



FINDING NEW WAYS FORWARD

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Introducing the Pace Board of Directors

Pace, the suburban bus division of northeastern Illinois' Regional Transportation Authority, provides bus, paratransit, and vanpool services in Chicago's six-county metropolitan area. Pace is governed by a Board of Directors, comprised of mayors or former mayors from the suburbs, as set by state law. Pace's chairman is elected by the chairmen of the collar counties and the suburban members of the Cook County Board. The Pace Board's Chicago member is the City's Commissioner for the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities.



Richard A. Kwasneski
Chairman



Rachel Arfa
City of Chicago



Christopher S. Canning
North Shore Suburban
Cook County



Terrance Carr
Central Suburban
Cook County



Roger Claar
Will County



David Guerin
North Central Suburban
Cook County



Kyle R. Hastings
Southwest Suburban
Cook County



Thomas D. Marcucci
DuPage County



William D. McLeod
Northwest Suburban
Cook County



Jeffery D. Schielke
Kane County



Erin Smith
McHenry County



Linda Soto
Lake County



Terry R. Wells
South Suburban
Cook County



Rocky Donahue
Executive Director



Melinda Metzger
General Manager &
Chief Operating Officer



Nancy Zimmer
General Counsel



Colette Thomas Gordon
Chief Internal Auditor

Welcome

Welcome to Pace's annual summary of our achievements over the previous year. Pace has, along with the rest of the world, faced historic challenges this past year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the height of the pandemic, Pace ridership dropped to approximately 25% of our regular ridership. Where we had been providing over 100,000 trips every weekday, systemwide ridership dipped to just 25,000. Those 25,000 trips helped heroes get to their essential jobs in healthcare, retail, and government and ensured everyone would have access to pharmacies, medical care, and everyday necessities. Although we have seen some ridership recover in summer 2020, ridership is still down approximately 50%. The fact that Pace's ridership has doubled to approximately 50,000 trips since the State of Illinois entered Phase 4 shows just how crucial our service is to keeping our people and our economy moving.

We rely upon farebox revenue and sales tax to cover operating expenses, and both funding streams have been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, spending on safety and sanitary measures skyrocketed as we worked hard to keep vehicles clean and passengers safe. Thankfully, Congress stepped in with \$113 million in emergency funding that covered some of the additional expenses and unforeseen shortfall we encountered in 2020.

Without additional federal relief, however, Pace's financial outlook in the near term is still very uncertain. Pace moves into 2021 with the guidance of the three core principles we established in March: safety, service, and transparency. Our vehicles are clean, our service is safe, and we will continue to communicate openly and honestly with the people we serve.

As always, we ask that you continue to be vigilant against the spread of COVID-19. We continue to encourage our riders to wear face coverings, follow social distancing guidelines, and reconsider nonessential travel. Together, I know we will get through this!



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Richard A. Kwasneski".

Richard A. Kwasneski
Chairman

Pace Continues to Move Forward

Even as 2020 was a year many would like to forget, Pace not only kept crucial transit services in place for our region's essential workers but achieved a number of forward-looking successes, thanks to the hard work of my outstanding team of employees.

Early in 2020, when it looked as if many transit agencies in the country wouldn't be able to continue their day-to-day operations, Pace partnered with our national trade association, the American Public Transportation Association, to advocate for and finally win passage of the CARES Act. This federal legislation provided Pace \$113 million in funds to be used for operations in 2020 and 2021. Without this vital support, Pace and many of our sister agencies would have had to institute draconian cuts to transportation service in 2020.

As Pace looks to emerge from this pandemic stronger than ever, I am proud to report that we were still able to move forward in 2020 with a number of exciting capital projects. The multiyear Rebuild Illinois capital program, the state's first in a decade, has provided Pace \$228 million in earmarks that will allow us to rehabilitate aging garages and transit centers, improve ADA Paratransit technology, and prepare for new expressway and rapid transit service opportunities. Additional funding—including the state's first sustainable, ongoing fund for transportation capital projects—will likewise help us reshape our system.

This year, Pace staff made progress on plans to add more bus rapid transit throughout the region—with Dempster Street being our next priority corridor—after a year of success on the Pulse Milwaukee Line. Our new website is already helping us communicate

more efficiently and allowing us to develop new web-based tools to enhance customers' experiences. Our forthcoming strategic vision plan, Driving Innovation, is being updated to account for our present crisis but will still guide us toward a future with robust, dynamic public transportation in north-eastern Illinois. Despite this year's setbacks, we are on the road to a brighter future.

Pace also continues to modernize our bus fleet. With 85 new buses delivered in 2020, the entire fleet of buses at West Division is new. Not only will Pace enjoy reduced maintenance expenses, but riders in the western suburbs will enjoy an improved riding experience.

We are grateful that our passengers, taxpayers, and legislators share our optimism and have trusted us with short-term relief, long-term investments, and an outpouring of support. Please take a look at the rest of this document for more details on the accomplishments we have been able to achieve, thanks to the dedication of our staff and the support from our external stakeholders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Rocky Donahue".

Rocky Donahue
Executive Director



Pace by the Numbers

“One of the best-run transit systems in the country.”
FTA Triennial



769 
VEHICLES IN SERVICE

49,488,000 
VEHICLE MILES OF TRAVEL

284 
NUMBER OF COMMUNITIES SERVED

220 
NUMBER OF FIXED ROUTES
(73 SUSPENDED AND 25 MODIFIED)

486 
VANPOOLS IN SERVICE

7.5 
AVERAGE VEHICLE AGE IN YEARS

2020 RIDERSHIP
17,502,000 TRIPS

 **4.2 COMPLAINTS**
PER 100,000 PASSENGER MILES
(DOWN FROM 4.4 IN 2019)

 **6 ACCIDENTS**
PER 100,000 REVENUE MILES

Budget

SUBURBAN SERVICE EXPENSES	\$221,144,037
REGIONAL ADA PARATRANSIT EXPENSES	\$168,905,440
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$390,049,477

 **19 NEW BUS TRACKER SIGNS**
INSTALLED

 **47 BUS SHELTERS**
INSTALLED



Prioritizing Safety of Riders

Pace is committed to keeping riders and drivers safe as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold. In the months since the pandemic began, our teams have worked tirelessly to adapt operations and do our part to reduce the spread of the virus. But it takes teamwork to tackle the problems COVID-19 poses.

At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pace implemented the following protocols to keep our drivers and riders safe while onboard:

- We disinfect both our fixed route and paratransit fleets daily.
- We inform the public on our website if Pace employees or contractors test positive for COVID-19.
- We limit the number of people on each vehicle, with a goal of one rider per ADA Paratransit vehicle.
- We follow the state law that requires any driver or rider over the age of 2 who is able to medically tolerate a face covering (a mask or cloth face covering) to cover his or her nose and mouth.
- We encourage ADA Paratransit riders in Chicago to participate in the Taxi Access Program (TAP) by waiving the \$3 trip fare. Between April 9 and June 22, Pace also implemented a "Quick Board, Safe Board" policy, under which riders were not required to pay a fare on paratransit or fixed route services to limit contact between drivers and riders.

- We limit Pace drivers' physical assistance of passengers solely to secure mobility devices (upon request). Passengers who need physical assistance while traveling are encouraged to bring a personal care attendant (PCA) with them. PCAs ride for free.
- We require people to maintain a 6-foot social distance from others in public spaces.
- We advise riders, especially seniors and those at higher health risk, to limit their travel to essential trips only.
- We ask all riders to "Check Before You Ride" to avoid making trips to destinations that are not open or have temporarily adjusted their hours.

More than ever, Pace staff prioritizes frequent and robust communication with our customers. With the safety and well-being of our passengers and teams as our top priority and as the state's orders related to COVID-19 continue to evolve, Pace updates its policies and instructions for our riders. We continue to encourage passengers to sign up for text or email alerts at PaceBus.com and follow us on social media for up-to-date information.

Pace operating personnel continue to inspire all of us with their dedication to the riding public. We continue to provide much-needed transportation options to the public, who rely on Pace to access medical care, employment, and other necessities, as well as to bring essential workers to their jobs.

This was a year like no other. I am grateful to all the Pace personnel and the role they have played in continuing to provide vital transportation services that our customers depend on.

Melinda Metzger
General Manager & Chief Operating Officer



Pace Mourns Two Directors From McHenry County

In a year when far too many Illinois families lost loved ones due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pace Board of Directors experienced its own sadness and tragedy in 2020.



On May 3, 2020, Pace mourned the loss of longtime Director Aaron Shepley. Director Shepley had represented McHenry County on the Pace Board since 1999.

Aaron was the longest-serving mayor of the City of Crystal Lake (also since 1999). He served on the board of directors for Leadership Greater McHenry County, Hospice & Palliative Care of Northeastern Illinois, and was an original member of the Lakeside Legacy Foundation. He also served as a Crystal Lake City Council member from 1997 to 1999.

"I will remember Aaron fondly," remarked Pace Board Chairman Rick Kwasneski. "He was a valuable member of Pace's Board of Directors and a dedicated public servant."

"Director Shepley had a significant impact on Pace and on me," said Pace Executive Director Rocky Donahue. "I offer our deepest condolences to his family and friends. He will be dearly missed."

On May 15, the City of Crystal Lake held a memorial procession for its late Mayor Shepley. Pace staff participated in the procession, with several

buses adorned with black bunting out of respect for Director Shepley's outstanding service to Pace and to the enhancement of transportation services for his suburban constituents.

In June, McHenry County Board Chair Jack Franks appointed John Schmitt to replace Director Shepley on the Pace Board of Directors. Director Schmitt had been the president of the Village of Algonquin Board of Directors since 2005, having first been elected to the Board in 1993 and then appointed president in 2002.

It was with great shock and sadness that Pace learned of the passing of Director Schmitt on July 25. A devoted family man, John is survived by his wife, Cheryl, and daughters, Kim and Beth. Schmitt, a Vietnam-era veteran and Pennsylvania native, spent his private-sector career in technology and management before turning his attention to public service full time. Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski stated, "During our short time together on Pace's Board of Directors, it was clear that John was a dedicated public servant and an enthusiastic supporter of public transportation. We offer our heartfelt condolences to his family and friends."



Staff Rises to the Challenge of COVID-19

This year's COVID-19 pandemic presented an incredible challenge to Pace and our fellow transit agencies. Not only did Pace incur about \$20,000 per week in extra costs to buy personal protective equipment for our employees and sanitation products for all our buses and facilities, staff went above and beyond the call of duty in spending extra hours to make sure our riders and their fellow coworkers could stay safe and healthy.

Pace's response to the pandemic started early in 2020 and continues as we turn the page to 2021, but of the huge number and wide variety of actions we took this year, the following represent several of the most important.



All In Illinois

In March, the State of Illinois created a campaign called "All In Illinois" that featured messages from prominent Illinoisans about the importance of staying in when possible, as well as providing tips and tools to turn everyday citizens into ambassadors for staying at home. Pace participated in this unifying campaign by branding materials with the state's "All In" logo and encouraging our riders to do their part in curbing the spread of COVID-19. On board Pace buses, we require face masks, social distancing, and adherence to CDC guidelines.

Impact of COVID-19 on our service

Between April 10 and May 18, a total of 73 routes were temporarily suspended, and another 25 had temporary service reductions. Pace took these actions on an emergency basis in response to the reality that ridership had dwindled considerably on all Metra feeder routes and other similar services that formerly carried employees to office jobs. Those actions allowed Pace to save money but also allocate buses to other bus routes that were being heavily used. On routes with strong ridership, Pace frequently "doubled up" buses to make sure that riders were able to socially distance onboard.

When Pace released a 2021 proposed budget for public hearing in October, we proposed to formalize those ongoing service suspensions and reductions indefinitely. The Board approved that recommendation in November, so the suspensions and reductions are in place until such time as available funding or demand for transit service returns and Pace can consider possible reinstatement of some or all of the services.

Pace's Board did not take this decision lightly, as we understand people previously relied on these routes. Through careful planning, Pace aimed to ensure these budget-cutting measures impacted the fewest riders possible.

Our ADA Paratransit service will remain fully funded thanks to the State's funding formula and a rainy day fund we have saved over the past few years. As we have striven to provide individual trips to maximize safety, the cost of these trips has increased; we are hopeful riders in Chicago continue to make use of our expanded Taxi Access Program (TAP) to help relieve pressure on the paratransit system. Technology improvements should also help riders and providers alike in keeping our operations streamlined.



"Quick Board, Safe Board"

On April 9, Pace announced a Quick Board, Safe Board program that waived fare collection on fixed route bus and ADA Paratransit service. The goal of the policy was to help slow the spread of COVID-19 by limiting interaction between bus operators and passengers. Passengers were also encouraged, when possible, to board and alight through the rear door of the bus to limit contact with the operator.



Even though Quick Board, Safe Board ended on June 22, Pace continues to allow essential medical personnel showing identification to ride free. That program had launched at the beginning of the pandemic.

Protective measures for riders and operators

Over the course of the spring, the maintenance team, led by Division Manager Larry Braun, showed tremendous ingenuity and dedication in the process of installing moveable vinyl barriers around the driver cockpit of more than 600 fixed route buses. Those barriers prevent airflow between drivers and passen-

gers. Staff at all the garages drastically enhanced their bus cleaning regimens to include daily sanitizing.

Paratransit rider safety

Several important changes were made in 2020 to our paratransit operations to ensure driver and rider safety. See page 7 more details on all those, including free rides on TAP, ensuring single-rider operation, and requiring passengers to wear masks.

#SoundTheHorn

On April 16, Pace's entire fleet of buses participated in a national Sound the Horn campaign. At 2:00 p.m. Central Time that day, all bus operators on the road beeped the horn to honor all essential workers—including each other!

Heroes Moving Heroes campaign

During the peak of the pandemic in April, Pace launched a Heroes Moving Heroes campaign to recognize that Pace's bus operators and maintenance employees—who steadfastly performed their jobs in the field day after day while many Americans had the luxury of working from home—were making heroic



efforts. Additionally, the people who were riding Pace buses—essential workers at hospitals, grocery stores, and factories—were also heroes in their efforts to keep our society functioning.

Certainly, having buses continue to operate allowed thousands of northeastern Illinoisans to continue reaching their jobs, many of whom had no other way to get there. Without Pace, many aspects of the regional economy would have been negatively impacted. Likewise, those who are riding Pace during the pandemic are heroically doing their part to keep our economy moving.

The campaign included advertisements on the sides of buses and in shelters, as well as social media posts.

Pace also conducted a parade of buses to eight area hospitals on Thursday, May 21, 2020. This series of mini-parades was incredibly well received by the medical personnel, who came out to cheer on the Pace buses and accept our gratitude for their hard work.

Promotion of safe riding

As fall approached, many Illinoisans were experiencing COVID-19 fatigue, looking to resume their pre-pandemic activities and less strictly follow guidance from health professionals. As COVID-19 infections began to rise again, and as many northeastern Illinoisans were headed back to in-person workplaces, Pace launched a safe riding campaign to reinforce the message that riders still need to wear face coverings onboard.

Other messaging in and on buses and on social media included reminders about how to get real-time bus information, since bus schedules had been adjusted since the spring and returning riders may not have been familiar with the latest updates. This campaign was funded by a federal grant.

Pace also joined more than 100 other transit agencies in signing on to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Health and Safety Commitments Program to show the public all the measures we've taken to keep them safe. The program is the public transportation industry's overarching pledge to passengers that transit systems are operating safely as North America recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. Pace and other agencies can use the promotional materials developed for the program after signing a pledge to implement the commitments.

Plan for the emergence from COVID-19

One lesson from the 2020 pandemic is how essential Pace service is to our region. While Metra and CTA ridership declined significantly, Pace's lowest daily ridership figures were approximately 75% lower than 2019 levels, and by summer, ridership was back to 50% of 2019 levels. While a 50% reduction in ridership is unprecedented in Pace's history, when compared to other agencies experiencing 75%-95% declines, the data shows how dependent many riders are on Pace service. While people who had another means of transportation chose to take advantage of it during the pandemic, riders continued to use Pace buses in droves.

In late summer 2020, Pace surveyed its riders to learn their reasons for continuing (or not) to ride transit during the pandemic, as well as getting the opinions of lapsed riders about their prospects of returning once the pandemic is over or their workplaces re-open. Among the results of that survey were the following:



- On average, respondents gave Pace's importance in their lives a score of 9 out of 10.
- Over 25% of respondents were full-time essential workers; more than 1 in 10 work in healthcare.
- Fully 88% of respondents thought Pace had communicated well during the pandemic.
- Over 80% of respondents saw transit as a moderate or high-risk activity. (The Illinois Department of Public Health actually considers taking transit a low-risk activity.)
- Only 3% of respondents believe they would continue working from home once there is a vaccine for COVID-19.

As 2020 comes to a close, Pace is finalizing a marketing plan to welcome back riders. While it's not yet known when the appropriate time will be to launch that resurgence campaign, Pace staff will be ready to restore service to meet new demand and aggressively promote our clean and safe service to those who aren't yet sure about returning to public transit.

Construction Begins on New Bus Garage in Plainfield

In fall 2020, Pace's contractor started construction of a new bus garage in Plainfield, adjacent to the park-n-ride facility that opened in 2019.

Through an intergovernmental partnership with the Village of Plainfield—who donated the 12-acre site to Pace—Pace is building a garage to support the rapidly growing I-55 express bus service. That bus-on-shoulder service has become a victim of its own success, as the number of buses needed to accommodate the 700% increase in ridership between 2011 and 2019 can no longer be adequately housed by Pace's Heritage Division garage in Joliet.

This new garage in Plainfield is approximately three times the size of the existing garage in Joliet. When completed in 2022, it will have a capacity of 140 buses, 12 maintenance bays and office space for Pace staff. Up to 250 employees could eventually work here once the garage is at full capacity.



This new facility at 14539 S. Depot Drive in Plainfield is being constructed by Northern Builders. Capital Construction Project Manager Josh Berger leads the team of Pace staff members who are working on the project.



Progress on New Bus Garage for Northwest Cook County

Pace's Northwest Division garage, which operates dozens of bus routes in northwest Cook County, is too small to accommodate the 140 buses that are now housed there. In 2018, Pace purchased the former Allstate Insurance office/warehouse campus in Wheeling and has now begun converting it into the new Northwest Division. It will become a compressed natural gas fueling station and a bus maintenance and storage facility and will also house Pace's Vanpool and Graphics Department staff.

The project is currently in the design phase, with our engineering firm submitting a completed design in December 2020. The retrofitting project will be let for bidding during the second quarter of 2021 and be substantially completed by the end of 2022.

Pace also enhanced the infrastructure surrounding the garage, ensuring it will be adequate for the buses traversing it in the years ahead. In 2020, per an agreement with Pace, the Village of Wheeling issued a contract for the Willow Road improvements located adjacent to Pace's facility. Work included the full-depth reconstruction of Willow Road, traffic signal improvements at the Willow Road and Wolf Road intersection, and new sidewalks along Willow Road and Wolf Road. Construction started in July and was completed in October 2020. Capital Construction Project Manager Tom Rasmussen leads the team of Pace staff members who are working on this project.



Progress Continues on Other Priority Capital Projects

In 2020, Pace partnered with Orland Square Mall to build a new passenger boarding facility on mall property. It provides a more comfortable waiting area for riders and better access for dozens of buses offering transit service to the busiest mall in south Cook County.

The engineering has been completed on an expanded South Division campus. A new bus acceptance facility and customer relations office will be constructed next to Pace's South Division garage in Markham. This new facility will be Pace's largest and will be a major investment in workforce development in a historically underserved part of the region.

In downtown Joliet, adjacent to the newly reconstructed Union Station, Pace and the City are constructing a bus transit center to be part of Joliet's Multi-Modal Facility. Funding from Rebuild Illinois and an inter-governmental agreement between Pace and the City of Joliet make this exciting project possible.

The Harvey Transportation Center is more than 20 years old and due for an overhaul. Pace is partnering with Metra to better integrate the bus and train facilities at this location to provide a more seamless experience for passengers. Wayfinding and bus tracker signage has already been installed. The infrastructure will be enhanced in the coming years to connect bus and rail service.

Pace will spend \$20 million over the next five years to modernize the communication technology and infrastructure used by ADA Paratransit riders and administrators. Improvements to real-time information systems are already close to implementation, with Trapeze software upgrades and Ventra integration coming along on schedule. Facilities at which paratransit riders can wait and transfer will be built in Schaumburg and Calumet City.

Pace and Partners Launch Ventra App 2.0

As more and more residents of northeastern Illinois seek out contactless methods of payment for all types of goods and services—including loading funds to their Ventra accounts—Pace and its Ventra partners completed development of the all-new Ventra mobile app this fall.

The Ventra Mobile App 2.0 launched September 24, 2020. The app includes major upgrades for Pace customers, including a trip planner showing services from Pace, CTA, and Metra. Navigation to all services is easier than before, with less taps required to reach your destination on the app. Pace and CTA customers are still able to add money to their accounts via this app as they did before.

A transit rider can load funds into his or her account and pay for a bus ride by tapping his or her Ventra Card against the Ventra reader when boarding, all without needing to physically interact with the bus operator. Not only is Ventra the easiest way to pay for transit rides in northeastern Illinois; it's also the safest way during the COVID-19 pandemic.



I-90 Market Expansion Project Wins APTA Innovation Award

On October 21, Pace was honored as one of only two Innovation Award recipients throughout the country in 2020. Given to a public transportation leader whose accomplishments and innovations have greatly advanced public transportation, the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) 2020 Innovation Award was given to Pace this year for its collaborative I-90 Market Expansion Project, the largest service expansion in the agency's history. The APTA Innovation Award acknowledges public transportation systems that demonstrate innovative concepts or effective problem-solving techniques not previously applied in the public transportation industry.

The most significant innovation of the I-90 project was the construction of Flex Lanes and technology to support a SmartRoad, enabling buses (and emergency vehicles) to travel on a dedicated lane of I-90. These Flex Lanes improve travel times on a network of more than a dozen Pace bus routes. With SmartRoad, the Illinois Tollway can take a data-driven approach to congestion management on I-90 and has been able to report to Pace (and to digital

screens above the roadway) in real time when buses can use the Flex Lanes to avoid congestion. Since SmartRoad was activated in September 2017, Flex Lanes have been opened approximately 850 times to Pace buses to support travel time reliability. The Tollway is also able to continually monitor traffic incidents and travel times and communicate them to Pace's Operations team.

To deliver these roadway improvements and improve overall mobility on the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90), Pace and the Illinois Tollway forged a unique partnership to significantly expand the public transit offerings in the corridor. Since the late 1990s, regional planners voiced the need to address congestion on Illinois' portion of I-90, a regionally significant corridor that stretches from Chicago through Rockford to Wisconsin. Furthermore, the portion of I-90 between Rockford and Chicago was originally built in the 1950s and was approaching the end of its useful life. A 2010 traffic analysis projected that I-90 travel times would double by 2030 if nothing was done to address the growing levels of commuter and freight traffic and determined that roadway construction alone would not be the solution. Planning for the Tollway's investment in rebuilding and improving I-90 became a coordinated effort with Pace's plans for its I-90 Market Expansion Program.

"Collaboration was the key to this project's success," said Pace Executive Director Rocky Donahue. "Every partner involved in this project ultimately has the same goal, and that's to serve the people of this region. We worked together for the greater good, and the result is better access for all to employment, medical care, education, and all our region has to offer."

"The partnership between the Illinois Tollway and Pace serves as a great example of what can be accomplished when transportation and transit agencies work together," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director José Alvarez. "Supporting more reliable and convenient bus service on our roadways demonstrates a viable mobility solution on the Tollway system and for the transportation industry as a whole."

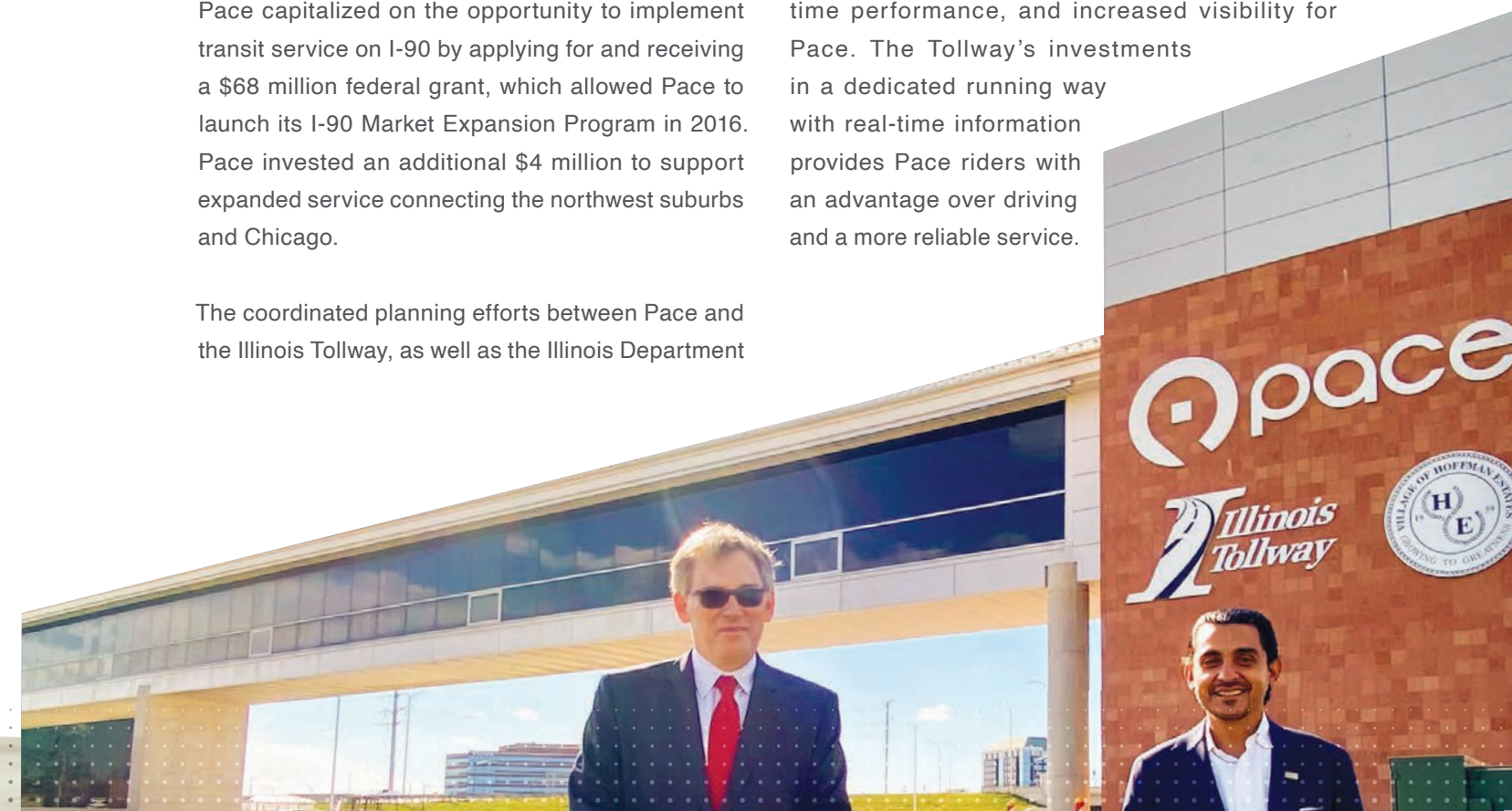
In 2011, while Pace was working to launch expressway-based services and invest in new vehicle technologies, the Illinois Tollway committed \$2.5 billion to rebuild and widen 62 miles of the I-90 corridor that included \$240 million for transit integration—the first implementation of transit service to address congestion on this heavily traveled corridor. Pace capitalized on the opportunity to implement transit service on I-90 by applying for and receiving a \$68 million federal grant, which allowed Pace to launch its I-90 Market Expansion Program in 2016. Pace invested an additional \$4 million to support expanded service connecting the northwest suburbs and Chicago.

The coordinated planning efforts between Pace and the Illinois Tollway, as well as the Illinois Department

of Transportation; the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning; the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA); Cook and Kane counties; and numerous municipalities, businesses, and residents, led to six new routes, enhanced service on existing routes, 25 new buses, new transit facilities providing more than 500 free parking spaces, and the state's first highway-based bus rapid transit station at Barrington Road in Hoffman Estates.

"Hoffman Estates is proud to be home to our state's first in-line bus rapid transit station," said Hoffman Estates Mayor Bill McLeod. "We enthusiastically supported this project and believe the economic development opportunities it creates will benefit our community for years to come."

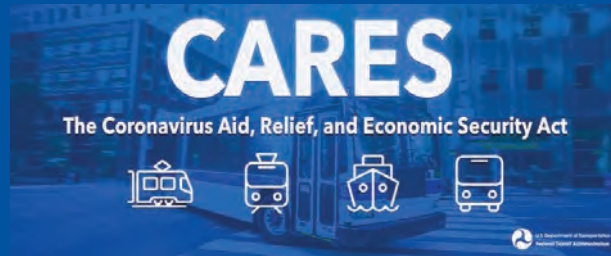
The collaboration between Pace and the Illinois Tollway is a high-profile model of what can be accomplished when transit and transportation agencies work together. The partnership set a new standard for Pace and marked a paradigm shift in highway and transit planning for Northern Illinois to deal with increasing travel demands. The improvements drove ridership, improved on-time performance, and increased visibility for Pace. The Tollway's investments in a dedicated running way with real-time information provides Pace riders with an advantage over driving and a more reliable service.



Federal CARES Act Keeps Service Afloat During Pandemic

On March 27, 2020, Congress unanimously passed a legislative package to respond to the impacts of COVID-19. Pace and many transit agencies across the country had aggressively advocated for the bill that became known as the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). It included emergency aid to public transportation agencies and Amtrak to help offset their extraordinary costs and lost revenue related to COVID-19.

The CARES Act included \$25 billion for public transit agencies nationwide, distributed by formula. After northeastern Illinois' portion was distributed by the RTA, Pace received nearly \$113 million in operating and capital grants to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19.



As a matter of comparison, the CARES Act provided almost three times as much federal funding as the annual appropriations bills have provided in recent years.

Pace's leadership worked tirelessly in the weeks leading up to congressional action on this bill and then offered members of the Illinois delegation much-deserved gratitude for the support they helped provide Pace during this extremely challenging time. During a period of rapid change to Pace and the entire public transit industry, Congress' recognition of Pace's situation and the funding assistance provided in the CARES Act allowed a stabilization of Pace's services and personnel to ensure Pace's valuable service could continue running so healthcare providers, first responders, and others in critical industries could continue to get to their workplaces.

Rocky Donahue with Congressman Jesus 'Chuy' Garcia.



New TripCheck Tools Launched for Paratransit Customers

Pace Paratransit's TripCheck tools help passengers keep track of their paratransit rides. The TripCheck portal allows you to view trip information, cancel trips, and opt in and out of email, text, and phone call alerts.

Chicago and Suburban ADA Paratransit riders, as well as users of Pace-operated Dial-a-Ride services, can use TripCheck. TripCheck has a variety of features, as described below.

Automatic email and text message alerts include:

- Trip booking (sent whenever you book a trip)
- Trip cancellation (sent whenever you cancel a trip)
- Imminent arrival (sent 20 minutes prior to scheduled pickup time)
- Next-day itinerary (sent nightly with scheduled trips for the next day)

Customers can also request trip information from our system at any time:

- Review or cancel upcoming trips and change their passwords using their phones or computers
- Send an email to see the next day's scheduled trips
- Send a text message to see the next day's first scheduled trip

We understand that many of our paratransit customers and their loved ones prefer to use these self-service features to get information about upcoming paratransit trips, and these tools save time for both our customers and our staff as well as improving the

flow of information about the service. When riders are better prepared for their trips, the service runs more smoothly for the whole community.



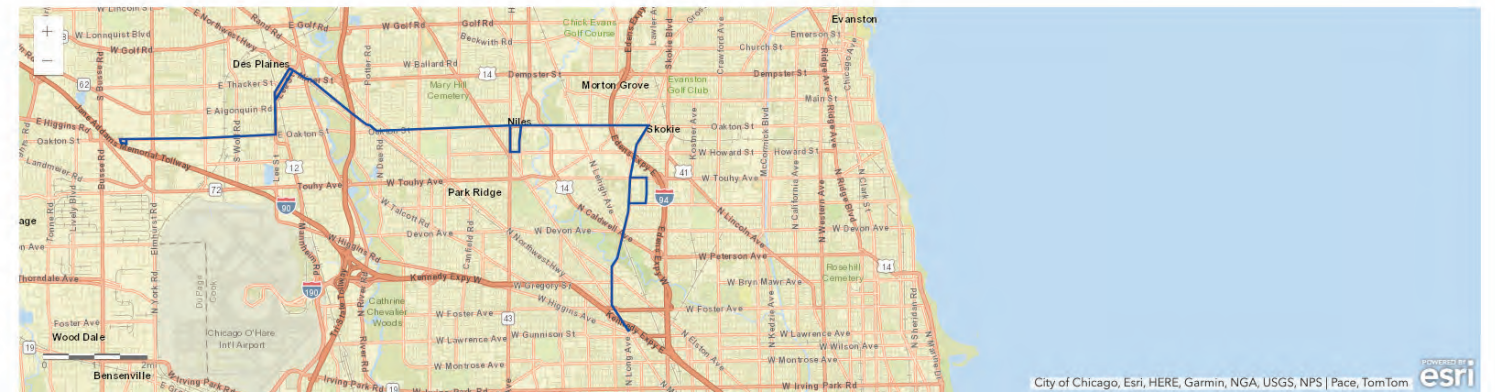
PACE UNVEILS NEW WEBSITE

The new Pace website was launched June 15, 2020. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of Project Manager Maggie Daly Skogsbakken and other Pace staff involved in the process, we've made this long-awaited project a reality that we can all be proud of. The new website was built from the ground up using a modern Drupal platform, expert assistance from two technology firms, and a great deal of user testing.

The primary goal for the new website was improved accessibility, for both people with disabilities and mobile users. We've achieved that goal and, in the process, improved the site's organization, navigation, search features, route pages and content management system, and menu system. We are beyond excited for what this means for staff and riders alike.

Fixed Route

Provides weekday service between the Jefferson Park CTA Blue Line Metra Station and Oakton and Hamilton in southern Mt. Prospect via Des Plaines Metra Station.



The site's features include:

1. Mobile-friendly design:

Seventy-four percent of our site's visitors are using mobile devices. Now, with a responsive design that changes based on screen size, the new site reduces the need for pinching, zooming, and squinting for riders checking in on the go.

2. Easier site management:

The new site's editing interface allows Marketing staff to update any part of the site without the aid of IT intermediaries. Proposed edits can be quickly approved, and pages can be easily archived, saved as drafts, or scheduled for later publication.

3. Immediate alerts:

In times like these, it's important for Pace to send our alerts as quickly as possible. The new site allows site updates to instantly generate email and text alerts for subscribed riders, streamlining the passenger notice-distribution process.

4. Better search:

Site testing and analytics showed that our old site search function wasn't working for users. The new site combines the "route" and "site" search functions and has content-filtering options on several landing pages as well, providing an improved search experience.

5. Better route pages:

Our site's most-visited pages are its route pages. The new site puts dynamic maps and real-time arrival information front and center, has more accessible timetables, and even allows us to offer geographically specific advertising opportunities on prime online real estate.

6. Better customer service:

A better navigation system, search function, and contact directory means more successful site visits, fewer calls to our Customer Relations department, and happier riders!

7. More accessible design:

The new site has achieved AA ratings across most categories.



Several Awards Earned During 2020

Pace was named one of the “100 Best Fleets in the Americas” by leading industry analyst Tom C. Johnson. The program recognizes and rewards peak-performing fleet operations in the Americas. Currently in its 20th year, the 100 Best Fleets identifies and encourages ever-increasing levels of performance improvement and innovation within the public fleet industry. The contest is open to all public fleets in North and South America.

The newly overhauled PaceBus.com website won a Silver 2020 MUSE Creative Award. Judges for this competition are senior level and are experienced in their fields/industries, including creative and art directors from international agencies, architects, fashion designers, interior designers, product designers, educators, and business owners. Judging is based on creativity, content, the visual appearance and design, innovation, functionality, and overall impact and memorability.

The website also was a finalist of the 2020 Acquia Engage Awards in the Leader of the Pack: Travel & Transportation category. The 2020 field of finalists features 47 projects selected from a highly competitive cohort of submissions. Nominations that demonstrated an advanced level of functionality, integration, performance (results and key performance indicators), and overall user experience and have an overall advanced user experience. The breadth of submissions was inspiring and continues to affirm that Acquia’s partners and customers are setting the precedent for exceptional digital experiences.

Also in 2020, Waukegan Township Supervisor Patricia Jones presented Pace North Division with the Township's distinguished Drum Major Award. In 2020, the difficulties and challenges of COVID-19 led the Township to focus on those leaders on the front lines of service to residents of our community.

“During the entire climate of COVID-19, we have noticed that the services from Pace continue,” said Supervisor Jones. “Thank you. We would like to honor Pace North Division in Waukegan for the great work and service offered to the community, especially during these challenging times.” This Drum Major Award will be awarded during our 19th Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dreamers’ Day on January 19, 2021.



In Memoriam.
Michael Jozwiak passed away after receiving this honor. A true public servant. 1949–2020.

Michael Jozwiak: IATR Driver of the Year

Bus Operator Michael Jozwiak was recently named Driver of the Year by the International Association of Transportation Regulators (IATR). Michael, who began his career as a bus operator in July 1973, was the highest seniority bus operator and a line instructor at Pace’s Northwest Division in Des Plaines, Illinois.

Michael provided excellent service and carried out his duties in an extraordinary manner that exemplifies the definition of a professional bus operator. He frequently received commendations from his customers thanks to his high level of customer service and care. Over the past 47 years, Michael has received

numerous safe driver awards, including the National Safety Council’s One Million Mile Safe Driver Award in 1991 and a Two Million Mile Safe Driver Award in 2006 as a result of driving for 25 years without a preventable accident.

“Mike was a true public servant, and we’re lucky to have had him on board all these years,” said Pace General Manager and Chief Operating Officer Melinda Metzger. “He’s driven close to 3 million miles without a preventable accident. That’s an extraordinary achievement.”



Ventra Card Is Now on iPhone!

On October 26, 2020, Pace and its Ventra partners launched the functionality of a virtual Ventra Card on iPhone and Apple Watch. Riders can now tap their iPhone or Apple Watch to pay for Pace rides using transit value or passes, without needing to carry a separate transit card, open apps, or even wake the device.

Pace riders enjoy the same features of a Ventra Card on iPhone and Apple Watch, including the ability to load and manage transit value and CTA and Pace passes, autoload, pretax transit benefits from employers, account management features in the Ventra app, and more.

Riders who convert their plastic Ventra Card to Apple Wallet were instructed to cut up and throw away the old, plastic card, as it is no longer valid once added to your Apple Wallet.

Special fare program cards, such as RTA Reduced Fare, Student Ventra Cards, or U-Pass Cards, cannot be added to Apple Wallet at this time.

Paying for transit has never been easier! Simply tap your iPhone or Apple Watch to the Ventra reader, and go when you see the green “Go.”



Partnership With Cook County Launches Fair Transit South Cook

As part of an intergovernmental agreement approved November 12, 2020, Cook County is funding an expansion of service on Pace's most heavily used route: 352 Halsted. This service improvement is part of a larger effort by the county to better integrate existing Pace, CTA, and Metra service in the south suburbs and the far South Side of Chicago.

Other features of the program thus far include the county's funding for COVID-19 contact tracing as well as a pilot that cuts South Side Metra fares to match those of CTA and Pace.

Pace's Route 352 Halsted had carried nearly 7,000 trips per day before the pandemic and continues to be heavily used throughout 2020. It connects

Pace's busiest transportation center in Harvey with the CTA's 95th Street Red Line station. In addition to the short-term expansion of service, Pace is in the planning stage to make South Halsted Street one of the next Pulse rapid transit lines.



Pace Inducts New Three Million Miler

Bus Operator Jeffery Yunker of West Division earned in 2020 one of the most remarkable achievements a Pace bus operator can earn: Three Million Miler status. That award is bestowed on the very few individuals who drove 37.5 consecutive years without a preventable accident—an incredible testament to safe driving over the course of nearly four decades. Mr. Yunker could have driven to the moon and back more than 12 times, all the while keeping his

riders safe from asteroids. Jeffery lives in Glendale Heights with his wife Debbie and enjoys fishing and the outdoors.



Staff Concludes “Driving Innovation” Planning Process

With an anticipated public release in 2021, Pace’s new strategic vision plan, *Driving Innovation*, will succeed Vision 2020 and guide the agency’s major projects moving forward. It represents the work of cumulative research efforts and coordination between Pace staff and leadership over the past two years.

Driving Innovation is guided by an overall strategic vision that entails harnessing technology and new mobility solutions to lower the cost of providing coverage services for areas where demand for transit is low and the land-use development context is unsupportive of fixed route transit while ramping up rapid transit services in higher-demand areas supported by more intensive land uses.

Pace has many resources invested in innovative programs like On Demand, Paratransit, Dial-a-Ride,

RideShare, Vanpool, and Rapid Transit Program services. It has developed years of experience refining these programs and learning from and with its customers to optimize user interfaces and trip-booking processes.

The agency has also witnessed an unexpected and significant loss of revenue due to COVID-19 and is thus faced with an even greater need to assess how to invest its diminished resources. Now more than ever there is a need to reallocate spending to prioritize ridership-focused services over coverage-based services while overall helping to get as many people back to work as possible. At the same time, Pace has grown its technical capacity to collect data, capture important transit performance statistics, and integrate the regional Ventra card system. Pace’s institutional knowledge combined with the agency’s skilled staff creates an environment in which emerging mobility solutions can support ridership growth and yield reliability and travel-time savings, potentially at a lower cost.

Pace will continue to leverage its assets and external partnerships to incentivize urban forms that improve pedestrian and bicycle access to transit. It is also important that Pace further expand these relationships to support increased development of community-based services, including demand-response and micro-mobility pilots.



Driving Innovation

The Pace Strategic Vision Plan

Driving Innovation initiatives are organized into three categories: Programs, Policies & Framework; Service & Infrastructure; and Technology & Insight. These initiatives are guided by and intended to achieve the plan’s aspirational goals, including accessibility, equity, productivity, responsiveness, and safety, as well as organizational goals, including adaptability, collaboration, diversity, environmental stewardship, fiscal solvency, and integrity.

Many of these initiatives are continuations of existing programs and projects, such as Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) solutions, upgrading the Ventra Card system, expanding real-time next-bus information, and rolling out Pulse lines and expressway-based services.

There are also several of for which funding has been identified or awarded and on which Pace is either currently working or will be starting within the next five years. Highlights include implementing the Rebuild Illinois capital improvement projects, developing a service standards framework, embarking on a network-wide service restructuring, piloting tactical infrastructure improvements, expressway-based service expansion studies, and new administrative functions to support initiatives.

Other initiatives Pace is committed to, but are longer term in their outlook, include what a mobility agency would entail, building a technological integrated transit platform, taking steps toward electric bus vehicles, and refining and consolidating policies toward transit-supportive land use with the results of near-term initiatives.

Others still require additional investigation, study, and research before Pace can commit to them and may require extensive external coordination or industry advancement before they can be realized. These include transforming coverage-based services, paratransit upgrades, and connected and autonomous vehicle pilots.

Importantly, Pace is committed to coordinating *Driving Innovation* initiatives with plans and interests of partner agencies, municipalities, counties, and many more important community stakeholders, including customers and the public. External outreach activities to discuss and gain feedback on the plan are happening in 2021, and Pace will continually update the *Driving Innovation* plan going forward to ensure its vision, goals, and initiatives are both responsive to the region’s needs and up to date with the many disruptions and opportunities happening within the transportation industry at large.



Photos taken prior to COVID-19.

Progress Continues on Pulse Dempster Line

After a full year of success on the Pulse Milwaukee Line, Pace staff continues to make progress on what will be the second Pulse line to open—the Dempster Line.

Pace initiated the planning phase several years ago and met with agencies and local municipalities to develop initial design concepts and preliminary station locations. A Dempster Line Project Definition Report was developed and outlines preliminary service and operating plans and project cost estimates. Coordination continued during the environmental analysis and advanced conceptual design, which was completed in February 2018.

The project is currently in the final design phase, and though subject to change, construction is anticipated to begin in 2021.

In 2017, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning approved a \$10 million grant for construction of the Dempster Line. That construction grant is funded through the Federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) 2018-2022 program.

Stakeholder and public outreach are ongoing throughout the program.



Photo taken prior to COVID-19.

Chairman Kwasneski Leads an Appreciation Event for Late Will County Executive Larry Walsh

On October 13, Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski led an event in Joliet to pay respects to recently departed Will County Executive Larry Walsh. RTA Chairman Kirk Dillard, as well as current and former Illinois Department of Transportation secretaries, spoke at a very small, safe, outdoor “transportation tribute.” Directors Jeff Schielke and Roger Claar spoke as well, to honor a leader who truly valued transportation and collaboration.



Larry Walsh, Sr.
1948–2020



New Board Members Bring a Wealth of Public Service Experience

In addition to Director John Schmitt (see page 8), the Pace Board of Directors welcomed several new members during 2020.

On July 15, Pace welcomed Rachel Arfa as its newest Board member. By statute, one seat on Pace's Board of Directors is reserved for the commissioner of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) in Chicago. Director Arfa, recently appointed to fill that role by Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, replaced Director Laurie Dittman, who led MOPD in an acting capacity for several months. Pace was grateful to benefit from Director Dittman's insights and leadership during her tenure and is excited to work with Director Arfa moving forward.

Commissioner Arfa is the first deaf commissioner of MOPD, and the highest-ranking deaf person to serve in a city government leadership role. Arfa comes to MOPD with years of experience as a disability and civil rights attorney. She has held numerous civic and leadership roles and has long advocated making Chicago's cultural spaces accessible to people with disabilities. Arfa is a graduate of the University of Michigan and the University of Wisconsin School of Law.



Rachel Arfa

"Pace has been fortunate to have dedicated, talented representatives from the City of Chicago serve on its Board," said Pace Chairman Richard Kwasneski. "Director Arfa will undoubtedly continue this trend, and the people our system serves will benefit from her skills, her experience, and her perspective."



William McLeod

On August 1, 2020, after former President of the Village of Schaumburg Al Larson retired from the Pace Board of Directors after 20 years of service, Mayor William McLeod of Hoffman Estates joined the Board. McLeod had been appointed by the Cook County Board's Suburban Caucus.

McLeod was elected to the Office of the Mayor in April 2001, after serving as acting mayor since September 2000 and Village trustee since 1980. During his tenure, Mayor McLeod has dedicated himself to the growth and sustainability of Hoffman Estates in the areas of economic development and business retention, housing, infrastructure, and transportation. He helped spearhead and guide the development of the highly visible Barrington Interchange, which is home to Illinois' first in-line (on-highway) bus station and Pace's I-90/Barrington Road Park-n-Ride.

"We are grateful for Al Larson's many years of dedicated service. He was Schaumburg's biggest supporter and was an integral part of Pace's leadership team," said Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski. "Mayor McLeod is a welcome addition to our Board. His partnership was key in the success of Pace's I-90 Market Expansion project, and I look forward to seeing what else we'll achieve together."



Erin Smith

Then, at the end of 2020, McHenry County Chairman Jack Franks appointed a second new Pace Board member this year—former Lakewood Village President Erin Smith. Director Smith served as Village president from 2009 to 2017 and as trustee for four years prior to that. She and her husband, Mike, still reside in the community where they raised their four children. Smith also served as an officer in the McHenry County Council of Governments and on the Executive Board of the Chicago Metropolitan Mayors Caucus.

Online Booking Now Available on All 10 On Demand Services

As more and more residents of northeastern Illinois have come to appreciate the convenience of ride-hailing services such as Uber and Lyft, Pace achieved in 2020 its goal of implementing online booking for all 10 of its similar services, called On Demand.

Pace On Demand offers a reservation-based, shared-ride service in designated service areas throughout the suburban region. Riders can book online or call to reserve a trip at least one hour (or up to seven days) in advance and pay with Ventra or cash when boarding. Riders can also use mobile wallets, such as the Samsung, Google, Fitbit, or Apple Pay apps, or their personal contactless bank cards. Rides cost \$2 through Ventra, making this service cost-competitive with ride-hailing services.

SERVICE NAME (CLICK FOR MAP AND INFO)	BOOK BY PHONE	BOOK ONLINE
Arlington Heights-Rolling Meadows On Demand Weekdays, 6:10 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.	224-803-9277	BOOK ONLINE
Batavia On Demand Weekdays, 6:30 a.m. - 6:50 p.m.	847-254-7471	BOOK ONLINE
Hoffman Estates On Demand Weekdays, 6:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.	224-323-2998	BOOK ONLINE
Naperville-Aurora On Demand Weekdays, 6:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.	630-453-4599	BOOK ONLINE

On Demand is open to the general public, so anyone can book a trip and ride the service as long as the trip starts and ends within one of the On Demand zones. The On Demand services are in addition to similar paratransit-style services within northeastern Illinois, used for decades by seniors and people with disabilities.



Pace's Diverse Workforce Reflects Regional Demographics

Pace has always prided itself on having an incredibly diverse workforce. Year after year, our employee demographic data shows a majority of employees are people of color.

Pace's Office of Diversity and Inclusion, created in 2019 by Executive Director Rocky Donahue, seeks to further improve Pace's diversity and take better advantage of the many talents our already diverse staff brings to the table.

The chart below offers a breakdown of Pace's workforce by race. Pace's employees are 64% male and 36% female. Fully 71% of Pace's workforce is



non-white. As we continually seek out ways to be more responsive to our customers' needs, having a workforce with a demographic breakdown that matches that of the population we serve is one of many ways we try to meet that goal.

SUBURBAN BUS SERVICES: Workforce Analysis

Job Categories	All Employees		Male							Female							
	Total	Male	Female	W	B	H	A	I	P	T	W	B	H	A	I	P	T
Officials and administrators	96	67	29	48	12	5	2	0	0	0	19	7	2	1	0	0	0
Professionals	313	201	112	111	44	28	14	1	0	3	59	33	11	9	0	0	0
Technicians	8	8	0	3	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administration support (including clerical and sales)	79	15	64	11	2	2	0	0	0	0	32	19	9	1	0	0	3
Skilled craft workers	136	133	3	57	30	36	8	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
Service/maintenance	1,225	764	461	187	440	101	21	4	1	10	41	367	34	1	1	0	16
Total Workforce	1,857	1,188	609	417	529	175	46	5	1	15	153	426	57	12	1	0	19

W - White, Not Hispanic B - Black or African American H - Hispanic or Latino A - Asian
 I - American Indian/Alaska Native P - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander T - Two or More Races

Employee Commendations Stream in From Grateful Riders

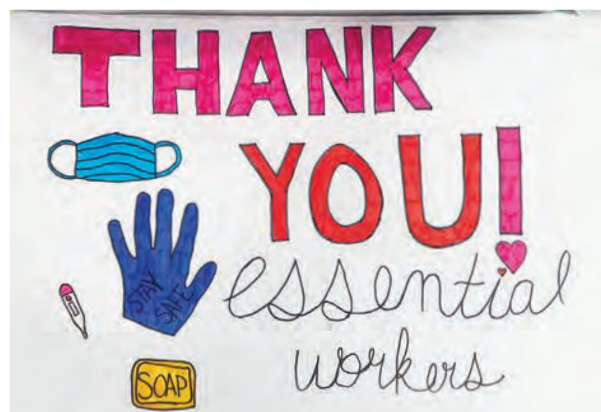
During a tumultuous year when many people found joy in small acts of kindness or learned to appreciate the value that essential workers offer to our daily lives, Executive Director Rocky Donahue and the Pace Board were heartened to see an influx of commendations from Pace riders about the bus operators who transport them safely every day.

Following are a few examples of the hundreds of glowing reviews Pace's front-line workers received from members of the public who rely on them.

April 13:
"Pace offers a sense of real life in these unreal times."

May 1:
"We got the best drivers in the world and we pray for them, it's a blessing."

May 1:
"Thanks for keeping me working when so many people are not."



June 12:
"Being able to ride free [during the peak of the pandemic] has made my life so much easier and I just want to say how much I appreciate it. God bless and keep you safe."

June 26:
A North Division operator "went out of her way to let an elderly lady onto the bus on the front with the loading ramp so she could get her groceries on; I appreciate that lady's efforts."

July 17:
"A customer was waiting at the incorrect stop for Route 221 when [a Northwest Operator] drove by on a different route, stopped even though she didn't have to, figured out the rider's situation, and picked her up."

July 31:
"I wanted to let you know what a great experience I had yesterday, my first time riding Pace, as I live in Chicago and do not normally ride Pace when I go to the suburbs. I was not sure how to get where I was going, or return for that matter, but the driver of bus #2674 was exceptional. He was very helpful, patient, knowledgeable, and kind. I really appreciate the help he gave me and thought you should know you have drivers doing a great job! I will definitely be back on Pace soon!"

September 11:
"My 213 driver is a really nice guy! No wonder he's a million miler and line instructor."

September 11:
"Tonight your bus driver ... alerted a supervisor because he didn't want me walking to my train alone. Thank you again for keeping us safe. You got a lot of great drivers!"

September 25:
"A rider who uses a cane was walking out of CVS and didn't quite make it to her bus stop in time, and my operator noticed her and waited for her to board."

November 6:
John (from Northwest Division), who we've been told "gives the smoothest rides" and is "very courteous" always wishes riders a good morning and tells them to have a good day. "He is very safe and just an all-around great driver."

December 4:
"Using my Ventra account [to pay for a paratransit ride] today was a fabulous experience! Kudos to Pace ;-)" from Pam Heavens, United Cerebral Palsy-Center for Disability Services

“
He was very helpful, patient, knowledgeable, and kind. I really appreciate the help he gave me and thought you should know you have drivers doing a great job! I will definitely be back on Pace soon!”





 **pace**
PaceBus.com