



Next Move Illinois

2026 Public Transportation Plan



Fall Planning Conference

September 2, 2026



Next Move Illinois Strategic Vision



Public transportation is vital in Illinois, connecting people to meaningful destinations, reducing congestion and air pollution, and shaping economically vibrant communities.

Led by the Transit division, IDOT supports local providers in moving people efficiently and safely throughout Illinois with a reliable and affordable public transportation network.

Next Move Illinois Goals



Stewardship

- Foster relationships and provide resources that enable local providers to maintain and grow public transit service across the state.

Resiliency

- Identify, explore, and adopt innovative policies and practices to future-proof public transit infrastructure and operations in Illinois.

Integration

- Collaborate with local providers and government agencies to advance a unified, seamless, and efficient statewide network of public transit.

Accountability

- Center the experiences of Illinois transit riders in decision-making and communicate decisions transparently.

What will NMI accomplish in IL's transportation landscape?

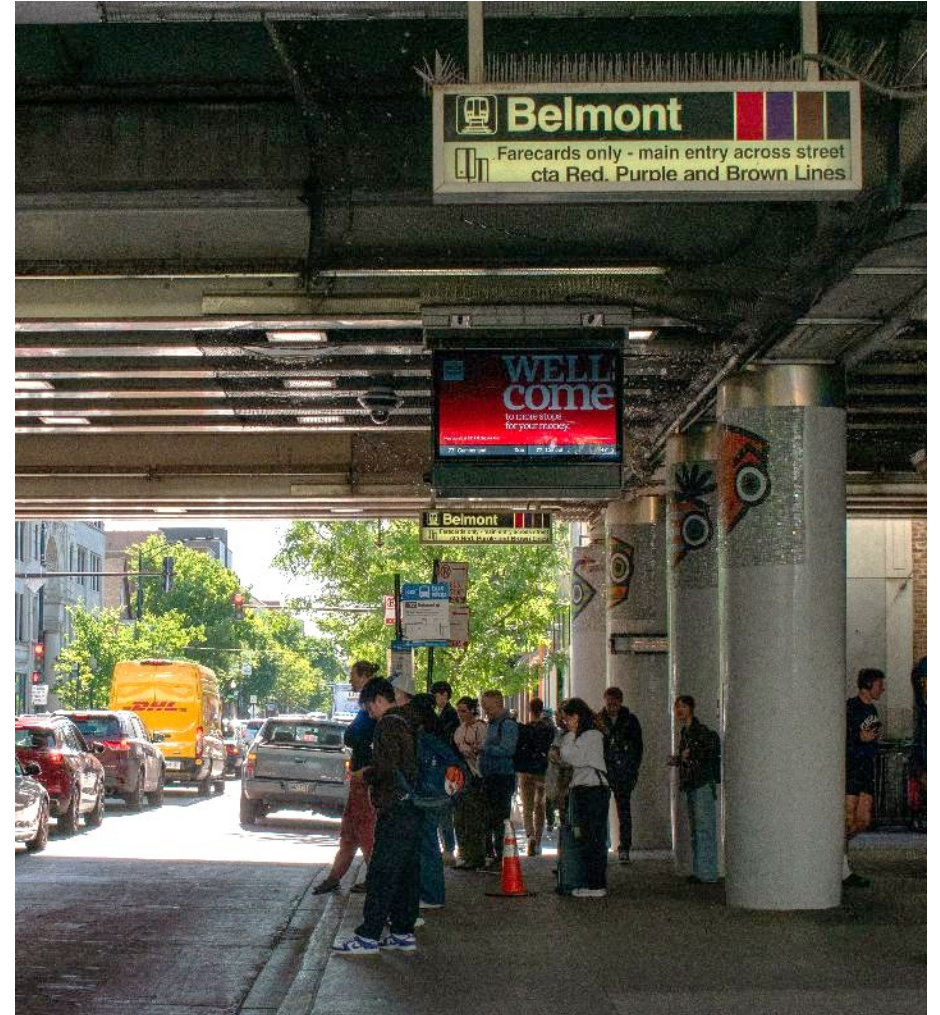
Next Move Illinois...

- **Elevates public transportation** within the context of IDOT's multimodal efforts
- Closes gaps that IDOT faces in **enabling providers to operate** the best possible service
- **Maximizes the return** on IDOT's public transportation **investments**
- Is a vehicle to **implement the big ideas** from NITA, BRC, and other big changes to public transportation in the coming years



Engagement: What We Heard from Providers

- Prefer reliable, dedicated funds over large but uncertain discretionary funds
 - More useful for planning and service/project provision
- Cross-jurisdictional trips are very resource-intensive
- Desire more interaction with each other and with IDOT to learn best practices and exchange ideas/issues
 - OIPI staff are very helpful but facetime can be hard to come by
 - Procurement is a big challenge; providers need more procurement guidance
- Driver retention is a big challenge
 - Rising wages, benefits, competition from private employers



Engagement: What We Heard from Riders

- Service quality is riders' top priority
 - Locations served, speed, frequency, hours of service
 - Other concerns like technology are secondary
- Many people do not know how much public transportation is available
 - Marketing transit to riders and non-riders
 - People are not aware of IDOT's role in supporting public transportation
- Riders want safer walking conditions to and from transit stops
- Only a small share of IL residents can use public transportation for all their travel needs





Recommendations

Next Move Illinois Recommendations

The recommendations are organized into three pillars:

Service

- Improve planning and operations via trainings, best practices, and standards

Capital & Technology

- Ease procurement and deployment processes

IDOT Organization

- Align IDOT's internal resources and processes with public transportation goals

Next Move Illinois Recommendations

Within each pillar, the recommendations are organized into three levels:



Service Strategies



A.1. Improve service coordination to enhance system efficiency



A.2. Increase access to public transportation



A.3. Establish performance standards

A.4. Increase training and knowledge sharing internally within OIPI and among public transportation partners



A.5. Advise on best practices for public transportation service operations

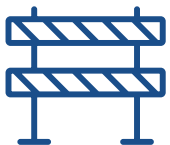
A.6. Foster collaboration among state departments, local and regional governments including MPOs, and providers



A.7. Expand and fund regional intercity services

A.8. Support public transportation providers to achieve data and information standards

Capital & Technology Strategies



B.1. Provide project procurement guidance to grantees

B.2. Encourage information exchange among public transportation providers to facilitate joint procurements

B.3. Develop shared resources that support implementation of capital projects

B.4. Reduce barriers to procurements for public transportation providers

B.5. Improve IDOT's capacity to conduct public transportation procurements

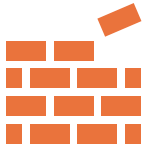
B.6. Increase IDOT staff's expertise on public transportation technology

B.7. Develop technology standards that encourage providers to modernize their systems

B.8. Develop a technology pilot program managed by IDOT staff

B.9. Leverage IDOT expertise and resources outside of Transit to support capital project delivery

IDOT Organization Strategies



C.1. Incorporate Blue Ribbon Commission recommendations for public transportation

C.2. Enhance multimodal transportation through funding strategies

C.3. Remove barriers for implementing public transportation-friendly infrastructure

C.4. Prioritize public transportation-supportive legislative updates

C.5. Invest in the professional growth and skill development of IDOT Transit staff

C.6. Strengthen communication between IDOT Central Office and IDOT District offices

C.7. Improve capacity and ensure adequate resources to effectively administer IDOT's public transportation programs

C.8. Establish internal knowledge-sharing resources

C.9. Clarify team roles and responsibilities to better support statewide public transportation coordination goals

C.10. Leverage more cooperative partnerships with external organizations



***Next Move Illinois* in Action: Scenarios**

Improving Service Coordination in Action



Connecting People to a City Hospital

Residents of a rural area frequently request rides to a nearby hospital in a different service area for routine medical services.

The rural transit operator completes most of the rides, but they are time-consuming and take a vehicle out of service for a long time. Sometimes, it has to deny rides due to capacity limitations.

Service Coordination

Next Move Illinois Recommendation:

Improve service coordination to enhance system efficiency

(Services Pillar - Strategy A.1)

Potential IDOT Action: Help to identify systems with capacity and broker coordination between systems to support cross-boundary travel needs

Potential Transit Provider Action: Work with neighboring transit providers to develop shared policies and service plans to address cross-boundary travel



Improving Service Coordination in Action



Transit Provider Benefit: A coordinated transfer point within the transit network and a revenue sharing agreement allow both rural and urban systems to maximize their services and reduce ride denials.

Rider Benefit: Rides will become more reliable, since each request will be less difficult for systems to provide. Rural residents can get to their regular medical appointments with less stress and uncertainty.

Improving Transit Service Information Shared in Action



Helping New Riders Learn about Services

Dave has just arrived in a new town for college. He does not have a car but would like to travel to an off-campus job.

He knows that there are buses he can take, but he struggles to find clear information about where and how often they run, even after checking the small urban provider's website.

Transit Service Information

***Next Move Illinois* Recommendation:**

Support public transportation providers to achieve data and information standards

(Services Pillar - Strategy A.8)

Potential IDOT Action: Create and encourage standards for how public transportation service is presented on websites, print schedules, and other public-facing materials

Potential Transit Provider Action: Update materials that are shared with existing riders and potential customers, according to standards



Improving Transit Service Information in Action



Transit Provider Benefit: Providers across the state earn new riders (like Dave) who become aware of how they can take transit for daily needs.

Rider Benefit: In a scenario where information is standardized, Dave can find the schedule and route information more easily and can use his knowledge to take transit wherever he goes.

Improving Transit-Friendly Infrastructure in Action



Implementing Transit Infrastructure on IDOT Roads

An urban transit provider has capital funds and a mandate to improve bus speeds and reliability on a popular route. One solution is to build bus bulbs at stops along an IDOT road, which will speed up travel speeds on that segment of the route.

There is no guidance in IDOT design manuals for bus bulbs, so the transit provider would need to apply for a design exception to get IDOT approval for the bulbs. Because the exception process is time-intensive, the transit provider opts not to build the bulbs.

Transit-Friendly Infrastructure

Next Move Illinois Recommendation:

Remove barriers for implementing public transportation-friendly infrastructure. (*IDOT Organization Pillar Strategy C.3*)

Potential IDOT Action: Develop toolkit of transit-specific infrastructure for incorporation in the BDE

Potential Transit Provider Benefit: Infrastructure that improves transit operations, like bus bulbs or queue jumps, will be more easily implemented on IDOT roads



Improving Transit-Friendly Infrastructure in Action



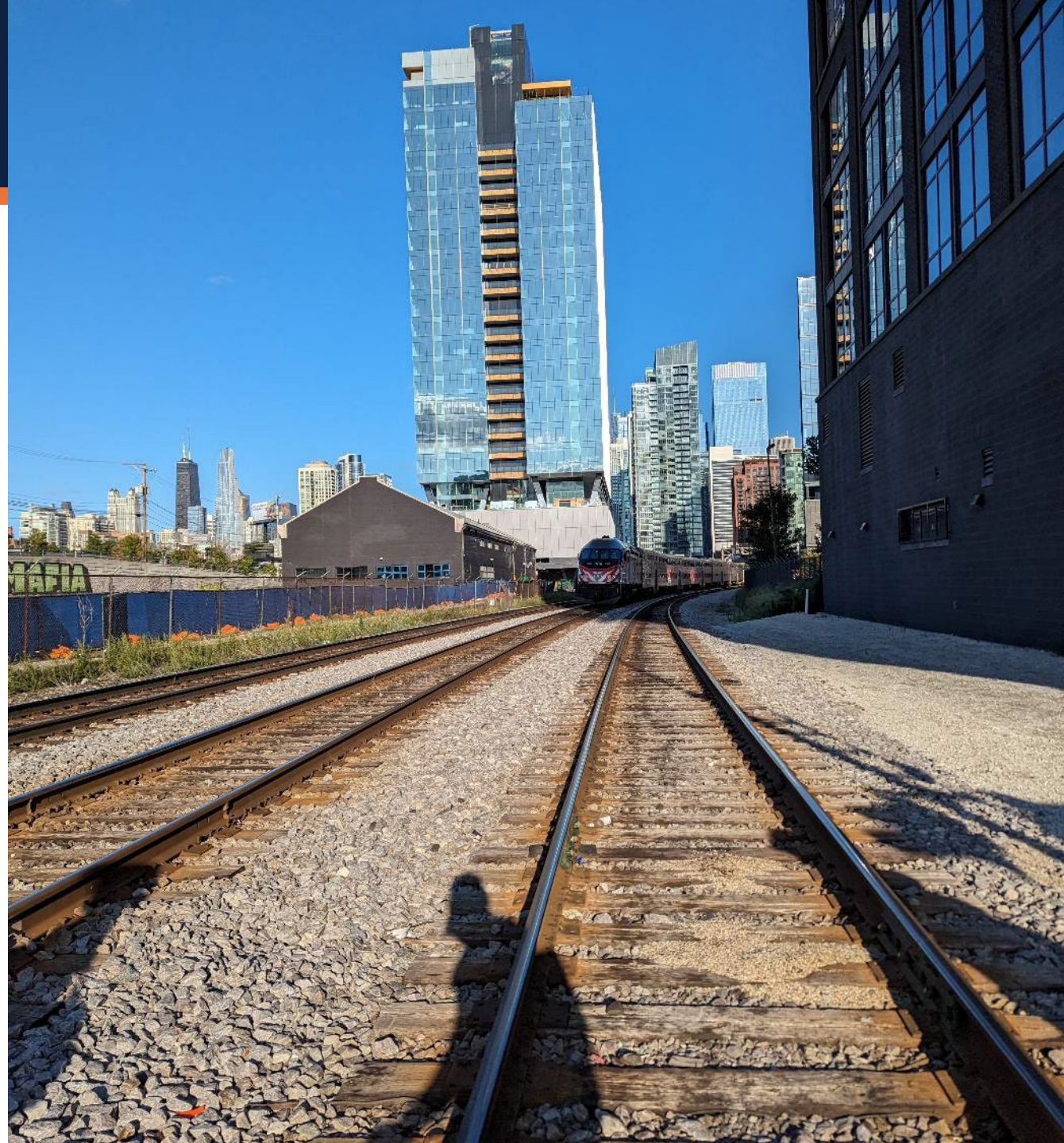
Transit provider benefit: With transit-friendly infrastructure incorporated into the BDE manual, the transit provider does not need an exception for its bus bulbs design.

Design and implementation progress more quickly, saving the provider project costs and operating costs once the bulbs are built.

Rider benefit: Bus riders enjoy a comfortable waiting environment, easy boarding and deboarding, and faster/more reliable trips.

Next Steps for IDOT

- Internal KPIs for plan monitoring
- Performance measures and other standards for providers
- Improve communication channels across IDOT divisions and departments
- Internal training, skills bank, SOPs
- Stand up training, information repository, and other resources for providers
- Separately but complementary:
 - NITA Committees
 - BRC implementation





Thank You!

Contact info:

Shoun Reese
Deputy Director, Transit
Shoun.Reese@Illinois.gov

Matt Orenchuk
Consultant Project Manager
matthew.orenychuk@tylin.com