

# Chicago Transit Authority

## Yellow Line Extension Alternatives Analysis Study

### Screen 1 Public Involvement

#### Public Comments and Questions (Appendix)

November 2008

**Comment No: 83**

**Topic Area: 3, 4, 12, 14**

**Received via: Email**

I am opposed to a CTA rail extension along the Union Pacific Railroad (and former CNS&M!) right-of-way.

- The alternative of bus rapid transit lanes along Gross Point Rd and Skokie Bl that would be more convenient to major travel destination underscores a fundamental weakness of the rail proposal.
  - The rail alternative represents a costly duplication of nearby Metra lines not only to Chicago but to outlying communities.
  - While a Yellow Line extension is a good deal for commuters, CTA fares cover a significantly smaller portion of the costs for the greater distance traveled.
  - The rail extension increases the financial burden on CTA for service outside the Corporate Limits, largely subsidizing suburban travel. Would Metra see any need to fund the current service or the proposed extension?
  - The rail alternative threatens rerouting current Pace connections with Metra and increasing costly competing Pace routes such as #626 to inflate ridership on the proposed extension to more justifiable levels.
  - How much of this is a die-hard attempt to undo a perceived mistake in abandoning the Chicago, North Shore & Milwaukee that was built to compete with the railroads and took advantage of economies that no longer exist?
  - How many more commuters can the Red Line absorb reaching into the suburbs?
  - Metra is capable of providing reverse-commute service with improved CTA and Pace coordination.
- I also oppose the idea of bus rapid transit lanes along Gross Point Rd and Skokie Bl.
- While BRT would enhance the existing #97 bus service, the volume of riders and buses hardly justifies, and greatly increases, the added road congestion time, fuel, and emissions resulting from reduced lanes.
  - Widening the streets for BRT would mitigate the traffic issue; but entail some possible dislocation and a radical change in streetscape.
  - The difference in travel time for the mile to Golf Road would not seem to be significant.
  - A BRT still requires a transfer to another vehicle after changing at Howard that discourages use.
  - If separate lanes are acceptable for buses, why not extend the Yellow Line tracks in an easement in the street for more convenient stations and eliminate the transfer?
  - A Golf Rd BRT, notwithstanding similar road traffic concerns as for Gross Point-Skokie, would improve on the existing local Pace #208 bus to Skokie & Golf and eliminate a transfer if Red Line service was extended to Linden Avenue, or if the Purple Line Express ran all day, possibly extended to Midway.
  - A Golf Rd BRT would undercut potential ridership on the Yellow Line.

The question for Skokie may be whether, despite the cost, a subway extension of the Yellow Line along Gross Point and Skokie to Golf is in their better interest for future development.

**Comment No: 89**

**Topic Area: 8, 9**

**Received via: Email**

Yes, I'm strongly in favor of extending the Skokie Swift as I happen to live in the part of Skokie that's just north of the Dempster Street terminal where this commuter train set up ends right now.

Many years ago (when I was still single), I was also living in the West central part of the village of Skokie near the Eden's Expressway (Interstate 94) without the use of a personal car. Back then and at that time, I was already hearing talk from a Skokie Swift operator that I knew about extending our Skokie Swift service all the way up to either Old Orchard itself or along Old Orchard Road as it would've made my getting to places in the Old Orchard area or further north on a weekday a lot easier.

My husband and I are living out here in Skokie as we've found out that this area is to be more convenient to public transportation than where we'd been living in Chicago after we gave up the use of a car as where we'd been living in Chicago was the area known as Westridge between East and West Rogers Park on the north side of Warren Park which now has no easy to use transportation on the weekends along Lunt since the CTA in a cost cutting move had eliminated the Lunt route (#96) on the weekends. If we were still living there and without a car, I would've had to use a much longer way to get to work at the job I had at that time on the weekends by walking over to Western, taking the 49B (North Western) to Howard to connect up to either the 97 (Skokie) or the Pace 215 to my next transfer point to get to the job I had at that time; when my employer at that time added the stunning news that I had to work one evening a week, I'd also be having to reverse that route from Old Orchard to get home after work since I'd be coming off of the Pace 422 bus from Wilmette to transfer onto either one of the buses (CTA 97 or Pace 215) that would connect me up to get home via the Western bus at Howard since the final Lunt bus had left the Morse el stop at 8 PM and I didn't get off of work until 9:30 PM. Since then, Pace no longer has a bus on Sundays for getting me to where I was working in Wilmette and I'd have to use a cab or a pick up from someone who would be working the same work shift as me. ENUF on this topic!

I have several questions to ask about the extension of this train route.

1. Would there be any actual train stops to be made between the current train stop at Dempster and the eventual northern end of this train route if it does happen? What I'd like to see stops being made along Gross Point by the end of the North Commuter Parking lot (which is right by where I live) as there is a lot of space for a platform to be built in the vacant property just west of where the northern end of this parking lot is located, Church Street, Golf Road at Woods Drive and then end the trains either by Woods Drive and Old Orchard Road or someplace at the Old Orchard mall itself.

2. Will we eventually see the Skokie Swift trains running on the weekends all the time? I hope that the test period that was done recently has shown for the need to have the Skokie Swift stay in service seven days a week like it is now.

3. During the morning and evening rush hours on the weekdays, could the CTA make the Skokie Swift to be a four or six car train instead of just two cars in service? The two car trains could be in service over the middle of the day on weekdays (approximately 10 AM to 3 PM) and on the weekends along with after the end of the evening rush hour on a Monday to Friday unless there is a need to have longer trains in service like during "Taste of Chicago" or when there are nighttime events taking place at Wrigley Field, Solider Field and US Cellular Field.

4. Would there be two tracks (one track each way) used on the extension of the Skokie Swift? This to me is common sense for the CTA to do so that a train going southbound doesn't have to wait for a train going in the other direction to get to the new northern terminal.

Please do put me onto your mailing list as I want to keep posted about the plans that the CTA has for the Skokie Swift trains.

**Comment No: 99**

**Topic Area: 5, 7, 8, 9, 14**

**Received via: Email**

1. It should be a rail extension ending near Old Orchard Road. There is the Skokie Courthouse, several office buildings, and a large condo complex west of the Edens within reasonable walking distance (Skokie may have to add some sidewalks).

The design should include room for a bus terminal similar to Howard Street or Jefferson Park. This will allow convenient train/bus connections and also allow buses to layover (which will make Old Orchard Mall owners happy - buses can operate thru the mall and NOT wait).

Some thought should be given to a "Shuttle Bug" operation from this new station - little buses that can operate close building entrances (see Pace's operation at the Metra Lake Cook Road station). Routes could operate to the courthouse, the mall, Rush North Shore Hospital, even Loyola Academy in Wilmette (quite a number of student ride Purple Line/Pace 421 to school).

Design should include room for platforms longer than 2 cars, in case line is extended north or stations added (see below).

2. Bus lanes on Gross Point & Skokie Blvd. are pointless unless they are part of Pace's Skokie Valley BRT plan. The headways of buses in the area don't warrant special lanes. Bus-only lanes work in Los Angeles, Toronto, New York, Montreal on heavily used routes where buses are 1-2 min. apart, otherwise motorists/government types will complain about road space taken away, and then the bus lanes disappear (See former bus lanes in the Loop - I can walk faster than buses on Jackson.)

I think there should be TWO stations in south Evanston:

RIDGE - for reverse commuters, St. Francis Hospital is walking distance. Reliable daily train service should increase number of hospital employees using transit. Residential density is not bad - medium size apartment buildings are nearby. Connections to 201 bus Monday thru Saturday.

DODGE/N. CALIFORNIA - connections to 93 N. California bus Monday thru Saturday, 97 Skokie daily. Station could have walkway to shopping center on Howard & Sacramento.

Long-term planning should include another station in south Skokie at Crawford/East Prairie. Businesses in the Skokie Industrial Area along Touhy, Howard, Oakton could provide shuttle services for reverse commuters. Reliable train service should increase ridership versus slow/local 97, 215, 290 buses.