



President's Report January 2011

Thank you Chairman Peterson, members of the board.

One of our top priorities at the CTA is to improve the customer experience. While we know we must remain fiscally responsible, there are things that can be done with minimal investment and provide a significant benefit to our customers.

On Saturday, Chairman Peterson and I joined Mayor Daley in announcing CTA's latest achievement - the launch of the CTA Train Tracker pilot.

Riders can now go to the CTA website, on their computer or web-enabled phone, to access CTA Train Tracker and view estimated arrival times of trains within a 15-minute span at all 144 CTA rail stations across all eight rail lines.

CTA Train Tracker uses a combination of scheduling information and data collected by the software that monitors the signal system to indicate when a portion of track is occupied by a train.

This data is used to calculate estimated arrival times by first measuring how long it takes a train to travel a portion of track, and then averaging the times of the last five trains.

Riders can customize how they view their train arrival predictions by selecting the number of results that are displayed and how they are sorted – either by platform or route if the station is served by multiple rail lines; or by time to the next arrival.

Customer alerts are also integrated into the CTA Train Tracker website, and will notify riders to any scheduled changes affecting rail service.

In the event estimated arrival times cannot be calculated, such as first thing in the morning with the start of service, or for those stations that serve as terminals – CTA Train Tracker will note that the estimated arrival time isn't available and will instead provide scheduled departure information.

Since April, riders at some rail stations may have seen estimated times posted on station signs intermittently throughout the day as the CTA conducted internal testing. As part of the activation of the beta CTA Train Tracker, train arrival information will remain available at 13 rail stations using existing electronic displays that are either on the platform or mezzanine levels.

I want to emphasize that this is the preliminary release of the beta CTA Train Tracker website and adjustments will be made to improve its appearance, functionality and accuracy.

This is why we're telling customers, if they spot something they think was in error, we want them to let us know. Customer feedback is what will assist our personnel in identifying ways to enhance and

evolve CTA Train tracker. Any questions, comments or suggestions can be sent to feedback@transitchicago.com.

As we look at improving the customer experience further into the future, at the end of this month, the next round of public meetings will take place in preparation for our federal funding application for modernizing the Red and Purple Lines.

Although funding has not yet been identified for any of the potential improvements, we continue advancing the planning process in an effort to be fully prepared when funding becomes available.

These meetings will provide customers with several different plans for infrastructure improvements.

The plans are based on input gathered from the first round of public meetings held at the end of 2009 and were designed to gather input on existing conditions and issues facing the Red Line North and the Purple Line.

Times and locations for the meetings have been advertised and are also available on CTA's website.

And now, an update on fourth quarter and year-end ridership.

The CTA provided 127.8 million rides in the fourth quarter of 2010.

From October through December, overall ridership on the system decreased – down 1.6%, which represents approximately 2.2 million rides.

Bus ridership decreased by 5.4% - the equivalent of 4.3 million rides - while rail ridership increased by 4.2% - the equivalent of 2.1 million rides.

The CTA provided 516.9 million rides in 2010, which is slightly higher than the 512.2 million rides projected for the year. There is reason for encouragement considering the dramatic impact the recession has had throughout the year.

Compared to 2009, 2010 ridership is only down 0.8% (point eight percent), even though we unfortunately reduced 18% of our bus service and 9% of our rail service in February.

The fact that CTA has lost very little ground from a ridership standpoint, under the most difficult financial circumstances this country has seen in decades, is something I feel is reason to look forward to the new year and hope that the economy continues to rebound, even if at a slow pace.

It would be unreasonable to expect that the growth in ridership the CTA has experienced in recent years would sustain itself with so many unemployed and businesses struggling. But, a drop in ridership of less than 1 percent continues to demonstrate the value of public transit as a cost-effective travel option.

While in a perfect world, growth of our service is what we would like to see, circumstances currently require us to adjust our expectations based on the state of the economy.

Overall, I would say that we are pleased with last year's ridership and hope to move toward growth as the economy regains ground.

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That concludes my report. Thank you.