



Holiday Savings Alert: Public Transportation Service Reductions

Dear Chicago Citizen:

The Chicago Transit Authority has experienced an annual turnstile of financial shortfalls dating back to the 1980s. Given the vital importance of public transportation, it's bewildering that through the years, CTA management and state lawmakers have not come up with a permanent long-term funding plan for mass transit. Unfortunately, decades of CTA systemic mismanagement and political interests have paralyzed the opportunity to produce a stable funding source for the riding public.

While millions of passengers ride the CTA annually, for decades the Amalgamated Transit Union – Local 241 has granted the CTA concession after concession from pension fund sacrifices, to work force reductions and wage freezes, including giving up raises in the first two years of the Local's current 5-year contract.

The City of Chicago contributes only \$3 million a year toward the CTA. That is the same amount the City has been contributing for the last 20 years. Three million dollars a year is woefully inadequate for a city with a \$7.5 billion budget. And recently, the CTA and RTA voted to increase pension contributions by 2.35% for union members and 4.69% for CTA management. What sense does it make for a transit agency already claiming to be broke to add \$30 million dollars to its budget?

As many public transit users prepare to face another tough, cold winter where they will encounter extended wait times of 30 minutes or more for a bus or train, and despite a faltering economy, Mayor Richard Daley spent over \$100 million in an embarrassing attempt to lure the Olympics. Rather than making sure people have a decent means to get around to live their lives, he needlessly squandered vital dollars.

Regrettably, the state's highest elected official, Gov. Pat Quinn has demonstrated the same bad habits. One Chicago newspaper called his recent decision to borrow \$166 million in a state that's already financially strapped to avoid a fare hike for the next two years, "a terrible idea" and a "superficial quick fix." Gov. Quinn's deal won't stop CTA service cuts and layoffs scheduled to take place Feb. 7, 2010, five days after the Feb. 2 election.

CTA service reductions include:

Rail Service

- Frequency of train service will be reduced

Bus Service

- 9 bus routes eliminated (X3, X4, X9, X20, X49, X54, X55, X80, 53AL)
- 41 bus routes will have later start times, earlier end times or both, including routes 56 Milwaukee, 103 West 103rd, 8 Halsted, 29 State, 70 Division

We're convinced money can be tapped to avoid congested buses and trains, excessive wait times and exposure to health threats. This can be done if leaders mandate fewer CTA management positions, abolish the Regional Transportation Authority whose job is financial oversight of the CTA, Pace and Metra, and consider a dedicated tax funding source, as is the case with many big-city transportation systems. Minimally, CTA management should slow the process that could lead to service cuts, and conduct public hearings on funding alternatives.

In the spirit of the holiday season, it's time for citizens to have their voices heard. Please contact Mayor Daley and Gov. Quinn and urge them to show they care about your well-being by developing a long-term funding plan for Chicago.

Respectfully,

Darrell Jefferson
President and Business Agent
Amalgamated Transit Union – Local 241

P.S. Please contact Mayor Daley and Gov. Quinn and urge them not to cut public transit service:

Mayor Richard Daley

Gov. Pat Quinn