

chicago transit authority

historical highlights
photo history
of transit vehicles



historical highlights

1945

April 12 Metropolitan Transit Authority Act creating the Chicago Transit Authority signed into law by Dwight H. Green, Republican governor of Illinois, culminating a successful bi-partisan effort that began in the late 1930s under the leadership of Democratic Mayor Edward J. Kelly.

April 23 Authorization by the Chicago City Council of exclusive rights to the CTA to operate unified system of local transportation.

June 4 Metropolitan Transit Authority Act approved by referendum.

June 28 First meeting of Chicago Transit Board. Philip Harrington elected chairman. One of original members was James R. Quinn, former chairman of City Council Local Transportation Committee, who served on the CTA Board until his death Nov. 26, 1976.

Dec. 11 Placed first of series of orders for 1,275 surface vehicles (600 streetcars, 465 motor buses and 210 trolley buses) using renewal funds of the Chicago Surface Lines.

1946

July 29 First major street car route (Montrose avenue) converted to bus operation.

1947

Oct. 1 The CTA began operations after purchasing properties of two privately owned bankrupt companies, the Chicago Surface Lines and the Chicago Rapid Transit Company, at a net cost of \$51,000,000 for the surface system and \$12,162,000 for rapid transit system. A total price of \$75,000,000 for the Surface Lines included a renewal reserve fund of \$24,000,000. Purchase money came from first CTA revenue bond issue of \$105,000,000.

Walter J. McCarter became the first general manager.

1948

April 5 First rapid transit skip-stop ("A" and "B") service begun on Lake route.

1949

May 25 Ralph Budd became second CTA chairman.

Dec. 4 New Beverly bus garage opened.

1950

May 28 New North Park bus garage opened.

July 27 500 propane (liquefied-gas) buses ordered - - largest order placed in transit history.

Aug. 13 First of 720 rapid transit cars (6000 series) placed in operation.

Sept. 7 349 trolley buses ordered - - largest U.S. order.

1951

Feb. 25 Dearborn street subway opened. (Chicago's first subway under State street was opened Oct. 17, 1943.)

1952

Oct. 1 Completed unification of city's local transportation services by purchasing properties of a third privately owned company, the Chicago Motor Coach Company, which operated mostly in the boulevards. Purchase price of \$16,400,000 came from a second CTA revenue bond issue of \$23,000,000.

1953

Oct. 1 Rapid Transit right-of-way on North route between Montrose avenue in Chicago and Linden avenue terminal in Wilmette purchased from Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad with proceeds of a third CTA revenue bond issue of \$7,000,000.

1954

Jan. 7 Purchased right-of-way of Garfield Park route between Laramie avenue, Chicago, and Desplaines avenue, Forest Park, from the Chicago, Aurora and Elgin Railway. (Garfield Park route later replaced by rapid transit route in Eisenhower expressway.)

May 30 The last of the old red street cars replaced with buses (Cermak and Lake routes).

June 24 Virgil E. Gunlock became third CTA chairman.

1955

Dec. 4 New Forest Glen bus garage opened.

1957

Jan. 10 Mrs. Bernice T. Van der Vries became first woman member of Chicago Transit Board.

Dec. 1 Last wood-steel rapid transit cars operated (Kenwood and Evanston routes).

1958

June 21 Last streetcar operated (Wentworth route).

June 22 Rapid transit operations begun in median strip of Eisenhower (Congress) expressway as a new concept of incorporating rail transit in a highway route.

1961

April 19 Four-track operation begun through Wilson avenue station area on North rapid transit route.

1962

July 27 Rapid transit inspection shop opened at Desplaines terminal on Eisenhower route.

Oct. 28 Lake rapid transit route elevated between Laramie avenue, Chicago, and Harlem avenue, Forest Park.

1963

June 13 Order placed for first air-conditioned rapid transit cars (180 cars of 2000 series).

July 2 George L. DeMent became fourth CTA chairman.

Oct. 1 Major new bus overhaul facility opened at South Shops.

Dec. 30 For new Skokie Swift service, right-of-way between Howard terminal and Dempster street, Skokie, purchased from Chicago, North Shore and Milwaukee Railroad.

1964

April 20 New Skokie Swift service begun. This was the first rapid transit project to receive a demonstration capital improvement grant from the federal government.

Oct. 1 Thomas B. O'Connor became general manager, succeeding Walter J. McCarter, who retired.

1965

Aug. 18 Illinois State Legislature authorizes first reimbursement to CTA for its long-standing program of providing reduced fares for students in elementary and high schools.

1945-1978

1967

March 22 New transportation office building opened at 77th street garage.

June 19 New rapid transit inspection shop opened at Harlem avenue terminal on Lake route.

Nov. 30 First electronic cab signaling installed on Lake route.

Dec. 29 Order placed for 150 air-conditioned rapid transit cars (2200 series) for the Dan Ryan and Kennedy routes.

1969

April 10 First reduced fare for senior citizens (between 0900 and 1500 hours weekdays and Saturdays and longer period on Sundays).

May 6 Englewood elevated route extended from Loomis to Ashland. Modern station opened at Ashland.

Sept. 28 Service begun on Dan Ryan route in the expressway median. This marked the merging of the Lake route with the new Ryan service.

Nov. 6 Exact fare for bus routes started.

1970

Feb. 1 Service begun to Jefferson Park terminal on the Kennedy rapid transit extension.

O'Hare Express bus service begun in Kennedy expressway between Jefferson Park and O'Hare International Airport.

June 29 Northwest Passage opened to provide enclosed walkway and escalators for connecting the North Western commuter railroad station with the CTA's elevated station at Lake and Clinton streets.

1971

May 13 Michael Cafferty became fifth CTA chairman.

Sept. 14 Filed applications with the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Illinois Department of Transportation for grants totaling \$121,000,000 as the first phase of CTA's major modernization program.

Nov. 1 Suggestion Bus began city-wide tour to solicit ideas from the public for the design of new buses and rapid transit cars.

1972

Aug. 11 First of 525 new air-conditioned buses placed in operation.

Nov. 5 Reduced fare for senior citizens extended to all hours.

1973

Jan. 19 Clair M. Roddewig elected acting chairman of the CTA board.

May 25 Milton Pikarsky became sixth CTA chairman.

Nov. 8 Third rail replaced trolley on Evanston rapid transit branch. 50-year-old rapid transit cars of 4000 series taken out of service.

Dec. 12 Regional Transportation Authority Act signed into law by Gov. Walker, with one of the main purposes being to provide public financial assistance to supplement fare collections for paying operating costs of the CTA, commuter railroads, and suburban bus operators in six-county metropolitan area.

1974

Jan. 3 Placed into effect the unique one-hour transfer permitting unlimited use of 10-cent transfer as long as last ride begins one hour after time punched on transfer at purchase.

March 10 Sunday Bargain Fare put into effect.

March 19 Creation of Regional Transportation Authority approved by referendum.

June 2 Super Transferpass placed into effect for Sundays and holidays, permitting unlimited riding at reduced fare for 24-hour period.

June 17 First woman bus driver hired.

Aug. 1 Expanded and modernized transit information center opened.

Oct. 23 New terminal building at Kimball and Lawrence avenues of Ravenswood route opened.

1975

Jan. 31 Milton Pikarsky became RTA chairman.

Feb. 1 James R. Quinn elected acting chairman of CTA Board.

June 26 New bus service facilities opened at 77th street garage.

1976

Feb. 5 James J. McDonough elected acting chairman of CTA Board. George Krambles appointed general manager.

Aug. 22 Major project of installing electronic cab signaling is completed, providing the CTA's more than 190 miles of rapid transit tracks with the protection of safe and reliable signaling, either cab signaling or the traditional system of wayside signals with train stop trips.

Oct. 6 Inaugural run of the first of 200 new rapid transit cars (2400 series).

Oct. 14 First CTA bus stop shelter erected under new program of erecting 100 or more shelters a year.

1977

Jan. 20 Federal grants made to Chicago Public Works Department for extending Kennedy rapid transit route to O'Hare Airport and transforming downtown State street into a transit mall.

May 29 Culture Bus service begun as special Sunday and holiday operation serving museums from the downtown Art Institute to the University of Chicago area. This popular service was expanded in subsequent years to include routes on the near north and west sides.

Aug. 7 Expanded and modernized CTA Control Center opened in Merchandise Mart.

Oct. 5 James J. McDonough became seventh chairman of CTA Board.

Dec. 7 Sale of monthly riding passes through employers and other organizations authorized by CTA Board.

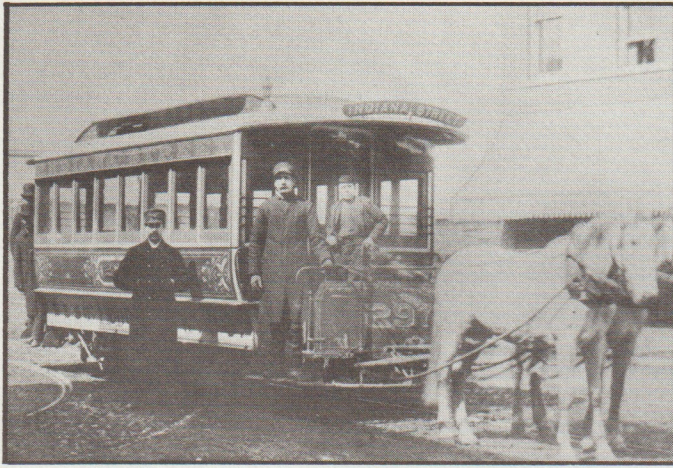
1978

July 1 Remaining \$20,601,000 principal of Series 1947 CTA revenue bonds (original total \$105,000,000) paid on maturity, with payment accomplished by use of funds in a CTA Debt Service Reserve Fund and proceeds of an emergency grant by the Regional Transportation Authority.

Dec 5 Telephones with emergency dialing capability installed on Evanston "L" station platforms as first step in program to install telephones on all station platforms.

Dec. 13 CTA Board authorized contract to purchase 300 new rapid transit cars, with option to acquire an additional 300 cars.

surface vehicles



Horsecars (1859–1906)



Cable car trains (1882–1906)



Four-wheel electric streetcars (1890–1914)

Red Pullman streetcars (1908–1954)



Open top double deck buses (1917–1937)

40-seat trolley buses (1930–1958)

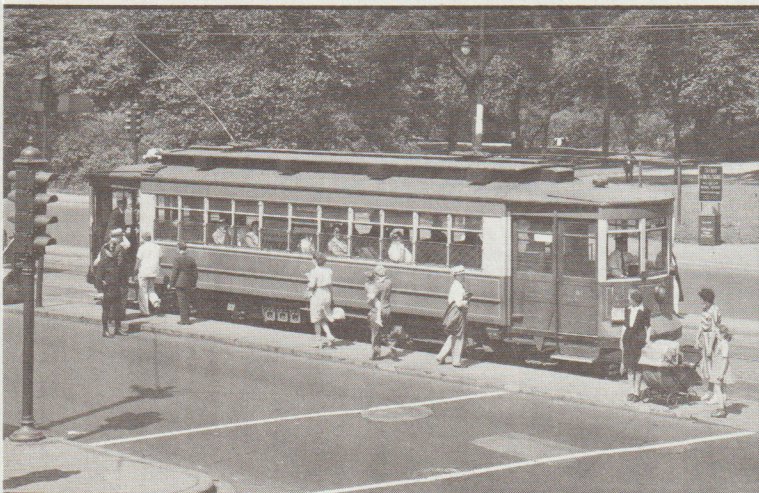
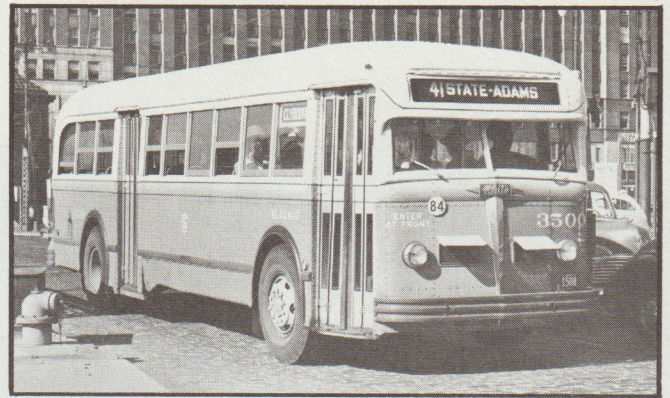


Photo history of transit in Chicago



Closed top double deck buses (1930–1950)



44-seat gasoline buses (1944–1963)



49-seat trolley buses (1951–1973)



Green Hornet streetcars (1946–1958)



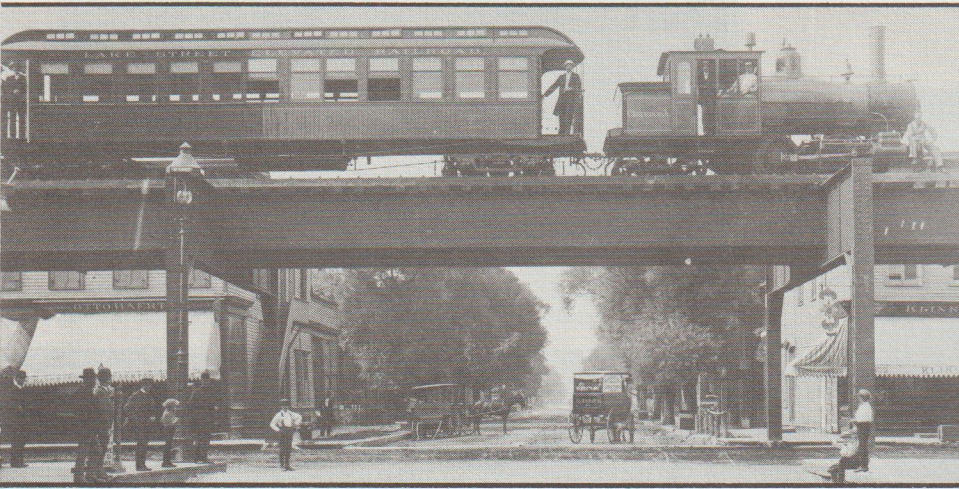
50-seat air conditioned diesel buses (1972 to present)

50-seat propane buses (1951–1976)

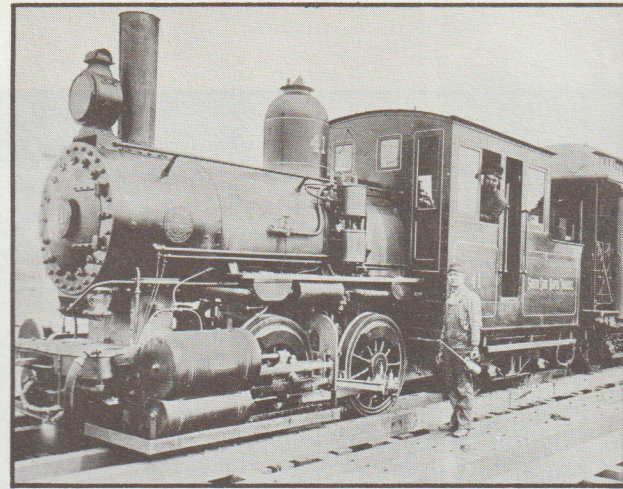
64-seat Big Bend articulated buses (1979 to present)



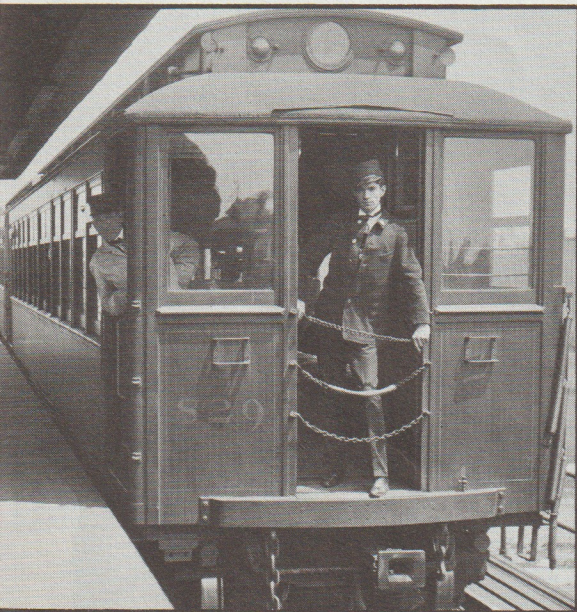
rapid transit cars



Steam engines, Lake Street 'L' (1893–1896)
Wood-steel electric cars (1895–1957)



Steam engines, South Side 'L' (1892–1898)



All-metal center door 4000 series cars (1914–1965)



World's first multiple-unit electric cars (1898–1930)

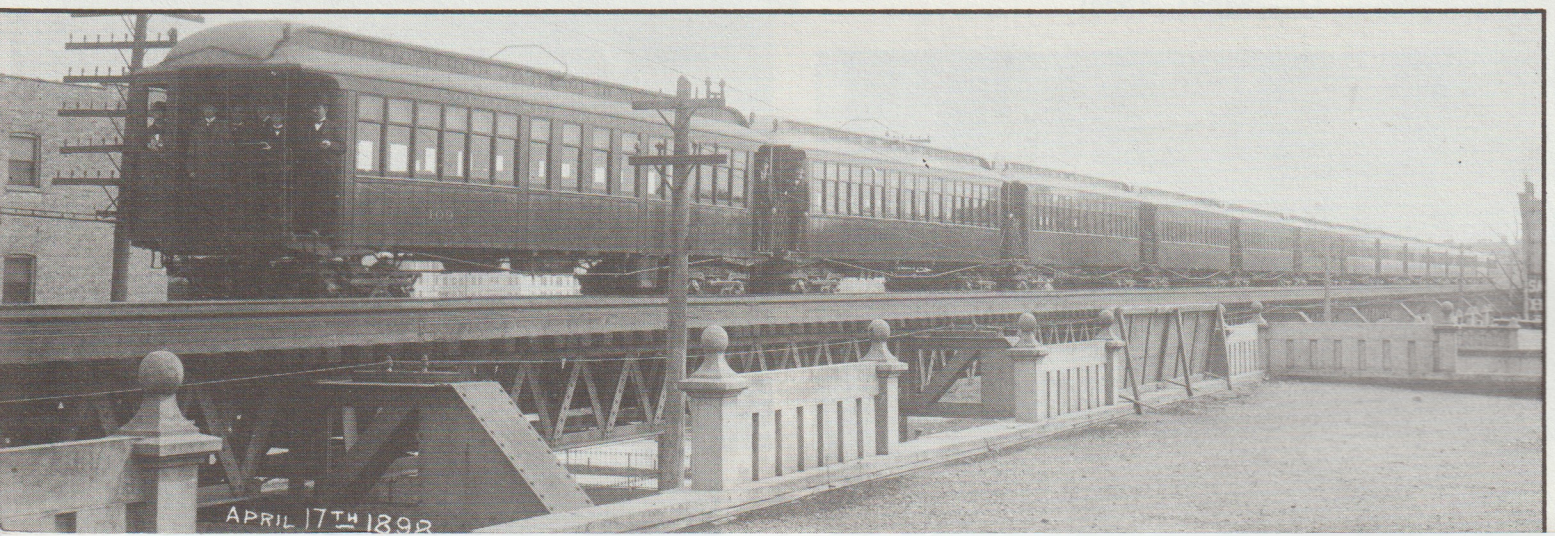
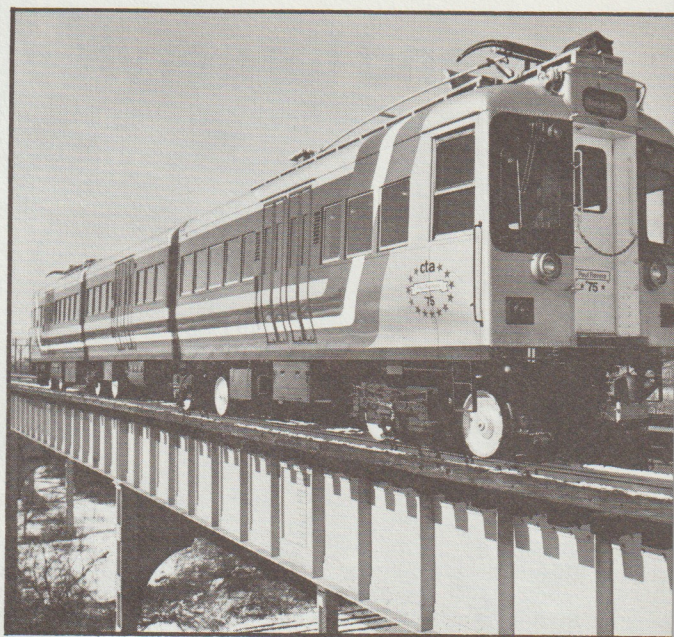


Photo history of transit in Chicago



All-metal 4000 series cars (1922–1973)

All-metal 6000 series cars (1950 to present)



All-metal articulated cars (1947 to present)

Air conditioned 2000 series cars (1964 to present)



Air conditioned 2200 series cars (1969 to present)



Air conditioned 2400 series cars (1976 to present)



cta and its service

The Chicago Transit Authority operates the second largest public transportation system on the North American Continent.

Weekday riding totals approximately 2,500,000 rides.

In 1978, the total for the year was more than 660 million rides.

There are 2,400 buses operating over 138 routes totalling 2,200 route miles. There are 13,400 posted bus stops.

CTA buses make more than 31,000 trips a day.

On the rapid transit system, more than 2,400 train trips are made each weekday.

There are 191 miles of track on 89 miles of right-of-way. The right-of-way consists of 50 miles elevated on structure and embankment, 22 miles in the median strip of expressways, 10 miles in subways, 5 miles at grade level, and 2 miles in open-cut below grade.

The CTA has a fleet of 1,100 rapid transit cars.

These cars operate over six routes with a total of 140 stations.

Seventy-five per cent of CTA riders

start their trips on buses, but there is a high volume of riders transferring between buses and rapid transit. More than 70 per cent of CTA riders use the transfer.

The CTA's service area is comprised of the 220 square miles of the City of Chicago plus 36 nearby suburbs, with a total population in excess of 4,000,000 persons. In Chicago, 99 per cent of the city's population is within three-eighths of a mile of CTA service.

Chicago is one of only a few cities in the world that has transit service around the clock. In the late night and early morning hours, nearly all of the rapid transit routes are in operation, and more than 50 per cent of the bus routes provide service.

The CTA has 13,000 employees, of whom the largest numbers are immediately involved in providing the service--5,500 bus drivers, 2,400 rapid transit operating employees, and 3,200 maintenance employees.

The Chicago Transit Authority, which was created by state legislation, began operating on Oct. 1, 1947, after acquir-

ing the properties of the Chicago Rapid Transit Company and the Chicago Surface Lines. On Oct. 1, 1952, the CTA became the sole operator of transit when it purchased the Chicago Motor Coach system.

The governing arm of the CTA is the Chicago Transit Board consisting of seven members. Four members of the Board are appointed by the mayor of Chicago, subject to approval by the City Council and the governor; and three members are appointed by the governor, subject to approval by the State Senate and the mayor of Chicago.

In 1974, after the enactment of state legislation and a referendum, the Regional Transportation Authority was created with jurisdiction over six Illinois counties in the metropolitan area.

One of the prime functions of the RTA is to provide and channel public funds to operators of local transportation in the six-county area as a supplement to fare collections in paying operating expenses. The recipients of this public funding assistance include the CTA, the commuter railroads, and suburban bus systems.

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