

New knowledge is the most valuable commodity on earth. The more truth we have to work with, the richer we become.

— Kurt Vonnegut

INSIDE-BOOSTER

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NEWS OF LINCOLN PARK, LAKE VIEW, NORTH CENTER & LINCOLN SQUARE

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Meeting over Ashland Ave. pot shop lightly attended

A new recreational pot is one step closer to arriving on the riverfront border between Lincoln Park and Bucktown after dispensary operators Dr. Greenthumb met with a group of residents over their plan to open a pot shop at the former site of Green Dolphin Street nightclub, 2200 N. Ashland.

On Dec. 20 representatives from TRP - company that operates Dr. Greenthumb's - shared their plans

to a small group of area residents at a community meeting hosted by Ald. Scott Waguespack [32nd].

Many of those who attended the meeting live across the street at the Triangle Square condo building which is also a recent arrival to the formerly industrial area.

TRP officials told the audience that they plan to present their proposal to the Zoning Board of Appeals in February.

Extended street closures in Lakeview this weekend

The CTA announced on Dec. 29 that there would be extended street closures on N. Clark St. from W. Newport Ave. to W. Buckingham Place, and on W. Roscoe St. from N. Sheffield Ave. to east of the CTA Tracks on weekends - Friday through Monday - Jan. 5 through 8, with backup dates of

Jan. 12 through 15.

Dates are subject to change due to weather and construction schedule adjustments

Work hours are 9 p.m. Friday through 4 a.m. Monday with continuous 24/7 street closures while workers conduct track and structure demolition.

Emergency bridge and road closures at Division St. Bridge

Work crews with the city's Dept. of Transportation shut down the Division St. Bridge Tuesday for emergency repairs. Emergency repairs at the Division St. Bascule Bridge over the North Branch of the Chicago River are expected to last until JFeb. 9.

The work consists of selective roadway stringers and deck repairs. Eastbound lanes are now closed to all through traffic between N. Elston Ave. and N. North Branch St. Westbound

lanes are open to traffic.

From Jan. 22 through Feb. 29, Eastbound lanes will be opened to traffic, while Westbound lanes will be closed to all traffic between N. Elston Ave. and N. North Branch St.

Division St. will remain open to local traffic at all times between N. North Branch St. and N. Halsted St. One sidewalk will remain open to pedestrian traffic at all times.

Common sense prevails, high density Ravenswood project rejected

It seemed out of place at first glance, and perhaps appearances have become the reality for a high density residential development project proposed for Ravenswood that was to rise on a site that now held just one single family home.

Ald. Andre Vasquez [40th] has denied a zoning change request for a proposal at 5400 N. Ashland. The five-story development proposal would have added 18 new residential units where once only one family lived.

Planned by real estate investor Josh Bradley, the project site is located at the northwest corner of N. Ashland Ave. and W. Bal-moral. It had been owned for 30 years by the same family. Bradley

and his husband bought the property and one-story ranch home in Oct. 2022.

The proposal also called for only nine off-street residential parking spots at the back of the ground floor, which would have left the other future tenants searching elsewhere in the community for parking.

Bradley was asking to rezone the site from RS-3 to B2-3, but Ald. Vasquez denied the request, citing community concern over its height, density and lack of parking. Vasquez claims he will have a follow up meeting with the community to discuss the project.



The CTA's financial troubles are on the horizon as rides are still down 40% for the CTA compared to the same period for 2019, the last pre-COVID year.

CTA reckoning coming in 2026

Public transportation rides high on two-year supply of bailout cash, but there is trouble ahead

BY MARK GLENNON
Wirepoints

Federal funds have been critical in maintaining public transportation service in the Chicago region since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. And the Chicago Transit Authority [CTA] has had an easy ride the last two years thanks to all the federal cash they were gifted.

Now, dire news over the past week makes clear that mass transit in the Chicago area is severely threatened.

The gravy train is coming to an end soon and according The Civic Federation [TCF] a financial cliff is on the CTA's distant horizon.

If it weren't for federal COVID relief funds still unspent, the

CTA's operating budget for the coming year would face a deficit representing nearly a quarter of the entire budget. Right now the Fiscal Year [FY] 2024 CTA operating budget is balanced with \$472.5 million in federal COVID relief funds, representing approximately 23.7% of the entire operating budget. The FY2025 projected budget gap of \$481.2 million will also be balanced with federal relief funds.

However, after 2025 those funds will be exhausted, forcing the CTA to balance its projected FY2026 budget deficit of \$576.9 million by securing new additional revenue sources, making severe service cuts or utilizing some combination of both strategies, says TCF.

In order to prepare for the loss of federal funds for Chicago area transit agencies in 2026, the General Assembly approved Public Act 102-1028 in 2023. The Act required the Chicago Metropolitan Area for Planning to convene regional transportation agencies to develop recommendations for the long-term fiscal and operational sustainability of the CTA, Metra and Pace.

The Plan of Action for Regional Transit [PART] report is now available in draft form and will be presented to the General Assembly this month for its consideration.

CTA operating budget totals \$2B

The CTA FY2024 operating budget of nearly \$2 billion was

RECKONING see p. 8

Most arrested Chicagoan under 'cashless bail' gets arrested three more times in five days

BY CWBCHICAGO

Remember Juvenal Coronel? We wrote about him in October as the person arrested more than anyone else in Chicago during the first month of cashless bail.

Well, he recently got out of jail after serving a little time.

And he quickly got arrested three more times within five days. Yes, he has been released each time.

Coronel was arrested five times within the first month of cashless bail's debut on September 18. He kept getting out.

First, he was accused of slapping two women on their buttocks in the 6800 block of N. Clark on Sept. 22. He left the police station hours later.

On Sept. 27, Chicago cops arrested him in the 1700 block of W. Lunt after a woman accused him of jumping on the hood of her car



Juvenal Coronel is seen in mugshots taken after some of his arrests during the "cashless bail" era.

and punching her window as she stopped for a red light. Again, he walked out of the police station a few hours later.

He was released again after a man accused him of scratching letters into the door of his Jeep in the 1700 block of W. Lunt.

On Oct. 17, he was arrested and

charged with blocking traffic in the 6900 block of N. Clark. He left the police station early the following day. That evening, he got arrested again after a driver reported that he was walking in traffic, trying to hit passing

ARRESTED see p. 8



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Letters to the Editor

Fern Hill plan fails to be authentic

As a longtime residents, we urge City Hall to de-commission the Fern Hill multi-year community engagement process. It has run its course and failed to be an authentic exercise.

Instead, the interested parties conducted a multi-faceted public relations campaign to benefit a small group of religious and educational institutions, a planned development owner, adjacent bar owners, and Walgreens.

Walgreens hopes to move to a temporary location in the vacant former Treasure Island space. This must be viewed in the context of Walgreens recently closing three stores: Clark/Broadway, Chicago/Orleans, and W. North Ave.

The closure of the North Ave. corporate-owned store in our neighborhood would enable Fern Hill to acquire its site and construct a cheap steel high-rise residential tower of 500 units and 450 parking spaces.

Surely the sale of this store to create a development site worth tens of millions of dollars would generate a solid profit for Walgreens and open Old Town to development. This is driven by Walgreens' own corporate issues as widely reported and the ambitions of Fern Hill's disclosed and undisclosed partners.

A temporary or even permanent 24-hour liquor-selling Walgreens

in the former Treasure Island space with its own parking lot, drive-through access and adjacent to two high-rise residential towers is a bad idea.

This Walgreens play has been communicated in open public meetings and in private deals through a years-long orchestration by a well-connected developer.

This was conducted under the broader guise of mothballing currently useful gas stations and cramming in new high-rise affordable housing onto a site too small to create feasible affordable housing units.

Those units could be built as low to midrise units in more suitable nearby vacant lot locations in our ward or in adjacent wards designated for low-income housing.

Not included in any real way were the voices of the residents who seek to protect their property values and their quality of life from further incursions of traffic, pedestrian street crossing safety, and criminal activity.

We assume that our public officials can put an end to this process by indicating that they cannot see a way to endorse this dense development without permanently altering and adversely impacting the character of Old Town.

The focus should be on supporting the re-establishment of

Divvy bike rack irrelevant

One more thing about the story on bicycle-vs.-pothole, and the Illinois Supreme Court decision [Dec. 27].

Yes, in Chicago bicyclists are allowed to ride on sidewalks where they're going to or from a bike rack. But if plaintiff Clark Alave wasn't riding a Divvy bike where he hit that pothole, the adjacent Divvy bike rack was irrelevant, since it's only for Divvy bikes.

*Jean SmilingCoyote
West Ridge*

a walkable grocery store in the Treasure Island space which for over 50 years thrived in that location.

Public officials need to step forward and end this money-making scheme. This process has hijacked our time and attention and held us hostage to an elaborate zoning chess game which gives priority to a few special interests in shaping this deal. It has treated voters as pawns and with disregard.

*Tim and Mary Carew
Old Town*

The Thomas O'Gorman column and The Home Front by Don DeBat will return next week.

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Hunt was a wonderful person



[L-R] Eagle Columns in Jonquil Park, Richard Hunt and Allan Mellis.

Richard Hunt, who just passed away, had his sculpture studio at 1017 W. Lill in the heart of Lincoln Park for over 50 years. He was an internationally famous sculptor with many monumental sculptures around Chicago and the world.

One of his sculptures, Eagle Columns, stands in Jonquil Park at the corner of Lincoln, Sheffield, and Wrightwood. The following quote describes the motivation behind the sculpture:

"During the late 19th century, Illinois Gov. John Peter Altgeld (1847-1902) made a decision of conscience that essentially destroyed his career. Soon after Altgeld's inauguration, his law partner Clarence Darrow asked him to review the cases of the anarchists who had been blamed for the Haymarket Riot of 1886. Altgeld became convinced that the men had been unfairly convicted of murder, and despite public outcry, he pardoned the three living "bombers" in 1893. Altgeld received harsh criticism even after his death. This senti-

ment finally changed in 1913, when Vachel Lindsay published "The Eagle that is Forgotten," a poem that prompted many citizens to recognize the previous governor as a forgotten hero."

Sara Leonard, a Wrightwood Neighbors Association community group board member, applied for a National Endowment of the Arts grant. The application asked 'how many people would see it,' Sara submitted the answer as "over 100,000 by the people passing by, on the CTA elevated trains nearby."

Well, we got the grant! Eagle Columns was installed in 1989.

On a personal note, when I moved to Chicago, I rented an apartment four houses down from Hunt's studio. Whenever I stopped by, I was always greeted with a big smile, a firm handshake and an invitation to see the latest piece he was working on. He was a wonderful person.

Allan Mellis
Lincoln Park

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Collective bargaining agreement between the FOP and City passes

BY ALD. MARIA HADDEN [49TH]

In December, City Council passed the extension of the collective bargaining agreement between the Fraternal Order of Police [FOP] and the City of Chicago. The agreement was a two-year extension of the agreement ratified under former Mayor Lightfoot in 2021. The new agreement will expire in 2027.

As a part of the agreement, CPD officers are set to receive pay raises set at 5% in 2024 and 2025, up from 2% and 2.5% previously.

After 2025, raises will be tied to inflation, ranging from 3%-5%.

There have been concerns expressed about the level of raises that officers are slated to receive under the new agreement. However, police are not immune to historical rates of inflation or increased costs of living.

Furthermore, we've seen rapid rates of attrition within the department along with a spike in the expectations of officers. With strained resources, increased demands on officers, and costs of living on the rise, the increase in salary will help retain and attract quality officers to fill these roles until we enter negotiations again in a few years.

As a part of the contract, officers will also receive a one-time \$2,500 retention bonus, replacing a yearly bonus of \$2,000 for officers who have been on the job for more than 20 years.

The agreement also offers a \$1,000/year bonus for officers who enlist in Crisis Intervention Team [CIT] training and receive their bike certification. CIT trained officers received specialized training in how to respond to and de-escalate mental health crises.

Officers who opt into the program have expectations that exceed those of other sworn officers. They provide critical public safety services to some of the most vulnerable populations in Chicago.

Bike-certified officers are also critical to getting officers out of their vehicles and immersed in communities. For years, I have asked for additional officers on bikes in our neighborhood, and I'm glad to see more incentives being offered to officers to become certified.

In addition to some of the financial incentives, the contract also changes the structure of medical and parental leave for sworn officers. Previously, only officers who were the birthing parent of a child were allowed to take parental leave. Under the new agreement, officers can now take up to 12 weeks of parental leave, even if they were not the birthing parent.

This provides officers a critical opportunity to bond with their infant after it is born. It also matches the offer of paid parental leave being offered to members of the Chicago Teachers Union.

At a time when CPD morale is at an all-time low, I believe that the financial incentives and benefits of the contract will serve as a much-needed morale boost.

After spending several years working without a contract, this can serve as a signal to our officers that we understand the stress of their position and are willing to compensate them fairly for it. It may also serve a dual purpose in that it will attract new potential officers from diverse backgrounds to join CPD.

There remains legitimate concerns about the newly ratified contract around the issue of accountability and transparency. Among the most concerning is language on the body-worn cameras policy. The new contract restricts the use of body-worn cameras and provides the FOP additional control over the use of footage from cameras in disciplinary cases.

The new policy also prohibits the use of body-worn cameras to record post-incident conversations with police members and supervisors and allows officers to turn off body-worn cameras when they are not actively engaging with the public.

There are also concerns about language in the contract around a "People's Court," which allows officers facing suspensions of 30 days or less to go before an independent arbitrator for an abbreviated hearing.

Parties involved in these hearings would not be allowed to provide written arguments in support of their positions, and the arbitrator's decision would be final and binding. In addition to the Peoples Court model, any investigation that takes longer than 18 months

to reach a conclusion can request to go before an arbitrator.

In these cases, the arbitrator would determine whether there is a reasonable basis for the investigation to take more than 18 months, with the CPD required

After spending several years working without a contract, this can serve as a signal to our officers that we understand the stress of their position and are willing to compensate them fairly for it. It may also serve a dual purpose in that it will attract new potential officers from diverse backgrounds to join CPD.

to demonstrate reasonable cause for delay. This contract may end those anonymous complaints for the first time in 40 years. Prior to this change, the City could not investigate any complaints brought forward anonymously, even if there was evidence that supported the complaint. This change will make it easier for individuals to come forward to report police misconduct without the fear of retaliation.

The ratified agreement also puts an end to the requirement to destroy disciplinary records. The new contract allows these records

to be retained indefinitely. The new contract broadened the use of disciplinary records in cases involving police misconduct. Previously, sustained allegations of misconduct could only be used for five years; under the new contract, these sustained allegations can be used for the duration of the officer's career.

During the December negotiations, the City Council rejected an ordinance that would allow arbitrators to rule on some of the most egregious police misconduct cases. The ordinance got voted down 33-17.

In June, an independent arbitrator issued a ruling that would allow CPD officers to have the option to have their cases heard through an arbitration process rather than by the Chicago Police Board [CPB] for suspensions in excess of a year or when facing dismissal.

The decisions in the arbitration process would be binding and final.

The arbitration ruling was the most contentious decision issued by an independent arbitrator ruling over contract negotiations between the FOP and City of Chicago. Because of the implications the ruling would have, the matter was bifurcated from the rest of the labor agreement.

For over 60 years, the CPB has been responsible for reviewing

and making decisions on police disciplinary matters, including the most serious allegations of misconduct. While imperfect, this format has allowed a transparent process to hold officers accountable by a body that is independent and impartial.

Shifting that to an arbitration process rolls back the clock on the progress Chicago has made toward increasing transparency on allegations of police misconduct, pushing the most egregious misconduct cases to be heard behind closed doors. This risks further eroding the already tenuous trust that the public has in the investigative process around police misconduct.

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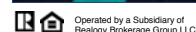
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Police Beat...

Couple robbed at gunpoint in Lincoln Park on Christmas night, second holdup nearby

A Lincoln Park couple was robbed at gunpoint near their home on Christmas night. Another man was robbed at gunpoint in the neighborhood Dec. 26. No arrests have been announced.

The couple, a 33-year-old man and a 31-year-old woman, was in the 400 block of W. Fullerton, not far from their home, when an armed man confronted them around 9:57 p.m., police said. He ordered them to surrender their valuables, and they complied, handing over jewelry and other property.

Chicago cops tracked the woman's phone and recovered it along with other proceeds in the 2600 block of N. Dayton, a CPD spokesperson said.

Officers who spoke with the couple said the robber was a Black man standing about 5'-7" tall. He was last seen heading west on Fullerton wearing a black ski mask and a black hoodie.

Then, around 2:45 a.m., a man was robbed at gunpoint near the intersection of Armitage and Mohawk. He told police that two men who got out of a small car put a gun to his head and threatened to shoot him.

The men took his phone and forced him to surrender his passcode and wallet. No description of the suspects was available.

Christmas Day arson at car dealer

An arson case occurred at 4:15 a.m. Monday, Dec. 25, when a male subject was seen on video jumping the fence of a car dealership located at 5950 N. Western Ave. The offender then pours gasoline on a car and ignites it.

Police believe he may have fled in a black Jeep afterwards. No other information is available at this time. Anyone with information on this crime is encouraged to call Arson Detectives at 312-746-7618. Callers should refer to this crime as JG553885.

Christmas Eve Lincoln Square break in

At 1 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 24, an unknown offender began kicking in the rear door of an apartment on the 4700 Block of N. Virginia. As he gained entry, he was confronted by the homeowner.

A physical altercation ensued and the offender fled. The homeowner was injured (bruising/swelling) and was transported to the hospital by EMS.

No description of the offender is available at this time. Detectives are continuing to investigate. Anyone with additional information may call Area 3 detectives at 312-744-8263. This case is referenced JG552819.

Armed robbery spree on North Side

Police are warning North Side residents of 15 similar robberies that occurred in the early morning hours of Dec. 18, and Dec. 23. The offenders arrive in two separate vehicles and drive up to the victims to box them into their vehicle.

The offenders exit the offending vehicles, point handguns at the victims and demand their personal belongings.

Victims turn over phones and the offenders flee in the vehicles they arrived in.

Incidents include one on the 5400 Block of N. Damen Ave, on Dec. 23,

2023, at 3:10 a.m.; 5200 Block of N. Winthrop Ave, on Dec. 23, 2023 at 3:25 a.m.; 4300 Block of N. Campbell Ave., on Dec. 23, 2023, at 3:30 a.m.; 4400 Block of N. Campbell Ave., on Dec. 23, 2023, at 3:45 a.m.; 3100 Block of N. Clifton Ave., on Dec. 23, 2023, at 4:00 a.m.; 2900 Block of N. Clark Street, on Dec. 23, 2023, at 4:10 a.m.; 6300 Block of N. Artesian Ave., on Dec. 18, 2023, at 1:45 a.m.; 2300 Block of W. Devon Ave, on Dec. 18, 2023, at 1:52 a.m.; 2700 Block of W. Rosemont Ave, on Dec. 18, 2023, at 2:10 a.m.; 4900 Block of N. Broadway Ave, on Dec. 18, 2023, at 2:30 a.m.; 4800 Block of N. Broadway Ave, on Dec. 18, 2023, at 2:35 a.m.; 6400 Block of N. Artesian Ave, on Dec. 18, 2023, at 2:45 a.m., and the 1200 Block of W. Winona Ave, on Dec. 18, 2023, at 3:36 a.m.

Anyone with information on these crimes may call the Bureau of Detectives - Area 3 at 312-744-8263.

Man accused of sexually assaulting two women he met in Chicago bars gets probation

A Lakeview man has been sentenced to probation after pleading guilty to sexually abusing two women he met in bars between 2014 and 2019. Prosecutors brought charges against Jorge Acevedo, 46, in Jan. 2022, but the victims filed reports with Chicago police years earlier.



Jorge Acevedo

The first victim, a 23-year-old woman, told police in Dec. 2014 that she went to a bar and woke up in Acevedo's apartment on the 900 block of W. Belmont with him lying on top of her naked, according to a Chicago police report filed in Dec. 2014.

The report said she went to a hospital for treatment, where a sexual assault evidence kit was collected. It also said she identified Acevedo by name and picked him out of a photo line-up.

For reasons that are not clear, Acevedo was not charged for another seven years.

In the interim, a second woman filed a complaint against Acevedo. The 24-year-old told police she was out drinking for a celebration on Sept. 22, 2019, when she realized she was in a white car that she did not recognize.

She later woke up alone and naked in Acevedo's apartment on the 3100 block of N. Cambridge, not knowing where she was or how she got there, the report continued.

The woman told investigators that she remembered having sex with Acevedo, and she went to Rush Hospital for a criminal sexual assault examination and evidence collection, the report said.

DNA testing of both sexual assault kits linked the two cases, according to CPD records.

Acevedo, now 46, faced kidnapping and criminal sexual assault charges in both cases but recently reached a plea deal with prosecutors.

Under the agreement, Acevedo was allowed to plead guilty to a reduced charge of criminal sexual abuse in exchange for a two-year probation sentence, according to court records. He must also register as a sex offender for two years.

Judge Adrienne Davis oversaw the case and sentencing.

Acevedo has been on electronic monitoring since posting bail shortly after the charges were filed.

Man found dead in bathtub

Area Five detectives are conducting a death investigation after a man was found unresponsive in Wicker Park on Christmas Day.

Chicago police released a brief media statement that said a 38-year-old was found inside a residence in the 1500 block of N. Wicker Park around 4:30 p.m. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

According to information collected from other sources, the man was found unresponsive in a bathtub in a second-floor apartment. The initial appearance was that he had drowned, but the medical examiner's office will try to determine the cause and manner of death by conducting an autopsy.

Ravenswood man confronts burglar, gets attacked

A Ravenswood man was physically attacked Dec. 24 when he came face-to-face with a burglar inside his home.

The victim was asleep in the 4700 block of N. Virginia when the intruder entered his home, apparently by kicking in the back door, according to a preliminary Chicago police report. When the victim went to investigate, the burglar punched him in the face and ran out the back door.

EMS took the victim, who suffered from bruising and a sore back after fighting with the intruder, to Swedish Covenant Hospital.

The suspect was described only as a male who stood about 5'10" tall and wore a hoodie.

Burglary reports citywide are down 1% compared to last year and down 22% compared to 2019. But the Town Hall 19th District, which includes the area where this burglary occurred, has seen a 19% increase in burglaries this year. Break-ins are up 4% in Town Hall compared to 2019.

Man robbed Rogers Park pharmacy of cash, narcotics

Chicago police investigators used the city's network of surveillance



Harvey Woodfork

cameras to track an armed robber from the scene of the crime on the Far North Side to his South Side home. Then, cops staked out the robber's home and took him into custody when he stepped back outside three days after the holdup, according to prosecutors.

Those details emerged during a detention hearing for Harvey Woodfork, 34, at the Leighton Criminal Court-house. He's charged with two counts of armed robbery and possessing a controlled substance.

Prosecutors said Woodfork entered Chicago Health Mart, 1260 W. Devon, on Dec. 5 and robbed the pharmacy of \$300 cash and a "large amount" of narcotics. Surveillance video showed the robber, wearing a black ski mask and distinct orange and black gloves, escaping in a red Nissan, according to police.

Detectives tracked the Nissan to the 6700 block of S. Prairie and found additional video on the block that showed Woodfork entering his home shortly after the robbery, prosecutors said.

Cops took him into custody when he stepped outside and entered the Nissan three days later. Prosecutors said the police recovered a black ski mask, orange and black gloves, and a pill bottle taken from the pharmacy during the arrest. The police said Woodfork was carrying \$1,861 cash when they arrested him.

Judge Anthony Calabrese ordered Woodfork detained while awaiting trial. Woodfork's previous felony convictions include possessing a stolen motor vehicle and possessing a controlled substance in 2021, according to clerk of court records.

Eight robbed during Dec. 23 crime spree

Two carloads of armed men went on an hour-long armed robbery spree across the North Side on Dec. 23. At least eight victims were targeted during the holdups, which began in Lincoln Square and ended in Lakeview.

The robberies strongly resemble two other robbery sprees reported



Two gunmen rob Byline Bank, 7050 N. Western Ave., Dec. 23, 2023.

Gunmen took \$9,433 cash - and a GPS tracker - from Rogers Park bank

Two men are in custody, accused of taking more than \$9,000 at gunpoint from a Rogers Park bank branch Dec. 22.

Federal authorities say one of the men claimed he had nothing to do with the robbery and was merely in the neighborhood for a Grindr hookup, an alibi that seemed to fall apart because his phone, a critical tool for using the gay dating app, was found on the bank's floor.

Troy Lockett, 23, and Kendall Sullivan, 21, were arrested minutes after the robbery by cops who followed a GPS tracker hidden inside the bank's cash, according to an FBI agent's probable cause affidavit.

The robbers entered Byline Bank, 7050 N. Western Ave., shortly after 10 a.m. and made their way to a teller. One of them displayed a gun while the other handed a bag to a teller and told them to fill it with cash, the agent wrote. A second teller slipped a GPS tracker into a second stack of money and stuffed it into the bag.

As the robbery was unfolding, two customers entered the bank, and one of the robbers, allegedly Lockett, forced them to lie on an office floor, the FBI agent said.

Chicago cops began tracking the GPS signal within eight minutes and quickly located two cars traveling together in synch with the tracker, according to the affidavit. The driver of the second car started to hit his brakes and drive slowly, apparently in

an attempt to keep the police from reaching the first car, the agent explained.

But the cars split up, and police apprehended Sullivan after he ran from the first car with a bag containing \$9,433, the exact amount taken from the bank, the affidavit said. Chicago cops allegedly found two pistols in the pockets of a jacket he discarded as he ran.

Sullivan later admitted to participating in the robbery, but he refused to identify his accomplice, the agent wrote.

Lockett allegedly denied participating in the robbery and told investigators he was in the area to have a Grindr hookup, the FBI agent alleged. While Lockett didn't have a phone with him, Chicago police did find a phone on the bank floor near where Lockett allegedly stood during the holdup.

When investigators asked how he could have a Grindr hookup without a phone, Lockett replied that the police were trying to "trick" him, the FBI agent claimed.

Lockett also denied knowing Sullivan, but publicly available social media profiles show the two men are friends on Facebook, according to the FBI agent.

Investigators also found two gun storage cases in Lockett's car that bore the serial numbers of the two guns cops allegedly recovered from Sullivan's jacket, the agent alleged.

this month on the North Side.

The first robbery attempt occurred in the 5400 block of N. Damen around 3:10 a.m. Four men jumped out of two cars and pointed guns at the victim, but he managed to run away and contact police.

A few minutes later, a group of men pointed guns at another man outside his home in the 5200 block of N. Winthrop and robbed him. Again, the offenders escaped in two cars.

The robbers then tried to rob another man who was in a car in the 4900 block of N. Washtenaw, but the would-be victim drove onto the sidewalk and got away.

At about 3:30 a.m., three armed men robbed a 32-year-old in the 4300 block of N. Campbell.

The victim was parking his car when two silver sedans boxed him in and five men stepped out, a CPD spokesperson said. Three of the men displayed guns as the group ordered the man out of his car.

He complied, but the robbers struck him in the head and face with a handgun anyway, police said. The crew took his property and then fled in the silver cars. CPD's spokesperson said the victim declined medical attention.

Two sedans also boxed in an Uber in the 4400 block of N. Campbell. A CPD spokesperson said the robbery occurred as the driver was picking up his 32-year-old passenger around 3:45 a.m. Two cars, one silver and the other dark-colored, rolled up and four men exited, two displaying guns. They took property from both victims and

then fled west in the silver and dark cars.

Two more robberies were reported in Lakeview.

One victim told police that up to six people, three armed with guns, robbed him of his phone, wallet, and cash in the 3100 block of N. Clifton at 4 a.m.

Ten minutes later, a pair of armed men physically attacked and robbed him in the 2900 block of N. Clark.

In a community alert issued subsequent to this story's initial publication, CPD described the suspects as up to eight Black males between 17 and 25 years old wearing black bandana face masks, black hoodies, and black shoes.

On Dec. 9, a group of armed men used two cars to box in robbery victims in West Ridge. Three people were carjacked, and a fourth was robbed at gunpoint within 45 minutes.

Then, on Dec. 18, two Uber drivers were among at least nine people robbed during an overnight robbery spree in Uptown and West Ridge. Once again, up to eight armed men used two vehicles to box in victims.

Anyone with information about the crimes can contact detectives at 312-744-8263 regarding crime pattern #P23-3-103CA.

Robbery reports in Chicago were up 24% this year as of December 10. They're up 39% compared to 2019.

However, the robberies in two

Can Big Brother watch your driving?

BY STEPHEN HOFFMAN

Our world is so technologically interconnected, technology is part of every facet of our existence, from household devices, to smart speakers, to our smartphones. It's everywhere.

The other day, my wife took "my" car (oops, I mistyped "our") to pick up her parents from the airport. I managed to avoid this duty, but she got to drive my car. Out of boredom, I noticed I could use the car's app to track nearly everything she was doing in the vehicle.

I could see what she was listening to on her phone through Bluetooth.

I could see (and remotely control) the temperature inside the vehicle.

I could see her speed.

And, most frighteningly, I could see exactly where she was.

All this got us both wondering, her as a normal person and me as a lawyer, "what could this mean for future car crashes?" What data could be utilized by insurance companies, lawyers, and the like?

Data Recording

Many vehicles these days are equipped with dash recorders. I've blogged previously about how this footage can be valuable in disputed crashes. Presuming you have the dashcam turned "on," it will record what happens in front of you, and, in the case of more advanced vehicles like the Tesla, it will also record what happened behind you and on the sides. Generally, this is erased rather quickly, but there may be ways to recover even previously erased video.

In general, the data goes onto the USB drive of the vehicle, and the owner could download and save the data. In some situations, it may also be amassed by the vehicle company.

Think of this for a moment. Instead of Mr. Jones claiming he was going 30 miles per hour and Ms. Smith claiming he was going at least 50 miles per hour in a 30 mph zone, you could simply obtain the vehicle's data and solve the dispute.

Who ran the light? Let's look at the tale of the tape! We lawyers who handle truck cases are always aware that truck data recorders keep massive amounts of useful information, and we almost always immediately subpoena this information in truck crash injury cases. It is essential to the handling of these cases.

But data recorder information has not been nearly as available in car cases. Until recently.

How To Obtain the Data

Herein lies the rub. Since the data is presumably the private data of the driver, it will not be released without a subpoena. To obtain a subpoena, one needs to file a lawsuit. Because the relevant data may be erased quickly, this may require the party's attorney seeking the information to act much quicker than is typical.

The subpoena presumably would ask to preserve and turn over all data from the USB, and would likely also go to the car company for any data it keeps.

Privacy

Now we get into the weeds of what is "private data" and what is "legally discoverable." In most

cases, within limits, a lawyer can obtain social media information from the other party, so it is not a stretch at all to presume that driver data (speed, camera information, question of lights, right of way) and video would be deemed discoverable by a judge.

How does one balance the right of an injured party to this very relevant information against someone else's right to privacy?

We could go back and forth on this point for pages and pages. Suffice it to say, this is the new frontier for attorneys on both sides of the matter. The courts will be busy as cars become more and more computerized.

Takeaways

- Newer vehicles amass a great amount of video and data.
- This data may be very useful in the event of a crash, going to prove or disprove speed, liability, right-of-way, and the like.
- Obtaining such saved data will be the new frontier of injury law.
- Courts will have to balance relevance and discoverability against privacy.

Stephen Hoffman, of Law Office of Stephen L. Hoffman, L.L.C., is a member of the Illinois State Bar Assoc. and Illinois Trial Lawyers Assoc. He also sits on the CBA Judicial Education Committee. He is listed as a SuperLawyer, has a 10.0 rating on Avvo, and is BBB A+ accredited. He is also an Executive Level Member of the Lincoln Square Ravenswood Chamber of Commerce.

'Kia Boy' burglary crew stole 'significant' amount of tobacco products, cash registers from Edgewater store

BY CWBCHICAGO

Prosecutors said an 18-year-old "Kia Boy" was part of a burglary crew that stole cash registers and a significant amount of tobacco products from a North Side convenience store.



Tyreese Green

On Dec. 21, Chicago cops saw a stolen Kia Sportage occupied by four men wearing ski masks traveling recklessly near 63rd and Halsted, according to a report the officers filed. The car also matched the description of a vehicle that 911 callers reported seeing in a nearby alley minutes earlier as three men broke cash registers.

So, the cops followed the Kia, which quickly stopped in the 6200 block of S. Union. All four occupants bailed out, police said, and the officers allegedly found 18-year-old Tyreese Green hiding under a porch with "multiple" packs of tobacco products.

"You were chasing me for no reason," Green allegedly told the cops before he "recanted his statement [and said] nobody was chasing him and he was just going to a friend's house," the report continued.

Back at the Kia, cops allegedly found a "large quantity of unopened tobacco products" similar to the items found with Green. The car's steering column was stripped, and police confirmed it had been stolen from its owner's driveway in the 1300 block of W. Chase.

The officers also learned that the car was at the scene of a burglary at Hollywood Deli, 5700 N. Sheridan, earlier that night, the report continued. Four men stole cash registers and tobacco products from the store.

Prosecutors charged Green with burglary, criminal trespass to a vehicle, and resisting police.

During an initial court appearance the next day, Judge William Fahy told Green he could go home to await trial after seeing a different judge who was handling a misdemeanor theft case that Green already had pending.

That judge, Martin Moltz, released Green after prosecutors dropped the theft case on Dec. 27. Green went home. He also failed to show up in court for the burglary case the next day, according to clerk of court records. Judge Michele Genskie issued a warrant for his arrest.

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New North Side migrant shelter residents charged with jumping on cars, hitting a driver with rocks and a crutch

BY CWBCHICAGO

Things are now going well for some of Chicago's "new neighbors" at the city's newly-opened migrant shelter at 1308 N. Elston, across from the Salt Shed.

Arturo Moron, 39, is one of the Venezuelan transplants calling the shelter home, according to his recent Chicago police arrest report.

In November, city officials opened three new migrant shelters in the West Loop and Near North Side, at 30 N. Racine Ave., 939 N. Lake St., and the one on Elston Ave. across from the Salt Shed music venue. The Elston Ave. shelter opened Nov. 18, and the city relocated migrants there,

pulling them out of the Near North 18th District police station.

City officials say as many as 1,000 people are staying there at a cost

to the city of \$21.80 per person per night, or as much as \$654,000 a month, according to reports in Block Club Chicago.

Cops arrested Moron for misdemeanor battery after he allegedly threw a rock at a 61-year-old suburban man's SUV, breaking the front windshield around 10:45



Mugshots of Arturo Moron (L) and Carlos Mujica-Garcia.

a.m. on Dec. 8 in the 1000 block of W. Division.

Moron threw another rock that hit the victim in the forehead when he rolled down his window

to yell about the shattered windshield, the report continued. It said Moron went on to strike the victim in the back of the head with a "half-broken crutch."

The victim got out of his SUV

and pinned Moron until the police arrived.

In another case, CPD officers arrested Carlos Mujica-Garcia, 30, around 4 p.m. Dec. 14. Two officers paying the Elston Ave. shelter a courtesy visit said they saw Garcia jumping on top of a vehicle and punching its windows in the traffic lanes of Elston Ave.

The cops said Garcia pushed one of them into the street and then fought with both officers, who had to call for backup, while telling one officer, "Te voy a matar." That means "I'm going to

RESIDENTS see p. 7

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Meeting of Shareholders of Central Savings will be held at the office of the Association, 1601 W. Belmont Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, on Thursday, January 18, 2024 at the hour of 3:00 P.M. for the purpose of electing directors whose term of office will expire, hearing reports, and acting on such matters as may legally come before the meeting.

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Paulita A. Pike, Secretary

Miscellaneous

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POLICE BEAT from p. 4

police districts are bucking the wider trend.

On the Far North Side's Rogers Park (24th) District, robbery reports are down 8% this year, but up 12% from 2019. The Lincoln (20th) District is enjoying a 19% drop in robbery reports this year. However, robberies are up 33% compared to 2019.

— Compiled by CWBChicago.com

Miscellaneous, cont.

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I think computer viruses should count as life. I think it says something about human nature that the only form of life we have created so far is purely destructive. We've created life in our own image. — Stephen Hawking

Lakeview Township Real Estate For Sale

Real Estate For Sale

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS COUNTY DEPARTMENT - CHANCERY DIVISION U.S. BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, AS INDENTURE TRUSTEE ON BEHALF OF AND WITH RESPECT TO AJAX MORTGAGE LOAN TRUST 2020-A, MORTGAGE-BACKED SECURITIES, SERIES 2020-A Plaintiff, -v- EDMUND C. MEADOWS, III, WENDY S. MEADOWS, 937 W. GEORGE CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION, STATE OF ILLINOIS, BMO HARRIS BANK, N.A. Defendants 2022 CH 03401 937 WEST GEORGE STREET, UNIT 1W CHICAGO, IL 60657 NOTICE OF SALE PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on January 4, 2023, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 10:30 AM on January 29, 2024, at The Judicial Sales Corporation, One South Wacker, 1st Floor Suite 35R, Chicago, IL, 60606, sell at a public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate: Commonly known as 937 WEST GEORGE STREET, UNIT 1W, CHICAGO, IL 60657 The real estate is improved with a condominium. The judgment amount was \$508,821.54. Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, in certified funds or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. The subject property is subject to general real estate

Real Estate For Sale

taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court. Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser will receive a Certificate of Sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale. The property will NOT be open for inspection and plaintiff makes no representation as to the condition of the property. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information. If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4). If this property is a condominium unit which is part of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1). IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW. You will need a photo identification issued by a government agency (driver's license, passport, etc.) in order to gain entry into our building and the foreclosure sale room in Cook County and the same identification for sales held at other county venues where The Judicial Sales Corporation conducts foreclosure sales. For information, contact JOHNSON, BLUMBERG & ASSOCIATES, LLC Plaintiff's Attorneys, 30 N.

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— Dean Acheson

The Dark Side of the Windy City



(L) Al Capone leaving court during trial for tax evasion, Chicago, c. 1931. *Image courtesy of Chicago Sun-Times/Chicago Daily News collection, CHM* (R) Jacob Loeb, Nathan Leopold Jr., Richard Loeb, and Nathan Leopold Sr. sitting at a long table in a room in Chicago, before Richard Loeb and Nathan Leopold Jr. went on trial for the murder of Bobby Franks, June 2, 1924. *Image courtesy of Chicago Daily News collection, CHM*

The newly available True Crimes LibGuide is a digital treasure trove to help people explore the Chicago History Museum's holdings on the enigmatic world of Chicago's criminal underworld.

BY AYAH ELKOSSEI
Chicago History Museum

Chicago, a city renowned for its architectural marvels and cultural richness, has a darker side to its history—one that unfolds through infamous true crime cases. Ayah Elkossei of the Chicago History Museum's [CHM] Abakanowicz Research Center [ARC] writes about the abundant resources for those fascinated by the city's criminal past.

The LibGuide has five categories, which will guide users through the various entry points into true crime research. Starting with a list of Specific Cases, it delves into notorious trials that have left an indelible mark on Chicago's history. From the chilling tales of notorious mobster Al Capone and serial killers, such as John Wayne Gacy, to the complex tapestry of political

scandals, this section not only captures the attention of true crime enthusiasts but also serves as a valuable resource for those venturing into the depths of historical research methods.

One of the highlights in this category is the Chicago History Museum's extensive material on the infamous duo, Leopold and Loeb.

In the Archives and Manuscripts section, people can explore primary sources such as firsthand accounts and historical documents. It is a journey beyond the headlines, providing a nuanced perspective that goes beyond conventional narratives.

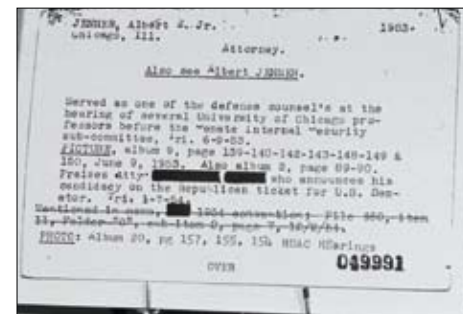
One of our most popular (and heavily restricted) collections is featured in this section, that of the Chicago Police Department's Red Squad. This section also highlights several of CHM's collections that reveal insights into unfair murder investigations and judicial misconduct, shedding light on the inequities within the justice system.

The next category features essential Published Materials and provides a curated list of books and published materials on various figures and topics. These materi-

als offer not only in-depth insights but also serve as guideposts, pointing researchers toward other relevant sources and avenues of exploration. This section isn't just books. There are some unique and unconventional materials here such as a scrapbook of miscellaneous Chicago crime stories, cut from 1930s-era detective magazines.

For those who prefer a strictly visual approach, the category on Image Research offers access to more than 370,000 digital images via CHM images. Keyword searching will bring up a great deal of material relating to Chicago crime. These images, capturing crime scenes and events that de-

fining Chicago's past, provide a unique and evocative perspective for researchers. Delving into the Museum's photo morgue collections, including the Chicago Sun-Times and Chicago Daily News, allows access to an additional 5 million images plus, creat-



Example of a Red Squad record at a press conference held by the Representatives of the Businessmen for the Public Interest regarding the Red Squad at the Executive House Hotel, 71 E. Wacker Dr., Chicago, January 5, 1977. Twenty-four Chicagoans claim they were watched by the Red Squad for years and filed a lawsuit that seeks to end the police surveillance. *Image courtesy of Chicago Sun-Times collection, CHM*

ing a visual tapestry that recounts criminal activity in the city's past.

Lastly, the LibGuide highlights online and other local resources, directing researchers to other institutions in the Chicago area focusing on crime and criminal justice. It is an invitation to further explore beyond CHM's offerings.

The goal is that this resource will help researchers, students, and true crime enthusiasts alike explore Chicago's enigmatic criminal narratives.

RESIDENTS from p. 5

kill you," according to the translation provided in Garcia's arrest report.

One of the officers suffered a broken hand during the struggle with Garcia, the report said.

He's charged with felony aggravated battery of a peace officer, reckless conduct, and resisting police. Judge Maryam Ahmad released him from custody the next day. According to court records, a warrant is now out for his arrest because he failed to show up for his first court date on Dec. 21.

Angela Materano, 21, was arrested at

Macy's, 111 N. State, on Dec. 16. Store security officers allegedly saw her take a bunch of clothing into a dressing room and then walk out of the store with the items concealed in a plastic bag.

She was careful to wrap all of the shoplifting sensor tags with aluminum foil before she walked out the door with \$712.50 worth of merchandise, according to her arrest report.

Prosecutors charged her with felony retail theft. Like Garcia, she didn't attend her first court date on Dec. 22. The judge decided to notify her of her oversight by sending a postcard rather than issuing an arrest warrant, according to court records.



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vs.
AARON SCOTT; 1209 NORTH STATE STREET CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NONRECORD CLAIMANTS; Defendants,
23 CH 5112
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PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above entitled cause Intercountry Judicial Sales Corporation will on Monday, January 29, 2024 at the hour of 11 a.m. in their office at 120 West Madison Street, Suite 718A, Chicago, Illinois, sell at public auction to the highest bidder for cash, as set forth below, the following described mortgaged real estate:
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vs.
Symmetry Tower/Chicago Project Owner, LLC, et. al
Defendant(s)
Case Number: 2019 CH 06588
Sheriff No.: 240001
Pursuant to a Judgment made and entered by said Court in the above entitled cause, Thomas J. Dart, Sheriff of Cook County, Illinois, will on January 30, 2024, at 1:00 P.M., in Room LL06 of the Richard J. Daley Center, 50 West Washington Street, Chicago, Illinois, sell at public auction the following described premises and real estate mentioned in said Judgment:
Legal Description:
PIN(s): 17-10-101-008; 17-10-101-009; 17-10-101-010; 17-10-101-011; and 17-10-101-012
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Improvements: non-residential property consisting

Real Estate For Sale

of a three-car garage with storage above on Wabash (739 N. Wabash); a small parking lot on Wabash (737 N. Wabash); a three-flat with restaurant space (42 East Superior); multi-level (3) commercial space (44 East Superior) and multi-level mixed use space (46 East Superior)
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Upcoming extended closure of Ardmore Ave.

The CTA is planning to enact extended closures of W. Ardmore between N. Broadway and N. Winthrop starting Monday, Jan. 8 and running through Friday, March 1.

The current closure of Ardmore will extend east to N. Winthrop and will remain closed 24/7, including Sundays. During work hours Monday through Saturday, the closure on Ardmore will be extended west to Broadway.

CTA contractor Walsh-Fluor needs this closure to begin assembly of the Windy City Gantry, a piece of construction equipment used to build the new Red and Purple line track bridge.

After they assemble the gantry equipment, precast bridge segments will be delivered to Ardmore. Once sections are completed, the gantry assembly and precast bridge segment delivery relocates, which will require intermittent daily street closures along the Red Line tracks. Walsh-Fluor will reopen the street outside of working hours, which are typically 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Those who have trouble traveling through the area via alleyways during this period may contact Carson Poole at cpoole@walshgroup, or call 331-303-2499.

Christmas tree recycling

The City and Chicago Park District, will co-host their annual Holiday Tree Recycling Program starting Jan. 6, running through Jan. 20 at 27 parks across the city.

Christmas trees collected at recycling events are turned into mulch rather than sending them to landfills. Only live/natural trees without flocking are accepted.

Garlands and wreaths are not accepted. Because the trees are turned into mulch, all tinsel, ornaments, lights, and stands must be removed. In 2023, over 20,000 trees were collected through these events, diverting about 730,000 pounds of waste from local landfills.

The recycling locations on the North Side include one at Cannon Dr. at Fullerton Ave. (East side of Cannon Dr.); Clark Park, 3400 N. Rockwell St.; Grant Park, 900 S. Columbus Dr.; Margate Park, 4921 N. Marine Dr.; North Park Village, 5801 N. Pulaski Rd.; Walsh Park, 1722 N. Ashland Ave., and Warren Park, 6601 N. Western Ave.

Four North Side locations will also have free mulch available to residents on a first-come, first-served basis, starting Monday, Jan. 8: Lincoln Park, Margate Park, North Park Village, and Warren Park.

RECKONING from p. 1

approved by the CTA Board on Nov. 15, 2023, and was approved by the Regional Transportation Board on Dec. 14, 2023.

The budget is an 11.7% (\$210 million) increase from the previous \$1.8 billion budget. Approximately 68.1% of the budget, or \$1.4 billion, is earmarked for personnel-related expenses.

The next largest individual line item is for contractual services, at \$191 million. The 37.2%, or \$51.8 million increase in this line item is driven primarily by costs associated with a Ventra card upgrade, inflation and normal cost escalations. A 13.4%, or \$15.4 million, increase for materials is driven by inflationary pressures on costs for goods and parts as well as expenses for cleaning supplies and protective equipment for employees.

There is a projected operating budget gap of \$472.5 million that will be covered by federal relief funds.

Fare and pass revenue from CTA bus and train customers is the largest source of sys-

tem generated revenues, with \$345.1 million, or nearly 81.0% of the total amount of \$427.3 million budgeted in FY2024. Smaller amounts will come from advertising, concessions, contributions from the City of Chicago and Cook County and other revenues.

Under PART, the CTA is required to fund 50% of its expenses through system generated revenues.

However, the Illinois General Assembly reduced the recovery ratio from 2021 through 2026 to help compensate for reduced fare and pass revenues due to sharp drops in ridership resulting from the pandemic. Between 2023 and 2026, the recovery ratio has been set at 42.0%, inclusive of federal relief funds and budget balancing actions.

Due to a variety of factors, such as work-at-home trends, crime and security concerns, the CTA just isn't drawing enough riders. The American Public Transportation Assoc. has the data through the third quarter of 2023. The good news is that ridership is up over last year. Total CTA

rides are up about 15% over the same period last year. And Metra's total rides were up 37% for 2023.

However, total rides are still down 40% for the CTA compared to the same period for 2019, the last pre-COVID year. Metra is down 53%.

That leaves the CTA depending more on public funding through the RTA. These funds include revenue from the regional sales tax authorized for transit in northeastern Illinois as well as real estate transfer tax revenues and public transportation funds.

Chicago's mass transit problems are part of what's now widely called the urban "doom loop." That's the vicious cycle centered mostly on empty offices. Thanks to work-from-home and high crime, the actual occupancy of Chicago's offices hovers at only a bit over 50%.

Empty offices mean lower valuations and lower property tax revenues.

Likewise for mass transit, work-from-home and crime mean fewer riders and less revenue. That all results in higher taxes for others and worse city services, further feeding the doom loop.

Federal COVID relief money hid mass transit's crisis, but that money is running

out. The resulting challenge for Chicago and many other cities dependent on public transportation will be enormous.

In FY2024 public funding will provide nearly \$1.1 billion, an increase of 3.2% from the prior year.

The CTA has received a total of over \$2 billion in federal bail out cash since 2020 that it has used to balance its operating budgets. The CTA's annual deficits during this period have been caused by declines in ridership revenue, as well as increased expenses.

As of July 2023, the CTA had used \$1.1 billion of these funds. The remaining amounts will be used to cover budget gaps for this year and next.

These projected gaps will rise from \$472.5 million in the upcoming fiscal year to \$576.9 million in FY2026 after the federal relief funds are exhausted in FY2025.

That means if ridership continues to be depressed, the CTA will be required to seek additional revenue sources, impose severe service cuts or utilize some combination of both strategies to balance its budget in that year and each succeeding year going forward.

ARRESTED from p. 1

cars with a broom in the 6700 block of N. Clark.

Finally, after all that, Judge William Fahy ordered Coronel to be detained for violating pretrial release conditions.

In the end, prosecutors dropped all of the cases except for the battery charges he received for slapping the women's buttocks. Judge Donald Panarese gave him 120 days for that on Nov. 13, and, after getting credit for good behavior, Coronel was released earlier this month.

He already has three cases pending: He was charged with battery on Dec. 21 for allegedly hitting a 14-year-old boy with a rake near the 7000 block of N. Clark. He walked out of the police station less than six hours later.

The next morning, he was arrested for reckless conduct after witnesses said he ran in and out of traffic and placed a shopping cart, milk crates, and hand tools in the traffic lanes of the 7300 block of N. Clark. Judge Charles Beach released him from custody the next day.

He got arrested again on Tuesday afternoon. Prosecutors say he walked into McDonald's, 6740 N. Clark, yelling and screaming and throwing trays on the floor. Then, according to the allegations, he went behind the counter and threw a bottle at the manager.

Prosecutors asked Judge Kelly McCarthy to keep Coronel in custody last Thursday because he keeps committing new crimes. She said no. When we checked last evening, he had not been arrested again.



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