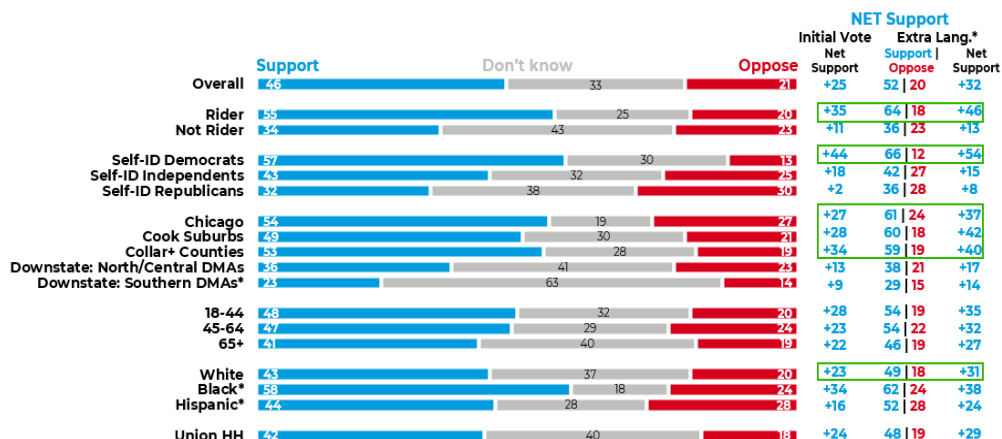


To: Interested Parties
From: Global Strategy Group
Date: October 2024
Re: NEW POLL FINDINGS: Voters Support Proposal to Unify Illinois Transit Agencies

Without any background information, by a 2-1 margin voters across the state support a proposal to unify Illinois’ transit agencies — this is especially true among voters who ride public transit. Moreover, once voters hear additional messaging (both positive and negative on behalf of the proposal to unify the agencies), support jumps and remains at over 60%.

Key Findings

- **Nine out of 10 (93%) voters want to focus on repairing existing roads over building new ones, and 72% want to shift investments toward transportation systems that make it easier and safer for people, including senior and children, to walk, bike, and take public transit, and away from expanding roads.**
- **While most voters are not unhappy with the various transit agencies, they do not hold strong opinions about them.** This lack of familiarity with the transit agencies is most apparent among voters residing in the Downstate DMAs, but even among transit riders in the Chicagoland area, feelings toward most of the agencies are not strong.
 - **The one exception is CTA, which garners a whopping 48% unfavorable in the City of Chicago, where the vast majority of its riders live.**
- **Simply asking voters if they support unifying the CTA, Metra, Pace and Regional Transportation Authority into one organization not only is supported by a 2-1 margin statewide, a solid majority of voters in the Chicago media market support it, including by margins of 54-27% in Chicago, 49-21% in Suburban Cook County, and 53-19% in the Collar Counties.** This data suggests that opponents’ efforts to pit the city of Chicago against the Cook suburbs and the Collar Counties are not working. The strongest supporters of unifying the agencies include Black voters (58-24%), Democrats (57-13%), and Transit Riders (55-20%).



*Small sample size, results are directional.

- **When introducing voters to the proposal to unify the CTA, Metra, Pace and Regional Transportation Authority, providing context on how unifying these agencies would improve service, safety, and frequency on trains and buses is important.** When asked if voters support “Unifying the CTA, Metra, Pace and Regional Transportation Authority into one organization to improve service, safety and frequency of trains and buses, thus attracting more riders,” just adding this simple context grows total support by 6 points statewide and is especially powerful with Transit Riders (+11 net support, for 64% total support), Chicago voters (+10 net support, for 61% total support), and voters in the Cook suburbs (+14 net support, for 59% total support). Other movers include Democrats (+10 net support, for 66% total support), white voters (+8 net support, for 49% total support), and Black voters (+4 net support, for 62% total support).
- **Focusing on how the different transit agencies duplicate services and waste taxpayer dollars, as well as the fiscal cliff that public transit is facing, is the best approach to boost support for the proposal to unify the agencies.** Pointing out the relative lack of funding Illinois invests in public transportation compared to other states is also effective, especially among swing voters. The three top-testing messages among the overall electorate are the fiscal cliff facing public transportation (37% very convincing, 72% total convincing; 27% not convincing), the wasting of hundreds of millions in taxpayer dollars due to duplicate services and lobbyists to block reforms (37% very convincing, 74% total convincing; 26% not convincing), and the relative lack of funding Illinois public transportation receives compared to transit in other states (36% very convincing, 74% total convincing; 26% not convincing).

 - **[FISCAL CLIFF]** *Public transportation is facing a \$730 million budget shortfall. The best solution starts with unifying CTA, Metra, Pace and RTA into one efficient agency – saving as much as \$200 to \$250 million each year.*
 - **[WASTE]** *Not only do the CTA, Metra, Pace, and RTA duplicate services and waste hundreds of millions in taxpayer dollars, but they are now also spending more than \$2 million of our money on lobbyists to block reforms and maintain the failed status quo.*
 - **[FUNDING]** *While states like Pennsylvania and Massachusetts fund 40-50% of transit, Illinois funds just 17%, which is one reason why CTA and Metra are lagging so far behind other systems in restoring service after the pandemic. The first step to increasing state funding is unifying the four transit agencies into one system that saves taxpayer money and delivers better service.*

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of 600 likely 2024 general election voters in Illinois between September 16 and September 19, 2024. The survey was conducted via live telephone interviews and text-to-web. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 4.0%. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic, political, and demographic divisions of the population of likely general election voters are properly represented.