



# FAIR TRANSIT SOUTH COOK

Community Partner Pre-Pilot Meeting

November 2020

**CONNECTING**  
**COOK COUNTY**  
Beyond Transportation

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# Agenda

- Fair Transit Overview (30 min)
  - Pilot History and Purpose
  - Outreach Program
  - Role of Community Partners
  - Community Partner Toolkit
- Discussion (45 min)
- Questions (15 min)



Cook County's Department of Transportation and Highways (DoTH), under the leadership of President Toni Preckwinkle, is working towards a partnership with the region's transit agencies to launch a **three-year pilot** project to **improve transit service** and **lower costs** for the residents of the south side of Chicago, south suburban Cook and north Will Counties.

The Fair Transit pilot will provide south Cook County and north Will County residents with greater opportunities to make transit their choice for getting to work, school, shopping and regional destinations.



# Pilot Goals

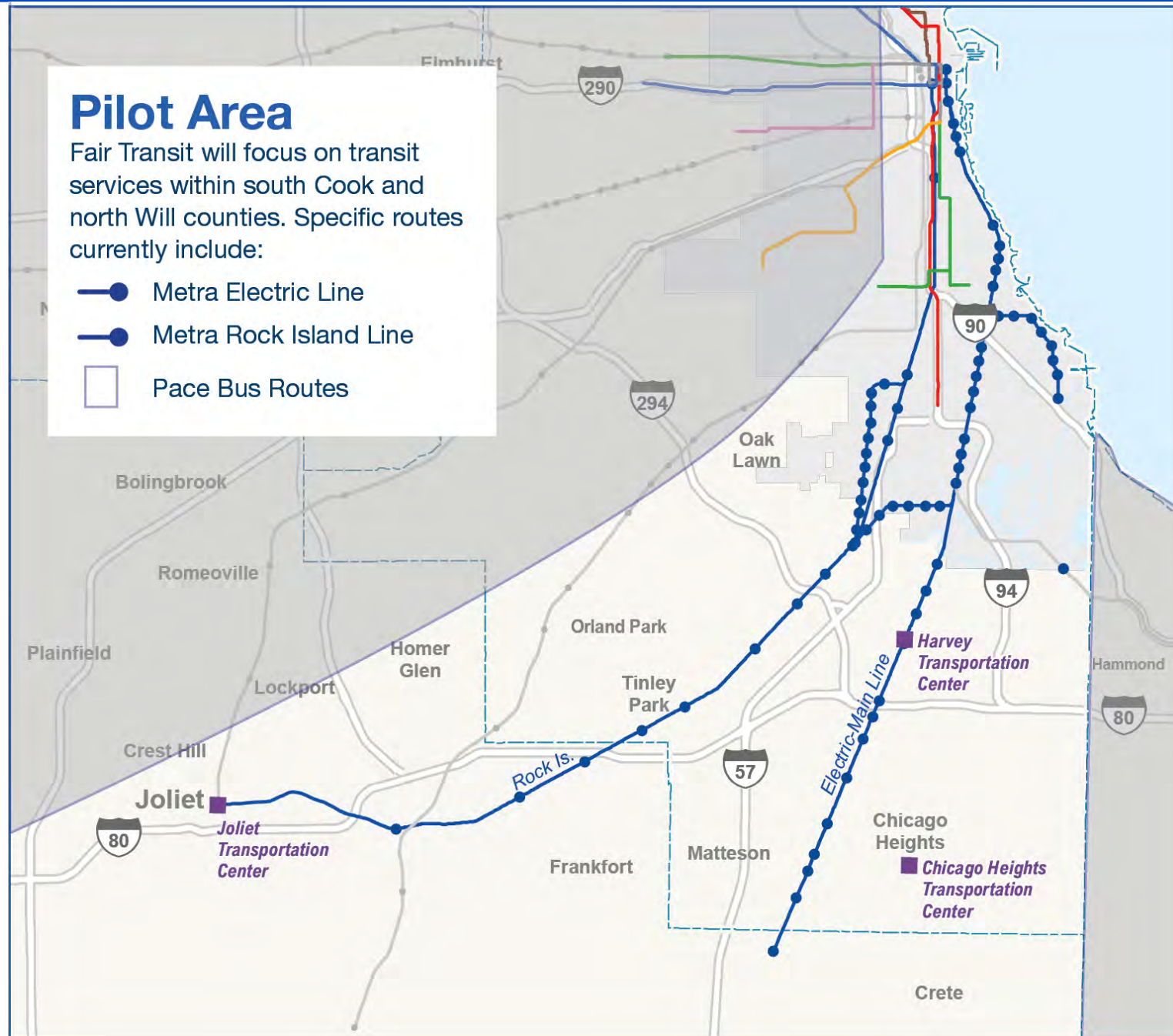
1. Improved service options
2. Metra fare reduction
3. Seamless transfers



## Pilot Area

Fair Transit will focus on transit services within south Cook and north Will counties. Specific routes currently include:

- Metra Electric Line
- Metra Rock Island Line
- Pace Bus Routes



# Fair Transit History

- Long Range Transportation Plan (2016)
- South Cook Mobility Study (2018)
- Coalition for Modern Metra Electric (CMME)
- ON TO 2050 – Inclusive Growth (CMAP, 2019)



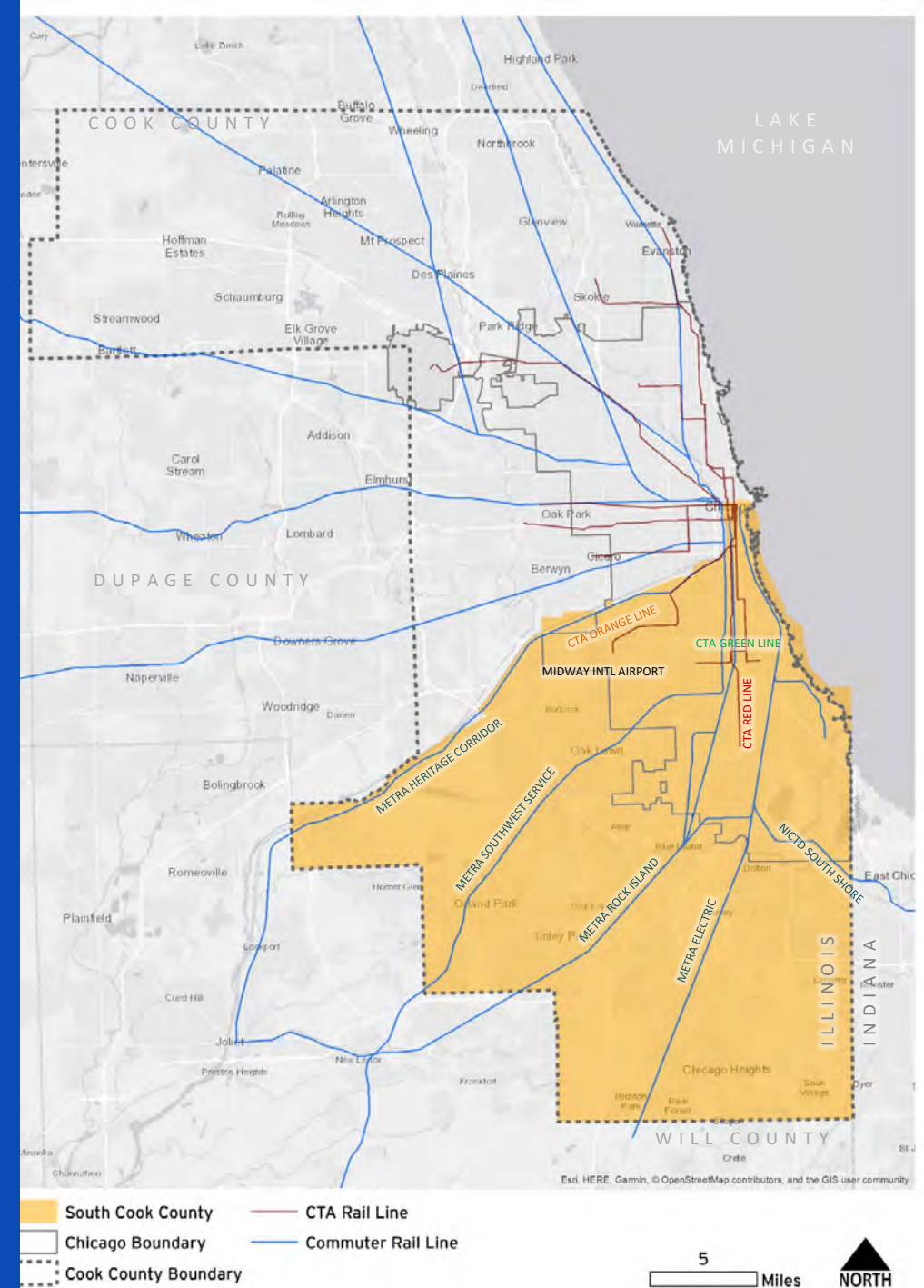
**“The goal is to increase service and lower costs for our South Chicago, Cook and Will County residents who experience longer commute times than north side residents and who spend half of their income on transportation expenses. Now is the time given the economic challenges from COVID-19, to address the critical need for essential workers, and all residents, to use transit to get where they need to go. This pilot will help us better understand transportation challenges facing our residents and businesses and implement the right solutions. It aligns with the other transportation and economic investments we are making to strengthen our overall economic health.”**

**– Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle**



# South Cook Mobility Study: Key Elements

- Focused on portions of Cook County with high transit dependence but limited access to transit
- Modeled different scenarios of new services, fare structures and facilities on ridership
- Included scenarios proposed by local advocates and agencies
- Most beneficial scenarios brought forward



# South Cook Mobility Study: Findings

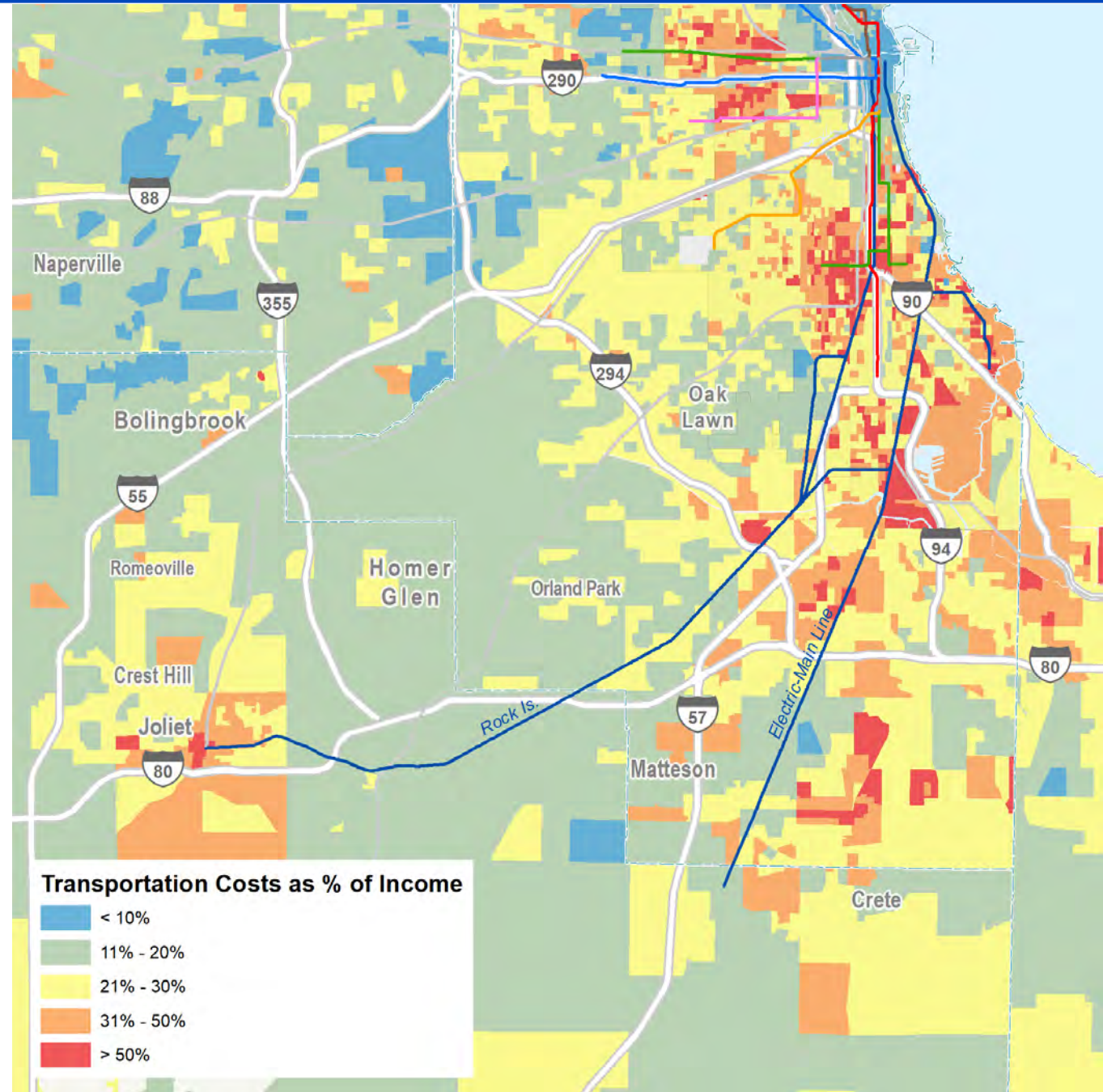
- Reduced fares drive tremendous ridership growth on Metra in South Cook
- Optimized service frequency brings near-CTA levels of service for ME Metra line
- Net ridership increases, but some services see significant losses
- I-294 Flex Lane Express Bus would have high ridership





# Why South Cook?

A large percentage of residents in South Cook spend 50% or more of their income on transportation

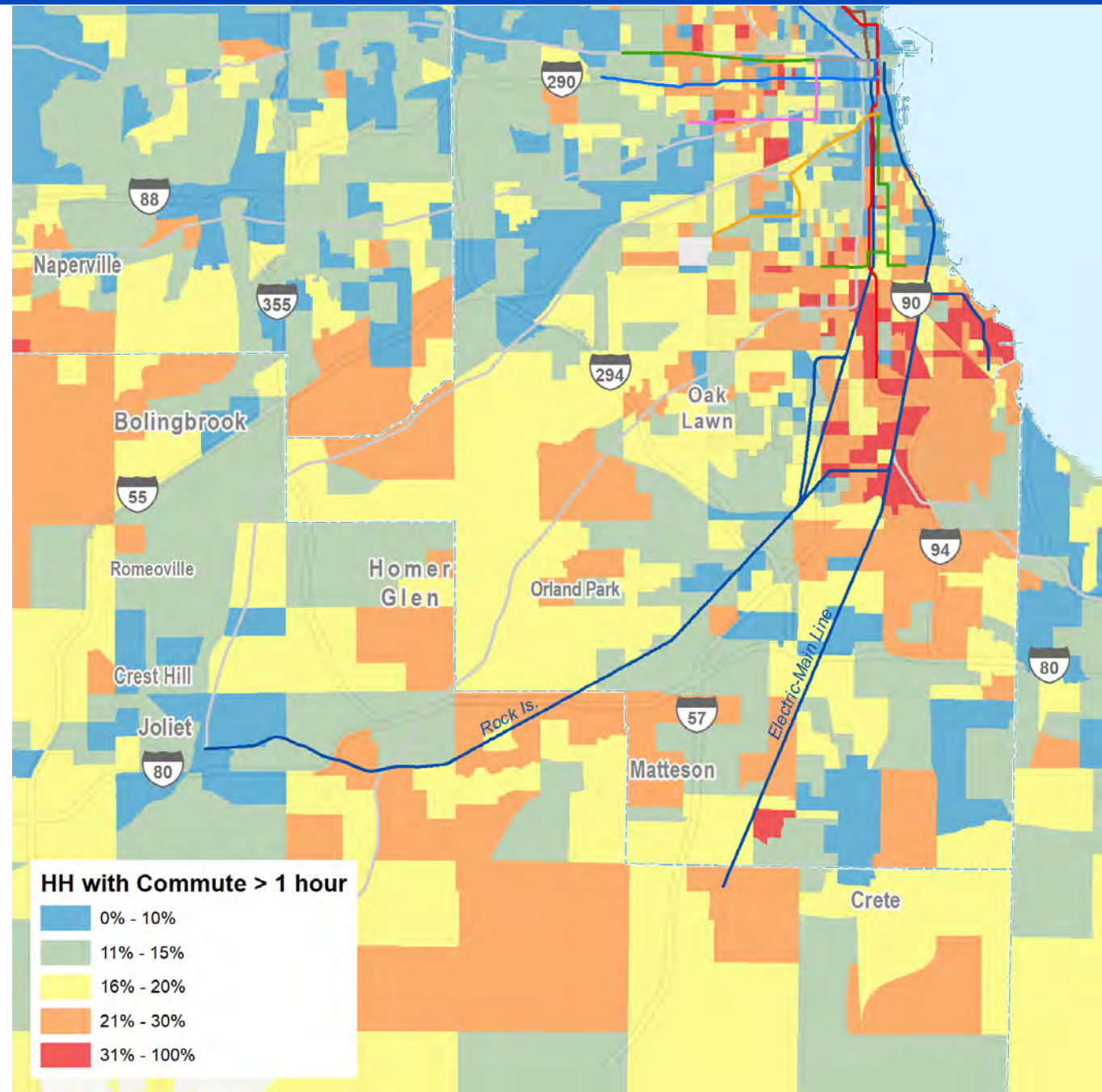


Source: CNT H+T Affordability Index



# Why South Cook?

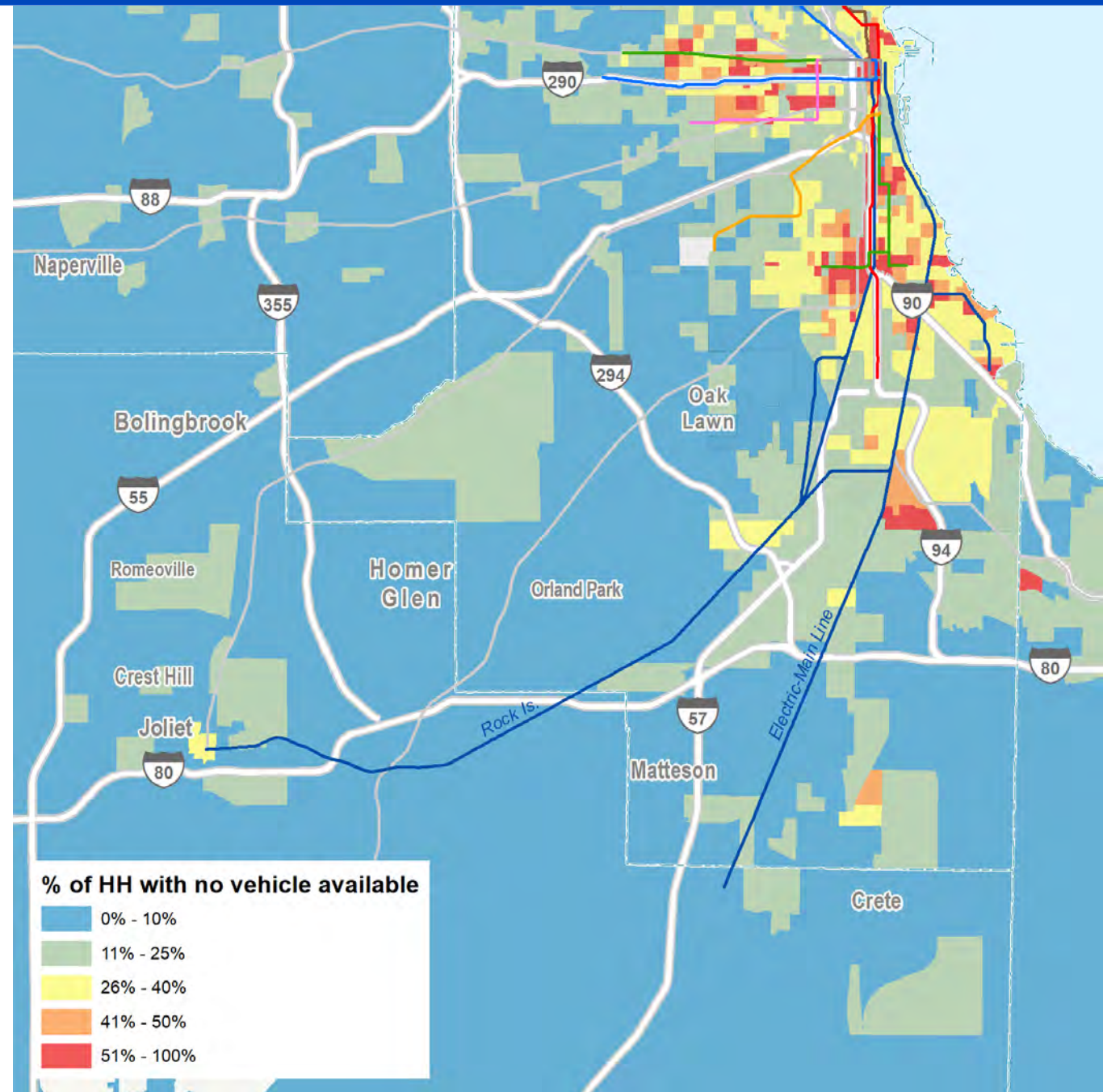
A large percentage of residents in South Cook spend over 1 hour commuting to work



Source: Esri Living Atlas, ACS

# Why South Cook?

A large percentage of households in South Cook do not own a personal vehicle

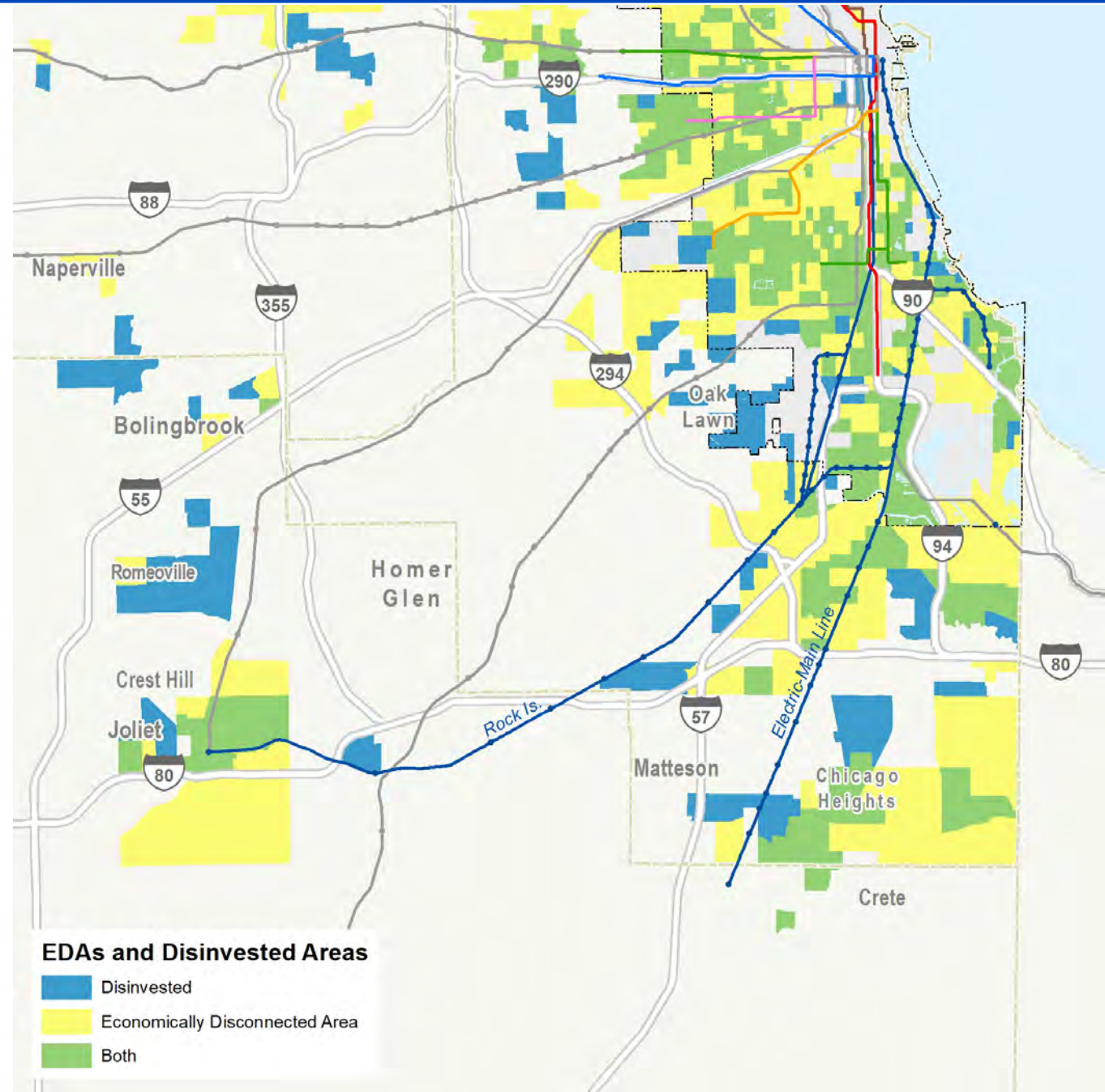


Source: Esri Living Atlas, ACS



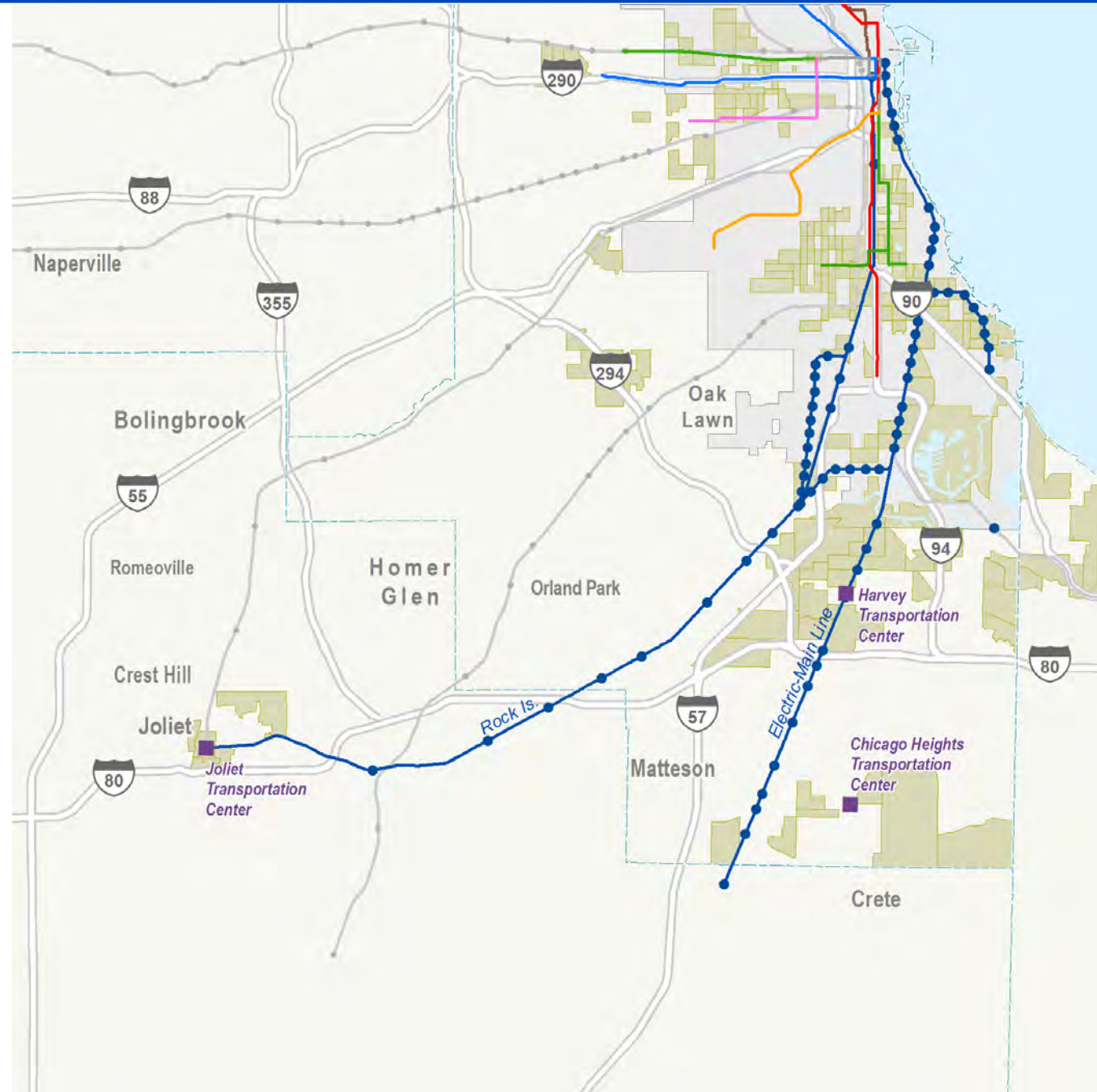
# Why South Cook?

Transportation access is further complicated by decades of economic disinvestment



# Why South Cook?

Several opportunity zones are located in South Cook – improved transit could further catalyze economic development

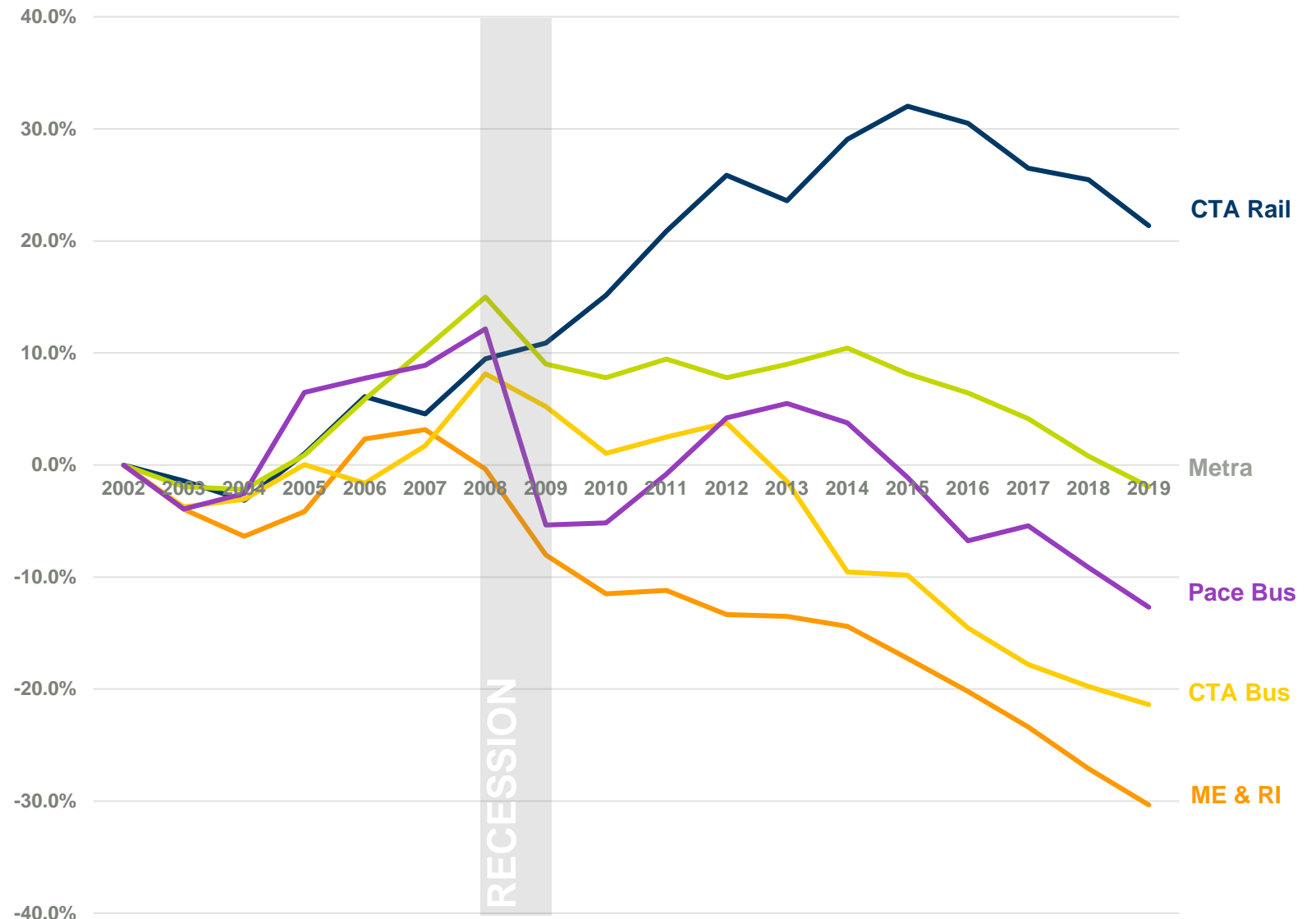




# Transit Trends

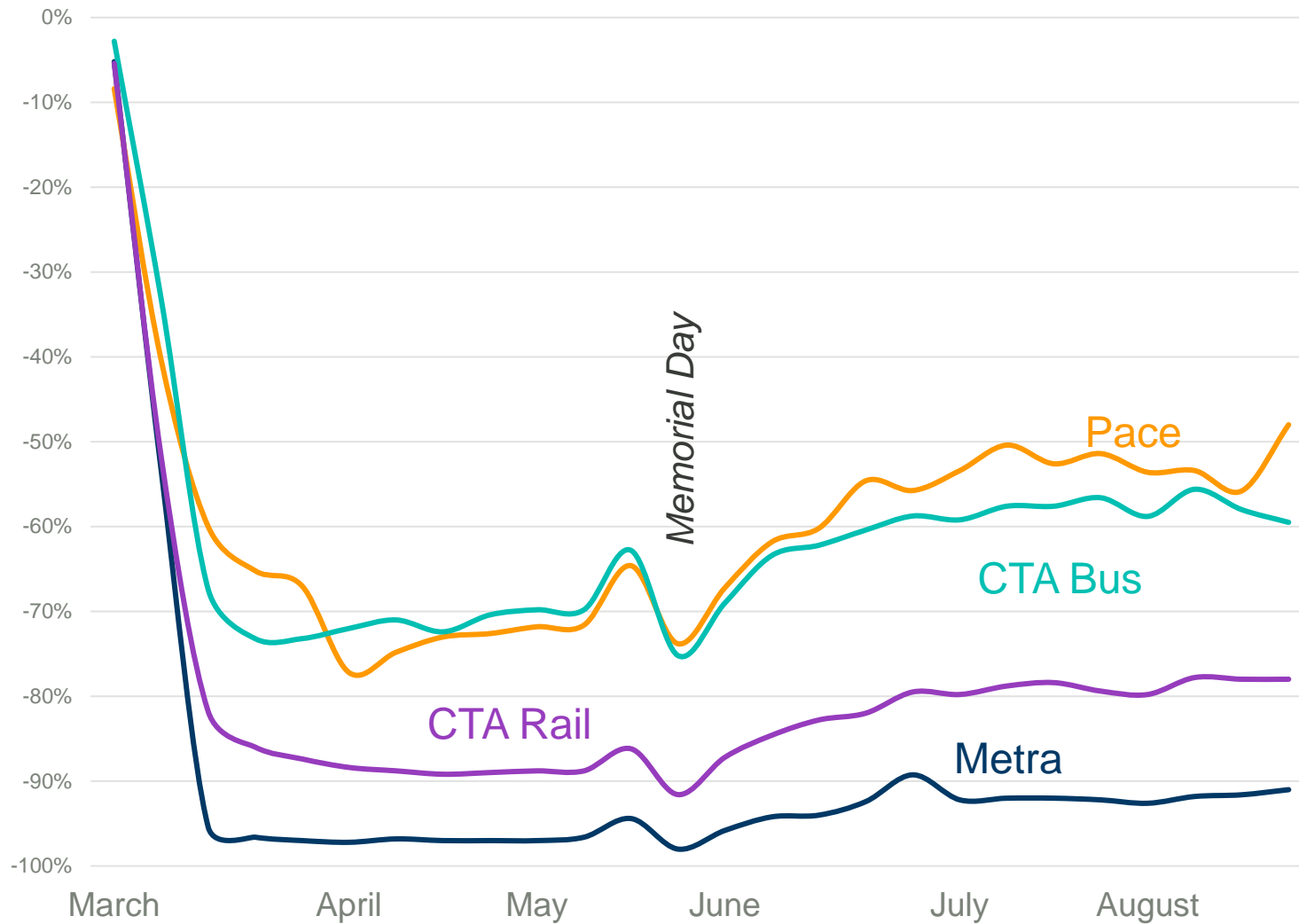
- CTA Rail has experienced the most growth recently, but mainly on north and northwest lines
- Metra: significant decline on Metra Electric and Rock Island lines
  - 14.6 million rides in 2019
  - Nearly 20% of all trips on the Metra system
  - Down 6.4 million trips since 2002
  - 45 of the 49 stations are in Cook County
- Both Pace and CTA bus ridership down systemwide

Transit Annual Ridership - Percent Change from 2002



# Ridership Data During COVID-19

Systemwide one week rolling average



- Bus ridership is recovering faster than rail, but remains flat since mid-June
- CTA rail is recovering slightly faster than Metra rail
- South Side ridership faring better than elsewhere as of June 2020 reporting

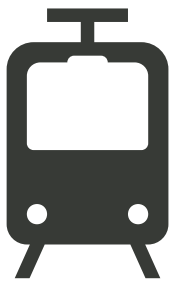
Source: RTAMS



# Ridership Data Highlights (June 2019 – June 2020)



Systemwide **64%** ↓  
Southside **53%-56%** ↓



Systemwide **85%** ↓  
Southside **67%-77%** ↓



Systemwide (Fixed) **60%** ↓  
South Cook/Will (Fixed) **57%** ↓  
Systemwide (ADA) **56%** ↓  
South Cook/Will (ADA) **54%** ↓



Systemwide **94%** ↓  
Metra Electric **90%** ↓  
Rock Island **92%** ↓

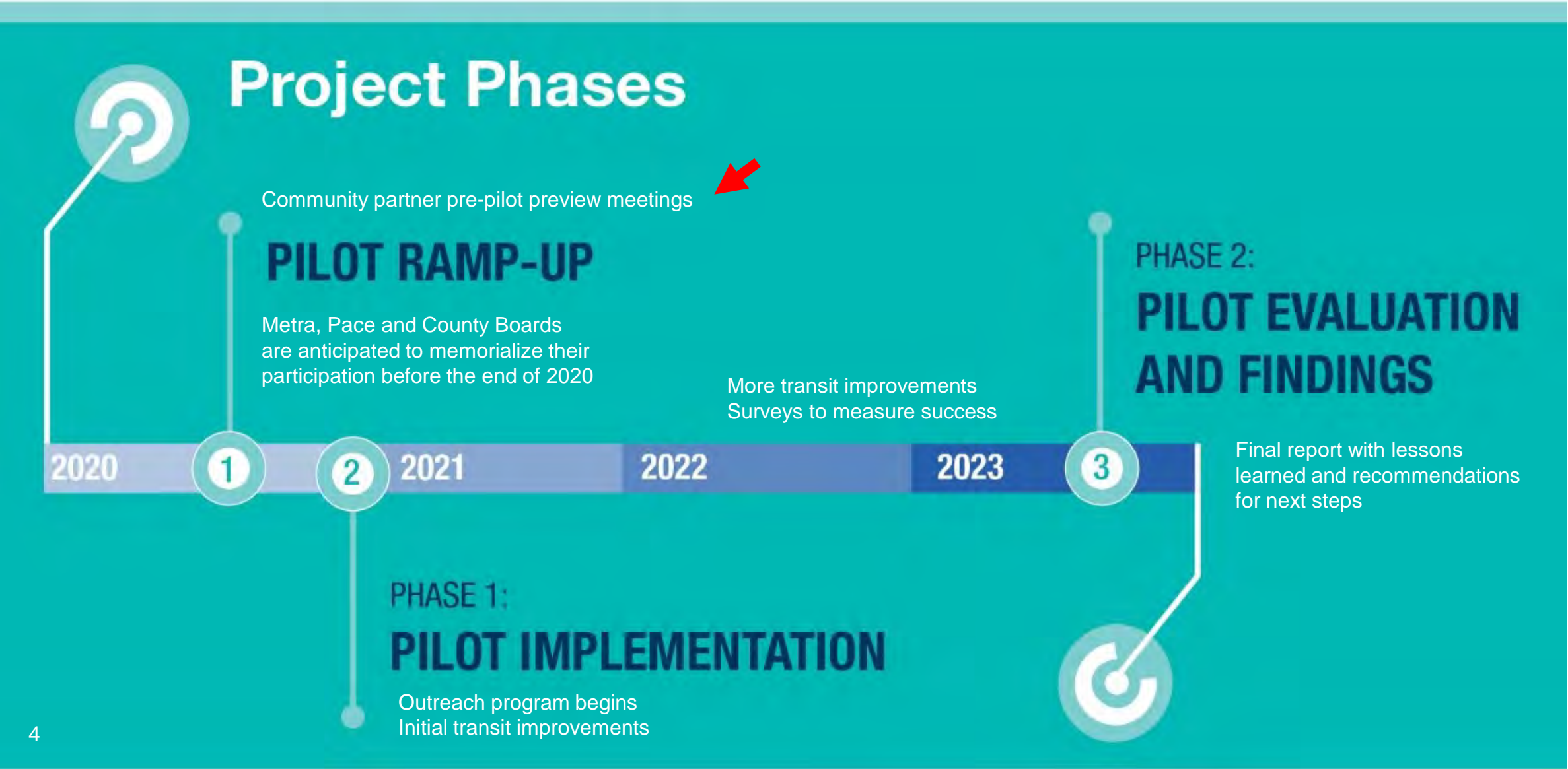
# How will improved transit serve the South Cook community?

Provides **relief to existing riders** (transit dependent, critical workers, weather impacted riders)

Encourages **new riders** to take transit instead of driving

Further agency **commitment** to equitable transit service and coordinated enhancements

# Pilot Timeline





# Metra Fare Reduction

- 50% reduction to fares on Metra Electric and Rock Island lines
- Begins in early 2021

Fare Zone	One-Way	Round Trip Plus*	10-Ride	Monthly
A	\$2.00	\$4.00	\$19.00	\$70.00
B	\$2.00	\$4.00	\$19.00	\$70.00
C	\$2.75	\$5.50	\$26.25	\$96.25
D	\$3.00	\$6.00	\$28.50	\$105.00
E	\$3.25	\$6.50	\$31.00	\$113.75
F	\$3.50	\$7.00	\$33.25	\$122.50
G	\$3.75	\$7.50	\$35.75	\$131.25
H	\$4.00	\$8.00	\$38.00	\$140.00
I	\$4.50	\$9.00	\$42.75	\$157.50
J	\$4.75	\$9.50	\$45.25	\$166.25



\*The Round Trip Plus is available through the Ventra app only. It allows unlimited travel for one day between the zones selected.



## Pace Service – Halsted 352

- Improved service and frequency
- A future Pulse corridor
- Begins in early 2021





# Public Engagement

As a key component of the pilot, Cook County will gather stakeholder and public input as each pilot element is designed and tested through the following activities:





# Immediate Outreach Timeline

November 2020

**Community Partner Pre-Pilot Meetings** 

Existing Conditions Survey

County Web Page

Metra/Pace Board Decisions

December 2020

Existing Conditions Survey/  
Pre-Pilot Promotion

Early 2021

Press Event to Launch Pilot (Fare Reduction, Improved 352)

Second Round of Community Partner Meetings

Pop-up Outreach and Increased Ridership Promotion

[www.cookcountyl.gov/FAIRTRANSIT](http://www.cookcountyl.gov/FAIRTRANSIT)  
fairtransit@cookcountyl.gov

# Pilot Launch in 2021

- In early 2021, the pilot's initial transit improvements will officially launch
- Virtual or in-person media event led by Cook County to bring key agencies together



# Ongoing Outreach and Promotion

- On-board and in-station advertisements
- Email newsletters
- Pop-up booths at:
  - Transit Stations
  - Groceries
  - Libraries



**FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITY:**  
**Where are people shopping or visiting now?**

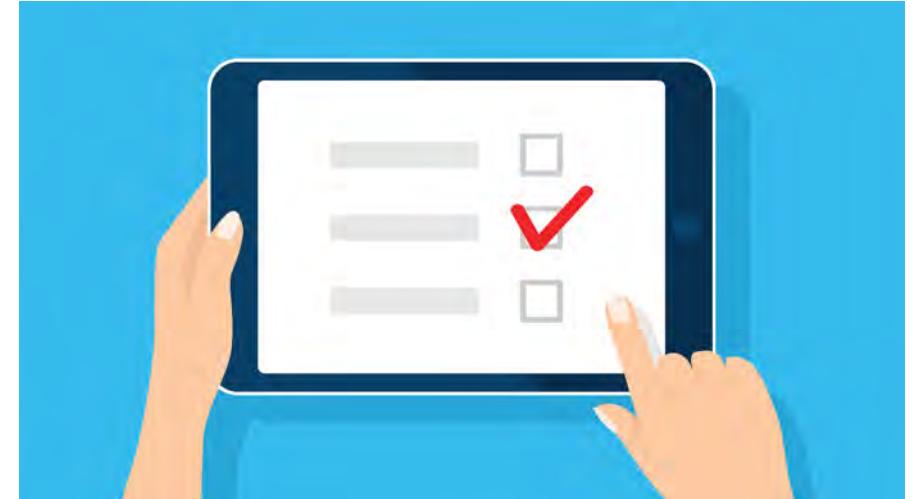


# Measuring Success

- Surveys will be conducted to gather existing conditions data and at key pilot milestones to understand the impact of pilot programs



- Existing conditions survey is open now through **December 31, 2020**
- Validated survey participants will receive a \$5 gift card for coffee while supplies last



# Role of Community Partners

- Provide feedback during community partner meetings
- Share pilot information with networks using toolkit provided
- Post on social media
- Encourage survey participation to accurately measure impact
- Suggest improvements to the pilot team throughout
- Take transit! 😊





# Community Partner Toolkits

POSTER

## FACT SHEET

**CONNECTING COOK COUNTY**  
**Fair Transit South Cook**  
 An innovative partnership to advance regional transportation

**FAIR TRANSIT SOUTH COOK**

Cook County, in partnership with the region's transit agencies, is launching a 3-year pilot project to **improve transit service and lower costs** for the residents of the south side of Chicago, south suburban Cook and north Will counties. The pilot is anticipated to kick off in early 2021 by establishing a 50 percent reduction in Metra fares on the Metra Electric and Rock Island Lines and improved service and frequency on Pace along Halsted, a future Purple corridor. The County will underwrite costs for each participating agency.

The Fair Transit pilot will provide south Cook County and north Will County residents with greater opportunities to make transit their choice for getting to work, school, shopping and regional destinations.

Pilot participants will work together towards achieving these goals:

- Fare Reduction
- Improved Service Options
- Simplified Transfers

**Project Phases**

**Cook**  
advance regional transportation

**Public Engagement**  
 As a key component of the plan, stakeholder and public input will be gathered through a variety of activities:

- Align with other regional planning initiatives
- Targeted outreach to current transit riders
- Core and community stakeholder engagement
- Ongoing virtual and digital engagement
- Targeted outreach to potential new transit riders

**FAIR TRANSIT SOUTH COOK**

Metra | Pace

**In 2021, you can look forward to improved transit service in south Cook and north Will counties.**

**Improved service on Pace's Halsted (352) route**  
**50% lower Metra fares on Metra Electric and Rock Island lines**

**FAIR TRANSIT SOUTH COOK**

**Got a minute? Take our survey!**  
 Tell us how the pandemic has affected you and what ideas you have to make transit work better in south Cook and north Will counties. Participants will receive a \$5 gift card for coffee.

Honorable Tom Prendergast, President, Cook County Board of Commissioners  
 John Votaw, P.E., Superintendent, Department of Transportation & Highways

[www.cookcountyll.gov/FAIRTRANSIT](http://www.cookcountyll.gov/FAIRTRANSIT)

**SOCIAL/  
PRINT  
MEDIA**

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# Community Partner Discussion

# Community Partner Discussion

1. How can we best share information about the pilot with the South Cook community? What will resonate with your network?
2. In addition to the goals of reduced fares, improved service and simplified transfers – what else can the pilot do to get people back on transit and/or out of their cars in favor of transit?
3. What does a successful pilot look like? What ideas do you have for how we might measure success?
4. Thinking about pre- or post-COVID circumstances, what challenges do South Cook residents face when taking transit?

## Next Steps

- Watch for an email with community partner toolkit materials
- Visit [www.cookcountyil.gov/FAIRTRANSIT](http://www.cookcountyil.gov/FAIRTRANSIT) to learn more and stay updated
- Help to spread the word!



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improved transit service in  
south Cook and north Will counties.**

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Honorable Sara Precourt  
President, Cook County  
Board of Commissioners

John Yonan, PE, Superintendent  
Department of Transportation & Highways

A project delivered by the Cook County  
Department of Transportation & Highways

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# Questions?

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