



DUPAGE MAYORS AND MANAGERS CONFERENCE

an association of municipalities representing over 1,000,000 people

1220 Oak Brook Road
Oak Brook, Illinois 60523-2203
(630) 571-0480 Fax: (630) 571-0484
www.dmmc-cog.org

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Contact: Tam Kutzmark
Transportation and Planning Director
(630) 571-0480, ext. 228

DuPAGE COMMUNITIES ONE STEP CLOSER TO LOCAL BUS SERVICE

The DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference (DMMC), in cooperation with DuPage County, are gearing up to implement transit projects of the DuPage Area Transit Plan in anticipation of a resolution to the transit crisis in Springfield. High on the Conference's list of priorities is circulator service, community-based, locally-oriented bus transit services that bridge the gap between the larger bus or train routes and residential, commercial, or workplace destinations.

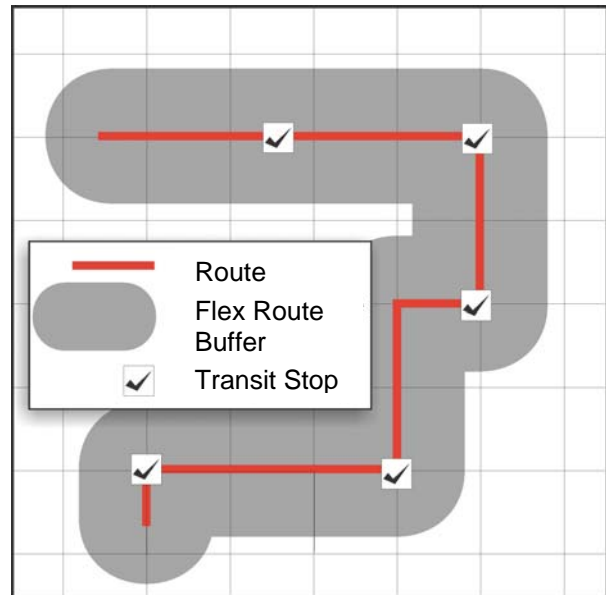
For the past two years, the Conference has worked with municipalities, residents, businesses, and potential riders to develop circulator plans for several DuPage communities. The Villages of Addison, Downers Grove, and Lombard and the City of Wheaton were selected as the first communities for design of the new services. Alternative ideas for circulator services were developed based on a market analysis and input obtained through community surveys, focus groups and public meetings.

Each community presented the draft service alternatives and invited feedback from residents, employees and other travelers in the community. The final design of the circulator service, what is referred to as the *preferred alternative*, was selected based on local preferences.

Each service design reflects the unique needs of the community. The *preferred alternative* for the Addison Circulator would provide service to destinations along and near Lake Street and link to the Lombard Metra Station. The Downers Grove Circulator would coordinate with and enhance existing service provided through the Grove Commuter Service. The Lombard Circulator would provide additional north-south service and increase access to the Butterfield Road corridor. The Wheaton Circulator would enhance existing bus service to the DuPage County Government Center with greater frequencies and expanded operating times and provide access to Central DuPage Hospital and Marionjoy Rehabilitation Center. In addition, these

services are planned to link with each other through transfer points at Lombard Metra Station and Yorktown Center.

These routes would also be *flex routes*, a cost-effective innovation in local service, also known as route-deviation service. Flex route transit vehicles follow a designated route, but leave the route to serve destinations within a specified area surrounding the route based on a scheduled request to a central dispatcher. The specified area is called a *flex-route buffer* and covers a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile area long the route (see graphic). The transit vehicles then return to the designated route to ensure that all stops along the route are served. The passengers on the bus may have a slightly longer travel time than for traditional fixed-route service, and the arrival or departure time at any stop may vary by five minutes.



The *preferred alternative* outlines specifications for vehicle type, stop locations, hours of operation, headways, staffing requirements, and standards for the type of service. A financial plan outlines fares, capital/operating costs, and existing and potential revenue sources. Recommendations are also made for an organizational and operating structure.

The next step for each community is to develop an implementation strategy that details how to turn each *preferred alternative* into an actual local bus service. DMMC will continue to work with each community. Important considerations in this phase are how to fund, operate, market, and monitor the service. This work is supported by a grant from the Regional Transportation Authority and the Illinois Department of Transportation.

More detailed information, including a copy of the detailed service plans, is available on the project website at www.GetaroundDuPage.org.

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Additional Background

Founded in 1962, the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference is a council of 34 municipalities representing over 1,000,000 people. A coalition of cities and villages, the Conference offers the municipal perspective on local, regional, state, and national issues. It also serves its members and the region by fostering intergovernmental cooperation. The Conference is a non-profit organization supported by membership dues and grants.

The *DuPage Area Transit Plan* was adopted in 2002 by the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference and the DuPage County Board. It is the culmination of a process that actively involved the citizens of the DuPage County area, the 35 member communities of the Conference (DMMC), DuPage County Board members and staff, regional transit providers and Conference staff. Drawing from an extensive information base – including a transit inventory was developed, high levels of participation to establish transit objectives and mobility needs, a market assessment to analyze demographic characteristics and travel patterns in the study area, and cost effectiveness data – the Transit Plan recommends three “layers” of transit service:

- ❖ **-Circulators:** local bus services that provide trips within a community or transfer opportunities to other services (major bus routes or Metra trains)
- ❖ **-Connectors:** bus services that run north-south or east-west on major arterial streets
- ❖ **-Bus Rapid Transit (BRT):** a service that provide high-speed connections between Naperville, Oak Brook, O’Hare, and Schaumburg

Also, the Transit Plan recommends many transit-supportive features, such as bus shelters, park-and-rides, and Transit Oriented Development land use.

RTA’s Regional Technical Assistance Program (RTAP) was created to help communities with preliminary transit planning. RTAP’s goal is to initiate activities that result in a more comprehensive transit system. Through RTAP, RTA accepts applications from communities and community groups for projects that support better access to transit services and increased transit usage, resulting in a consolidated program of projects that benefit both local communities and the RTA transit system.

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