

## Daniel La Spata

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### CITY OF CHICAGO CITY COUNCIL



CITY HALL  
3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR - ROOM 300  
121 NORTH LASALLE STREET  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

Chair, Committee on Pedestrian and  
Traffic Safety

Vice Chair, Committee on Contracting  
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Standards

## **MONTHLY REPORT – JULY 2024** **COMMITTEE ON PEDESTRIAN AND TRAFFIC SAFETY**

Pursuant to the Rule 45 of City of Chicago Rules and Order, the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety submits the following monthly report for July 2024.

### **Date, Time, & Location of Meeting:**

On Wednesday, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety held a meeting at City Hall in Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 10:07 a.m.

### **Members in Attendance:**

Chairman La Spata (1<sup>st</sup> Ward)  
Alderman Hopkins (2<sup>nd</sup> Ward) – virtual  
Alderman Yancy (5<sup>th</sup> Ward) – virtual  
Alderman Chico (10<sup>th</sup> Ward)  
Alderman Quinn (13<sup>th</sup> Ward)  
Alderman Moore (17<sup>th</sup> Ward) – virtual  
Alderman Curtis (18<sup>th</sup> Ward) – virtual  
Vice Mayor Burnett (27<sup>th</sup> Ward)  
Vice Chairman Cruz (30<sup>th</sup> Ward)  
Alderman Knudsen (43<sup>rd</sup> Ward)  
Alderman Lawson (44<sup>th</sup> Ward)  
Alderman Martin (47<sup>th</sup> Ward)  
Alderman Manaa-Hoppenworth (48<sup>th</sup> Ward)

**Absent Members:** Alderman Robinson (4<sup>th</sup> Ward), Alderman Ervin (28<sup>th</sup> Ward)

The Chairman accepted motions from Ald. Martin and Ald. Knudsen to allow for remote participation by Ald. Hopkins, Ald. Yancy, Ald. Moore, and Ald. Curtis, which were approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

### **Public Comment:**

There were five spoken public comments for this meeting.

Spoken Public Comment was provided by the following individuals (in order of appearance):

- **Mrs. Lawrence:** spoke about a hit-and-run she experienced where there was no citation, ticket, or arrest for the person who hit her vehicle; shared about learning that the driver who hit here was impaired and a white man from the suburbs through a FOIA request; uplifted the discrimination against Black and brown drivers that exists, as researched by the ACLU
- **Ed F.:** 50 year resident living close to the Dickens greenway; questioned CDOT's authority to close the street and who is responsible for the oversight of pedestrians; stated that CDOT funded the greenway project with city money instead of federal funds to avoid answering his questions about Oz Park safety
- **Michael B.:** spoke about his disappointment in the state of council and how alders vote and act during meetings
- **Mr. Blakemore:** spoke about driving and walking while Black; spoke out against the abuse of Black people through traffic stops by the Chicago Police Department
- **Peter C. (online):** 45<sup>th</sup> ward; stated that this is his third public comment on illegal and unwarranted stop signs on residential streets; spoke about how the proliferation of such stop signs increases drivers ignoring stop signs and how that can pose a danger to pedestrian and driver safety

### **Approval of June 2024 Rule 45 Report:**

Ald. Lawson moved to approve, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

### **Agenda of Matters Considered:**

The Agenda of Matters Considered consisted of 9 pages and included 144 matters:

- 105 ordinances related to disabled parking permits,
- 19 ordinances related to traffic warning signs and/or signals,
- 8 ordinances related to residential parking permit zones,
- 8 ordinances related to parking restrictions,
- 2 ordinances related to parking meters, and
- 2 amendments to the Municipal Code of Chicago

Direct Introductions on pages 1-3 Passed without Department recommendations. Ald. Manaa-Hoppenworth moved to approve all Direct Introduction ordinances, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

All matters on pages 4-6 Passed as Recommended by the appropriate Department(s). Ald. Knudsen moved to approve all Recommended ordinances on pages 4-6, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

All matters on pages 7-9 Passed with No Recommendation. These items were submitted as aldermanic overrides or received no recommendations from City Departments. Ald. Cruz moved to approve all No Recommendation ordinances on page 7 and items 1 through 17 on page 8, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

A Substitute Ordinance was submitted for Item 18 on page 8 correcting language per the recommendation from the Department of Transportation. Ald. Lawson moved to accept the Substitute Ordinance, which was

approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum. Ald. Lawson moved to approve the Substitute Ordinance, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

Ald. Cruz moved to approve Item 1 on page 9, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

A Substitute Ordinance was submitted for Item 2 on page 9 amending the end date of the program addressed by the ordinance. Ald. Martin moved to accept the Substitute Ordinance, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum. Ald. Lawson asked a question about the start date of the program, which was answered by Robert Kearney, Chief of Staff for the 42<sup>nd</sup> Ward. Ald. Cruz moved to approve the Substitute Ordinance, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

A Substitute Ordinance was submitted for Item 3 on page 9 expanding the definition of “covered offense” for the program addressed by the ordinance. Ald. Hopkins moved to accept the Substitute Ordinance, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum. Ald. Lawson moved to approve the Substitute Ordinance, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

All actions taken at the meeting were by viva voce vote.

Having no further business before the committee, Chairman La Spata requested a motion to adjourn. Ald. Cruz so moved, and hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

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### **Subject Matter Hearing:**

On Monday, July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety held a meeting for the purpose of conducting a Subject Matter Hearing at City Hall in Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 10:20 a.m.

#### **Members in Attendance:**

Chairman La Spata (1<sup>st</sup> Ward)  
Alderman Hopkins (2<sup>nd</sup> Ward)  
Alderman Robinson (4<sup>th</sup> Ward) – virtual  
Alderman Chico (10<sup>th</sup> Ward)  
Alderman Quinn (13<sup>th</sup> Ward)  
Alderman Moore (17<sup>th</sup> Ward)  
Vice Mayor Burnett (27<sup>th</sup> Ward)  
Alderman Ervin (28<sup>th</sup> Ward) - virtual  
Vice Chairman Cruz (30<sup>th</sup> Ward) - virtual  
Alderman Knudsen (43<sup>rd</sup> Ward)  
Alderman Manaa-Hoppenworth (48<sup>th</sup> Ward)

**Absent Members:** Alderman Yancy (5<sup>th</sup> Ward), Alderman Curtis (18<sup>th</sup> Ward), Alderman Lawson (44<sup>th</sup> Ward), Alderman Martin (47<sup>th</sup> Ward)

**Non-Members in Attendance:** Ald. Cardona (31<sup>st</sup> Ward), Ald. Vasquez (40<sup>th</sup> Ward)

The Chairman accepted a motion from Ald. Moore to allow for remote participation by Ald. Robinson, Ald. Ervin, and Ald. Cruz, which were approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

**Public Comment:**

There were 15 spoken public comments and 15 written comments for this meeting (*see written public comment in its entirety, pages 7-15*).

Spoken Public Comment was provided by the following individuals (in order of appearance):

- Mr. Blakemore: spoke about the issue of walking while Black, driving while Black; discussed how the Democratic National Convention is going to make public transportation a disaster; said he's noticed the same people giving public comment and they aren't being listened to
- Jessica J.: expressed disapproval of Chicago government and its corruption; spoke against like how Chicago is spending money to impress people for the Democratic National Convention and that Chicago is going to be left with a bill that residents will have to cover via increased taxes
- Dominic A.: representative of Sierra Club; 10-year resident; stated that CTA services have taken a downward turn when it comes to reliability and the issue of ghost buses; advocated for signal priority, bus stop bump-outs, and dedicated bus lanes
- Jim M.: representative of Active Transportation Alliance; supportive of bus priority streets; called for a dedicated network of bus priority streets to give residents a faster, more reliable way to get around; pointed out how bus priority streets are needed in wards across the city, as well as Lake Shore Drive
- Michael P.: representative of Better Streets Chicago; said the transit system across the region has been underinvested in for many decades and criticized the chosen plan for the redesign of Lake Shore Drive for prioritizing cars instead of rapid transit investments; pointed to surveys that showed majority of people would choose transit over driving if service was faster and more reliable
- Lena G.R.: representative of Environmental Law and Policy Center; spoke about the city bus and intercity bus infrastructure; advocated for bus as a solution to the air pollution caused by individual drivers; advocated for keeping the station for intercity buses, whose lease expires in October
- Stephanie B.: representative of Illinois Environmental Council; supportive of increasing speed and service level of buses and expanding transit access through bus infrastructure investments; shared data on the harms of diesel pollutions and advocated for electric buses as a solution to this issue
- Heather D.: CPS middle school teacher; representing people who are upset about the roads and is a pedestrian advocating for improving the physical infrastructure of streets especially those around schools; called for raised crosswalks around schools, wants her kids to be able to walk to school alone
- Joe S.: spoke about the intercity bus terminal and expressed disappointment that the city hasn't looked at various options for saving the terminal or an alternative location;
- James A.: spoke about the Greyhound bus terminal; suggested a short term solution to ensure bus service is not curtailed while the city works out a long-term solution; uplifted that a letter about this issue was sent to the Mayor and was signed by twenty-four organizations
- Fabio G.: advocate with Commuters Take Action; advocated for bus rapid transit, with bus service being dependable, quick, and accessible
- Danny V.: from the southwest side and relied on the bus to get to the meeting; suggested not just improving bus infrastructure but investing in buses to make them the quickest and most comfortable way to get around the city; advocated for more bus shelters; spoke in favor of bus rapid transit on Ashland and Western and called for lines along Archer, Cicero, and Pulaski as well

- Francesca L.: representative of Flix; stressed the importance of infrastructure that is safe, comfortable, accessible, and well connected
- W. Robert S.: representative of Active Transportation Alliance; 40+ year resident of Chicago and moved here because of the city's public transportation; would like to see greater investments in buses, like in Bus Rapid Transit; hears about reliability, speed, and length of travel time as areas of improvement; has been advocating for the need to improve public transportation at the state and federal levels too
- Kyle L.: representative of Better Streets Chicago; expressed concern with constant struggle of getting the city on board with basic improvements to transit, uplifting redesign proposals for Lake Shore Drive; called on City Council to advocate for bus rapid transit implementation and resident-based reporting
- Courtney C.: took time off work to advocate for better transit; frustrated that there is only conversation being had on things that should have been done decades ago; asked why City Council hasn't done anything about the lacking bus service and urged them to move on this faster
- Peter C. (online): 45<sup>th</sup> ward; stated that this is his fourth public comment on illegal, unwarranted stop signs on residential streets; spoke about how he has left dozens of voicemails and many emails to the relevant CDOT staff about this issue and has not received any responses

### **Agenda of Matters Considered:**

**R2024-0009627:** The subject matter hearing topic was how bus infrastructure improvements would impact mobility and traffic safety. No votes were taken on this matter.

The hearing consisted of testimony from the Chicago Department of Transportation and Chicago Transit Authority, followed by Q&A.

- CDOT - Vig Krishnamurthy, *Managing Deputy Commissioner*, and David Smith, *Complete Streets Director*:
  - Discussed a holistic approach to improving transit, including how transit investments fit within the larger multi-modal strategies and the experience and perspective of the user / transit rider to improve transit from every step of the way, from one's front door to the destination: getting to the bus, waiting for the bus, and riding the bus
  - Highlighted existing and planned corridor improvements across the city, as well as the corridors that are being studied and will be seeing improvements
  - Shared the positive impact on transit-user-experience and bus run times of transit signal priority installations at 130 intersections, with an additional 100 locations in progress, and of the bus boarding islands and bump outs installed at 40 locations since 2022, with an additional 90 in the planning and design stage
  - Described Queue Jump Infrastructure, which will be piloted at 20 intersections under a new federally funded program that is eligible for expansion in the future as well
- CTA - Molly Poppe, *Chief Innovation Officer*, and Cara Bader, *Vice President of Strategy and Innovation*:
  - Shared the demographics of bus riders and the importance of and reliance on buses, whether as a segment of or as the entirety of someone's trip, which totals over 350 million passenger miles ridden every year
  - Discussed recent trends in bus ridership, including that daily bus riders represent the highest share of 30-day pass holders, weekend ridership reaching over 95% of pre-pandemic levels at peak hours, and doubled ridership on routes that have received increased service since Spring 2024 as compared to lines that did not receive increased service

- Discussed the Better Streets for Buses Plan and Network, which includes 17 corridors, covers 185 miles of Chicago streets, and accounts for 44% of weekday bus ridership; framed Better Streets for Buses as the starting point for considerations of Bus Rapid Transit, which is a combination of infrastructure and service operations to provide high-frequency, high-capacity bus-based services
- Discussed the Western Avenue and Chicago Avenue bus lanes, noting how run time decreased as a result of infrastructure investments and how majority of survey respondents using those lines stated that the faster run times made them more likely to continue using transit
- Shared the five corridors to be studied for the Bus Priority Corridor Study, set to be kicked off this fall: Western, Pulaski, Fullerton, 55<sup>th</sup>/Garfield, and Cottage Grove; and shared Bus Priority Zones pinch-point locations along 79<sup>th</sup>, 63<sup>rd</sup>, Ashland, Chicago, Halsted, and Belmont over the next couple years

Alders La Spata, Ervin, Vasquez, and Manaa-Hoppenworth shared comments and asked questions following the presentation, which included questions on transit signal priority for buses and emergency vehicles; congestion pricing; transit signal priority goals; realistic timelines for the planning and implementation of Bus Rapid Transit; the use of graduated fines and fees; the use of quick-builds versus permanent installations; contracting challenges that alders can support departments with / through; and the redesign proposals for North DuSable Lake Shore Drive, including the possibility of having Bus Rapid Transit on NDLS.

Having no further business before the committee, Chairman La Spata requested a motion to adjourn. Ald. Manaa-Hoppenworth so moved, and hearing no objections, Chairman La Spata adjourned the meeting at 12:40 p.m.

## Written Public Comment for the July 29 Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Meeting:

Jeremy W., submitted June 2, 2024:

Rep. Buckner and Committee,

MEMO: Bus Lane Cameras are easy to set up - see attached flyer

Where is IDOT and CDOT in reviewing and implementing this tech?

Has the proper legislation been passed? Why not?

Automated cameras should be installed on all bus lanes (or a competitor software).

Brochure shows how easy they are to set up.

See attached.

Thanks,

Jeremy, resident



**HaydenAI** Automated Bus Stop Enforcement

**Keep bus stops clear for riders**  
A mobile perception platform that makes boarding accessible and safe

Bus stops aren't parking spots – but many drivers treat them that way, with dire consequences for senior and disabled riders. Illegal parking at bus stops makes it impossible for the bus to pull up to the curb properly, which slows down transit and makes boarding unsafe and inaccessible to people using wheelchairs or other mobility assistive devices.

Hayden AI's Automated Bus Stop Enforcement platform uses bus-mounted, AI-powered camera systems to keep bus stops clear for buses. By enforcing bus stops at scale and in real-time, our platform helps keep transit on-time, safe, and accessible.

In 2022, Marcel Moran, PhD, published a survey of 2,964 bus stops in San Francisco in an effort to document how many had unobstructed curbs. He found:

**“Roughly one third of all stops are obstructed by on-street parking, rendering them difficult to use and exposing riders to oncoming traffic.”**

**Why What We Do Matters**

- ✓ **More Efficient Bus Operations** by improving bus speeds, on-time performance and reducing time spent per commute trip
- ✓ **Enhanced Safety** by decreasing collisions and protecting bus riders as they get on and off the bus
- ✓ **Increased Transit Ridership** by improving on-time performance and schedule reliability

© Moran, Marcel E. "Are shelters in place? Mapping the distribution of transit amenities via a bus stop census of San Francisco." Journal of Public Transportation, 2022.



### Our Mobile Perception Platform

#### 1 AI-Powered Camera System



Hayden AI combines computer vision with on-board cameras and embedded connectivity like 5G, to help municipalities create smarter fleets capable of protecting bus and bike lanes, keeping school zones safe, and more.

#### 2 Edge Processing



With edge processing, Hayden AI's mobile perception platform identifies and documents potential traffic violations while the bus is moving, and then uploads only the data necessary to issue a prosecutable violation – keeping data secure and streamlining data management.

#### 3 Data Portal



Footage, data and evidence packages are sent from cameras to Hayden AI's data portal. The portal streamlines evidence review, provides advanced data analysis and visualization, monitors your city's assets, and allows for easy management of traffic rules. All in one centralized dashboard.

#### WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Contact Hayden AI at [sales@hayden.ai](mailto:sales@hayden.ai) for additional information about how our solution can help enhance bus safety and performance for your community.



Steve I., submitted June 26, 2024:

Please tow cars parked in EXPRESS BUS LANES between the posted NO PARKING signs.

Once a week, I pass through Western and Diversey going northbound and there are ALWAYS cars parked in the Express Bus lanes. Always in front of Hyun's Hapkido & Tae Kwon Do and Fernandez Used Auto Glass.

You can't label a bus lane as Express when drivers read this as as suggestion and park in it.

Enforce it please.

Thanks – Steve  
Chicago, IL 60618

Zach H., submitted July 18, 2024:

*Hello,*

*I would like to offer my public testimony in full support of increased public transit on DLSD and for bus rapid transit (BRT) in general. I work at a non-profit serving students at the city colleges of Chicago and cannot afford a car. Therefore, I rely on public transportation and bicycling. I live at 2427 W. Eastwood and frequently use the lakefront corridor to move about the city. Increased public transit, especially BRT, on DLSD would greatly benefit my ability to get from place to place.*

*Best,*

*--*

*Zach H.*

*He/Him/His*

Noah W., submitted July 19, 2024:

*Dear Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Committee,*

*Chicago has the bones of a world-class bus system: long, flat, wide streets that connect premier destinations, major employment centers, dense residential neighborhoods, and numerous train stations. For a fraction of the cost of a rail extension, the city could implement Bus Rapid Transit along the corridors identified in the Better Streets for Buses Network. Designated bus lanes, signal priority, and fast, reliable service along these corridors would greatly boost CTA ridership across the board, take cars off the road, and increase affordable connectivity for all Chicagoans.*

*We have the bones - all we need to do now is build it. I strongly support whatever steps are necessary to make this happen.*

*Sincerely,*

*Noah W.*

*Logan Square Resident*

Jessie S., submitted July 26, 2024:

*To the Committee on Pedestrian & Traffic Safety regarding the Bus Infrastructure Hearing:*

*My name is Jessie Steckling, and I'm a frequent CTA bus rider as well as a member of the Sierra Club Chicago Group. Since moving to Chicago 2 years ago, I've had some frustrating CTA bus experiences. Too often, when I check Google Maps, the transit time via bus is twice as long as the driving time, if not longer. Sometimes, the bus times hardly compete with walking or cycling. For example, getting from my apartment near North and Halsted to Smith Park would take 17 minutes by car, 20 minutes by bike, or a staggering 34 minutes by transit. We can and must do better, especially considering transit is an essential service to keep our city connected.*

*We have the means to develop excellent transit in Chicago if we choose to. Although we face clear barriers to increasing bus frequency, such as budget constraints and hiring challenges, there are BRT measures we can implement right now to greatly improve trip times. Notably, stop light signal priority and dedicated transit lanes. In Los Angeles, implementing BRT decreased bus travel times by [up to 29%](#). And in Bogotá, riders saved [around 32%](#) in travel times on average after Transmilenio BRT was implemented. Due to these changes and even more impressive, both cities saw massive increases in ridership as a result. It's important to note that these cities were able to quickly mobilize to create these changes without the immense budget required for rail.*

*BRT not only improves the rider experience but creates a positive feedback cycle for the whole city. As bus ride quality improves, more people will consider taking the bus, who in turn provide more fares for future bus improvements. Increased ridership makes each bus route cheaper to run per rider so the benefits are a*

*significantly better investment than the cost to make these improvements. We have been in a negative cycle of ridership and service cuts, and we need to act immediately before we lose any more riders.*

*Every time a person commutes using transit rather than a car, the rest of the city benefits. Traffic is reduced, cutting down on harmful emissions that hurt our climate and our health, especially on the South and West sides. People become more connected to essential services and leisure, especially those who cannot afford personal vehicles. The operators will have less frustrations navigating our streets and make driving the bus a more pleasant experience for them. We must do everything we can to thank bus riders by giving them a positive experience, not by making them regret taking the bus.*

*Thanks,  
Jessie S.*

Zach H., submitted July 26, 2024:

*Hello,*

*I'm writing to express my severe disappointment that IDOT/CDOT are planning to add lanes to NDSL D without creating bus lanes and or addressing many of the public comments shared over the last decade. As we know from induced demand [research](#), adding lanes DOES NOT decrease traffic. The only solution to manage congestion and make transportation easier is to add bus-only lanes. Furthermore, amid a worsening climate crisis, I think it is shameful that our city would prioritize car travel over public transportation. It is already ridiculous that Chicago's best community and environmental asset, our lakefront, is marred by a major highway right next to it. To add more car lanes, without including bus lanes, is adding further insult to injury. We should improve NDSL D -- with bus lanes NOT car lanes.*

*Best,  
Zach  
He/Him/His*

Sustainable Englewood Initiatives (SEI), submitted July 26, 2024:

*City Council Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Subject Hearing on Bus Infrastructure  
Prepared by: Sustainable Englewood Initiatives (SEI)*

*Good morning, Alderman and Chairman Daniel La Spata; Alderman and Vice Chairman Ruth Cruz; City Council Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety: fellow committee members, Alderman and City department representatives.*

*Sustainable Englewood Initiatives SEI is a local advocacy organization working on environmental justice, transportation planning, socio-economic initiatives, public safety and community benefit strategies.*

*SEI appreciates the City Council Committee's interest to review, through Subject Hearing Proceedings, Chicago's Department of Transportation (CDOT) scheduled programming relative to Bus Infrastructure. This program is important to our community and its ability to move bus riders through Chicago.*

*SEI wishes to learn from CDOT about its scheduled Bus Infrastructure Plan for 2024-2028. We are indeed excited about the intergovernmental agreement between CDOT and the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) related to the Bus Infrastructure Plan. The scheduled Bus Infrastructure Programming along Garfield Blvd. is much anticipated (under its Better Streets for Buses Plan).*

*This historic corridor requires much deserved public improvements. The City of Chicago selection of the Historic Garfield Blvd is both wise and prudent.*

*We are looking forward to planning Bus Infrastructure alongside City agencies, property owners, Aldermanic offices and local organizations such as Grow Greater Englewood, Teamwork Englewood, Preservation Chicago,*

*Neighborhood Housing Services, Englewood Community Land Trust, Englewood Arts Collaborative, Imagine Englewood If, R.A.G.E. organization, Sherman Park Advisory Council, Englewood's Picture Your Park Strategy Team, Englewood Nature Trail Wisdom Council and a network of church denominations.*

*On July 30th, a delegation from Greater Englewood will be attending the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Public Engagement Workshop. We hope to learn from the series of workshops in order to improve communication and collaboration with regional transportation planners and municipal agencies.*

*Thank you so much for this subject hearing on Bus Infrastructure. This is indeed for us, a public engagement opportunity.*

Regional Transportation Authority, submitted July 26, 2024:

*Buses connect our neighborhoods and communities equitably and serve as a lifeline for millions of residents. Compared with peer regions, the Chicago region dedicates very little roadway space for public transit. Transit agencies serving cities like Los Angeles, Seattle, Miami, Minneapolis, Houston, and Phoenix all have over 100 miles of transit-only or transit-priority roadway lanes. Chicago has less than 15 lane miles in this category. Our bus riders deserve better, and the RTA is excited to see a City Council committee hearing for advancing Western Avenue BRT.*

*Western Avenue is one of the busiest bus corridors in the Chicago region, with more than 20,000 rides per weekday and connections to four CTA rail lines and one Metra line. These riders deserve fast and reliable service on their way to work, school, healthcare centers, and visits with family and friends. Building BRT on Western is an efficient way to upgrade service, boost the local economy, and improve quality life in surrounding neighborhoods. The RTA commends many area aldermen for their interest in and support for Western Avenue BRT and we look forward to CDOT and CTA discussing the future of this project with the council committee members.*

Mike B., submitted July 26, 2024:

*Hello,*

*I'm writing about the upcoming meeting on bus infrastructure improvements. Specifically, about bus priority lanes on North DuSable Lakeshore Drive. As it currently exists, NDSL D should already have bus priority lanes. And it most definitely should as part of Redefining The Drive. Ideally, it's only bus lanes instead of a massive highway along the lakeshore.*

*The present situation where buses are driving and getting stuck in traffic created by 8 lanes of car traffic is unacceptable. It also doesn't meet the goal of moving people. Condense those individuals in cars onto buses and give the buses priority lanes. That's how you move lots of people all at once, especially during peak traffic hours. Apply that same principle to the redesign and you don't even need car lanes. Instead you have space for more beach, parks, and people along our beautiful lake front.*

*Bus priority lanes are needed throughout the city. Ashland could have been a rapid yet safe place for commuting for nearly a decade now. Hopefully, it still can be, along with streets like Western.*

*Thanks,*

*Mike Bretzlaff*

Active Transportation Alliance, submitted July 26, 2024:

*Chairman La Spata and Members of the Pedestrian & Traffic Safety Committee:*

*On behalf of Active Transportation Alliance's thousands of members across the City of Chicago, we thank you for the opportunity to voice our support for bus priority streets.*

*But we are not here to talk just about infrastructure and operations, we are here to talk about people.*

*Chicago's working families, young people, older adults, and people with disabilities all depend on our buses to navigate their lives.*

*For years, bus riders have seen the average speed of Chicago's buses decline as a result of traffic congestion clogging our streets.*

*This is more than an inconvenience. It means lost time at home with family. It means arriving late to work or school. It means working people being forced to use more expensive transportation options because the bus is not reliable enough. It means people with disabilities or older adults being stranded in their homes.*

*Our bus riders deserve better. Our people deserve better.*

*We are calling for the creation of a dedicated network of bus priority streets to provide our residents with a faster and more reliable way to move about their lives.*

*Such a network would have a transformative impact on our city, addressing some of the most deeply embedded inequities in our transportation network. Bus priority streets, especially when executed correctly, can bring rapid transit style service to corners of the city that have never been served by our rail network.*

*The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) have a plan, Better Streets for Buses, that gives us everything we need to make this transformation a reality.*

*The Better Streets for Buses Plan is a toolbox. Now we must do the hard work of deciding how and where we will deploy these tools to best serve the people of Chicago.*

*We are calling on you, members of City Council, to be bold in your leadership and to embrace this opportunity to make big changes. We need dedicated lanes for our buses to get out of traffic. We need transit signal priority to keep them moving. Pre-paid and level boarding at train-style stations to give riders an easier and more comfortable experience.*

*These elements, taken together, are the gold standard on bus priority streets around the world. Our long-suffering bus riders deserve nothing less than the very best we can offer.*

*Better Streets for Buses gives us the tools to do just that, but it's up to us to do the work.*

*We have to be willing to be bold. Recently, CDOT and Illinois Department of Transportation presented plans to rebuild North DuSable Lake Shore Drive without dedicated lanes for transit, a move that has been criticized by our own Regional Transit Authority and many elected officials.*

*This is not the kind of big thinking we need in this moment. We can and will do better.*

*We look forward to working with members of City Council on bringing bus priority streets to wards across Chicago.*

*Thank you,  
Jim Merrell, Managing Director of Advocacy  
Active Transportation Alliance*

Avondale Neighborhood Association, submitted July 26, 2024:

*To the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety,*

*On behalf of the Avondale Neighborhood Association, we express our support for the Better Streets for Buses plan and commend the City of Chicago for the recent bus infrastructure improvements on Belmont Avenue. However, we believe more work is needed to improve bus infrastructure along the entirety of Belmont and on other bus routes that pass through our neighborhood.*

*Per our neighborhood plan produced in coordination with CMAP, our goals for Avondale include:*

*Improving the commuter experience by implementing safety and accessibility improvements near transit, adding bus stop infrastructure, and strengthening the appearance of transit stops*

*Improving bus speeds through dedicated bus infrastructure*

*Our organization supports more dedicated bus infrastructure, although we acknowledge our neighborhood does not unanimously support these changes. Buses need to compete with the availability and speed of personal vehicles to be an attractive transportation option for everyone, and this is impossible when our current transit infrastructure positions buses full of riders behind queues of single-occupancy vehicles.*

*We urge the city to expeditiously pursue adding dedicated bus infrastructure across full bus routes, not just isolated sections. Local bus infrastructure improvements in the absence of route-wide improvements do not necessarily improve service and run the risk of becoming scapegoats for car traffic congestion, ultimately discouraging much-needed public support of investment in public transportation.*

*As an example, the new bus infrastructure recently added to Belmont between Kimball and Western allows buses to traverse that part of the route more quickly, but service is still unreliable due to the lack of dedicated bus infrastructure along the rest of the route. It is common during rush hour to have to wait in excess of 20+ minutes for a bus to appear—only to then have two or more bunched up buses appear in short order. These symptoms could be avoided with more holistic engineering approaches, such as temporary quick-build infrastructure along the rest of the route.*

*We also believe there should be more opportunities for neighborhood-level advocacy to facilitate bus infrastructure improvements. For example, adding bus infrastructure to Chicago's Neighborhood Infrastructure Menu Program (i.e., the Aldermanic Menu Program) would enable more localized, community-driven enhancements in conjunction with citywide efforts to improve bus routes. Additionally, we would appreciate a clear process for initiating smaller, local bus infrastructure projects outside of larger street resurfacing efforts.*

*Finally, better enforcement of existing infrastructure is crucial. Vehicles often park in bus stops or bus lanes, without penalty or disincentive, ultimately exacerbating poor traffic conditions and undermining the effectiveness of current infrastructure. We urge the city to implement stricter enforcement measures to keep bus lanes clear.*

*Thank you for considering our comments. We look forward to bus infrastructure improvements on Pulaski through the Better Streets for Buses plan and hope to see similar improvements on the rest of the bus routes in our neighborhood.*

*Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Muscare, President  
Avondale Neighborhood Association*

The Chaddick Institute at DePaul University, submitted July 26, 2024:

*Dear Committee Members:*

*The Chaddick Institute at DePaul University submits this testimony to make known the urgent need for the City of Chicago to take immediate action to preserve the Chicago Intercity Bus Terminal at 630 W. Harrison Street for all scheduled bus providers, including Greyhound, FlixBus, and Trailways. As an organization that undertakes much analysis on transportation and publishes Intercity Bus E-News, which covers developments in scheduled long-distance bus travel, we feel it is critical to make known that losing this facility would greatly affect disabled travelers, minority groups, students, individuals who do not own cars or cannot drive, and many others who rely on bus travel. The lease of the facility by Greyhound ends in October, which makes this an extremely pressing issue that requires the Committee's attention.*

*Having the entire city's intercity bus system moved to a curbside location due to the station's closure would create many hardships. Not only will hundreds of thousands of Chicagoans who use intercity buses be hurt, but Chicago risks enduring much negative publicity and will struggle with finding suitable options if the station is lost.*

*We urge the City to buy the Terminal, rehab it, and contract with a firm to manage it—or, at a minimum, work to extend the lease. The city should seek guidance from Cook County and the Illinois Departments of Transportation, which should work toward a resolution to the crisis. Many other cities have recently made or are making significant investments to support intercity bus terminals.*

*Sincerely,  
Joseph P. Schwieterman, Ph.D.  
Director, Chaddick Institute at DePaul University*

Metropolitan Planning Council, submitted July 26, 2024:

*Members of the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety:*

*The Metropolitan Planning Council, a local nonprofit, nonpartisan civic organization dedicated to fostering equity in the built environment, strongly supports the city and regional transit agencies in investing in bus priority infrastructure. These investments hold the potential to provide fast and reliable service to communities underserved by current rapid transit lines, which are primarily rail-based. By prioritizing bus infrastructure, we can also reduce conflicts with other road users, thereby increasing safety and accessibility for all.*

*Buses are the primary mode of transportation for the majority of Chicago transit users, and bus ridership has rebounded faster than other modes to pre-pandemic levels. However, in recent years, bus speeds have declined since buses without any priority treatments are slowed in traffic congestion and travel becomes unreliable. This makes transit less competitive compared to less sustainable alternatives like ride-hailing services or personal vehicles. It is critical for the city to make the most sustainable and equitable modes of transportation most attractive, in alignment with the City's Climate Action Plan.*

*Research demonstrates that bus priority infrastructure, such as BRT, can increase bus travel speeds to an average of 15-20 MPH. Additionally, the cost of implementing this infrastructure is just a fraction of rail while providing similar reliability and capacity.*

*Over the last 15 years, MPC and other advocacy organizations have advocated for the implementation of bus rapid transit (BRT) on high-ridership corridors. In 2011 MPC published a report on how BRT could provide increased access to opportunity for the City's residents; however little has been accomplished to date. Now is the time to actively pursue bus priority projects along high ridership corridors to create a network of bus rapid transit throughout the city. We are pleased about the upcoming feasibility study of bus prioritization on the Western, Pulaski, Cottage Grove, Fullerton, and 55th Street corridors. This effort will require not only agency involvement but also community and city support to drive meaningful changes in our transit systems and elevate service quality to the standards we all deserve.*

*We urge the city to embrace BRT, as this mode of transportation is gaining popularity nationwide, with success in major cities like Los Angeles and San Francisco. Neighboring cities like Indianapolis and Milwaukee are also implementing BRT systems.*

*We ask for your support of these measures and for backing the CTA and CDOT in executing the "Better Streets for Buses" plan, as well as the feasibility study and future initiatives aimed at implementing gold-standard BRT. Moreover, we advocate for collaborative efforts between the city and stakeholders throughout the region to establish a comprehensive regional network of bus priority corridors.*

*Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.*

*Sincerely,  
Chris Conley  
Interim President & CEO*

Heather D., submitted July 26, 2024:

*To the Committee on Pedestrian & Traffic Safety-*

*I am writing to advocate for infrastructure improvements that make it safer for people to walk through their own neighborhoods, specifically for children to walk safely to their neighborhood school.*

*I live in Old Irving Park, a neighborhood bisected by the highway and also cut into three separate wards. This can make it difficult to advocate for improvements, specifically around the highway - is that a state responsibility? The city? Our alderperson? Because the highway is here, people often treat our residential road as they would a highway - driving extremely quickly, barely stopping at stop signs, being distracted by electronics. I know these behaviors are common throughout the city, but I notice them here because I walk through my neighborhood a lot.*

*I would like to advocate for raised crosswalks, especially on busy roads that lead to neighborhood schools. In Old Irving that would be Kostner & Cullom, Kostner & Berteau, Keeler & Cullom, and Keeler & Berteau. I am sure there are other intersections throughout the city that would benefit as well.*

*Studies have shown that physical infrastructure is needed to change people's behavior - not simply speed limit changes. I would love to see preventative infrastructure (rather than reactive) to ensure the safety of residents, especially children.*

*We really need to help people understand that cities are for people, not cars. Culturally, all of us have grown up with infrastructure that makes us think we should be able to get from point A to point B as fast as possible and in the comfort of a personal vehicle - we need to be on the forefront of changing this mentality.*

*To close, the other day I was walking to pick up my children from a summer program at their school- I was crossing at one of these busy intersections and was almost hit by a car - the woman rolled down her window and yelled at me to "walk faster." I want to be able to give my children independence as they get older and know that they will safely arrive at school, but we need to make the roads safer for this to happen. I am asking for your help.*

*Sincerely,*

*Heather D.*

*45th Ward*

*CPS Parent and teacher*

Flix North America, submitted July 26, 2024:

*Dear Members of the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety,*

*I am writing on behalf of Flix North America Inc., owner of FlixBus and Greyhound, to express our strong support for a safe, comfortable and secure location for long-distance bus passengers to wait for their bus.*

*We appreciate the Committee's recognition of the vital role that intercity buses play in the transportation ecosystem of Chicago and the United States. We emphasize the great need for infrastructure that both supports Chicago's unique position at the center of America's transportation landscape and as one America's most iconic destinations for millions of travelers each year.*

*Intercity buses are a crucial source of transportation for the people in this city, including those from lower-income communities, college students, individuals on fixed incomes, and individuals with disabilities. A recent survey of FlixBus and Greyhound passengers in Chicago found that 58% are women, 51% are Black / African American, 54% are employed and 23% are retirees. 71% earn less than \$35,000 per year. Our diverse passengers need safe and affordable connections to make social and family trips, reach essential services and employment opportunities and travel to educational institutions both within and beyond the city limits.*

*As you know, we have been diligently working with relevant stakeholders for more than one year to find an acceptable and affordable solution for the closing terminal at 630 W. Harrison Street. We should be able to continue to serve the people of Chicago and provide you with an affordable, convenient, and safe way to travel. Unfortunately, we still don't have consensus on a solution that prioritizes the needs of travelers and puts*

*pedestrian and traffic safety first. At this juncture, it is imperative, in our view, that we all come together to identify a sustainable, long-term solution within the next few weeks.*

*We have been long advocating for publicly owned and operated intermodal transportation hubs as they increase accessibility, connectivity, and safety for travelers and communities where we operate. We have seen how this approach can work in cities like Los Angeles, Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, and New York, bringing tremendous economic benefits to the city and enhancing pedestrian and traffic safety. Chicago deserves nothing less than a welcoming transportation center that includes intercity buses.*

*Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to the outcomes of the meeting and are eager to continue our active engagement with all relevant stakeholders for the benefit of the people of Chicago.*

*Sincerely,  
Kai Boysan, Flix NA CEO*