



KANE COUNTY
LONG RANGE TRANSIT PLAN

2040 Long Range Transit Plan

ADOPTED JUNE 14, 2011





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PARTICIPANTS

The Transit Committee established by the Kane/Kendall Council of Mayors served as the steering committee for this project. The Transit Committee consisted of municipal and County representatives and representatives from the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Pace, Metra, and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). The Transit Committee, as well as members of the public who attended project open houses and completed surveys, provided important input and feedback for Kane County staff and the consulting team.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kane County 2040 Long Range Transit Plan (LRTP) is the transit element of Kane County's long-range comprehensive planning efforts, building upon previous plans that addressed transit, including the County's 2030 Transportation and Land Resource Management Plans, and 2002 Transit Opportunity Assessment. Today, most Kane County residents who have access to a car depend on it for travel. These earlier plans identified the need to address automobile dependence in Kane County in order to accommodate projected population and employment growth while mitigating increased traffic congestion and its adverse impacts on air quality and quality of life. They also recognized the relationship between existing land use patterns in the County and the challenge of providing efficient transit service. Reducing automobile dependence and fostering land use patterns that support "active" forms of transportation like walking, bicycling, and transit (which typically involves at least one walking trip) are now increasingly recognized as key elements of healthy living and sustainability.

In the public outreach conducted for the LRTP, numerous stakeholders articulated the importance of providing quality transit service for people who depend on it by making transit a more convenient, reliable travel option for County residents. Current economic conditions make it hard for private and public entities to invest in new services and sustain existing ones. Pace, along with other public transit providers, has struggled to maintain existing bus routes and has had to cut some services in the past. Strategies to make transit a viable travel option for County residents must recognize these fiscal constraints in the short term. With this in mind, the short-term strategies in the LRTP focus on implementing non-traditional services sponsored by municipalities and employers, changing development patterns, integrating transit with land use planning, and improving transit marketing and information.



Sidewalks are an important capital facility that supports transit and enables safe access to stops and stations for all passengers. Transit amenities, such as the benches at this bus stop for Pace route 802 in Geneva, make waiting for the bus more comfortable, particularly in adverse weather conditions. The threshold for installing a shelter at Pace bus stops is a minimum of 10 boardings per day.

Source: Nelson\Nygaard



The Aurora Transportation Center (left) provides access to Pace buses, Metra commuter rail, and Greyhound intercity buses. Bicycle racks located at Kane County Transportation Centers and Metra stations facilitate bicycle access. In addition to bicycle racks, the Elburn Metra station (right) facilitates Kiss & Ride and Park & Ride access.

Source: Nelson\Nygaard

Project Overview

The project, initiated in 2009, was based on an analysis of existing and planned transit services and market potential. The analysis used the most recent data available at the time it was conducted (2009 or 2010). The Kane/Kendall Council of Mayors Transit Committee served as the project steering committee and includes representatives of municipalities, transit service providers, and County staff. The project team held three meetings with the Transit Committee and conducted focus groups and individual meetings with representatives of major medical and higher education institutions, major employers, and social service organizations; online surveys; and two public open houses. Project materials and meeting notices were also posted on the County's website.

Based on input from stakeholders and the public, and the analysis of transit services and markets, the L RTP identifies current and future unmet needs for public transportation services and recommends strategies and implementation actions for improving transit service over the next 30 years. In the outreach efforts for the L RTP, stakeholders articulated the importance of transit service, particularly for County residents with no other transportation options, and a belief that there is a need to improve existing service to make transit a better option for all residents. Issues identified as part of the L RTP include reliability of service and limitations in the frequency, hours (span), geographic coverage, and pedestrian access of current service. If these issues can be overcome, there is an opportunity to capitalize upon the stated support for transit articulated by stakeholders. A central theme of the L RTP is that improving transit service in the County and achieving the County's transportation goals, including reducing congestion, depends on creating an integrated process for transit service providers and municipalities to coordinate transit service with land use planning and development.

Additional detail on the planning process and methodology can be found on pages 5–8 of the complete report.

Existing Conditions for Public Transit in Kane County

Pace and Metra provide most public transit services in Kane County under oversight of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). Figure ES-1 provides an overview of the existing transit service in Kane County and the region.

Existing transit service in the County is centered around the transportation centers in downtown Elgin and Aurora, which are served by both Metra commuter rail and Pace bus service. The highest level of Pace service in the County operates from these hubs to local destinations in the Elgin and Aurora areas. Pace fixed-route bus service also operates in and between other municipalities in the Fox Valley, but service is relatively infrequent and land use patterns (such as buildings deeply set back from the street and a lack of safe, direct pedestrian routes and street crossings) are generally not conducive to providing efficient, convenient transit service. Pace also operates demand-responsive ADA Paratransit service within a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile distance of its fixed-route bus system.

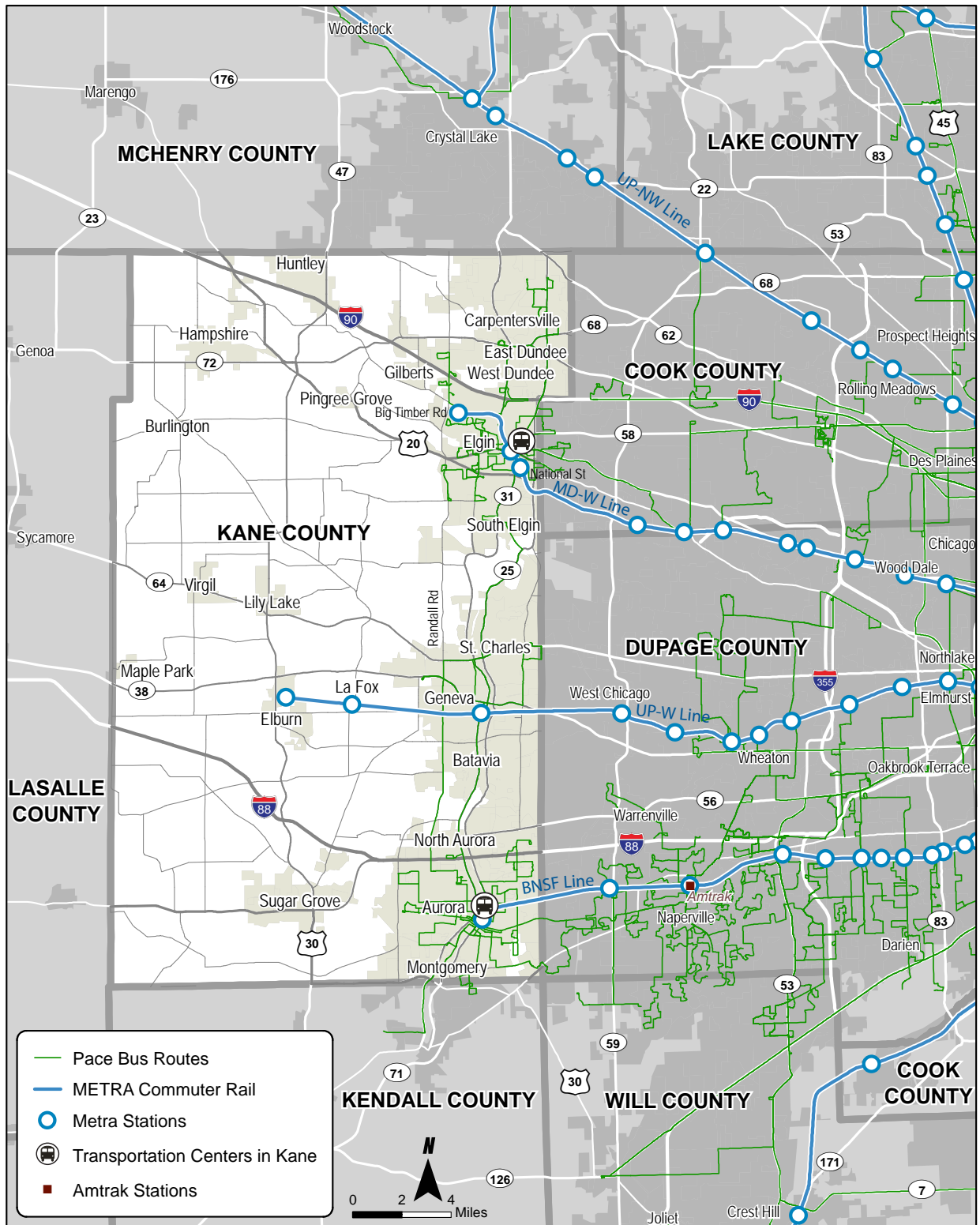
The County is served by three east-west Metra lines that operate as often as every 15 to 30 minutes during peak hours. In addition to the Elgin and Aurora Transportation Centers, Kane County Metra stations are located at National Street and Big Timber Road in Elgin, and in Geneva, La Fox, and Elburn.

The western and central parts of the county are predominantly rural and have no regular public transit service, outside of the Metra stations in Elburn and La Fox. The Ride in Kane program, launched in 2008, coordinates dial-a-ride services funded or supported by 18 local sponsors (municipalities and non-profits) in all parts of the County using a regional call center operated by Pace. Pace also operates several vanpool programs, with 30 vans in use countywide as of 2009.

Kane County has an extensive network of regional trails, and trail facilities in close proximity to the two Transportation Centers and other Metra Stations in the County. All Pace buses are equipped with front bicycle carriers that can hold two bikes. Metra stations have bicycle racks and bicycles are allowed on-board Metra trains, with restrictions during peak hours.

Additional detail on existing public transit conditions can be found on pages 9–20 of the complete report.

Figure ES-1 Existing Regional Transit Network in Collar Counties



Nelson Nygaard
consulting associates

Source: Kane County, ESRI, Census 2000

Transit Needs

This study identified the key unmet transit needs for Kane County based on an analysis of gaps between community public transportation travel needs and available transit services. The individual needs can be characterized as:

- **Gaps** between existing transit services and requirements for time-sensitive travel such as work or school commutes;
- **Insufficient levels of transit service** making public transportation inconvenient relative to automobile travel;
- **Missing connections in the public transit network** between population centers and major retail/employment centers; and
- **Desired transit connections** as identified by stakeholders and supported by the Kane County Travel Demand Model.

A transit market analysis, which helped inform the analysis of needs, can be found on pages 21-29 of the complete report. Additional detail on transit needs can be found on pages 31-34 of the complete report.

Strategic Approaches

The LRTP provides a toolkit of strategic approaches for addressing the identified public transportation needs and making transit an attractive mode of travel to destinations. These approaches consist of:

- **Transit service strategies** to provide missing connections, increase level-of-service (frequency and hours of service), and expand the types of services offered; and
- **Transit-supportive or non-service strategies**, including land use policies, parking policies and practices, and methods for encouraging transit use, ranging from improving marketing to targeting incentives at potential transit users.

Additional detail on strategic approaches can be found on pages 35-44 of the complete report.



The lack of sidewalks and other pedestrian infrastructure along many parts of Randall Road is a significant barrier to transit use. On Randall Road there are no pedestrian crossings to provide access to stops or destinations on the other side of the street outside of signalized intersections, which are generally about 1/3 of a mile (or more) apart.

Source: Kane County

Recommended Strategies

Drawing on the toolkit of strategic approaches, the L RTP recommends 12 strategies to meet the identified transit needs, summarized in Figure ES-2. These strategies will help Kane County realize the benefits of transit—increased travel choices, community livability, and congestion relief through reduced vehicle trips.

A central transit-supportive strategy is to enact a Primary Transit Network (PTN) policy—an approach to coordinating transit and land use that entails agreement between municipalities and service providers (Pace) on the corridors where the highest level of transit service is desired and most feasible, and focuses strategies on those corridors.

Figure ES-2 Summary of Recommended Strategies

Fox Valley Service Strategies		
1	Expand local service network in growing population/employment centers and improve level-of-service	Expand the local Pace bus service network in areas where population and employment growth may warrant expanding the local service area adjacent to the existing Pace network and/or increasing the level of transit service.
2	Improve/provide regional service in Kane County	Improve or provide regional connections between key destinations or along major corridors in the urbanized parts of Kane County.
3	Develop employer-sponsored transit services in Kane County	Provide employer-sponsored service to major employment areas.
Western Kane County Service Strategies		
4	Provide access to major activity centers in Kane County	Provide connections to major institutions in Kane County, including shopping, medical, and civic institutions, from parts of the County that currently lack fixed-route bus service. These connections would provide limited service aimed at transit-dependent populations, operating a limited number of daily trips up to several days per week.
5	Provide Metra Feeder service	Provide connections to Metra Stations in Kane County from parts of the County that currently lack fixed-route bus service. These connections would provide primarily commuter-oriented weekday peak hour service, with limited mid-day trips, and would rely on transportation hubs with small park & ride facilities in each origin municipality.
Out-of-County Service Strategy		
6	Provide regional out-of-county bus service	Provide connections to adjacent counties, primarily serving commuter needs, from parts of the County with and without existing fixed-route bus service.
Transit-Supportive Strategies		
7	Improve capital facilities that provide access to transit	Improve and prioritize/coordinate investments in the different types of capital facilities that provide access to transit.
8	Improve access to existing Metra commuter rail stations	Includes programs, policies, and physical access improvements to enable and encourage alternative means to access Metra commuter rail service.
9	Support Metra commuter rail and intercity rail capital expansion plans	Support documented plans to expand Metra commuter rail service along the existing rail infrastructure in Kane County.
10	Coordinate transportation and land use	Link planned transit investments and land use policies. The strategy emphasizes identifying transit corridors based not only on current and projected land use, but on creating opportunities for developing around transit.
11	Improve marketing and customer information	Improve the understanding and perception of public transit among Kane County residents and others who work in or visit Kane County.
12	Implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs	Provide incentives to use transit, including tax benefits and parking incentives.

Additional detail on recommended strategies can be found on pages 45–64 of the complete report.

Implementation Action Plan

The LRTP calls out specific actions as the key initial steps that Kane County, municipalities and partner agencies (Pace, Metra, the RTA, and CMAP) can take to implement the identified strategies. Drawn from the strategies identified in the previous section, the recommended actions include developing policies, identifying or creating organizations responsible for coordinating transit service and supporting policies, creating informational materials, and conducting detailed planning for short to long-term service strategies. The actions are summarized below.

Coordinate Transit and Land Use

1. Establish the Kane/Kendall Council of Mayors Transit Committee as a forum to discuss and facilitate ongoing coordination of transit service and policy development.
2. Enact a Primary Transit Network (PTN) policy that identifies corridors with the highest potential ridership and where the County and municipalities aspire to have the highest level of transit service over time.
3. Develop a model transit overlay zoning ordinance for adoption around transit nodes and PTN corridors.
4. Create development design guidelines and integrate design review into the development review process.
5. Adopt a Complete Streets Policy.

Coordinate Transit-Supportive Capital Improvement Plans

6. Develop bus stop amenity design standards and a policy for where and at what level to provide stop amenities.
7. Develop a program of transit-supportive capital improvements, coordinated with local Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs), including bus stops at major intersections, bicycle/pedestrian facilities, and transportation centers/hubs.

Market and Promote Transit

8. Promote transit options in Kane County, including healthy/active living campaigns, use of vanpool/ridesharing options, and use of tax-free purchase of passes and benefits.
9. Design a regional transit map for Kane County and feature this map as part of improved transit information displays.
10. Design local area maps for Metra stations that include bicycle/pedestrian access routes and connecting transit service and feature these

maps as part of improved transit information displays.

11. Publish “open” transit data, making it available to applications such as Google Maps and mobile devices.
12. Review/update marketing materials on a regular basis.

Expand/Improve Transit Service

13. Provide transit service in western Kane County using the Pace Municipal Vanpool program.
14. Implement local, regional, and inter-county service improvements as warranted by demand and permitted by available funding.
15. Develop connecting service to Metra stations in Kane County, including the proposed STAR Line, and the planned Amtrak station on Randall Road.

Develop Employer-Sponsored Transit Services

16. Create Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) for major industrial/employment areas such as Kirk Road in St. Charles/Geneva/Batavia and IL 72/Big Timber Road west of Randall Road in Elgin/Gilberts. Apply for grant funding to conduct TMA feasibility studies.

Maintain/Enhance Transit Funding

17. Pursue continued grant funding, develop a stable long-term funding source, and encourage municipalities to identify local match funding. Foster coordination between all partners (existing sponsors and identified implementors). Identify funding to expand service for County residents and programs not currently served by Ride in Kane.
18. Monitor the level of transit service provision in Kane County relative to the County's contribution to sales tax funding for Pace. Ensure that resources are equitably distributed as higher densities and transit-supportive land use patterns take hold in the County.

Create Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Programs

19. Create local TDM plans, or incorporate TDM elements into local comprehensive plans.

Additional detail on implementation actions can be found on pages 65–71 of the complete report.