Better Streets for Buses

Bus Priority Corridor Study Meeting Material: Overview

Why should we redesign streets for bus priority?

Buses mitigate traffic by making efficient use of a finite and valuable resource: Chicago's street space. One standard or articulated bus can comfortably carry around 50 or 80 people, respectively; moving that many people in cars would require significantly more vehicles to use the same stretch of road.

While buses provide vital connections and other benefits citywide, bus travel can be impacted by traffic delays, making some trips slow and inconvenient and causing longer waits between buses; Chicago's bus riders deserve better.

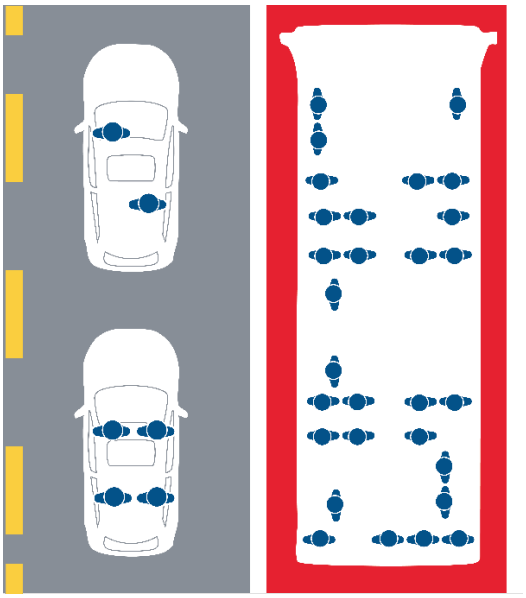

Illustration shows that buses can move many more people in the same street space, compared to cars

Improving the streets that CTA buses use every day means improving daily life for the hundreds of thousands of riders who rely on the bus as their primary way to get to school, work, the doctor, and other essential places. **When streets work better for buses, buses work better for people.**

Why do buses matter?

Buses matter because the people who ride them matter.

In 2024, CTA saw **more than 180 million bus rides,** providing vital connections to Chicagoans of all income levels.

Buses make significant contributions to the livability, health, and sustainability of the City of Chicago and the surrounding region. When transit provides a competitive experience, it can attract more people from lower occupancy modes such as personal cars and ride-hail, thereby reducing car dependency and the demand for parking.

A trip taken by bus has a smaller environmental footprint compared to trips taken by cars and ride-hail, both in terms of health-impacting and climate-changing pollutants. These benefits are further compounded by the fact that public transit supports more compact land use patterns that have a range of environmental benefits, including the reduction of impervious surfaces that contribute to water pollution, and reducing overall transportation energy use by reducing travel distances.

Buses are…

- **Accessible**
  Since 2005, CTA's entire bus fleet has been accessible to people with disabilities. Today's bus models are designed specifically with accessibility in mind, including low-floor designs and ramps that flip outward, rather than steps and complex lift mechanisms that took longer to deploy and were more difficult to maintain.
- **Affordable**
  CTA base bus fare is $2.25 per ride, regardless of distance or time of day, with reduced or free fares available for eligible groups including seniors, Medicare recipients, people with disabilities, and military personnel. Various pass products can also help reduce the cost to ride for frequent riders, which allow for unlimited rides for 1-, 3-, 7-, or 30-day periods.
- **Everywhere**
  For most Chicagoans, the CTA bus is the public transit service in their neighborhood. About 96% of Chicago residents live near CTA bus service, meaning they are within a half-mile, or about a ten-minute walk, of a CTA bus

stop. This compares to around 30% of Chicago residents who live similarly close to CTA rail stations, which means that about two-thirds of Chicagoans live close to buses but far from CTA rail. CTA buses connect more people to rail lines, and they connect neighborhoods to each other, to employment, education, medical services, shopping, entertainment, parks, recreation, and other opportunities.