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For Immediate Release

August 15, 2023

## **Forest Park Blue Line Branch Rebuild Project On Time; CTA Alerts Riders to Part-B Service Changes Beginning Monday**

*Riders in the area impacted by construction will be able to utilize CTA transit options with free or reduced fares*

Work associated with the first phase of the Forest Park Branch Rebuild is on time and on budget, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) announced today. To reduce the impacts on riders, and to efficiently carry out project work, the Forest Park Branch Rebuild is being performed in two parts --the first of which is expected to conclude this weekend; resulting in updated service plans for Blue Line riders.

Beginning at 10 p.m. Sunday, August 20, Blue Line trains resume serving the Clinton and UIC-Halsted stations, and operate in the following two sections:

- Between O'Hare and UIC-Halsted, and
- Between Forest Park and Illinois Medical District (IMD)

There will be no rail service between the UIC-Halsted and IMD stations during Part-B project work, which is expected to conclude in early October. The Racine station will remain fully closed during this time,

To mitigate impacts on riders and encourage use of alternative CTA service options, CTA will continue offering free and reduced rides during construction on various bus and rail lines.

### **FREE BUS AND REDUCED RAIL FARE ZONE**

To incentivize use of easy alternative service options near the project area, CTA will continue to provide free rides on select bus routes operating between the Green and Pink lines. Free rides will be available on all CTA north-south bus route stops between the Green and Pink lines from Ashland (#9 and #X9 routes) on the east to Austin (#91 route) on the west. Bus operators will allow riders to board for free within this fare zone.

Free rides will also be available on designated north-south Pace regular, fixed route bus service in the project area. Riders boarding Pace's #307, #311, #315, and #318 bus routes between the Harlem/Lake branch on the Green Line and Forest Park Branch on the Blue Line will be able to ride for free. Riders boarding Pace's #316 bus route between 54th/Cermak on the Pink Line and the Forest Park branch on the Blue Line will also be able to ride free.

CTA will also be offering 50% reduced fares for rail customers using Ventra Cards boarding at Ashland/Lake and all stations west on the Green and Pink lines, as well as those boarding at IMD and all stations west on the Forest Park Blue Line branch (see Map-1 below).

Free and reduced rides will be available up until the completion of the Part B work, in early October.

In addition, a free, 24/7 local shuttle bus (route BL) will run between the accessible IMD and UIC-Halsted stations.

### PHASE 1 DETAILS

As part of this \$268 million project, crews are completely rebuilding 15,000 feet, or almost three miles of track, between the LaSalle and IMD stations; demolishing and completely rebuilding the Racine station to meet modern accessibility guidelines; and upgrading the traction power system that provides electricity to the system and will result in improved service reliability.

As part of Part-A project work, a roughly three-mile stretch of track and the underlying drainage system between the UIC-Halsted and LaSalle stations has been completely removed and rebuilt.

Under **Part-B work**, crews will rebuild the track between the IMD and UIC-Halsted stations.

Upon completion of track work, the Loomis St. auxiliary entrance of the Racine station will re-open. The main entrance of the Racine station will remain closed and is expected to re-open in late-2024, at which time the Loomis St. auxiliary entrance will close for reconstruction through 2025.

Additional information regarding alternative service options is available on the project website ([transitchicago.com/FPRebuild](https://transitchicago.com/FPRebuild)).

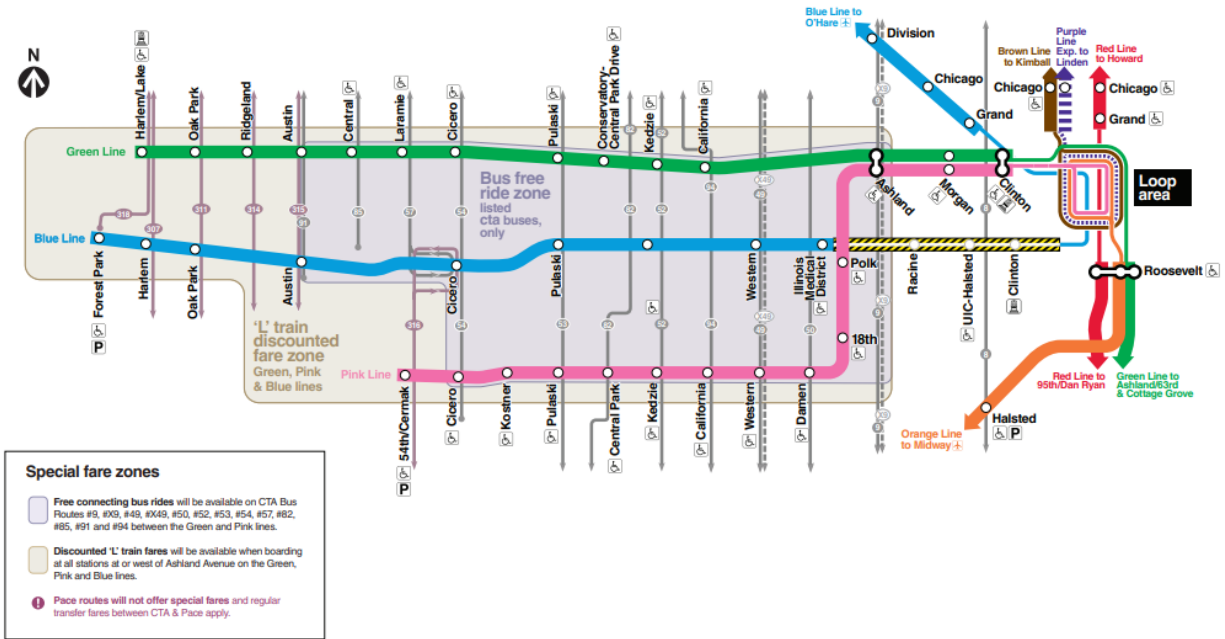
### INFORMATION SPECIALISTS

To help riders acclimate to the Part-B service plans, the CTA will have Information Specialists deployed at the IMD, UIC-Halsted and Jackson stations next week. Information Specialists will be available throughout the day to provide in-person support to help customers understand their transit options and guide them on making proper connections as needed.

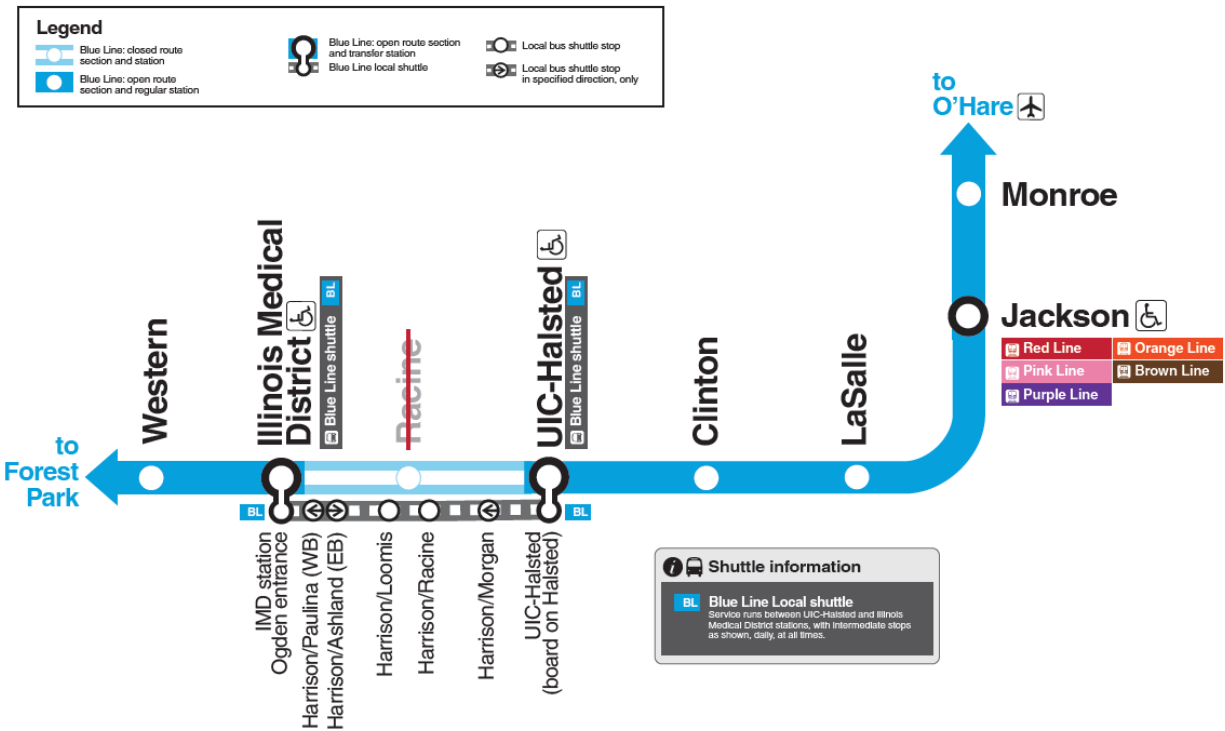
Phase I project work is funded by a mix of state and local resources, including *Rebuild Illinois*, TIF and CTA Bonds. Additional funding is needed to advance future phases of the *Forest Park Branch Rebuild*, which in total is estimated to cost \$3 billion, including Phase I work.

Opened in 1958, back when Dwight D. Eisenhower was president, the Forest Park Branch of the Blue Line has received some improvements, but after six decades of heavy use the tracks along the entire branch are beyond their useful life. This has resulted in nearly 80% of the branch being under slow zones, which cause service delays. Further, only four of the eleven stations (or 36%) along the branch are accessible to people who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices.

### Map 1: CTA Alternatives and Free/Reduced Fares



## Map 2: Part B Service



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