

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION OF THE COOK COUNTY COMMISSION ON SOCIAL INNOVATION  
CALLING ON THE COUNTY TO WORK WITH THE CITY OF CHICAGO, THE REGIONAL TRANSIT  
AUTHORITY AND ITS SERVICE BOARD TO FOCUS ON METRA ELECTRIC DISTRICT SERVICES,  
STATIONS, FARES AND FARE TRANSFERABILITY

WHEREAS, the Cook County Commission on Social Innovation ("Commission") was established via ordinance #16-2290 dated April 12, 2016, and codified as Chapter 14, Article IX Sections 14-89 to 14-97 to develop policy recommendations for the Cook County Board of Commissioners on matters related to economic development that address divestment and or disinvestment in areas within the Cook County region; and

WHEREAS, the Far South Side of the City of Chicago and South Suburbs are losing population, suffering from decades of disinvestment, and have long been identified as areas that should be prioritized for economic development; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has found through the Cook County Long Range Transportation Plan dated July 13, 2016, that public transit is the single-most important mode in generating economic development and connecting people to jobs; and

WHEREAS, Cook County ceased the diversion of Motor Fuel Tax funds effective January 1, 2017; and

WHEREAS, the Commission unanimously voted in favor of encouraging the County of Cook to conduct a feasibility study of the Metra Electric District ("Metra Electric") on December 18th, 2016; and

WHEREAS, on May 24, 2017, Metra proposed service changes on the Metra Electric that include reductions in the span of service on the South Chicago ("SC") and Blue Island ("BI") branches by 4 hours & 3 hours and 54 minutes, respectively, on weekdays, and by 4 hours & 17 hours and 20 minutes, respectively, on Saturdays, eliminating late evening trains on both branches, and eliminating all weekend service on the BI branch; and

WHEREAS, Metra held four public meetings (South Shore, Flossmoor, Blue Island and Hyde Park) during the period June 19-22, 2017 to share details and receive public comments which are currently being considered by Metra staff; and

WHEREAS, the proposed service changes would limit and adversely affect development opportunities near a number of Metra Electric stations and decrease job access on the Far South Side and South Suburbs; and

WHEREAS, the proposed service changes would cut service in Cook County communities and City of Chicago neighborhoods that are lacking comparable public transportation options while increasing service to communities and neighborhoods that are currently well-served by public transit; and

WHEREAS, the proposed service changes would largely effect low income communities and communities of color on the Far South Side and South Suburbs; and

WHEREAS, a number of poorly maintained Metra Electric stations, infrequent non-peak service, high fares, and a general lack of fare transferability to/from CTA and Pace buses currently limit Metra Electric ridership potential on the Far South Side and South Suburbs; and

WHEREAS, the Cook County Board approved a feasibility study of the Cross-Rail Chicago plan on February 8th, 2017; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Cook County Commission on Social Innovation urges the Cook County Board of Commissioners to call on Metra to analyze equity and the discriminatory impact of potential Metra Electric service changes on high-need communities on the Far South Side and South Suburbs in a formal study and share with the public prior to action on service changes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Cook County Commission on Social Innovation urges the Cook County Board of Commissioners, leadership and appropriate departments to work with the leadership and appropriate departments of the City of Chicago, including its Department of Transportation, the leadership of the Regional Transportation Authority and its three service boards, Metra Rail, the Chicago Transit Authority, and Pace to coordinate schedules, integrate services, implement fare transferability, and increase the frequency of service, and upgrade Metra Electric stations, where needed, in order that the Metra Electric Line become the foundation for the economic revitalization of the Metra Electric Service area.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Cook County Commission on Social Innovation and Cook County Board will continue to support and pursue the goal to eventually extend Metra Electric from the Southland to O'Hare Airport via McCormick Place and Union Station, as is proposed in the CrossRail Chicago plan.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This resolution shall be in effect immediately upon adoption.