



# CONNECTING



## OUR



## COMMUNITY



**2025**  
ANNUAL REPORT





# OUR MISSION:

TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH EMPLOYEES,  
PASSENGERS, COMMUNITIES, AND BUSINESS  
PARTNERS TO FOSTER THE USE OF PUBLIC  
TRANSPORTATION IN OUR AREA.



# Chairman's Welcome

## DEAR PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS,

On behalf of the Pace Board of Directors, I am pleased to share our 2025 annual report. This document reflects the major achievements and historic investments in public transit made possible by the work of our elected officials in Springfield.

The entire Pace organization would like to thank the Illinois General Assembly and the Illinois Governor's Office for its commitment and dedication to passing legislation this year that delivers transformational funding to our region's transit system. It is also important to recognize the labor and transit advocacy groups who worked in partnership with us throughout this process.

Because of this legislation, 2025 concludes on a high note and our organization can move forward in 2026 with a vision for improved suburban bus service. Through stronger improvements to our infrastructure,

technology, and service delivery, we can continue to show the impact of careful planning and wise investment. These achievements reflect the hard work of our employees, the guidance of our Board, and the steadfast support of our partners at every level of government.

With continued collaboration, smart planning, and sustainable funding solutions, we will ensure that transit not only survives but thrives—strengthening the economic vitality and quality of life across our region. Thank you for your continued trust and partnership.

Sincerely,

*Rick Kwasneski*  
**RICK KWASNESKI**  
Chairman





# Board of Directors

PACE, THE SUBURBAN BUS DIVISION OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY IN NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS, PROVIDES BUS, PARATRANSIT SERVICE FOR THE REGION INCLUDING THE CITY OF CHICAGO, AND VANPOOL SERVICES IN CHICAGO'S SIX-COUNTY METROPOLITAN AREA.

Pace is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of members representing each of the six counties, including six members from suburban Cook County and the City of Chicago's Commissioner for the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities. The geographic diversity of representation on the Pace Board ensures stakeholders from all parts of the region have a voice in public transportation policymaking.



**Richard A. Kwasneski**  
Chairman



**Rachel Arfa**  
City of Chicago



**Christopher S. Canning**  
North Shore Suburban Cook County



**Terrance Carr**  
Central Suburban Cook 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



**John D. Noak**  
Will County



**Jeffery D. Schielke**  
Kane County



**Erin Smith**  
McHenry County



**Linda Soto**  
Lake County

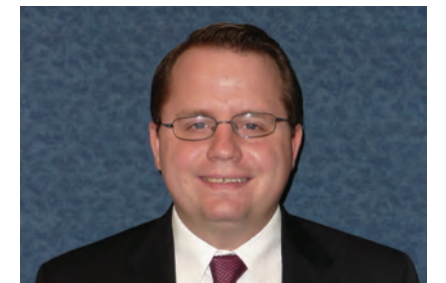


**Terry R. Wells**  
South Suburban Cook County

## Pace Senior Staff



**Melinda J. Metzger**  
Executive Director



**Andrew Mueller**  
General Counsel



**Lindsey Umek**  
Chief Operating Officer



**Colette Thomas Gordon**  
Chief Internal Auditor



**Maggie Schilling**  
Chief Financial Officer





# Dear Stakeholders:

Pace has always been more than a transit agency. We are a vital connector of people, places, and opportunities across the suburbs. Thanks to collaborative efforts with many of you, our stakeholders in northeastern Illinois, we have much to celebrate from 2025. Throughout the following pages, you can see our commitment to our mission by strengthening our investments in our passengers, communities, and services that help drive the region's economic prosperity.

Thanks to the Illinois General Assembly and the Illinois Governor's Office, new legislation approved this past fall will generate more than a billion dollars for transit agencies. The legislation represents a historic investment in public transit for northeastern Illinois. Pace looks forward to continuing its tradition of using the public's resources efficiently and effectively to expand and enhance our services. Because of this legislation, Pace is now positioned to deliver what we do best—connect people to opportunity. Every day, thousands of riders rely on us to reach jobs, school, medical appointments, and the activities that fulfill life. Our buses strengthen industrial corridors and expand access to talent for employers. And our paratransit system empowers people with disabilities and older adults to participate fully in our economy and civic life.

We can now move forward with the service expansions identified in ReVision, our ambitious network restructuring project that began more than a year ago. Our ReVision work will lead to more frequent service, new rapid transit corridors, expanded bus-on-shoulder operations, and innovative mobility solutions for riders throughout our region.

Pace cannot wait to meet this moment and continue the momentum toward a stronger and more resilient transit system. With the support of our riders, employees, and elected officials, we look forward to building the world-class transit system our passengers deserve.

Sincerely,

Melinda

MELINDA J. METZGER  
Executive Director



# Pace in 2025: By the Numbers

2025 Ridership\* **24,857,000 trips**

**608**

Fixed Route Vehicles in Fleet

**274**

Communities Served

**7.9%**

Ridership Increase Over 2024

**27,532,000**

Vehicle Miles of Travel by Fixed Route Vehicles

**310**

Vanpools in Service

**133**

Fixed Bus Routes

**413**

Paratransit Vehicles in Fleet

**0.32**

Accidents per 100,000 Revenue Miles

**9.0 yrs**

Average Vehicle Age of Fixed Route Vehicles in Service

**37%**

Increase in Suburban Population Since 1985

**98%**

Paratransit On-time Performance

**5.6 yrs**

Average Age of Paratransit Vehicles in Service

## 2025 Budget\*

Suburban Service Expenses



Capital Budget



Regional ADA Service Expenses



Total Expenses



\* Estimate

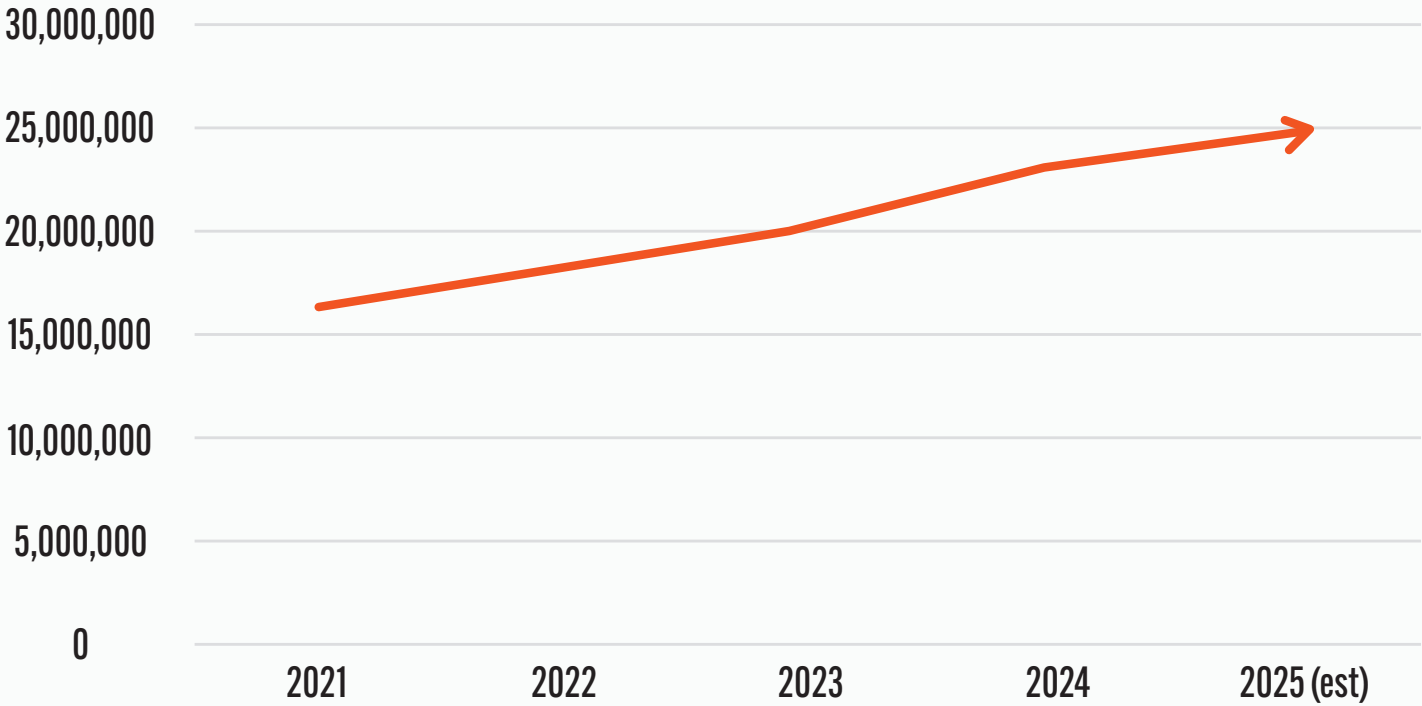


# Strong Ridership Growth Continues

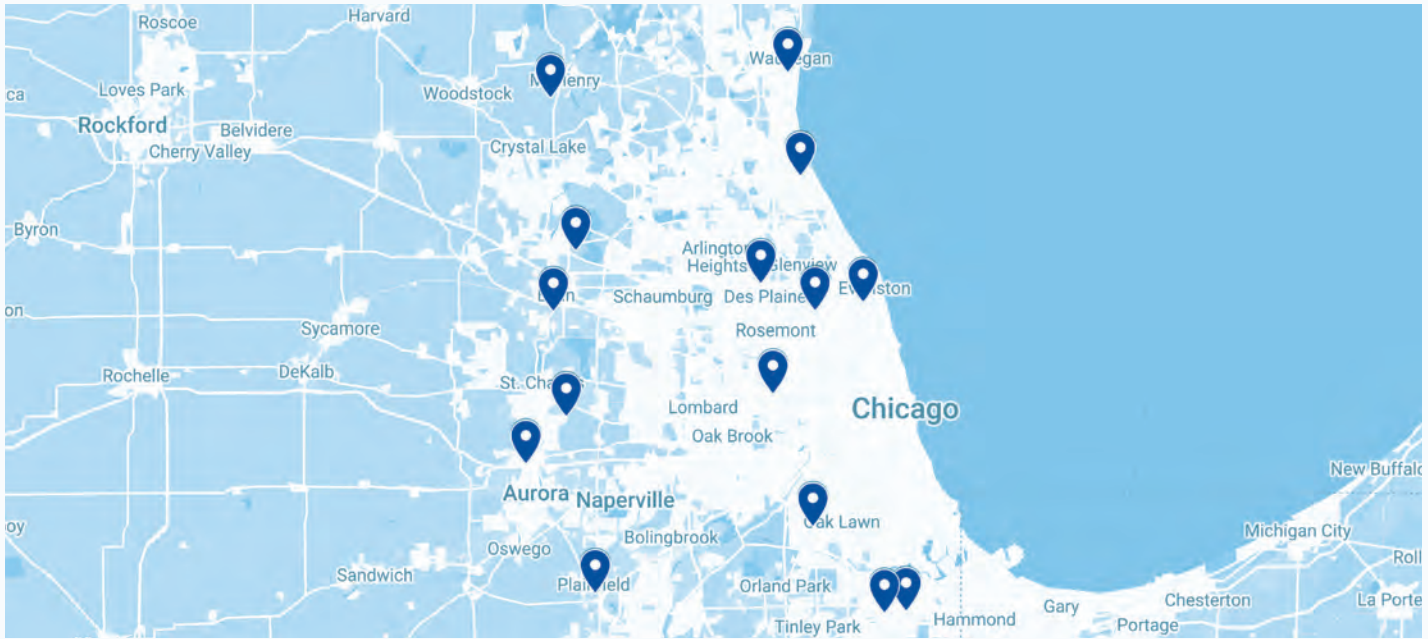
Your efforts to serve our passengers is paying off! Ridership has increased for the fifth consecutive year, with an estimated 7.9% growth in 2025.

YEAR	RIDERSHIP	CHANGE
2021	16,359,000	10.8%
2022	18,130,000	10.8%
2023	20,107,000	10.9%
2024	23,041,000	14.6%
2025 (est)	24,857,000	7.9%

## Annual Ridership



# Pace’s Facilities



Pace operates its fixed route bus service from 14 different facilities listed below. Pace also performs bus acceptance and maintenance at a 15th site and bus operator training at a 16th site.

## Garage/Division

<b>Acceptance Facility</b> 2107A W. 163rd Place, Markham, IL 60428	<b>Heritage</b> 14539 S. Depot Drive, Plainfield, IL 60544	<b>River (East Dundee)</b> 401 Christina Drive, East Dundee, IL 60118
<b>Central Training and Customer Relations Facility</b> 2107B W. 163rd Place, Markham, IL 60428	<b>McHenry</b> 5007 Prime Parkway, McHenry, IL 60050	<b>Southwest</b> 9889 S. Industrial Drive, Bridgeview, IL 60455
<b>City of Highland Park</b> 1150 Half Day Road, Highland Park, IL 60035	<b>North</b> 1400 W. 10th Street, Waukegan, IL 60085	<b>South</b> 2101 W. 163rd Place, Markham, IL 60428
<b>Fox Valley</b> 400 Overland Drive, North Aurora, IL 60542	<b>Northwest</b> 900 E. Northwest Highway, Des Plaines, IL 60016	<b>Village of Niles</b> 6859 Touhy Avenue, Niles, IL 60714
<b>Headquarters</b> 550 W. Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60005	<b>North Shore</b> 2330 Oakton Street, Evanston, IL 60202	<b>West</b> 3500 W. Lake Street, Melrose Park, IL 60160
	<b>River</b> 975 S. State Street, Elgin, IL 60123	





# Historic Legislation Sustains Illinois Transit Funding

October 31 was a truly historic day for Pace and regional transit. The Illinois General Assembly passed SB 2111, which not only provided more than \$1.2 billion annually for the northeastern Illinois transit system, but also created significant reforms to governance and operations. These reforms will unify the three Chicagoland transit agencies under a new regional authority, the Northern Illinois Transit Authority (NITA). NITA will replace the RTA and take on new responsibilities, including setting fares, enhancing and coordinating service, overseeing long-term capital planning, and leading the implementation of unified, rider-focused tools such as more seamless mobile ticketing.

This sustainable funding means riders will not experience service cuts or fare increases in 2026 and instead will benefit from continued improvements to service frequency, reliability, and safety in the coming years. Starting in 2027, after funding NITA expenses, ADA paratransit, and base-line funding for the Service Boards, remaining operating funding will be distributed to CTA, Metra, and Pace using a new formula that includes key performance-based metrics and will later transition to distribution via a soon-to-be-developed service standards model that will help guide appropriate levels of service throughout the region.



New revenue streams for Pace, CTA and Metra transit operations come from:

- ⌚ **Dedicating existing sales tax on motor fuel: \$860 million statewide (\$731 million for RTA region and \$129 million for downstate transit)**
- ⌚ **RTA sales tax increase of 0.25%: \$478 million for RTA region, pending approval by the RTA Board after the legislation's effective date of June 1, 2026**
- ⌚ **New capital revenue from interest on the Road Fund balance: \$200 million statewide (\$180 million for RTA region and \$20 million for downstate transit)**

"We are deeply grateful to the legislators who recognized the essential role public transportation plays in connecting communities and improving lives — and who understood the devastating impact that a lack of new funding would have had on our passengers, our employees, and our regional economy," said Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski.

The legislation takes effect on June 1, 2026. While new funding will not immediately reach Pace, the agency anticipates that in 2026 it will invest an additional \$18.9

million in suburban service, with \$56.7 million allocated to the Regional ADA Paratransit Program. For 2026, this funding will:

- ⌚ **Pay for the entire Regional ADA program, including TAP and RAP.**
- ⌚ **Allow Pace to maintain its current fare at \$2.00 (\$2.25 cash) for fixed route and \$3.25 for ADA Paratransit, with no fare increase until at least June 2027 for the NITA system.**
- ⌚ **Provide nearly 10% more suburban bus service so we can add service to meet market demand.**
- ⌚ **Allow Pace to expand our On Demand Program to provide additional first/last-mile connectivity for riders.**

The new funding will allow Pace to finish our network restructuring plan, called ReVision, to enhance our system for the long term. "This legislation ensures that Pace can not only maintain service but also enhance it. With this new investment, we are poised to deliver more service, increased frequency, expanded bus-on-shoulder operations, new bus rapid transit corridors, and innovative solutions to meet growing demand," said Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger. "This is a bold new chapter for Pace and for transit across northeastern Illinois. We are ready to build on our momentum and make our riders and communities proud."

This bill represents a tremendous investment in regional transit, and it is a testament to the commitment of Pace employees to deliver reliable and safe transit service every day for our riders.

Governor JB Pritzker signed the bill on December 16, 2025, officially enacting Illinois Public Act 104-457 at an event at Chicago's Union Station.







# Governor and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Present Pace with Grant for Electric Buses

February 7, 2025

Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) joined Pace and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) at Pace's new state-of-the-art Markham Campus Bus Acceptance Facility to celebrate a \$27 million award to Pace for the purchase of electric buses through "Driving a Cleaner Illinois." The Driving a Cleaner Illinois grants for electric buses to the RTA region are the largest grants that IEPA has announced from the program to date; the previous high was \$14 million.

Pace will provide a \$9 million match to the IEPA award and will purchase 27 battery-electric buses (BEBs). Honored speakers included Governor JB Pritzker, State Senator Napoleon Harris, Markham Mayor Roger Agpawa, IEPA Acting Director James Jennings, RTA Chairman Kirk Dillard, Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski, and Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger. Other guests included State Representative Bob Rita, State Representative Matt Hanson, IDOT Acting Secretary Gia Biagi, Cook County Commissioner Donna Miller, Cook County Commissioner Dr. Kisha E. McCaskill, University Park Mayor Joseph Roudez III, and representatives from U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth's Office, U.S.

Congresswoman Robin Kelly's office, State Senator Kyle Hasting's office, the Village of Robbins, South Suburban Mayors & Managers Association, Chicago Southland Economic Development Council, and South Suburban College.

By transitioning to a zero-emission fleet, our region's public transportation system aims to significantly reduce harmful pollutants, contributing to healthier communities and a greener future. Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski welcomed guests and said, "Public transit is more than just buses — it's about connecting people to jobs, schools, healthcare, and opportunity, and being a good steward of our environment. We are grateful to the Governor's leadership, which ensures critical, clean energy initiatives move forward."

"Illinoisans of all backgrounds depend on Pace and the CTA. Whether commuting to work, visiting friends and family,



or running their everyday errands — the convenience and efficiency of these systems is absolutely essential to their everyday lives," said Governor JB Pritzker. "Pace has added 27 new, fully electric buses. This is an investment that will help us meet our climate goals, create opportunity for our people, and further connect our communities. Electric buses are vital to the future of transit — clean, reliable, and convenient — and I'm excited to be taking a step toward that future today."

"Transit is the strongest tool we have in the fight against climate change, and we are grateful for the partnership of the IEPA in leading that fight," said RTA Board Chair Kirk Dillard. "This investment will improve service and provide cleaner air for Pace riders in the short term and in the long-term, help us lower greenhouse gas emissions.

"RTA is committed to leading regional grant applications in the future to advance key transit capital priorities for our region," Dillard continued.

**"This award from IEPA takes us another step further in meeting our regional commitment of reaching a zero-emissions bus fleet by 2040."**

Driving a Cleaner Illinois is the IEPA's grant program developed to distribute funding for various types of mobile source electrification projects. The Driving a Cleaner Illinois Program implements funding from a variety of sources, including the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) Program.

The Illinois EPA has been designated as the lead agency to administer funds allocated to Illinois from the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust. Illinois' initial allocation of funds is approximately \$108 million to be used to fund mobile source diesel emission reduction projects. The funds are to be used for projects that reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides in Illinois.

"Emissions from diesel powered transit buses negatively impact air quality in the communities they serve and the region as a whole," said Illinois EPA Acting Director James Jennings. "Through the VW settlement funding and additional cost-sharing commitments from both Pace and RTA/CTA, these projects represent a \$77 million investment in clean transportation that will benefit communities throughout the Chicago area."

"This investment will provide climate-friendly transit options that improve mobility and quality of life for people across the region," said Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Gia Biagi. "Under Governor Pritzker's leadership, we are working closely with our transit partners to make our entire transportation system safe, reliable, and green."

"It's refreshing to see how something that began as a challenge for Volkswagen has been turned into a positive force for change, furthering both our region's and the state's pollution reduction goals. This transformation underscores the real impact of investing in clean transportation solutions," said Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger.





JOB CATEGORIES	TOTAL			MALE							FEMALE						
	Total	Male	Female	W	B	H	A	I	P	T	W	B	H	A	I	P	T
Officials and Administrators	89	60	29	37	9	9	5	0	0	0	16	11	1	1	0	0	0
Professionals	320	202	118	97	55	39	10	1	0	0	53	45	14	5	0	1	0
Technicians	7	7	0	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative Support (including clerical and sales)	88	24	64	14	6	3	1	0	0	0	29	18	13	3	0	0	1
Skilled craft workers	150	149	1	46	32	64	6	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Service/Maintenance	1391	860	531	150	542	147	17	2	0	2	29	458	37	1	3	0	3
Total Workforce	2045	1302	743	347	645	264	40	3	1	2	128	532	65	10	3	1	4

# Diversity Is Our Strength

DEMOGRAPHICS OF PACE'S WORKFORCE  
As of 12.01.2025

THE PRINCIPLE OF INCLUSION GUIDES ALL THE WORK PACE DOES, FROM HIRING NEW EMPLOYEES, TO AWARDED CONTRACTS TO VENDORS, TO IMPLEMENTING NEW SERVICES IN UNDERSERVED AREAS.

Diversity contributes to Pace's strength. Since its inception, Pace has had a diverse workforce, and that trend has continued with the flurry of hiring activity in the past three years. See above for the current makeup of the Pace workforce. Of note, 77% of employees are non-white.



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



# Local Officials Celebrate Grand Opening of Paratransit Transfer Center at Schaumburg's Northwest Transportation Center

September 10, 2025



## PACE WELCOMED LOCAL AND STATE OFFICIALS TO OFFICIALLY OPEN THE REGION'S FIRST ADA PARA- TRANSIT TRANSFER FACILITY AT THE NORTHWEST TRANSPORTATION CENTER IN SCHAUMBURG WITH A RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY.

The multi-million-dollar project, funded predominantly through the State of Illinois' Rebuild Illinois program, represents a major investment in suburban transit infrastructure and accessibility. In addition to the new transfer facility, the project delivers expanded passenger amenities, including a modern indoor waiting area, real-time travel signage, a Ventra vending machine, and expanded park-n-ride capacity with new EV charging stations.

"Pace is proud to deliver this investment in transit infrastructure for the northwest suburbs, improving access and comfort for the communities we serve," said Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski.

**"This project shows what's possible  
when transit is supported – and with  
your partnership, there's much more  
we can achieve together."**

The new ADA Paratransit Transfer Facility is the first of its kind in the region, providing a safe, comfortable, and efficient transfer point for riders with disabilities. By centralizing connections and improving amenities,

Pace is enhancing mobility for some of the region's most vulnerable populations.

"Today, thanks to critical investment through Rebuild Illinois, we celebrate this new passenger facility, a space designed to improve accessibility, comfort, and convenience for our riders. It reflects our commitment to enhance ADA paratransit service and improve the passenger experience for all our riders," said Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger.

Local and state leaders joined Pace to celebrate the milestone, including Illinois State Representative Michelle Mussman; Illinois State Senator Darby Hills; Illinois State Representative Nicolle Grasse; Illinois State Representative Jennifer Sanalito; Cook County Commissioner Kevin Morrison; Schaumburg Village President Tom Dailly; Illinois Tollway Executive Director Cassandra Rouse; Pace Board Member and Hoffman Estates Mayor Bill McLeod; Pace Board Member and Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities Rachel Arfa; Pace Board Member Christopher Canning; Pace Board Member Linda Soto; and Pace Board Member Terrance Carr.

The Northwest Transportation Center serves as a key hub for bus and paratransit connections in the northwest suburbs with more than 600 daily boardings. This project reflects Pace's commitment to innovation and accessibility in the communities it serves.

A similar ADA Paratransit transfer center will be built in Calumet City. As of mid-2025, the design of that facility is complete, and an agreement with the City has been executed which calls for the City to perform the construction using Pace capital funding.





# Pace and DuSable Museum Partner for Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Event

January 20, 2025

## PACE JOINED THE NATION IN CELEBRATING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. AND HIS LEGACY.

Dr. King worked tirelessly to advance equity, justice, and civil rights in America, and his commitment to these causes moved our nation toward a more just and equitable society. In recognition of the Civil Rights Movement and Dr. King's service to our country, Pace sponsored the DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center's 2025 MLK Day of Service event entitled **"We Are One: Visions of Victory."**

At the event, there was a storyteller on our bus who talked about the life of Rosa Parks and how her act of defiance on a bus changed the trajectory of the Civil Rights Movement.

In previous years, Pace's 1949 GMC West Towns Bus Company vehicle—the same model Rosa Parks famously rode to start the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott—was on display at the DuSable Museum.

Pace is proud to once again partner with The DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center for their King Day event, commemorating the life, legacy, and profound impact of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"At Pace, we understand that public transportation has always been a vehicle for progress, equality, and opportunity," said Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger.

**"We are honored to join the DuSable Museum in commemorating Dr. King's legacy. This event serves as a powerful reminder of how acts of courage can lead to monumental change."**



# Pace Hosts Senate Transportation Committee at Heritage Division

February 14, 2025

Pace hosted members of the state Senate Transportation Committee at our Heritage Division for a tour of the facility and a discussion about Pace and the future of public transportation in northeastern Illinois.

As legislative discussions progressed on solutions to the transit “fiscal cliff,” Pace continued to make the case for adequate funding of suburban bus service.





# Planning work continues on Pulse Lines on South Halsted, 95<sup>th</sup> Street, and Cermak/22nd Street

August 14, 2025

Pace and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle celebrated a \$176,000 Invest in Cook grant, which will fund construction costs for the Cermak Road Business Access and Transit Lane pilot program. That lane will eventually be a key element in the Pulse Cermak/22nd Street Line, which is currently in project development and is projected launch in 2030.

“Every community needs good transportation options in order to thrive,” said President Preckwinkle. “The Invest in Cook program helps meet the needs of all communities, whether it is enhanced public transit, safer streets, new bicycle

paths, or improvements to industrial roads to support businesses. The program especially helps traditionally under-resourced areas. When we lift these communities up, we’re improving the quality of life for not only these residents, but for all County residents.”

The Pulse Cermak/22nd Street Line will provide service between the CTA Pink Line 54th/Cermak Station in Cicero and the Yorktown Center area in Lombard. In collaboration with local communities, Pace identified preliminary service recommendations, station locations, and related corridor improvements for further evaluation in future phases. As the project progresses, Pace will be seeking public feedback to ensure the Pulse Cermak/22nd Street Line meets the needs of the communities and transit riders in western Cook County and eastern DuPage County. During the Pulse Cermak/22nd Street Line’s Project Definition phase, Pace, in coordination with project stakeholders, determined the corridor limits and preliminary station locations. That phase is complete. Pace is now progressing the proposed recommendations into the federally-required Environmental Review phase.

As part of Pace’s strategic vision plan, Driving Innovation, Pace has committed to expanding its network of arterial bus rapid transit service called Pulse. Pulse provides premium limited-stop bus service to commuters featuring enhanced amenities and a streamlined route design in heavily traveled corridors of Chicagoland.

“Pace’s collaborations with Cook County have consistently delivered better service for our region,” said Pace Executive



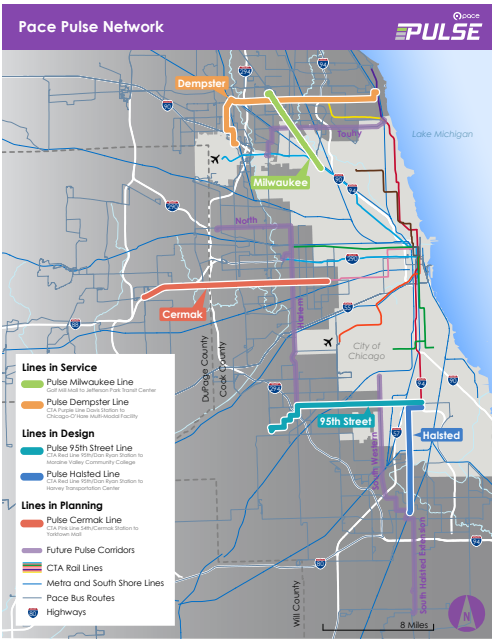
Director Melinda Metzger. “Now, as Pace navigates a period of fiscal uncertainty, the County has stepped up once again to help us keep people connected to jobs, schools and essential services.”

The Pulse Cermak/22nd Street Line is one of three corridors currently in project development—with Halsted and 95th Street being the other two. In addition to the lines already in service—Pulse Milwaukee and Pulse Dempster.

South Halsted Street is Pace’s highest-ridership corridor and has seen the strongest ridership recovery in a post-COVID world, indicating the importance of public transportation for people living and working along the corridor. A new Pulse line will improve travel times and reliability of bus service for the thousands of current customers and make transit a more attractive option for many more. This project, in conjunction with a new Transportation Center at the Harvey Metra Electric station and the Pulse 95th Street Line, represents significant investment by Pace to improve transportation in South Cook County. The Pulse Halsted Line portion of the project corridor was awarded \$20 million from the highly competitive federal Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program in June 2023. Pace has also been recommended for a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), which, if approved, will ensure the project is fully funded. The project will move into the Final Design phase, with construction anticipated to begin in 2025. Pace aims to launch service by 2027.

The Pulse 95th Street Line will run between the CTA Red Line 95th/Dan Ryan Station in Chicago and Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Hills. With major destinations and connections to other Pace and CTA bus routes, as

well as Metra’s Rock Island and Southwest Service lines, 95th Street Line passengers will have a variety of local and regional connection options. Linking major destinations, the Pulse 95th Street Line is expected to provide significant transit improvements to the communities of Palos Hills, Hickory Hills, Chicago Ridge, Bridgeview, Oak Lawn, Hometown, Evergreen Park, and Chicago. As of December 2023, the Project has obtained National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) approval. The project will now move into final design followed by construction. Both remaining phases are fully funded through a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant awarded by CMAP.





# Pace and Congressman Foster Celebrate Federal Funding for Zero-Emission Paratransit Vehicles

March 21, 2025



## U.S. CONGRESSMAN BILL FOSTER MADE A CEREMONIAL CHECK PRESENTATION TO PACE OFFICIALS, MARKING THE AWARD OF \$1 MILLION IN FY24 COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING.

This funding will provide five electric ADA paratransit vehicles for McHenry County, enhancing mobility options for individuals with disabilities and supporting the region's commitment to sustainable transit solutions.

"As our communities grow, it's essential that we invest in safe, reliable, and sustainable public transportation options," said Foster. "That's why I was proud to secure \$1 million in Community Project Funding to support the expansion of Pace's electric bus fleet. This investment will help reduce emissions, improve air quality, and provide residents in McHenry County with a modern, efficient transit system that connects them to work, school, and other places in our community—all while contributing to a cleaner environment for future generations."

Pace leaders emphasized the long-term benefits of this investment, highlighting both accessibility and sustainability. "We are thrilled to be part of this important moment in McHenry County's transportation future," said Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger.

**"This funding will not only help us maintain access to vital services for residents, but also reinforces our commitment to sustainability and innovation in public transit."**

Building on this commitment, Pace's leadership underscored the positive impact these new vehicles will have on riders. "New electric paratransit vehicles will not only provide a cleaner, more efficient mode of travel, but will also help enhance the quality of life for riders who rely on our ADA paratransit services," said Pace Director Erin Smith.



# Pace Celebrates 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by Installing Artistic Bus Stop Benches

One of the ways Pace celebrated its 40th anniversary of providing public transportation to Chicagoland riders was a public art program in which artists in northeastern Illinois created works of art on 40 benches for use at Pace bus stops. As of the close of 2025, Pace has nearly completed installing all the colorful benches at bus stops throughout the suburbs.

The program created plenty of enjoyment for the artists who get to showcase their work to the public, as well as bus riders who now appreciate a comfortable place to sit while waiting for the bus. Furthermore, passersby can witness these contributions to public beautification.

"Pace is proud to serve 274 municipalities across Chicagoland, and we want these bus stops to be a reflection of the diverse riders, communities, employees, and partners who make up the Pace family," said Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger. "Not only will these benches be a celebration of the rich history of Pace, but they will continue to beautify communities for years to come."

The Pace website, serves as the resource through which artists and the public can find where each bench is located.

[WWW.PACEBUS.COM/40BENCHES](http://WWW.PACEBUS.COM/40BENCHES)



“Pace is proud to serve 274 municipalities across Chicagoland, and we want these bus stops to be a reflection of the diverse riders, communities, employees, and partners who make up the Pace family.”







# Waukegan to Become Home to Region's First All-Electric Bus Facility

PACE BREAKS GROUND AND THEN COMPLETES PHASE ONE ELECTRIFICATION AT NORTH DIVISION

April 4, 2025

The electric transformation of Pace Suburban Bus reached a major milestone when state and local officials joined agency leaders to break ground on the renovation of Pace's North Division Garage. The project will create the region's first bus facility designed to support an all-electric fleet and move forward Pace's transition to a zero-emission fleet.

The upgrades to this facility places Waukegan at the forefront of Project Zero, Pace's initiative to reduce pollution and honor statewide climate goals by converting its entire bus fleet to zero-emissions technology by 2040. By launching this effort in Waukegan, Pace is prioritizing communities historically impacted by industrial pollution and economic disinvestment, ensuring they benefit from the agency's clean energy transition.

"Today marks another step forward in Pace's commitment to a zero-emission future," said Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski. "We already have a few zero-emission and hybrid buses in service, but this facility will take our



sustainability efforts to the next level. Once completed, North Division will have the capacity to charge and house a fleet of 60 zero-emission buses."

The electrification of the North Division Garage is being funded through Rebuild Illinois and federal grants. Pace estimates that fully achieving Project Zero will require approximately \$2.5 billion, which includes facility upgrades and vehicles.

State Representative Joyce Mason and Lake County Board Chair Sandy Hart joined Pace officials to speak about the exciting project coming to their area.

"Pace is incredibly proud of our commitment to operating a zero-emission fleet, and I am proud of our personnel for embracing this operational change. Our North Division Garage has always been a major contributor to Lake County, providing public transit to the residents, including essential workers, seniors, people with disabilities and students, so I am glad we can make this critical investment

to Waukegan," said Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger. According to Pace Board Member Linda Soto:

**"This project is one of the most important milestones in Pace's journey towards operating a more sustainable fleet, and I am thrilled that this milestone is taking place here in Lake County."**

Several zero-emission buses are expected to operate out of Waukegan in 2026 following the December 2025 installation of 12 chargers and the construction of a covered outdoor charging facility. The second phase of the project, expanding and modernizing the entire garage to include electric bus chargers, is expected to be completed by 2027.



# Project Zero Progress Continues as Bus Charging Stations Get Installed



## PACE CONTINUES TO MAKE GOOD ON ITS COMMITMENT TO OPERATE A FULLY ZERO-EMISSION FLEET BY 2040.

Despite the challenges with electric bus manufacturing, as well as identification of needed capital funding, incremental progress continues to be made.

The most significant milestone in 2025 was the opening of a charging station at North Division (Waukegan) which, as of December 2025, is capable of charging twelve buses at once. This new charging facility is outdoors and is only the first of two phases planned for North Division. Within two years, all 60 buses operating from North Division will be zero-emissions and the facility will be capable of charging all of those buses indoors.

In 2025, charging equipment for electric buses was installed at North Shore Division in Evanston, Fox Valley Division in

Aurora, South Division and the Acceptance Facility in Markham, and West Division in Melrose Park.

In addition to these locations, Pace already has electric bus and non-revenue vehicle charging available at Heritage, River, and Southwest divisions, as well as Headquarters, the McHenry Paratransit location, and South Campus. Pace also offers charging for private cars at nine Park-n-Ride locations and passenger facilities throughout the region.

Pace does expect delivery of a long-awaited batch of electric buses by 2026, and those vehicles will be deployed to the various garages at which charging stations have been installed. Additionally, in furtherance of our emissions reduction goal, Pace has begun taking delivery of hybrid buses. The first of a shipment of 80 arrived in October 2025 and will continue to arrive between now and the end of 2026.

# Access Will County Dial-A-Ride Expands to Three New Townships



As of May 2025, the Access Will County Dial-a-Ride service has expanded to include Channahon, Manhattan, and Plainfield Townships. Seniors or people with disabilities in these three townships can now register for Will County's curb-to-curb paratransit bus service. Eligible residents can schedule rides for any purpose within a travel radius that includes all of Will County and some portions outside of county boundaries.

"This expansion marks an important milestone for our continued efforts to improve transportation in Will County for residents with mobility issues," said Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant. "Offering a safe and reliable transportation service for seniors and people with disabilities has been a top priority, and I'm grateful to all of our partners who helped bring Access Will County Dial-a-Ride to these new communities."

The program growth followed agreements between Will County, the Village of Channahon, Manhattan Township, and Plainfield Township to replace local dial-a-ride services with Access Will County, offering residents an expanded service radius than a locally managed program. The three new townships join the current service area, which includes eastern and southwestern Will County. 16 out of 24 townships in Will County are now part of the Access Will County program, which is overseen by the Will County Executive Office and operated by Pace.

"Expanding the Will County Mobility Management Program to include Channahon, Manhattan, and Plainfield Townships will enhance our public transportation network and help citizens with disabilities and the elderly to maintain their

independence," said Will County Board Speaker Joe VanDuyne. "I am proud to support this important initiative, and I look forward to a time when citizens across our entire county have access to these services."

Will County leaders joined local officials and Pace representatives to cut the ribbon on the program's availability on Friday, May 2, highlighting the latest expansion of the service in Will County. The ceremony included Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant, Will County Board Speaker Joe VanDuyne, Will County Board members Dawn Bullock and Sherry Williams, Village of Channahon President Missey Schumacher, Village of Manhattan Mayor Mike Adriansen, Manhattan Township Supervisor James Walsh, Plainfield Township Trustee-Elect Jes Monu, Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski, and Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger.

The expansion is part of Will County's ongoing efforts to offer the Access Will County Dial-a-Ride service to more residents throughout the county. This follows the Will County Board's approval of a plan aimed at eliminating barriers to mobility programs throughout the county and improving or consolidating existing systems. The service expansion has been supported and financially supplemented by Pace, who operates the Access Will County system.

"Expanding Will County Access to include Manhattan, Plainfield, and Channahon is a meaningful step forward in ensuring that more residents have access to vital transportation services," said Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski. "This expansion reflects our ongoing commitment to providing safe, reliable, and convenient mobility options for everyone in our community, especially those who need it most."

Residents interested in utilizing Access Will County Dial-a-Ride must fill out a one-page registration form, either by contacting their local municipality, township office, or the Will County Executive Office at **(815) 774-6346** or **countyexec@willcounty.gov**.

RESIDENTS OF CHANNAHON, MANHATTAN, AND PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIPS HAVE NEW DIAL-A-RIDE ACCESS.



# Interagency Regional Day Pass Launches

The newest fare product jointly launched by Pace, CTA, and Metra now allows customers to ride the buses and trains throughout northeastern Illinois with a one-day pass purchase. As of the June 20 launch, riders can now purchase the Regional Day Pass, which allows unlimited rides on CTA, Metra, and Pace in a single day – streamlining how people move across the Chicago region.

The new pass, available only in the latest version of the Ventra app (v 2.2.11), is a collaboration between the three transit agencies and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) to advance fare integration and a more seamless transit rider experience. It offers a more convenient and cost-effective option for regional transit riders.

The Regional Day Pass costs \$2.50 more than the usual Metra day pass and includes full access to CTA buses and trains and Pace regular fixed-route service. Weekday prices are:

- 🕒 **\$10 in Metra's single zone travel area (\$6 for reduced fare card holders)**
- 🕒 **\$13.50 in Metra's two-zone travel area (\$8 for reduced fare card holders)**
- 🕒 **\$16 in Metra's three-zone travel area (\$9 for reduced fare card holders)**
- 🕒 **All weekend Regional Day Passes will cost \$9.50.**

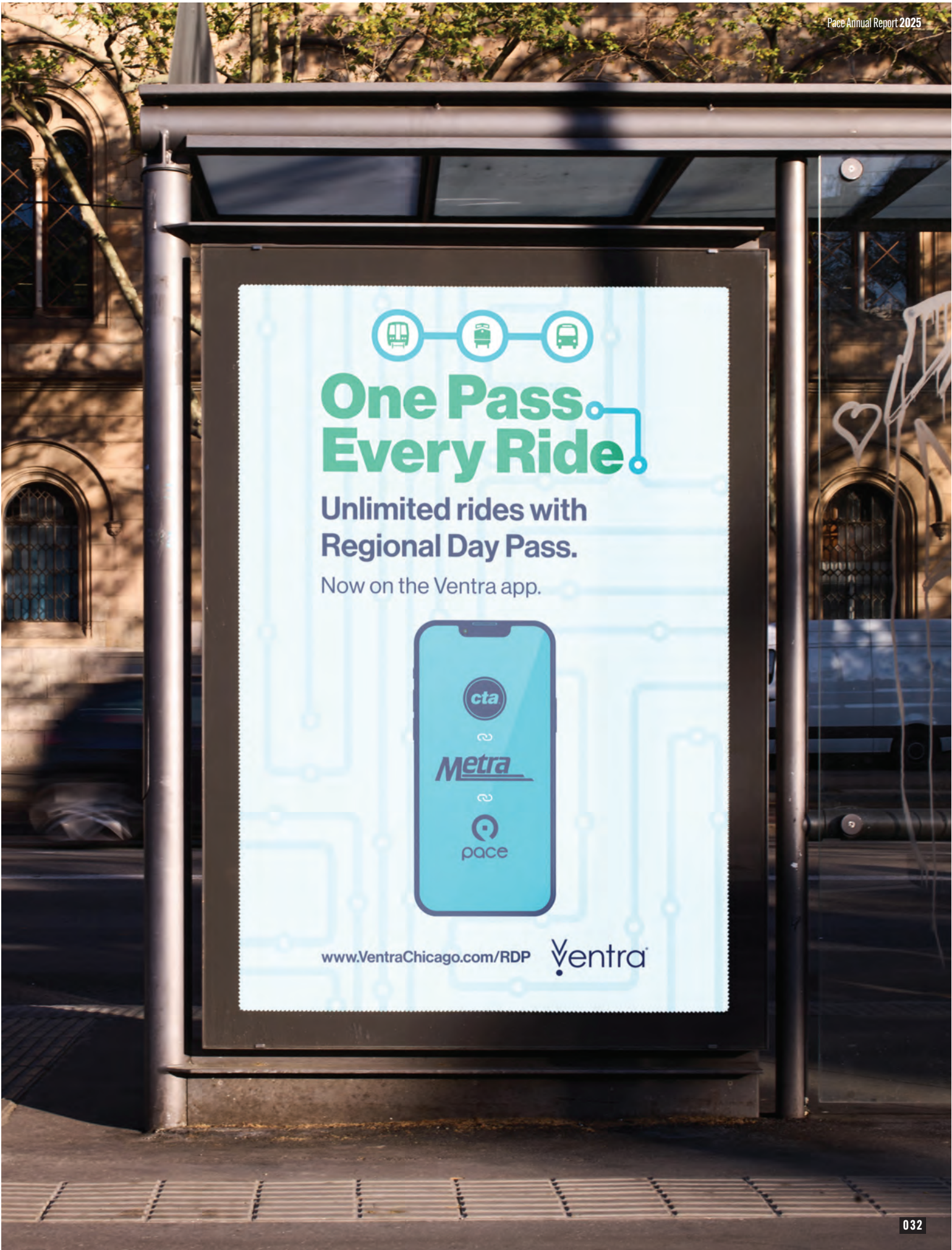


**“It shows what regional collaboration can achieve—but it’s just the beginning. To build a truly connected transit system, we need both reform and support, including increased operating funding and action on proposed legislative changes that would centralize and make fare integration easier to implement and sustain.”**

“This new pass is another major step forward in regional connectivity,” said Melinda Metzger, Pace Executive Director. “Whether you’re commuting to work, heading to a summer event, or just exploring the region, this pass makes travel easier, more affordable, and more accessible.”

The Regional Day Pass builds on the existing Regional Connect Pass for Monthly Pass users across all three operators and represents ongoing efforts to simplify the rider experience. While the pass is a positive step forward, regional leaders agree that more work is needed. Key reforms that were not passed by the Illinois General Assembly this spring could help formalize and expand integration efforts, setting the stage for broader system improvements.

The RDP pilot is slated to continue for six months after launch with the potential for the agencies to offer it permanently in 2026, depending on funding availability.





# Newest VanGo Service Comes to Joliet Area



In September 2025, Pace's latest VanGo offering expanded access to jobs in the Joliet area. Through this self-service transit option, a rider can reserve a Pace van to drive roundtrip within a designated zone for just \$5.00 per day. The newest VanGo vehicle can be picked up at Pace's Joliet Transit Center, a major hub for buses connected to the Gateway Center, which has one Amtrak and two Metra rail lines.

Other VanGo services are available at the Lake-Cook Road Metra station in Deerfield, the Itasca Metra station, the Rosemont CTA station, the Lake Forest Metra station, and the Palatine Metra station

VanGo is a reservation-based round-trip service that is designed so you can drive within a defined zone around a transit station for getting to and from your job any day of the week, from 6:00 am - 9:00 pm. Once you are registered

and have met some safety requirements, you can reserve a van. The VanGo van can also be used during the lunch hour. Pace handles all maintenance and refueling.



# Grant from Cook County Enables Expansion of On Demand in Northwest Suburbs

August 14, 2025

Pace and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle celebrated two Invest in Cook grant awards, one of which will provide \$180,000 toward implementation costs for Pace's Arlington Heights/Rolling Meadows On Demand service expansion.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle joined the County's Department of Transportation and Highways (DoTH) and Pace officials to tout the Pace award, which is one of 32 projects that will receive funding under the 2025 'Invest in Cook' grant program. A total of \$8,270,810 will be distributed across 26 municipalities, three transit agencies, two park districts and one township.

"Every community needs good transportation options in order to thrive," said President Preckwinkle.

"The Invest in Cook program helps meet the needs of all communities, whether it is enhanced public transit, safer streets, new bicycle paths, or improvements to industrial roads to support businesses. The program especially helps traditionally under-resourced areas. When we lift these communities up, we're improving the quality of life for not only these residents, but for all County residents."

The Arlington Heights-Rolling Meadows On Demand has been in service for a decade, covering portions of the two eponymous communities. As of February 2026, the new service zone will include more of western Rolling Meadows and parts of Schaumburg, Palatine and Inverness. Harper College, a desirable destination for many would-be transit riders, is now part of the service zone. That service will also be renamed the Northwest Cook On Demand.



"Pace's collaborations with Cook County have consistently delivered better service for our region," said Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger.

**"The County has stepped up once again to help us keep people connected to jobs, schools, and essential services."**



# Park-n-Ride Expansions Underway As Ridership Grows On I-55 Express Bus Service



**DUE TO THE SUCCESS OF PACE'S I-55 BUS ON THE SHOULDER EXPRESS SERVICE, PACE IS PROGRESSING ON TWO PROJECTS THAT WILL EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE PARK-N-RIDE FACILITIES IN THE SOUTHWEST SUBURBS.**

First, at the Old Chicago Park-n-Ride in Bolingbrook, Pace is soon to build a 1,150-square-foot building on the existing site that would include a waiting/seating area, accessible public restrooms, a dedicated bus operator restroom, and deep canopies to shelter riders. This building will take the place of the existing lone bus shelter, which isn't sufficient to accommodate the dozens of passengers who board each trip of the express route here. Other site improvements include bench seating and bike racks. The new facility will be fully accessible to people with disabilities and offer riders a more welcoming environment for transit riders, especially in inclement weather.

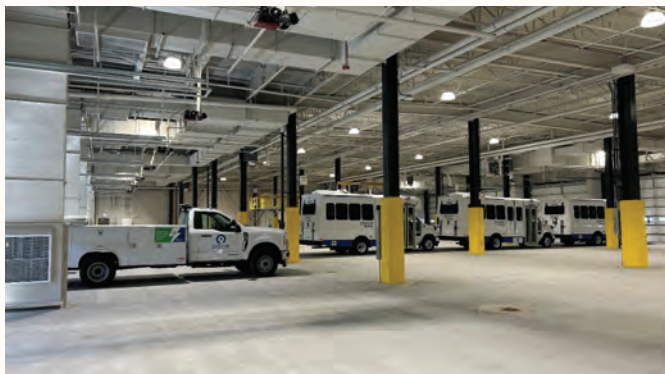
The existing park-n-ride was constructed in 1996 and was expanded in 2016 to accommodate 219 cars, in addition to landscaping, stormwater, and lighting upgrades. Up to 250 riders board at this facility each weekday.

Likewise, at Pace's Burr Ridge Park-n-Ride, plans are taking shape for a new 1,400-square-foot building which will include a waiting/seating area, accessible public restrooms, a dedicated bus operator restroom, and large canopies at both entrances. Other planned site improvements include reconstruction and expansion of the parking lot to approximately 197 total spaces, 4 spaces with EV charging stations, new bench seating, bike racks, lighting upgrades, and landscaping. The new facility will be fully accessible to customers with disabilities. The existing facility was constructed in 1996 on approximately 4.4 acres, but has only one bus shelter and parking for 83 cars. This location sees as many as 115 boardings per day and the parking lot is often filled. Ridership is expected to increase when the new building and parking lot expansion are complete.



# New Bus Acceptance Facility Opens in Markham

Pace's newest bus garage is now open for business, as occupancy approval was received on September 12, 2025 from the City of Markham for the Acceptance Facility at South Campus. The Acceptance Facility is where major maintenance on buses occurs, as well as vehicle and supportive equipment procurement, processing of vehicles entering and leaving the fleet, and ongoing inspection and maintenance of Pace vehicles housed at all divisions in the six-county region.



The Bus Maintenance Department has moved its operation from a facility in South Holland to the new facility in Markham, sharing a campus with the Central Training and Customer Relations Facility and next door to South Division.

The opening of this new facility is the latest Pace investment, using State Rebuild Illinois capital funding, in the south suburbs. In 2024, Pace opened the Central Training and Customer Relations Facility, also in Markham, and will soon break ground on a \$70 million reconstruction of the Harvey Transportation Center.

The new Acceptance Facility is housed in a 55,200-square-foot building on a 23-acre site at South Campus. It replaces the former South Holland Acceptance Facility, which was 44,700 square feet on only 4 acres. The new building has 12 vehicle storage bays and 3 vehicle maintenance bays. The building has enough indoor storage space for at least 45 full-size buses, which is crucial during winter weather. The administrative office area for the Bus Maintenance and Technical Services Departments has three offices and 32 workstations (including 10 electronics repair stations).



# Metzger Op-Ed Appears in National Trade Publication

September 17, 2025

2025 TRANSform

## Telling the Full Story: How Pace is Making The Economic Case for Transit

BY MELINDA METZGER  
Executive Director  
Pace Suburban Bus  
Arlington Heights, IL

IN AN ERA OF TIGHTENING budgets and changing travel patterns, public transit agencies must do more than deliver service. They must clearly articulate their value. At Pace, we've worked hard to make sure our riders, partners, and lawmakers understand what's truly at stake when public transit is under threat: the health of our regional economy.

Our message to decision-makers is simple but powerful: transit is economic infrastructure. Every Pace route connects people to jobs, employers to talent, and communities to opportunity. Our services link suburban residents to



Melinda Metzger

the regional rail network, industrial corridors, medical centers, and educational institutions. Paratransit ensures that people with disabilities and older adults can fully participate in the economy. This isn't just a matter of convenience; it's a matter of economic resilience.

When faced with the possibility of future funding shortfalls, we knew we couldn't lead with doom and gloom. Instead, we doubled down on data, storytelling, and coalition-building. We're helping legislators see transit through the eyes of their constituents: the nursing assistant who relies on Pulse to reach the hospital at 6:00 a.m.; the warehouse employee who works the overnight shift; the employer who depends on reliable bus service to attract and retain staff.

We've also worked with chambers of commerce, workforce boards, and local governments to emphasize how transit drives development and supports business growth. Our capital investments, including new facilities, electric buses, and improved rider amenities, are not just service upgrades; they are job creators and long-term economic catalysts.

At a time when every public dollar is scrutinized, it's not enough to show what transit costs. We must continue to show what it delivers. That's why we've embraced APTA's call to elevate economic storytelling. Because when we frame transit as essential to workforce participation, regional competitiveness, and inclusive growth, we turn conversations about cost into conversations about value.

Pace is proud to be part of that story, and even prouder to be part of the solution.



From

Pace Executive Director Melinda J. Metzger had an article published in Passenger Transport, the monthly publication of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). APTA is the national trade association for transit agencies of all sizes across the country. Metzger's article highlights how important a robust transit system is to the local economies of every city in America.

Metzger and the Pace team continue to make the case locally with Illinois policymakers to appropriately fund

the Chicagoland mass transit system, in the face of the forthcoming fiscal cliff, to ensure northeastern Illinois's economy continues to thrive.

TELLING THE FULL STORY: HOW PACE IS MAKING THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR TRANSIT | PASSENGER TRANSPORT



## Tremendous Ridership Growth on ADA Paratransit Program Leads to Changes

As a result of growing popularity of Pace's Rideshare Access Program (RAP) and Taxi Access Program (TAP), changes were made to those programs on October 1, 2025. TAP and RAP are important transportation services, offering freedom and mobility to our ADA Paratransit-certified riders. However, the growth in demand for those two programs led to the ADA Paratransit Budget being \$45 million over budget for 2025.

The RTA, by ordinance, required Pace to make the following changes as of October 1, 2025:

- Increasing the TAP and RAP fares to \$3.25 per trip (to equal the ADA Paratransit fare)
- Capping the number of TAP and RAP rides to 30 per month per rider
- Free rides on CTA and Metra services for ADA-certified riders. (Pace had already been offering free rides on fixed route to those customers for more than a year.)

Then, on October 31, the Illinois General Assembly passed transit funding and reform legislation that provided the Paratransit program, including TAP and RAP, the funding needed for 2026. RTA and Pace have also been in discussion (with those discussions ongoing as this document went to print) about a change in the maximum trips per month per rider, with an expectation that more than 30 per month will be offered.

Pace remains committed to providing as much service to our community as the Regional ADA Paratransit Budget, as dictated by RTA, will allow.





# Pace Expands Service As Ridership Builds



Ridership on Pace services continues to grow, as it has each year since the worst of the pandemic in 2020. To meet that growing demand, and to entice additional riders to return to public transportation, Pace has been judiciously increasing service frequency. The overall level of service in place today is nearly the same as it was in early 2020, when Pace implemented service reductions in response to the pandemic.

While riders and the communities served by Pace are seeking even more (and more frequent) service, Pace has only expanded up to the level that can be accommodated by our current roster of bus operators. As documented elsewhere in this report, Pace's aggressive hiring practices will allow Pace—if the General Assembly provides long-term funding certainty—to expand even further, as called for in the ReVision plan.

In March 2025, Pace expanded weekend service on 311, 315, and 383, while expanding weekday service on Route 381. In May, the Pace board made permanent a pilot

expansion of weekend service on Route 381. Those enhancements of 381 lay the groundwork for the forthcoming launch of the Pulse 95th Street Line, which is in the planning stage (see page 14).

In July 2025, the Pace Board made permanent other route expansions that had begun as pilots last year—Routes 330, 331, 755, 850, 851, and 855. In particular, the additional trips on I-55 express ("bus-on-shoulder") routes mitigated overcrowding that had occurred as post-pandemic ridership soared.

Then, in late 2025, the Board made permanent several more pilot service expansion projects benefiting riders on Routes 301, 322, 350, 364, 563, and 564.

But, fixed route services weren't the only ones to expand in 2025. A new VanGo in Joliet was launched

late in the year, as was the expansion of the size of the Arlington Heights–Rolling Meadows On Demand zone, giving new access to Harper College. Then, in September, the Pace Board approved the permanent operation of our newest On Demand service in the Lansing area.

In May 2025, Pace's Access Will County Dial-a-Ride expanded to three new townships—Channahon, Manhattan, and Plainfield Townships. Seniors or people with disabilities in these three townships can now register for Will County's curb-to-curb paratransit bus service. Eligible residents can schedule rides for any purpose within a travel radius that includes all of Will County and some portions outside of county boundaries.

"Expanding Will County Access to include Manhattan, Plainfield, and Channahon is a meaningful step forward in ensuring that more residents have access to vital transportation services," said Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski. "This expansion reflects our ongoing commitment to providing safe, reliable, and convenient mobility options for everyone in our community, especially those who need it most."



## Expansion and Electrification of River Division Gains Momentum

The next major Pace project coming to Kane County is the expansion of River Division in Elgin. It's an exciting initial development in an effort to upgrade one of Pace's older divisions and equip it with modern amenities and technology that can accommodate our zero-emissions fleet. The project is tentatively planned to start phased construction by the end of 2026.

Today, River Division operates from two separate bus garages—one in Elgin, which is the Pace-owned facility being expanded by this project, and one in East Dundee, which Pace leases. Once the Elgin facility expansion is complete, Pace will no longer incur the leasing cost of the East Dundee facility, so this expenditure of capital funds not only prepares our fleet for the zero-emissions conversion, but will save operating funding over the long term.

The project will expand and replace the existing 63,000-square-foot building with greater capacity, creating a new 200,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility. Once

complete, the expanded River Division will store, operate, and maintain 106 forty-foot buses and 35 paratransit vehicles. The expansion will make use of the newly acquired property south of the existing garage. The building will feature a 2-story Drivers' Day Room space that can be overlooked from the mezzanine level above.





# Newest Group of Million Milers Celebrated for Their Commitment to Safety

Safety is Pace's top priority, and always has been. To that end, Pace has set up a rewards program for bus operators who embody our commitment to safety. Any employee who operates a bus for one million consecutive miles without a preventable accident is inducted into our Million Miler club. There are even some incredibly accomplished bus operators who have operated a bus for two million—or even three million!—consecutive safe miles.

PACE IS THRILLED TO WELCOME FOUR TWO MILLION MILERS ALONG WITH 13 NEW ONE MILLION MILER EMPLOYEES TO THE MILLION MILER CLUB FOR 2025.

## Two Million Mile Drivers

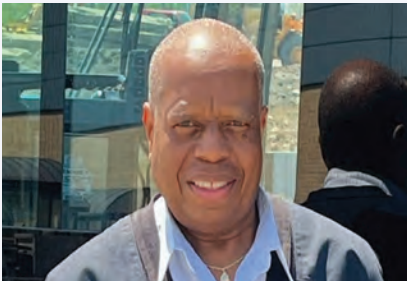
These 4 operators reached the Two Million Miler level this year:



**Karin Bartz**  
Northwest Division



**Charles Clancy**  
Northwest Division



**Egbert Gentle**  
West Division



**William Kurth**  
River Division

## One Million Mile Drivers

These 13 operators reached the Million Miler level this year:



**Robert Antenor**  
North Shore Division



**Cecile Brown**  
River Division



**Garabet Garabet**  
River Division



**Willis Harper**  
West Division



**James Humphries**  
West Division



**Martha Jenkins**  
Northwest Division



**Eddie March**  
River Division



**Octavia Mitchell**  
West Division



**Christopher Rider**  
North Division



**Derrick Sales**  
Northwest Division



**Russell Smith**  
South Division



**Mark Stimage**  
Southwest Division



**Horace Ware**  
Northwest Division



## Staff Donates to Deborah's Place in Recognition of Women's History Month

As part of the Women's History Month celebration, Pace organized a donation drive supporting Deborah's Place, a Chicago-based nonprofit that provides permanent supportive housing for women experiencing homelessness. Staff donated various household items – including cleaning supplies, personal care items, and household goods – at donation bins stationed throughout our facilities.

Staff then collected all donations from the bins at the end of the month. This effort represented a great opportunity to support our region's communities, and our Women's History Month donation drive was a major success. Employees contributed so many items! We struggled to fit it all in one of our vans during our donation drop off. The support from the Pace family won't go unnoticed, either. Deborah's Place will put the items to good use, providing women throughout the region with the resources they need to help move on from the experience of homelessness.



## Transit App Usage Continues to Grow

For several years, Pace has partnered with the Transit app to improve customer information in the form of trip planning and real time bus information. The Transit app is now Pace's recommended trip planning app because it offers features that no other app does—most importantly, showing Pace's flexible, reservation-based transit options in trip plan results. It also has more accurate real-time departure predictions and crowding information to show passengers how full buses may be based on recent ridership.

Until late 2025, the benefits of the Transit app were only available to those with smartphones who had downloaded the app. But as of late 2025, Transit's trip planning tool is available in desktop web browser format. That feature will soon become part of Pace's website and allows a seamless experience for riders who use both the app and a web browser.

Usage of the Transit app increased dramatically in 2025. In October 2025, a total of 16,887 Pace riders opened the Transit app; that's 34% more than in October 2024. Altogether, they opened the app 888,851 times (an average of 53 times per rider), which is 34% more than in October 2024.

On an average weekday, 3,586 Pace riders open the Transit app, which is 33% more than in October 2024. Riders planned 108,270 trips on Pace in October 2025, 48% more than in October 2024. Pace riders also started 20,237 GO trips to get step-by-step navigation while helping to improve real-time vehicle locations (up 53% from October 2024). A total of 7,585 riders are subscribed to service alerts for at least one line.

Pace's continued partnership with the Transit app bodes well for addressing a Pace rider priority—accurate and timely information about Pace services. As non-fixed route options are expected to be an even more important aspect of what Pace offers after our ReVision implementation, the unique trip plan offering that Transit provides will be especially valuable to northeastern Illinois transit riders.



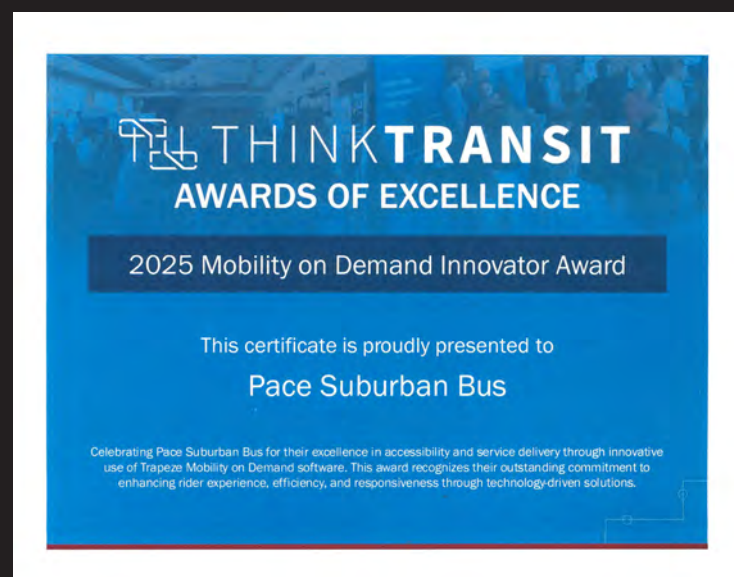


# Awards and Honors



## TRAPEZE MOBILITY ON DEMAND INNOVATION AWARD

**A**t Trapeze's annual ThinkTransit Conference in March, Pace received the 2025 Mobility on Demand Innovator Award. The award celebrates an agency that has achieved excellence in accessibility and service delivery through innovative use of the Trapeze Mobility on Demand software. The award recognizes Pace's outstanding commitment to enhancing the rider experience, efficiency, and responsiveness through technology-driven solutions. It's always rewarding to see our hard work acknowledged by industry professionals. Congratulations to all Pace employees whose work helped earn this award!



## DISTINGUISHED BUDGET PRESENTATION AWARD

**G**overnment Finance Officers Association announced in May 2025 that Pace once again received GFOA's Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its 2025 budget. The award represents a significant achievement by the entity. It reflects the commitment of the governing body and staff to meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting. In order to receive the budget award, the entity had to satisfy nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation. Budget documents must be rated "proficient" in all four categories, and in the fourteen mandatory criteria within those categories, to receive the award. There are over 1,700 participants in the Budget Awards Program. The most recent Budget Award recipients, along with their corresponding budget documents, are posted quarterly on GFOA's website. Award recipients have pioneered efforts to improve the quality of budgeting and provide an excellent example for other governments throughout North America.



## TWO GOLD "ADDY" AWARDS

**P**ace won two awards for our Ride Kind work and we have achieved the highest honor, securing the Gold Award in the **Chicago American Advertising Awards!**

“ Our entry will now advance to the District 6 Competition, which encompasses Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan. Winners from that competition will then be forwarded to the national American Advertising Awards level.”



# Retiring Employees

Pace thanks the following dedicated employees who gave decades of their lives to serving the commuters of northeastern Illinois and who retired in 2025:

## 5-15 Years of Service

**Doris Love**  
5 years, from South Division

**John Casagrande**  
11 years, from Headquarters

**Lori Heidegger**  
12 years, from Heritage

**Salaheddin Salah**  
12 years, from Southwest Division

**Robert Van De Veire**  
12 years, from Fox Valley Division

**Leonard Armstrong**  
14 years, from Headquarters

**David Bloedorn**  
14 years, from North Division

**Willie Boyd**  
15 years, from West Division

**Alan Carter**  
15 years, from West Division

**William Reado**  
15 years, from West Division

## 16-25 Years of Service

**Kempton Shine**  
20 years, from Southwest Division

**Calvin Johnson**  
21 years, from West Division

**Sally Ann Williams**  
21 years, from Paratransit

**Caldwell Johnson**  
22 years, from North Division

**Otho Markham**  
22 years, from South Division

**Clarence Nelson**  
22 years, from Fox Valley Division

**Jeretta Atkins**  
24 years, from South Division

**Nancy Zimmer**  
24 years, from Headquarters

## 26-40 Years of Service

**Jermaine Griffin**  
26 years, from West Division

**Brenda Starr**  
29 years, from West Division

**Monique Colbert**  
33 years, from West Division

**Alfredo Herrada**  
33 years, from Southwest Division

**James Shoelen**  
34 years, from Heritage

**Marcos Salafo**  
37 years, from River Division

**David Yetter**  
39 years, from West Division

**William Myles**  
40 years, from Northwest Division

# In Memoriam

Pace honors the memory of those current and former employees we lost in 2025:

**Joe Madden**  
South Division retiree

**Thelonious Robey**  
North Division retiree

**Denise Arive**  
North Division retiree

**Patricia Schilke**  
South Division retiree

**Jeannene Hoppe**  
Headquarters employee

**Michelina Browne**  
West Division retiree

**Kevin Walton**  
Heritage employee

**Barbara Ketchum**  
South Division retiree

**George Harding**  
North Division retiree

**Ronald Halamar**  
Northwest Division retiree

**William Jackson**  
North Division retiree

**Rickey Hughes**  
North Division retiree

**Isom Townsend**  
North Division retiree

**Mable Vinson**  
Fox Valley Division retiree

**John Skiba**  
Northwest Division retiree

**Hormus Mesho**  
North Shore Division employee

**Luis Armstead**  
West Division retiree

**Anthony Bonadonna**  
Northwest Division retiree



# Pace Riders Express Satisfaction

Even in an environment in which Pace's budget has not allowed for as much transit service as stakeholders demand, Pace's riders in 2025 gave high marks to us for our service quality, safety, and cleanliness.

Fixed route riders were surveyed in spring 2025. The last time we surveyed this segment of our customers was in 2022. The results of this year's survey are positive, including the following highlights:

- Fixed route riders report 84% satisfaction overall, up from 83% in 2022.
- Pace is the only service board whose riders are more satisfied than three years ago.
- Highest ratings were for value of service, total travel time, and service available where you need to go.
- Bus operators and customer service representatives got outstanding reviews.
- Aspects of Pace that scored high on importance and lower on satisfaction were accuracy of bus tracker data and accuracy of schedule/route information.
- 89% are likely to continue to ride Pace.
- Riders are largely dependent; 79% of respondents have no vehicle access for their Pace trip.

Likewise, Pace's ADA Paratransit customers expressed their satisfaction in a survey conducted in May and June 2025. The last time we surveyed this segment of our customers was 2018. Among the highlights of this survey's results were that:

- ADA Paratransit riders report 89% satisfaction overall.
- Riders had 80% satisfaction with on-time pickups, up from 72% in 2018.
- Riders consistently reported service being as good or better compared to a year ago.
- Riders' satisfaction with travel time being comparable to a fixed route trip was 82%, a significant increase from 74% in 2018.
- The percentage of Paratransit riders who ride fixed route at least once in a while are 27% (on Metra and CTA) to 55% (on Pace), which could increase even further now that rides on CTA and Metra are free for this customer base.



# Commendations from Riders

The tremendous service you provide to our customers every day results in hundreds of commendations from riders. See a few of the highlights of feedback about our top-notch staff that have been received in 2025.

- 1

One rider said an operator displayed exceptional professionalism during a recent incident involving an individual who was acting erratically. The rider said the individual was banging on the windows of the bus and briefly stood in front of the bus before boarding. The rider said the operator kept a calm and respectful demeanor and asked the individual if he was doing OK. The operator then discreetly contacted management while the bus remained parked. After the individual left the bus on their own accord, the operator took time to apologize to the other passengers and explained that he needed time to follow the proper procedures. The rider said the operator's actions throughout the situation showed extreme care for the passengers on board, saying the operator "effectively and compassionately" handled what could have been a dangerous confrontation.
- 2

"I just wanted say, thank you Pace for implementing the Pace Pulse Dempster Line to O'Hare. I needed a rental car and reserved one at O'Hare airport with my favorite car rental company and the best price. In need of transportation on how to get there I remember Skokie promoting the Pulse bus Dempster Line to O'Hare. I have to say what a tremendous service and convenience, on time service (every 15 minutes), comfort and ease of transportation, and cordial pleasant drivers helping to confirm using this bus line. I utilized the service again when I returned the rental car. Thank you for the Pulse Dempster Line!"
- 3

A Pace rider would like to commend the driver for going the extra mile. On this trip, the rider felt sick and was exiting the bus. The driver noticed that the rider did not look well and asked if he was ok. The rider said he wasn't feeling well and as he was exiting the bus, passed out. The driver got off the bus to see about the rider, called the paramedics, explained to the rest of the riders what was going on. The driver waited until paramedics arrived, and while the rider wanted to refuse treatment, the driver convinced the rider to take the treatment. The rider is so grateful for the dedication and honor of this

- 4

A rider who lives outside the region said their operator was kind, friendly, and helpful, taking the time to explain to them how to pay their fare, and when the bus would depart. The operator also was quick to greet other passengers in a welcoming tone, they said, and took time to interact with a lone rider who was disabled. They said the operator's demeanor convinced them to ride Pace again whenever they're back in the area.
- 5

One rider was especially thankful for how their operator treated a passenger with dementia. The rider said the passenger was lost and unsure of where to go. The operator, they said, went "above and beyond," asking the passenger questions to ensure they reached a safe destination. They said the operator ultimately made sure the passenger reunited with family members at the Harvey Transportation Center.
- 6

One rider said their operator took extra time and care to assist numerous passengers along their route with directions and guidance. The rider said they were confident the operator could handle any situation "expeditiously with authority, professionalism, compassion, and concern," adding that the operator does "the absolute best job with the safety and dignity of her and her passengers".
- 7

Another rider submitted a commendation to all operators, thanking "all the wonderful Pace drivers for courteous and prompt service."
- 8

A fixed-route rider, who said they are visually impaired, commended their operator for being extremely attentive and going out of her way to make sure they reached their destination safely.

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"A Pace driver helped me with my questions regarding other business routes and also delays and reroutes, he was detailed and specific. I was so pleased with your driver where I took the time to inform you of my complete satisfaction, regarding a Pace employee. I also, commend Pace for having such employees. Thank you to the driver and Thank you Pace for jobs well done!!!"
- 10

One rider almost missed her bus as he was delayed crossing the street to catch the bus due to traffic. "The bus driver saw me and waited until the traffic light changed and I could safely cross the street and board the bus". The rider, who is 80 years old with a heart condition, said "the operator came to my rescue" because it meant he did not have to wait for another bus in the extreme July heat.
- 11

Another rider said they appreciated how their operator was extremely knowledgeable about her route and routes located nearby. The rider said she was new to Pace and that the operator provided her with confidence to keep using Pace in the future.
- 12

Another rider wrote to say that they appreciated how their operator respectfully asked another rider to use headphones after taking a call on speakerphone and remained politely assertive after the rider became defensive.
- 13

One rider said their operator's kindness made their day after going out of his way to make sure she felt comfortable on an unfamiliar route, ensuring she debarked the bus curbside and made her Metra train on time. She said the operator "is a true credit to Pace."
- 14

"I am a passenger on the 711 Pace bus. I just wanted to inform you that Jeff, a young bus driver is an excellent driver. It is thanks to him I can always catch the 715 bus and make it on time for work. I cannot express enough how grateful I am that he

- 15

A Pulse Dempster rider praised their operator for providing a "fantastic" trip. The rider said the operator openly provided passengers with travel information, apologized for encountering potholes, and took time to deal with an unruly rider. The rider said the operator was "one of the best I've seen" and delivered outstanding service.
- 16

"Special thanks to drivers Bus numbers 330, 322 and 307, who pick me up everyday. Very professionals and good drivers specially the first trip from O'Hare to Harlem. To all bus drivers, I salute and thank you for your great service! Superb experience!"
- 17

"Thank you for all that you do! You make our lives so much better and help to minimize the stress associated with commuting! Please know that you are truly appreciated and valued!"
- 18

"I want to say thank you to all the drivers even my reoccurring drivers that get me to work and home. I appreciate you keep up the great work. Continue being great!"
- 19

"Thank you so much! I had the most warmest easy morning taking your buses! not a day goes by where you guys aren't helpful."
- 20

"Thank you so much for getting me around safe! I appreciate you more than you know, you're the backbone of the city!!"
- 21

"Thank you for always helping people get to somewhere where they need to go, without you we wouldn't be moving anywhere"



