

New Access, New Markets

The case for extending the CTA's 155 Devon Ave bus west to Edgebrook



Presented by:

Ald. Margaret Laurino

Chicago, 39th Ward

Ald. Anthony Napolitano

Chicago, 41st Ward

Ald. Debra Silverstein

Chicago, 50th Ward

President Barry Bass

Village of Lincolnwood

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The CTA's 155 Devon Avenue bus route should be extended from its current western terminus at Kedzie, to connect with Metra's Milwaukee District North Edgebrook Station at Central Avenue



Serve a sizable, underserved, disproportionately elderly population:

- The closest existing east-west lines are the CTA's 84 Peterson Avenue bus, half a mile to the south of Devon, and PACE's Touhy Avenue bus, a mile to the north of Devon.
- The industry standard for transit planning has long been that people are generally willing to walk one-quarter mile to a bus stop.¹
- Therefore, the core market area for the proposed Devon bus extension would be bounded by Granville Avenue on the south, Albion Avenue on the north, Kimball Avenue on the east and Central Avenue on the west. The 2015 core market population was 8,942, projected to grow to 9,558 by 2040.²
- Currently, *no one* in the core market area lives within a quarter mile of an east-west bus line. Some people in that area (those who live at Arthur Avenue) currently have to walk three-quarters of a mile to the nearest east-west bus line.

¹ This is a commonly cited standard in mass transit planning. A few examples:

<http://humantransit.org/2011/04/basics-walking-distance-to-transit.html>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3377942/>

<https://blogs.crikey.com.au/theurbanist/2011/11/02/how-far-should-we-walk-to-the-station/>

http://tram.mcgill.ca/Research/Publications/Transit_service_area.pdf

² Figures taken from the Regional Transportation Authority's Population and Employment Statistics and Projections tool. The tool only permitted obtaining figures for an area one-half mile north of Devon to one-half mile south of Devon, so we cut that in half to estimate the core market area. <http://www.rtams.org/subzoneapp/stats.html>

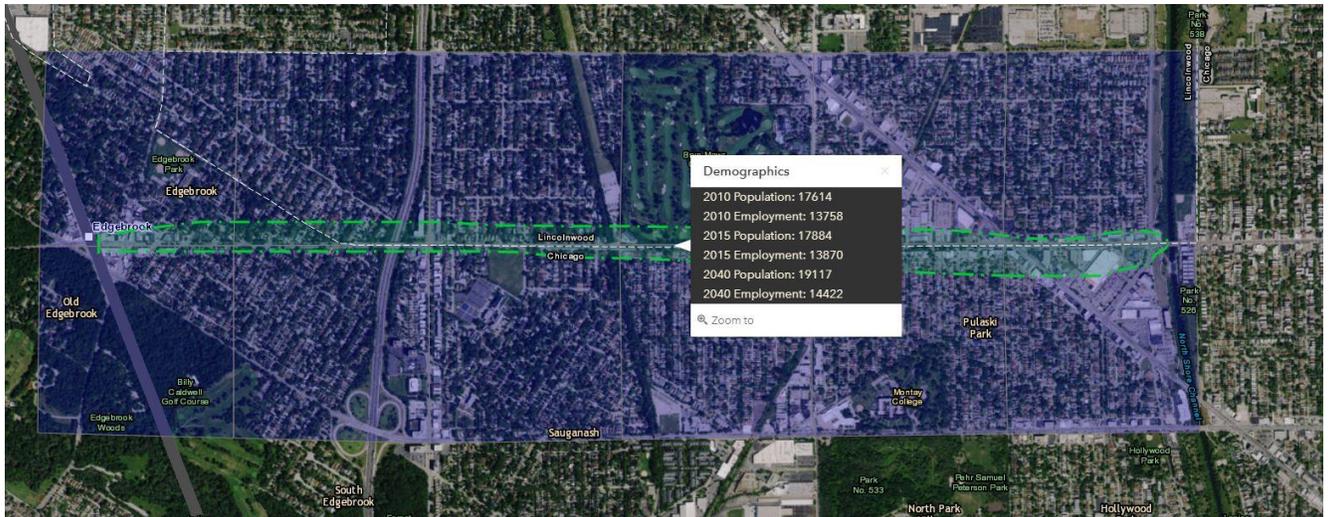
- 24.8% of the core market population is 65 years of age or older, compared to 12.7% in Cook County as a whole. 3.9% of the core area population is over 85, compared to 1.8% of Cook County as a whole.³

Improve Connectivity with existing transit lines:

- There is only one north-south line within the core market area (the CTA’s 54A Cicero North/Skokie bus), which only operates during weekday rush periods. Disregarding the 54A, residents of the core market area live as much as of 1.5 miles from a north-south line, and thus require an east-west line to serve as a feeder.

Serve not only existing demand generators, but also emerging demand generators:

- The area extending from half a mile north of the proposed extension to half a mile south of the proposed extension contained 13,870 jobs in 2015, which is projected to grow to 14,422 by 2040.⁴



Graphic captured from RTAMS Population and Employment Stats

- Commercial uses are densely packed throughout Devon Avenue.

³ 2015 Census estimates from the Census Bureau’s American Factfinder. For the core market area, we used Census tracts 1202, 1203, 1301, 8079, 8080.01 and 8080.02. These tracts roughly parallel the core market area, although the tracts make up a larger area. <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

⁴ Ibid

- The extension would give the core market transit access to the ethnic business corridor along the existing Devon Avenue bus line, which is a shopping/dining destination for customers throughout Chicago. It may be especially attractive to the many Muslims and Orthodox Jews who disproportionately live in the core market for the proposed western extension.⁵
- The proposed western extension will make the Home Depot at Devon and McCormick transit accessible for both residents of the western extension and residents along the existing bus line.
- It will improve accessibility to the 3,000 jobs⁶ in the Peterson/Pulaski industrial corridor, especially if paired with the proposed Pulaski/Crawford bus.
- It will give access to the 1,300 jobs⁷ at the Illinois Science + Technology Park, 4901 Searle Parkway, Skokie, via connection to the PACE 210 and the CTA 54A.
- It will give access to the Lincolnwood Town Center mall, via connection to the PACE 210, and the CTA 82 and 96.
- It will give access to the Westfield Old Orchard Mall (formerly known as the Old Orchard Mall), and the North Shore campus of National-Louis University via connection to the CTA 54A.
- Serve as a major feeder to a new Crawford/Pulaski bus line, which is likely to be included in the PACE/CTA North Shore Coordination Plan.
- It will provide access to the CTA Red Line, the most heavily used transit line in the Midwest.

⁵ The concentration of Muslims and Orthodox Jews in the core market area is mostly anecdotal, as reliable statistics on religion are hard to come by. It is worth noting that seven of the 109 Mosques and Islamic Centers listed by the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago are in the 60659 zip code (<http://www.ciogc.org/index.php/memberrelations/islamic-directory-of-services/mosques-and-islamic-centers>).

The Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago's Guide to Jewish Living lists 56 Orthodox Synagogues, of which nine are in the 60659 zip code, and one is in Lincolnwood (<http://www.juf.org/guide/category.aspx?id=16092>).

⁶ The 3,000 jobs figure comes from the Peterson-Pulaski Business and Industrial Council. <http://ppbic.org/service-areas/peterson-pulaski-snapshot/>

⁷ http://www.scienceparkillinois.com/about_illinois_sciences_technology_park

Extend a high-performing revenue generating lines, without competing with other lines:

- In 2016, the 155 Devon Avenue bus carried an average of 7,355 passengers per weekday, which ranked 49th among the CTA's 131 routes. Currently, it only goes 2.5 miles (Sheridan to Kedzie), making it one of the highest performing routes in passengers *per mile*. It carries 6.5% more passengers per weekday than the 92 Foster bus, and 81.5% more passengers per weekday than the 84 Peterson, even though those other buses travel more than twice the distance.⁸
- Since no one in the core market area for the proposed extension lives within a quarter-mile of any existing east-west bus, the extension would add to the 155's ridership totals while taking few passengers away from other lines.

8 The ridership figures come from the Regional Transit Authority: <http://www.rtams.org/rtams/ridershipDetail.jsp?dataset=ctaBus>. The distance for the 155 is calculated as Sheridan-Kedzie, while the 92 and 84 are calculated as Sheridan-Foster (5.6 miles). The incidental north-south movement on each line required for turnaround and grid irregularities is disregarded, as it does not add to market area.

The proposed route extension has a favorable environment in terms of traffic, street width, potential bus stop locations, and turnaround location:

- The route extension would have two traffic lanes in each direction for all of its length, with landscaped medians preventing left-turns for most of its length. There is no street parking for much of the extension. Traffic flow is relatively smooth, compared to many Chicago streets.



- The bus could turn around at the westbound terminus of the route by turning left on Central Ave, and using the existing turnaround used by the at Central and Lehigh. Using this turnaround, there would not be a single rail crossing at grade in the entire route extension.
- Alternately, the bus could turn around by turning left on Caldwell, then left on Central, and right back onto Devon. This would have the advantage of bringing passengers closer to Metra's Edgebrook Station, although it would entail two at-grade rail crossings and more potential traffic congestion. On the upside, the two left turns would be at intersections with existing left-turn lanes and left-turn signals.

