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## \$50B price tag to fix aging rail transit in Chicago, 6 other cities

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(AP) — More than one-third of the trains, equipment and facilities of the nation's seven largest rail transit agencies are near the end of their useful life or past that point, the government said Thursday. Many have components that are defective or may be critically damaged.

A report by the Federal Transit Administration estimates it will cost \$50 billion to bring the rail systems in Chicago, Boston, New York, New Jersey, San Francisco, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., into good repair and \$5.9 billion a year to maintain them.

Those seven systems carry 80 percent of the nation's rail transit passengers, or more than 3 billion passenger trips a year. They also include some of the oldest subways and commuter railroads. Some of their facilities date back more than a century.

"In a period of rising congestion and fuel prices, these services and the infrastructure and rolling stock that support them, are critical to the transportation needs and quality of life of the communities they serve," the report said.

"At the same time, this infrastructure is aging and the level of reinvestment appears insufficient to address a growing backlog of deferred investment needs," the report said.

Sen. Richard Durbin, D-Ill., one of 11 senators who requested the report, said older transit systems have received a declining share of federal rail transit aid as newer systems have come online. In 1993, the seven largest rail transit systems received 90 percent of federal modernization funds, compared with 70 percent today.

The study rated 8 percent of the assets of the seven rail transit agencies as in poor condition because they have outlived their useful life and are in need of immediate repair and replacement and may have critically damaged parts. An additional 27 percent were rated in marginal condition because they are near or past their useful life and may have defective or deteriorated components, requiring increasing maintenance.

Excluding the seven large system, less than 20 percent of the assets of rail transit systems nationally are in poor or marginal condition, the study said.

The study comes as Congress is gearing up to overhaul highway and transit programs over the next six years through soon-to-be-introduced legislation that some lawmakers estimated will seek about a half trillion dollars.