

The full text of W. Robert Schultz III's comments during the Chicago City Council Committee on Transportation and the Public Way on Sept. 14, 2022:

Good afternoon, I am a young senior.

I am W. Robert Schultz, III, a campaign organizer at Active Transportation Alliance. Our mission is to advocate for public transit.

I moved to Chicago to live car free. I serve on Howard Brown Health Board of Directors. The major lesson? The importance of public transportation to Chicago's public health.

I am also one of the Advocacy Committee Co-Chairs of the Transportation Equity Network (TEN). TEN is a people of color lead Chicago coalition of 41 organizations.

During the current 117th Congress, TEN successfully garnered the Illinois congressional delegation's support for federal public transportation dollars. Improved ADA access on CTA rail lines will be a positive outcome. Recently, I met with our Illinois Congressional staff urging support for Rep Hank Johnson of Georgia bill for federal support for operations in public transportation.

While we campaign for increased resources for public transportation in DC and Springfield, it is incumbent upon Chicago's public transportation leadership to be transparent, visionary, and accountable. Racial equity, and climate justice must be central.

Even if someone never takes public transportation, they are dependent upon someone that does whether it's the barista at the coffee stand, or the nurse at the medical center.

We agree, hiring to adequately staff CTA is an issue.

There are two areas of where silos need to be broken.

First, finger pointing by CTA and CDOT should cease, and cooperation be valued. Alderman roadblocks to a robust city-wide bus priority network and bus rapid transit should end. CTA and CDOT need to increase bus speeds, decrease system wide travel times, and allow bus operators to concentrate on operations as

opposed to fighting rush hour and sport/entertainment related congestion. Give buses priority over other traffic. Implement the [Better Streets for Buses Plan](#).

Second, public safety. CTA must be transparent about security firm contracts currently amounting to over \$100M. Riders' input was lacking regarding expenditures, training, or evaluation and their efficacy in deterring violence and crime.

Public safety is having a robust infrastructure of affordable housing, mental health services, and jobs so that Chicago's problems don't spill into CTA as they do now.

Chicago should explore creative solutions beyond policing by involving substantial participation by other city agencies and community groups. CTA must convene a multidisciplinary oversight body to provide guidance to address the multifaceted issues the agency is facing. This body should include specialists in public health, mental health, security, homeless services, transit riders, etc. Potential solutions could be identified that can be piloted and evaluated.

Thank you.