

March 4, 2021

Leanne Redden  
Executive Director  
Regional Transportation Authority  
175 W. Jackson Blvd., Suite 1650  
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Ms. Redden,

Thank you for providing an opportunity to comment on Step 2 of the RTA's COVID recovery strategy. Our coalition applauds the transparency of this process and the clear commitment to providing the best possible outcome in these difficult times. Overall, we enthusiastically support this deliberate, flexible, and data-driven approach used to allocate the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act funding, and encourage the RTA to continue to employ these types of methods.

### **Funding**

We encourage the RTA to continue advocating at the state and federal level for additional relief funding as necessary, and for greater flexibility in using existing funding. As noted in Sustaining Critical Transit in 2021, greater flexibility would enhance RTA's ability to allocate resources in an innovative fashion.

### **Data-Driven Decisions, Equity, and Transparency**

The approach proposed to distribute CRRSAA funding among the service boards was a welcome innovation, given its transparent use of data to prioritize support of operations during the COVID-19 crisis. We support your attention to defining transit Critical Need Areas. A combined approach which includes data on transit propensity, regional equity, and high mobility industries is a critical and promising strategy.

As relief funding is deployed, we encourage the RTA to evaluate how the allocation impacts mobility outcomes -- with a focus on racial equity -- and to continue evolving data-driven methods in the future.

We applaud the RTA's commitment to transparency, and welcome all opportunities for collaboration. Meaningful public engagement is critical to ensure that the RTA's strategic recovery process meets the needs of marginalized and transit-reliant communities, as well as the businesses and workers who need an efficient transit system. We encourage the RTA to seek input directly from these groups and to provide information in a clear and consistent manner.

Our organizations would be happy to assist the RTA in these efforts.

Sincerely,

Active Transportation Alliance  
Center for Neighborhood Technology  
Chaddick Institute at DePaul University  
Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago  
Elevated Chicago  
Environmental Law & Policy Center  
High Speed Rail Alliance  
Illinois Environmental Council  
Metropolitan Planning Council  
Respiratory Health Association  
Shared-Use Mobility Center  
Union of Concerned Scientists