

Red Line South Track Renewal Project

Coming: Spring 2013

Faster. Smoother. Better.

Starting in Spring 2013, the Chicago Transit Authority will rebuild the tracks along the south Red Line, from Cermak-Chinatown to 95th/Dan Ryan, a project that will provide faster, more comfortable and more reliable service for Red Line riders.

The South Red Line, called the Dan Ryan branch, is more than 40 years old and needs a full replacement. Because of the current track conditions, Red Line riders experience longer travel times, more-crowded trains and less-reliable service.

This project will provide faster commutes, a smoother ride, improved stations and accessibility and a better passenger experience. Additionally, the project is expected to create hundreds of good-paying jobs.

The work is part of Mayor Rahm Emanuel's Building a New Chicago program, which is updating infrastructure that's critical to the city and includes improvements that will help ensure that CTA continues to serve customers as effectively as possible.

The project is made possible by \$1 billion in federal, state and local funding announced in late 2011 by Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Governor Pat Quinn for the Red and Purple Lines.



Project scope

From just north of the Cermak-Chinatown station to the 95th Street station, crews will replace everything in the track bed: ties, rail, third rail, ballast (the stone material that holds the ties in place) and drainage systems. Some stations will also receive improvements ranging from new canopies, paint and lighting upgrades to new benches and bike racks. Additionally, the stations at Garfield, 63rd and 87th will get new elevators, making all stations on the South Side Red Line accessible.

Project benefits

This project will provide numerous benefits to Red Line riders:

1. Faster travel times by eliminating slow zones: 10 minutes faster between 95th Street and Cermak/Chinatown
2. Better reliability, with reduced potential for delays and service issues
3. New elevators at Garfield, 63rd and 87th: making the south Red Line fully accessible
4. Lower operating and maintenance costs
5. Improved station environments

Construction plan

To complete the work as quickly and effectively as possible, starting in Spring 2013, the Red Line will completely close from Cermak-Chinatown to 95th/Dan Ryan.

The closure will last five months, and will impact the nine Red Line stations from Cermak-Chinatown through 95th/Dan Ryan.

This option is the quickest, most efficient and most cost-effective way to complete this complex project.

- Shortest project duration
- Lowest cost—with project savings reinvested into local transit improvements, such as station improvements along the Dan Ryan branch
- Will result in quicker trips and more frequent trains on the South Red Line—sooner

Other benefits

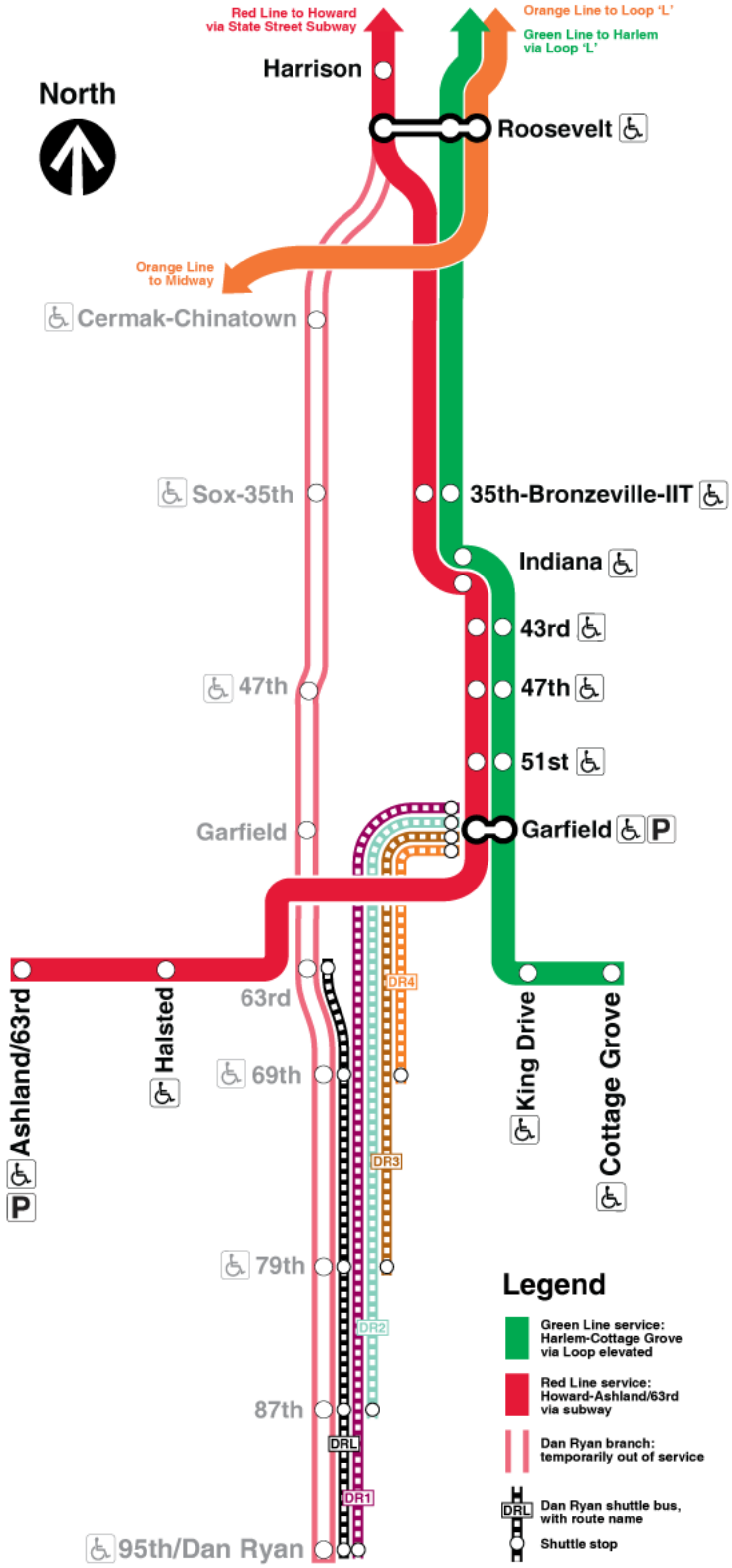
New tracks will accommodate the new 5000-series rail cars, which feature:

- Modern, quieter, smoother, more customer features
- Security cameras to enhance safety
- Most employment opportunities for South Side residents
- Hundreds of jobs for construction apprentices, tradespeople, bus drivers

Service alternatives

During construction, CTA will offer extensive alternate service providing multiple options for commuters.

1. Free shuttle buses from 69th, 79th, 87th and 95th/Dan Ryan stations to the Garfield station on the Green Line
(a) including express service from stations and local, station-to-station service (entry at Garfield will be free for bus shuttle riders)
2. Free rail entry for shuttle bus riders at Garfield on the Green Line
3. 50 cent discounted bus rides on many South Side routes
4. Red Line service on Green Line tracks between Ashland/63rd and Roosevelt
5. Expanded bus service on existing routes.



Why should this project be done?

The Red Line is the backbone of the rail system, with nearly 250,000 riders on an average weekday. Opened in 1969, the Dan Ryan Branch tracks and track bed are beyond their expected lifespans. Rail ties are deteriorated, the ballast doesn't provide sufficient drainage and track conditions require trains to reduce speed in several areas.

This means longer commutes and less reliability for more than 80,000 commuters on the Dan Ryan Branch each day. Currently, 40 percent of the Dan Ryan Branch requires slow zones for safe operation, which means longer commutes and less reliability for Red Line riders.

Without these improvements, the percentage of slow zones would rise in the next year—further increasing commute times and creating more congestion.

History

The Dan Ryan Branch of the Red Line opened to customers on September 28, 1969. Richard Nixon was in the White House, a first-class stamp cost six cents, gas cost 35 cents a gallon and "Midnight Cowboy" won that year's Academy Award for Best Picture.

Constructed by the City of Chicago's Department of Public Works for the CTA, the extension provided relief to the overcrowded South Side Elevated while extending rapid transit service four miles further south than it had previously gone.

Noted design firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) designed the nine stations on the Dan Ryan branch. Improved visibility and security, a high level of illumination, and more comfortable conditions were design goals.

Frequently asked questions

General questions

Why is this project needed?

The Red Line South reconstruction will improve the conditions of rail tracks between the Cermak-Chinatown station and the 95th/Dan Ryan station. The resulting improvements will eliminate slow zones that plague the south end of the Red Line, and enhance some stations.

Is it absolutely necessary?

Yes. The Dan Ryan branch opened in 1969, and the tracks and track bed are beyond their expected lifespans. Without rehabilitation, train service would become even slower, and the project cost would continue to grow.

Why is it being done now?

Without these improvements, the percentage of slow zones would continue to increase—creating longer commutes and creating more congestion.

What is the project cost?

The estimate cost, including design, engineering and construction, is \$425 million. The project is expected to go out for bid this summer.

How is this being paid for?

The project is made possible by the \$1 billion in federal, state and local funding announced in late 2011 by Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Governor Pat Quinn for the Red and Purple Lines.

Project scope

What exactly will be done?

Everything in the track bed—the median area of the Dan Ryan Expressway—will be replaced: ties, rail, third rail and ballast (the stone/earthen material that holds the ties in place) and drainage systems. Additionally, stations will receive improvements ranging from new paint and lighting improvements to new benches and bike racks.

The CTA already had a Dan Ryan Reconstruction Project. How is this different from that?

The work in 2005 focused primarily on electrical power infrastructure -- substations, crossovers, third rail, and other power-related elements -- and station renovations, including adding elevators at 47th and 69th stations and refurbishment of platform canopies at eight stations from Sox-35th to 87th, inclusive. This work will focus on the track bed.

Project benefits

What will the project achieve?

1. Faster travel times by eliminating slow zones
2. Reduced potential for delays and service issues
3. Improved station environments
4. Significant investment in the Red Line south corridor
5. New elevators at Garfield, 63rd and 87th will make all South Side Red Line stations accessible

Why not just work on weekends?

CTA did explore this option, but did not pursue it because of its considerable drawbacks:

- Working on weekends, only, would have taken four years to complete the project
- Weekend ridership along the Dan Ryan Branch is significant: over 39,000 on Saturdays and more than 29,000 on Sundays
 - The five-month construction option will save \$75 million over an option to perform work on weekends, only
 - Continued slow zones for 4 years and could result in:
 - Average additional commuting time per passenger at a minimum of 20,000 minutes (14 days)
 - Additional commuting time would increase each year
 - Greater potential for delays caused by track issues
 - Continued use of older rail cars for 4 years (noisier, less smooth ride)
 - More crowded trains for 4 years
 - Fewer community jobs, as a smaller workforce would be required
 - Frequent schedule changes, multiple reroutes

Without question, the five-month reconstruction plan will pose challenges to commuters. But this is the best and most-effective way to improve the Red Line—completing the project in the shortest amount of time and at the lowest cost.

How will CTA spend the \$75 million in savings?

The \$75 million in savings over an option to perform work on weekends, only, will be reinvested into station upgrades along the South Red Line, such three new elevators, lighting, painting, electrical substation work and other improvements, and will also enable CTA to provide the extensive alternative service during construction.

When CTA rebuilt the Brown Line in the mid-2000s, the line remained open. Why must the Red Line completely close?

The Brown Line project involved station reconstructions. The Red Line South project involves the actual tracks on which trains run. It is impossible to do the Red Line work while trains are running.

This project is more akin to the reconstruction of the Green Line from 1994-1996, when the entire line was closed for reconstruction of both track and stations (though this project has a much smaller scope and duration).

How much longer is my commute going to take?

Commuting times will vary depending on a number of factors, including passenger volume, time of day, traffic and weather conditions, etc. Change in commuting time will also depend on the starting and ending locations of your trip. Additionally, travel times will likely change during the first few weeks of the project, as traffic and commuting patterns adapt to the changes. Regardless of your destination, CTA recommends allowing additional travel time.

What are my options when the Red Line is closed?

Red Line riders will have three main options, each designed for convenience and efficiency:

1. Free Station-to-Station express bus shuttle service traveling between Garfield on the Green Line and 95th/Dan Ryan. Red Line stops at 95th/Dan Ryan, 87th, 79th and 69th will have their own shuttle bus service, continually running directly to Garfield on the Green Line (and back). Additionally, an express shuttle bus will continue to serve riders traveling between stations from 63rd to 95th Streets, making stops at each station.
2. Red Line trains will travel on the Green Line tracks, south of Roosevelt, to Ashland/63rd. Red Line trains from Ashland/63rd will operate on the Green Line tracks thru 35th-Bronzeville-IIT and then continue north to Howard via the subway.
3. Green Line service will operate between Harlem/Lake and Cottage Grove, with service via downtown. (Some Green Line trains will operate between Harlem/Lake and the Loop, only, which will help reduce the likelihood of delays due to traffic on the parts where Green and Red will share track.)
4. Entry at Garfield (Green Line, also with Red Line service) will be free for shuttle bus riders.
5. 50 cent discounted bus rides on many South Side bus routes will also be offered.

In addition, multiple bus routes (both north-south and east-west routes) will provide additional options.

Will the public have a chance for input on the project/process?

Yes. There will be a series of public meetings to discuss the plan and its improvements to the Red Line, service implications and other issues. Those meetings will begin Spring/Summer 2012.

The cta Red Line at a glance

- Overall, busiest rail line: Nearly 250,000 passengers on average weekday; 81 million annually
- Dan Ryan branch: Approximately 84,000 passengers on average weekday
 - (13.6 percent of weekday rail system customers)
- 40% of Dan Ryan Branch is a slow zone
- 9 stations will close—Cermak/Chinatown, Sox/35th, 47th, Garfield, 63rd, 68th, 79th, 87th and 95th