

Case Study Modernizing Fare Collection at Scale

Chicago Transit Authority and the
FareGo FB|30 Farebox System

Execution

In 2024, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), operator of the nation's second-largest public transportation system, launched an ambitious fare collection modernization program. Together with Scheidt & Bachmann, the CTA equipped buses with over 2,000 FareGo FB|30 fareboxes in just 49 working weeks. The rollout, carried out between May 2024 to April 2025 was remarkable for the speed and precision with which such a large-scale system was integrated into daily operations.

The deployment was preceded by a three-month pilot that demonstrated the reliability and robustness of the FareGo FB|30 under real-world conditions in Chicago's high-volume, high-complexity environment, with buses making nearly 18,500 trips a day.

Following the pilot's success, installation moved quickly and systematically across the fleet, with Scheidt & Bachmann's local Chicago team coordinating closely with the CTA to minimize disruption.

This local approach was central to the project's success. By maintaining a permanent presence in Chicago, Scheidt & Bachmann could provide fast support and direct communication throughout the deployment.

The project's rapid completion time – despite the scale of the project – reflects not only the efficiency of the FareGo FB|30 System but also the strength of the collaboration between the CTA and Scheidt & Bachmann. From the earliest planning sessions to the final installations, both teams worked side by side, ensuring that operational needs were met without compromising service.

See how a large-scale farebox deployment could work for your fleet. Start the conversation!

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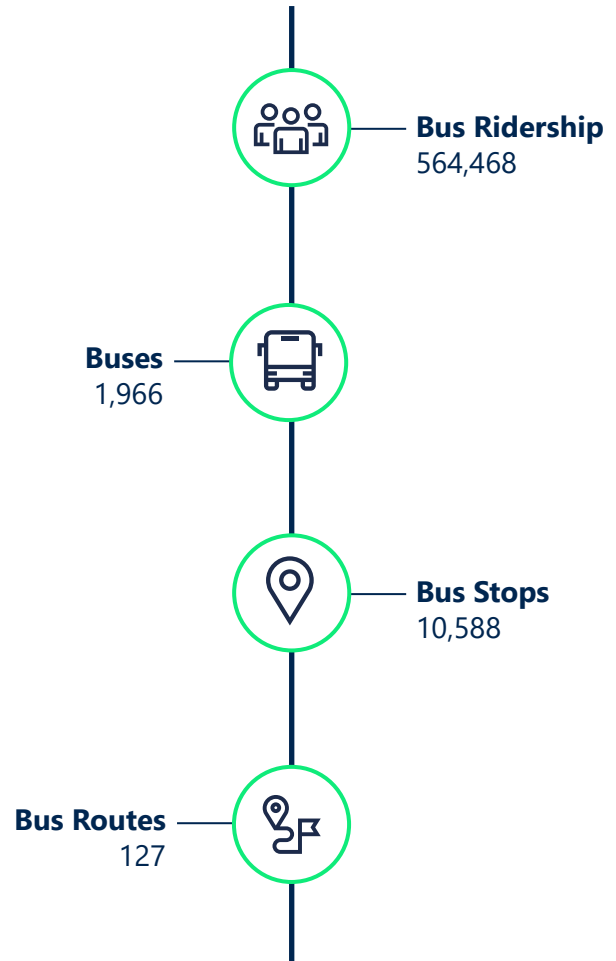
Challenge

The CTA had been facing a series of challenges that made this upgrade particularly urgent. The system’s aging farebox hardware had become increasingly unreliable and costly to maintain due to outdated parts and frequent breakdowns, while high passenger volumes demanded faster and more dependable boarding processes to prevent delays cascading across the network that facilitates more than half a million daily bus boardings.

Highly manual, time-consuming reconciliation processes and a lack of modern diagnostic-and-operational data further strained operations and limited the CTA’s ability to gain meaningful insights into fare collection data. At the same time, its legacy technology lacked the scalability and integration capabilities required to support the growing demand for new technology, like account-based ticketing or mobile integration.

The CTA operates nearly 2,000 buses across 127 routes and needed a durable, future-proof solution that could be deployed quickly without disrupting service. Meeting these requirements in an agency of CTA’s size – covering 3.4 million people across Chicago – required not only proven technology, backed by Scheidt & Bachmann’s successful system deployments with agencies such as Valley Metro and MBTA, but also a trusted partner able to deliver, support, and adapt in real time.

Chicago Transit Authority by the numbers



Solution

Scheidt & Bachmann's FareGo FB|30 farebox offered the comprehensive solution the CTA was seeking. Built for speed, durability and adaptability, the farebox integrated seamlessly within the CTA's existing bus fleet, back-office systems and broader revenue account workflows. Its design supported secure vaulting processes, improved reconciliation and real-time system health monitoring, while its intuitive interface made adoption straightforward for the CTA staff.

The speed of deployment was unprecedented. In less than a year, over 2,000 fareboxes were installed, enabling the CTA to modernize fare collection without major service disruptions. As Elvis Rodriguez, Director of Client Success from Scheidt & Bachman USA, Inc. highlights:

"This project highlights what can be achieved through close coordination and shared execution at every level, reflecting our approach of working closely with the customer throughout the entire project lifecycle. Completing more than 2,000 fare-

box installations in under a year reflects the coordination required from early planning through system-wide deployment."

The new system's benefits were immediately noticeable. Boarding became faster, reducing dwell times and improving CTA's overall schedule consistency. Reliability increased significantly, with fewer maintenance interventions and stronger uptime. Furthermore, revenue handling was streamlined through more efficient reconciliation and vaulting processes, with CTA staff never coming into direct physical contact with cash, reducing the complexity of cash management and providing them with real-time operational data to guide decision-making.

The local presence of Scheidt & Bachmann's Chicago office ensured that support was never far away, creating a collaborative atmosphere that reassured the CTA throughout the rollout. The ability to respond quickly, share expertise and adapt to on-the-ground challenges was a decisive factor in meeting the ambitious timeline.

"This project shows what is possible when proven technology is paired with a boots-on-the-ground approach. Installing more than 2,000 fareboxes in under a year demonstrates our commitment to delivering for one of North America's largest transit agencies."

Joseph Mastro Senior Manager Fare Systems
at Chicago Transit Authority



Solution

As the rollout now transitions from installation to ongoing daily operations, Scheidt & Bachmann's focus turns to long-term service and support. This next phase ensures that the CTA continues to benefit from reliable, efficient fare collection without disruption. With a dedicated local team remaining in Chicago, Scheidt & Bachmann continues to deliver rapid response to maintenance needs, provide ongoing training and knowledge transfer and continuously monitor and update the system for maximum reliability.

Ultimately, by implementing Scheidt & Bachmann's system, the Chicago Transit Authority not only addressed the shortcomings of its legacy fareboxes but also positioned itself for the future. With the

FareGo FB|30 farebox, the agency has laid the foundation for faster, scalable and more reliable fare collection system. The project demonstrates how a combination of proven technology, close collaboration and local support can transform fare collection at scale, enabling one of North America's largest transit agencies to deliver better service today while being prepared for the needs of the future.

Explore the FareGo Farebox System and how it supports large, complex transit systems.

[View the FareGo Farebox System](#)





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