



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR EMANUEL AND CTA KICK OFF NEXT PHASE OF BLUE LINE MODERNIZATION

Belmont Blue Gateway and Modern Jefferson Park Station Latest Projects in \$492 Million Initiative Designed to Save Commuters Time While Increasing Blue Line Capacity

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. today announced the start of the next two major Blue Line station improvement projects, as part of the Mayor's historic, \$492 million Your New Blue program – the Belmont Blue Gateway project and the renovation and modernization of the Jefferson Park Transit Center.

“The Blue Line is in the midst of its largest modernization since it was extended to O’Hare over four decades ago, and today marks a major milestone in that progress,” Mayor Emanuel said. “By keeping the CTA moving forward we are keeping Chicago moving forward, creating good-paying jobs and ensuring our future is even brighter than our past.”

The Mayor and CTA also previewed station projects set to begin later this year at Division, Chicago and Grand in the Blue Line subway. In all, Your New Blue will rehab 14 stations along the O’Hare branch. When completed passengers will save up to 10 minutes on a round trip between downtown and O’Hare. Your New Blue is bringing brighter lights, cleaner, drier tunnels and, in some stations, a new elevator, improved entrances and original public artwork.

Mayor Emanuel and CTA are making a \$42 million investment to modernize two of CTA’s busiest rail-bus transportation hubs, benefitting thousands of people who use these facilities daily. Your New Blue is part of the \$8 billion in transit investments announced or completed under Mayor Emanuel, whose vision is to create a world-class, 21st century transit system that benefits the Chicago region.

The Jefferson Park and Belmont Transit Centers are valuable transit connections for the Northwest Side of Chicago, and are the fourth and seventh-busiest stations along the O’Hare branch, respectively. This will be the first time Belmont Blue has undergone a major renovation since it opened nearly 50 years ago, while Jefferson Park gets its first major upgrade since 2001.

“The modernization of the Belmont and Jefferson Park Transit Centers will not only improve the CTA travel experience for those who live and work on the Northwest Side, but these projects will create architecturally significant and visually appealing stations that enhance the character of their respective neighborhoods,” said CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. “This project aligns perfectly with our belief that an investment in transit is an investment in the surrounding community.”

Belmont Blue Gateway

Upgrades to the Belmont Blue Line terminal will include the addition of a new architectural steel canopy for the terminal, designed by the Chicago architecture firm Carol Ross Barney. The canopy will create a community gateway for the station and the neighborhood and will visually enhance the street-level entrance to the subway station.

The \$17 million project will also provide customers with:

- A more modern bus arrival and departure areas – featuring new, LED lighting, repaved surfaces and new signage - to speed bus boarding and a more convenient environment for pedestrians.
- A permanent prepaid boarding area to improve bus service and boarding times.
- Enhanced communications systems, including new Bus and Train Tracker signs, and an upgraded public announcement (PA) system to keep customers better informed.
- Additional windbreaks and people heaters to improve customer comfort.
- Surrounding streetscape improvements which, combined with the station improvements, will help create a signature transit gateway to the Avondale community.

The Belmont Blue subway station and bus terminal is an important transit hub in the Avondale community, providing access to the Blue Line and to the busy #77 Belmont and #82 Kimball/Homan bus routes.

The station provided nearly 1.8 million train rides in 2017.

The project is expected to create more than 200 jobs, and more than 45 direct, on-site construction jobs.

Jefferson Park Transit Center Improvement Project

This \$25M rehabilitation project will create a modern terminal that is safer, brighter, cleaner, more comfortable and easier-to-navigate, while visually enhancing the streetscape for the Jefferson Park community.

The upgrades for bus and rail passengers will include:

- Replacement of the bus terminal and creating bus boarding areas that are ADA compliant by widening the loading islands and adding audio assistance.
- Improved boarding for rail users to increase safety and additional cameras to enhance security for customers.
- Modern, updated bus and train canopies, new signage, new LED lighting, newly refinished platform surfaces and new exterior paint to enhance customers' travel experience.
- Architectural and art enhancements that improve the aesthetics of the Terminal and contribute to the identity of the Jefferson Park downtown community. This will include the installation of custom windbreaks at the bus terminal, with design provided by renowned conceptual artist, Jamie Pawlus (Indianapolis, IN). Aspects of the Jefferson Park community inspired the theme of the work.

The new bus terminal's accessibility improvements are another step in CTA's push toward 100 percent accessibility across CTA, a goal set by President Carter's All Stations Accessibility Program.

Jefferson Park currently serves 12 CTA and Pace bus routes, as well as the Metra UP-NW line. The station provided more than 2.1 million train rides in 2017.

The project is expected to create more than 325 jobs, including almost 70 direct, on-site construction jobs.

Project work at Belmont Blue is scheduled for completion in late 2018, followed by the completion of work at Jefferson Park in mid-2019. As with all major projects, CTA will work closely with local elected officials and community members to minimize impacts to customers and provide regular project updates and service impacts.

Your New Blue is the most ambitious service improvement project on the Blue Line since it was extended to O'Hare International Airport in 1984. Improvements made under the Your New Blue program will benefit the more than 80,000 daily riders who enter stations along the branch, which had more than 27 million rides last year.

The Belmont and Jefferson Park projects follow a number of completed Your New Blue projects, including the rehabilitation of eight of 14 stations and track improvements that increase service reliability for customers.

More project information can be found at <http://www.transitchicago.com/yournewblue/>.

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