



A Plan for Equitable and Efficient Transit

Equitable, efficient, safer and robust transit is essential to our quality of life. Transit connects people to schools, local businesses and jobs, and it connects communities. And transit is essential to Chicago's growth, attracting people and businesses to Chicago and promoting economic development. I am committed to growing Chicago's transit system and making it more equitable, efficient, safer and robust. Working together, we will do this by:

1. Designing safe streets and incentivizing pedestrians and bicyclists
2. Instituting fair traffic enforcement
3. Improving and growing Chicago's bus system
4. Expanding bus rapid transit
5. Electrifying our bus fleet
6. Encouraging equitable transit oriented development
7. Leveling the playing field between taxi and ride-hailing services

1. Increase Safety and Incentives for Pedestrians and Bicyclists

Increasing the safety of the most vulnerable street users — pedestrians and bicyclists — is critical. Forty-six pedestrians were killed in traffic crashes in Chicago in 2017, up from 44 in 2016. Six bicyclists were killed in 2017, the same number as in 2016.¹ Unfortunately, 2018 was on track to be another deadly year for both pedestrians and cyclists. Through October 2018, 37 pedestrians and 5 cyclists were killed.² Although pedestrian and cyclist fatalities occur throughout the city, they are concentrated on the west and south sides. These trends are especially tragic considering that traffic fatalities are preventable with the right mix of street design and policy choices. Chicago's Vision Zero has the ambitious goal to eliminate death and serious injuries resulting from traffic crashes, but clearly more must be done to make this goal a reality.³

My administration will renew the city's commitment to reduce the number of traffic crash fatalities to zero. The city's approach to achieving Vision Zero must be holistic and creative. In addition to pushing for smart street designs that prioritize safety, my strategy includes incentivizing more people to walk or bike and instituting fair traffic enforcement measures that focus on improving safety and compliance — not filling the city's budget holes.

A. Design safe streets

Each street in the city of Chicago should be designed to stress the safety of all users. The city completed over 90 pedestrian infrastructure improvement projects, which included bump-outs, high-visibility crosswalks, refuge islands, and speed feedback signs in 2017. In addition, the city created 16 miles of new bike lanes that year.⁴ These infrastructure projects are vital to creating safer streets. However, progress in Chicago has been slow compared to that in other cities. For example, Cleveland installed 53 bump-outs, 60 enhanced crosswalks, and built over 14 miles of new bike lanes in 2016. Milwaukee, another city much smaller than Chicago, installed 15 miles of new bike lanes in 2016.⁵ My administration will redouble Chicago's efforts to build safe streets.

In order to accomplish these goals, my administration will reallocate \$20 million from existing Chicago Department of Transportation funding to establish a new annual budget line item dedicated to building safe streets. In addition, under my leadership the Department of Water Management and CDOT will coordinate their strategies to identify opportunities to link the city's massive water main replacement program with Chicago's efforts to construct more bike lanes and pedestrian infrastructure improvement projects.

B. Incentivize Cyclists and Pedestrians

Research strongly suggests that pedestrians and cyclists experience safety in numbers.⁶ Although it might sound counterintuitive, the more cyclists and pedestrians there are, the fewer accidents that occur. Smarter street design will help encourage people to bike and

walk. However, I will take additional steps to further incentivize pedestrians and cyclists. For example, working with city council, my administration will draft a Chicago Commute Trip Reduction Ordinance to reward workers who bike or walk to work. This ordinance will call on large businesses to create employee transportation plans that encourage employees to walk, bike, carpool, and/or take public transportation to and from work.⁷ Through tax and regulatory incentives, we will encourage employers to reward employees who do not drive to work.

In addition, my administration will work with regional partners to develop bike and pedestrian paths that connect downtown Chicago to the suburbs, paying particular attention on identifying opportunities to increase connectivity on the west and south sides. One potential route abuts the Rock Island Metra line from downtown to the Southwest suburbs. Other opportunities exist along both the north and south branches of the Chicago River.

2. Institute Fair Traffic Enforcement

Traffic enforcement is another important component of increasing safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Traffic enforcement, which includes red light and speed cameras, is also highly controversial. I pledge that fairness and safety will guide my administration's traffic enforcement strategies. For starters, my goal is to increase compliance — not revenue. Most researchers agree that red light and speed cameras increase road safety in Chicago⁸ and elsewhere.⁹ I will convene a technical panel of independent traffic and legal experts to evaluate how Chicago should improve its network of red light and speed cameras. The panel's findings will be public, and my administration will work in good faith to implement the panel's recommendations.

It is unacceptable that our current ticketing system is having such a devastating impact on low-income people and people of color. As part of my administration's efforts to transform the city's ticketing practices, I will order an audit into potential bias in ticketing and instruct the Chicago Police Department to focus its traffic enforcement efforts on matters directly related to public safety. When tickets are issued for compliance issues, such as broken tail lights or city stickers, I believe that people should have the opportunity to correct the issue instead of being fined. My administration will partner with allies in city hall to reform the necessary city ordinances to provide people an opportunity to comply with the law prior to being fined.

Additionally, right now people who owe money to the city are not allowed to work for the city or as taxi or ride-hail drivers. I would end this policy for people whose outstanding payments are below a certain threshold, and would seek to stop the suspension of drivers' licenses for non-moving violations.

3. Improve and Grow Bus Service Throughout Chicago

Buses are central to Chicago's transit network, accounting for 52% of transit rides in 2017.¹⁰ Many people rely on buses to commute to work or school, even in the age of Lyft and Uber. I want Chicago to have a world-class bus system. Faster, more convenient transportation options that connect people with employment and educational opportunities will help spur economic development beyond Chicago's downtown core.

It is this simple. Most people will seek out other transportation options if bus service is inconvenient. Expanded bus service encourages more people to take the bus,¹¹ and expanded service is part of the solution to stemming the decline in bus ridership.¹² In Chicago, bus ridership has been on the decline overall, but not on lines that run at higher frequency and speed such as the Western Express (3.1% increase in 2017) or the Ashland Express (1% increase in 2017).¹³

Reliable 24-hour transit service is a key component of connecting people with job opportunities. Recent research found that many of the region's manufacturing jobs are located in areas that lack transit options,¹⁴ and correcting this issue requires a regional approach. As part of my transportation strategy, the CTA will work with regional partners to expand the bus network to ensure that people on all sides of the city can get to where they need and want to go.

My ultimate goal is to create a transit system where every Chicagoan lives within a 15 minute walk of reliable 24-hour transit service. To initiate this goal, I will work with CTA to re-evaluate existing lines to identify potential for instituting express service along additional corridors.

4. Expand Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Network Beyond the Loop

Chicago has a nascent BRT system, with the opening of the Loop Link and stalled plans to build a line on Ashland. However, the city has not implemented all elements of a fully functional BRT system, which would include prepaid boarding. Lax traffic enforcement of the line's dedicated bus lanes has further limited the Loop Link's success.¹⁵ More importantly, residents' feedback has not been adequately incorporated into the city's plans to expand BRT beyond downtown.

My long-term vision for Chicago includes a network of BRT lines to enable people to travel quickly from one side of the city to the other without having to transfer through the Loop. By decreasing travel times, BRT lines make taking the bus more attractive. Moreover, research demonstrates that BRT lines contribute to greater economic development and quality of life.¹⁶ BRTs are also cost-effective relative to other modes of public transportation — according to the Metropolitan Planning Council, BRT lines cost \$13.32 million/mile compared to \$35 million/mile for light rail and \$96.25 million for heavy rail.¹⁷

As a first step, I will work to improve existing BRT lines. This will involve closely evaluating the CTA's efforts to pilot prepaid boarding.¹⁸ I will encourage the CTA to explore new technologies that would allow for boarding at both the front and back of the bus as an alternative to prepaid boarding. I will also instruct the city's parking enforcement officers to prioritize enforcement in dedicated bus lanes. In addition, my administration will work with state legislators to permit fair camera enforcement of bus lanes.

I want to work closely with residents to build a high-functioning BRT system that serves commuters on all sides of the city. My administration will lead by effectively communicating with the public. This includes communicating both the costs and benefits of BRT, listening to community members, and actively addressing concerns. For example, the Ashland BRT line faced community resistance in part because plans called for eliminating left turn lanes.¹⁹ However, given Ashland's width, it is possible to develop a fully functional BRT line that allows

for left turn lanes.²⁰ My administration will renew efforts to transform the Ashland line into a well-functioning BRT line with community support.

I believe one of the reasons that some Chicagoans are dubious about the benefits of BRT, and about the benefits of dedicated bus lanes specifically, grows out of a lack of familiarity. It is not an overstatement to say that few Chicagoans have had the opportunity to see a dedicated bus lane. At the end of 2017, Chicago had only 4.1 miles of dedicated bus lanes, compared to 82.8 in New York City, 35.4 in Los Angeles, and 34.8 in Seattle.²¹ These other cities have used dedicated bus lanes to increase bus speed reliability cost-effectively and with little disruption to car traffic.

As my administration works to construct full BRT lines, which include prepaid boarding and raised platforms in addition to dedicated bus lanes, we will also identify routes where a dedicated bus lane would be sufficient to substantially improve service. My goal is to create 50 miles of dedicated bus lanes. The city recently announced plans to install bus lanes along the #66 Chicago route.²² My administration will continue this work while I work with stakeholders to identify additional bus routes where improvements are needed most. Potential routes include the #4 Cottage Grove, #53 Pulaski, #8 Halsted, and others that the Active Transportation Alliance highlighted in a recent report that identified locations where bus lanes and faster boarding could improve service.²³

5. Electrify the Bus Fleet

Growing the city's electric bus fleet is vital for improving the city's air quality and for reducing our reliance on fossil fuels — one electric bus is equivalent to taking 23 cars off the streets each year.²⁴ Unfortunately, the CTA's total fleet of 1,864 buses is 86% diesel, and the agency has only 2 electric buses and a contract to purchase only 20 more in the coming years.²⁵ Chicago can, and must, do better.

A new electric bus costs roughly \$800,000,²⁶ compared to \$489,000 for a diesel bus.²⁷ Although the upfront costs of electric buses are higher than traditional diesel buses, each of CTA's existing electric buses has saved the agency \$54,000 annually in fuel and maintenance costs.²⁸ This represents a savings of \$648,000 per electric bus over its 12-year lifespan, which more than compensates for the higher purchase price. In fact, converting just half of the bus fleet from diesel to electric would save the city \$314,084,000 over a new electric fleet's 12-year lifespan.

Los Angeles is transitioning to an emission-free bus fleet by 2030.²⁹ New York City wants to have an electric-only bus fleet by 2040.³⁰ Believing that Chicago is second to none, my administration will demonstrate my commitment to both public transit and the environment by developing a strategy for transitioning Chicago's bus fleet to electric-only by 2030 or earlier.

6. Encourage Equitable Transit-Oriented Development

Over the last several years, Chicago has witnessed a boom in transit-oriented development, which is an important component to creating communities accessible to the employment, educational, and entertainment opportunities on offer throughout the city. However, these developments, which are concentrated mostly on the North Side, have raised concerns about gentrification and displacement.³¹

I envision a city where Chicagoans of all income levels can enjoy the benefits of living in walkable communities close to transit hubs that connect them to jobs and other opportunities. My administration will work with city council to increase the number of required affordable units in transit-oriented developments from the current 10% to 15%. My administration will also explore expanding the Chicago Community Land Trust's (CCLT) ability to acquire land near transit centers and preserve affordability in perpetuity.

I will support efforts to spur equitable transit-oriented development on the west and south sides.³² Under my administration, the Department of Planning and Development will convene community stakeholders, developers, and third-party agencies such as the Illinois Housing Development Authority and the Chicago Housing Authority to identify and implement strategies for building equitable transit-oriented developments in underserved Chicago neighborhoods.

7. Level the Playing Field Between Taxi and Ride-Hail Drivers and Decrease Congestion by Restructuring Ride-hail Fees

Although taxis and ride-hail companies like Uber and Lyft provide the same service, the two are treated very differently under current city ordinances. Ride-hail companies pay the city \$10,000 annually for an unlimited number of drivers while taxi drivers pay individual annual fees to the city as well as medallion license renewal fees every two years. On top of this, many cab drivers spent well over \$100,000 on a taxi medallion as a path to the middle class only to see the value of their medallions decimated by the introduction of ride-hailing services. The city should not stifle new technologies, but it does have a responsibility to ensure a level playing field. Accomplishing this will involve bringing licensing fees for taxis and rideshare vehicles into alignment and instituting identical background check requirements for taxi and ride-hail drivers.

The number of ride-hail vehicles on the streets of Chicago quadrupled between 2015 and 2017.³³ In addition to impacting the taxi industry, ride-hailing has increased traffic in the city. In fact, research is clear that ride-hail services contribute to traffic congestion.³⁴ Traffic congestion, in turn, lengthens overall commute times and, more importantly, worsens pollution and public health,³⁵ and places wear and tear on our infrastructure.

My administration will encourage innovation and explore strategies to help ride-hail services better complement public transportation. Specifically, I will update the city's ride-hail fee structure to strengthen public transportation options. My administration will help write and introduce an ordinance to increase fees for ride-hail trips that begin in the Loop. Revenue will be used exclusively for the construction of dedicated bus lanes and the expansion of 24-hour bus and "L" service.

To further decrease congestion, my administration will work with city council to implement a fee that applies to ride-hail vehicles that operate within the city but are registered at addresses outside of Chicago. Revenue from this new fee will be used exclusively for the construction of dedicated bus lanes.

A final note: I hope that this initial plan to improve transit can be an important part of moving our city in the right direction. I also hope it can spark an ongoing conversation about transit. Please send your thoughts and ideas to info@lightfootforchicago.com and we will build on this plan together.

- 1 See <http://chicagocompletestreets.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/March-2018-MBAC-Presentations.pdf>
- 2 See <http://chicagocompletestreets.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/November-7-MPAC-SlideshowFINAL.pdf>
- 3 See <http://visionzerochicago.org/what-is-vision-zero/>
- 4 See <http://visionzerochicago.org/first-year-accomplishments/>
- 5 See <https://www.jsonline.com/story/entertainment/2017/06/15/its-good-time-cyclist-milwaukee-and-bars-and-restaurants-making-even-better/393414001/>
- 6 See <https://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/injuryprev/9/3/205.full.pdf>
- 7 My administration will use Seattle's Commute Trip Reduction Program as a model. See <https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/projects-and-programs/programs/transportation-options-program/commute-trip-reduction-program>
- 8 See <https://www.transportation.northwestern.edu/documents/research/featured-reports/RLC-Report-Web.pdf>
- 9 See <https://www.transportation.northwestern.edu/documents/research/featured-reports/RLC-Report-Web.pdf> and <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/pdf/10.2105/AJPH.2006.093195>
- 10 See https://www.transitchicago.com/assets/1/6/2017_CTA_Annual_Ridership_Report.pdf at p. 6
- 11 See http://tram.mcgill.ca/Research/Publications/Transit_Ridership_overtime.pdf
- 12 Although many cities in the United States have experienced decreases in bus ridership, bus ridership in many Canadian cities has remained stable or grown. Part of the reason Canadian bus ridership has been more resilient is due to greater service per capita. See <https://humantransit.org/2018/04/why-does-ridership-rise-or-fall-lessons-from-canada.html>
- 13 See https://www.transitchicago.com/assets/1/6/2017_CTA_Annual_Ridership_Report.pdf at p. 6
- 14 See https://greatcities.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/RevitalizingManufacturingChicago_Final.pdf at p. 23
- 15 See <https://chi.streetsblog.org/2018/10/17/foia-ed-documents-show-loop-link-has-provided-only-modest-speed-gains/>
- 16 See https://www.metroplanning.org/uploads/cms/documents/brt_report_20110817_reva.pdf
- 17 *Id.* at p. 4
- 18 See <https://www.transitchicago.com/cta-to-begin-faster-bus-boarding-pilot-on-loop-link-downtown/>
- 19 See <http://www.saveashland.com/>
- 20 See https://www.metroplanning.org/uploads/cms/documents/brt_report_20110817_reva.pdf at p. 9
- 21 See <http://activetrans.org/sites/files/SpeedingupBuses.pdf>, p. 6
- 22 See <https://blockclubchicago.org/2018/10/22/busy-no-66-chicago-bus-to-get-its-own-lane-as-part-of-5-million-mayoral-push/>
- 23 See <http://activetrans.org/sites/files/SpeedingupBuses.pdf>
- 24 See <https://www.transitchicago.com/electricbus/>
- 25 See <https://www.transitchicago.com/facts/> and <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-cta-electric-buses-met-20160122-story.html>
- 26 See <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-cta-electric-buses-met-20160122-story.html>
- 27 See <https://www.transitchicago.com/cta-approved-to-purchase-300-new-clean-diesel-buses/>
- 28 See <https://www.transitchicago.com/cta-expands-electric-bus-fleet/>
- 29 See <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-metro-electric-buses-20170721-story.html>
- 30 See <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/26042018/nyc-air-pollution-electric-bus-public-transportation-mta-clean-technology>

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31 See <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/wisniewski/ct-biz-affordable-housing-logan-square-getting-around-20181029-story.html>

32 For example, see <https://cct.org/2018/01/how-transit-oriented-development-is-building-more-equitable-neighborhoods/>

33 See <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/wisniewski/ct-met-ride-hailing-numbers-20180201-story.html>

34 See <http://www.schallerconsult.com/rideservices/automobility.pdf>; <https://www.npr.org/2018/08/01/634506179/ride-hailing-services-add-to-traffic-congestion-study-says>

35 See <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/air-pollution-traffic-levy-von-stackelberg/>