standing around
13 who have nametags and they are willing and ready to
14 assist. Also there are public restrooms that are also
15 at the top of the room just outside of this hall at the
16 right; and, again, if you have any questions, please
17 feel free to raise your hand and we will be right over
18 to
19 answer any questions. Without further adieu let me go
20 ahead and introduce our co-chairs Ann Schneider and
21 George Ranney.

21 MR. RANNEY: Good afternoon. Can we be heard from
22 here? I'll call the meeting to order and then Secretary
23 Ann Schneider and I are going to share the chairmanship
24 responsibilities. I'm going to start off by calling the

1 roll for the task force. Carole Brown?
2 MS. BROWN: Here.
3 MR. RANNEY: Robert Guy?
4 MR. GUY: Here.
5 MR. RANNEY: Tony Paulauski?
6 MR. PAULAUSKI: Here.
7 MR. RANNEY: Dr. Sylvia Jenkins?
8 MS. JENKINS: Here.
9 MR. RANNEY: Donald Tantillo?
10 MR. TANTILLO: Here.
11 MR. RANNEY: Nick palmer?
12 MR. PALMER: Here.
13 MR. RANNEY: Robert Reiter?
14 MR. REITER: Here.
15 MR. RANNEY: Dr. Adrienne Holloway?
16 DR. HOLLOWAY: Here.
17 MR. RANNEY: Kathryn Tholin?
18 MS. THOLIN: Yes.
19 MR. RANNEY: Patrick Fitzgerald?
20 MR. FITZGERALD: Here.
21 MR. RANNEY: Dr. Ashish Sen?
22 DR. SEN: Present.
23 MR. RANNEY: Sonia Walwyn -- no response. And
24 Secretary Ann Schneider?

1 MS. SCHNEIDER: Here.

2 MR. RANNEY: Okay. And I will pass the microphone
3 over to you for you to make a few remarks.

4 MS. SCHNEIDER: Yes. I just have a few
5 housekeeping matters that I want to make sure we cover
6 in addition to what Jae talked about. First of all, I
7 want to tell everybody in the audience that has made it
8 here tonight we are very glad that you can be a part of
9 this and we're excited to continue to take steps towards
10 meeting the objectives set forth in the governor's
11 executive order. In terms of a few housekeeping items
12 there are palm cards which contain the website for the
13 task force available. You can get those on your way out
14 the door. We have them up at the top and, please, if
15 you're interested enough to come tonight, you're
16 obviously interested enough to follow the deliberations
17 of what we're doing and we're going to have everything
18 accessible on our website. So we advise you to pick up
19 a palm card so you can see what that website is.

20 Also, on behalf the task force we are
21 cordially inviting anyone to make public comment during
22 this hearing at the end of the agenda. We are providing
23 some time for public comment. We are going to limit the
24 oral public comment to three minutes per person and the

1 reason we're doing that is because we want to be
2 respectful of everybody's time; and, if you feel that
3 you have more than just the three minutes that you want
4 to share, we also have comment cards that we would like
5 for you to, whether or not you are speaking, we would
6 like you to fill out those public comment cards. If you
7 are speaking, we're going to use it to call on you. If
8 you prefer to give written comments, you can fill those
9 out on those cards and deposit those with the staff
10 after the hearing or at any time during the hearing.

11 Also, we have set up a website public comment
12 page and we invite you, if you also feel like you need
13 to give additional comment, to visit the website on that
14 card and you can go to the website page and you can fill
15 in your public comment. We also have with us tonight
16 three computers set up in the back of the auditorium.
17 If you feel like you want to provide public comment via
18 our website you can do so tonight as well.

19 The final thing is I would ask for both the
20 task force members and also from the public if you're
21 providing public comment and also from our invited
22 guests we have a court reporter that is reporting our
23 proceedings tonight and so I would ask that you please
24 clearly state your name before you speak so that she can

1 capture that, that is serving as our minutes for the
2 meeting tonight and we want to make sure that we're
3 capturing everything accurately.

4 And I think with that we want to go ahead and
5 move to the next part of the agenda which is the public
6 testimony. And, just so everybody knows, we now have
7 the opportunity to provide Illinois residents and
8 visitors with a world class public transit system where
9 performance, safety, and accountability are hallmark to
10 the way the managing agency operates and we are glad
11 that in attendance today to help answer some of the
12 questions that we've provided in advance are John Gates,
13 Junior who is the chairman of the RTA. Thank you for
14 coming, Mr. Chairman. Forrest Claypool, the president
15 of
16 the CTA. Thank you, Mr. President. The interim
17 executive director of Metra, Don Orseno. Thank you.
18 And the executive director of Pace, T.J. Ross. And also
19 joining us is the RTA executive director Joe Costello.
20 Thank you, Director, for coming. We're going to ask
21 that you try to limit the testimony to 15 minutes, no
22 more than 20, if possible, and at the completion of all
23 of your testimonies then I think we want to then move
24 into task force questions.

24 And just so everybody in the audience knows we

1 have sent each of the service boards and the RTA three
2 questions that we wanted them to address the first
3 question being how they see the performance of the
4 Northeastern Illinois transit system in the areas of
5 serving riders, the overall region, and broader economy
6 and also operating efficiency. We also asked them to
7 tell us what they believe are the most important
8 criteria for evaluating performance and how they would
9 rate the system in comparison to industry standards for
10 excellent performance. And, finally, we asked them to
11 tell us what they believe defines a world class transit
12 system, particularly, for Northeastern Illinois, and
13 what actions they think are necessary to achieve it.

14 Also, briefly, we sent a list of questions
15 related to ethics that we would like each of the
16 presenters tonight to address. They can take no more
17 than five minutes. I would say spend no more than five
18 minutes on that addressing those questions more
19 specifically about any issues you might have with
20 providing responses or other thoughts or concerns you
21 might have with the questions that were sent.

22 So, with that, I think what we would like to
23 do, Chairman Gates, is turn to you and have you take it
24 over.

1 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you. Actually, you asked
2 three questions. I'm going to ask Joe Costello our
3 executive director to address the first two and I will
4 follow up with the third. And, unfortunately, I have to
5 leave to another board meeting which I am late to
6 already; but, if you have any specific questions of me,
7 go ahead then or, certainly, Joe is more than capable of
8 answering anything you want to ask. So, with that, I'll
9 turn it over to Joe.

10 MR. COSTELLO: Thank you and good afternoon.
11 Regarding performance, the RTA system provides 660
12 million passenger trips per year, over 2 million weekday
13 trips. In 2012, RTA experienced its highest ridership
14 level since 1990. Over the last ten years the RTA
15 system has increased its ridership by 12 percent.
16 Customer surveys show that our riders rate our system
17 highly. 91 percent of our customers would recommend
18 service to others and 83 percent are satisfied with the
19 service. Transit contributes to the overall regional
20 vitality by improving access to jobs. Over 30 percent
21 of traveling to jobs in the City of Chicago travel by
22 transit and 76 percent of regional jobs have access to
23 transit. Transit reduces regional congestion. It is
24 estimated that without transit time lost through

1 congestion would be 33 percent higher. Transit helps
2 maintain the livability of our region through reducing
3 greenhouse gas emissions. Without transit there would
4 be an estimated 300 million additional trips on our
5 roadways. The use of transit helps to extend the value
6 of the existing road infrastructure by reducing the
7 daily demand on the roadways.

8 The RTA system consistently performs stronger
9 in comparison to peers in measures of operating
10 efficiency. Among the ten largest metropolitan areas in
11 the country, the RTA system has the lowest operating
12 cost per passenger mile. The CTA bus and rail services
13 and Pace bus each have the lowest cost per vehicle hour
14 compared to their peers. Metra has the third lowest
15 cost per vehicle hour and the second lowest per
16 passenger mile. Service has seen steady improvements in
17 cost efficiency as Pace has implemented programs to
18 control costs while improving passenger service. Strong
19 maintenance programs keep aging vehicle fleets in safe
20 working condition with a minimum of service breakdowns.
21 Our rates of in-service failures compared to our peers
22 is very good where we once again perform at the top of
23 the group.

24 Where we fall below our peers is in capital

1 funding of the system. We rank in the bottom third of
2 the peer group for the level of capital expenditures per
3 resident. We continue to face significant shortfalls in
4 the capital funding needed to bring the system to a
5 state of good repair and currently face an estimated
6 \$31 billion need over the next ten years with an
7 immediate need of \$18.7 billion to address the backlog
8 of state of good repair projects and we have limited
9 hope that additional funds from Springfield or
10 Washington will solve these challenges soon.

11 So the RTA has implemented policies to help
12 address the capital needs of the system including
13 prohibiting the transfer of capital funds to cover
14 operating expenditures. In addition, through board
15 policy, capital expenditures are focused on the
16 maintenance of the current system rather than expansion
17 projects.

18 The second area, looking at criteria for
19 evaluating performance, we see the most important
20 measures for evaluating performance are passenger trips
21 and passenger miles travelled, cost per passenger mile,
22 on time performance, safety as in major reportable
23 incidents per passenger trip, miles travelled between
24 major mechanical failures, the fair recovery ratio which

1 is the proportion of expenses covered by fare revenue
2 and customer satisfaction.

3 The large capital investment of any transit
4 system requires a regional and long-term outlook.
5 Movement towards greater regionalization is the trend we
6 see throughout the nation. We have a system in place in
7 which state law requires the adoption of balanced
8 budgets for each service board and a five-year capital
9 program for the region. This requirement is good for
10 the region and promotes fiscal responsibility. Now,
11 granted achievement of this mandate is difficult often
12 to achieve with the requirement that the region must
13 come to a consensus on these budgets and capital
14 programs and, certainly, it's challenged by the fact
15 that the needs of each service board is greater than the
16 funding available.

17 The capital program funding levels are
18 generally applied by historical formula. It is
19 difficult to adopt a strategic direction for the region
20 that would require departure from the established
21 funding formulas. The past regional systems do not
22 operate with such limits on their long-range strategic
23 vision. Not only has the RTA quantified through an
24 asset condition assessment the threat to system

1 viability through the huge backlog of state of good
2 repair projects just mentioned, the RTA has also
3 developed using a federal grant for a leading edge
4 analytical tool, a capital optimization tool that helps
5 prioritize capital projects to ensure the best use of
6 our limited capital funds. And now to address the third
7 area, Chairman John Gates.

8 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you, Joe. The third
9 question you posed was what does the RTA believe defines
10 a world class transit system in Northeastern Illinois as
11 well as what actions we believe are necessary to achieve
12 it. There is no one factor that defines a world class
13 transit system; but I'd like to focus on two subjects:
14 First, the RTA's strategic plan, and, second, my recent
15 legislative ideas. You have been provided with detailed
16 copies of both.

17 Both of these proposals set a framework for an
18 efficient and reliable regional transportation system
19 going forward; and both, I believe, begin to provide the
20 answers to the questions of how we in Northeastern
21 Illinois can move towards an even better functioning
22 system. The RTA needs the tools and authority to ensure
23 financial stability and regional coordination, ethics,
24 and appropriate oversight. Our strategic plan -- Every

1 five years the RTA is required by statute to adopt a
2 strategic plan for the region. This strategic plan was
3 unanimously agreed to several months ago by
4 representatives of all six county boards and the mayor
5 of the City of Chicago. It establishes a common vision
6 for transit in our region and sets priorities over the
7 next five years and allows transit to respond
8 effectively to developing issues as they occur. The
9 current plan was created by the RTA in collaboration
10 with the service boards and with input from public
11 stakeholders and elected officials. The plan is a
12 roadmap to shape the future of the region's transit
13 system in order to define the region's common vision and
14 goals for transit.

15 In general, as you know or as you see, the
16 strategic plan describes five ways to improve transit in
17 our region. The first is develop long-term funding
18 solutions in order to lessen the \$31 billion capital
19 backlog that we currently have. We should positively
20 seek stable long-term funding solutions to support the
21 remediation of our capital problems. Given today's
22 fiscal realities, we do not expect any increased funding
23 above the levels currently received from Springfield or
24 Washington. You also must focus on improving the

1 customer experience through a modernized and integrated
2 system that utilizes all of the technological tools
3 available today. Also, given the current fiscal
4 realities we have, we must create a balance between our
5 current needs and developing new markets for future
6 transportation usage. At the same time we have to
7 balance our very tight operating budgets. There's no
8 service board as part of our system that couldn't use
9 twice what we currently have available and we need to
10 educate the public to encourage greater utilization of
11 the system and alleviate congestion throughout our
12 highways.

13 Over the last six months or so we've also
14 brought forth a separate series of ideas crafted in
15 legislation that we believe would also truly improve the
16 system. This takes the form of a series of memos which,
17 let me be clear, are my ideas, not those of staff and do
18 not necessarily represent the views of all 16 RTA board
19 members. However, as chairman, I feel that the RTA
20 needed to put forth these thoughts and proposals.

21 First, to increase the RTA's oversight and
22 responsibility. These, as you know, we've had a number
23 of ethical issues involving one service report in
24 particular and we feel these ideas might help to

1 alleviate these and other ethical problems that have
2 cropped up over the last decade. They include
3 prohibiting service board and RTA board members from
4 engaging in any business relations with the RTA or any
5 service board or any reporting authorities during their
6 term of service or for a two-year period following the
7 expiration of their term, in other words, a no revolving
8 door policy. Giving any elected official who appoints
9 the board member the power to remove that board member.
10 Right now for most of the service boards and the RTA
11 that does not exist. To create a new set of minimal
12 qualifications in order to serve as a board member
13 including possessing a transportation, finance, or
14 planning background and also giving the RTA a line item
15 veto of the various budgets of the service boards.
16 Right now it's an all or nothing type of approval; and,
17 if there are issues within a given budget, by not
18 approving it basically shuts down that particular
19 service board's operations thus penalizing the rider and
20 not necessarily the policy makers who provide those
21 decisions. We also think it is necessary to give the
22 RTA realtime access to the service board's financial
23 records. The RTA is charged with financial oversight
24 but does not receive service report financial results

1 until months after they occur and often not in the
2 detail necessary to answer questions.

3 As Joe mentioned, the RTA has also developed
4 in conjunction with the federal government a capital
5 optimization tool we call COST. It is a technology
6 driven resource that develops and prioritizes regional
7 trackable capital funding needs. It also integrates
8 those needs with the activities and the capital
9 investment decisions of each of the service boards. And
10 COST is intended to provide an independent objective
11 perspective on capital needs to help better form
12 regional decision making. It should be mandated that
13 each service board utilize the capital optimization
14 support tool COST developed by the RTA in order to
15 better prioritize and integrate their regional capital
16 projects.

17 Going back to ethics, we have also put forth
18 some ideas about lobbyists and how public transit
19 agencies are lobbied. Under the state's Lobbyist
20 Registration Act any individual who lobbies an official,
21 executive, or legislative branch in the state government
22 must register with the Illinois Secretary of State.
23 There is no such registration requirement for the RTA or
24 any of the service boards due to the fact that we are

1 units of local government not of the state. The general
2 assembly should amend the Lobbyist Registration Act and
3 mandate any individual who wishes to lobby a board
4 member of the RTA or service boards or any of the
5 agency's senior staff members must first register with
6 The Secretary of State.

7 Mass transit planning and regional goals: The
8 RTA, CTA, Pace, and Metra each have their own separate
9 planning departments. These employ over 100 long-term
10 regional planners with a budget collectively of over
11 \$20 million. The general assembly should support
12 legislation that would enable the consolidation of
13 long-term and strategic planning activities of RTA, CTA,
14 Metra, and Pace into one agency or CMAP. We have been
15 working with CMAP and migrating many of our activities
16 over the course of the last several years.

17 Consistency in the procurement process:
18 Collectively the transit agencies are the largest buyer
19 of energy and other resources in the State of Illinois;
20 however, they do not act together and often sometimes
21 act in conflict. Our contracts for energy or anything
22 else should be structured to utilize the purchasing
23 power -- our joint purchasing power whenever possible
24 and that should be mandated. It should be mandated that

1 all service ordered RTA contracts contain a clause
2 allowing the other agencies to piggyback upon them. The
3 general assembly should also mandate the creation of a
4 joint procurement team comprised of procurement
5 department heads of the RTA and each of the service
6 boards. This group would be responsible for identifying
7 opportunities or joint procurements and ensuring, if
8 reasonable, that these opportunities be taken advantage
9 of. It should be mandated that the RTA and service
10 boards create an annual procurement plan describing each
11 agency's additional procurement needs for the upcoming
12 year and coordinating those. In conjunction with their
13 financial boards the service boards should also be
14 required to submit a DBE report to the RTA on a
15 quarterly basis including evidence the DBE
16 subcontractors are being appropriately compensated and
17 trained for their services in accordance with
18 subcontracts and letters of intent submitted by the
19 prime vendors. In many cases we are not meeting our
20 individual DBE requirements but collectively have an
21 opportunity to do that.

22 It should be mandated that the RTA and the
23 service boards have quarterly meetings to improve their
24 DBE outreach including ways to continue to make efforts

1 to outreach to veteran owned businesses. The RTA should
2 be made the centralized agency for handling all DBE
3 certification. This will allow for increased efficiency
4 in certifying these businesses. The general assembly
5 should mandate the RTA with a comprehensive set of
6 procurement regulations for the RTA and the service
7 boards to follow.

8 And, finally, the general assembly should pass
9 legislation that enables the RTA and the service boards
10 to more effectively and easily enter into public and
11 private partnerships. Other ideas that we will be
12 outlining over the next several months in future memos
13 will include bonding and capital financing suggestions
14 for transit in Northeastern Illinois. They will also
15 include methods of service integration, regional
16 consumer marketing, acknowledging integration and past
17 utilization and increasing the reverse commute.

18 Regarding governments, my overall preference
19 obviously is that the RTA be given the tools to do its
20 job to provide the financial resources, oversight, and
21 regional service optimization the people of Northeastern
22 Illinois deserve. However, after a thorough analysis
23 and consideration my second preference would be merging
24 all four agencies into one. If you want a truly world

1 class transit system in Northeastern Illinois, then that
2 is an option we and you must consider.

3 Later this fall I will propose how such a
4 unified agency might be governed and the savings it
5 would bring to the region and why it would increase the
6 quality of everyone's service. Let me be clear. There
7 are only really two ideas of improving transit in this
8 region. Both require a regional vision, cooperation,
9 and the desire for regional transit optimization. A
10 regional approach is the only one that works because we
11 all must remember that two-thirds of the population of
12 the RTA region resides in the suburbs but more than 80
13 percent of the transit rides occur in the city but
14 70 percent of the \$1.4 billion public subsidy that is
15 injected into this system every year comes from the
16 suburbs. If these regional realities cannot be balanced
17 not only will the system suffer but each subregion might
18 go it alone and all would be worse off. Thank you very
19 much.

20 CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDER: Thank you. Since Chairman
21 Gates needs to leave, we were going to hold the
22 questions of the task force members until after all of
23 them were finished, but since Chairman Gates needs to
24 leave, are there any questions of Chairman Gates?

1 MR. RANNEY: Thank you for your remarks and I think
2 we welcome additional suggestions as we proceed in this
3 work.

4 CHAIRMAN GATES: Given the time table I wasn't able
5 to get them done by the time this meeting occurred or
6 get them out by the time this meeting occurred. You
7 guys are moving very fast.

8 CHAIRMAN RANNEY: Let me ask an underlying
9 question. Given the many suggestions you just made,
10 some of them you've made in the past and some of them
11 you've made for the future. Why is it so difficult to
12 go forward with some of these suggestions which are the
13 same ones we've been looking at?

14 CHAIRMAN GATES: This is a regional agency with
15 many different desires and conflicts some of which you
16 don't know and some of which I've outlined. It is also
17 an agency that is designed and required to provide
18 oversight and, frankly, does not have the tools to
19 execute that oversight or enforce what it may find. It
20 really has only one tool which is to approve or
21 disapprove the entire budget of all of the services. We
22 call that the nuclear option. Anything else that we
23 wish to bring forward we can only do so through the
24 power of persuasion. There is no mandate in our power.

1 There is no subpoena power in our investigation. We
2 have no ability to investigate or enforce much less
3 bring forward the kind of policy solutions that at least
4 our board might feel are in the best interests of the
5 entire region other than disapproving the budget and
6 that is what we call the nuclear option and only really
7 punishes the rider. It doesn't punish or incentivize
8 the policy maker who is the person who can make these
9 kinds of things happen, and it's unfortunately the way
10 this system was designed. The RTA was given a job to do
11 but it does not have the tools to do it. And until that
12 is rectified, you're going to find the kind of acrimony
13 in the decision that you have today because we can only
14 really operate through the power of suggestion not
15 through the power of mandate.

16 MR. FITZGERALD: And I would just make a request
17 that -- I've seen copies of your proposals before. If
18 there's a way where you could after this meeting outline
19 proposals and sort of bullet points and then I would ask
20 if the representatives of the other agencies could
21 comment so that obviously we'll look at everything you
22 put on the table. We may agree with some or none and we
23 would like the input from other folks to say we agree on
24 these points or we disagree and reasons why so we could

1 have that in front of us the collective views of all the
2 folks sitting at that table there.

3 CHAIRMAN GATES: We'd be happy to do that. The
4 proposals have taken the form of two or three or
5 four-page memos with bullet points. So you may well
6 have those in your packet already. If you don't, we're
7 happy to get them to you and I know the service boards
8 probably do have their thoughts on various ones and I'm
9 sure we'd be happy and delighted to provide those.

10 MR. FITZGERALD: Thank you. That would be great.

11 MR. RAYMUNDO: Can you elaborate on the suggestion
12 of merging all four into one? Would that necessarily
13 mean the RTA would be formed into a new board --

14 CHAIRMAN GATES: Yeah.

15 MR. RAYMUNDO: What would be the makeup of that new
16 board as well?

17 CHAIRMAN GATES: The two questions you asked are,
18 I'll call it policy decisions, but the thought I would
19 have as one person is that you would have a new board
20 that would have representatives from throughout the
21 region in proportions to be decided by the legislature,
22 or by a referendum and that that board would operate as
23 a singular entity in the same fashion that the MTA does
24 in New York, which is the biggest system or SEPTA which

1 is another large historic system or the Washington D.C.
2 system. Most other systems operate in that fashion.
3 And that board sets policy for the entire system and it
4 operates the entire system and it allocates resources
5 for the entire system and it raises resources for that
6 entire system. And it might have underneath it a heavy
7 rail division. It might have a bus division. It might
8 have a light rail division and those activities would be
9 integrated in the most efficient way possible utilizing,
10 you know, a common technology and support system
11 throughout. I think it would also allow a singular
12 agency to lobby for additional resources in a way that
13 we can't today. We often lobby separately and often
14 against one another.

15 MR. PAULAUSKI: No questions.

16 MR. REITER: If you were -- To play off of that, if
17 you're going to bring all of the service boards under
18 one agency, would there be any deference given to -- I
19 assume the CTA has very specific services than what
20 Metra provides. Would there be any deference given to
21 the regional aspect to city elevated trains?

22 CHAIRMAN GATES: I think that would be the role of
23 that board. There are lot of conflicting desires,
24 requirements, and resources. As I said, 70 percent of

1 the public subsidy comes out of the Suburbs. 82 percent
2 of the rides are in the city. So all of this would have
3 to be brought together to a regional solution that
4 optimizes the maximum amount of resources and the
5 maximum amount of people. That's what that board would
6 do. And the solution would be looked at on a regional
7 basis just like the MTA in New York or the SEPTA system
8 or L.A. transit or whatever and they all have slightly
9 different models but they are all cohesive and not
10 competing.

11 MS. SCHNEIDER: Let's try to go with maybe like two
12 or three more questions because we're 45 minutes in and
13 we've got to give these other gentlemen a chance to
14 talk.

15 CHAIRMAN GATES: Sorry.

16 MS. HOLLOWAY: We're also making time for this area
17 as well?

18 MS. SCHNEIDER: Yes, absolutely.

19 MS. HOLLOWAY: Chairman, I'm deeply troubled by
20 your comment about lack of resources and oversight and I
21 see that as being one of your primary responsibilities.
22 Correct me if I'm wrong and help me understand that
23 statement a little more clearly than just a sound byte.

24 CHAIRMAN GATES: The RTA is charged with oversight,

1 particularly, financial oversight of all of the service
2 boards but -- and I'm sure Mr. Cheryl will understand
3 this -- we do not have the authority to really conduct
4 the proper investigations. We have no subpoena
5 authority. If we ask for particular types of documents,
6 no one is required to give them to us. Our only power
7 is that of an audit. So we can go in and audit whatever
8 we want but that's it. If it's not germane to a
9 financial audit, we cannot provide a proper
10 investigation. Then once we find something, we really
11 can't do much about it. We can only, you know, make it
12 public, use the power of the bully pulpit, if you will.

13 For instance, in this matter recently
14 regarding Mr. Clifford, within a day or two of finding out
15 about it, we initiated an audit process but it took us
16 two months to begin to get documents, the really
17 important documents. Then, once we found out there were
18 various things that raised questions, all we could do
19 was talk about it. We couldn't do anything to change
20 the system or change personnel at the board level or any
21 other level. All we could do was identify it and could
22 not go beyond that. And, certainly, we'd love to have
23 our head auditor or general counsel bring you more
24 details if you so desire.

1 MS. HOLLOWAY: The statements were very troubling.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. JENKINS: Just real briefly, my name is Sylvia
4 Jenkins. You mentioned a number of things that are not
5 being done or that you wish would be done. Are there
6 any things that you do as an oversight board and service
7 boards together that you would recommend that we
8 maintain?

9 CHAIRMAN GATES: That we maintain? Oh, yeah. I
10 think things are, as Joe mentioned, substantially better
11 than the way they were both at the operating level and
12 to a certain extent at the, I'll call it, the
13 interagency cooperation level. It's not like we're all
14 fighting each other. We might have a few discussions
15 which happens to be occurring right now. All of us
16 spend a lot of time on the phone but somehow or another
17 the one thing that the nuclear option, as I described
18 it, does is in the end result when we all have to come
19 together with a joint budget, otherwise, the system
20 shuts down. After January 1st, we do not have a budget.
21 We do not fund into the next year. So we do talk a lot
22 and --

23 MS. JENKINS: Give me an example of what works.

24 CHAIRMAN GATES: I would say there's a good deal of

1 communication that works. I do think that the nuclear
2 option requires that we come up with a regional budget
3 that, you know, as inelegant as that process is, it gets
4 done. It's democracy. We somehow have to all
5 compromise to make a deal. I think we are getting
6 better and better at executing all sorts of, you know,
7 operating proficiencies. I think our capital allocation
8 is very good. We're taking on capital projects now that
9 were long needed and somehow or other are raising the
10 funds to do that and those projects are being executed
11 in a very professional way. So I think there are a lot
12 of good things that are happening but there are a lot of
13 good things that need to happen and I think a greater
14 degree of cohesiveness would help that.

15 MS. JENKINS: Thank you.

16 MR. RAYMUNDO: In your vision of this new board,
17 would board members be paid?

18 CHAIRMAN GATES: Probably not. You know, frankly,
19 I think that's sort of a red herring issue. I mean, I
20 think it's only about half of the board members now get
21 paid. A lot of people -- I think virtually everyone
22 could say -- Any of the boards could say it costs them
23 far more than what they get back. I really don't think
24 that's a relevant question; and, if it's a political

1 question, then I would certainly suggest that any kind
2 of impediment to having these boards I would certainly
3 suggest that nobody get paid, nobody get any perks,
4 nobody get any pensions, nobody get anything. It's an
5 honor to serve on these boards and that should be
6 compensation enough.

7 CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDER: With that let's move to
Forrest

8 Claypool. Mr. President?

9 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very much, Madam and
10 Mr. Chairman.

11 MR. CLAYPOOL: Thank you Co-chair Schneider and
12 Ranney and members of the Northeastern Illinois Public
13 Transit Task Force. I really appreciate your invitation
14 this evening. Just for context, last year the CTA
15 provided 545 million bus and train rides averaging 1.7
16 million rides per weekday. As the region's largest
17 transit operator covering Chicago and 35 suburbs the CTA
18 provides more than 83 percent of regional transit
19 ridership and 65 percent of vehicle revenue miles. We
20 are the nation's second largest transit system operating
21 service 24/7/365.

22 Under Mayor Emanuel the CTA has thrown off the
23 shackles of the past and in a little more than two years
24 the CTA has wiped out a \$308 million deficit without

1 service cuts or across the board fare hikes. We have
2 reduced bureaucracy and improved service while
3 aggressively modernizing every facet of the agency from
4 supply chain management to our bus and rail fleet.

5 The doomsday budgets of the past are gone. In
6 addition to aggressive cost cutting and modern
7 management efficiencies the CTA last year reached a
8 historic agreement with labor cost curve. Those changes
9 allowed the CTA to not only protect service but to
10 improve it by hiring 1,000 additional customer serving
11 union employees.

12 CTA just launched the nation's first open fare
13 system joining its partner Pace in complying early with
14 the general assembly's 2015 mandate for a universal fare
15 card. The CTA has added more frequent service to bus
16 and train routes serving 80 percent of our customers and
17 our rail stations; and key bus stops now feature
18 electronic train and bus tracker screens to let our
19 customers know exactly when their ride is coming.

20 Violent crime is down which is the result of thousands
21 of new surveillance cameras and more police.

22 And, after years of deferred maintenance, the
23 CTA in 2011 embarked on an unprecedented \$4 billion
24 capital improvement plan that's building a modern bus

1 and rail fleet, improving stations and maintenance
2 facilities, and replacing miles of dilapidated track.
3 The most visible example of this is the Red Line South,
4 a brand new railroad re-opening next month.

5 The elected leaders with CTA appointive power
6 Mayor Emanuel and Governor Quinn worked together to make
7 this historic project possible and one reason we're on
8 time and on budget has been the seamless working
9 relationship between the CTA and IDOT under the
10 leadership of Secretary Schneider. I would add as an
11 aside that I believe the CTA's governance model to the
12 extent that is an issue is a model governmental
13 structure. Jefferson said obviously that the government
14 closest to the people serves it best and we are
15 accountable directly to the taxpayers and riders through
16 the elected leadership, the elected leadership through
17 the City of Chicago and the elected leadership of The
18 State of Illinois.

19 The taxpayers and fare riders know who to hold
20 accountable. There's absolutely no ambiguity about
21 who's in charge and who can be held accountable and in a
22 democracy I think that's important. Along with our
23 partners at Metra and Pace we are an integral part of
24 the region's economy connecting employees to jobs and

1 helping keep companies competitive by providing good
2 transportation access.

3 Chicago is the economic engine of the region.
4 That's important to remember and the CTA is crucial to
5 keeping that engine running smoothly. So even those who
6 don't use the CTA benefit from its existence through the
7 economic development contribution of transit and its
8 role in reducing congestion and pollution.

9 And in both the city and the suburbs the CTA
10 has scores of connections with Metra and Pace, the
11 hallmark of the regional nature of the system. In fact,
12 more than 15 percent of CTA rides, more than 80 million
13 annually, have a suburban component to the journey and
14 over 40 percent of Pace customers transfer to the CTA.
15 Collectively CTA, Pace, and Metra are engaged in
16 unprecedented levels of cooperation and coordination
17 contrary to what you may occasionally hear.

18 Included in the five-month Red Line South
19 reconstruction project, the region's largest current
20 transit improvement project, there the three partners
21 worked not only to coordinate service but also to create
22 a discounted joint fare. For the first time CTA and
23 Pace synchronized our schedules. We synchronized our
24 schedules so that our buses are appropriately spaced

1 with one another. The results are more frequent and
2 more reliable and comfortable service for our joint
3 customers. Metra and the CTA always coordinate on
4 responses to service disruptions by honoring each
5 other's fares. That was the case just earlier today
6 when Metra experienced an incident on the UP Northwest
7 line and CTA honored Metra passes for the morning
8 commute.

9 Perhaps the best example of all is the CTA and
10 Pace's new fare payment system. Even before the
11 legislative mandate for a universal fare card the CTA
12 began working on what would be the nation's first open
13 fare system. Pace became a partner about six months
14 after the CTA announced its plan and Metra under its new
15 leadership has announced it will join Metra formalizing
16 several months of discussions. Over the last two years
17 the CTA has been extremely focused on making operations
18 more efficient and cost effective to the benefit of
19 taxpayers and fare payers. We've created the leanest
20 management structure in CTA history reducing expenses
21 and improving business processes across the agency.

22 Earlier this year the CTA launched a new
23 supply chain initiative, the largest of its kind, for a
24 U.S. transit agency that will save millions of dollars

1 by eliminating unneeded inventory and moving closer to a
2 just-in-time procurement process with transparent lowest
3 cost pricing. After years of spiraling costs related to
4 absenteeism, CTA management implemented reforms that
5 will reduce unplanned employee absenteeism by 22 percent
6 which saves us \$10 million annually.

7 The issue of procurement was raised. The CTA
8 has joint procurement agreements with Chicago's sister
9 agencies for healthcare, computer hardware and wireless
10 services as examples. And we have made it standard to
11 put piggyback language in all our contracts and bids in
12 order to enable other agencies to take advantage of
13 those contracts. And, in fact, all city agencies in
14 Cook County and CTA have piggyback clauses in healthcare
15 and dental proposals, parts, electricity, computer
16 hardware, cell phones, car rental, you name it. So
17 there's a tremendous amount of efficiencies gained
18 through joint procurement cooperation as we speak here
19 today both among the service boards and among the other
20 agencies this year. Even last year we purchased
21 piggyback in a contract with Seattle, Washington to
22 purchase 100 buses for the Red Line South project. So
23 it's not even limited to the City of Chicago or Cook
24 County or The State of Illinois.

1 Each service board serves different
2 populations in different ways. I think that's again
3 important to understand in light of arguments about
4 seamless mergers of disparate agencies. Both CTA and
5 Metra, for example, provide rail service but one is a
6 limited stop commuter rail system traveling long
7 distances with diesel locomotives and the other is an
8 electrified rapid transit system with interconnected
9 lines. Pace buses operate exclusively and service
10 suburban areas where service is more spread out and CTA
11 operates in a more denser urban and suburban
12 environments with more frequent service.

13 Uniform performance metrics would not capture
14 the essential differences between these service
15 providers. We don't even use the same equipment or
16 fuels in many instances nor would it directly reflect
17 the customer experience. For example, on time
18 performance is clearly an important measure of
19 performance; but, in the eyes of the customer, the on
20 time performance of a Metra train that arrives once an
21 hour is different than the on time performance of a CTA
22 train that arrives every three to five minutes, but
23 performance is clearly a factor in ridership. People do
24 vote with their feet and each ride represents a

1 measurable incremental demand for transit services.

2 A world class transit system was one of your
3 questions and its one that continually improves the
4 experience of the customer and that's what we've tried
5 to emphasize in our reforms over the past two years; but
6 oftentimes when we talk about that it's what's code for
7 saying more funding and that's been obviously a lot of
8 the discussion not only now but for years about mass
9 transit.

10 Although all the service boards would welcome
11 new funding, I believe in the current fiscal climate the
12 notion that there will be significant formula funding
13 increases, I think, is highly unlikely. We simply have
14 more modest hopes for Springfield and that is for
15 restoration of \$17 million in unexpected cuts that
16 occurred to all three agencies last year at five minutes
17 until midnight in the state budget process. And that
18 additional burden has come on top of state mandated free
19 and reduced ride programs which are unfunded and in
20 which the CTA spends \$100 million annually -- \$100
21 million annually to serve a ridership category that
22 continues to grow, again, because of unexpected state
23 changes effecting eligibility.

24 Our average fare as published was \$2.10 but

1 our real fare is about \$1.07 because of this massive
2 amount of free and discounted rides that we provide with
3 very limited support from the State of Illinois. In
4 discussions we've had with the other service boards one
5 other main concern is a merge. We are hopeful that any
6 changes you consider don't add additional layers of
7 bureaucracy that divert even more scarce resources from
8 our budgets. Every dollar earmarked for administrative
9 functions is another dollar that's diverted from train
10 and bus service.

11 You heard Chairman Gates a minute ago mention
12 that he feels the one tool that the RTA has is to
13 approve or disapprove the budget, the one effective tool
14 in his mission, and yet somehow they managed to spend an
15 additional \$33 million a year on other things that comes
16 out of our budgets that puts pressure on fares that puts
17 pressure on service in addition to tens of millions of
18 dollars in capital grants that would otherwise flow
19 directly to the agencies.

20 So each of us at these three agencies at Pace,
21 Metra, and the CTA work to be as efficient as we can be
22 and we face enormous management challenges. And it is
23 just simply frustrating to see so many dollars taken
24 from our operating budgets to fund duplicative or

1 ineffective programs. So one of our real asks here is
2 that when you look at this big picture please consider
3 that any recommendations do not take even more dollars
4 from our operating budgets for bureaucracy in the
5 process. Thank you for the opportunity again to speak
6 with you and I'd be happy at the appropriate time to
7 answer any questions.

8 CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDER: With that, let's go ahead and
9 move on to Metra and our executive director Don Orseno.
10 Don?

11 MR. ORSENO: Thank you for allowing me to be here
12 today. I want to thank you personally for your efforts
13 in this committee. We stand ready to help this
14 committee and provide any information that we can
15 because as all of us are here today we want to make sure
16 that the Northeast Illinois regional transit is really
17 representing a world class transit system.

18 I'd like to start off and talk a little bit
19 about Metra history and give you a little snapshot of
20 what Metra is. We operate more than 750 trains a day in
21 the most unique and complex operating environment in the
22 county. We interface with multiple locations of freight
23 railroads that operate about 600 trains. In the mix of
24 all that also there's about 100 Amtrak trains. So it's

1 a very complex network. During our time that we run in
2 our service areas between the morning rush hour and the
3 evening rush hour the freight rails virtually come to a
4 halt for about six hours a day. That's 25 percent of
5 their capacity. That's a huge, huge amount of capacity
6 for our service. Every weekday we serve about 300
7 riders on 11 lines that radiate from downtown Chicago
8 into the six county area nearly twice the size of Road
9 Island. You add up all the miles those passengers
10 travel each year and you get about 1.7 billion miles.
11 We directly serve 116 communities with 241 stations
12 across the region. 76 of those stations are located
13 within Chicago. The region would need approximately 29
14 more highway lanes for all the cars that would be on the
15 road if not for the Metra trains. We deliver human
16 resources that power the economies of Chicago and the
17 entire region.

18 You asked about performance in serving our
19 riders. More than 80 percent of our riders were
20 satisfied with the aspects of our service. I'll go over
21 a few of these. Getting to their destinations on time,
22 the frequency of rush hour service, their personal
23 safety on the trains, the cleanliness of the trains and
24 the stations, the availability of seats, the courtesy of

1 our employees and also the knowledge of our employees.

2 We perform better than our peer agencies in a
3 variety of measures. Operating cost per vehicle mile,
4 fringe cost as a percentage of salaries, vehicle
5 maintenance expenses per vehicle mile, general
6 administrative hours per train hour, passengers per
7 vehicle hour, cost per passenger and operating cost per
8 passenger mile. In 2011 the RTA subregional peer report
9 was released this past last February and, again, Metra
10 rated better than our peer average in a variety of ways.
11 Passenger trips for vehicle revenue hour, passenger trip
12 per vehicle revenue mile, operating costs per vehicle
13 revenue hour, operating cost per passenger mile,
14 operating cost per passenger trip, miles between major
15 mechanical failures and capital funds expended per
16 passenger trip.

17 You also asked what a world class system would
18 look like. In 2012 we asked our employees, the riders,
19 public, the boards members and other stakeholders to
20 help us to find a vision for the future of Metra. To be
21 a world class commuter rail agency linking the
22 communities throughout the region by providing the
23 safest most efficient and most reliable service to our
24 customers, sustaining our infrastructure for future

1 generations, leading the industry in achieving
2 continuous improvement, innovation and transparency and
3 facilitating economic vitality through Northeast
4 Illinois. Ten recommendations for achieving a world
5 class transit system: Achieve state of good repair,
6 ensure financial stability, provide a high quality
7 travel experience for our customers, strengthen the ties
8 with the regional transportation network and communities
9 Metra serves, attract and maintain a quality workforce
10 and improve agency wide efficiencies, implementing
11 system expansion to meet transportation needs and
12 resources allowed, support agency and regional
13 sustainability, communicate effectively with customers
14 and stakeholders and maintain customer security and
15 emergency preparedness.

16 To achieve a state of good repair while we
17 provide superior service with the resources we have been
18 limited in what we can do and what we can offer in new
19 services and new service areas and to reach new markets.
20 We're doing all that we can, in fact just to tread water
21 to meet our regular maintenance needs. The RTA
22 estimates that Metra needs approximately \$9.7 billion
23 over the next decade for state of good repair. We're
24 expected to receive only about a quarter of that amount

1 of money from state and federal resources.

2 To ensure financial stability most riders
3 don't understand our funding. They think our fares
4 cover capital costs as well as operating expenses and
5 wonder why we aren't investing in new service or new
6 equipment or renovating stations when we raise the
7 fares. The answer to that is the fares only cover
8 operating costs and only about half of those. The rest
9 of the money for capital comes from the state and
10 federal levels and our partners there.

11 To truly create a world class transportation
12 system in the Northeast Illinois region we will need
13 your help to solve the chronic funding problems. We
14 need to have sustainable funding so we can continue to
15 grow and continue to deliver to our customers what
16 they're asking us to do. High quality travel
17 experience: Getting people to use transit involves
18 helping them to get to the first mile and last mile for
19 their destination from our trains which involves
20 coordination with Pace and the CTA. We need to focus on
21 more ways to link together. Again, Metra, CTA, and Pace
22 do an excellent job with the limited resources; but to
23 expand and provide a greater connection, services will
24 need to have additional long-term funding.

1 Safety, reliability, and comfort are necessary
2 components of high quality service for Metra and that's
3 what we strive to do. Strengthening our regional
4 ties -- we'd also like to provide more opportunities for
5 reverse commuting. That will not only take more revenue
6 but will also require negotiation with our freight
7 partners who already sacrifice 25 percent of their
8 capacity for our needs. In many cases to expand
9 additional service we would require more capital
10 infrastructure to avoid degradation of the freight
11 service and this takes even more of our revenue.
12 In conclusion, striving to improve regional ties is very
13 important. Continuous improvement in service and
14 safety, reliability, and efficiency and ensuring
15 long-term financial viability and a state of good repair
16 to provide a railroad for future generations and we
17 continuously look for new opportunities to be more
18 efficient in ways of operation and administrative
19 functions.

20 As you've heard previously, we would really
21 like to get together when we talk about efficiencies in
22 buying things; but, I think, Forrest, as you mentioned
23 before, we don't buy necessarily all the same things.
24 I'll give you one example. When we buy fuel, we buy

1 about 25 million gallons of fuel. If you take that
2 times \$3 a gallon, that's \$75 million. We buy volume
3 fuel but it's not necessarily the same fuel that the CTA
4 uses. We're not opposed to looking at those things and
5 where there are efficiencies, we need to look at those
6 areas. One of the things I would ask the group to do is
7 in order to evaluate Northeast Illinois transit I really
8 think you really need to sit down and look at what we do
9 as a day in the life of each one of our service areas.
10 I would extend the offer to one day if you would like to
11 get together, we could have you come to Metra, take a
12 look at what we do, take a look at some of the
13 complexities and challenges we face so when we make
14 decisions we're making informed decisions and we're
15 doing the best we can for the people of Northeast
16 Illinois. With that, I thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDER: I think we also have with us
18 from Metra Norm Carlson who is a Metra board member who
19 would also like to make a presentation at this time.

20 MR. ORSENO: Norm is going to talk about economic
21 viability.

22 MR. CARLSON: I was invited to address you because
23 I am on public record saying that Metra's economic model
24 is not sustainable for the long term; and while my

1 comments are about Metra, I think that Forrest may
agree

2 with me that they are the same about CTA, particularly,
3 with regard to the rail operations. My professional
4 background is 34 years with Arthur Andersen where I had
5 the privilege of being the worldwide managing partner of
6 the transportation industry practice. Prior to that I
7 was at North American Rail for Arthur Andersen from an
8 industry perspective.

9 I'm also a historian and published on the fact
10 and I'm going to make a distinction between transit
11 which in the old days was street cars, rail and bus as
12 opposed to commuter rail. In my opinion in looking over
13 the history in Chicago, transit is not at a sustainable
14 economic model from a 120-year history. When the rapid
15 transit lines were built in the 1880's, they were within
16 bankruptcy within a period of at the time they started
17 operation to within two years of their organization.
18 With regard to the street railways in Chicago, in 1914
19 there was a reorganization 100 years ago to get them out
20 of bankruptcy. When the CTA was created in 1947, they
21 were still in bankruptcy. They were in bankruptcy that
22 entire period.

23 I think the other serious point here is when
24 we look at public sector funding models if they are not

1 adequate I think we should be encouraged by government
2 of finding other ways of providing funding for our mass
3 transit operations. I will give some background on that
4 but there's a couple things I would like to reinforce of
5 what Don said. There is no other commuter rail
6 operation in this continent and perhaps in many other
7 parts of the world that has such a complex interface
8 with its freight railroads. The only thing that comes
9 close in the United states is one line in the
10 Los Angeles basin. Visualize an air traffic control
11 system. We have 1,400 trains a day that interface in
12 the Metra territory. There are 753 Metra trains. There
13 are 64 freight trains and on average 600 freight trains
14 a day. We literally bring the entire freight network in
15 this area to a halt three hours in the morning and three
16 hours in the evening. In history the commuter rail
17 services have not been as intense as they have been
18 today and there is increasing demand on some of our core
19 routes where we must compete with the freights.

20 A major issue in the industry today is
21 capacity. This is the code word for sharing railroads
22 between passenger trains and freight assets and as the
23 freight movements are shifting from truck to rail, this
24 pressure capacity becomes greater and greater. An

1 example of this is the third track that is needed on the
2 Union Pacific West Line between Chicago and Elburn and
3 there are other examples. The other thing that we wish
4 to point out is that there are significant labor and
5 regulatory differences between transit and the
6 railroads. The railroads are covered under The Railway
7 Labor Act along with the airlines. There are unique
8 provisions as to the retirement system. Railroads have
9 a completely different retirement system. There are
10 only about ten people in Metra as a whole that are in
11 the RTA retirement package. The railroads have a
12 separate workman's compensation system known as the
13 Federal Employees Liability Act and there are different
14 regulations. We are regulated by the Federal Railroad
15 Administration and CTA is regulated by the Federal
16 Transit Administration. So there are substantial
17 regulatory and labor issues that must be considered in
18 any thought of combining operations.

19 Metra's funding comes roughly 50 to 55
20 percent from -- I was just handed a note. There are ten
21 people and in Social Security and everybody else among
22 the 2,900 people are in the railroad retirement to give
23 you some idea. Our funding model -- and I'm back to not
24 being sustainable. And if we're going to have a world

1 class system, we're going to have to have a sustainable
2 funding model and I would suggest that CTA and Pace has
3 to as well. So I'm not talking about diverting funds
4 from one to another. I'm talking about how do we make
5 the pool greater to achieve this. Our model is roughly
6 50 to 55 percent comes from the fare box for operating
7 costs. 45 percent comes from sales tax. If we were to
8 add a train or if we were to add a service extension, we
9 get nothing more on a sales tax. That doesn't generate
10 more sales tax or less sales tax. So, in effect, for us
11 to add a train or for us to add service, we have to
12 figure out how we cover 100 percent of the operating
13 costs from day one. That's almost mission impossible
14 but that is what we are facing and we have a constant
15 demand for new lines.

16 We've been asked to provide reverse commuter
17 service. We'd love to provide reverse commuter service
18 but where's the capital and where is the money? And I
19 will tell you in my capacity as a transportation advisor
20 to the City of Lake Forest we put a new commuter train
21 on. We used a set of equipment that went into service
22 at 8:00 o'clock in the morning and we put in the service
23 at 4:00 o'clock out of Waukegan. It goes north at 5:35
24 in the morning. It's a smashing success. So we know

1 the market is there. We just have to enhance it.

2 I will beg to differ with Mr. Gates on one
3 point. It's not two times what we need in capital.
4 It's four times what we need in capital. Of the \$9.7
5 billion to achieve the state of good repair \$6.6 billion
6 of that is backlog. It's due today to which that
7 backlog over 20 years we have to share with the
8 resources that are available. So, if it takes us 40
9 years because we have to split the money half and half
10 to work off that backlog, what's going to happen to the
11 assets that are in service now? And that, in my
12 judgement, is not in anybody's calculations. So the
13 numbers that are being thrown out have to be modern
14 backed with the deterioration that is going to occur in
15 the intermediate period. The rail assets of CTA, in my
16 judgement, have the same issue, however, CTA has been
17 very successful on the Red Line project and is probably
18 something that we should look at.

19 So over the past 120 years the history of
20 commuter rail is replete with bankruptcies, financial
21 reorganizations, and in more recent times inadequate
22 funding. I want to emphasize, strongly emphasize, Metra
23 is not trying to get any more funding at the expense of
24 CTA or Pace. The bottom line is we all need more

1 funding. We need to look to government and government
2 needs to address what role it can take. Despite its
3 desires to fully fund something, if it cannot fully fund
4 something, we need to be able to look to other sources
5 to get money. Private partnerships possibly are a
6 source but we need to really look to it. So we're
7 looking to political leadership to help us gain this
8 world class system that we have to get the ability to
9 look outside the box and see where we can get funding.

10 I am not saying that this is a criticism of
11 government. We are only asking for a really good
12 recognition of what is the present economic realities
13 facing government at both the state and federal levels
14 and what they can provide and what we need to go out and
15 figure out how we can get it. This is a real problem
16 that needs considerable attention in any mass transit
17 reform in Northeast Illinois to achieve the objective of
18 having a world class transit system. Thank you for the
19 opportunity to speak.

20 CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDER: We'll go to Executive Director
21 Ross and then we will have the task force ask questions
22 of all of our panelists.

23 MR. ROSS: Okay. Good afternoon. My name is T.J.
24 Ross. I'm the executive director of Pace. I've had the

1 privilege of having that job for the last 15 years and I
2 hope some more. The goal the governor set for you
3 members of the task force is a tough one and I want to
4 thank you all for taking it on. It's hard work and I
5 understand what hard work is. Prior to answering the
6 specific questions I want to give a quick background on
7 what Pace does.

8 Now, we operate fixed route services
9 throughout the six-county area of Northeastern Illinois
10 using a fleet of maybe 800 buses and ten garages we
11 operate out of. One of the garages is totally
12 privatized. We also serve in that area 5 million
13 people. That's more people than there are in
14 Connecticut and Rhode Island together. It's a service
15 area that's roughly a little bit smaller than the state
16 of Connecticut. So it's a large area. We have seen
17 ridership gain since 2009 when the recession just took
18 us into the dump but every year we've seen ridership
19 gains and August was our highest ridership in the
20 history of Pace for August. Kind of fun, huh?

21 Balanced budgets: Every year since 2009 -- I
22 often talk to people and remind them we didn't have to
23 increase fares. We didn't have to lay anybody off. We
24 just had to work a little bit harder and we made it

1 through to 2013. We look to have a balanced budget in
2 2014 as well and no fare increases are proposed.

3 We operate more than a bus. We do more than a
4 bus. We do Vanpool. We do Ride Sharing. We have
5 contracts with almost 90 different communities for
6 providing paratransit services and some fixed route
7 services. You may have seen the Niles free bus. You
8 may have seen the bus in Downers Grove. Schaumburg does
9 a lot of service. We now have a shuttle in Rosemont
10 that's going to the outlet malls there. We do
11 coordination of services as requested by the county.
12 Ride DuPage was a request from the county of DuPage.
13 They said this is what we want you to do. We want you
14 to coordinate a lot of the paratransit services and
15 Dial-A-Ride services. We did that in DuPage and other
16 counties say, hey, we want the same thing. So we've
17 gone out and done that. We have the Bus On Shoulder
18 which after 14 years I think Rick Bacigalupo, an
19 executive director of RTA, and I went up to Minneapolis.
20 We went up and saw that about 14 years ago. And with
21 Governor Quinn we got support to do Bus On Shoulder and
22 that is very successful for us. There's 400 percent
23 ridership increase on one route that had been out there
24 for that whole 15-year time period and 70 percent

1 increase on another one.

2 We continue to put in bus stop shelters in the
3 suburbs. We now have 1,200 bus stop shelters to keep
4 people out of the snow and the rain. We put in traffic
5 signal priority which is for buses allows the bus to
6 communicate with the traffic signal and say, hey, give
7 me a little more green or shorten up the red a little
8 bit so I can get back on schedule. And we've done that
9 on 159th Street, 147th Street, and Halstead. And RTA
10 and CTA have -- we're all getting together and trying to
11 move that regionally so that we can make our buses move
12 faster and that's the key -- faster, more reliable, and
13 safer.

14 We have Wi-Fi on 15 buses now. I am told it
15 works pretty well. There's some places that it kind of
16 cuts out, but it's there. And we are also going to be
17 having the regions first compressed natural gas buses.
18 That will lower our fuel costs. If we did our whole
19 fleet, we'd probably see a fuel cost reduction of maybe
20 \$10 million. We buy about 6 million gallons of fuel a
21 year and compressed natural gas is running easily a
22 dollar less than diesel. So we're working on that.
23 That you're going to see in the near future. The other
24 thing, of course, is this Venture program. I can't tell

1 you how excited I am about that. I've been working on
2 that my whole career. This is a great thing. We are
3 going to make history with this; and, trust me, you are
4 going to be very happy with a product that's going to
5 give to the region and it's going to give us the ability
6 to do more things than just run a bus.

7 Earlier this month I got an award, a strange
8 award. We are the largest small bus operator in the
9 nation. Local control said we don't want 40-foot buses.
10 We want 30-foot buses. So we went out and bought
11 30-foot buses for Elgin, Aurora, and Joliet. We did
12 what the local community asked us to do. And, by the
13 way, we've done this on 8 cents. Our share is basically
14 8 cents out of every transit dollar in the region. So
15 we've taken that 8 cents and we've done very well with
16 it and we think that you should be proud of what we've
17 done.

18 In 2007, the general assembly said, Pace, we
19 want you to run all of the ADA services in the region.
20 We want you to handle that for the region. We went
21 ahead and did that. The most vulnerable residents of
22 our region are using ADA services which are the curb to
23 curb service that we provide to people who cannot access
24 fixed route services. This mobility gives people the

1 ability to live their lives at home. It gives them the
2 ability to live their lives by going to school, by going
3 to work, and it has been successful, so successful that
4 our ridership has increased 50 percent since 2007 on
5 that service. And that creates some costs and we've
6 been working close with the RTA to fix that.

7 So we're looking to centralize call centers to
8 help reduce our costs and better group trips. We also
9 would really like to see a dedicated source of ADA
10 funding for capital. Right now almost all of the
11 service is provided by private providers and almost all
12 of the fleet -- We own about 400 paratransit vehicles in
13 the suburbs but probably 500 or 600 are owned by private
14 providers in the city and that doesn't come free and
15 that is a capital expense that we think could be paid
16 for more efficiently through public dollars and so does
17 the governor and the general assembly and they've given
18 us \$45 million of jump start funds to go out and buy ADA
19 vehicles and we will be starting to do that soon.

20 Now to some of your questions about the task
21 force about our current riders. We do customer service
22 indexes every couple three years. What are they telling
23 us? Overall 90 percent are satisfied. 89 percent are
24 likely or very likely to recommend Pace to others and

1 also 89 percent are likely or very likely to continue to
2 ride Pace. Knowing that it's rewarding, however, we
3 have to keep getting new riders. Our riders turn over
4 every five years. So we have to go out and impress
5 people, get them to trust us, and get them to use us as
6 a service. We are unique among the transit boards
7 because two-thirds of our riders have to use Pace. It's
8 either that or walk or maybe ride a bike, but they have
9 no access to automobiles or they can't drive an
10 automobile. So that is where we are unique. Without
11 Pace people just don't move in the suburbs.

12 Serving the overall regional economy is
13 interesting. We said it earlier. Two-thirds of the job
14 opportunities are in the suburbs. Yet our funding is
15 sitting at 8 percent of the region's funding. And
16 according to -- these are not my numbers. Brookings
17 Institute did a study on job access by transit in
18 Northeastern Illinois and what they are saying is that
19 12 percent of suburbanites have access to a job by
20 transit in less than a 90-minute trip. So what does
21 that mean? 88 percent of the jobs are accessible and
22 it's going to take you more than 90 minutes to get to
23 that job if you live in the suburbs. That is just a
24 very tough situation. Less than 3 percent of trips in

1 the suburbs to employers are done by transit.

2 We are seeing communities in the suburbs that
3 are still suffering from the economic decline. If
4 you've seen the number on poverty in the suburbs the
5 number of people living in the suburbs on the low income
6 levels has doubled in the last ten years. It's now well
7 over 700,000 people -- doubled. And that is hitting the
8 local communities hard. People need access to jobs and
9 public transit can provide that.

10 Are we operating efficiently? I'm not going
11 to answer that question. The auditor general's report,
12 2007, read it. They independently looked at Pace and
13 said that out of 29 categories Pace was as good or
14 better -- 24 out of 29 categories we were as good or
15 better than our peers. And they did that independently
16 in 2007. The numbers are very similar now. We haven't
17 changed that significantly. What are the most important
18 criteria for evaluating Pace's performance? It's
19 customer satisfaction. Does that passenger trust that
20 operator to get them where they need to go? Is there a
21 basic trust there? That's the whole thing when you get
22 on that bus is do you trust that operator to get you
23 where you need to go safely and speedily.

24 So what defines a world class transit system?

1 In my viewpoint, it's having the ability to maintain
2 that trust with the customer and with the bus operator
3 that we're going to get them where they need to be
4 safely.

5 And the biggest issue -- And you've heard it
6 time and time again that the biggest issue is capital
7 funding. We need \$1.8 billion over the next ten years
8 to just keep a state of good repair. Right now it looks
9 like we have about \$500 million identified. That's
10 going to be very tough to figure out how do you deal
11 with a shortfall of \$1.3 billion. Let's make no mistake
12 about it. If you're going to improve public transit
13 services in the suburbs so people have economic
14 opportunity, people have opportunity to get to jobs and
15 can do it safely, it's going to take new money and it's
16 going to take investment in the area and it's going to
17 take the ability to tell someone that they can get where
18 they need to go to maintain their life from any vantage
19 point in the region.

20 So, in closing, I'm happy to be here. It's
21 been a long afternoon already. You're going to hear a
22 lot of facts and figures, the good, the bad, the ugly
23 about transit; but the question we, of course, ask you
24 is where do we go from here, what decisions are you

1 going to make, what recommendations, how is what we are
2 going to decide going to effect the people who are
3 riding our transit systems; and I can tell you from the
4 Pace viewpoint Pace is not the reason or the problem why
5 we're here today. We are not the problem. We are part
6 of the solution though and that's because we firmly
7 believe that a strong community depends on a very strong
8 Pace.

9 CHAIRMAN RANNEY: Well, we thank you all for
10 preparing the testimony and for addressing the questions
11 that we've asked. We're going to ask now for members of
12 our task force to ask questions on the things you've
13 said and the questions that we have. I hope that
14 Patrick Fitzgerald before we open it will address the
15 issue of the responses to the inquiry of the detailed
16 formulas. With respect to generating information I'll
17 leave it to you, Patrick, but we want to make absolutely
18 sure that we've done everything to gather all the
19 information together for the inquiries; and, with that,
20 I'll hand it over to you, Patrick.

21 MR. FITZGERALD: Thank you, George. And first I
22 want to thank each of you and your staff because we sent
23 a request out for a lot of information last week before
24 this meeting so that we could use it to educate

1 ourselves and we needed to see each of your agencies
2 submit a lot of information and I found that very, very
3 helpful and I want to thank you all for that. I guess
4 there's a couple of questions that struck me from speed
5 reading several of the materials that came in. One of
6 them came in as I was going out the door. It struck
7 me -- one issue that sort of concerns me is patronage
8 and patronage hiring and I recognize that the issue of
9 ethics is important but it's not going to solve all the
10 other issues. There are budgetary issues. There are
11 governmental issues. There are capital investment
12 issues but I do think it's important for the taxpayers
13 to feel comfortable about how their dollars are going to
14 be used, particularly tax dollars. And what struck me
15 is I believe each of the agencies agree that effectively
16 you cannot hire based upon political affiliations. I think
17 looking at the materials it struck me that the training
18 materials that I could see there were lots of materials
19 for people who were being trained as employees that they
20 shouldn't engage in gender discrimination, they
21 shouldn't discriminate based upon on sexual orientation
22 or natural origin. There's a lot in there that it makes
23 clear people should not discriminate based upon
24 disabilities and you anticipate a lot of training on

1 anti-nepotism but from what I saw so far in most of the
2 materials from each of the four institutions there
3 wasn't a lot of training on whether or not people could
4 be hired based upon political affiliation and so I have
a
5 concern and a question about that and I don't want to
6 point to any one particular board but when you look at
7 the training materials, they seem to flag everything but
8 hiring based upon political affiliations. And one of
the
9 things that we need to do to make sure that the law is
10 complied with is make sure people understand what the
11 law is because no one wants to be punished for breaking
12 a rule they don't understand.

13 The second part of that is when I saw
14 certifications in place, but a lot of certifications I
15 don't believe that people certify that hires are not
16 made based on the basis of political affiliation and I know
17 that that happens in the city pursuant to the Shakman
18 decree and I know the city would like to avoid a new
19 Shakman decree at some point but that's very important
20 and I just don't know what effort there is made to
21 ensure that hiring won't be based upon that. So I just
22 look to each of you for a comment on whether or not you
23 think that's a fair reading of that based on the

24 materials that I've seen that there's a lot of training

1 on ethics and not having people campaign in the
2 workplace but there doesn't seem to be much emphasis on
3 removing politics from hiring. I don't know which one
4 of you want to go first.

5 MR. COSTELLO: Thank you, Mr. Fitzgerald, and I
6 appreciate with your background the view that we could
7 do a better job to beef up the training and materials
8 that we give to people who are involved in the hiring
9 decision as well as evidencing their knowledge of that
10 requirement. We do believe that our entire staff
11 understand that the hires are to be made on the merits
12 of the particular job but we'll certainly acknowledge
13 your expertise in this area and look to beef up that
14 area in our agency.

15 MR. FITZGERALD: And I guess one question also is
16 whether there should be a firewall between elected
17 officials concerning hiring decisions, and people could
18 argue whether there should or there shouldn't be and
19 whether there's a record kept so that if someone calls
20 up any of the folks working for Pace or RTA or Metra or
21 CTA and says we'd like this person to be hired, what
22 happens? Is there a record kept of that? Does someone
23 report that to the ethics office or is there someone
24 looking out for that?

1 MR. COSTELLO: As we said in our response that in
2 any inquiry we refer whoever is making that call to the
3 fact that any applicant must apply through our website
4 and go through the normal process through human
5 resources and so on and we keep no record of those calls
6 because they are referred to our normal process and
7 therefore make sure that we are hiring on the
8 appropriate merits.

9 MR. FITZGERALD: Would anyone else like to respond
10 to that question?

11 MR. CLAYPOOL: I would say, Mr. Fitzgerald, that I
12 think your point is well taken about the training. I
13 don't actually know what the training materials say, but
14 based on your description I wouldn't be surprised if
15 they don't have reference to political hiring but that's
16 an improvement we could easily make. The materials we
17 submitted to you were clearly governed by The
18 Metropolitan Transit Act which describes political
19 considerations in hiring and we've structured our
20 process in such a way as to include that but the actual
21 materials down to the lowest detail in terms of training
22 our employees and things like that I'm certain that's an
23 improvement that can be made.

24 MR. ORSENO: I'd also like to echo that. One of

1 the things we have implemented is for our new board
2 members. We have training instead of coming in and
3 talking just about the operation, we talk more in depth
4 on the ethics and procurement and things and kind of
5 steer people in the direction of what is acceptable and
6 what's not acceptable. Your point is well taken about
7 the training as far as our hiring managers and different
8 things like that and people they may be approached we
9 probably do need to look at that and do a little bit
10 better effort on making sure our current employees are
11 properly trained on that. I don't believe we have that
12 much of a problem but I'll tell you definitely anything
13 we can do to make it better we definitely will do that.

14 (WHEREUPON, proceedings were had
15 that were inaudible.)

16 CHAIRMAN RANNEY: I think we're going to turn now
17 to public comment.

18 CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDER: Thank you for answering our
19 questions and providing the information we asked about
20 and what we'd like to do is right now we've got two
21 people that are requesting to provide public comment at
22 tonight's hearing and so what I'd like to do is call you
23 up and have you go ahead and make your public comment.
24 The first person I would like to call up is Mr. Dave

1 Campbell. He is on his way down.

2 MR. CAMPBELL: Good afternoon. Thank you for the
3 opportunity to speak with you. My name is Dave Campbell
4 and there are a couple of boards that I serve on such as
5 I serve on the DuPage County Citizen Advisor Board For
6 Metra and The DuPage County Residents For Persons With
7 Disabilities Working For Greater Independence. The crux
8 of my comment is how you look at making this world class
9 transit system. One of the areas that I feel could
10 still use some enhancement in the southern suburbs and I
11 think this particularly applies to DuPage County. It's
12 pretty easy to get east and west with the Metra lines
13 but if you want to go north and south there's not a
14 whole lot except at a little higher cost. It would be
15 really nice to have much more service to get to major
16 job centers in the suburbs as you talked about earlier.
17 I reference The DuPage Area Transit Plan and I encourage
18 you as part of your work to pull out that document and
19 see what's implemented in that plan and also to see what
20 other things can be done and need to be done. In that
21 order I think we need to look at ways
22 to -- I know we talked about looking at ways to get more
23 service out to disabled people that need to get to jobs.
24 The disabled community or the hearing impaired community

1 I should say 70 percent of the people are unemployed. A
2 big reason for that is lack of access to get to where
3 job opportunities are and I think there needs to be a
4 focus on that and that needs to be improved. Thank you
5 for your time. I appreciate the opportunity.

6 CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDER: Thank you, Mr. Campbell.
7 Those are very good comments and we'll take those under
8 advisement. I would like to call up Tanya Corey who
9 also has submitted a card to provide public comment.

10 MS. COREY: Good afternoon. Thank you for the
11 opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Tanya
12 Corey and I am here representing the nearly 1 billion
13 residents and taxpayers of DuPage County. While I
14 represent District 5 I am a member of The DuPage County
15 Board. I am also the chairwoman of a committee recently
16 formed by Chairman Dan Cronin. This mass transit
17 committee is focused on the governments of the service
18 boards as well as fair and equitable funding for our
19 region.

20 I'd like to thank all of the representatives
21 of the task force for the work you are doing to study
22 regional transportation and the services being provided
23 throughout the six county area. The work you are doing
24 here will help all of us move forward following the

1 crisis at Metra as well as to create a roadmap of
2 accountability for all the service boards and the
3 Regional Transportation Authority. As a liaison to our
4 DuPage representatives at RTA, Metra, and Pace, I will
5 lead important discussions at the subcommittee levels
6 and I will keep the full board apprised of all of the
7 proposals and actions of your task force as well as
8 other entities proposing consolidation.

9 The two busiest stations are in my district.
10 We all know that Metra fares are based on distance. So,
11 obviously, my constituents are looking to me to ensure
12 that their dollars are being used in the most
13 resourceful way. DuPage County would like to be on the
14 record today and every day in stating that good
15 government of the service boards and fair and equitable
16 funding is our number one priority. We will be
17 monitoring your efforts and proposals as well as those
18 of the other governmental and planning entities. Thank
19 you.

20 CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDER: Thank you very much. We look
21 forward to staying in touch and contact with you.

22 MS. COREY: Yes. Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDER: With that I would like to
24 point out to all the people that are remaining here

1 tonight that all of the information we have gotten from
2 the service boards and the RTA as it relates to their
3 testimony tonight we are going to be uploading that to
4 the website. Again, be sure to stop and pick up the
5 information on the website if you don't have that. So
6 that information will be available and open to the
7 public.

8 Also, I want to make sure that I thank the
9 hearty members of this task force for their time. I
10 know we've asked for a lot of time over the last three
11 weeks and that is going to continue unfortunately for
12 you over the next few months. We have a very tight
13 timeline but I think everybody here is really dedicated
14 to making a difference in transit in Illinois. So I
15 want to thank you all very much on behalf of the
16 governor for your dedication and your work of this task
17 force. And with that I would propose the adjournment of
18 this hearing tonight unless anyone has an objection to
19 that. Hearing no objection, we're adjourned.

20 (Which were all the proceedings had
21 at the hearing of the above-entitled
22 cause, this date.)

23
24

1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)

2) SS.

3 COUNTY OF COOK)

4

5 Angela C. Trayes, being first duly sworn, on
6 oath says that she is a Registered Professional Reporter
7 and Certified Shorthand Reporter doing business in the
8 City of Chicago, County of Cook and the State of
9 Illinois;

10 That she reported in shorthand the proceedings
11 had at the foregoing Northeastern Illinois Public
12 Transit Task Force Public Hearing;

13 And that the foregoing is a true and correct
14 transcript of her shorthand notes so taken as aforesaid
15 and contains all the proceedings audibly heard had at
16 the said Northeastern Illinois Public Transit Task Force
17 Public Hearing.

18

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ANGELA C. TRAYES, CSR, RPR

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