

Regional Transportation Authority Budget

October 23, 2024

Cook County Board



RTA region's transit system

1/10

Percentage
of Illinois Area

3,700

Size in
Square Miles

8.3M

Regional
Population

4.2M

Total Jobs
within Region

74%

Percentage of Economic Activity in Illinois, 2019

Ridership is Up

14%



Increase in system wide ridership from July 2023

16% ↑ **11%** ↑

CTA Bus

CTA Rail

13% ↑ **20%** ↑

Metra

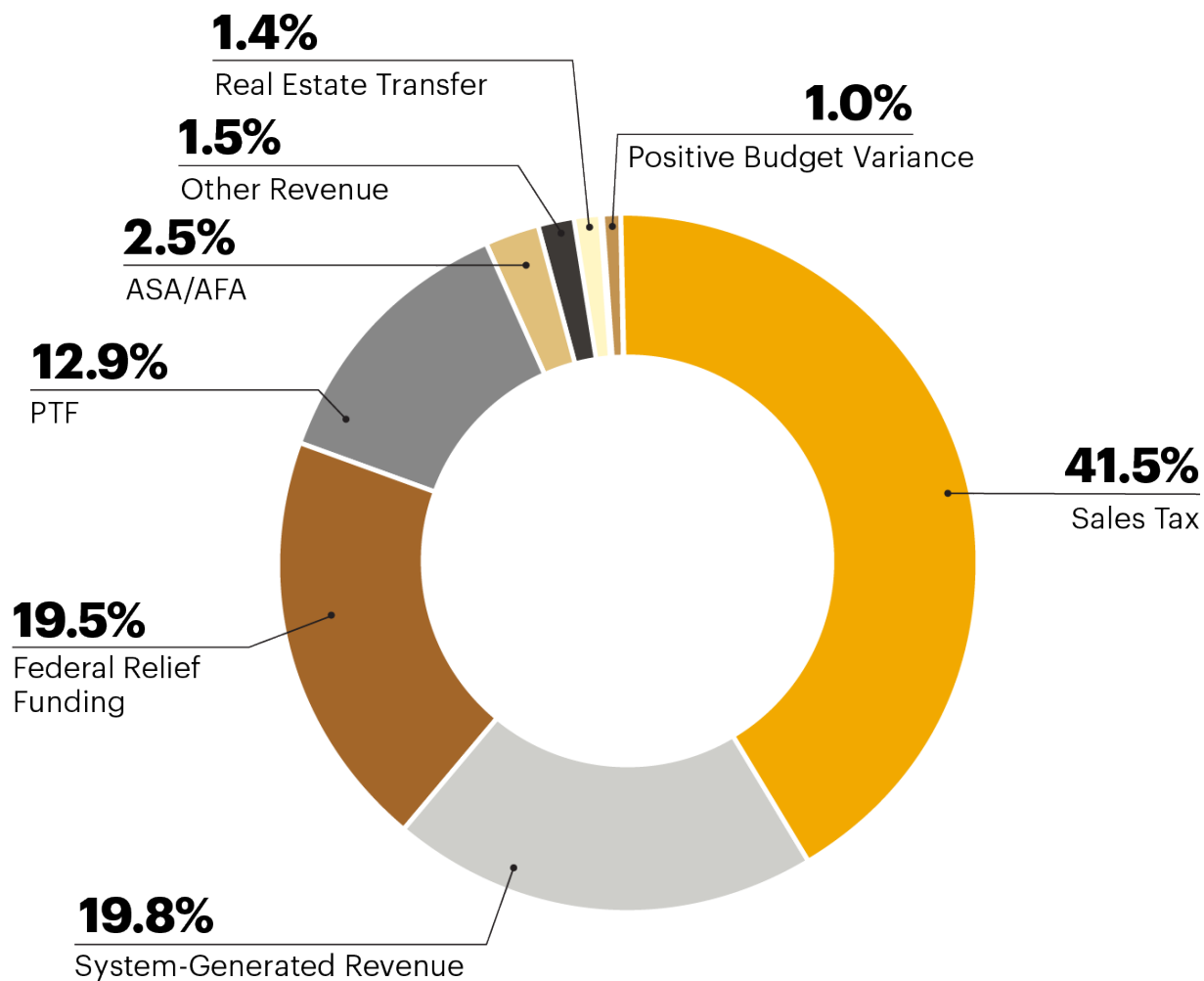
Pace Bus

Proposed 2025 Regional Operating Budget

- Total regional expenses projected at \$4.147 billion
 - 5.7% increase from 2024 Regional Budget
 - Continued service restorations, higher labor expense amid workforce challenges
- Federal relief funding now expected to begin to exhaust in early 2026
 - Projected annual shortfall of more than \$700 million starting in 2026
 - New funding sources and policy reforms need to be in place to avoid extensive service cuts and fare increases



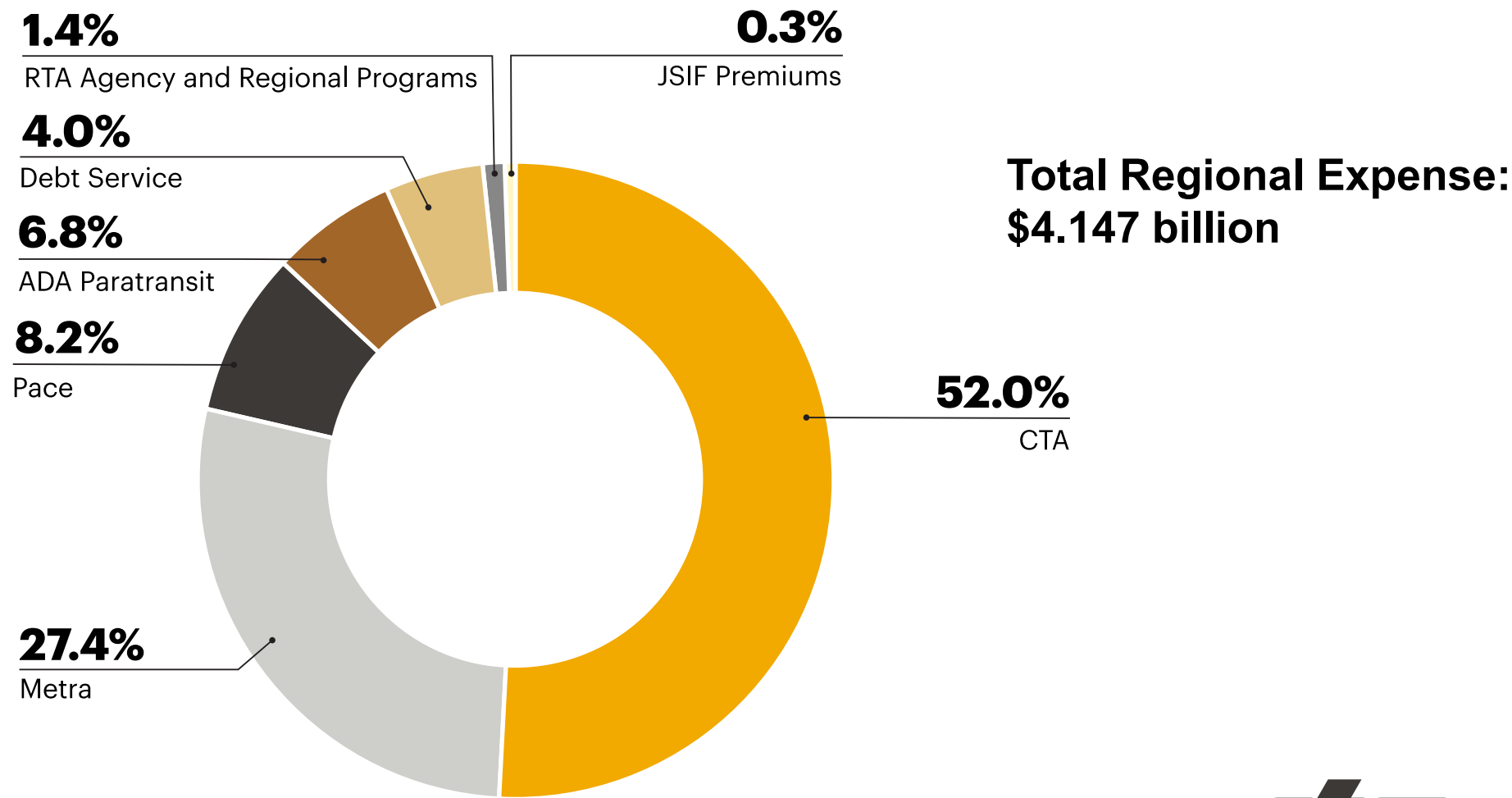
2025 operating budget still being stabilized by federal relief



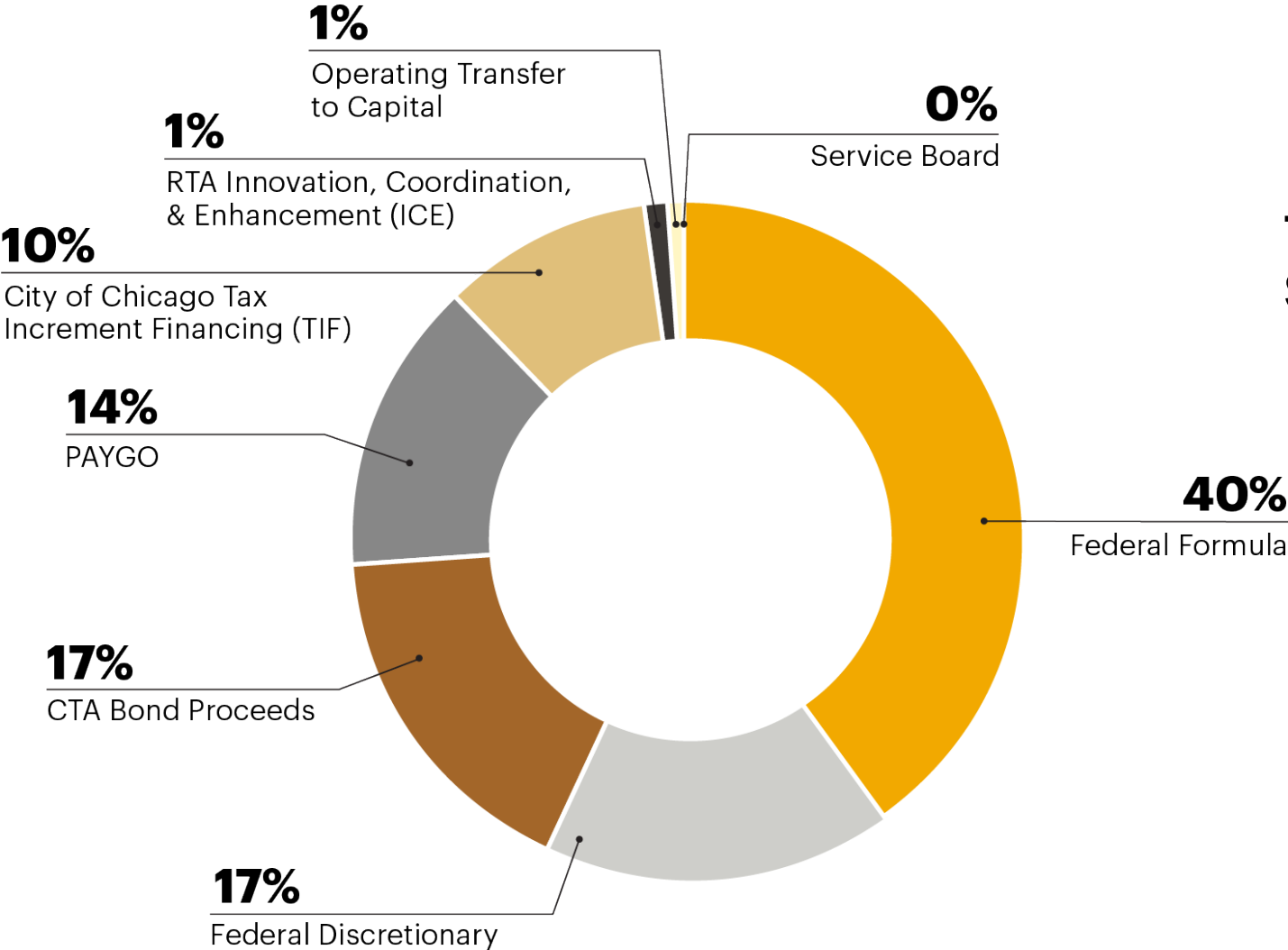
Total Regional Revenue: \$4.182 billion



2025 budgeted expense by agency



2025-2029 Regional Capital Program



**Total Regional Program:
\$9.469 billion**



Cook County Transit Projects

- **CTA**
 - Red Line Extension (\$3.95B)
 - Bus Electrification (\$437M)
 - New Rail Cars (\$350M)
- **Metra**
 - Cook County Station Improvements (\$75M)
 - Zero Emissions Trains (\$207M)
- **Pace**
 - Southwest Division Electrification (\$92M)
 - Hydrogen Paratransit Vehicles (\$4M)



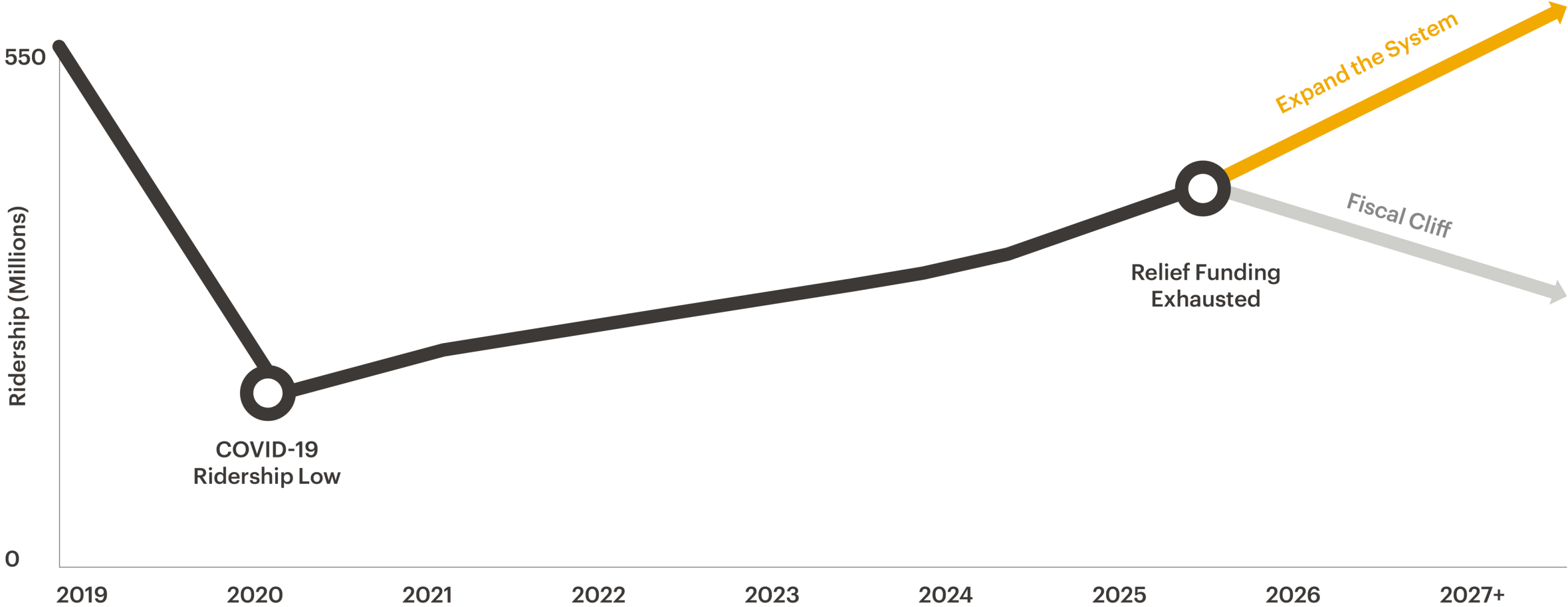
Transit is the Answer in action

- **2024 Implementation Highlights**

- Access Pilot Program
- Fare Equity Report
- Regional Day Pass
- Relaunched rider-focused Citizen Advisory Board
- Safety and Security Summit, Transit Station Activation Pilot
- Suburban Transit Summit



2026 is a critical pivot point



Year 1 Impacts – Service Scenarios

Fall off the Fiscal Cliff

20% **30–40%**

Budget **Cut**

Service **Cut**

25 min 

15 min Headway

75 min 

45 min Headway

Expand the System

20% **30–40%**

Budget **Increase**

Service **Increase**

10 min 

15 min Headway

30 min 

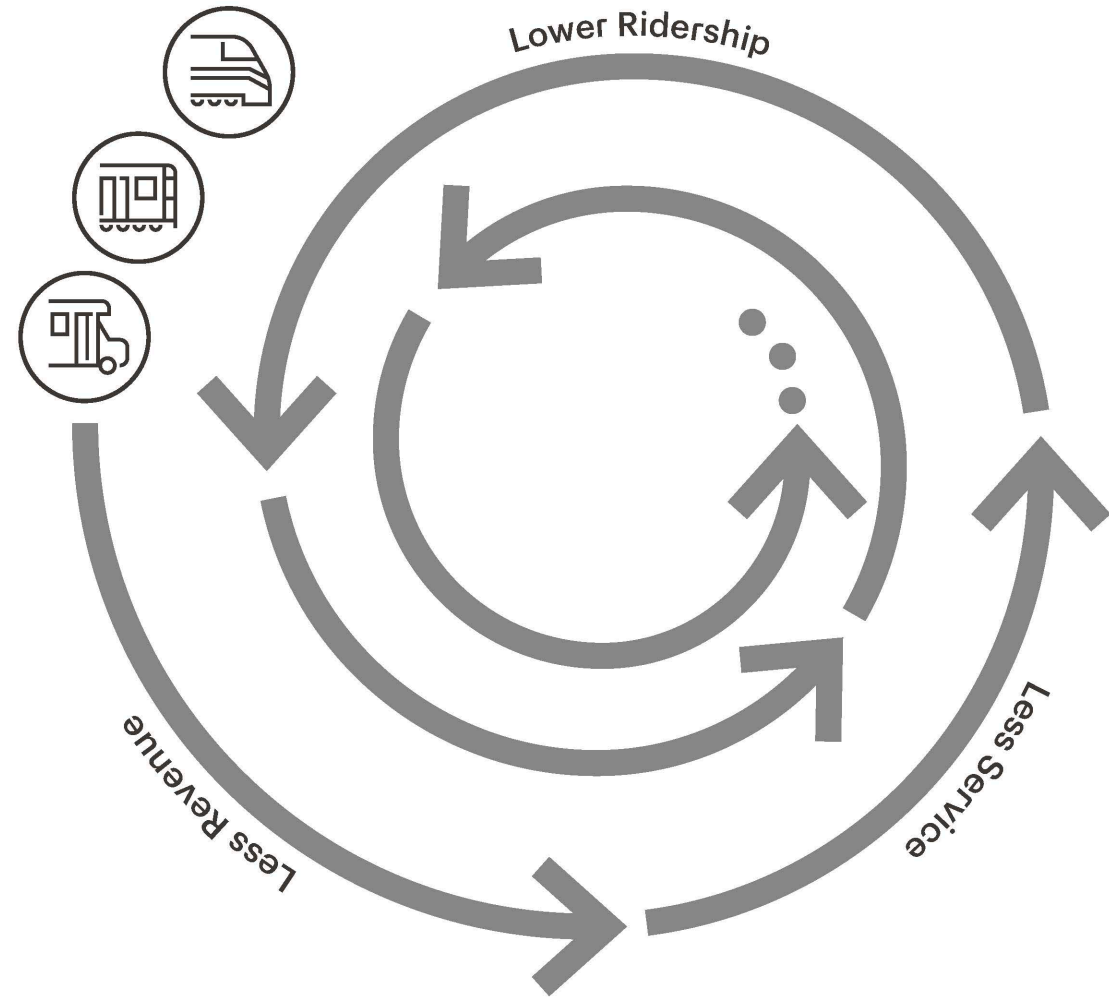
45 min Headway

Fiscal cliff is not a one-time event

Fiscal cliff begins a negative feedback cycle.

Revenue shortfall and a declining annual operations budget is the new normal for the Service Boards.

Year 1 is a 40% cut in service but each following year will bring additional cuts.



Preparing for major legislative action in 2025

- Outreach to Governor's Office, ILGA leadership, and individual members
- Senate Transportation Committee hearings
- House Public Transit Working Group
- Key Dates:
 - Election Day: November 5, 2024
 - Veto Session: November 12-14, 19-21
 - Lane Duck: Early January 2025
 - New Session: Late January – May 2025

Even a small delay in finding a funding solution could **set the system back** and make the current problem **harder or impossible to solve.**

2025 Legislative Agenda - Funding

Fully fund regional transit operations

- Fill projected operating budget gap
- Increase operations funding by at least \$1.5B annually
- Eliminate farebox recovery ratio requirement
- Fully fund free and reduced fare programs (\$150M annually) and ADA Paratransit service (\$250M annually)

2025 Legislative Agenda - Safety

Strengthen partnerships and investment to enhance personal safety and security on public transit

- Increase law enforcement presence
- Increase social services presence
- Advance a multi-layered approach using strategies identified at 2024 RTA Safety and Security Summit

2025 Legislative Agenda - Reform

Reform transit governance to establish a stronger RTA that improves service and accountability for riders and taxpayers

- RTA serves as rider hub for fares and customer service
- RTA sets service standards with mechanisms to monitor and enforce compliance
- RTA leads planning for major regional transit and transportation capital projects

Next Steps

- November/December – County Board hearings, service board public hearings
- November 15 – December 10 – Regional Budget open for public comment
- November 22 – Agencies present to RTA Board
- December 3 – RTA virtual public hearing
- December 19 – RTA Board of Directors votes on budget adoption



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