

# Making Way

*A Guide for Communities to  
Promote Pedestrian Mobility and  
Increase Access to Existing Transit*



**Regional  
Transportation  
Authority**

December 2012

This page intentionally left blank.

Table of Contents

About the RTA . . . . . 2

Purpose of this Guide . . . . . 3

Transit Access Hierarchy . . . . . 4

Making Way: Using Pedestrian Access Improvement Plans . . . . . 5

Steps to Creating a Pedestrian Access Improvement Plan . . . . . 6

Pedestrian Access Improvement Plan Elements. . . . . 8

Additional Contacts. . . . . 12

Funding Opportunities for Pedestrian Access Improvement Plans . . . . 13

Helpful Websites . . . . . 14



## The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)

is the oversight, funding, and regional planning agency for the transit service boards including the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) bus and rail, Metra commuter rail and Pace suburban bus and paratransit. The agency was created in 1974 upon the approval of a referendum by the residents of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will counties in northeastern Illinois. The RTA is a special purpose unit of local government and a municipal corporation of the State of Illinois. From the time of its creation, the RTA's mission has been to ensure financially sound, comprehensive and coordinated public transportation for northeastern Illinois. The CTA, Metra and Pace handle their respective transit operations and fare responsibilities. Each is led by a Board of Directors that determines levels of service, fares, and operational policies. The RTA's oversight responsibility is guided by the RTA's Board of Directors, who approve an annual budget and two-year financial plan that sets a strategic plan to guide all the agencies in achieving their common mission of providing the best transit system possible for the region. The Board consists of 16 members and a chairman appointed from the six-county region. The RTA Board also is required annually to review and approve a five-year capital plan, which is a blueprint of capital activities to be funded by the RTA and executed by the CTA, Metra and Pace. The RTA regional system is the third largest in the country measured by unlinked passenger trips with more than two million rides daily. The combined assets of the RTA system are valued at more than \$43 billion and include 5,640 buses and rail cars, plus 650 vanpool vehicles. The system covers 7,200 route miles and 381 rail stations in the six-county region that currently has a population of approximately eight million people.



## Purpose of this Guide

Municipal and local government officials often seek creative ways to enhance the quality of life and spur increased activity within their communities. One viable option is to focus on the local pedestrian environment and foster community improvements centered on existing Pace and CTA bus stops and CTA and Metra train stations. By making way, that is, creating pedestrian access improvement plans, communities can implement low-cost improvements that provide several benefits for local communities, their visitors and residents and the RTA transit system, such as:

- offer greater mobility options, especially for older adults and people with disabilities
- create viable pedestrian access to transit service
- improve the safety, vibrancy and connectivity of the pedestrian and transit environment
- enable a variety of environmentally friendly mobility options
- accommodate sustainability and livability principles
- address the last-mile issue, the first or final portion of a transit trip that is not served by traditional transit resources

This guide provides individual communities with strategies and examples of how they can take the lead in providing improved transit access in their community. By taking the steps of identifying the location of possible improvements, determining which improvements are viable and merit priority, and developing costs and identifying funding opportunities, communities can take the lead on pedestrian access improvements. Types of pedestrian access improvements include pedestrian walkways and sidewalks, crosswalks, and transit friendly infrastructure such as bus shelters and pads and bus stop signs. All improvements should be accessible and complement a community's ADA Transition Plan (a plan for physical improvements to address accessibility, see page 14 for more information).







## Transit Access Hierarchy

The RTA recognizes a hierarchy for accommodating access to transit stations, focusing on providing priority access to modes that are low-cost, have the fewest negative impacts on the environment and surrounding neighborhood and support the tenets of transit-oriented development and sustainable communities. This hierarchy applies to both the trip to the station and the trip to the final destination from the station. At the top of the hierarchy is access for pedestrians and people with disabilities, followed by bicycle access, connecting transit service access, kiss and ride access, and park and ride access. Accommodations for people with disabilities should be included for every mode of access, ultimately benefitting all users by following accessible, universal design<sup>1</sup> standards. This report details how individual communities, by creating pedestrian access improvement plans, can implement the top tier of the transit station access hierarchy.



<sup>1</sup>Universal Design has been defined as "the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design." This definition was developed by the architect Ron Mace, Fellow with the American Institute of Architects, and the founder of the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University.



## Making Way: Using Pedestrian Access Improvement Plans

Since some areas within the region were built based on auto-centric principles, the pedestrian environment was not included in their planning and development process. Other sections of the region incorporated pedestrian amenities, but heavy use over time and lack of reinvestment in pedestrian infrastructure has taken its toll. Recognizing that such settings are deterrents to pedestrian travel and transit use, pedestrian access improvement plans focus on effectively placing sidewalks, transit amenities and crosswalks to foster increased pedestrian activity and provide greater mobility to and around bus stops and train stations.

A pedestrian access improvement plan results from a short term planning process. By performing small scale inventories and 'spot audits,' basic improvements that will have a positive impact on access, convenience and safety are identified. The steps involved in creating the plan allow for timely plan completion and implementation. Very little data is needed to determine small scale, low cost improvements, such as: providing sidewalks at high pedestrian traffic areas, placing bus stop signs and shelters at popular bus stops, and installing crosswalks and signs where a significant number of pedestrians cross the street. However, an experienced engineer should be part of the process to ensure that proposed improvements are feasible and effective.



# Steps to Creating a Pedestrian Access Improvement Plan

Individual communities can take the following steps to develop pedestrian access improvement plans. Throughout the process, it is crucial to work with the municipal engineer and the appropriate jurisdictions (IDOT, County, etc.) to determine feasibility.

## STEP 1



### Project Planning & Organizing

1. Determine internal project manager, team members and delegation of duties. Commence project meetings.
2. Contact appropriate transit agency staff from CTA, Metra and/or Pace. Contact appropriate municipal, county and state transportation and / or public works departments.
3. Identify initial study area, set-up mapping capabilities. Mapping can be as extensive as the use of GIS, databases and geo-coding, or as simple as marking up a paper map.
4. Review ADA requirements and the community ADA Transition Plan.

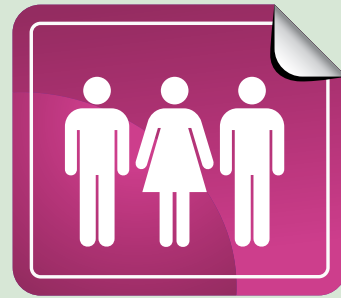
## STEP 2



### Data Collection

1. Through field observations and data collection, obtain information and create inventories that will assist in identifying location specific improvements. Improvements should consider safety concerns from both transit operations and pedestrian mobility:
  - a. Pace bus routes, CTA routes, and Metra stations within the study area. Ridership information for stops within the study area. Location of marked transit stops (work with transit agency staff). Identify if current bus stops should be relocated. (Service board staff and the RTA's RTAMS website, [www.rtams.org](http://www.rtams.org), will be beneficial during this step.)
  - b. Traffic signal locations and timings.
  - c. Presence of sidewalks: widths, surface condition, gaps, and connectivity.
  - d. Marked crosswalks and crosswalk devices.
  - e. Locations with high volume of pedestrian activity.
  - f. Average Daily Traffic (ADT) and street characteristics on major streets (speed limits, streetlights, curb ramps, etc.).
  - g. Past complaints and issues regarding access to transit stops.
  - h. Barriers and deterrents in crossing a street or using a sidewalk.

## STEP 3



### Public Involvement

1. Include stakeholders such as citizens, businesses, public agencies and citizen organizations. The public should be engaged to solicit input to create the plan, and to comment on the draft and final plans. Public involvement can be obtained in a variety of ways, such as on-line and paper surveys, public meetings and focus groups.
2. Gather input such as suggestions for improvements and obstacles and barriers to access.

## STEP 4



### Analyze Information & Prioritize Improvements

1. Using the information gathered in Steps 2 and 3, identify potential improvements and locations for improvements.
2. Rate the potential improvements using weighted criteria, as appropriate, such as:
  - a. Urgency and opportunity.
  - b. Type of treatment.
  - c. Demand.
  - d. Cost of improvements (work with the municipal engineer and transit agency to get appropriate cost estimates).
3. Identify possible deterrents to implementing the potential improvements, such as:
  - a. Right of way limitations.
  - b. Roads that are wide or have multiple lanes that are difficult to cross, have high speeds or complex intersections.
4. Based on pertinent criteria and presence of deterrents, rank the identified improvements.

## STEP 5



### Create the Plan

Once the improvements and locations have been determined and ranked, create the plan. The plan should document the steps used in the planning process, and identify the locations of the improvements. Include the ranking of priority improvements and where the sidewalks, transit amenities, crosswalks and crosswalk devices should be placed. The resulting plan should provide accessible features such as:

- Improved walking and street crossing conditions to access transit stops, and
- Improved pedestrian safety and convenience to transit stops.

## STEP 6



### Implementation

1. Consult with transit agency staff. Work with transit agency staff regarding bus stop signs, transit wayfinding signs, bus stop, and bus shelter placement.
2. Obtain governing board approval to approve the pedestrian access plan as an official planning document.
3. Pursue funding, using local funds or utilizing available funding assistance described in the Funding Opportunities for Pedestrian Access Improvement Plans on page 13.
4. Program the implementation plan. Place projects in the appropriate funding and work plan queues.
5. Install improvements as timing and funding permit.



## Pedestrian Access Improvement Plan Elements

Three common pedestrian improvements are identified in pedestrian access improvement plans. All specifications for these improvements should be ADA compliant.

- Pedestrian Walkways / Sidewalks
- Transit Friendly Amenities
- Designated Street Crosswalks with Street Crossing Devices



Sidewalks with ADA compliant curb cuts



Bus shelter with bench



A sidewalk separated from the roadway



Pace bus shelter

### Pedestrian Walkways / Sidewalks:

Clear, uninterrupted sidewalks can provide direct access to transit. Sidewalks should be separated from the roadway and provide a buffer between the pedestrian and traffic and other pedestrian amenities such as benches, trees and landscaping. Sidewalks typically have widths of five feet or more and should have accessible features such as curb cuts and markings.

### Transit Friendly Amenities:

Access to bus service can be further increased by clearly marking and efficiently locating bus stops and installing accessible bus stop pads and shelters. Train station access can be enhanced with wayfinding signage. These amenities improve the transit environment while enhancing pedestrian access within the entire community. Pace, CTA, and/or Metra should be contacted regarding the planning and installation of these transit amenities.



Sidewalks should provide a continuous path to the transit stop





Pace bus shelter



Crosswalk with pedestrian crossing signs



CTA bus leaving a marked crosswalk

### Designated Street Crosswalks with Street Crossing Devices:

Another key strategy to improve pedestrian access to transit is to provide crosswalks and crosswalk devices to aid pedestrians to safely cross the street. They establish the right of way for pedestrians to enter into the roadway and alert motorists to the presence of pedestrians. Crosswalks can be located at signalized or unsignalized intersections.

A variety of crosswalks and devices can be utilized, and their appropriateness is best determined by factors such as traffic volumes, roadway size, and budget constraints. Common crosswalk types include high visibility markings, which include white markings demarked on the pavement, using zebra or ladder designs. These markings can be used at intersections or mid-block. As budget allows, high visibility markings can be enhanced by adding permanent or portable traffic signs that state "IT IS STATE LAW TO STOP FOR PEDESTRIANS WITHIN CROSSWALK", electronic flashing yellow beacons, and at intersections, traffic signals and pedestrian countdown signals.

Raised crosswalks can also be used for pedestrian crossings. Raised crosswalks are flat-topped speed humps with added crosswalk markings and signage. By raising the level of the crossing, vehicles slow down through the crosswalk while pedestrians are more visible to approaching motorists.



Electronic flashing yellow beacon



Marked crosswalk



Pedestrian countdown signal



Pedestrian countdown signal device



Additional Contacts

When developing pedestrian access improvement plans, the following contacts and agencies may serve as valuable resources and possible partners. If pedestrian access improvement plans include improvements along county roads, please work with the appropriate county staff. Contact state transportation staff if needed.

Active Transportation Alliance  
Contact regarding local planning, policy and Complete Stations community engagement program  
Lee Crandell  
Director of Campaigns  
312-427-3325, ext. 395  
lee@activetrans.org

CMAP Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force  
Contact regarding bicycle and pedestrian concepts within the region  
John O’Neal  
Associate Planner, Planning and Programming  
312-386-8822  
joneal@cmap.illinois.gov

CTA  
Contact regarding improvements at CTA stations and bus stops  
Jennifer Henry  
Planner, Strategic Planning & Policy  
312-681-4143  
jennifer.henry@transitchicago.com

Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)  
Contact regarding improvement plans that involve state maintained roads  
James Stoner, P.E.  
Pedestrian Engineer, Bureau of Traffic & Electrical Operations  
847-705-4152  
James.Stoner@illinois.gov

Metra  
Contact regarding improvements near Metra stations  
Lynne Corrao  
Director of Community Affairs  
312-322-6494  
lcorrao@metrarr.com



Pace Bus  
Contact regarding information on the installation of Pace shelters, signs, and pads at Pace bus stop locations  
Doug Sullivan  
Department Manager, Marketing and Communications  
847-228-4264  
Douglas.Sullivan@pacebus.com

Funding Opportunities for Pedestrian Access Improvement Plans

Funding for pedestrian projects is primarily a local responsibility, but federal assistance may be available. The following chart details possible funding sources.

Program Name	Funding Source/ Local Adminis- tering Agency	Types of Projects Funded	Funding Share
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)	Federal - CMAP	Traffic flow improvements  Bicycle and pedestrian facility projects  Bicycle parking and bicycle encouragement projects	<div><div></div>80% Program Funds</div> <div><div></div>20% Local Funds</div> <div></div>
<b>Website Link:</b> <a href="http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/congestion-mitigation-and-air-quality">www.cmap.illinois.gov/congestion-mitigation-and-air-quality</a>			
5310 - Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities	Federal - RTA/IDOT	Projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate or unavailable  Projects that exceed the requirements of the ADA  Projects that improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance by individuals with disabilities on complementary paratransit  Alternatives to public transportation that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities	<div><div></div>80% Program Funds</div> <div><div></div>20% Local Funds</div> <div></div>
<i>The most recent Federal transportation funding Act – the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), was signed into law on July 6, 2012. This new law folds Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) funds under the Section 5307 formula funding program. Additionally, New Freedom funds are now under Section 5310, Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and individuals with Disabilities. For updated information regarding future funding cycles, please visit the website listed below.</i>			
<b>Website Link:</b> <a href="http://www.fta.dot.gov/map21/index.html">www.fta.dot.gov/map21/index.html</a>			
Transportation Alternatives	Federal - IDOT/CMAP	Facilities for pedestrians and bicycles  Safe Routes to Schools	<div><div></div>80% Program Funds</div> <div><div></div>20% Local Funds</div> <div></div>
<i>The most recent Federal transportation funding Act – the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), was signed into law on July 6, 2012. Under this new law, the Transportation Enhancements and Safe Routes to Schools programs have been renamed the Transportation Alternatives program. For updated information regarding future funding cycles, please visit the websites listed below.</i>			
<b>Website Link:</b> <a href="http://www.cmap.illinois.gov">www.cmap.illinois.gov</a> & <a href="http://www.dot.state.il.us">www.dot.state.il.us</a>			
Surface Transportation Program (STP)	Federal - CMAP Council of Mayors	Traffic flow improvements  Bicycle and pedestrian facility projects  Bicycle parking projects	<div><div></div>70% Program Funds</div> <div><div></div>30% Local Funds</div> <div></div>
<b>Website Link:</b> <a href="http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/council-of-mayors/stp-resources">www.cmap.illinois.gov/council-of-mayors/stp-resources</a>			



## Helpful Websites

The following websites provide additional information on pedestrian concepts and improvements. They can be useful in investigating pedestrian access improvement options and examples of successful projects:

**www.rtachicago.com/cp**

The **RTA website** houses information on the Community Planning Program, which provides funding for transit-oriented development plans, transit improvement plans, and integrated transportation and land use plans.

**www.rtams.org**

The **RTA’s Mapping and Statistics database** offers information on transit routes, mode of access, ridership and other useful information.

**www.pacebus.com**

**Pace**, the suburban bus agency, offers the document *Guidelines for Transit Supportive Communities*, to foster efficient, convenient, and accessible transit and transit amenities throughout its service area.

**www.transitchicago.com**

The **Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)** provides transit service to the City Chicago and 40 surrounding suburbs utilizing 154 bus routes and eight rapid transit routes.

**www.metrarail.com**

**Metra**, the commuter rail division of the RTA, provides the region’s commuter rail service. The Metra rail system comprises 11 separate lines running north, west and south of Chicago.

**www.cmap.illinois.gov/ada-transition-plans**

**CMAP**, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, has completed a Community Briefing Paper to assist local governments in improving accessibility by developing or updating their ADA transition plans to address necessary physical improvements that are identified in a self-evaluation. Following accessibility guidelines in public rights-of-way improves access for everyone, thus improving community livability.

**www.FHWA.dot/gov/**

The **Federal Highway Administration** website offers information on grants available for pedestrian and mobility improvements as well as updates regarding MAP-21 programs.

**www.bikewalk.org/pdfs/sopada\_fhwa.pdf**

This **FHWA** Guide provides information regarding accessible sidewalks and street crossings.

**www.atpolicy.org**

This website of the **Active Transportation Alliance** provides information on Complete Streets and other policy initiatives.

**www.cmap.illinois.gov/council-of-mayors/subregional-councils**

Information regarding **CMAP’s** subregional councils and related funding opportunities.

**www.Americawalks.org**

**America Walks** is a national resource which fosters walkable communities by working collaboratively to share knowledge, advance policies and implement effective campaigns to promote safe, convenient and accessible walking conditions for all.

**www.Walkinginfo.org**

The **Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center** (PBIC) is a national clearinghouse for information pertaining to pedestrians (including transit users) and bicyclists.

**www.transportation.org**

**AASHTO, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials**, is a nonprofit, association representing highway and transportation departments. Its primary goal is to foster the development, operation, and maintenance of an integrated national transportation system. AASHTO serves as a liaison between state departments of transportation and the Federal government.

**www.ite.org**

The **Institute of Transportation Engineers** is an international educational and scientific association of transportation professionals who are responsible for meeting mobility and safety needs. Through its products and services, ITE supports and encourages education, and develops public awareness programs.

This page intentionally left blank.