



# ENVIRONMENTAL LAW & POLICY CENTER

Derrick James, Senior Policy Advocate, ELPC  
Testimony to Chicago Community Development Commission  
4/15/26

The Environmental Law and Policy Center encourages the members of the Community Development Commission to expand the Canal/Congress TIF district to include the intercity bus station. Purchasing and renovating this station is an incredible opportunity to improve on Chicago's legacy as a transportation hub for the Midwest. Chicago has always been a gateway for those seeking opportunities in employment, education, culture, health care and self expression. Chicago has been a launching pad to prosperity for millions for almost two centuries. They have come by many means over the years, but when we look to transportation in the future, our priorities should promote a cleaner environment and affordability.

Taking the bus creates only [1/5<sup>th</sup> of the carbon](#) emissions compared to driving, meaning cleaner air and less climate impacts. Average car prices are now [over \\$50,000](#). With tariffs, inflation, and soaring gas prices, driving is increasingly expensive. Chicago's secret sauce of attracting strivers and talent to live here has been our transit system that allows households to function car free or car lite, saving thousands of dollars annually that could instead be devoted to other expenses, housing, education, or wealth building. College students from around the Midwest can access our 30 campuses and get to and from hometowns, even after they graduate and start their careers here.

We have a proud history of showing the world how to build a transportation system of both functionality and beauty. We've taken pride in the superlatives over the years; busiest airports, railroad Capitol of the nation, tallest building. For us to succeed, we need to be not just the subjects of the keystrokes and cameras of the influencers, or lauded by the tastemakers, but more substantively, we need to be real about making opportunity available and accessible to those with limited resources. That means continuing a proud history of grand facilities for Chicagoans setting out on journeys and a welcoming entrance for those visiting, not just at O'Hare, or Midway, or Union Station, but at the bus station, too.

The public has seen fit to provide substantial and comfortable terminals for plane and train passengers, and we solicit non-profits to adopt our highway entries for beautification. The same should be true for our bus passengers. Chicago is the undisputed mid-continent transportation hub for planes and trains. Heck, a nascent Great Lakes cruise industry would have no place to dock but for publicly-owned Navy Pier. We devote public resources to make sure those visitors are 'wowed' by our emerald city. By expanding the West Loop TIF, we'll have the resources to provide the same for our neighbors and visitors traveling by long distance bus. If Atlanta, New York, Philadelphia and Detroit can give bus travelers a place from which to disembark, surely Chicago can do even better.