



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Transit
Administration**

Executive Director

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

March 17, 2026

Ms. Nora Leerhsen
Acting President
Chicago Transit Authority
567 W. Lake Street
Chicago IL 60661

Dear Ms. Leerhsen:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) acknowledges receipt of the Chicago Transit Authority's (CTA) revised security enhancement plan (Plan) dated March 10, 2026, as mandated by FTA Special Directive (SD) [25-3](#) Required Action FTA-25-3-002 and FTA's [determination letter](#) to CTA dated December 19, 2025. The CTA's Plan revisions are a direct result of FTA's intervention, and now FTA will monitor CTA's Plan execution and results, determining whether further FTA enforcement action is required.

In conjunction with this letter, FTA is issuing a new special directive [SD 26-1](#) to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to ensure it addresses deficiencies in its direct safety oversight of CTA required by 49 CFR Part 674. Under Federal law, IDOT is the State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) to perform direct oversight of rail transit systems like CTA to ensure a safe environment for transit workers and passengers. IDOT deficiencies identified in SD 26-1 contributed to FTA's recent direct intervention addressing CTA safety practices.

Background

As described in FTA's December 19, 2025 determination letter, the CTA failed to comply with SD 25-3, *Required Actions to Address Transit Worker Assault and Public Safety Concerns* (December 8, 2025). Specifically, FTA required CTA to submit a revised Plan including significant crime and assault reduction targets and a staffing surge plan. FTA SD-25-3 required "targeted, significant reductions in transit worker and customer assaults and other crime" and explicitly required that "[t]argets must be set showing reductions for each of the next six months."

The December 15 CTA Plan proved materially deficient, failing to deliver necessary corrective actions. The FTA's December 19 determination letter rejected the plan and required CTA to "immediately revise and resubmit crime reduction targets that demonstrate significant, measurable reductions" and ensure that "CTA's security staffing enhancements [are] sufficient to achieve the significantly reduced targets that FTA requires." The FTA-mandated revised CTA Plan submitted to FTA March 10 commits

CTA to boosting law enforcement hours on its system 75% and significantly reducing rates of worker and passenger assault.

As outlined below, FTA will closely monitor CTA to ensure it meets its commitments under the Plan and satisfies additional oversight requirements. FTA will gain new operational visibility into CTA through the enhanced monitoring of IDOT.

Holding CTA to Its Commitments

FTA continues to enforce SD 25-3, *Required Actions to Address Transit Worker Assault and Public Safety Concerns* (December 8, 2025), Required Action FTA-25-3-002, to closely monitor CTA and verify that it fully implements the FTA-mandated Plan. CTA must continue to submit biweekly staffing and crime data, which FTA will verify and evaluate against the Plan's targets. While FTA is not withholding Federal funding at this time, it reserves the right to withhold up to 25 percent of CTA's 49 U.S.C. 5307 formula funds without further notice if CTA does not fulfill its commitments under the Plan and satisfy remaining requirements under SD 25-3.

FTA continues to audit CTA's Agency Safety Plan (ASP) to prevent assaults on transit workers, pursuant to FTA's authority under 49 U.S.C. § 5329(f)(1) and 49 CFR Part 670, and expects IDOT to actively participate in this review. FTA closes SD 25-3 Required Action FTA-25-3-001, having received CTA's 2025 ASP update and associated documents.

Launching Enhanced Monitoring of IDOT

FTA has determined that IDOT has longstanding unaddressed deficiencies in its CTA oversight. Through ongoing monitoring activities over the last four years,¹ FTA concludes that IDOT has not exercised its authority, resources, or responsibilities at the level required to reduce serious safety risks to passengers, workers, and the public at CTA. Accordingly, FTA is:

1. issuing SD 26-1, which will require IDOT to promptly address known deficiencies in its oversight of CTA, including producing a strategy to address and close corrective action plans; demonstrate independent, field-based oversight of safety event investigations; and conduct additional on-site inspections at CTA properties; and
2. launching a Safety Management Inspection (SMI) into IDOT's oversight of CTA, which will assess how IDOT performs its safety oversight functions and will determine root causes for observed deficiencies.

¹Both SD 23-1, *Required Actions to Address Insufficient State Safety Oversight Program Staffing at the Illinois Department of Transportation* (issued October 23, 2023), and SD 22-31, *Required Actions to Implement a Risk-Based Inspection Program at the Illinois Department of Transportation* (issued October 21, 2022), remain open. In addition, FTA conducted an audit of the IDOT State Safety Oversight Program in 2025.

Ms. Nora Leerhsen

Page 3

Conclusion

FTA expects CTA's and IDOT's complete cooperation and compliance to improve safety and oversight of CTA's system. Please address questions to Mr. Joseph DeLorenzo, Associate Administrator for Transit Safety and Oversight and Chief Safety Officer, at 202-366-1783 or joseph.delorenzo@dot.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew J. Welbes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Matthew J. Welbes

cc: Gia Biagi, Illinois Department of Transportation