

Representative Al Riley: The hour of 9:30 has come and passed. I call to order the Regional Equity subcommittee of the Mass Transit Committee of the House of Representatives. I'd like to read a letter from the Speaker's office which states, "Please be advised the following temporary member replacements for the following permanent members: The permanent member, Cynthia Soto will be replaced by temporary member Constance Howard".

Clerk, please take the roll.

Committee Clerk: Riley (Here), Arroyo, Bassi, Dunkin, Froehlich (Here), Howard (Here), Miller, Tryon, Washington

Representative Al Riley: Before we get started, why are we all here? I think we are here all here for a lot of different reasons. First of all, for those who may not know, this is a subcommittee meeting which will deal with regional equity issues in transportation. It is part of the Mass Transit committee of the House, which is chaired by Representative Julie Hamos.

I am conducting a subject matter hearing just as we do in Springfield; essentially helping to bring government to the people. The First Amendment of our Constitution talks about the citizenry assembling and petitioning their government and this is certainly one way to do that. I want to thank all of you for being here; there will be a lot to cover.

Just for those of you who don't know what happens down in Springfield; essentially, a member of the General Assembly sits on multiple committees to deliberate on potential legislation. I sit on seven committees and two subcommittees. My colleague, Representative Howard sits on many, many committees also. Often, when you see us on T.V., you see us in session on the floor of the House, debating or advocating for different bills that are being advanced.

But prior to that, we are in our own committee meetings for the meat and potatoes work on prospective legislation. That's where the actual crafting of the bill takes place, before one even gets to the floor of the House. So, this is one of those committees, where we are airing your concerns from the South Suburban region of Chicago.

Again, why are we here? There have been major population shifts in the Chicagoland region since the 60's. Businesses have migrated throughout the area. What are the impacts of those shifts? What do they really mean in terms of transportation infrastructure, policy and transportation service delivery in general?

There are some that would say that the south suburban region has historically gotten short shrift with regard to transportation funding and projects. And certainly, before I came down to Springfield, as many of you know, I taught at Governors State University for many years. Some of us were working on regional economic indicators, some of which would serve as input data to regional development studies. Some of you may be familiar

with different economic measures of inequality like the Gini coefficient. Not to bore you with economic analysis, but the Gini coefficient for the metropolitan area has been increasing over the last ten years. This means that, with respect to income distribution and related variables, inequality is growing and seems to indicate a disparity between regions. Those facts notwithstanding, the south suburbs as a region are still developing their communities, strengthening their local economy; striving to do more with less.

These communities, by necessity, are looking at new ways to depend on each other as they try to do with more with less. They have felt that their voices are not really being heard as other voices in the metropolitan area. They have indicated that that this perception of neglect has translated into public policy and private investment decisions that are not equal throughout the metropolitan area. You've seen all the studies. You've seen how business, industrial and employment growth has basically occurred in the north, northwest and west. As a consequence, transit performance measures that have increased over time like time to work, duration of congestion and so forth have had a greater impact on south suburban residents, it is felt.

This beautiful school that is hosting us, Colin Powell Middle School, is the newest school in District 159. The Superintendent is Dr. Eric King and the principal of the school is Ms. Pamela Woods. This school and area is just an indication of the things that are happening out in the south suburbs. Lincoln Mall, one of the largest regional malls in Chicagoland, is essentially undergoing a \$100 million re-development.

So, there is the "Field of Dreams" kind of model of development; if you build it, than they will come. The only problem is that many people out in the south suburbs postulate that they would not come, because they can't get here. And therein lies the reason for being here. Let's address the issues of transportation equity or inequity, no matter where they lie. That is the job of this subcommittee.

Arguably, the precursors of economic development and regional development generally are the existence of an adequate transit system and transportation infrastructure. It has always been my personal goal to commit to the development of a regional development strategy. I will let many of you know about that strategy as time goes on in this summer. The south suburban region needs to ask itself, "What are we going to look like in the next 10-15 years with respect to transportation, community and economic development and so forth?"

You know, I'm reminded of good old movies that are often allegories for life. The movie Bullitt in 1967 with Steve McQueen was such a classic. The protagonist, Steve McQueen's character was a cop. He dealt with a lot of very important cases and it took a toll on his interpersonal relationship. Jacqueline Bisset, his girlfriend, was a fashion designer whose world was of course, totally different. One day, she voiced her concerns and asked him "What will happen to us in time?" Steve McQueen looked back at her and said, "Time starts now." Well this isn't that relationship, but McQueen's answer is

appropriate. This is about a relationship of many communities of up to a million people here in the south suburban region that inter-depend on each other.

So the question could be re-phrased, "What will happen to the south suburbs in time?" The answer being, "time starts now." Let's get started.

I'd like to read a letter into the record from Congressman Jackson. Congressman Jackson was supposed to be here but was delayed in Washington. He sent a letter of support for the hearing and some of his own concerns which you have in your packets.

Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. letter read into the record by Rep. Riley:

I want to thank and commend State Representative Al Riley for hosting this important public discussion on transportation disparities and inequities in the Southland.

During my 12 years in Congress, I have tried hard to enhance transportation services in the South Side and south suburbs. Why? Because investing in infrastructure is the first step in attracting economic development. Why is attracting economic development important? Because economic investment provides the financial underpinning of any strong community, and helps provide residents with the quality-of-life that everyone wants and deserves.

Most of you probably remember my mantra when I first ran for Congress. It's a mantra that I still use today.

I said then and I say now: "I want the South Side and south suburbs to look like the North Side and northwest suburbs."

Regrettably, despite serious and tireless efforts by me and many other elected officials in the Southland, important opportunities often go nowhere for lack of support from key state leaders.

Frankly, too often the Southland gets the shaft. It's a sham. And it's a shame.

There's no greater example of this than the third airport. This project is necessary, in fact long overdue.

The Governor promised two years ago at several public forums that we would be breaking ground on the Abraham Lincoln National Airport as early as spring of 2007. The truth is, we are no closer to breaking ground today than we were two years ago.

It's incredible to me that the state, for two years, would ignore two world-class airport developers who are committed to investing \$300 million in our state to build what we need at no cost to taxpayers. But instead of action and cooperation, the state gives us delays and excuses.

The airport would be the great equalizer for the Southland. The North Side has O'Hare. The West Side has Midway. The South Side deserves Lincoln. This airport would be an economic engine for the Southland – but also for Chicago; Cook, Will and Kankakee Counties; and the State.

While the airport is the best example of the state's transportation inequities, it's not the only one.

Let's look Metra's Southeast Service. Twelve years ago, Metra's top leaders told me that the SouthEast Service line was necessary, and that it would be their next priority after it completely three line extensions that were already underway at that time; one to the far northwest suburbs, one to the far western suburbs, and one to the far southwest suburbs.

Metra leaders said, "Please Congressman, help us get money to complete those three lines, then the SouthEast Service is next. Be patient, please wait, your time is coming," they promised. Believing them, I helped secure hundreds of millions of federal dollars for Metra to complete those lines.

Then, guess what? When it was time for the SouthEast Service to rise to the top of their priority list, Metra came up with a new priority. They called it the Star Line. The Star Line will connect O'Hare airport to that new line to the far northwest suburbs, that new line to the far western suburbs, and that new line to the far southwestern suburbs.

As you recall, we as a region rose up and expressed our collective outrage. Metra finally shifted gears and put the SouthEast Service line back on its priority list. That said, however, we've still seen little evidence of substantial progress in that project for several years. In fact, the same could be said of the CTA's proposed Red Line extension.

Then there's IDOT and the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority.

For 12 years, IDOT, tollway, and local officials have talked about building an interchange at I-294 and I-57. For 12 years, we've waited. There was once even \$50 million set aside for this project. But recently, I've learned that the \$50 million was redirected to another project somewhere else – though no one seemed to know exactly where. Once again, we were told to wait.

Wait. Wait. Wait. That clearly is the strategy by our state's transportation leaders when it comes to the South Side and south suburbs – be it with airports, transit, or highway.

Well, we're tired of waiting. We're tired of being treated like less than full citizens in this state. We're tired of paying tax dollars that end up going to other projects, usually in places where residents are much better off than we are.

The waiting is over. It's time for action. For commitment. For follow-through on years of promises. As the only Illinois Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, I

am now in a stronger position than ever to see to it that federal resources are distributed fairly and equitably. And I promise you that I will do all in my power to do so.

Thank you.

Representative Al Riley:

That was the letter from Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr.

We have another letter from the Speaker's office regarding committee replacements. Representative Arroyo is being replaced by Representative Bobby Rita. Add Representative Rita to the roll.

I'd like to make a brief point about the conduct of the hearing, if you will. We are here to specifically talk about transportation issues in the South Suburbs. What I want to be sure of is that we don't have a discussion about current funding deficits and impending service cuts. We have had numerous committee meetings regarding those issues. Let's focus our discussion on the Southland.

Panel I – Service Boards

In our first panel, we have Clayton Harris, Chief of Staff for IDOT, John DeLaurentis, Deputy Executive Director for Planning from the RTA, Michael Bolton, Deputy Executive Director of Strategic Services for PACE, Lynette Ciavarella, Director of Planning for Metra and Jeff Sriver, General Manager of Strategic Planning for the CTA. Proceed, Mr. Harris.

Clayton Harris: Thank you very much. Thank you inviting me to speak at this hearing. My name is Clayton Harris and I am the Chief of Staff for IDOT.

I have a Power Point presentation. I'd like to talk about where we are at IDOT.

At IDOT, we have small-scale planning studies that contain a transit related component which is funded through the Technical Studies program. Funding requests are generally \$200K or less and can come from local entities such as MPOs, municipalities, Councils of Government, or Mass Transit Districts.

For issues related to the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association; other types of projects funded include: Rail Feasibility studies, which involve extensions or new lines of service; Transit Demand Analysis for a region which could include several counties and other municipalities; evaluating bus routes to determine if modifications would result in greater ridership, and for purposes of congestion mitigation. That particular program has a rolling application process. Interested applicants should contact **DPIT** directly.

The Consolidated Vehicle Procurement Program (CVP) is a federal program that provides lift and ramp equipped vehicles to agencies that serve elderly persons and persons with disabilities. IDOT is the agency designated by the Governor to administer this program. The program funds are used to purchase small buses and vans for local programs throughout the state. 80% of the cost of the vehicles comes from federal funding; the remaining 20% are from state or local funds. IDOT purchases all vehicles on behalf of program recipients. The next application cycle will start in January, 2008.

Metropolitan Chicago is the third largest intermodal hub in the world; it trails only Singapore and Hong Kong. It is the busiest rail gateway in the United States. Nearly a third of the nation's total rail shipments move through this region. In fact, bottlenecks in the Chicago region cause freight back-ups on the entire national system.

The CREATE program is designed to alleviate many of these problems associated with rail congestion and aims to improve passenger and freight rail service, reduce motorist delays, increase safety, and improve air quality. This project of national and regional significance is also the first-ever project national freight rail project to receive programmed federal funds.

These much needed improvements to our region's rail network will provide for greater efficiency and service for commuter and passenger rail networks – a definite benefit to communities across metropolitan Chicago.

In January 2007, the federal government allocated \$100 million for Phase 1 engineering. \$48 million is being used to start a number of projects, seven of which will enter construction in calendar year 2007 and 32 of 78 projects will be in design or under construction by 2009.

The latest version of the federal transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU, mandates that funding for programs geared at the targeted populations of elderly, disabled and low income individuals be included in locally-developed public transit/human services transportation plans in order to access funding for two new federal programs. Those programs are Job Access Reverse Commute and New Freedom. Projects funded through the CVP program will also be included in this plan.

DPIT has also been in charge of oversight and management of an audit of northeastern Illinois Paratransit costs. This included an examination of 2005 costs for Pace, CTA and RTA. Estimates for future service were conducted based upon no service changes and a forecast of future costs which were also based on no changes in services. These financial reviews came on the heels of Pace taking over paratransit operations for the northeastern Illinois region. The final reports provided data for the RTA's Paratransit funding plan and Pace, as they developed service requirements and negotiated new contracts for

Paratransit service providers. In addition, we have been working closely with members of the General Assembly, in particular the Mass Transit Committee, to provide technical assistance on the development of legislation aimed at providing a state funded paratransit program.

I appreciate coming to this committee hearing. I am available for your questions.

Rep. Riley to IDOT: I've got a question for you. Rich Township specifically and some of the other townships out here, have very active transportation programs. As a matter of fact, Rich Township's program conducts 85,000 to 100,000 person/trips a year. There is something strange about why townships are ineligible for Section 5310 program funds. This program provides transportation grant assistance for the elderly and people with disabilities. Those are the client groups that we serve, primarily. Why aren't townships eligible for Section 5310 funds? I have heard that only municipalities are eligible. What constitutes a municipality? Should townships be included in this definition? We have not able to secure these funds.

IDOT response: It is my understanding that as far as eligibility, the federal standard applies. We are just complying with the federal standard. Perhaps you can contact Congressman Jackson on this area.

inaudible...

Riley to Harris: A lot of times townships are overlooked. Clearly, the township is a unit of government, statutorily. Because of this, they should be included. This issue is too large to be an oversight. Oversight, but I'd like to *inaudible*. Any other questions before we move on.

Harris to Riley: Thank you very much.

Riley to panel: Let's get through the entire panel before asking any other questions. Next we have John DeLaurentis, Deputy Executive Director for Planning from the RTA. The clerk wants us to read into the record, witness slips. Sam Smith from the RTA.

John DeLaurentis, RTA. Thank you very much for the opportunity to be here. Mr. Chairman, today I'd like to focus on the strategic planning process, not so much anything project specific regarding the RTA. Although there are many issues in the south suburbs, I'm more than happy and to follow up or take any questions. But, along with our strategic planning process, we have had great relationships with elected officials and many organizations and individuals throughout the region, especially here in the southern suburbs. The RTA looks forward to achieving a long-term comprehensive solution to the

region's transportation challenges. And again, I would like to thank Representative Riley and the other members of the committee for having this discussion today.

Politically, the way the RTA is structured has been through legislation. The RTA is a unit form of government and it was created by state law in the RTA Act. And the enacting legislation created the role for the official planning, oversight, and funding agency responsibilities for the CTA, Metra and PACE. The individual service boards that were mentioned are responsible for actually providing services. The RTA is supported by taxes and revenues are distributed to the different service boards.

Our current system is the second largest in the nation. The CTA and Metra provides about 2 billion rides. They provide a tremendous economic benefit. Specifically, about 60,000 trips per day occur on mass transit in the Southland. This is pretty good, we put a lot of trips a year here in the south suburbs.

Our transit system is currently facing a major crisis both in terms of day to day operating costs, and the need to improve the system through capital projects. In response to this growing challenge, the RTA and its service boards, as well as the Illinois auditor general through performance, management and financial audits are trying to be accountable. We feel the problem of coordination can be improved. We simply do not have enough funding to support the current system, let alone to expand it.

Without additional funding, the only way to closing the operating shortfall is to cut service, shift capital funding to operations, or take other drastic steps to conserve funds. As you heard, the CTA, PACE and Metra are all already drafting plans and creating steps beginning in late summer if no additional funding is identified.

As well for capital needs, we feel the state legislature will approve a capital plan soon. Now, we just haven't simply demanded more money. The service boards and the RTA have spent time in developing a comprehensive strategic plan to develop a cost plan consistent with the service. That's why we launched Moving Beyond Congestion. Since this began, over 70 organizations and thousands of individuals have joined in the effort to call for transit investments. At this point I'd like to call on Sam Smith, the RTA Manager of Government Services who would like to talk about a little about that effort.

Sam Smith, RTA: Thank you. The RTA recently put forth plans to generate the necessary operating revenues for the system. It primarily lies within the regional sales tax; the "Chicago only" real estate transfer tax, and state match. A total of \$452.5 million will be collected to benefit the entire region's transit system. And in the end, the majority of these taxes will be collected from the region.

Here's how we propose how to distribute these funds. \$325 million will be distributed to the service boards for main line services. These monies will be distributed in the same manner and it is important that, from the last 25 years, essentially 60% to the CTA, 30% to Metra and 10% to PACE.

\$100 million will be dedicated to paratransit services in the region. \$20 million for the Suburban Mobility Fund that will be used to address the suburban transit needs, particularly flexible PACE services. In addition, \$10 million will be dedicated to jump start new innovative programs to be determined by their effectiveness.

In addition to our operating proposals, we've identified capital needs which both are near and long term. For our strategic planning process, we've developed three building blocks to guide our capital investment ideas. The first block is to maintain and that would be \$7.3 billion dollars to maintain the existing system and bring it into a state of good repair. The second block is to enhance, and that's \$1.1 billion. And the third block is to expand and that's \$1.6 billion to expand the current services.

In response to the Auditor General's report that was released earlier this year, our proposal also contains reform guidelines. The plan generally increases the accountability at the RTA, it requires more coordinated regional planning, additional coordination of fares and services, and oversight in financial reports. It's important to note that this element for mass transit funding was incorporated in SB572, which was passed by the House Mass Transit committee a few weeks ago.

Coordinated forms of transit funding are approved by the General Assembly. Again, there will be further amendments and that is CTA pension reform. We're continuing on this legislation and we are confident that an agreement will be reached. With that final piece in place, we hope that the legislature will support our proposal. It is a regional solution to a regional problem. It is a lot cheaper in the long run and it is not a one time bailout of the system.

Thanks for the opportunity to testify today and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Representative Riley: Next we have Michael Bolton, Deputy Executive Director of Strategic Services for PACE. Before we get started, for the sake of time I'd like the panelists to be succinct to allow questions from the Representatives. There has been an awful lot of information presented at this subject matter hearing. There will be other opportunities coming up very soon for details. I would ask that you keep your presentations to five minutes to get all the panelists in to provide testimony in this hearing. Proceed.

Michael Bolton, PACE: Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to be with you this morning. My remarks this morning are intended to provide an update on the work that we have been doing as part of our South Cook-Will County Initiative we've undertaken for the past 5 or 6 months.

We've just finished the second round of nine public forums to engage the users of the service and the communities in the restructuring of the service in South Cook and Will County area. We've had hundreds of people show up for these meetings. In addition to that we've also had meetings with our Regional Advisory committee and our Community Advisory committees made up of local officials and technical experts and community organizations. Ed Paesel and Mike Schofield were participants in this part of the process. Pat Peters from Rich Township participated as a member of the community advisory committee.

This is by far the largest effort to date. The initiative includes; 82 communities, 48 fixed routes, 18 dial-a-ride/ADA paratransit programs, over 200 vanpools, and over 10 million rides annually on area fixed routes which is 40% of overall PACE fixed-route ridership. Please keep in mind that 5 of our top 10 routes originate in South Cook. The 355, the 353 and the 352 are one of top performers. I believe that we serve more people in South Cook than any of the other service boards. We recognized that making changes in this part of the region would be significant simply based upon size and need. This is also the area where there is apparent duplication of service with CTA and Metra.

While much of the effort centers on the fixed route service, we have also been looking at ways to manage the growing demand for service that might ordinarily have been considered dial-a-ride service. We are aware of the limitations that exist when the townships have had to fund local services; we view our role as providing the cross-border opportunities.

We must now take all of the comments into account as we develop the preferred alternatives that we will take to public hearings and then to our board for approval.

This is the first time that we have really focused on a "suburb-centric" service plan; most of our earlier efforts were focused on work trips to the city. As the region has changed we must design work trip options that serve the growing suburban job market whether that market is in the south or the west and the northwest.

We are also being challenged by the South Suburban Mayors & Managers Association to serve limited shopping opportunities and for providing evening service for people in the service industry. These people very often work evenings, they cannot take us to get home right now.

Some areas are better served with demand response rather than fixed route service, this effort has identified areas where we can implement general public demand response service.

Reducing the overlap with Metra and CTA is a critical part of this effort, we have identified about \$700,000 dollars in duplication that can be reassigned to the Southland so that we can reliably operate the schedules that we provide today; our 70% on time rating is unacceptable.

After the first round we realized that we would have to do something quickly, so we took the first phase and segmented it into what we could do this fall. Then there are those things that could be done in the spring of next year assuming that some additional funding could be found.

Fall of 2007 will see express bus service on the tollway to connect people in the Southland with jobs in a reasonable amount of time. We know that a significant number of people that board our bus and then transfer to the Red Line at 95th, later board one of our buses at the Cumberland or Rosemont stations on the Blue Line. We believe a circumferential routing system will serve them better and faster. Improving the speed of our service by limited stops in the city will allow us to better serve the suburbs. We currently serve more riders in South Cook than either one of the service boards. By reducing the duplication with the other services, we can reallocate the miles and minutes to other parts of the Southland.

A simple graphic of what can be done in the fall with existing service.

Our transit signal priority project is based on the Harvey transit center and South Halsted. We expect a 15% improvement in running time once the system is in place.

Regional connectivity in a limited manner in the fall is also possible by realigning existing service and using JARC funds that have been allocated to us. This might be in jeopardy if we cannot sustain the local match.

These are the changes that can be implemented in the spring of 2008 if additional funds are available. All of these areas have been identified as being potentially productive through the new service planning tool. The service planning tool has allowed us to link the demographic data with attitudinal data in much the same way that retailers and other private businesses make decisions about store location or employee hotspots.

This is also the time to create East-West connections in the first tier of south suburbs, as well as midway service by utilizing flexible routing for seniors.

Here is a quick schematic showing the areas that would see improvement of service levels and hours as well as new service alignments.

We have more work to do over the coming weeks to finalize the preferred alternatives based upon public input. The proposed alterations to route 355 generated a lot of comments and concerns about serving Sibley. We will weigh the alternatives suggested by the participants in the forum, looking at Kensington Metro Station as one alternative, the CTA #14 Jeffrey Park Express that begins at 103rd and Stony Island and operating only a few limited trips to downtown Chicago.

We have people everyday that would get in our bus in Harvey and transfer to the Red Line at 95th, transfer to the Blue Line downtown, get off the Blue Line at Rosemont and get back on our bus. That is a 2 ½ hour trip every single day one way. We have to find a way to solve this.

Once we have the preferred alternatives, we will take it out for formal public hearings. People will still have the opportunity to make suggestions and recommendations, all of which will be incorporated into the recommendation that will be presented to the Pace board for action. We will not simply state the numbers, we will explain the impact that our recommendations will have on the people using the current service. We understand that for our board members, statistics don't show up at public hearings to testify, people do.

Thank you for your time.

Representative Riley: Thank you for your testimony. Next we have Lynette Ciavarella, Director of Planning for Metra.

Lynette Ciavarella, Metra: Thank you. Thank you for including us here this morning. We appreciate the opportunity to be at the table and talk at the program that we have.

What I wanted to do is give a quick overview of Metra and who we are. Metra has over 500 route miles, serving 237 stations system wide. We are the largest commuter railroad in the North America in terms of traffic and we also offer 700 trains a day to carry about 300,000 passenger trips.

In the Southland, Metra provides service on the Metra Electric line, the Rock Island in the southwest. In 2006, we provided 11.5 million passenger trips on the Metra Electric Line. The Electric Line is our second highest ridership line. It also boasts the highest level of on time performance with on time performance at 97%, and it has been that way since 1986.

In 2006, we provided 9.9 million passenger trips on the Rock Island. The Rock Island is the third highest ridership line. And finally in 2002, we provided 2.1 million passenger trips on the Southwest service. That line has grown 134% in ridership since 1983 when we first expanded in this region. All total, every weekday we have 268 trains that serve the Southland. We also have 87,200 passenger trips which make up to 30% of the capacity that we carry.

In the past couple of years, we have purchased 26 new Highlander cars. We have also upgraded 15 stations on the Metra Electric. We have also upgraded 13 stations on the Rock Island. That was our goal since this past January. We were able to upgrade service the southwest line and provide some of the stations along that line as well. We continue to work with all the communities down here in the Southland. I want you to understand, we have worked closely with the South Suburban Mayors & Managers and the RTA in transit oriented development. We have worked in your communities for about 16 or so of those studies down here in the Southland. But we didn't we come here to talk about what we've done in the past, but what we can do in the future. So, with that in mind, there are some capitol needs in the Southland. However, we are not able to move forward without additional state funding.

With the RTA, we want to maintain the system, we want to look for ways to enhance and plan for future expansions. There is no doubt that our highest priority in terms of maintaining our existing system is to purchase 160 new Highlander cars for the Metra Electric line with essential restroom facilities. At the top of the list, after our board meeting yesterday with Phil Pagano, our board made it very clear that this is the next capital investment that needs to be made.

Along with the new cars, we are going to need to construct a new yard facility to service those cars for the Metra Electric line. In addition, other improvements include, upgrades to the substations that we have on the other two lines, the Rock Island and the Southwest service. We are proposing improvements to the Rock Island with new stations at 35th, near 118 and Garfield, to compliment CTA services line at the Red line. As for the Green line, we are moving forward with that project.

In conjunction with the CREATE programs with IDOT, it includes coordinating the Southwest service line which includes shifting the Southwest service over to the LaSalle street station to allow travel on those particular trains. The Southwest trains have a lesser on-time performance than Rock Island and the Metra Electric. Freight traffic contributes to this problem. We're aiming to change this. We will be able to upgrade in that category; looking a way to handle the service on the Southwest as well as service on the Rock Island.

Finally, keeping in tune with looking to the future for planning for improved mobility, Metra is currently undertaking steps to ensure the federal funding for a new rail line in the Southland. The new rail line will operate on existing freight tracks on the Chicago rail, as well as connecting to our existing Rock Island line and connecting to the LaSalle station. It will open the doors for economic development. We are working closely with all the communities in the area, as well as the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, and our service planning partners, PACE and CTA.

We remain in the first phase in the very tedious FTA process. In order to secure additional funding, there are a whole prescription of projects and studies that have to go through. We have been working on the alternative analysis for the past two years now and I can report that we are near the end. Final stages of the alternatives evaluation for the SouthEast service should be completed by fall so we can start preliminary engineering.

Beyond that, the list and the amount of service that we have been looking at for quite some time goes back to our 1982 study of possible service expansion for the Southland. Another extension would be the Eastern extension of the STAR line in its second phase. We also include extensions into Will County along the Heritage Line.

In closing, I just want to let you know that that we are prepared to move forward on our extension programs. Obviously being able to support the region is important and will foster future opportunities, planning projects, and being able to move on.

Thank you for the opportunity and I'll take any questions right now.

Representative Riley: Thank you. We will leave the questions for the end. I'd like to move now to Jeff Srivier, the General Manager of Strategic Planning for the CTA.

Jeff Srivier: Thank you. Good morning. Thank you, Chairman Riley and members of the subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with everyone today. I'd like to spend a few minutes briefly talking about CTA's process both for short term and than for longer term planning initiatives, and specifically how that affects service in the South part of our service area.

First item that most people are aware, the RTA encompasses a six county region in northeastern Illinois. CTA principally services the City of Chicago and the nearby suburbs. Of all the service areas, the CTA serves nearly four million riders. We provide 1.6 million rides per day on the buses. CTA service planning process is essentially governed by what we call our service standards. It is a book that is available for download on the CTA's website. It essentially looks at the rider coverage, the hours of service, hours of service, frequency, passenger, flow, and productivity. What this does, is

it gives us guidelines for how quickly we run our service, how early we start the service, and how closely we route the buses and where they go. Once a year, CTA updates its schedule and we try to make sure we make sure we run an effective service for our customers.

Every few years, we look comprehensively at the route structure in the entire CTA network, not just individual routes. Various routes work together in sub-regions for major corridors around the service area. This is very similar to the type of process that Michael described that has been going on recently at PACE. In the last few years, we have lead a comprehensive study of our bus and rail service in the North Lakeshore corridor, the South Lakeshore corridor, and most recently on the West side and West suburbs.

At the present time, it is the far South side of our service area, which includes the Cook County suburbs and integrates closely with PACE service, that Michael mentioned a large share of the PACE suburban transit customers transfer to CTA service. This is for both the elevated trains and any buses in the CTA system. Very complimentary... our service process as PACE involves a great deal of public outreach. There are community meetings and workshops that we were involved in earlier this spring. About a half a dozen or so meetings were held where we had a roundtable full of people. We have announced all the ...*inaudible* . What are the best transportation services needed? ... where are the new shopping centers... that did not previously have services that now want services? Services should be reallocated. We will solicit recommendations and we will be back out over the next year or so. That's my brief outline for shorter term planning.

As for long term projects, this process is similar to the short term. Most of our long term projects involve rail expansions. Examples are an elevated railroad system that encompasses all parts of the City in the Northeast, South and West. The Red Line is the primary CTA line that reaches out to the south part of our service area. Right now, the Red Line stops at 95th street. There has been discussion to extend that all the way to the City limits; all the way to 130th street. In the last cycle for federal legislation that authorizes funding, we received approval to start the planning phase and the alternatives analysis studies that were talked about earlier. Extending the Red Line project beyond 95th street was what we started with; our first round of public meetings for that project occurred earlier this year in April. We will follow up with two more rounds of public meetings to determine the alignment of where to extend the Red Line. Also, we should continue to have discussions on where the rail alignment would go ask the question if there some kind of bus technology that might be more appropriate for the types of ridership that this area needs. This is all determined by the federal process.

So that basically concludes my remarks and I would take any questions.

Riley to Panel: Thank you very much for your remarks. I would like to open up for questions for this panel. I just have a few questions. Last year, about this time, there was a very good transportation simulation that took place in Blue Island. As a matter of fact, in the early 70's I was a transportation planner. This was one of the better exercises that I have seen. CMAP talked to me about a transportation simulator as part of a broader transportation planning process. These types of exercises clearly provide a wealth of information an opinion in a focus group type of setting. Essentially, a selected group provided transit ideas, predicated upon possessing a finite sum of money. Have any of you seen any outcomes of that study? Transopoly, was it called?

Michael Bolton, PACE: At PACE, we have taken all the studies that they've done. *Inaudible...* There have been areas which have been identified as part of the target areas *inaudible....* We are looking very clearly and very closely on what's involved in those processes.

Metra: From Metra's standpoint, we had a good portion of the CMAP options and was working as a partner with them. We looked at...*inaudible..* in terms of the projects that were selected. They were very similar to...*inaudible*

Representative Riley: Chair recognizes Representative Connie Howard.

Rep. Howard to Panel (opening statement): Yes, thank you very much. I appreciate this opportunity to be here this morning. Some of us deal with inequities on the information super highway as opposed to the transportation piece. But, I did have a couple of questions to ask. Let me start with, with this question for anyone who would answer. It seems to me that we never have enough funds to do all of the projects that we want to do. Do any of you have any thoughts about what it is that we need try to change in terms of the way that we go about getting funding? Are there things that you think that are not as important as what you represented to us today?

I have to tell you where I'm coming from. We have to stand up very adamantly ... on the federal government to get any of funding. I was pleased to hear about the Red Line because we need this in South Cook. I know that based on the letter that came from Congressman Jackson that the government giveth and the government try and taketh away. And so, we might have hope today that tomorrow will not bring decisions that will never happen. What exactly do you do to figure out how to get the federal government and most of all Congress involved? Can they figure out where we're coming from?

Rep. Howard to CTA: What is the status of the Red Line extension?

Rep. Howard to Panel: What can we as State legislators do to get the federal government to commit more funds?

Rep. Howard to Panel: Is coordination an issue? Are we working closely enough?

Rep Riley to Panel: I didn't hear anything about the Southeast Line during any of your presentations. Do any of you have an update? We want to make sure that the project remains a priority.

Rep. Rita to the Panel: What other projects are you working on in the Southland region?

Representative Riley: Chair recognizes Representative Bob Rita:

Representative Rita to Panel: Thank you Mr. Chair for having this committee here in the Southland. I have just a couple of questions. Where are we at regarding the universal fare card?

RTA Response: The universal fare card *per se* is still alive. I think that what we're looking at right now is some sort of solution that would not require less expenditure of funds in the region. But, rather take advantage of what we know is going on. In other words, PACE and CTA want some sort of way to accept debit cards or credit cards at kiosks or whatever. We're trying to look at payment solution used at places in other parts of the globe.

Representative Rita to Panel: Is that a yes or a no? It's hard to hear up here for some of the testimony. In regards to what are the current projects going on the Southland; I haven't heard much of what is occurring out here, just what was happening in the Southwest side. What is occurring right now? What other projects are you working on in the Southland region?

CTA response: The major thing that the CTA has ongoing right now is our South sub-regional study, which is our opportunity to be comprehensive in all the services, in all the different buses, and all the different routes necessary, not just on individual routes. How do all those routes work together; how they feed into the train stations, how they service the various destinations. This is modeled after a successful initiative of this sort in other parts of our service boards. As we look at those, riders in the Southland would have to wait probably another year or so before we are able to start implementing some of our findings from these studies.

PACE response: The biggest project that PACE is working on right now is the transit synchronization project in Alsip. We anticipate we would improve our operations by 15% by way of a smarter intersection. There's a lot of requests for assistance; and we

are also looking at not going out for bids in regards to the operations until late this year or early spring next year. We've made significant work process; once we look at one corridor than we can add on to another.

Metra response: In terms of Metra's projects; we are working on a handful of local projects which are very heavy intensive of capital, when we start looking at upgrading our stations and our signal systems and things like that. In the last three years, we have transferred over \$135 million from our capital budget over to our operating budget in order to cover those costs. As you know, our capital program has diminished as a result of that. I mentioned that we are in the process and have considered a handful of station improvements and we are continuing to move forward. The other things we have done on the planning side of things and obviously our number one focus is the South East service. We have been working diligently on the alternative analysis. The other thing that I also mentioned is working with the various communities to work on transit-oriented development around the stations, working in conjunction both with the RTA and the SSMMA. Currently, there are projects going on and planning work studies going on at 211th street, Crete and Mokena which are just about to kick off. SSMMA has the local financing that we are working on with them. The Village of Chicago Heights is involved and there are also plans to do studies from Mokena and in Blue Island and any other communities around the areas who are interested in partnering with us and working with us. Those are the current projects that we are working on.

CTA response: I have just one more note for the record. I was focusing on future projects. I would be completely remiss also if I didn't mention that over the last three years recently ended, the CTA has invested \$250 million in essentially rebuilding the Red Line on the Dan Ryan. This is the primary CTA rail line to the South Side and the South Suburbs and includes upgrading all the tracks, all of the signals and providing a much smoother and reliable faster ride. That's a very big part of the CTA capital investments being made.

Representative Riley to Panel 1: Really, quickly before we move on to the other panels, I think testimony from panels three and four will give you some ideas to take back as you develop policies in your respective bureaus. But before you guys all leave this panel, I read the letter from Congressman Jackson earlier. Often, as public officials, we are put on the spot to respond to things that develop very quickly. In that spirit, I'll give the panel about two minutes each to respond to some of the things that Congressman Jackson stated in his written testimony.

Metra response: We actually had a meeting with Congressman Jackson about 2 ½ weeks ago or so. The proposed South East Service line as well as the SSMMA's concerns were discussed along with other things that were written in the letter. During that meeting, we explained to him about the FTA process. We told that to him that we were 100% percent committed to the South East Service, as we already testified today that we

are doing everything in our powers to move the Southeast Service forward. That is still where we stand, and we are continuing to work closer with the community. We have agreed to provide weekly updates to the SSMMA, and a whole host of things. We are working in support with Congressman Jackson on the South East Service Line.

IDOT response: One of the things mentioned in the letter was the 3rd airport in the South Suburbs, the South Suburban airport. We are working on land acquisition, we are in constant contact with a couple of properties also. We are going to be build our actual office on the site, on the footprint of the site. Now Congressman Jackson's representative feels that things are not moving as fast as they would like it to. We are respectful of that. This is a significant project. We are committed to building the third airport.

Representative Riley: I want to thank you all for your testimony. I understand you will be staying to hear the rest of the testimony as presented. Thank you. Panel II will now convene. Now, in the essence of time, I would like to stress to the upcoming panels, we do want to try to have all testimony delivered, and we will adjourn roughly about 12:30.

Panel II – State Representatives

Representative Riley: Panel II consists of the state elected officials and testimony about what we've been doing. We are going to consolidate our presentation in order to move on to some of the most important testimony and that is from panel III and IV. So with that, we will move right into panel II. Representative Rita has been very, very influential in work regarding the importance of the I-57 and I-294 interchange. Rep. Rita, I will give you the floor; give us some idea of what is going with that.

Representative Rita: Thank you. I guess I need to take care of this since Clayton Harris didn't announce anything regarding the 57/294 interchange and what is going on there. We had a public hearing with the Tollway committee in Blue Island on April 12th; much like this and a lot of testimony and a lot of support for it. That project has been around for about 15 years. It was put off on the side, as noted in Congressman Jackson's letter. Most recently, we met with IDOT and the Tollway in Springfield in terms of securing a commitment for entering Phase II. We are nearing ending Phase I engineering, and in order to move forward, we needed a commitment of roughly \$15-\$18 million.

In the past there has been one commitment from IDOT which has shifted. As to the other funds, we don't know where they are. In that meeting, we are also able to get a commitment from the Tollway. The Tollway has been working very well with us and the other representatives from the Southland. Representative Riley and I talked about this

project moving forward. They also committed they would come up with the 10% in construction costs when we got to that point with the 80/20 split for funding. So, we are waiting for IDOT on a commitment for Phase II engineering. I've had many talks with Speaker Madigan about this project and he is in support. We've had almost every mayor in the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association and the South West Suburban Mayors & Managers in support of this project. He is well aware of all the support of this.

As we move forward with our budget negotiations in Springfield, this is one of the priorities for our region that all the representatives have been working on. If we get the commitment for Phase II engineering, we will be closer to having this project. A lot of this is contingent on funding for Phase II engineering. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Representative Riley: Questions for Representative Rita: No questions? Thanks for your testimony.

Rep. Marlow Colvin could not be here. But one of the things that Marlow Colvin has been involved in are issues on accountability in transit services. There is one thing to talk about all the needs that we have. Again, we are talking about spending the taxpayer's money and regarding transportation and transportation infrastructure. These initiatives will cost a lot of money, and issues of accountability will have always have to be addressed.

Rep. Colvin has done quite a bit assisting us on the mass transit committee. Rep. Julie Hamos is the Chair of the Mass Transit Committee who has been helpful with regard to these issues. I just wanted to be sure to mention that, moving forward. As I said, the committee as a whole has been involved in a lot of issues; funding formula changes, regional equity that this subcommittee is dealing with and many other issues germane to the overall transportation bill.

I have spoken many times with Representative Howard about transit-oriented development; specifically a TOD project for 95th and Cottage Grove. This, of course, is at the Metra Electric station at Chicago State University. This would be an economic and convenience boon for that area. It would also add a modicum of security to the area while also facilitating transportation to the burgeoning enrollment at that school. As a former trustee in Olympia Fields, I know first hand about the TOD process. We were one of the first municipalities in this area, who actually developed a TOD that is doing quite well, right now. There will be testimony from the Village Manager of Olympia Fields in panel III coming up about that.

Rep. Howard, why don't you speak a little about the Chicago State idea.?

Representative Howard: Well, on the issue of Chicago State University, I am interested in things that will help the university move forward and to overcome that transit solution. We want our young people in that area to have the best ability to get back and forth to and from that institution. We are certainly hopeful that whatever benefits there are, they come as soon as possible. But we don't have to be as diligent with that, because we have probably should concentrate more quickly on the Red Line issue. Those are where the dollars and need are. I am working very closely with that and glad to hear they are making some decisions about at least three of the options that will essentially expand 95th Street out to 130th; so I am very happy about that. I am still going to say this one more time to the Service Boards; pay more attention to the issues facing this region.

Representative Riley: Thank you for your testimony. I'm glad our colleague, Paul Froehlich is here. Representative Froehlich, would you like to add some comments about our activities in Springfield.

Representative Froehlich: Thank you Mr. Chairman, I am from northwest Cook. The headline in the Daily Herald today is "Doomsday for Mass Transit". It points out that the Governor said that he would veto the sales tax hike that will essentially fund the bill. Based on that pronouncement, the Speaker has doubts about its' passage. I have an alternative that I think is more politically feasible. I invite everyone today, and I think what we could pass, is a binding tax referendum on the February ballot in the six county region, asking voters would they approve a ¼% sales tax for transit funding.

Now the precedent is there in that the RTA was created by binding referendum. Now I know people in the transit agencies would prefer for the legislature to raise the taxes. Like I say, just hypothetically, in case that doesn't happen, this is another alternative that I think our counties would be willing to vote for. Even our downstate colleagues won't vote for any taxes in our area that won't even affect their taxes. But I think they could vote to put a referendum on the ballot so voters in the RTA region could make their own decision. That's my suggestion as a constructive alternative that is politically feasible; politics being, the art of the possible.

Representative Riley: That's true, Paul. But that's a big assumption.

Representative Froehlich: Well, politically it's an easier goal than if we're going to raise taxes in the legislature, for a bunch of reasons. But you know, my attitude is the RTA and the transit agencies can make their case to voters better than they would have had a shot of getting the sales tax approved through the legislative process.

Representative Riley: Thank you for your testimony.

Panel III – Local Elected Officials

Let's move to panel III, local officials. Members of panel three, please come up on stage.

We have Ed Paesel, Executive Director of the South Suburban Mayors & Managers Association (SSMMA), Mark Stricker, Village President of the village you are in right now, Matteson We have Dwight Welch, Dwight Welch is the mayor of Country Club Hills. Dave Mekarski, the village manager for the Village of Olympia Fields representing President Linzey Jones. I don't see Mayor McCowan; is Al Penn here? We have Al Penn who is a former village trustee in the Village of University Park, representing Mayor Al McCowan.

Panel III is basically charged with discussing the importance of mass transit and the general transportation investments in the Chicago Southland. They will discuss what transit means to this area and talk about some of the projects they are involved with. They will speak on transit needs and the physical, social and economic development impact on the area. I know you all well. I know what Mayor Stricker will do (*laughs*); but please try to keep your comments to five minutes and we will come back for questions. I'd like to start with Ed Paesel with SSMMA.

Ed Paesel, Executive Director SSMMA: Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of this committee. I would like to briefly mention that the SSMMA represents 41 communities in Southern Cook and Will Counties. There are over 650,000 residents in those areas. We are among the fastest growing areas in the Chicagoland region and we have communities that make up (*inaudible*)... over last several years, and we urgently need redevelopment and transportation to these communities. Our top two priorities; which is a consensus of why we all are here, are education reform and transportation.

It is very difficult to separate one mode of transportation versus the other and we need to have investment in highway funding. The I-57/294 interchange proposal that you mentioned as well as the development of US-30 from Matteson to the New Lenox area are important initiatives. The airport has been discussed many times and we need action on that quickly. We are all vying for transportation projects in the region.

As far as the CREATE program that you mentioned, the South Suburban areas' economy is built on transportation; not only highways, but freight rail and commuter rail. The economy needs these investments. So, we absolutely support the CREATE rail program because by improving the movement of rail freight, we are not only improving the freight economy, we are also helping mass transit when the train runs on time and does not adversely affects vehicular traffic and everything else. I will be talking the rest of my time talking about transit.

The transit priorities for the South Suburban area which have been endorsed are extremely important. Our renewed priority is the South East Metra commuter rail line, which would service the eastern part of the South Suburbs and northeastern Will County. That's our top number one priority. Secondary will be the Star Line in Joliet and east to the State Line. We cannot forget the existing travelers with new rail cars on the Metra Electric. (*inaudible*) ... without action by the General Assembly, in terms of a new capitol program would be a travesty. Our rail stations needs to be improved. There are many improvements in the transit area that our mayors are supporting.

I would like to also include along all the proposals that are out there; first, we do need a new capital program. The General Assembly needs to take action on a capitol program that would include not only funding for transportation, highways, commuter rail, but also school construction.

In terms of operating funds, in general, the SSMMA's executive committee met last week. We support SB 572 because all three Service Boards need help and need more operating revenue. But capital is needed too to keep the promises that were made to the southern suburbs. Promises have been made to our legislators and more importantly our residents; that if additional funding comes we've been told for years, that you're next, you're next. So we are going to be the ones getting hurt the most by a do nothing approach by the Governor.

Finally, I would say in terms of proposals, is that there is a proposal on the table that involves the collar counties' ¼% sales tax that would go to the counties to decide how to spend for it transportation and related activities. We would urge a similar ¼% sales tax for suburban Cook, not to the county, but to the Council of Governments who have transportation improvements. Our transportation committee is chaired by Mayor Mark Stricker of Matteson, who has a proven track record of carrying out transportation projects to the best of his ability. And I hope you would consider that change in the legislation. Thank you very much.

Representative Riley: Thank you for your testimony. Now, for the next four people, one of the things I want to stress is each one of these mayors, and public officials and trustees come from areas that are destinations. Each one of these villages has major malls, major entertainment venues, and major educational venues. That's very, very important to consider when talking about transportation funding and services. With that in mind, I want you to introduce you to Village President of Matteson, Mark Stricker.

Mark Stricker, Mayor of Village of Matteson: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Paesel has touched on many of the points that are extremely important to our communities. I would concur with many respects involving the communities. I have probably been in more south suburban communities since I was born and raised here and have been

involved in various aspects of community life. It is interesting to hear some of the comments by some of the individuals who are here today; to hear some of our concerns and issues.

That's why we're here today, for our communities. The south suburban area, and I go back far enough to the Safeway bus line, I rode that bus line as a kid. I rode the fire trucks and worked for the railroads. Let me explain, there are a lot of interests and knowledge about the transportation concerns that we have and they are real. We are on the front lines and the trenches for bringing these services for our constituents.

We need revenue for our roads. Sometimes, I hear that we don't have our act together. To the contrary, we do have our act together and we are very supportive of one another. We believe in one another. We recognize the fact that things don't stop at the boundary lines of the cities. I'm going to express a few thoughts regarding transportation.

There is a lot discussion about gaming issues and casinos and so forth. Some of the proposals included revenue from the sale of the 10th casino license to help pay for transportation projects. We should distribute the current revenue from current casinos. Why should the funds only go to a couple of communities? Nobody is too concerned about where the boat will go. Well, let's share that wealth; up and down the state. It is the responsibility of the legislature to determine that. Why can't we share in those opportunities that are out there. Yes, some communities are doing extremely well. But transportation is significantly, significantly important to this area.

All you have to do is come across the southern part of Lake Michigan and the South Suburban area. The highway, transportation through buses or whatever it is, is important in the Southland, and I think it is time we step up to the plate, and refer to the Chicago suburban area as the Southland, period. Recognize this region and know that we have very specific needs that are important for our region. That's my concern.

You talk about economic development. What businesses are going to move here for construction, for manufacturing if they can't get their raw materials to the site or if they can't get their finished products to the market? It's got to go mostly by freight, or highway. We have to continue to build.

There are a number of other things that I can go on about. I have been on the transportation committee since 1981. Yes, we have been very successful in many aspects, but we need your input, your leadership, to help continue the programs that we'd like to see completed, whether it's the airport, commuter rail services, or even freight rail service. We need economic investment. When the I-355 east extension is built, it will help this area. We need for the western suburbs to come to our areas for work,

employment, and business opportunities, so I want to put that I'm also a graduate of Chicago State University.

Thank you. Think about the needs of this area and put that on the number one priority. I appreciate your leadership, and I thank you for the opportunity for addressing our concerns and obviously, we can go on for hours and continue with a whole host of activities that are needed and there are other people who need to speak.

Representative Riley: Thank you for your testimony Mr. Stricker. Next we have Mayor Dwight Welch; Mayor of Country Club Hills.

Dwight Welch (Mayor of Country Club Hills): Thank you for having me here today. On behalf of the people of Country Club Hills, I want to thank you and other people from the Southland. I am just like the other mayors, very concerned. I was at Charter-One Pavilion last night with my girlfriend and we were watching a concert. We were watching a heavy metal band and I'm not into that. What I noticed though, when I was leaving, I got out of there so quickly, so fast. I couldn't hear, though. I tell you what, the transportation network in downtown Chicago is superb. If you are in a car, you scoot right out. And I want to see that continue south, continue into our area.

I always preface, if you combined the population, the South Suburbs would be the 15th largest city in the nation; bigger than San Francisco, if the South Suburbs were a city. And that's what I think a lot of people have to put into perspective. What we are today, and what we will be. At our growth rate, we will be 50% bigger, according to all studies in less than 30 years.

I thought it was interesting, IDOT's comments, and I worked hard with them on a number of issues for my community. (I'd like to see) Peotone in the air traffic pattern and contributing to air transportation in the nation, and I think that we have the opportunity to do something south that is all part of that engine, that economic engine that is coming whether you want it or not. I know there is a political fight over it; but it's going to happen and we've got to prepare for it.

So, I'm going to on for a couple of topics here because I think it all mixes in. Recently, in the newspaper, Alderman Ed Burke and the City of Chicago wants to put a congestion tax of about \$8 to go downtown. It is similar to what London has done. You know that would be great and people would wake up and to find the jewels of this region are in the suburban areas; the surrounding areas. And those jewels have to be taken care of. Our transportation lines are by far the worst maintained, the worst cared for.

I thought it was interesting what you had said, Mr. Chairman; that the different service boards should stay. I think there is only one left and the rest all took off. They really

don't want to hear what we have to say. That, I think, should be in the record, because if they did they should still be here. They've left us and they said they'd be here. I think it is just another slap in the face of the South Suburbs.

Again, we are a good area, a strong area and what we want is important too. And we really appreciate you giving us the opportunity to give this today.

One of the things that we do in Country Club Hills, is we have a bus company. We chose to spend our taxpayer money to go and buy buses, and we have four buses and three drivers, with one back up bus. And we got another bus coming; and soon we will have four drivers. We run just as many rides as Rich Township buses. And what I'd like to see, right now, there are \$100 million for senior transit riders and \$20 million for Suburban Mobility fund for workers. I'd like to see that start flipping. It's really nice to move your seniors and that is a good thing.

But we need to start moving the workers through PACE, and Metra and everyone else can't do this for us, even the RTA. We need to do this ourselves. Take those funds and start looking at flipping those funds over where there are more funds to suburban mobility purposes.

Having said that, I would like to see that change to maybe the figure \$50 million for seniors and \$50 million for workers. Now, the seniors are growing and they are great voters, and that's true. I've got 23% in my town and I also know they supply dollars to the area to make the area better and the seniors can't enjoy the area if it transit doesn't grow with it. Our schools, all those ancillary services, public safety; that all is driven by tax payer dollars and seniors are benefiting from that and they should. But there comes to a point in life that we got to make sure that the growth continues. You have less and less people (to provide the tax dollars). Al, you're a Chairman. You're a statistician. We have a less and less people, making less and less money on a pro-rata basis and we have to change that, Al.

We have an opportunity in the Southland to do that. Representative Howard, I think technology is a great thing. We've got the I-355 corridor. We need to think about doing something like that out here. We could develop a corridor right along I-57, where we focus those ideas. You have your ideas for your committee, I'm transportation.

And there's the part I don't get and lots of people don't get this. We have in the South Suburbs a cross roads of opportunities. We have the two major links of the entire nation I-57 and I-80, crosses Country Club Hills and Oak Forest, crosses right there; and yet we are not, we are not capturing it. Right now, IDOT is very graciously looking at putting exit ramps on there with us, of course us fronting the bill on that.

We just put up an American flag, 165 feet tall, one of the biggest flags in the Midwest. We did that because we wanted to be a sign there in the back of our new fire station, which says the City of Country Club Hills, so people know where we are at. It's an identity thing. It is a pride thing. It is two things; the American Flag and our South region.

And my point sir, I won't belabor it any further. Other than this, we really need to stop being a step child to the system. And Congressman Jackson is right about a lot of things. Some things can be a little fudgy politically, but he's right about a lot of things. One of the things is that we are not considered unless we start making more noise than anyone else. And I don't want to do that. I want to show them, that right now in Country Club Hills, we just built a half million square feet of retail and that's a whole lot. We are in the process of building an outlet mall. We're in the process at looking and building a new 10,000 indoor seat coliseum, just like the Allstate Arena up north. We can do this, I won't have to go to Charter One pavilion with my girlfriend and have my ears blown out. I can go to Country Club Hills and do this; and so can the South Suburban region, the rest of us. We are losing the Tweeter Center. We are losing the amenities that we used to brag about. That's going by the wayside, they're selling that. We need to start focusing on our region; our transportation will be the key and it will take the help of the people.

One final note, a number of businesses in our new area, have grown and we will be over a million square feet. By the way, half of them came in one year, in one year. It is phenomenal, on the largest of tract of land and the best intersection in the world.

What we need to do is start focusing on the South Suburbs. We are one decision from the state that can make a lot of money. I've got to thank the Governor and the House Speaker for the things that they have done for us when we're down in Springfield. But we don't always need to do that. We're a great area, we're a big area and we're united. Thanks very much for this time.

Representative Riley: Thank you for your testimony Mayor Welch. As you were talking about going downtown to Charter One Pavilion to get your ears blown out, and you can do it at your venue, I thought you were going to say, that you can go to South Suburban Hospital to be taken care of (*laughs*). Thank you for your testimony. Next we have Dave Mikarski, the Village Administrator of Olympia Fields. Please proceed.

Dave Mikarski: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you the Chairman, Representative Al Riley and members of the subcommittee for calling this hearing, and having it locally over here in the Chicago Southland communities. I want to have the record show my displeasure on the absence of the other transportation officials that have departed. Their departure displays a serious lack of concern. I think it shows disrespect for those elected officials and the problems that we face.

Representative Riley: Mr. Mikarski, one second. Out of the five people who were on Panel I, who is still present? Please stand. Well, Metra, RTA and IDOT. Metra, RTA, and IDOT are there still here. And let's please record their attendance for the record (*applause*). And the representatives who are not here, we can figure that out by subtraction. Proceed.

Dave Mikarski: On behalf of Mayor Linzey Jones and the Board of Trustees, I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and to provide some local perspective of some of the needs and some of the positive developments that are happening in the Chicago Southland with the agency representatives.

First and foremost, I want to give you a short perspective of Olympia Fields and its situation in regards to mass transit. Olympia Fields enjoys two rail facilities, the 211th street station at Lincoln Highway and the 203rd station, which just recently re-opened. I want to thank the Metra officials for that. It is a state of the art, 550 lot commuter parking facility. Beautifully landscaped; it is situated directly off Kedzie Avenue near our recent \$8 million reconstruction of Kedzie Avenue.

What I would like to do is do a quick overview of some of the power of planning that is occurring in Olympia Fields. We have been able to do this with both the RTA and Metra. We're moving forward with additional planning. Chairman, as you well know, as a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners, you know that no development can take place without solidifying the plans through a collaborative process in the community. To that end, the RTA has actually worked with the Village of Matteson, the Village of Park Forest, and the Village of Olympia Fields, with \$85,000 of grants eligible from RTA and Metra for a transit-oriented development analysis.

Let me just show you some of that progress of that planning process. The first layout I want to show is an example of some of the coordinated planning, transit work and development that is occurring with that \$85,000 RTA and Metra grant for the TOD analysis of these communities. What you see here are mixed-use developments on all four corners surrounding that station. Mixed-use development is being proposed in the Village of Matteson. Mixed-use development is being proposed in the Village of Park Forest. Mixed-use development is being proposed for the Village of Olympia Fields.

This is a well thought out TOD, and on Lincoln Highway, you can see the power of working together on a transit oriented development plan with the communities. Starting in 2008, plans for a restaurant in that area, plans for a 5,000 square foot banking facility and 100 high-end condominium units will anchor the area. This plan has forged a partnership between two south suburban developers and the community. Our RTA money is complimented by strategic TOD funding to make this planning possible.

Over at the 203rd site, the local development community was stimulated on the opportunity of new housing developments being built. You will see a brand new 77 single family unit which would be breaking ground probably in about a month. There will be 80 condominiums at an average price point of about \$269,000 per unit. These are 80 (1600) square foot units. I can show a photograph of it. These are photographs of the Metra facilities. You can see the four and a half story, condominium unit, all brick and stone and masonry material, and hard wood floors. This is something that we in the community should be very proud of.

We are very proud of our single-family owner occupancy community. This is an opportunity for our community to diversify, however. I acknowledge that, for two reasons. We'd like to bring in new professionals into our community, and also to find empty nesters. They have an opportunity to stay within the developing south suburban community. So compliments to the two agencies with regard to planning for an important study. I would suggest, as a recommendation, that this committee should support a transit oriented development analysis on every single station stop on the Metra Electric line. And have those fostered through the SSMMA to pull together communities that serve that facility and move our community forward in the right direction. What I am showing you is an example that serves the Village of Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields.

Now briefly, here are just some of the concerns that the Village President and the Board have heard from our constituents. There is still some concern on the condition of the platforms and the tunnels. The condition of the platforms and tunnels are in disrepair. There are no bathroom facilities. Those that exist are poorly maintained. Many of our residents have stopped coming to the station, not just necessarily concerned about the disrepair, but also security. There is a need, both in this study, as well in the future for available monies for a higher level of security. To that end, Senator Maggie Crotty has appropriated \$50,000 to a new surveillance program and I would encourage this subcommittee to work towards providing additional state funds to those communities for video surveillance and facilities on the Metra Electric Line.

Again, let me reiterate and thank the legislature for working towards providing restroom facilities and trains and we've heard Metra providing automatic payment systems. We have a brand new parking lot, but I still have a situation where we would like additional dollars to complete our design; we should have some additional assistance to do that.

Last, but not least, I have some concern over what is in the paper today about the lack of funds. Metra and PACE officials predicted brutal scenarios. I just want to read just one short passage on this. "Starting over being left out of funding discussions in Springfield, Metra and PACE officials brought fare increases and service cut scenarios that would be implemented if the General Assembly fails to provide more monies to transportation."

This would be devastating to the Southland. Executive Director Phil Pagano said that Metra and PACE faces a bleak future if forced to continue shifting capital funds to day to day operating needs. Metra would consider reduction or elimination of weekend trains and a reduction of weekday service after 9:00 p.m. Without an additional \$23 million in state funds, PACE said, it would increase all fares to \$2.00. They would also eliminate 23 fixed route services.

This can't happen. And I've heard the legislature state that need to ensure that there will be adequate funding. We need capital funds. Remember Representative Riley, I will report to you a copy of the 211th station to your subcommittee and I would ask that that recognition of that study be entered into the record for future recommendations for funding for our communities.

Representative Riley: By virtue of your testimony, that has already occurred. Thank you very much. Before we move on to Al Penn, I'd like to recognize and have stand, Mayor JoAnn Kelly from Oak Forest. Alright, time; we've got to get a lot more testimony in. I'd also like to admonish everyone that we really need to move on, because there has also has to be questions from the Representatives. I'd like to introduce Al Penn, trustee of the Village of University Park.

Al Penn: Thank you Chairman Riley for this forum and thank you Representative Rita, and Representative Davis. I want to clear something up, I am not a current trustee of University Park, I am a former trustee. I was asked to sit in by Al McCowan and Congressman Jackson. I want to focus in on two significant parts of my testimony today. One is the significant work which has been done in University Park. The second part, I have devoted to the third airport, which does have a name, it is called the Abraham Lincoln National Airport.

In University Park, we have just approved a comprehensive plan of development, which is pretty much centered around a TOD project adjacent to the final stop in the Metra Electric line in University Park. This has been on the table for quite some time, but Mayor McCowan felt it was time to put together a comprehensive plan that has some meat in it in terms of how we develop our town. The TOD project, which is probably 4-5 years away, was also put together with the help of a grant some years ago. It is looking at a significant single family development which is west of University Park, across the street from the University and across Governors Highway.

The other thing we are also looking at is an outlet mall or some sort of mall to attract business. University Park went through great pains at looking at the TOD in terms of development. We'd like increase bus transportation and coordinate with other municipalities with their development.

In terms of the Abraham Lincoln National Airport, some of you should have or may have read Congressman Jackson's statement this morning. I can only tell you that Mayor McCowan, who chairs the Abraham Lincoln National Airport Commission, echoes the same sentiment. We all know the importance of the airport to this region, in terms of what it means, in terms of 50,000 construction jobs. We also know what it means in terms of 200,000 jobs that would be created over the life of this airport. We also have to recognize what it means in terms of the quality of life, for not just for University Park, but basically for every town that sits along the I-57 corridor. It improves our quality of life. We all know what O'Hare has done for the northwest corridor. We also know what Midway has done for the western side of the City. But it basically confuses us.

It raises a lot of questions in terms of where is the State's support along with this project. This project is not a public project. It is a combination of a public and private project. It means that we have gone outside the norm; outside of the statehouse. We went outside the norm by not going to the federal government asking them to front this project. As a matter of fact, in working with the FAA, they clearly stated that private funds are where you need to look at when it comes to funding this project. So, we wonder, where it is, the Governor's leadership is on this issue. In the State of the State address in February 2005, he boldly stated he was behind this project. Since that time, we haven't seen anything in regards to the Governor's leadership.

Where is the leadership of President Jones? He claims to support the airport. He claims to want an airport. But basically, in the political process, he has basically dumped on everything possible to do this. We need massive support; that's spearheading by our local officials. I am not saying this from a municipal level, but a state level. We have state representatives throughout the region who support the idea of the Abraham Lincoln National Airport, but we need massive action and basically massive support in the State House. This is probably the most significant project, not only for this region, but for the State over the next 50 years. We have private money behind this and we can't guarantee that the private money is going to stay there forever until this project gets done.

Some people might say, well we have O'Hare, we have Midway, why is this airport necessary? Well, we look at the economics of an airport. For those of old enough to remember, O'Hare Field was an army base. There was nothing there, but basically in the 1960's, when Mayor Daley first decided that he wanted to be an airport there, the first corporation to move along the corridor was Sears and Roebuck. They have been there since the 1960's and since then, this corridor has grown to be one of the most massive business corridors, not only in the State, but also in the entire nation.

If you go to New York and you look at what the JFK terminal #4 has done, it basically increased the opportunity for jobs to be developed, for companies to grow and to create an economic infrastructure that would have never existed if in fact that terminal had not been built.

We are asking that there be an urgency created about these airport needs. Within 45 minutes, there are 2 ½ million people that live within the airport footprint. Within a 45 minute radius.

Who is standing in the way? The only people that can make that determination; the Governor claims he wants the airport; but all we get is promises and no action. Senator Jones says he wants an airport, he says he also wants a casino. But this has been no dialogue in two years from what we understand in terms of getting this issue fixed.

Our Senator, Majority Leader Debbie Halvorson claims she is working for every mayor's interest. But in her district, the majority of mayors are burnt out on that. Local elected officials who also compromise on this issue with inactivity and silence are, in their own way, trying to kill this airport.

So, we're hoping that the mayors and the trustees and state representatives really start to re-energize their whole focus on this airport. One of the studies that we have done indicate that, if you put this airport here, you are looking at a good transformation of the Southern Suburbs. Mayor Welch has talked about there wouldn't be a I-57 corridor. However, we want to make sure it gets done, without delay. Thank you very much.

Representative Riley: Thank you for your testimony. Now I'll open up the floor for questions. Question from Representative Howard.

Panel III – Questions and Answers

Representative Howard: Yes, thank you very much Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, I certainly feel your frustration. I have a statement. Let me be condescending as I ask you to beware of Political Science 101. Everything bill in Springfield, you need 60 votes to pass anything out of the House and 30 votes to pass anything out of the Senate. And of course, you must have the Governor's support after that. I have voted on gaming bills, although you probably couldn't have survived if you waited for Connie Howard to come to your boat or to a casino. I believe adults should be able to make decisions regarding what they want to do with their money. They are traveling to all parts of the State. They are traveling to other states to gamble. Why shouldn't we capture some of those monies for our revenue needs?

I would like to ask Mr. Penn, the last time you talked to the Governor; what did he tell you about the progress?

Mr. Penn response: I never spoke to Governor Blagojevich. I have only spoken to Senator Halvorson. As a matter of fact back in 2003, Senator Halvorson visited

University Park and spoke with the Board of Trustees. She claimed she was in support of the ALNAC position. She claims she was in support of Congressman Jackson's fight. Shortly thereafter, after speaking with us, there was an about face in terms of where her support was on the issue. Will County was on board, and basically backed out in the discussion in terms of support of the airport.

The ALNAC position, Congressman Jackson's position, Mayor McCowan's position, and ALNAC's position is simple; the Governor stated publicly his support for the Abraham Lincoln National Airport. The Governor, since that public statement of support has done nothing. There's been conversation in the Congressman's office. There's has been conversations with the ALNAC in terms of moving forward and how best to compromise. There has been compromise, after compromise, after compromise that has been given in order to keep this project moving forward.

I think it is high time that the Governor meets the CEO of this city. He has executive privilege to make that decision to enter into an agreement with the ALNAC, today. That's the only thing that is stopping this project. Other people that have complained that they want to run the airport and they want to control the airport, do not have the natural resources to do it. It is not coming from Senator Halvorson. It's not coming from the federal government. We are bringing a private developer who is bringing in private dollars to build this airport. If the Governor wants an airport, he needs to act like he wants an airport and be a leader of this State and work to get it done. There is no reason for his inaction.

Representative Howard: Incidentally, Rep. Davis has also has (asked for) the Congressman's help. I appreciate your comments. I just don't want anyone leaving this room today thinking that the entire General Assembly is represented here. We have a fight against (*inaudible*) with our colleagues, asking them to understand that we need new sources of revenue, and that there be an income tax increase. We have one of the lowest rates in the country, I'm told. We say to them that we need any source of funding, but we still have to have 60 votes. Look at the roll calls, a few votes for those things are needed with regard to additional revenue. That's what we need. And look at those, (*inaudible*)... that are in need for those additional resources of revenue. Go to them; ask them the reasons why. There are a thousand reasons why.

Mark Stricker: Can I just make a quick comment? I know that the Governor announced his support two years ago. I was sitting next to him at the Martin Luther King Day program in Matteson. I remember because we sat side by side together. Someone in the audience asked if he supported the airport. He said yes, he did support it. And remember that was a couple of years ago. I've been tied to the airport (issues). If you have a family member who loses their property to the state for the purposes of building an airport, you may have some concerns. My daughter, son-in-law and grandson

headed south because of the coming of the airport. I relate a bit with some of the concerns, but I'm supporting this project. Okay.

And one other item while I have the mike, I would like to see the three transit bodies in the Chicago Southland area, PACE, Metra, and RTA work cooperatively for the general benefit of the entire region. I know each of them has their own specific areas that they are in charge of. I think there needs to be a bigger picture that they need to take into account for the general services that needs to be provided to our region.

Representative Riley: Thank you. Are there any more questions of the panel? Representative Froehlich.

Rep Froehlich to Panel: One of the communities I represent is Elk Grove Village. Just letting you know that I am in support of the Abraham Lincoln National Airport, and have been since I have been in the General Assembly. And I'm happy to be here today to hear about the issues from the Southland. I came out of respect for Chairman Riley, and we do have some alliances across regions where we can work together on a common goal.

As far as Ed Paesel's suggestion about the 1/4 percent which would be spent only in the region that it was raised. It seems to me, that there needs to be a two part referendum. One part for the 1/4 percent for the regional expenses. And than a second part for 1/4 percent spent only in suburban Cook. This can happen not only for suburban Cook, but also for the City of Chicago. My question to you, it's not 60 votes now, its 71 votes to pass a tax hike. It's fair to say, with the Governor already threatening to veto any sales tax increase, that its' a long shot.. So a referendum is your best bet. My question to the mayors and the trustees is; are you willing to work in favor of such a referendum if it was on the ballot? We all talk about a need for more revenue, so we can operate and expand and improve; but without more revenue, you're just going to see the opposite happen. There's going to be less being done. Question is; if you can get it on the ballot, will you help ensure that it will pass?

Mayor Welch: I certainly would and have agreed all along. I think there is natural growth of our assessed value and I've been capturing that every year, raising my levy and raising my levy 20% this past year, I'm going to raise it again about the same; because I'm taking that natural growth. That's a tax increase, but it is being absorbed by the natural growth. That's why Cook County is in a mess today and I know that from my previous 10 years as the Deputy Budget Director, we're in a mess over there because they never took the cut; a lot of people may think they have lot of money on the table. We need to start looking at taking natural growth and taxes that don't affect people. That's a great idea.

Ed Paesel: Mr. Chairman, really quickly. My response and I think that Mayor Welch has said in regards to support of a referendum, that is only if it is a last resort. Many times, municipal officials have been asked to take stances on tough issues. They generally don't want to take a stance on a tough issue, we're going to go to a referendum. With all due respect, the legislature and the Governor need to take a stance on this tough issues. Transportation, education funding; it is too easy to put it off and say well, let's go to referendum. They need to make the tough decisions. I would think that the first step is the Governor and this legislature needs to make the tough decision.

Representative Riley: To interject; local elected officials, lobbyists, community organizations and so on come to us all the time asking for additional state resources. Let's go on record about this. I think what you're saying is basically correct. But, often times, when we espouse revenue enhancements, the members are often are left twisting in the wind, as if they were the only ones asking for a tax increase. When we try to find revenues, we're the only ones out there saying that the things that people want cost money. There's a lot of legislators who are willing to go the whole nine yards to do that. What we're talking about is soliciting a revenue stream for viable projects that are tied to development. All we want is consensus and support behind our advocacy from those same groups. I think that is all that we would ask for. You're basically right in your other statement.

Representative Froehlich: I just want to add Ed, that the Governor has taken a position. His position is that he would veto if we pass it. Now our mass transit committee did pass it. I am one of the few Republicans on the committee who voted for the sales tax hike. But the Governor said he'd veto it. The Speaker has said this issue is dead. And I'm trying to say, well, quit or do nothing; or we can try another alternative that might have a chance of passage. I want to know would there be support if we can get it on the ballot, would there be support to try and pass it.

Representative Riley: I think what you heard, certainly, the elected officials out here would support it. We have some input by Mayor Welch.

Mayor Welch: I want to say that we would support that. I'm sure, I know the Southland would support it. We have been very supportive of our state representatives and our senators. What we're seeing, not so much from the state representatives, but we're seeing a big hand wave from the Senate. We're actually launching into a political dialogue this year, a number of us in joining together in shopping for new candidates that aren't supporting our legislative initiatives out here because they are not listening to us. They are listening to the four heads in the State House.

Representative Riley: Thank you Mr. Mayor. We're straying from our purpose here a bit, but thank you. Government in action (*laughter*). Thank you very much for this panel. We are going to move on to panel four. Thank you very much.

Panel IV – Chicago Metropolitan Agency on Planning

Representative Riley: I think we have Randy Blankenhorn, Executive Director from CMAP and Bola Delano, Deputy Executive Director of Economic Development, Bob Ginsburg, who is the Director of Workforce and Community Development, Jackie Grimshaw, Vice-President from the Center for Neighborhood Technology. Thank you. We'll start with Randy Blankenhorn from CMAP.

Randy Blankenhorn, CMAP: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I will be brief. I'd like to start on the premise that the future starts now. The future does start now. That is one of the reasons we had a long discussion about transportation; and we can pull this into a bigger picture. I'd like to start on the importance of this region planning as a whole. It is important to the South Suburbs and the south part of Chicago. What do we see in our future? How do we look to develop the areas? How do we look to grow? Growth is going to happen in this part of this region, and we can watch it happen or we can help transform it. Transportation is the key, without a doubt. I won't deny that at all. We need to have a shared vision. That's why CMAP has brought me here, to work with the communities.

At CMAP, we're working with communities to ensure that we have that shared vision. To ensure that when we think about transportation, we think of not just about how to get within the South Suburbs and to other major developments, but how to bring jobs to the South Suburbs. It is not just about getting on a train station. How do we bring jobs to the train stations. How do we use our transportation modes to bring development in the right direction. These are the kind of things we need to think about.

In response to Representatives Froehlich's question about where the support is; our organization was the first on the record saying we need a comprehensive capital program. We need new funding and we need to support new funding in whatever method we take to find funding for a comprehensive capital program.

Water and sewer, is just as important in many ways as transportation infrastructure. We need to look at this in a comprehensive nature. Our organization has been supportive of infrastructure projects such as the Illiana expressway and the 57/294 interchange which are critical in economic development growth in this part of this region and I will continue to say that. And with that I will stop and answer any questions that you might have. Thank you.

Representative Riley: Thank you for your testimony and we will have questions at the end. We move on now with Bola Delano with CMAP.

Bola Delano, CMAP: *unintelligible – (testimony listed herein is taken from power point presentation)* Thank you Mr. Chairman and state representatives. I just want to give a general overview of CMAP and its charge as we move forward. As you are well aware, we were two organizations in the past. There is coordination of information which is extremely important. That is one of the roles of CMAP. The role of CMAP is basically, that we share information and we link our knowledge and data provision as strong components to promoting economic development.

At CMAP, we are promoting community and economic development. In order to integrate economic development in land use and transportation planning, some of our activities include: providing research and data as a valuable resource to the region, supporting business attraction and retention activities in the region by providing technical assistance, encouraging and promoting community involvement in the planning process through coordinating roundtables and dialogues. Some of our activities include promoting affordable housing which is vital to the economy, advocating the protection of natural resources to ensure it is compatible with the economy and reducing congestion which makes the region more conducive to commercial investments.

One of the major things that you all have been talking about again, is about how this organization supports the various communities. In terms of equity, there are a lot of things that are happening here in the Southland. Especially population shifts, land available for development, employment centers and business parks, and transportation modes of the area. In conclusion, there is a potential for this region to advocate for regional equity within its transportation services. And we can help you do it.

End of tape.....