

Appendix E: Planning Initiatives

Vision 2020—The Blueprint for the Future

Overview: Vision 2020

Pace continues to use its Vision 2020 as the guide into the future, to develop the 21st century transit system for this suburban environment. Pace is meeting the goals of the plan in a variety of ways, but chief among them is through the extensive use of market research to communicate with its customer base and other stakeholders. Through the market research efforts, Pace understands that a large part of its service is effectively connecting people and jobs. Making this “people-to-jobs connection” is a huge challenge in the suburban areas because the land use patterns tend to be more decentralized unlike the City of Chicago with a central business district.

Recognizing the value and importance to develop the transit system that benefits the customers needs, the Strategic Services unit has focused on four major areas to enhance Pace’s service delivery to make the “people-to-jobs connection”, and improve the rider experience:

- Market Research and Analysis
- Corridor Development
- Increase Network Speed
- Alternatives to Mass Transit

Market Research and Analysis

The Market Research group continues to focus their efforts on providing accurate, timely, insightful, and actionable market information to Pace decision-makers so service can be matched to customer needs and ridership can be maximized through fast, convenient and reliable services.

The Market Research team will primarily work on three projects in the year 2012:

- Pace ADA/Paratransit Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) Survey
- Market Analysis Study for Harlem Avenue Corridor, West Cook and North Cook region
- Market Analysis Study for Lake County

Through the user and non-user surveys and analysis of market data, we can identify service planning opportunities

that meet the needs of commuters looking for faster and more reliable service. At the same time, Market Research efforts will continue to identify and serve the needs of riders seeking more traditional, localized or special-needs service through our core and community-based “family of services”.

Pace ADA/Paratransit Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) Survey

In 2012, Pace will conduct the ADA/Paratransit Customer Satisfaction Index survey, a component of the 2010 Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) studies which cover Pace’s Fixed-Route, Vanpool, and Paratransit “family of services.” The Paratransit survey will include customers being served by approximately sixty Dial-a-Ride projects and 800 ADA Paratransit vehicles both in the suburbs and City of Chicago. The overall goal of the study is to provide continued evaluations of service performance through the eye of Pace customers so transportation needs can be met, loyalty strengthened, and ridership increased.

Pace has worked with NuStats, a consulting firm specializing in transportation customer research, to conduct the Fixed-Route and Vanpool CSI survey since the execution of the contract in August 2010, and will complete the ADA/Paratransit study in 2012.

Market Analysis Study for Harlem Avenue Corridor, West Cook and North Cook Region

Pace will also conduct Market Analysis studies for West Cook and North Cook regions respectively. It is an extension of the Harlem Avenue Corridor Market Analysis Study. Pace has selected NuStats to conduct the studies. Since the execution of the project in February 2011, Pace has worked with NuStats to conduct the Harlem Corridor Avenue Study, and will complete the market analysis studies for West Cook and North Cook regions in 2012.

The overall goal of the study is to have a current understanding of the characteristics, needs, and perceptions of existing and potential Pace customers in these areas, and provide insights and recommendations that improve Pace operations, increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, and grow Pace’s customer base.

Market Analysis Study for Lake County

In addition, Pace has also partnered with Lake County to conduct a market analysis of transit markets and appropriate services throughout the county. These studies will assist Pace and our regional partners in understanding the demographics, travel patterns, origins and destinations and the characteristics of each study area.

Corridor Development

I-55 Corridor

Beginning in the fourth quarter 2011, Pace, IDOT, RTA, and the Illinois State Police will conduct a two-year demonstration of transit bus operations utilizing Pace routes 755 and 855 on the I-55/Stevenson Expressway shoulder as a priority treatment for transit under congested conditions. This demonstration will operate on I-55 between Kedzie Avenue and I-355. The purpose of this demonstration is to determine whether using the highway shoulder for transit can improve transit service and the customer experience while also maintaining the primary function of the shoulder and overall traffic safety, and to examine this new strategy to increase the capacity of the urban transportation system. The shoulder lane is being upgraded for transit usage as a component of IDOT's I-55 repaving project.

Additional service improvements are planned for the spring of 2012 utilizing regional CMAQ funding (pending CMAP approval). Increased frequencies are planned for routes 755 and 855 along with a new park -n-ride facility serving the Darien ridership markets. The CMAQ committee supports the I-55 corridor project as it is a component of the regional GO TO 2040 plan and for the coordination of a transit and a highway major capital project.

I-90 Corridor

Pace and the Illinois Toll Highway Authority are partnering to implement a multi-modal transit/highway project within the Jane Addams I-90 Corridor. This project will serve new and expanded markets between Rosemont and

Elgin in conjunction with the Tollway's planned managed lane improvements on I-90, as called for in the regional GO TO 2040 plan. The project will be developed over a five year period beginning in 2012 utilizing CMAQ funding (pending CMAP approval).

As the corridor continues to undergo major reconstruction over the next several years, Pace is committed to enhance existing service in order to mitigate some of the traffic congestion during the construction period starting next spring including the establishment of a new park-n-ride in the IL 59/I-90 area.

With the completion of the managed lanes, new, expanded express bus service will be implemented along with local distribution zones (Call-n-Ride service), purchase new transit vehicles, construction of new park -n-ride lots, improved access at the Rosemont terminal, and direct access to and from the west in Schaumburg.

Pace ART Network

The ART network will feature limited stops, stations with enhanced passenger amenities including lights and heat, smart card fare collection, information kiosks with system maps, real-time schedule information, upgraded signs and shelters and distinctive vehicles using TSP to improve schedule adherence.

Arterial Corridor Development Studies

The goal of the corridor development studies is to understand land use patterns and market conditions to provide congestion relief, improved regional mobility, sustainable employment access and economic development in preparation for Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (ART) Service. Pace continues to partner with the Southwest Conference of Mayors in completing the South Harlem Avenue corridor study between 63rd Street and 183rd Street. In 2012, similar corridor studies will be conducted for the Cicero Avenue Corridor between Midway Station and 127th Street followed by the 95th Street Corridor between Western Avenue and LaGrange.

Call-n-Ride

Call-n-Ride is an innovative approach to community transit. It is a curb to curb reservation-based service open to the general public utilizing small lift-equipped paratransit vehicles which take riders anywhere within the designated geographic service area and often connects with other arterial bus routes in the region to provide the first/last mile of the transit trip. Reservations are made by calling the published cell number of the bus operator directly who then books trips on the same day with at least an hour's notice.

Call-n-Ride is designed to operate in areas where ridership demand for fixed route services may be low or to serve as a distributor service to take riders to/from a transit connection to home or work. Call-n-Ride is valuable to Pace and its customers because it provides greater service coverage than would be possible with a fixed route.

Guidelines for Transit Supportive Communities

Pace is in the process of updating its Development Guidelines which were last revised in 1999. The resulting document Guidelines for Transit Supportive Communities will include a dramatically expanded scope, providing municipal planners and the development community with a thorough examination of why transit supportive development is important and beneficial, what it entails, and how it can and should be achieved.

Map 7. Vision 2020



The primary function of the guidelines is land use and site design practices and policies that support public bus service. The guidelines purpose and goals will be directly related to Pace's Vision 2020, CMAP's GO TO 2040 Regional Plan, and RTA's Community Planning and Sub-regional Planning Programs. The guidelines will make the case for why public transportation is important and beneficial to municipalities and developers and why they should actively support them. They will be paramount in determining how land use policy has a central role in realizing transit supportive communities.

Transit supportive development practices and land use policies include Smart Growth including growth boundaries promoting infill and increasing density of established communities. Bus Transit Oriented Development including development around bus stops, stations, and park-n-ride facilities to support planned Arterial Rapid Transit services. Livable Communities that include human scale, mixed-use neighborhoods that encourage walking, bicycling and use of public transportation on complete streets. Physical design including street network, location, design, safety, and accessibility of transit infrastructure which include bus stops, stations, park-n-ride facilities, and passenger amenities.

Pedestrians and cyclists must be accommodated for through the use of best practices for new development and retrofits of existing development. In addition, policies and priority that include transit supportive zoning, land use, density regulations, Traffic Demand Management strategies, HOV and Queue jump lanes and Transit Signal Priorities must be accommodated for.

Increase Network Speed

Transit Signal Priority

The Transit Signal Priority (TSP) Program is geared to providing a more reliable regional transit system with improved bus travel times, schedule adherence and customer satisfaction. Transit Signal Priority recognizes that most buses operate on the arterial system, where delay is

largely related to congestion and traffic signal timings that have not been oriented to bus operations. TSP allows bus transit vehicles to adhere to their published schedule by giving priority green time to buses that are behind schedule.

Implementation of TSP on designated corridors is a multi-year program. Implementation of corridor segments and locations are determined, based on delay analysis, funding and coordination with the ART and posted stop programs.

In 2011, Pace took final acceptance of the 20 TSP equipped signals within the Harvey Transportation Center Transit Signal Priority Project and optimized traffic signal timings along Milwaukee ART Corridor. In addition, Pace implemented a TSP corridor design work contract including Washington Street and Grand Avenue in Lake County, Halsted Street and 159th Streets outside the Harvey Transportation Center project area, 95th Street and Harlem Avenue in South Cook County, and Cermak & Roosevelt Roads in West DuPage County.

Pending CMAP approval, a regional \$40 million five year Transit Signal Priority Program will begin in 2012 to design and implement TSP on designated Pace and CTA corridors. This program is the result of a multi-agency CMAQ program application submitted by the RTA, Pace, CTA and supported through the regional signal operators including IDOT, CDOT and the counties. RTA has committed to providing the local funding match for this program.

Improving On-Time Performance

In order to make service more reliable and predictable for riders, Pace Strategic Services and Revenue Services are jointly working on a project to improve the on-time performance of Pace fixed routes throughout the six-county region. By analyzing the running times of existing trips and evaluating traffic patterns, the schedules for the selected routes will be optimized to allow service to operate on time which will allow for improved connections with other routes and fewer delays. This is part of an ongoing program to make transit work better for existing riders and to encourage non-users to put their car aside and try public transit.

Posted Stops

Pace is continuing to improve service, safety, speed, reliability and visibility by converting routes from the current “flag stop” service where buses will stop anywhere along the route where it is safe to do so, to “posted stop” service where buses stop at fewer designated stops along a route. The posted stops project enhances Pace’s ability to operate safely by clearly communicating the location of each route’s bus stops to operators and passengers through marked bus stop locations with the goal of increasing passenger amenities at those stops. Posted bus stops help speed up Pace service by establishing efficient stop patterns and by laying the groundwork for other strategic programs such as Transit Signal Priority (TSP) and Arterial Rapid Transit (ART). The posted stops project helps current and future passengers make reliable connections with Pace service in their communities.

Alternatives to Mass Transit

Pace’s implementation of the RideShare Program in 2012-2014 will continue through www.PaceRideShare.com, a website that matches users who can share their commute by carpooling, and allows for tracking the region’s carpools. This website also facilitates the formation of new Pace vanpools and supports the retention of existing vanpools. In 2012, Pace will be upgrading its matching software to include more features and matching options. The software upgrades and marketing of the RideShare program are both funded by federal grant money.



Pace administers a RideShare Program which is a free, easy and a convenient matching service that connects commuters.

Marketing and Communications Plan

In 2011, Pace reinstated a region-wide promotion of the entire fixed route network. Through online advertisements, 90-second features on WCIU-TV, radio spots and ads on the sides of buses, we promoted the affordability of public transit and the ability of bus passengers to make better use of their time.

Early in the year, Pace took advantage of the opportunity presented by record-high gasoline prices. We promoted Pace as an affordable alternative for those whose budgets were stretched thin by \$4-per-gallon prices. We even earned media coverage of our vanpool program on several local TV stations during this period.

Once again this year, Pace invested heavily into reaching out to persons with disabilities. Pace sought to encourage existing ADA paratransit riders to ride fixed route buses and trains. Our partnership with the advocacy organization JJ's List and our visits to high school and college training programs for students with disabilities enhanced our ability to communicate directly with the disabled community. The first half of 2011 saw some success with this initiative, with Circuit Permit (a.k.a. "People with Disabilities Ride Free") ridership on fixed route up slightly, and use of wheelchair lifts on fixed route buses up 28% through June.

Based on a 2011 agency goal to increase vanpool participation by 10%, Pace invested heavily in promoting the vanpool program to employers. For the first time, Pace staff hosted webinars for human resource professionals, touting the program and the benefits to employees and employers' bottom lines.

A significant new program—"bus on shoulder" on I-55—was the focus of much promotional activity. Pace wrapped the buses used on routes 755 and 855 and, in partnership with IDOT, RTA and the Illinois State Police, we utilized a variety of channels to inform the motoring public and encourage people to take the more-reliably-on-time services. Pace also spent marketing resources on the major changes in West Cook County and on the start-up of several new Call-n-Rides.

Also in 2011, Pace delved more deeply into the realm of social media—an increasingly popular method of communication amongst people of all ages and income levels. Pace has dozens of videos about different bus routes on its



This campaign encourages people to take public transportation to the airport.

own YouTube channel. Pace's YouTube channel has been viewed more than 75,000 times since its launch in 2009. Furthermore, we monitor daily our Facebook page and send "tweets" via Twitter. The functionality of Pacebus.com was enhanced as well, with an improved WebWatch section and the addition of RSS feeds.

The agency also marketed its Express Services to Popular Destinations to attendees of sporting events and concerts, and attempted to increase awareness of Pace services among the Spanish-speaking population of the region. Pace staff also updated and printed a comprehensive Rider Guide, to teach potential riders about the system and how to ride public transit in northeastern Illinois.

The Pace Marketing Department also implemented several projects which aim to enhance Pace's non-farebox revenue in 2012 and beyond. In 2011, the program of advertising over the audio announcement system on fixed route buses was expanded, and Pace began the sale of advertisements on the Pace website.