



DATA ■ ANALYSIS ■ SOLUTIONS
INNOVATION



Listening to what the riders say

CHALLENGE

The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) is the second largest of its kind in the United States, operating eight train lines and 160 bus routes and with annual ridership of nearly 500 million in 2006. The CTA has seen increases in ridership in eight of the last nine years.



RSG's transit onboard OD study collected ridership data on each of the CTA's eight train lines and 160 bus routes. The analysis included a sophisticated multidimensional weighting structure, which gave the CTA the information necessary to calibrate its transit model to current and observed ridership behavior.

INITIATIVE

The CTA contracted with RSG in 2007 to conduct a major origin-destination (OD) study to evaluate traveler patterns and rider usage of all CTA train lines and bus routes across the entire CTA system. The study included collection of origin, destination, and transfers on all eight train lines and all 160 bus routes. For the study we:

- Designed the OD survey to identify the travel patterns of riders on all of CTA's train lines and bus routes. Field data for this study were collected on weekdays over an eight-week period, sampling every train line and every bus route, with nearly 150,000 surveys distributed.
- Obtained roughly 34,000 onboard hand-back or mail-back paper survey responses. All records were geocoded, and the dataset was weighted to known ridership counts to ensure unbiased results.

RESULTS

The logistically challenging fieldwork was implemented successfully and within budget. This study provided CTA with updated knowledge about the use of all its facilities, train lines, and bus routes; informing myriad planning and policy decisions. With these data the CTA now better understands the core baseline questions that are key to any planning or policy decisions and can apply for New Starts funding that meets and exceeds the rigorous data collection criteria set by the U.S. Federal Transit Administration.

Contact Information

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