

AVOID STREET CONGESTION



“Improvements in service at the Red Line stations will allow more people to take advantage of mass transit, resulting in more customers in the surrounding business districts. Increase in property values and potential new transit-oriented development will bring more economic activity to the Edgewater neighborhood.”

—EDGEWATER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

106 SUCCESS STORY

Rebuilding Historic Transportation Infrastructure for the 21st Century

Chicago, Illinois



THE STORY

Celebrated with cheers at its opening in 1900, the establishment of the elevated North Main Line provided a 7.5-mile transit route to the North Side of Chicago. The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) has operated the line, now known as the North Red Line, since 1947. Part of Chicago's iconic "L" system set above city streets and historic neighborhoods, the line is constructed of steel, and portions still display the riveted steel plate construction technology that was perfected during the 1880s construction of the Eiffel Tower. The line was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 2012.

THE PROJECT

Today, the North Red Line is the busiest line in the CTA system, connecting passengers in a rapidly growing transit corridor with jobs and destinations in the nation's second largest central business district, the Chicago Loop. The line's aging infrastructure is past its useful life and is currently unable to meet the demand for capacity, resulting in frequent delays, crowded trains, and overall slow speeds. After more than 100 years of service, substantial improvements are needed to continue the North Red Line's success and its vital role in Chicago's transit system.

These improvements, set forth in the Red and Purple Modernization (RPM) Program, are the largest capital improvement in CTA's history. The massive project to modernize the corridor with significant improvements is being completed in phases. RPM Phase One identified two projects that will allow CTA to expand its North Red Line service to accommodate up to 30 percent more customers in the busiest hours, reduce passenger wait times, and alleviate overcrowding. In 2017, CTA received a commitment of \$957 million from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) through the Core Capacity Program, which was the final piece needed to fund the more than \$2 billion RPM Phase One Project.

Photos: Above, poster used to promote rail travel in 1926; Right, streetscape showing an elevated section of the North Red Line (photos courtesy Chicago Transit Authority)

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Photos: from left, transit users at Belmont Station in 1956, view to the north; cover of a CTA transit brochure published in 1961 (photos courtesy Chicago Transit Authority)

THE 106 PROCESS

FTA was responsible for conducting the Section 106 process under the National Historic Preservation Act. Section 106 requires federal agencies to identify historic properties and assess the effects on those properties of the projects they carry out, fund, or permit. Federal agencies also are required to consult with parties that have an interest in historic properties when adverse effects are likely to occur. FTA consulted with a wide swath of interested parties to address the preservation issues. Adverse effects were identified on resources that included the North Red Line, portions of which would be replaced by a modern aerial structure. Additional historic properties affected include the Vautravers Building, a six-flat apartment building located within the new rail alignment that is both individually National Register-eligible and a contributing resource to the National Register Newport Avenue Historic District; the Newport Avenue Historic District; and three additional historic districts that the North Red Line traverses. Recognizing the dynamic nature of an engineered facility that must continue to be rehabilitated, modified, and updated in order to meet the city's needs, the Section 106 process focused on minimizing impacts to the historic properties and providing a tailored, creative, and collaborative approach to mitigation. Proactive and consistent dialogue was the guiding principle for a successful Section 106 consultation that led consulting parties to agree to a set of wide-ranging mitigation measures.

THE SUCCESS

CTA is responsible for completing the mitigation measures but has continued to involve the consulting parties as reviewers whose input has directly affected the outcome. The consulting parties provided input on National Register updates and historic preservation plans as well as the visual preference survey for track design. Design proposals rated higher when the aesthetic qualities of the historic track structure were integrated. CTA is implementing mitigation measures including installation of an interpretive exhibit, Historic American Engineering Record/Historic American Buildings Survey documentation, updating the National Register nominations, and the development of historic preservation plans to guide future development in the affected historic districts. In addition, CTA will conduct an evaluation of the feasibility of relocating the Vautravers Building and made the commitment to move the building if determined viable. As a result of the Section 106 process, RPM Phase One will provide state-of-the-art upgrades that will respect Chicago's historical legacy while bringing significant improvements to modernize the corridor and allow CTA and the North Red Line to serve customers through the 21st century.

Consulting Parties:

Federal Transit
Administration
ACHP
Illinois Historic
Preservation Agency
(SHPO)
City of Chicago,
Historic
Preservation
Division
Preservation Chicago
Landmarks Illinois
Edgewater Historical
Society & Museum
Uptown Chicago
Commission
Friends of the Parks
Uptown Historical
Society
Miami Tribe of
Oklahoma
Uptown United

For more about
Section 106 and
the ACHP go to
www.achp.gov



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