Illinois State House District 7

REP. EMANUEL CHRIS WELCH

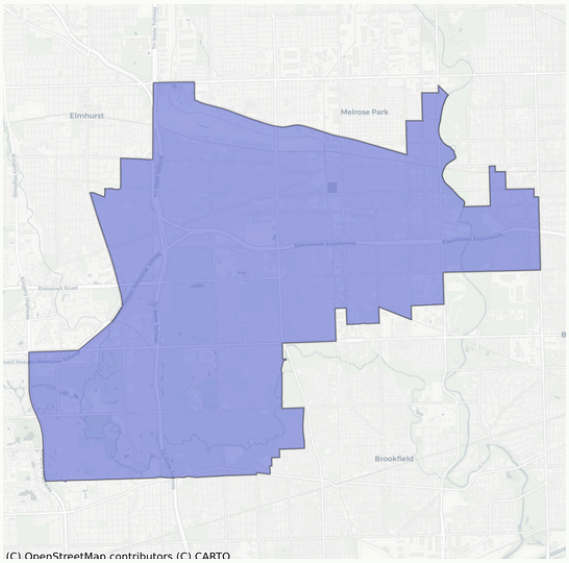
CLIMATE CABINET EDUCATION

Overview

Transit across the Chicago region is in crisis. The chronic underfunding of the CTA, Pace, and Metra has cost residents thousands of dollars a year, made commutes longer, and worsened our air quality. The solution is clear: transit in Northeast Illinois needs to be fully funded, modernized, and expanded.

Illinois families deserve top-notch transit – and do not want the broken status quo.

In addition to harming our environment and reducing the quality of life for Illinois families, our state's economy is suffering from this chronic underinvestment. Transit spending produces $13 in economic activity for every $1 invested. Funding transit is one of the best investments the State of Illinois can make to energize our economy, improve affordability, and reduce air pollution.



In House District 7

19,639 residents are **65 years** or **older.**

18,034 residents are **low income.**

12,028 residents have a **disability.**

45,415 residents identify as **White.**

44,377 residents identify as **Black.**

26,681 residents identify as **Latino/a.**

2,870 residents identify as **Asian.**

Source: US Census Bureau ACS 5-Year 2023

Fix it! Fund it!

The expansion and modernization of our transit system requires better coordination between the CTA, Metra, and Pace. Centralizing service planning, governance, and capital decisions in a single governing agency will help accomplish this goal. A more unified system is extremely popular with residents. The net approval rating for voters is +27% in Chicago, +28% in Suburban Cook County, and +34% in the Collar Counties. **Support for unifying the agencies is also particularly strong among Black voters (+34%), Democrats (+41%), and Transit Riders (+35%).**

However, improved coordination alone will not address the crisis. **State transit funding must be increased by at least $1.5 billion to prevent the regional system from collapsing.** This funding would also allow for the City, Cook County, suburban Collar Counties, and the State to build the enhanced services that residents have requested while powering the state's economy for decades to come.

Many Families in District 7 need reliable public transit...

3,693 Households without vehicle access

7% Commute to work on public transit

32% Housing cost as % of income

20% Transportation cost as % of income

52% Housing + Transportation cost as % of income

Average Annual Miles Traveled by Car (per person)

Source: US Census Bureau ACS 5-Year 2022, H+T Index (Center for Neighborhood Technology)

$5.8 billion

The economic benefit to the Chicago region by investing $1.5 billion in transit.

Source: Regional Transportation Authority

Argonne National Laboratory and MIT modeled the impact of transit cuts in the Chicago region. **The consequences of going off the fiscal cliff would be disastrous.**

- **1,600,000 more cars** on the road
- **2 million cancelled activities** daily
- 18 more hours lost to commuting annually
- **$35 billion in economic losses**
- 2% increase in regional greenhouse gas emissions
- 1,500 additional severe traffic crashes

Misaligned Priorities

The Rebuild Illinois capital program spent just 14% of transportation dollars on transit while spending 75% on roads, even though this does not reflect residents' preferences. Decades of policy choices like these have resulted in congested roads, expensive transportation, and polluted air. Many people who can't (or don't want to) drive still lack reliable transportation options. This often includes seniors, disabled people, lower-income residents, and young people. This problem is especially acute in Chicago's suburbs. It is also worth noting that single mothers, Latino/a residents, and Black residents are negatively impacted at higher rates due to less access to jobs and resources via transit, according to the Regional Transportation Authority.

Transit drives growth and connects people to jobs, schools, and health care. By reforming and funding transit, we can create a stronger, more equitable economy.

Transit saves families money.

The average annual cost of car ownership is $12,000/yr – which is over 5x more expensive than riding transit. Increasing state funding for transit would directly result in an average economic benefit of $3,800/yr per household in the region.

Fix it! Fund it!

Read our report on rural and small town transit!

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