

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2002, the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference (DMMC), representing the 36 cities and villages within DuPage County, approved the *DuPage Area Transit Plan*. This plan developed a comprehensive public transit network for DuPage County and established short-term, medium-term, and long-term implementation goals through the year 2020. In 2008, the *DuPage Area Transit Plan Update* was commissioned to evaluate the progress of the plan and provide further guidance for the future. Due to federal, state and local funding constraints following the 2008 recession as well as a policy shift away from new service implementation and toward obtaining a state of good repair, The *DuPage Area Transit Plan Update* is focused on the evaluation of existing transit service in DuPage County and near-term improvements that are already under way. Long-term projects are recognized but are not evaluated due to likely funding constraints - evaluation is thus deferred to the individual project studies.

The *DuPage Area Transit Plan Update* was made possible due to the participation and input of the following organizations:

- The County of DuPage
- The DuPage Mayors & Managers Conference
- Pace Suburban Bus Service
- Metra
- The Regional Transportation Authority of Northeastern Illinois

Transit Network Overview

The transit network in DuPage County includes 26 stations on three commuter rail lines and more than 60 bus routes. Commuter rail service is provided by Metra, which operates one of the three rail lines serving the county (the Milwaukee District – West Line), while the other two are operated by BNSF Railway and Union Pacific Railroad under contract with Metra. Fixed route bus service in the county is provided by Pace Bus, with operations provided either directly by Pace or contracted.

In addition to bus routes and commuter rail lines, DuPage County is also host to a variety of demand response services – transit service that does not operate on a fixed route or schedule, but instead operates based on customer requests. Demand response services are used in low-density areas to provide connectivity to fixed route and rail services, as well as to provide mobility to low-income, disabled, and elderly residents and those with no other transit access. These services are provided by Pace (mostly operated by Veolia Transportation) with ADA complementary paratransit available throughout much of the county, as well as numerous dial-a-ride services funded by local jurisdictions, some of which are available to the general public (part of the Ride DuPage program).

Ridership Change and New Services Implemented Since 2002

Overall, ridership on Metra's rail network increased between 2002 and 2009 by 8 percent, from approximately 76.8 million to 83.1 million annual trips. Meanwhile, ridership in Pace's bus services increased by approximately one percent, from 34.8 million trips in 2002 to 35.1 million trips in 2009. A number of new services were implemented in DuPage County following the completion of the *DuPage Area Transit Plan* in 2002. These new services were in response to a combination of factors, including the *DuPage Area Transit Plan* and North Central DuPage Initiative, Pace's Fox Valley/Southwest DuPage Restructuring Initiative, and Pace's own plans to develop an ART and Suburban Express Bus network. These new services included:

- *DuPage Area Transit Plan* services including the new Route 714 and expanded routes 711, 715, and 747. The *North Central DuPage Initiative* also included eliminating 653, 706, 707, 711, 712, and 713, and realigning 654 and 657. Eliminated routes were generally covered by the new services.
- The *Fox Valley/Southwest DuPage Initiative* included the re-alignment of Routes 530 and 535. Route 530, operating between Naperville and Aurora, was extended to western Aurora, absorbing Route 526, and streamlined between Aurora and Naperville. Formerly alternating trips operated to Naperville; now all trips serve Naperville. Route 535 was added connecting the Route 59 Metra Rail station, the improved Route 530, and the Fox Valley shopping area.

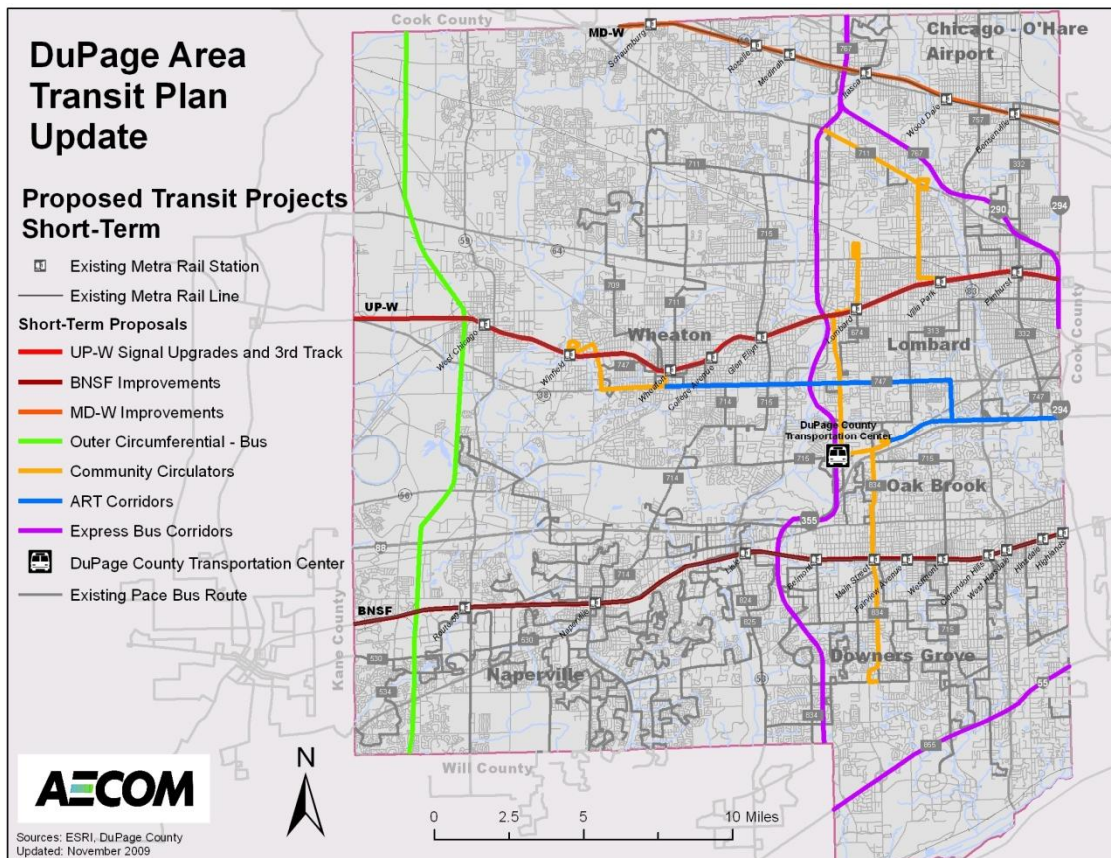
Demographic Change

DuPage County is growing in terms of both residents and employment, and is projected to continue growing through 2030 and beyond. Located 14 miles west of the Chicago Loop, DuPage County is home to over 916,000 residents (2010 US Census) and 632,000 jobs (2008 estimate). The 333 square-mile county has an average density of 2,750 persons per square mile (2010 US Census). The most populous township in DuPage County in all years was Downers Grove, followed by York, showing generally larger populations along the southeastern edge of the county. The northwestern townships of Wayne and Winfield have remained the least populous. Population densities were greatest in York, Lisle, and Milton Townships, representing the southeastern and central portions of the county (Downers Grove ranks fourth), and the least in Wayne and Winfield.

Near-Term Transit Proposals

Near-term proposals for transit service in DuPage County are defined in the *DuPage Area Transit Plan Update* as those for the period spanning 2011 through 2016. Given the tight fiscal constraints faced by the RTA at present, near-term expansion is limited to those projects already underway for the county. These projects include signal upgrades and installation of a third track on a portion of the Union Pacific–West Line, which will allow for passenger service upgrades; as well as development of a few Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (ART) routes, express bus corridors, and community circulators over the next five years. In the near-term, proposals include those projects already underway; funding limitations preclude the likelihood of implementing additional new services beyond those listed here.

Proposed Near-Term Transit Projects



Projects include:

- Upgrades to UP-W service – Addition of a third track from Geneva to West Chicago and from Melrose Park to River Forest, signal upgrades from Geneva to River Forest and upgrade and grade separation of the A-2 crossing in Chicago between the UP-W Line and the MD-N, MD-W, NCS and Amtrak services.
<http://metraconnects.metrarail.com/upw.php>

- Cermak ART – Arterial Bus Rapid Transit along 22nd Street/Cermak Road and Butterfield Road from the 54th Street/Cermak Road CTA Pink Line station to I-355. <http://www.rtams.org/rtams/rtpProject.jsp?id=6>
- IL-38 ART (Roosevelt Road) – Current bus service (Route 747) operates between Wheaton and the CTA Blue Line in Forest Park. Improvements have been made along the eastern portion of the route on Roosevelt Road with additional incremental improvements scheduled for the corridor including service to the new Elmhurst Memorial Hospital.
- I-355 Corridor, Elgin-O’Hare Corridor and South Suburbs-O’Hare – Express bus service between Bolingbrook and Schaumburg via I-355, express bus service between Elgin and O’Hare International Airport via I-90, and express bus service between Joliet and O’Hare International Airport via I-355. <http://www.elginohare-westbypass.org>
- I-55 Bus on Shoulder Demonstration – Priority treatment for express bus service along I-55, including DuPage County segment from I-355 to County Line Road.
- I-90 Jane Addams Memorial Tollway – Corridor improvements are planned and coordinated with Illinois Tollway Managed lanes/widening project beginning in 2012. A base level of express bus service improvements will operate during the construction period with service expansion coordinated with the completion of the project. CMAQ corridor expansion project funded pending 2012-16 program approval for park-and-ride facilities, transit advantage improvements, express bus and local distribution serving the Randall Rd and Rosemont markets.
- Community circulators in Addison, Downers Grove, Lombard and Wheaton as proposed in the 2002 *DuPage Area Transit Plan*. <http://www.getarounddupage.org/>
- DuPage County Transportation Center at I-88/I-355. <http://www.pacebus.com>

In addition to simply providing service, numerous other features and amenities contribute to the smooth operation of a transit system as well as the overall passenger experience. These features were covered in the 2002 *DuPage Area Transit Plan* and include:

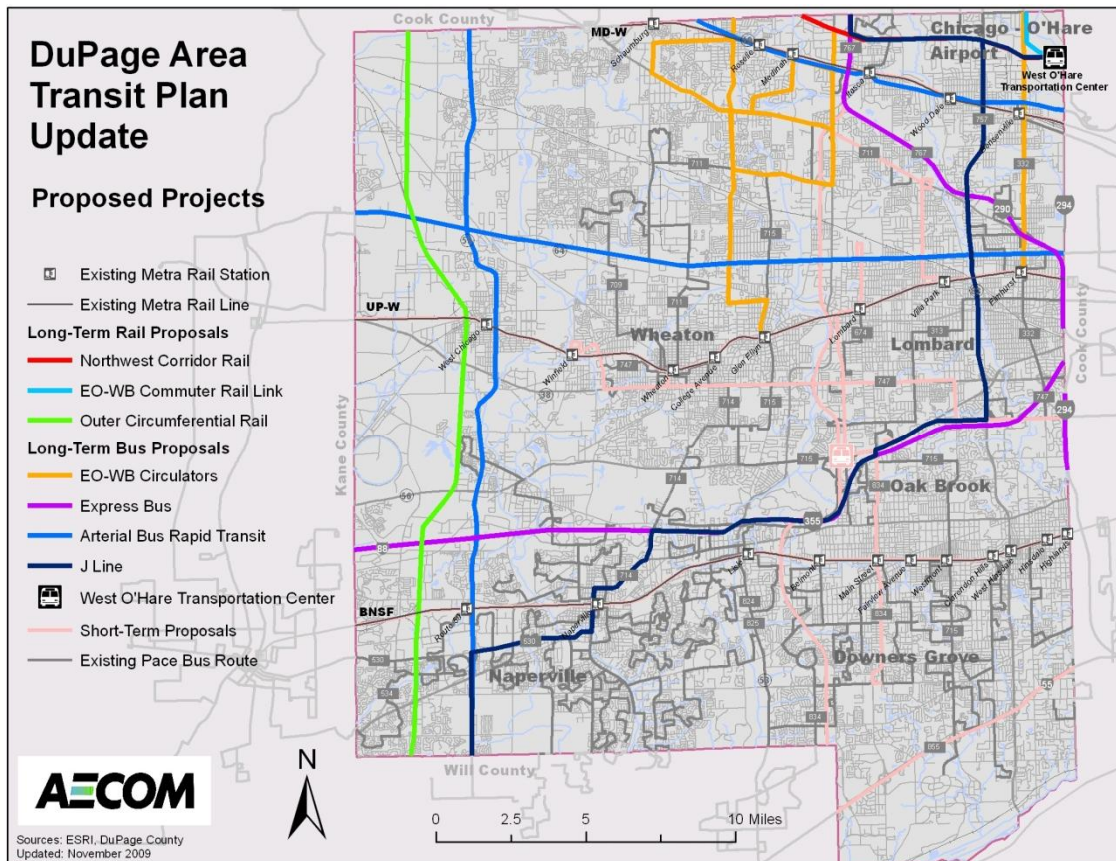
- Integration with regional transit services
- Transit centers and stations
- Transit stops
- Park-and-ride
- Pedestrian facilities/environment
- System information
- Fares
- Safety/security
- Marketing
- Transit supportive land use

Long-Term Transit Proposals

Long-range proposals for transit service in DuPage County are defined as those projects planned for the years 2016 through 2030. Given the fiscal constraints at the federal, state and local levels expansion of transit service in DuPage is likely to be limited to those projects already underway. Thus all proposals included in this document are already in the works through RTA- or IDOT-sponsored projects across the region. These projects include development of commuter rail corridors (STAR Line), the high speed line ("J" Line) proposed in the 2002 *DuPage Area Transit Plan*, several Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (ART) routes, express bus corridors, and several facilities in conjunction with the Elgin O'Hare-West Bypass project.

As these projects are already underway and are planned for the long-range, it is not possible to predict capital or operating costs or determine ridership projects for individual studies – as each study progresses, changes to the scope of proposals contribute to constant changes in cost or ridership projections. Therefore, this document does not include details on potential costs (capital or operating) or ridership. To obtain the latest information available for specific projects, it is best to consult the individual project websites, the RTA's website (www.rtachicago.com), or RTAMS (www.rtams.org). Where available, links to project websites have been provided in the following sections.

Proposed Long-Range Transit Projects



In the long-term, proposals are somewhat more expansive than in the near-term; however, funding limitations continue to provide fiscal constraints on what may or may not be implemented. Long-term proposals include:

- Elgin-O’Hare West Bypass (EO-WB)
 - EO-WB Transit Link – Transit link (mode to be determined) between the above STAR Line and a new intermodal West O’Hare transit terminal. Commuter rail service linking the proposed STAR line or bus service linking the “J” Line (see below) are both transit options for this corridor. <http://www.elginohare-westbypass.org>
 - EO-WB Circulators – Circulators connecting the proposed West O’Hare multimodal station with nearby portions of DuPage County. This will be coordinated with airport expansion plans. <http://www.elginohare-westbypass.org>
 - EO-WB Multimodal Station – A new multimodal station at Chicago-O’Hare International Airport (West O’Hare), to be coordinated with airport expansion plans. <http://www.elginohare-westbypass.org>
- STAR Line – Commuter rail service expansion including the Northwest Corridor (roughly along I-90), Inner Circumferential Rail (between Midway and O’Hare Airports) and Outer Circumferential Rail (via the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway, parallel to the IL-59 corridor in DuPage County). <http://metraconnects.metrarail.com/star.php>
- “J” Line – The centerpiece of the 2002 *DuPage Area Transit Plan*, this enhanced bus service would connect Schaumburg and a new intermodal station at West O’Hare with Oak Brook and Naperville. Specific routing to be determined. <http://www.rtams.org/rtams/rtpProject.jsp?id=7>
- IL-19 ART (Irving Park Road), IL-64 ART (North Avenue) and IL-59 ART – Long-term ART service along IL-19 (Irving Park Road), IL-64 (North Avenue), and IL-59 in western DuPage. http://www.pacebus.com/sub/vision2020/brt_video.asp
- I-290 Corridor – Includes numerous express bus routes such as West Cook-Istasca/Addison, West Cook-Elk Grove/Wood Dale, and Northwest Corridor-Forest Park via Schaumburg, Itasca and Hillside. <http://www.eisenhowerexpressway.com/>
- Joliet-Schaumburg, Joliet-Naperville and Sugar Grove-Lake Cook Road – Express bus service connecting Joliet (Will County) with Schaumburg (Cook County) via DuPage County, express bus service connecting Joliet (Will County) with Naperville, and express bus service connecting Sugar Grove (Kane County) with the Lake Cook Road corridor along the Lake/Cook County line via DuPage County.

Funding Challenges

One of the largest obstacles to the expansion of transit service is funding – this hurdle has been further exacerbated by the economic crisis beginning in 2008. In order to keep transit service affordable, passenger fares generally only cover a small portion of the cost of operating transit service. Additional funding is required to build and maintain transit facilities and equipment (capital expenses), as well as for the daily operation of transit service (operating expenses).

This section provides a brief overview of revenue sources for funding transit operations and capital projects, as well as an overview of likely challenges. Implementation plans are not included in the *DuPage Area Plan Update* as each individual project listed in the near-term and long-term projects sections has its own plan, to be determined on a project-by-project basis.

Federal funding is primarily used for capital expenditures. Conventional federal funding assistance for new major investment in transit fixed-guideway capital projects is through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) New Starts program. Since the late 1990s, the federal government's level of assistance in new capital projects has typically been 50 percent of the total cost, with the remaining 50 percent of funding originating at the state or local level. In recent years, the United States Congress has appropriated around \$2 billion per year to the new starts program, yet applications for funding assistance have consistently exceeded this amount, leading to a highly competitive process for funding awards. The Small Starts program includes funding requests of less than \$75 million (total project cost under \$250 million) that encompass corridor improvements and non-fixed guideway bus transit projects.

The current legislation authorizing federal transportation funding, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), expired in late 2009 and has been extended through special acts of Congress. Although a need for transportation infrastructure spending beyond recent levels has been widely acknowledged, both for expansions to the transportation system and for maintenance of existing facilities, no new ideas for development of additional funding sources to meet these needs have been advanced to a public policy level. Current transportation funding through motor fuel taxes and special Congressional appropriations from the general fund have maintained this base level of funding commitment from SAFETEA-LU, though they have not generally been applied to new funding levels beyond that.

While the New Starts program is likely to remain the primary mode of federal transit funding into the foreseeable future, it is clear that demand for its fund exceeds availability and that local transit agencies wishing to utilize this funding assistance must demonstrate that transit benefits, especially relative to cost, reflect a mix of ridership-generating land uses and operational characteristics.

Even if New Starts/Small Starts funding is secured, additional funding sources must be identified to fulfill the "local match" (the percentage generally required by federal funding sources from the local project proponents). Throughout the country and the Chicago region, local government budgets are challenged and funding for transit system construction and/or operations is unlikely. The current climate of federal transportation funding has pointed to an increased need for state and local governments to assume greater responsibility in securing funding for transit projects. In addition to capital funding from New Starts/Small Starts, a dedicated source of operating funds is critical to the long-term success of any new service. The best way to sustain funding for transit at the local level is to establish a dedicated funding

source that provides a reliable source of annual revenues to support transit operations and capital costs. Establishing revenue sources on the front end, by a legislative body or by the voters, can provide funding dedicated for transit without being subject to the same kind of discretion associated with general fund revenues. This approach reduces the annual burden placed on local governments to find funding for public transportation and minimizes the uncertainty for public transit customer, operators and the business community looking to invest along fixed transit routes.