

CTA #4439



Type: Rapid Transit Car

Built: 1924

Modernized in 1952

Seats: 52

Length – 48' 6"

Width – 8' 11"

Height – 13' 3"

Weight – 76,800 lbs.



Since late 1892, the Chicago "L" (short for "elevated") metro system has shaped the Windy City. By the early 1900s, lines fanned out in all directions, transporting millions of people to and from work, shopping, and recreation. These lines were most influential, connecting the downtown and other transit hubs with neighborhoods and outlying areas.

At first, the lines were owned by several different companies, with a loop of track circling the downtown that all of the companies shared. The wooden interurban and rapid transit cars would circle the loop before heading back on their respective routes. Eventually, the decision was made to bring the systems together, forming the Chicago Rapid Transit Company, more commonly known as the CRT.

The company was formed in the early 1920s, and quickly sought to renew the look and feel of the city's transit system. As America sped through the second industrial revolution, the wooden cars were soon being seen as old and dilapidated. Over 400 of the new all-steel 4000 series were ordered in two batches of slightly different designs.

The first order of cars closely resembled the new subway cars in New York. Car 4439 was part of the more advanced second-generation model of cars. These cars were more like interurban cars, even being equipped with trolley poles so that they could operate on outlying "L" lines and nearby interurban lines.



Roger Puta photos



When new, the 4000s were placed into service on the north-south side main line. In 1947, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) took control of the "L" and other public transit systems in the city. They ordered more modern cars and the 4000s were upgraded, receiving new door controls and exteriors. However, they were eventually phased out and retired in 1973.

Car 4439 was one of several preserved and moved among several transit and railroad museums. The car found its way to the East Troy Railroad Museum in 2020, and a complete restoration was completed in 2022. ETRM currently has three fully operational 4000s, two in as-delivered condition, and 4439, which has been restored to its 1950s appearance.

