

TUA NEWS RELEASE

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CTA PROPOSES SQUANDERING BILLIONS OF DOLLARS ON TOTALLY USELESS EXPANSION

Earlier this year, Val Zimmicki, Director of Outreach for Taxpayers United of America (TUA), addressed the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) Board of Directors to convey our views opposing the board's proposed multi-billion-dollar expansion of the city's obsolete, nineteenth-century rail line.

Now that President Joseph "Uncle Joe" Biden is promoting spending literally trillions of dollars on so-called "infrastructure" projects, consisting mostly of "green" pet projects but still containing billions of dollars to be spent on obsolete technologies, Zimmicki's statement is especially relevant.

The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) is proposing to extend the Red Line from the existing terminal at 95th/Dan Ryan to 130th Street. This boondoggle is a part of the Red Ahead Program and is estimated to cost \$2.3 billion, which is the largest amount ever by the CTA to be spent for a particular project. As a quick side-note, have these projects ever come in on time let alone without waste and overspending? This proposed 5.6-mile extension would include four new stations near 103rd Street, 111th Street, Michigan Avenue, and 130th Street, and each new station would include bus and parking facilities. But where is the money coming from? The CTA's 2021 budget already has a \$375 million deficit.

The CTA claims it can pay for half the project and hope the rest of the money will come from the federal government. Actually, Chicago citizens should prepare for new tax line-items on their real estate taxes to pay for this. That has been the unfortunate normal procedure that citizens of Chicago and Illinois have endured for virtually every over-budget, behind schedule and unnecessary program devised by legislators and bureaucrats. Their theme seems to be, "If we build it, maybe they won't come, but for sure we will tax them to pay for it."

The Red Line extension is unnecessary and expensive. How many people will use it? Projections are always optimistic and always seem to fall short. At a staggering \$410 million a mile, will it pay for itself? Indeed, in the last 5 years general transit ridership

fell by 2.8 million trips while ride-hailing grew by almost 30 million. Chicago is losing population as its citizens are moving to Indiana, Wisconsin, Florida, Texas and other states where the tax burdens are lower.

The CTA will also need to purchase private property to make room for the Red Ahead Program. Families will be dislocated and some will not want to sell. Will the CTA enforce condemnation procedures? Will "just compensation" be enforced on individual property owners. Will renters be properly relocated?

The CTA wants to extend services to a dwindling population while not all the funding is as yet identified.

Will eminent domain take away property rights? What about the inevitable cost overruns and new taxes to pay for them? For these reasons, we oppose the Red Line extension.