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Pete Scales, CDOT
312.744.0707
peter.scales@cityofchicago.org

CTA Media Relations
312.681.3090
CTAMedia@transitchicago.com

**BUS RAPID TRANSIT IN CENTRAL LOOP EAST-WEST CORRIDOR
WILL PROVIDE BALANCED SEPARATION OF BUS, BIKE AND TRAFFIC LANES**

Designs for Union Station Transit Center Unveiled

The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) today unveiled the proposed lane configurations for the Loop streets to be used by the planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system that is scheduled to start service in 2014. Through careful planning and design, the lanes will provide a balanced separation of bus, bike and regular traffic lanes.

The agencies also unveiled renderings of the design for the new off-street transportation center just south of Union Station, which will provide key connections with other modes of transport to the BRT system.

BRT plans for the Central Loop East-West Transit Corridor include designated bus-priority lanes on two miles of streets: Madison, Washington, Canal and Clinton. The Loop BRT corridor will serve Union Station, Ogilvie Transportation Center, CTA subways and Navy Pier with more than 1,700 buses per day, making it one of the busiest bus routes in the nation.

BRT improvements designed to make bus travel more reliable and appealing to customers include: colored pavement markings and enhanced signage clearly delineating the bus lanes; level-boarding; queue jumps for buses at key intersections; distinct bus shelters; bus tracker digital displays; sidewalk improvements and protected bike lanes.

“By using a balanced approach to configuring the roadways for BRT, we will make cost-effective improvements without dramatically changing the current traffic setup,” said CDOT Commissioner Gabe Klein. “At the same time, we will provide transit connections to downtown businesses and major destinations more reliable, fast and easy.”

Under the proposed lanes configuration, eastbound Washington will feature a colored bus-only lane that will be serviced with island bus-boarding platforms. Two auto lanes will remain for traffic through the Loop. A bike lane against the southern curb would be protected from auto traffic by the bus lane and boarding platforms.

On westbound Madison, the bus-only and auto lanes would be similar to the current configuration with curbside bus-boarding platforms. The westbound protected bike lane would be relocated to Randolph Street.

"Washington and Madison are two of CTA's most traveled bus corridors with buses arriving every two to three minutes," said CTA President Forrest Claypool. "The new configuration will speed up six routes on these busy streets and fifteen total routes throughout the entire Central Loop BRT corridor, providing more efficient service for those making east-west connections in the Loop."

CDOT will construct and manage the Central Loop BRT project, which is being financed by a \$24.6 million Federal Transit Administration grant and \$7.3 million in local Tax Increment Financing funds.

CDOT is in the process of acquiring a surface parking lot located south of Jackson between Canal and Clinton to build the transportation center. It will provide sheltered staging areas for CTA buses and a vertical connection to an existing Amtrak underground passageway, allowing commuters to access Union Station without crossing at street level.

"The BRT program addresses the critical need of moving significant amounts of visitors and employees from commuter rail connections to The Magnificent Mile and adjacent neighborhoods," said John Chikow, President and CEO of The Greater North Michigan Avenue Association. "For the district to maintain its vitality, connections like this are necessary."

"Downtown Chicago relies on transit to have access to a talented and diverse workforce, millions of tourists, visitors, and shoppers," said Chicago Loop Alliance Executive Director Michael Edwards. "We support high-quality BRT to make downtown more competitive regionally and globally."

BRT improvements could improve overall bus travel times through the Central Loop corridor by three to nine minutes per trip. While buses are only 4% of the vehicles traveling through the corridor, they carry more than 47% of the commuters making trips in vehicles.

"The Central Loop BRT corridor will provide a new, fast and reliable transportation option to connect people to jobs and major destinations such as Navy Pier," said Metropolitan Planning Council Executive Vice President Peter Skosey. "This is a smart investment in Chicago's public transit network."

"By making the cross-Loop trip fast and reliable, transit becomes an even better option for Chicagoans traveling through downtown," said Ron Burke, Executive Director of the Active Transportation Alliance. "BRT is an incredible opportunity to provide the kind of transportation options that Chicagoans need."

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ONLY
BUS



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DESIGN RENDERING: ENTRANCE TO TRANSFER TUNNEL

VIEW LOOKING SOUTHEAST



DESIGN RENDERING: OVERALL VIEW

VIEW LOOKING SOUTHWEST