

SAFE STREETS FOR ALL. TRANSIT THAT WORKS.

SAFE STREETS FOR ALL, TRANSIT THAT WORKS PLATFORM

After the deaths of Rafi Cardenas (age 2), Elizabeth Lily Grace Shambrook (age 3), Ja'Lon Jones (age 11), and Taha Khan (age 5) in the summer of 2022 due to traffic violence, co-founder of Chicago Bike Grid Now, Rony Islam, created a Twitter page automatically informing readers of the number of traffic crashes that occurred on a particular day. According to that page, which uses Chicago Police Department data on reported traffic crashes, November 2022 saw an average of 185 crashes per day. Most of these crashes did not result in death but many of them involved injuries, either to those within the car or those outside of it.

The United States is in the midst of record levels of traffic crashes and traffic fatalities. Sadly, Chicago is no exception. In 2022, 301 pedestrians and 149 cyclists were seriously injured in traffic crashes along in Chicago. 2022 saw 27 pedestrian fatalities and 8 cyclist deaths.

At the same time, the Chicago Transit Authority is in a state of crisis: many riders have been stranded or unable to reach their destinations due to slow and unreliable bus service, a situation made worse by the significant shortage of bus and train operators. Meanwhile, a major financial shortfall looms on the horizon. The time for action is now.

In an effort to create a transportation system that is safe, reliable, and equitable, a coalition of transportation advocacy groups came together to create a transportation platform Chicagoans deserve to see implemented.

SAFE STREETS FOR ALL

LOWER THE SPEED LIMIT CITYWIDE AND RESTRICT TURNS ON RED.

Speed is deadly. A person struck by a car moving 20 mph has a 90 percent chance of surviving. If struck by a car traveling 30 mph, a person's chances of surviving decrease to 60 percent. At 40 mph, there is only a 20 percent chance of survival — an 80 percent chance of being killed.

Many pedestrians who are struck by moving vehicles are often struck when they have the walk signal and turning traffic has a red light. By restricting right turns on red we can prevent injuries and death.

The next mayor and city council should:

1. **Lower the default citywide speed limit** to 20 mph.
2. Work with state leaders to **create a 10 mph residential street speed limit for Chicago.**
3. Improve pedestrian and cyclist safety by **restricting right turns on red.** (Cambridge City Council just passed an ordinance to ban turns on red on November 7.)

BUILD SAFE STREETS FOR ALL AGES AND ABILITIES.

Streets are currently designed to move cars as quickly as possible, and the results are deadly. Safe streets are designed for slow speeds with narrow travel lanes, short crossing distances, and dedicated space for people on transit and bikes.

The next mayor and city council should:

1. **Make safe, accessible design the default** by passing an ordinance to require every street improvement project meet the highest standards of safety and accessibility.
2. **Create a citywide curb management program** that addresses needs for deliveries, drop-offs, and accessibility.
3. **Create and fund a serious crash rapid response team** that makes immediate changes to intersections where a fatal crash has occurred.
4. **Commit to an equitable maintenance approach** that considers sidewalks, bike lanes, and roads for snow removal and maintenance.

CONFRONT THE STATE'S DANGEROUS TRAFFIC SAFETY NEGLIGENCE.

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) controls many of the roadways in our city that see a high number of crashes. Frustratingly, the department often stands in the way of common-sense safety improvements.

The next mayor and city council should:

1. Work with state leaders to champion **reform at IDOT to advance safe streets**.
2. **Demand that IDOT adopt design standards appropriate for urban neighborhoods** such as NACTO, following the lead of California, Colorado, and Massachusetts.
3. **Support reform and repeal of state laws**, like truck turning radius requirements that favor largemvehicles over pedestrian and cyclist safety, to enable safe street design for pedestrians and cyclists.

CREATE A CONNECTED AND PROTECTED BIKE LANE NETWORK CITYWIDE.

Chicago's piecemeal approach to building a network of connected and protected bikeways is failing, leaving communities disconnected and creating dangerous conditions for people.

- Pass an ordinance requiring the Chicago Department of Transportation to **create a new citywide bike plan** and fund its implementation.
- Create near-term change by developing a comprehensive **network of neighborhood slow-streets**.

ADDRESS DANGEROUS LARGE COMMERCIAL VEHICLES.

Large trucks and other commercial vehicles play an outsized role in serious injuries and fatalities on our streets.

The next mayor and city council must:

- Place **limits on the size of commercial vehicles** and where they can operate.
- **Require safety features such as side guards and mirrors** for all large trucks operating on city streets, working with state and federal legislators as needed.
- Introduce enforcement strategies that **target companies with drivers who chronically drive, park, and operate their vehicles unsafely**. Any fines would be directed to safe streets funding.

TRANSIT THAT WORKS

Chicago was built around transit, and the “L” tracks over our city streets are iconic. We are fortunate to have such an extensive bus and rail network. However, American transit systems are in a state of crisis and the Chicago Transit Authority is no exception.

Riders have been plagued with “ghost” buses and trains, infrequent service, and long wait times. When buses do arrive, they’re often slowed down by being forced to operate in mixed traffic. Along with experiencing unreliable and slow service, people no longer feel safe or secure being on transit.

Another challenge facing the system is the CTA’s difficulty in hiring people to fill hundreds of vacant positions. The effects of unreliable and poor service and staffing issues are being disproportionately felt by the Black and Brown riders who are the core users of the transit system.

During the last election cycle, the slow speeds of Chicago’s buses were a campaign issue. Voters were promised miles and miles of new bus-only lanes that would help speed up bus service. Sadly, that promise was not kept.

Now Chicago’s transit system faces additional challenges. In 2023, Chicagoans will choose a new mayor and city council. By controlling a majority of the seats on the CTA Board of Directors, the mayor holds significant power over CTA’s decision making. It’s up to us to ensure that the next mayor and city council take action to create a world-class transit system.

INVEST IN AND SUPPORT CTA WORKERS.

Transit operators and front-line workers are essential parts of the community that provide a critical service. CTA employees deserve compensation that keeps up with rising living costs and more flexible schedules that allow workers to tend to child and elder care.

In addition, operator assaults have increased, and operators lack access to restrooms and break rooms which takes a toll on workers’ health. Potential workers often decide to look elsewhere for employment, such as driving for trucking and delivery companies.

The next mayor and city council should:

1. **Provide competitive compensation** for all front-line CTA employees, which would include higher wages and sign-on bonuses for operators and station attendants.
2. **Give operators more control over their schedules**, allowing for better work-life balance.
3. **Provide restrooms on all bus routes and break rooms at all operator depots**, which supports worker health and well-being.
4. **Create more secure cockpits for operators** and take fare collection off their list of responsibilities.

PROVIDE A SAFE, SECURE, AND COMPASSIONATE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL CTA RIDERS.

Many Chicagoans no longer feel safe or secure taking transit. Our most vulnerable and those in need of compassion are often being treated as afterthoughts by our city’s services.

The next mayor and city council should:

1. **Reinstate conductors on CTA trains** that are trained in de-escalation and social work best practices.
2. **Implement a transit ambassador program** staffed with people that not only provide social service support, but also act as representatives of the transit system itself to welcome riders and assist with customer service.

IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE FOR ALL CTA RIDERS.

Slow and unreliable transit is an enormous problem in Chicago, and poor service has led to plummeting ridership. It doesn't have to be this way. It could be much better, and it wouldn't cost our city much. When buses have their own dedicated lanes separate from cars, the impact has been nothing less than transformational. Additional investments in traffic signals that prioritize buses can provide further improvements in bus speeds and bus reliability.

We also need to fix tracker issues with buses and trains that have plagued riders far too long. Riders deserve accurate information in order to plan their trips. We must also make sure that everyone can access CTA service and move forward with the Red Line to the Far South Side.

1. We want to see the CTA, the city, and the state work together to **implement multiple corridors of dedicated bus lanes across the city.**
2. **Upgrade the bus and rail trackers** to help solve the "ghost" bus and train issues.
3. **Expand the Red Line to the Far South Side without delays**, prioritizing community engagement with historically disinvested communities along the project corridor.
4. **Make all rail stations and bus facilities accessible to everyone** and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

BREAKING DOWN THE SILOS – GREATER COOPERATION WITH PROBLEMS THAT ARE EXTERNAL TO CTA.

In order to improve transit service, CTA needs to approach all the issues outlined above with greater cooperation with other city agencies and non-profit organizations. A greater level of cooperation will help address mental health and human needs, increase safety and affordability, and improve service.

The next mayor and city council should:

1. **Bring together all city departments** to tackle issues on transit and with housing.
2. **Appoint new CTA board members** who have expertise in solutions to problems facing transportation and housing across the city, and the appointment process must be transparent.
3. Create a plan to **incorporate rider and community leadership and priorities** into decision making.

For more information, visit <https://safestreets4all.org>