
**Ordinance No.
2025-26**

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WHEREAS, section 2.01(d) of the Regional Transportation Authority Act was amended in 2012 to require full funding of the adopted ADA Paratransit budget for all future years by establishing an ADA Paratransit Fund to be used solely for the provision of regional ADA Paratransit service;

WHEREAS, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is committed to providing accessible public transportation services in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990;

WHEREAS, ADA Paratransit ridership has been rising sharply and is expected to exceed 2025 budget projections by 1.3 million to 1.8 million rides, creating a projected funding shortfall of \$65 million;

WHEREAS, RTA Ordinance 2025-21, adopted at the May Board meeting, disbursed \$25.5 million to Pace from the RTA ADA Paratransit Reserve to remedy the year-end 2024 ADA Paratransit budget deficit and required RTA and Pace staffs to develop an Action Plan to address the developing 2025 ADA Paratransit budget shortfall;

WHEREAS, staff recommends adopting a strategic action plan to address this gap, supported by a set of near-term funding options and a longer-term reform path;

WHEREAS, the guiding principles for this Action Plan include protecting mobility access, promoting financial sustainability, leveraging one-time funds wisely, ensuring equity and transparency, and linking action to broader reform;

WHEREAS, additional 2025 ADA Paratransit funding in excess of \$30 million is likely to be required from a combination of potential sources including existing ADA Paratransit Reserve, incremental sales tax/PTF collections, and federal COVID-19 funding reserves;

WHEREAS, section 4.03.3 (e) of the Regional Transportation Authority Act directs the RTA to fund ADA Paratransit from the receipts of the 2008 increase in RTA sales tax and Public Transportation Funds colloquially known as Sales Tax II and PTF II; and

WHEREAS, section 4.03.3 (a) of the Regional Transportation Authority Act directs the RTA to retain 15% of the receipts of the original RTA sales tax levied since 1983 colloquially known as Sales Tax I.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY THAT:

1. The Board of Directors hereby approves the ADA Paratransit Action Plan, as presented in the attachment to this ordinance, which includes proposed immediate and future changes to the ADA Paratransit program to address the projected funding shortfall and ensure long-term sustainable success.
2. The Executive Director, or her designee, is further authorized to prepare and present to the Board of Directors, as necessary, budget amendments for 2025 to reflect the increased ridership levels, revenues, and expenses within the ADA Paratransit program, incorporating the estimated impacts of the Action Plan initiatives and the authorized funding options.
3. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval.

ADA Paratransit Action Plan

Immediate programmatic changes and actions to be implemented as soon as possible in 2025

- Pace will set a monthly ride cap of 30 rides per ADA certified rider on the Taxi Access Program (TAP) and the Ridershare Access Program (RAP)
- Pace will restore the TAP and RAP base fare to \$3.25
- CTA, Metra, and Pace will implement Ride Free fixed route rides for ADA certified riders on all fixed route transit throughout the region
- RTA Mobility Services will complete a review of the ADA certification program including:
 - Federal regulations for certification programs
 - Structure and certification process
 - Quality assurance & peer comparison
 - Cost reduction efforts

Future programmatic changes and actions to be implemented in the 2026 budget cycle and/or the 2026 update to the Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP)

- Re-estimation of ridership and program cost projects for ADA Paratransit budget and recommended fare increase
- Further adjustments to TAP/RAP subsidy parameters based on results from Immediate actions implemented in 2025, additional peer review, and further market analysis
- Launch HSTP update process to include a goal of aligning county funded RAP(s) with ADA TAP/RAP for standardization and better coordination of regional paratransit services

