Driving Innovation

The Pace Strategic Vision Plan

Executive Summary

DRAFT June 2021

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About *Driving Innovation*

Purpose

The purpose of the *Driving Innovation* plan is to identify and establish both near-term and long-term priorities for Pace Suburban Bus, guided by goals, and organized into discrete planning initiatives, in accordance with an overarching strategic vision. *Driving Innovation* is the successor plan to *Vision 2020: Blueprint for the Future*, released in 2001-2002.

In communicating its vision, Pace hopes to provide greater transparency to riders, communities, and other regional stakeholders, as well as foster expanded opportunities for the coordination and innovation of public transit in Northeastern Illinois.

How to Read this Plan

This Executive Summary includes two main sections, the *Driving Innovation* goals, and the plan's 20 initiatives, which are organized into four groups:

- Agency Priority Initiatives
- Programs, Policies & Frameworks
- Service & Infrastructure
- Technology & Insight

Beyond the Executive Summary, Pace has prepared the main *Driving Innovaiton* plan document, titled as the Detailed Plan. Please refer to the Detailed Plan for background information and specifics for how individual initiatives are expected to advance Pace's strategic vision, as well as additional context for how the plan was produced and will be implemented moving forward.

The Need for Partnerships

Pace is already committed to many of the initiatives in this plan, but recognizes that some warrant additional study, research and development. In particular, Pace seeks feedback from its regional partners, external organizations and the public to better understand how *Driving Innovation* can affect positive change at the community and individual level, and find new opportunities for collaboration and mutual support.

A Living Document

The transportation industry has witnessed dramatic changes over the last decade. New mobility solutions and business practices are causing equal amounts of disruption and opportunity.

This dynamic has been profoundly amplified and reshaped by the COVID-19 pandemic. As Pace moves forward with implementing the initiatives called for in this plan, much thought and care will be invested into considering how current conditions have evolved and affect the agency's ability to proceed.

Pace will update this plan on a regular basis as initiatives are progressed, completed, expanded, abandoned or otherwise modified to keep pace with the ever-changing and dynamic region the agency serves.

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Driving Innovation Plan Goals

The *Driving Innovation* plan is guided by eleven overarching goals, divided among each of the two following groups: Service Goals and Organization Goals. See Chapter III of the Detailed Plan document for additional information about these goals, including illustrative objectives identified for addressing each.

Service Goals

ACCESSIBILITY
Maximize transit access for residents and employers.

EQUITY
Support an inclusive transit system that provides low cost connections to social and economic opportunities.

PRODUCTIVITY
Efficiently move large numbers of customers.

RESPONSIVENESS
Provide superior experiences for all customers.

SAFETY
Operate and maintain a system that prioritizes safety.

Organization Goals

ADAPTABILITY
Embrace innovation to advance Pace's goals.

COLLABORATION
Seek creative and mutually beneficial relationships.

DIVERSITY
Build and nurture an exemplary workforce.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP
Plan and operate in a way that protects the environment.

FISCAL SOLVENCY
Deploy financial resources in a fiscally responsible way.

INTEGRITY
Promote transparency in decision-making and foster a culture and practice of good goverance.

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Agency Priority Initiatives

Driving Innovation provides Pace with a vision that spans both near-term and long-term horizons. This section features the nearest-term initiatives that are currently the agency's highest priority for moving forward.

Agency priority initiatives are broad-based and encompass the topics of each of the other three initiative sections of this chapter of the plan. Each is programmatic in nature and promotes agency-wide policies, directly affects service operations and the underlying infrastructure that supports it, and also relies heavily on technology and the needs of Pace's customers.

Implementation Key for Initiatives

IMPLEMENT NOW   These are new initiatives that Pace is committed to moving forward with in the near-term five-year timeframe.

IMPLEMENT LATER   These are new initiatives that Pace is committed to moving forward with in general. The timing of these initiatives is currently unknown, and most will likely require other initiatives or preliminary work to be completed before these can start.

FURTHER INVESTIGATE   While Pace may not be committed to implementing these ideas, it is committed to further investigating or exploring them to ascertain whether they should be programmed. If accepted, these initiatives may advance to either Implement Now or Implement Later.

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A-1   Electric Bus & Fleet Transition Planning | *IMPLEMENT NOW*

Assess the feasibility of transitioning Pace's fleet toward battery electric and additional CNG technologies, as well as develop a transition plan for operations and facilities. Study other emerging technologies that can improve Pace's environmental impact.

A-2   Capital Improvement Projects | *IMPLEMENT NOW*

Implement all capital projects funded through Rebuild Illinois, and produce a Facilities Plan to determine how Pace facilities will be used to support other service plans and initiatives.

A-3   Rapid Transit Program | *IMPLEMENT NOW*

Continue planning, designing, implementing and operating Pulse Lines and Pace Express bus services.

A-4   Service Standards Framework | *IMPLEMENT NOW*

Implement a service standards framework to guide service characterisitcs, performance, and local transit propensity.

A-5   Network Revitalization & Service Restructuring | *IMPLEMENT NOW*

Conduct a system-wide market assessment to understand current service demand, design alternatives for restructuring the entire Pace service network, and use a Corridor Development program to prioritize investment areas.

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Programs, Policies & Frameworks

Driving Innovation calls for Pace to update its programs and policies to reposition the agency's vision and capitalize on the forward momentum of its current projects and past successes.

Furthermore, these policies and programs are partly designed to provide preliminary means of administering many of the Driving Innovation initiatives discussed in the Service & Infrastructure and Technology & Insight sections.

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P-1 Mobility Agency Transition | *IMPLEMENT LATER*

Formally recognize Pace's current role as a regional mobility provider and move beyond the perception of a suburban bus company.

P-2 Strategic Administrative Functions | *IMPLEMENT NOW*

Develop and launch new agency programs and associated administrative support functions to support emerging strategic initiatives.

P-3 Transit-Supportive Development Engagement | *IMPLEMENT LATER*

Support *Driving Innovation* service development initiatives by establishing clear expectations for level of service and transit amenities that municipalities and the development community can expect for building transit-supportive developments.

P-4 Transit Fare Equity Programs | *FURTHER INVESTIGATE*

Explore a range of different solutions (including establishing price caps) to provide equal access to service for persons of all incomes and reduce financial barriers.

P-5 Funding & Finance | *IMPLEMENT NOW*

Consistent with Pace's annual budgeting process, develop strategic financial goals and refocused spending priorities, as well as develop a financial investment plan for new strategic initiatives.

Service & Infrastructure

Pace is committed to upgrading its facilities, infrastructure investments, service typologies and plans. This section discusses how Pace will deliver and plan for capital projects that will allow the agency to continue to grow and meet the expanding transit needs of the region.

Details are also provided for Pace's vision of how specific types of services can and should be developed and upgraded, as well as the approach to be taken for planning its network.

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S-1   Tactical Transit Pilots | *IMPLEMENT NOW*

Collaborate with municipalities and roadway agencies to pursue tactical measures to initiate temporary infrastructure improvements to enhance service and operations.

S-2   Coverage Service Transformation | *FURTHER INVESTIGATE*

Further investigate how to strategically deploy coverage-focused services, such as On Demand, Vanpool, RideShare, micro-mobility and community partnerships to provide coverage service.

S-3   Paratransit Upgrades | *FURTHER INVESTIGATE*

Explore further partnerships, wheelchair-accessible vehicles and improvements to the fixed route system to serve Paratransit-eligible customers.

S-4   Dial-a-Ride Service Consistency | *FURTHER INVESTIGATE*

Explore ways of streamlining DAR marketing, staffing, customer service, eligibility, reservations, and service hours across the region.

S-5   Centralized Operations Control Facility | *FURTHER INVESTIGATE*

Investigate the feasibility of a centralized fleet management system to improve monitoring and deployment of resources.

Technology & Insight

Pace recognizes that the evolution of transportation technologies over the last decade is leading to significant changes in the methods used to plan and design future transit systems.

Differences in passenger commuting practices, travel patterns, markets, climate, fiscal resources, service standards, operations, and business priorities are all strong influences on the agency's appetite for technical changes.

This section touches on the most prominent and promising technology-based solutions that Pace may have the capacity for either implementing near-term or beginning to make long-term plans to accommodate.

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T-1   Current Technology Programs | *IMPLEMENT NOW*

Expand and build upon the success of Pace's current technology-based initiatives to augment infrastructure and service development initiatives.

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T-2   Customer Focused Engagement | *IMPLEMENT NOW*

Upgrade customer relationship technologies and internal processes, as well as ramp up market research efforts to understand customer preferences, trip purposes and travel patterns using new and innovative practices.

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T-3   Integrated Transit Platform | *IMPLEMENT LATER*

Establish an internal software platform to match transit services with customer travel preferences in real-time, including vehicle location, connection protection, first and last mile.

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T-4   Open Source Multi-Modal Trip Planner | *IMPLEMENT LATER*

Implement an open source multi-modal trip planner with integrated demand-response services.

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T-5   Connected and Autonomous Transit Pilots | *FURTHER INVESTIGATE*

Explore partnerships with regional transportation stakeholders to develop agency capacity in implementing connected and autonomous transit vehicle applications.

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