

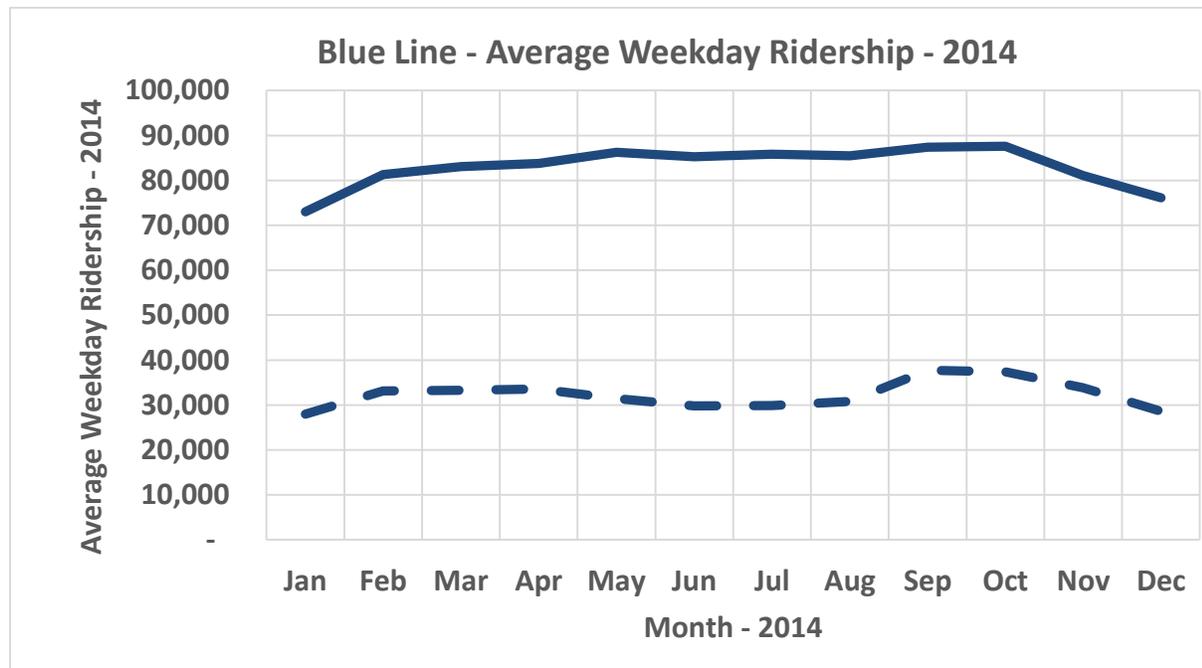
Citizens for Appropriate Transportation (CAT) The Eisenhower Transportation Corridor

TRANSIT RIDERSHIP BALANCE

Extending the CTA Blue Line west of Forest Park would help the CTA provide better service to residents and be more efficient. More stations = more markets = more riders. Most of the West Cook suburbs in the Eisenhower Transportation Corridor west of Forest Park have population densities high enough to make rail transit a viable option.

The O'Hare Branch of the Blue Line has more riders and stations than the Forest Park Branch, so the O'Hare Branch dictates how frequently the CTA schedules trains. The Forest Park Branch of the Blue Line serves fewer riders than the O'Hare Branch, so Forest Park trains have more empty seats. Empty seats do not generate revenue.

After the Red Line, the Blue Line has the second highest ridership on the CTA rail system. Ideally, the number of riders on the O'Hare Branch is roughly equal to the Forest Park branch to allow the CTA to run full trains, but ridership is not equal. The chart below shows Average Weekday Ridership by month in 2014 for the two branches of the Blue Line. The vertical distance between the lines shows the size of imbalance. For every rider on the Forest Park Branch, there are 2.3 to 2.9 riders on the O'Hare Branch, depending on the month.



There are 16 stations on the O'Hare Branch of the Blue Line and 12 stations on the Forest Park Branch. Extending the Blue Line west of Forest Park and adding stations would add markets and reduce the imbalance. Hotels and airlines discount prices to attract more people. The CTA could do the same.

Improving ridership balance issue is one of several reasons to extend the Blue Line west of Forest Park. An extension would give residents in West Cook County better access to jobs and more travel options, as well as make the CTA more cost effective.

Rick Kuner – revised May 2015