

# Wendella RiverBus Service Analysis

Working Paper 01-16

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## A. Introduction

On August 27, 1999, the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) surveyed passengers on the Wendella Boats RiverBus service in order to determine whether the RiverBus service reduces traffic congestion and improves air quality. This information was needed to determine whether the RiverBus service was eligible to receive funds from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program for the purchase of additional boats, which would be used to improve service along the Chicago River.

The survey results show that the Wendella Boats RiverBus provides reliable, efficient, and timely passenger service along the Chicago River and attracts riders to the connecting public transportation services. An analysis of the survey data also shows that the availability of the service is associated with fewer automobile trips to and within downtown and therefore lower overall vehicle miles traveled and vehicle emissions.

## B. Overview of Wendella RiverBus Service

Wendella Boats has operated a commuter service along the Chicago River since 1962 (Wendella 1999a, p. 3). Wendella estimated in 1999 that annual commuter and sightseeing ridership totaled approximately 300,000 people (Wendella 1999b, p. 1). Every weekday, Wendella Boats made seven round trips between Madison Street<sup>1</sup> and Michigan Avenue<sup>2</sup> during the morning peak period and eight round trips during the evening peak period for the commuter service (Wendella 1999c). Two boats provided an eleven-minute service headway in the morning peak. Three boats provided a nine-minute headway in the afternoon peak. The one-way travel time is approximately eight minutes. Off-peak service operates between Madison Street, Michigan Avenue, and River East<sup>3</sup>, which is within walking distance of Navy Pier (a popular entertainment and tourist destination). Mid-day and weekend headways were forty minutes, with one-way travel times of approximately twenty minutes. Smaller boats are used for the mid-day and weekend service, whereas the larger boats are used for sightseeing tours during these times. In 1999, approximately 32 round trips were made per weekday for the RiverBus service (1999c).

Since 1999, RiverBus service levels have increased (Wendella 2001). Approximately 40 round trips per weekday take place. Service levels were increased by starting earlier in the day, adding a third morning peak boat and replacing some runs to River East with more service between Madison Street and Michigan Avenue.

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<sup>1</sup> The Riverside Plaza Building Wharf at mile 325 on the Illinois Waterway (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2001a).

<sup>2</sup> The Wendella Sightseeing Boats Wharf at mile 326 on the Illinois Waterway (ibid).

<sup>3</sup> North Pier [now referred to as 435 East Illinois Street] Chicago Ogden Slip Excursion Vessel Moorings at mile 327 on the Illinois Waterway (ibid.).

The RiverBus operates on docks along the Chicago River that are strategically located to efficiently serve many Metra commuter rail customers. Specifically, the Madison Street dock is one block from the Ogilvie Transportation Center (formerly known as the Northwestern Station and the Chicago Passenger Terminal), which serves Union Pacific rail lines. The dock is connected to this station via an enclosed pedestrianway. The Madison Street dock is also across the street from the Madison Street exit to Union Station. Passengers on the Milwaukee District north and west commuter lines, as well as the North Central Service, disembark adjacent to this exit. Passengers on Burlington Northern-Santa Fe, Southwest Service, and Heritage Corridor commuter trains disembark in the vicinity of Jackson Street, which is three blocks south of the Madison Street dock. Commuters from all of these Metra trains can walk to the Madison Street dock in three or four minutes.

The Michigan Avenue dock is located at the Wrigley Building on the north shore of the river (see Photograph 1). The North Michigan Avenue area is a major employment center with many large office buildings, urban retail operations, and cultural institutions. The Michigan Avenue dock provides easy access to the CTA bus lines serving North Michigan Avenue and Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

Photograph 1  
Michigan Avenue Dock, Afternoon Operations



The River East dock serves the rapidly growing area near Navy Pier that features many tourist attractions, residences, and commercial enterprises. The dock is accessible to Navy Pier by sidewalks along the river.

The one-way cash fare for 2001 RiverBus service is \$2.00. However, monthly passes are deeply discounted to \$36.00 per month (a discount of more than 50%), equivalent to the cost of a CTA linkup fare for Metra monthly pass holders. Ten rides are discounted by 40% to \$12.00.

The Wendella RiverBus operates on the Chicago River's main and south branches, which are part of the Illinois Waterway. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is responsible for maintaining navigation on the Illinois Waterway (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2001b). USACE Chicago District operates the Chicago Lock in River East, which controls the flow of water into the Main Branch of the Chicago River and allows navigation between Lake Michigan and the Illinois Waterway (ibid.).<sup>4</sup> USACE also maintains the navigation channel in the Main Branch of the Chicago River. This channel is maintained to a depth of 21 feet (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2001c). The navigation channel in the South Branch of the Chicago River is maintained by the USACE Rockford District to a depth of nine feet (ibid.).

### C. Operating Challenges

In addition to barge traffic, the river supports a variety of other traffic, including motor boats, sailboats (moving from moorings to and from Lake Michigan), commercial sightseeing boats, other water taxis serving the Sears Tower area, and other tourist-oriented and recreational watercraft (see Photographs 2 and 3). Increasing uses of and along the river have presented challenges in providing delay-free service, according to Wendella staff.

Other factors affecting boat speed include the City of Chicago's "no-wake" ordinance. Additionally, sailboat traffic, which occurs most frequently at the beginning and end of the sailing season, requires the bridges that cross the river to be raised. This creates congestion on the river and on adjacent streets, so raised mast sailboat traffic is only permitted during limited times.

The authors of this paper have noticed that the commuter express service may fall behind schedule on very busy days, resulting in boat "bunching." The boats are on a tight schedule, so if a boat falls behind schedule because of unusual passenger loads or congestion on the river, it tends to fall further and further behind because it must contend with its normal passenger load and part of the next boat's passenger load. The next boat receives a light load and winds up on schedule or slightly ahead of schedule. The cycle may continue to worsen until the boats are bunched together, resulting in longer waiting

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<sup>4</sup> The Metropolitan Sanitary District of Greater Chicago, predecessor to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago reversed the flow of the Chicago River in 1900 in order to improve Lake Michigan water quality. Lake Michigan is the source of much of metropolitan Chicago's drinking water; the lake had been the source of deadly typhoid, cholera, and other water-borne epidemics when the Chicago River drained into the lake. Thus, the Chicago River now flows away from Lake Michigan, draining through the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal to the Des Plaines River, which in turn drains into Illinois River and eventually the Mississippi River. The Metropolitan Sanitary District of Greater Chicago was named by the American Society of Civil Engineers one of the seven engineering wonders of the United States (Chicago Public Library 2001, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago 2001a). The role of the MWRDGC in river management is through the operation of the Tunnel and Reservoir Project, which controls drainage into the Chicago River, and through the operation of the Lockport Powerhouse, the outlet of the Chicago River.

times for passengers and unequal loads on the two boats operating the service. This phenomenon is similar to what can occur with city buses.

Wendela Boats responds to this challenge by dispatching boats not in revenue service to the RiverBus service. When notified by radio that a boat is falling behind or that a boat in service was too small to handle passenger demand, a boat not in use by the tour service can be dispatched by radio.

Photograph 2

Rowing Team and Commuter Boat Sharing the river at Lake Street



Photograph 3

Tour Boats and Commuter Boat Sharing the river at Wabash Avenue



The RiverBus season extends from April to early November, with weekend service discontinued in October. Wendella's open boats make winter travel uncomfortable. In addition, the Chicago River is periodically frozen in winter, making year-round passenger operations impractical. However, using closed boats could extend the river season somewhat.

The RiverBus service parallels Wacker Drive, a bi-level downtown arterial suffering from major deterioration. Increasing deterioration and the need for additional structural support required the discontinuation of express bus service on Lower Wacker Drive in early 1999. This reduction in parallel bus service, combined with increased RiverBus service, had a role in doubling the usage of the Wendella RiverBus service in 1999 (Chicago Sun Times 2000a). A multi-stage reconstruction of Wacker Drive began in 2001. This construction project further impinges on CTA service between near-west side train stations and Michigan Avenue and will probably result in even greater use of the RiverBus service (which, as noted earlier, was improved for the 2001 season). The first stage of construction is expected to be completed in June, 2002. Remaining construction stages are unfunded and not scheduled.

#### D. Methodology and Survey Administration

In evaluating Wendella Boats' request for CMAQ funding of additional equipment, it was determined that the evaluation of benefits hinged on boat users being drawn from an automobile trip to a Metra/boat trip. Other benefits would accrue from passengers being drawn from taxis to the boat. If all boat users would take Metra regardless of the availability of the RiverBus, or all boat users are diverted away from public transit for the downtown access trips, no benefits would accrue. To determine these effects, CATS staff used revealed preference survey research techniques to determine behavior changes from when Wendella is operating to when it is not operating.<sup>5</sup>

The last full week in August was selected because of compatibility with the CMAQ analysis time frame and because it was within the peak summer period of Wendella RiverBus usage. That week also avoided holiday time periods.

CATS staff performed a pretest of the survey on August 26, 1999. Passengers on the first morning express boat bound for Michigan Avenue were surveyed. A high response rate was noted, but several questions required modifications, including several questions which would have provided better data regarding trip diversions to transit. In addition, because of rapid boarding, staff decided to hand out the surveys on the boat rather than as people arrived at the dock.

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<sup>5</sup> An alternative research methodology would be a stated preference survey of a larger population encompassing boat users and non-boat users. Because of the time constraints involved in the evaluation, the difficulty in devising a valid sample of non-users whose origins and destinations would be consistent with users, and questions regarding the method of evaluation, the revealed preference survey was used.

For the final survey, which was conducted on August 27, 1999, two CATS staff members surveyed all but two of the morning boat trips (the first boat, subject to the pre-test, and the last express boat were not surveyed). A total of 445 surveys were distributed on the boats as passengers embarked. Surveys could be completed on the boat, or completed at home or work and mailed to CATS in a business reply envelope available on the boat. Golf pencils were provided to complete the surveys. Most passengers easily completed the survey within the eight-minute dock-to-dock travel time. Most surveys were collected in marked boxes on the boats as passengers disembarked. 369 surveys were returned; 321 (72%) were sufficiently complete to be usable for the analysis below<sup>6</sup>. This was in excess of the target 250-300 usable surveys. The response rate was approximately 83%. The survey instrument is included as Appendix A, p. 15.

Completed surveys were numbered for data entry purposes and entered into a Microsoft Access 97 database. This database was used for tabulating and cross-tabulating results.

## E. Results

Two effects of the boat service that may reduce vehicle emissions were identified. First, Metra riders may be diverted from the taxi service to the boat, thus reducing emissions on their downtown access trip (see Figure 1).<sup>7</sup> Secondly, having the boat service available may have made Metra more attractive to commuters, thus possibly diverting downtown bound auto trips to Metra. The survey demonstrated that both of these effects were small but positive. By comparing the current ridership with reported winter behavior, we determined that taxi rides diverted to the boat and auto trips diverted to Metra as a percentage of weekly trips. This was accomplished by identifying the trips in cross-tab queries in the Access database. Diverted trips in excess of Wendella trips were not counted.

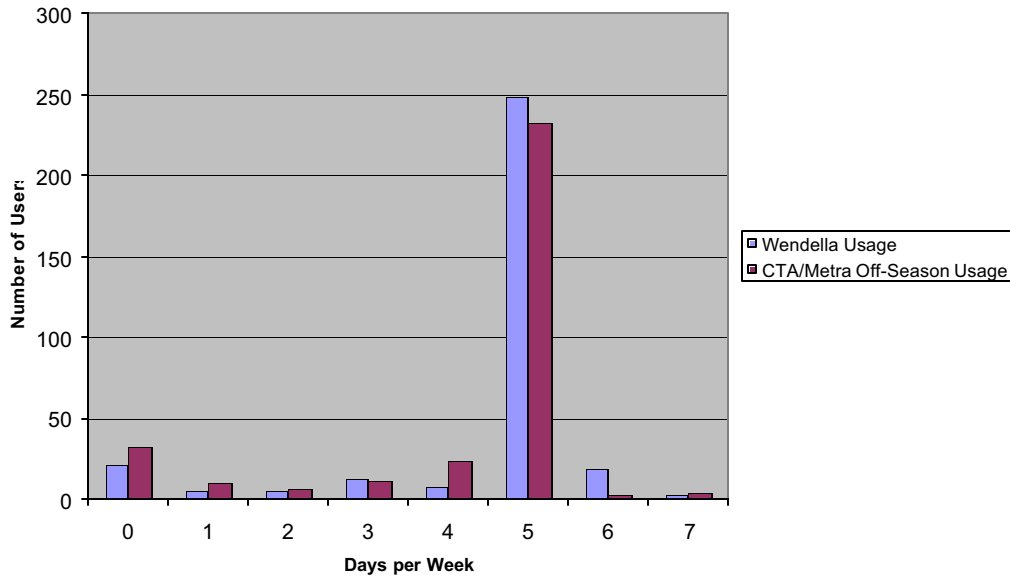
Based on this analysis, up to 6.7% of Wendella trips are diversions from taxis. In addition, up to 7.2% of trips are diverted to Metra. The analysis may present an overestimate, since we attribute the summer-winter behavioral change to the presence or absence of the boat service. In fact, there could be other lurking variables affecting behavior. However, this presents the best analysis available.

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<sup>6</sup> For cross-tabulations to determine trip diversions, many of the unusable surveys consisted of those who did not travel downtown in the Winter, making Wendella/non-Wendella seasonal comparisons difficult. While this makes the tabulations of SOV trip diversions reasonable, it also under-reports trip characteristics for casual users in the following tables. Tabulations of results for selected questions for all available data can be discussed with the authors.

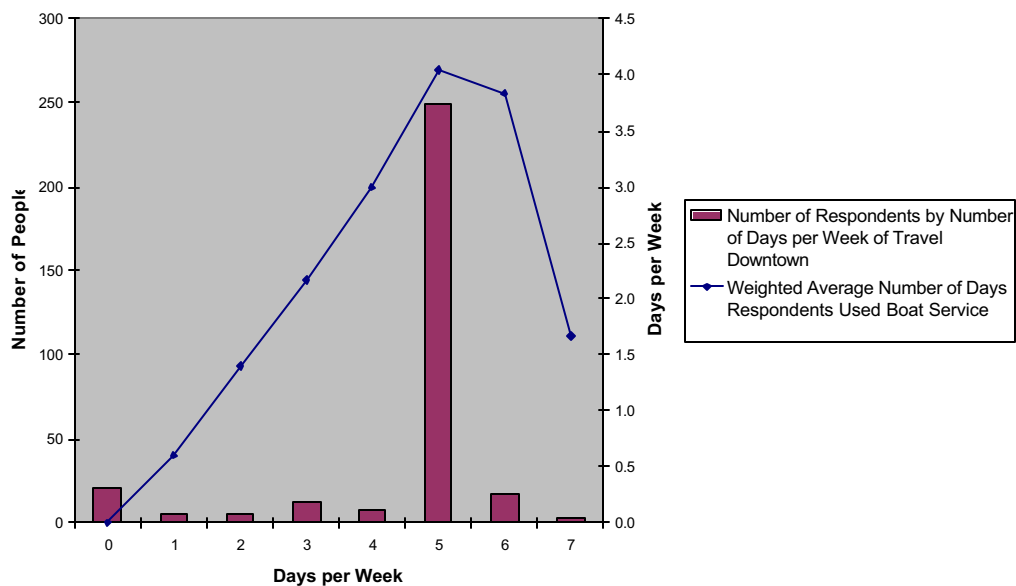
<sup>7</sup> As noted above, for this section, only surveys usable in calculating trip diversions are included in data analyses. Tabulations of results for selected questions for all available data can be discussed with the authors.

**Figure 1**  
**Comparison of Wendella Usage and CTA/Metra Off-Season Usage**



Other data is also useful. Figure 2 shows the number of respondents by the number of days per week they traveled downtown the previous week. This shows that the majority of boat users travel downtown five days per week. Figure 2 also shows that most boat users usually use the boat for the morning commute. For example, users who travel downtown 5 days per week (numbering 249) used Wendella for the morning commute an average of 4 days. Less than 50% of users used the Wendella RiverBus for the morning commute 5 days or more the previous week.

**Figure 2**  
**Wendella Boat Survey Analysis of Daily Travel and Boat Usage**



Analyses of the responses show that most of the RiverBus users are Metra riders. The vast majority, 89%, of commuters traveled by Metra to the Madison Street dock.

Figure 3 shows the origins of the passengers on the survey day. It demonstrates that, as would be expected, passengers came largely from the north, northwest, west, and southwest suburbs, corresponding to the Metra lines served by the Ogilvie Transportation Center and Union Station.

Figure 4 shows the downtown destinations of RiverBus users on the survey day. Roughly two-thirds of the destinations were along Michigan Avenue. All other commuters were going within a quarter mile of the dock, or within walking distance. One of the most interesting results of the survey is the finding of some long access trip lengths along Michigan Avenue, probably related to the availability of good transit service along this corridor. We hypothesize that some passengers are making a second transfer to CTA service along Michigan Avenue. This results in unusually complicated commutes for some boat users.

**FIGURE 3**

**Wendella RiverBus  
August 27, 1999  
Passenger Origins**

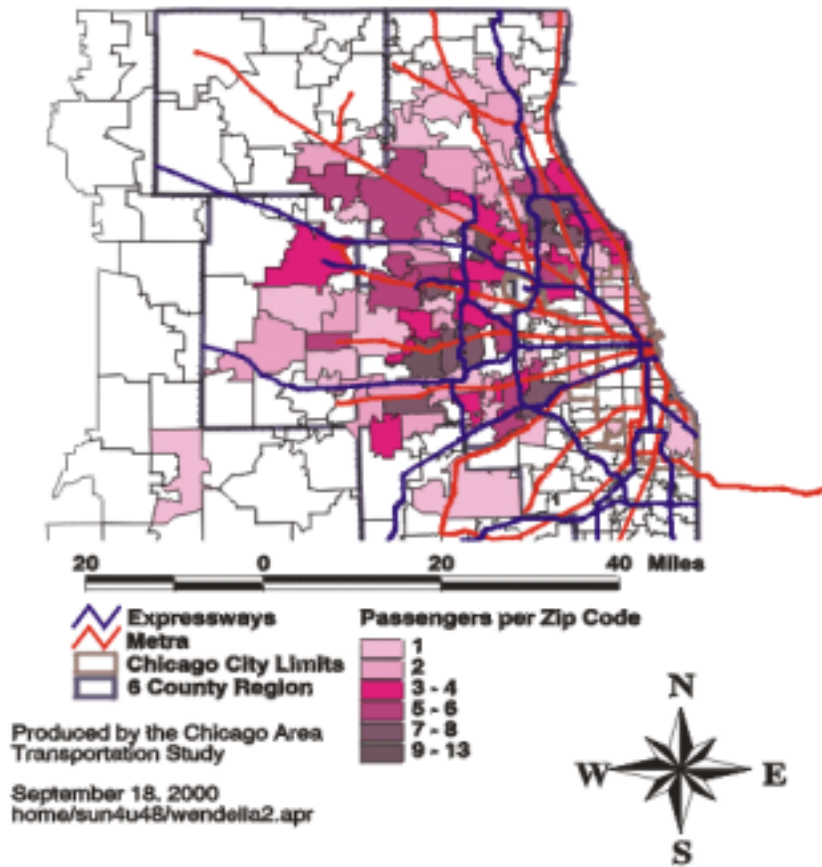
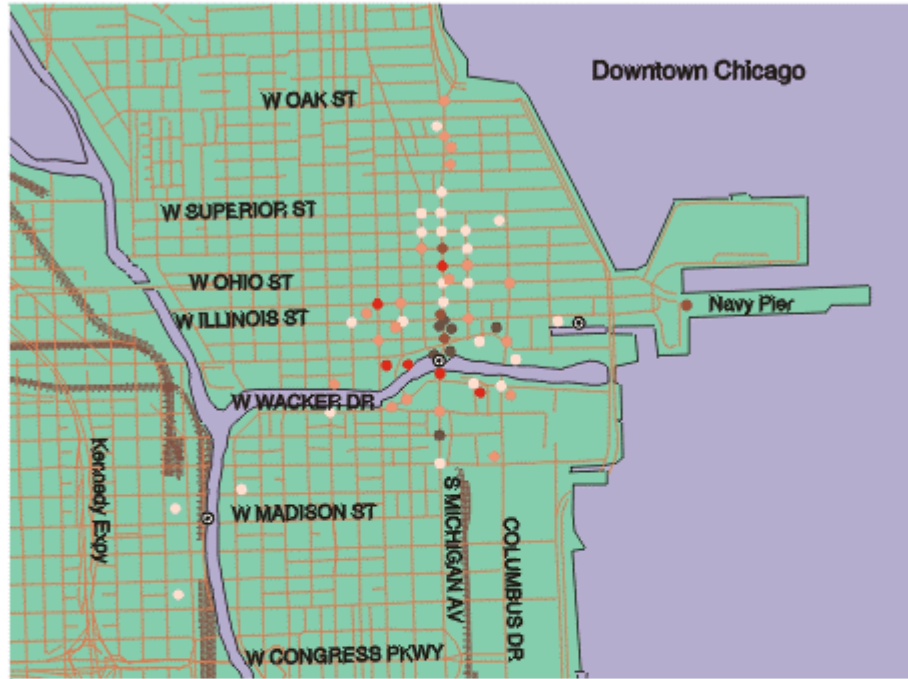


FIGURE 4

**Wendella RiverBus  
August 27, 1999  
Passenger Destinations**



- Passengers per Building
  - 0-1
  - 2-3
  - 4-6
  - 9-12
  - 13-30
- Passengers per Intersection
  - 0-1
  - 2-3
  - 4-6
  - 6-8
  - 9-26
- Roads
- Railroads
- Docks.shp

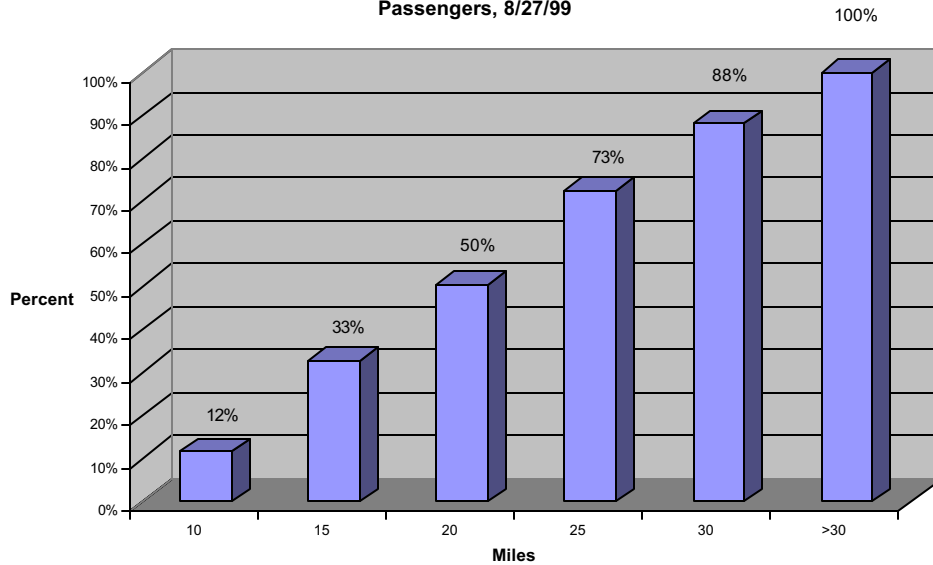


Produced by the  
Chicago Area  
Transportation  
Study

September 18, 2000  
home/sun4u48/wendella1.apr

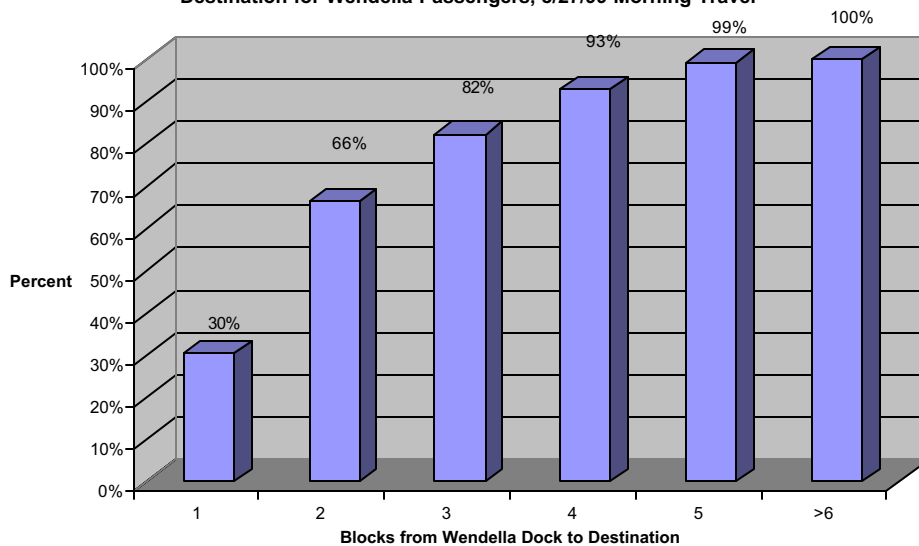
A spatial analysis of the origin and destination data was undertaken. The origin data is shown in Figure 5. More than half of the boat users travel between eleven and twenty-five miles to access the boat, although about twelve percent of passengers travel greater than thirty miles before embarking on the boat.

**Figure 5**  
**Cumulative Percentage of Miles Traveled from Origin to Dock for Wendella Passengers, 8/27/99**



The downtown destination data is shown in Figure 6. 66% of the boat users traveled two blocks or less from the Wendella dock to their final destination. However, nearly 20% of Wendella users traveled four or more blocks from the dock to their final destination.<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 6**  
**Cumulative Percentage of Blocks Traveled from Wendella Dock to Final Destination for Wendella Passengers, 8/27/99 Morning Travel**



<sup>8</sup> For purposes of this analysis, a block was defined as 450 feet in length.

Figure 7 shows the trip purposes reported by the Wendella RiverBus survey respondents. Close to 90% of the boat users were commuting to work on the boat. Most of the remainder had primary trip purposes other than boat travel, such as dining, recreation, shopping, errands, or personal business. However, some users (about 4%) simply traveled for pleasure.

**Figure 7**  
**Trip Purpose of Wendella RiverBus Users**  
**Morning of 8/27/99**

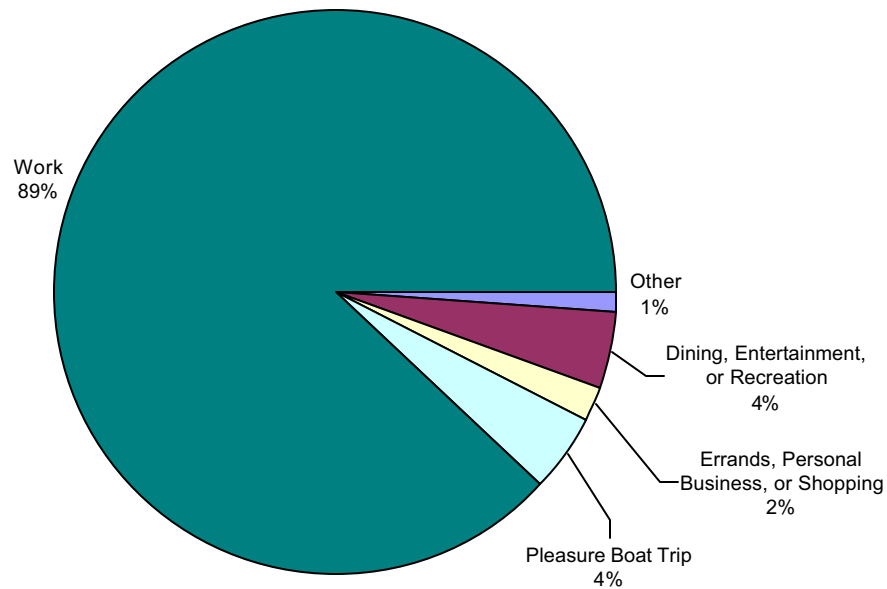
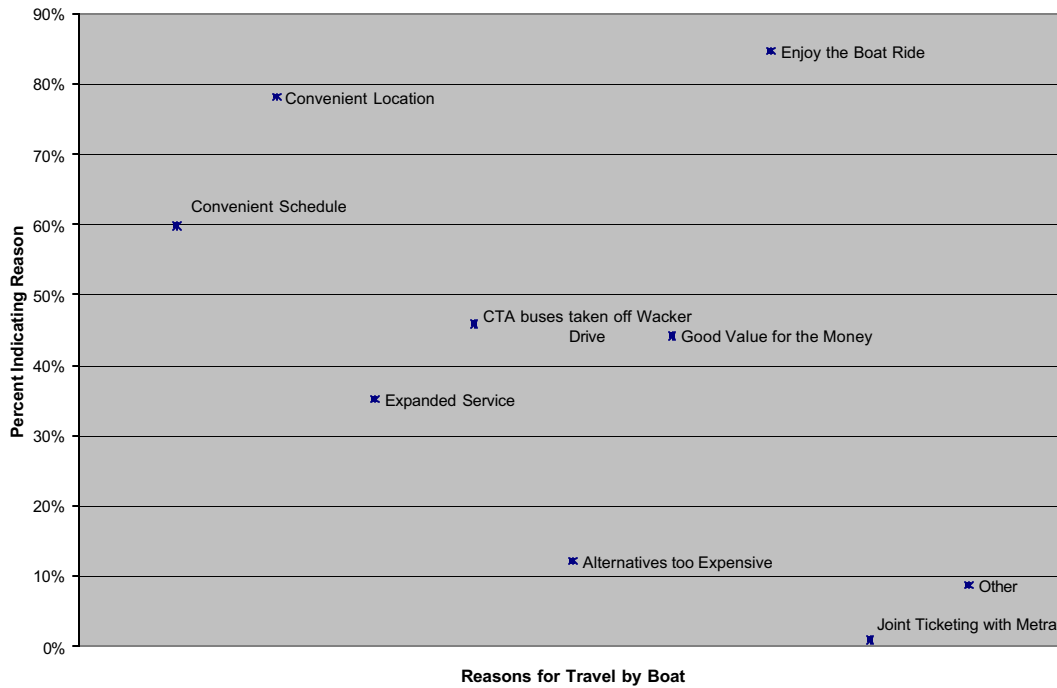


Figure 8 shows the reasons boat users gave for traveling by boat (more than one response was allowed). The location of the service and the enjoyable service were the most important factors noted. Also drawing customers to the service were the schedule, the expanded service, and the reduced express bus service on Wacker Drive. Customers also felt that Wendella Boats was providing good value for their money.

**Figure 8**  
**Percent Indicating Reason for Travel Using Boat**  
**Morning of 8/27/99**



Survey respondents were invited to add additional comments. The comments were largely positive regarding the RiverBus service. Wendella Boats has taken actions to address many of the customers' concerns. The customer comments, including those of the pretest group and other unusable surveys, are located in Appendix B (p. 18).

**F. Subsequent Events**

When the Wendella survey results were applied to CMAQ project selection analysis, the estimate of dollars per ton of hydrocarbons eliminated over the life of the project was \$16,850. Thus, the project ranked 7<sup>th</sup> of 14 projects submitted in the "other " category of projects. Funding for the project was approved on December 9, 1999. The project ranked 5<sup>th</sup> of the 8 projects selected for funding in this category.

Numerous administrative issues arose in the execution of the project. Among other issues, it was determined that an ordinance was necessary for the execution of a grant agreement. This ordinance is included in Appendix D, page 25.

The first new boat envisioned by the grant was placed in service while the grant was being reviewed and was not funded with CMAQ funds. The administrative issues resulted in the second boat's placement in revenue service being delayed until summer, 2001. The second boat, funded by CMAQ, has a larger capacity than originally anticipated and is an enclosed all-weather craft, enabling a longer season of use.

## G. Summary

The Wendella RiverBus is a link in Chicago's transportation network serving the North Michigan Avenue and Navy Pier areas, both of which are important engines of economic activity in northeastern Illinois. The availability of the RiverBus appears to encourage transit usage among people destined for the North Michigan Avenue and Navy Pier areas, though the effect is modest. Therefore, the RiverBus has a modest but measurable impact on vehicle miles traveled and vehicle emissions in the Chicago area. The service is primarily used by commuters, but increased off-peak service will likely cause higher non-commute ridership.

Appendix A  
Survey Instrument

9. Why do you travel by boat? **(check all that apply)**

- Convenient schedule
- Convenient location
- Expanded boat service hours and locations
- CTA Buses were taken off Lower Wacker Dr. (causing a longer trip by CTA Bus)
- Alternatives are too expensive
- Good value for the money
- Enjoy the boat ride
- Joint ticketing with Metra
- Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

10. How many years have you been using the boat service? \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your help. The following questions are optional.**

11. Sex:

- Male
- Female

12. Age \_\_\_\_\_

13. Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

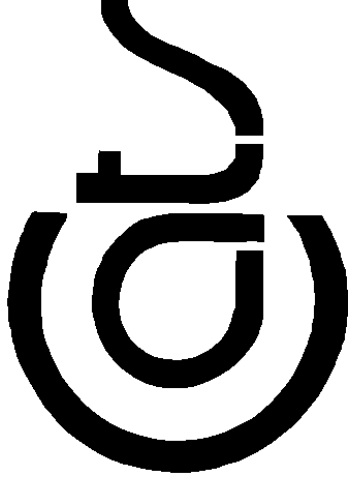
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## CHICAGO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

### Boat User Survey

Dear Boat Customer:

The Chicago Area Transportation Study is conducting a travel survey of boat users. Your responses will help us understand travel patterns, thus aiding us in transportation planning and project development.

All responses will be confidential; no identification is included. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Aristide Biciunas  
Executive Director

- How many **days per week** did you **travel downtown** last week? \_\_\_\_\_ days
- Of the days you traveled downtown last week, how often did you use the boat service for your morning commute?** \_\_\_\_\_ **days**
- When you use the boat in the morning, how do you usually travel from **home to the Madison Street dock?** (select only the choice used for the **greatest distance**)
  - Metra
  - CTA
  - Walked/bicycled only
  - Drove alone
  - Carpooled
  - Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- What is your home zip code? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where are you going after you leave this boat? Indicate the nearest intersection, address, or landmark. \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the primary purpose of your trip **today**?
  - Work
  - School
  - Errands/Personal Business/Shopping
  - Dining/Entertainment/Recreation
  - Pleasure boat trip
  - Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

- During the **off-season** (November to March), how many mornings do you usually travel from **home to downtown** by each of the following? Pick the mode used over **the greatest distance for the morning commute**.
 

Metra	_____ days per week
CTA bus/train	_____ days per week
Taxi	_____ days per week
Walk/Bicycle	_____ days per week
Driving Solo	_____ days per week
Carpooling	_____ days per week
Other	_____ days per week
(please specify _____)	
- How many mornings do you usually travel along the Wacker Drive corridor during the off-season by each of the following? Pick the mode used along the river for the morning commute.
 

CTA bus/train	_____ days per week
Taxi	_____ days per week
Walk/Bicycle	_____ days per week
Driving Solo	_____ days per week
Carpooling	_____ days per week
Other	_____ days per week
(please specify _____)	

APPENDIX B  
Wendella RiverBus Users Survey Comments  
Morning of 8/27/99

Note: As noted in the service analysis, Wendella Boats has taken several actions over the past two years to address customer concerns like some of those expressed below. Some of these actions include a somewhat longer season (which will be further facilitated with the new CMAQ-funded boat), earlier morning and later evening service, and additional runs in the peak period service.

- Great service – keep it open until Thanksgiving.
- If the buses were air-conditioned and not so cram-packed, I would consider using them on the off-season.
- Too bad the boat doesn't run year-round. It is timely and much more enjoyable than any CTA bus.
- Great service! I miss it during the Winter. The ride is much nicer on the boat. One thing: commuters should be made to buy tickets at the office – workers should not have to handle cash sales – dangerous for them. You can't get change on bus!
- I think we have to wait too long to get on the boat. I would like to see a more frequent service and later service. Thank you.
- It would be great if the evening boat left earlier than 4:38; it's not enough time to catch the 4:50 train.
- Put the buses back on Lower Wacker. More convenient to go to and from the train.
- I love taking the boat. Dependable service! On time!
- Boats should run earlier - 7:00 am to 6:30 p.m.
- I hope CTA service will soon be improved from NW station to N Michigan Ave. – Need to find quick convenient way from train station.
- Make the schedule more flexible and be sure everyone is on board before leaving. Don't leave a minute or two early when people are coming to get on the boat.
- The boat is fun. I wish it ran longer.
- The boat is the best commute in Chicago!
- How about a covered boat/ferry for Winter months?
- Expanded evening hours would help. Boat to arrive 6:10 would help.
- Would travel by boat year-round.
- Can we add more boats from Metra-Union Station (off Adams) to Michigan bridge? I have to walk every day from Union Station to Madison Street.
- I love taking the boat. Great way to start the day, and I feel good for not being on the streets adding to street traffic.
- I would like to see a link-up pass arrangement that includes Wendella's commuter service.
- I would appreciate a linkup between Metra, CTA, Wendella, and Pace transportation.
- I should be able to pay cash fare on the boat as long as it is exact. A worker commented that I had to buy a ticket. I felt that it was unnecessary since there are times when you have to purchase tickets on the boat. If I am a paying customer, etc.

- Boat service this year not as good. The boat leaving Madison Street at 8:22 am is late too often. There would be more boat passengers if lines weren't so long at rush hour. More boats would be better.
- Please get a hovercraft and operate on the river 12 months. It works in Europe!
- Worried about upcoming bus delays due to Wacker.
- I've only been working downtown since July.
- Put the buses back on Lower Wacker. It was an arrogant and stupid decision to discontinue them permanently.
- I first took the boat because the bus ride is awful, since Lower Wacker closed. I really enjoy the ride.
- I cannot take the boat as often as I used to because it's too crowded. I won't wait in line for it.
- I would like the boats to run later into December. I love to walk when the weather is good but I prefer the boat to the buses. I normally take the boats every evening.
- Keep up the good work. Too bad you can't run in the Winter months.
- I wish the boat service were extended to cover October and April.
- Consider adding a dock closer to Union Station.
- Fix Lower Wacker!
- Keep up the great service. The CTA is terrible.
- Would use the boat more frequently if the schedule were expanded (more boats added). Lower Wacker bus service is most efficient in off-season.
- Expand service please.
- I haven't been downtown long - 3 months- but the boat is the best part.
- The boat was 10 minutes late, which now made me late for my appointment.
- Schedule is not always reliable.
- I initially started using the boat service because the buses were taken off Lower Wacker, but now I'm hooked! You do a great job!
- Just visiting for the day.
- 1st time user.
- I'm very concerned that in the off-season the CTA bus service will be very slow and inconvenient due to lower Wacker construction.
- Although the construction caused me to use the boat as alternate transportation, I have enjoyed it very much and intend to use it again next Summer. Thank you!
- First time user.
- Great service. Night and day difference compared to CTA. (More friendly, reliable and courteous).
- I wish the buses were more available – Winter will be a drag walking from Metra, and CTA is so unreliable - always late.
- I enjoy the commute. Pleasant way to start the day. Good personnel.
- It would be nice to have a more extended schedule in the evening between 7 and 8 p.m.
- I love the boat – wish it ran at 7:10 p.m. and 8:10 p.m. from Michigan to Madison. Wish it ran all year! Everyone is very nice! Thank you for asking.
- I would like even more boat service, especially between 9 am and 10 am.
- Use mostly to get from train station to Michigan Ave for shopping and entertainment.

- Well-run company. Unique service to Chicago.
- Additional boats during rush hour. Doesn't make sense to have people waiting when we get to the dock and see boats sitting there. Also, devise better boarding plan - long lines wiggling around the Wrigley building to board the boat were a little silly etc.
- I'm one of those individuals that finds it unfortunate for me, but great for Wendella, that ridership this Summer has increased so drastically.
- I have not seen any no smoking signs (I smoke) but I assume it is not allowed.
- This has been great!
- Riding the boat is like a mini-vacation.
- CTA should take lessons from Wendella – run a scheduled, on time, pleasant service. If only Wendella could run an enclosed/heated vessel during the Winter months. It's a shame when the commuter boat stops for the Winter. A definite alternative needed etc.
- Improve bus service - # 125 Express. Thanks.
- The boat is great – more crowded this year, but still convenient. Why are the CTA buses so random? It's terrible! I really enjoy the boats, and would use them and would encourage guests and visitors to use them as well.
- I've been riding the Wendella since its very first year as a commuter boat service in the 1960's.
- Should make it handicapped accessible.
- Tourist.
- Great first trip. I've lived here 30 years – never did this -- but will always from now on.
- I hope the boat will be able to run year-round. I have been most dissatisfied with CTA bus service.
- Thanks for the [? Illegible]
- I hate the CTA and bus travel. There are more than 12 buses than 120's. Buses are erratic. Also takes too long to get to office. Too crowded. I wish the boat went into November and started back in March.
- I find the boat service extremely convenient and pleasant. Any chance of extending duration/season? Heated boats!
- Later hours would help the boat service. Also consider a stop at Union station.
- I love to travel by boat. Too bad there is an off-season.
- Traveling with children.
- Facing CTA on Upper Wacker Drive during the off-season is a GRIM PROSPECT.
- I think that the service is great. I wish it ran a little later in the evening, though.
- If Wendella would use a warm ice-cutter in the Winter I'd ride it too!
- I would like earlier afternoon schedule to Northwestern.
- Great service – can it run in the off-season?
- I love the boat! I wish you could run year-round.
- Restore bus service so that the inconsiderate bus commuters get off the boat.
- Improve public transportation on Lower Wacker.
- I love the boat.
- Expand service to River East Plaza.

- Why can't the boats operate November – March? Year-round would be great!
- Run it all year long! Use an icebreaker if you have to.
- The boat offers great service. I just feel that the discount on the ten ride should be a bit more beneficial to the consumer.
- I wish boats could dock more convenient to southbound Union. Get Lower Wacker project underway - way too slow. Get CTA reorganized as efficiently as Metra - CTA not focused on customer but on fare box, e.g., can't purchase CTA linkup sticker in IBM. Etc.
- Keep the bus [boat?- ed] in Winter. Add another boat at 5:50 p.m. or so.
- I wish there were more options later in the evening. I NEVER leave work at 5:00 p.m.
- Need bus service back on lower Wacker to get the "bus people" off the boat.
- I love the boat! Great expanded schedule! I hope it runs as late in year as possible. Staff great.
- You should schedule departures for X number of minutes after Metra arrives. Often I arrive by train, walk to boat, only to see it leave as I arrive.
- The boat is very convenient, but it seems that the schedule got thrown out the window a lot this year. Too many people? When the boat is scheduled to leave Madison at 8:34 it shouldn't arrive at 8:34. Most commuters have a strict morning schedule.
- I wish the boat ran in the Winter
- I would like the boat to run late into the Fall. It's not cold in the cabin! It's better than the bus.
- Add early boat. Coffee and champagne service would be nice. Great way to commute. Hope it goes year-round
- Please, please keep the boats going as long as possible. I'll pay more - I'll pay extra to use an ice pick when the river starts to freeze. Please don't make us victims of the buses any sooner than necessary. Don't abandon us. We love you.
- I Hate Surveys!
- Boats are very convenient and faster than buses between Madison and Michigan Ave. Boats should be integrated (?) with other modes of transportation and service expanded during the years.
- I am a tourist, so this really does not apply to me.
- Wish the boats-Commuter-Ran later in the evening for those that work past 5:30-6:00PM.
- Friendly crew. I enjoy the ride-look forward to it no matter what the weather. A nice memory to the day.
- Wish it could run until 6pm in the evening.
- Any chance of another stop closer to south end of Union Station? Later hours at night at Michigan Ave would be appreciated-maybe 'till 6pm?
- I won't go back to the CTA bus as long as the boat is running.
- Please continue as long as possible.
- Lower Wacker bus service during off boat season is going to present big problems. Commute is very long.
- Please continue the service as far into the winter as you can.

- The hours of service should be expanded to accommodate work schedules (real ones!). I often leave work between 6-6:30 and there is no public transportation (except slow, local bus) to stations-I usually end up taking a cab for \$5.
- Great service. Wish it could be year round!
- What "Joint Ticketing" with Metra?!
- Earlier and Later boat service would be nice.
- Later commuter hours for the boat would be extremely helpful! It would increase my use on the way home 100%.
- Would like to see an even more expanded schedule, especially during rush hours.
- Even with expanded boat service hours the boat schedules still do NOT appear to work smoothly between 8:15 -9:15 AM. (truncated by Staff).
- A Navy Pier route would expand my use of the boat!
- It would be nice if the boat ran during the winter/spring.
- Keep it going as long as possible into the fall!
- Keep the boat going as long as possible.
- Expand service as late as possible into fall.
- Wish the boats operated into November & started in March. Could you run them every 5-min.? (continued) Thanks. (Could you go a little faster?)
- I would use the boat even if the season were longer.
- Clean up the Madison location. Add other boats for Union Station.
- Need more frequent boats in the afternoon. Expand Rush hour.
- Start rush hour boats earlier on Friday afternoons.
- The boat should be "year round".
- I'll probably continue to take the boat even when they reinstate the buses to their normal schedules. It's a faster ride, and much less hassle than the buses.
- Keep running as long as possible!
- Please keep boat running thru October. The bus alternative is ugly. I love the boat.
- I don't ride the boat when it rains because seats are usually wet.
- Needs to have earlier departure times-most work around 8:00 AM-Does not leave time in between times. 7:20-7:30 would be better.
- Since there are more commuters on the boat due to the Wacker Dr. Construction there should be more boats---supplemented by the CTA.
- Please keep the boat running for as long as possible. The buses are undependable.
- I wish there was some sort of (?) information at the Madison dock-like Great America. It would greatly help the chaos. The girl who works the boat is really rude & needs to adjust her attitude towards customers.
- I would like to see Wendella continue commuter service through November.
- Boat makes me feel more like a tourist on vacation than a harried commuter.
- I love this boat! It is quick, convenient, and relaxing.
- I love the boat ride. It's a great way to start and end the day. The crewmembers are great. I would like the boat to run longer into the Winter.
- The boat seems to be late frequently. The schedule doesn't seem to matter any more.
- Start a little earlier in the morning.

- One additional run in AM for 8 am Naperville express; 1 additional run in PM for 5 p.m. Naperville Express; both trains at Union Station.
- I actually work adjacent to Union Station; however, I use the boat service whenever I have a chance.
- They should run the boat year round. Why don't they do that?
- Please realize that "traditional" rush hour is expanding, particularly in the evening. Transportation providers, however, still insist that everyone goes home at 4:30 or 5:00. It's simply not the case. More service (particularly x-town) needed at night.
- They have joint boat/Metra tickets?
- Yahoo!
- Please add more seats or more frequent trips.
- Great service. It would be wonderful if it could be expanded through some of the colder months.
- Why not use tour buses to run between Metra and Michigan Ave (225 N Michigan Ave).
- Get the bus situation fixed. Your current solution to Lower Wacker Closing sucks! It takes way too long in the evening to get to the train! 20 - 30 Min.
- Expand schedule to add earlier routes in the morning.
- I work in the suburbs now. I came down for a work-related convention today.
- Wish 9:00 would stop at Michigan Ave.

Appendix C  
Aerial View of Wendella RiverBus Peak Period Operating Area



Note: the peak period route of the RiverBus is indicated with a thin red line. The length of this line is approximately one mile. Off peak service extends to the River East area.

Appendix D  
City of Chicago Ordinance

City of **Chicago**

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**Richard M. Daley, Mayor**

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**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

**CITY OF CHICAGO**

March 15, 2000

RICHARD M. DALEY

MAYOR

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CITY COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO

Ladies and Gentlemen:

At the request of the Commissioner of Transportation, I transmit herewith an ordinance authorizing the execution of a grant agreement with Wendella Boats.

Your favorable consideration of this ordinance will be appreciated.

Very truly yours,

**Richard M. Daley**

Mayor

[The execution of a grant agreement with Wendella Boats](#)

## O R D I N A N C E

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago (the "City") will receive Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program ("CMAQ") grant funds (the "CMAQ Funds") from the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration ("FTA") for various CMAQ eligible projects for fiscal years 2000 to 2001; and

WHEREAS, it is beneficial to the City to promote transportation efforts that reduce the number of motor vehicles, congestion and traffic in the central business district of the City; and

WHEREAS, Section 1110 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Public Law 105-178, permits CMAQ funds to be used for projects which are cooperatively implemented under agreements between the public and private sectors; and

WHEREAS, Wendella Sightseeing Company, Inc., an Illinois corporation ("Wendella"), operates a commercial water transit shuttle service on the Chicago River from the Ogden Slip to the Madison Street Bridge; and

WHEREAS, on December 9, 1999, the Chicago Area Transportation Study ("CATS"), the metropolitan planning organization responsible for allocating CMAQ funds in the City, approved a grant of CMAQ funds in the amount of \$526,400 (the "Grant Funds") to pay a portion of the costs of construction of a new boat to be owned by Wendella and used for a commuter boat service on the Chicago River by Wendella for a minimum period of 20 years (the "Project"); and

WHEREAS, Wendella will provide the local match in the amount of \$131,600 to the Project, which shall be used to operate the boat for one year; and

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that the FTA will grant the Grant Funds to the City and the City, through its Department of Transportation ( the "Department"), will grant the Grant Funds to Wendella to be used for the construction of the boat; now, therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO:

SECTION 1. The above recitals are expressly incorporated in and made a part of this ordinance as though fully set forth herein.

SECTION 2. The Commissioner of the Department is hereby authorized, subject to the approval of the Corporation Counsel, to negotiate, enter into and execute a grant agreement with Wendella which shall contain the terms for the construction and operation of the boat, and such other agreements and instruments, and perform any and all acts as shall be necessary or advisable in connection with the implementation of the Project. Upon the execution and receipt of proper documentation, the Commissioner of the Department is hereby authorized to disburse the Grant Funds to Wendella in connection with the Project.

SECTION 3. To the extent that any ordinance, resolution, rule, order or provision of the Municipal Code of Chicago, or part thereof, is in conflict with the provisions of this

ordinance, the provisions of this ordinance shall control. If any section, paragraph, clause or provision of this ordinance shall be held invalid, the invalidity of such section, paragraph, clause or provision shall not affect any of the other provisions of this ordinance.

SECTION 4. This ordinance shall be effective upon its passage and approval.

EAD\303-3/15/00

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