

*If you're part of an organization that would like to sign this petition and join future advocacy meetings about the shutdowns, please contact [info@activetrans.org](mailto:info@activetrans.org).*

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## **Petition for Racial Justice for Chicago Transit Agencies:**

### **CTA, Pace, Metra and Divvy**

Given potential civil unrest in the event of a contested presidential election, we need to avoid repeating the mistakes of May and August regarding transit shutdowns. As transit riders and leaders of organizations that represent transit riders and advocate for racial equity and justice at the CTA, Metra and Pace we are deeply concerned about the Lightfoot administration and transit agencies' actions during the week of August 10, 2020, and on Sunday, May 31, 2020 and the days that followed, when transit was shut down to the Loop, and rolling L stop shutdowns occurred during smaller protests with little notice to the public. During these periods, Divvy bikeshare was also sharply curtailed in downtown Chicago and bridges were raised, shutting down roadways, as a response to civic unrest.

Black and Brown communities are disproportionately reliant on public transportation, specifically buses, and so are disproportionately harmed when service is abruptly changed or stopped without warning. Shutting down transportation is not the solution and creates undue hardships, especially for essential workers and Black and Brown Chicago residents. Transit is a public good and a necessity at all times. Transporting police officers to protests while concurrently refusing transit access to protesters and other riders is transit racism.

**Chicago's transit systems must remain safe and reliable providers of access for marginalized racial groups, whether through the course of a public health crisis or during lawful protests.**

Freedom of movement is freedom.

Therefore, we submit the following petition:

- **CTA, Metra, Pace and Divvy prepare and make public a commitment to remain in operation during times of protest to provide people with access to their homes or other destinations.** We understand that this will be challenging particularly as we confront intersecting crises of police brutality, long-standing structural racism, and the COVID-19 pandemic. We also understand that the CTA, Metra, Pace and Divvy rightfully desire to maintain a safe environment for workers, passengers, and property. However, just because our transit agencies have the authority to modify service during an emergency, it does not necessarily follow that they should do so with no communication with the public. The transit service boards should develop and act on a plan to address future similar circumstances. We have experienced large protests and other events before and must expect them again. Transit should not be shut down during protests. Such a plan should be geared toward providing pre-planned and communicated evacuation service levels and station operation contingencies, maximum real-time information and full rush-hour service levels to get people home or, in certain circumstances, out of harm's way.

- **Ensure elected officials and transit agency leaders retain control of operational decisions during crises while taking emergency management and public safety factors into consideration.** The decision to stop service the week of August 10 eroded already fragile trust in the CTA from some of the system's most reliable and dependent riders, most of whom are Black and Brown. Restoring that trust will require taking operational decision-making out of the hands of law enforcement, as well as providing greater levels of transparency about how those decisions are made. Additionally, real-time operational changes to routes, frequencies, and stations must be centered on serving our most marginalized and essential riders. Any changes must be communicated with as much advance notice as possible - no less than four hours - and in real time across all CTA, Metra, Pace and Divvy platforms, including through real-time transit apps.
- **Ensure transit employees, buses, and facilities are never utilized by law enforcement.** Our public transportation system cannot and should not be a law enforcement tool. This should be an official policy of the CTA, Pace and Metra.

Signed:

Active Transportation Alliance

Better Streets Chicago

Center for Neighborhood Technology

Equiticity

Foundation for Homan Square

Illinois Environmental Council

Logan Square Neighborhood Association

Metropolitan Planning Council

MUSE Community + Design

Natural Resources Defense Council

Shared-Use Mobility Center

Transportation Equity Network

Union of Concerned Scientists