



Pace passengers riding a Vanpool vehicle.

S-2 Coverage Service Transformation

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

implement
now

implement
later

FURTHER
INVESTIGATE

Supports Goals:

Accessibility, Equity, Productivity, Responsiveness, Safety, Collaboration, Environmental Stewardship, and Fiscal Solvency

ACTION ITEM 1 Leverage Cost Effective Coverage Services

Driving Innovation calls for Pace to explore policies that will establish the desired allocation of coverage services between different contexts and urban typologies. This would allow a refined approach to improving ridership services and send a clear signal of the types of services that were appropriate for different typologies.

Pace may aspire to increase service on its successful Primary and Secondary Routes while reducing, restructuring, or replacing service for inefficient services such as commute shuttles and low ridership fixed-routes that primarily provide coverage.

For Pace, a key piece of reducing the cost of coverage services is prioritizing On Demand over Connector Routes, where feasible. On Demand services are more efficient than low-performing fixed routes, however may have a lower farebox recovery when compared one-on-one with most fixed routes.

Future market assessments and planning efforts will need to carefully consider where such replacements in service type would be desirable from both a financial and practical perspective.

Pace will explore new opportunities to partner with private transit providers and/or municipalities to reduce costs and improve service responsiveness.



ACTION ITEM 2 Continue Modernizing the On Demand Service Model

Analysis findings indicated that Pace's On Demand zones are its most efficient form of coverage, serving approximately 89 square miles per million dollars of annual operating cost. On Demand service also provides a personalized customer experience compared to hourly bus service.

As Pace assesses its funding and allocation of service resources in the wake of COVID-19, On Demand may provide one coverage-based service option for replacing fixed route services. This suitability of the service model depends on the urban typology, transit competitiveness and overall land use context. Ultimately, financial feasibility will be a major deciding factor in determining if and where On Demand should be expanded.

Pace will also explore new opportunities to partner with private transit providers and/or municipalities to reduce costs and improve service responsiveness, such as what Bedford Park is piloting (see pg. 135).

Lastly, Pace will continue the process of modernizing the On Demand service model to accept digital reservations, as well as continue its revamped marketing techniques to encourage greater utilization. These efforts will help enhance the customer experience and also improve data collection, so that Pace can better understand customer travel patterns, wait times, cancellation rates, and rejection rates.



ACTION ITEM 3 Conduct Pilots and Feasibility Studies

Pace will continue to optimize its On Demand service planning and determine ideal locations for potential service. Although Pace has previously and is currently conducting such studies independently, this type of investigation could also be conducted as part of the proposed A-5 Network Revitalization & Service Restructuring initiative or as standalone projects that coordinate with restructuring efforts. On Demand, Vanpool, and TNC partnership arrangements may be utilized to support the following scenarios.

SERVICE COVERAGE REPLACEMENT

On Demand and other alternative service designs may provide lower-cost coverage solutions for areas where demand for transit does not meet levels established by the agency's Service Standard Framework. Replacing select fixed-route service with On Demand may help Pace reallocate fixed-route resources in higher-performing markets and benefit more customers.

FIRST MILE-LAST MILE

Another strategy for On Demand services is to support first mile-last mile solutions, and the current and latent market demand for this unique portion of commute trips should be explored. A market identification process should identify the general location of markets, such as rail stations, park-and-ride locations utilized by bus and Pace vanpools, and regional employment centers that could benefit from first mile-last mile solutions.

BEYOND SERVICE SPAN

The feasibility of On Demand and TNC partnership pilots may be explored in areas where service span is a greater issue than access to higher-capacity transit. This may include areas with demand for late-night services or hours that go beyond current service spans.

Specific locations for these pilots should be determined from further analysis. Coverage-based pilot projects may provide an overlay across Pace's Secondary lines and Connector routes to span between Rural and Urban Center land-use/urban development typologies.

Importantly, a framework of evaluation should be explored to set expectations for when it may be appropriate to expend public dollars to subsidize TNC partnerships. Specifically, Pace should ensure that public dollars invested in a private partnership are equitable and avoid diminishing the quality or availability of core fixed-route service.

ACTION ITEM 4 Explore Micro-mobility Partnerships

A key to a better first- and last-mile experience is providing comfortable sidewalks and bicycle facilities and making sure they are well maintained. Advances in micro-mobility and new forms of shared mobility expand the reach of transit. Pace will explore pilot programs with micro-mobility providers. Coordinated bike-share or shared scooters may help achieve Pace's service coverage goals. Pilot programs may provide a detailed evaluation criteria to measure program effectiveness and to identify areas of improvement to address customer needs. Micro-mobility will only be a viable option in areas that are reasonably comfortable for walking and bicycling.

Pace would not be able to enter such a partnership independently; it would require collaboration and support from the local municipality. Pace will further investigate markets where micro-mobility is most appropriate.

Pace will also work with the Active Transportation Alliance, the Shared Use Mobility Center, and other civic and advocacy groups, to explore how to best approach this issue.



All Pace fixed-route buses are equipped with bicycle racks.

Village of Bedford Park

The Village of Bedford Park is a community in Cook County with only 580 residents yet over 600 businesses that attract thousands of workers who travel into the Village every day. This commuting pattern creates congestion and safety challenges.

In 2018, the Village of Bedford Park began a mobility study and pilot program to understand how emerging mobility options, such as ride hailing and sharing applications, can be used to promote transit connectivity and equal access to employment opportunities. Funded with a grant from Cook County and RTA, and in partnership with CTA, Pace, the Shared use Mobility Center and other stakeholders, this project explored innovative transportation solutions to connect businesses and visitors to transit hubs utilizing a matrix of transportation tools. The program identified key challenges in using transit to access an industrial area (using a multi-modal first mile-last mile assessment survey tool) and tested public-private partnerships between transit agencies and transportation network companies.



The Village of Bedford Park is home to hundreds of businesses that employ thousands of workers who rely on public transit service to get to their jobs.