

Pace Suburban Bus



ReVision Draft Plan

Executive Summary

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Why does the suburban bus network need to change?

Pace covers a large area with very little service.

Pace’s suburban service area covers 3,450 square miles, and about 5.7 million residents. Despite this, Pace’s suburban services have historically received less than 10% of regional public funding for transit.

This was due to a formula that limited bus funding in suburban areas despite tremendous suburban population growth. As a result, **Pace’s resources have been much less than those of other agencies serving comparable regions.**

For example, Pace’s service area is similar in scale to Connecticut, or half of New Jersey¹. Connecticut

1 Connecticut has a land area of about 4,800 square miles and a population of about 3.6 million. New Jersey has a land area of 7,400 square miles and a population of about 9.3 million.

and New Jersey also have similar development patterns to the Chicagoland suburbs, and they are also served by extensive commuter rail networks to a major central metropolis.

But, as shown below, transit agencies in Connecticut and New Jersey provide 50 to 100% more bus service per capita than Pace. The difference is even more stark comparing Pace with the Toronto suburbs, where suburban bus agencies provide over four times as much service per resident, and bus ridership is over ten times higher than in Pace’s service area².

2 In 2022, Pace buses served 16.5 million boardings in a region with about 5.7 million suburban residents. Bus agencies in the Toronto suburbs served a combined 183 million boardings in a region with about 3.9 million suburban residents.

Bus Service per Resident in 2024, Pace vs. Peers
(annual vehicle revenue hours per capita)

Source: National Transit Database, CUTA Canadian Conventional Transit Statistics

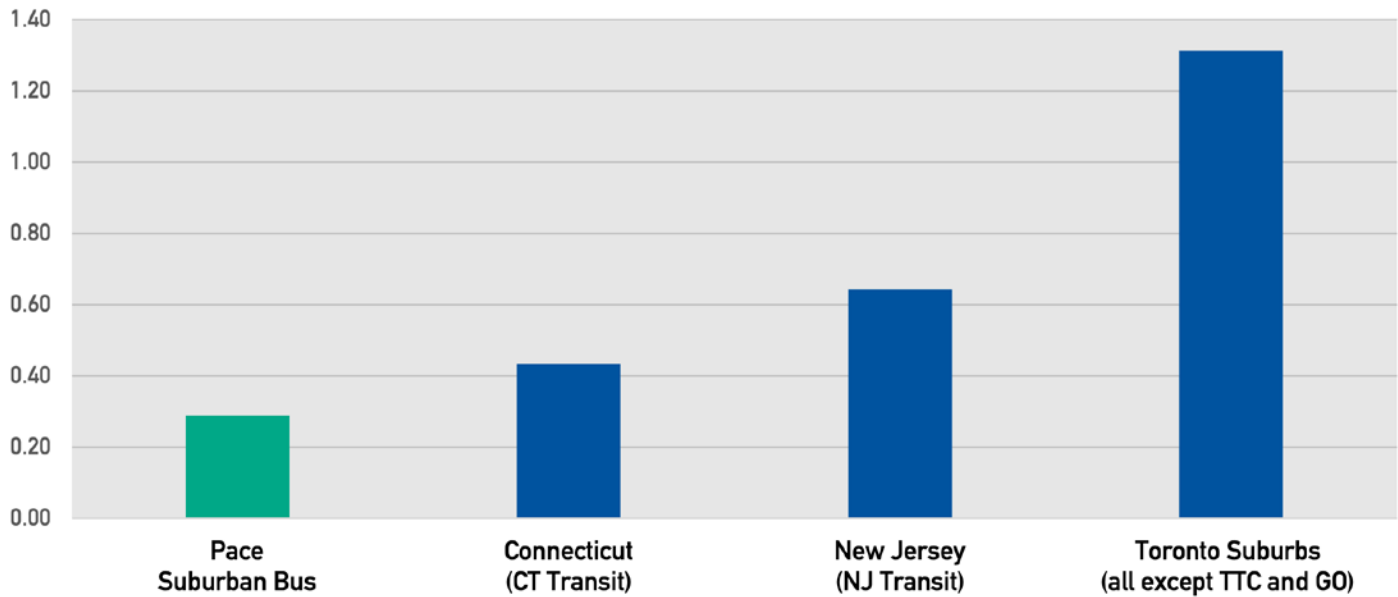


Figure 2: Chart comparing the amount of bus service available per resident of the Pace service area, compared to bus service per resident in Connecticut, New Jersey and the Toronto suburbs.

Most existing suburban bus routes are very infrequent.

Only 4% of residents and jobs in Pace’s service area are near frequent service (every 15 minutes or better, seven days per week). This rises to 7% on weekdays, as shown below.

In other words, **most Pace riders must either time their trips to the bus schedule, or wait a very long time.** If a bus comes every 60 minutes, then the average rider will wait 30 minutes to use it. By then, using a car probably would have been faster.

On many routes, poor frequencies are compounded by special route variations that happen just a few times a day. If someone tries to ride the bus at a different time than usual, the same route might not be going to the same place.

Most people and places are far from transit.

The chart below show that nearly 60% of people and jobs in Pace’s service area are located more than a half-mile from any bus or rail service.

This is partly because many suburbs are characterized by low densities, scattered development, and low walkability, which make it expensive to cover very many people with transit service (as detailed in Chapter 2 of this report).

These numbers are not limited to affluent people who voluntarily live in areas without transit. Nearly 800,000 suburban residents live in households with incomes below 150% of the federal poverty line. **Almost half of low-income suburban residents live more than a half-mile from any bus or rail service.**

Pace Spring 2026 - Weekdays at at Noon

What percentage of the Pace service area is within a 1/2-mile walk of transit with service

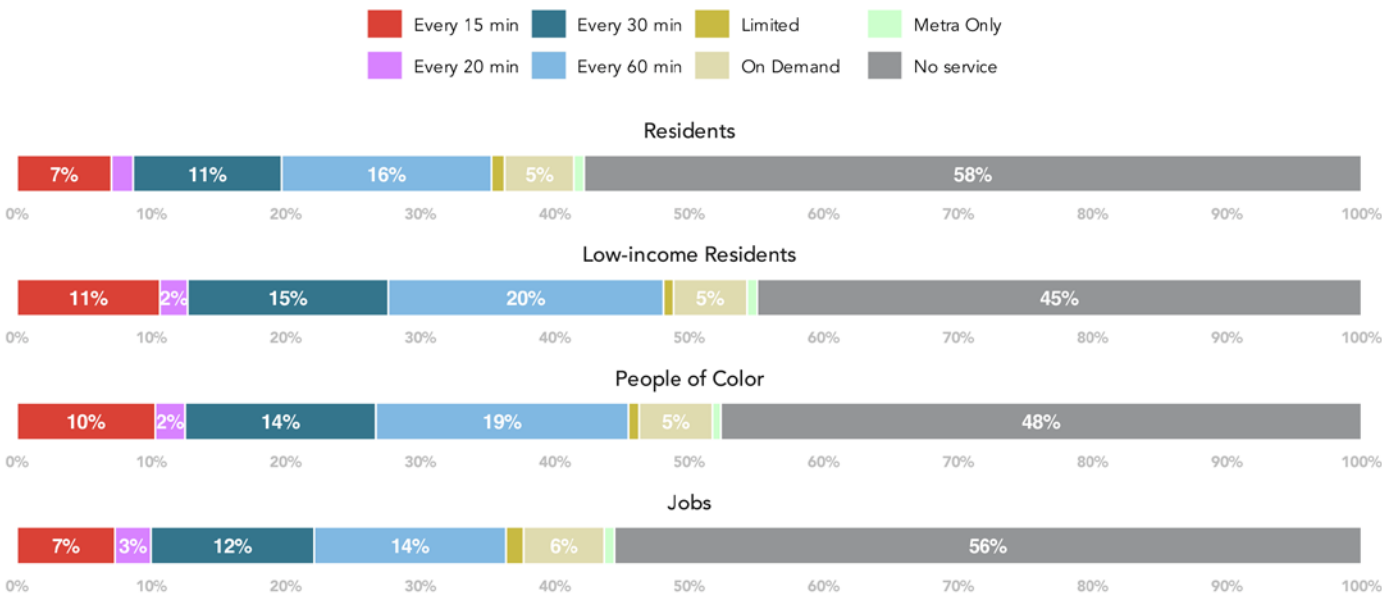


Figure 3: Chart showing the percentage of residents and jobs within a 1/2-mile walk of transit service at different frequencies in the Pace service area.

Saturday and Sunday service levels are especially low.

The chart below shows how much service Pace provides on weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays. This chart shows vehicle revenue hours per day, which means the total amount of time that all Pace buses are in service over the course of a day.

- On Saturdays, Pace provides 60% as much service as on weekdays.
- On Sundays, Pace provides 37% as much service as on weekdays.

Over the past several years, Pace has increased weekday service by 6%, Saturday service by 9%, and Sunday service by 18%. Building on this progress, additional investment is needed to better meet regional travel needs and to bring service levels more closely in line with peer agencies.

Replica travel data from Spring 2023 suggest that people in Chicagoland make about 80% as many trips on Saturdays as on weekdays. **There's no evidence that people who ride Pace buses need to travel less on weekends than anyone else.** In fact, many low-income riders are more likely to travel than average on weekends, due to work in retail, service and healthcare jobs.

Pace's Sunday service levels are especially low because several of its divisions do not operate: River, East Dundee, Fox Valley, Heritage and North Shore. As a result, there's almost no service outside of Cook County on Sundays. However, NITA has provided funding in 2026 that allows Pace to begin adding garage staff at divisions to expand weekend service.

Compared to 2025, the ReVision Draft Plan would nearly double suburban bus service on Saturdays, and more than triple service on Sundays.

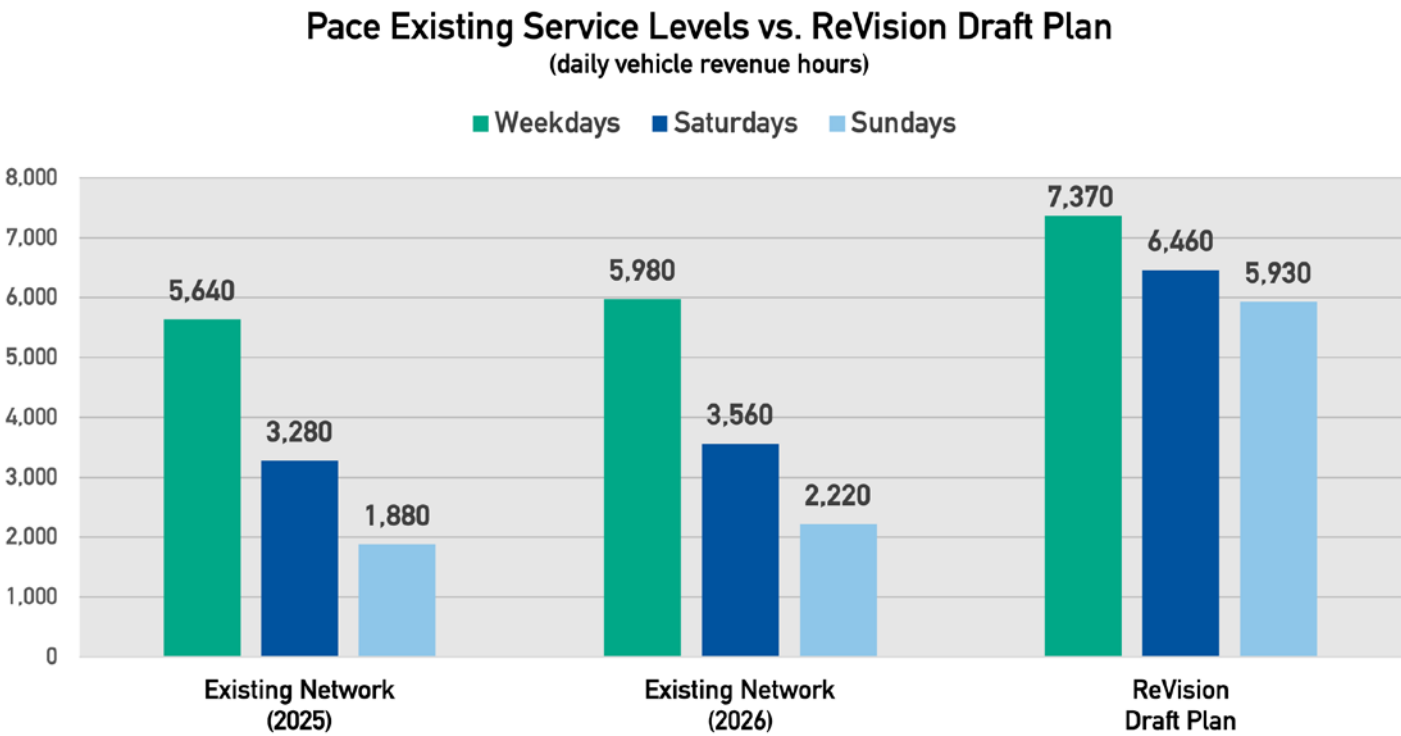


Figure 4: Chart comparing the amount of bus service provided by Pace on weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays in 2025, in 2026, and in the ReVision Draft Plan.

New investment could make suburban bus service useful to many more people.

The limitations of today's suburban bus network are largely due to:

- Land-use and road design decisions that make transit expensive to provide, compared to the number of people served.
- Historically low funding levels that have limited how much frequent service Pace can provide, even in many suburbs designed for transit.

Recognizing the development challenges, Pace has created Transit Supportive Guidelines for communities interested in transit, and offers free design review assistance to developers and urban designers.

ReVision presents Pace's vision for how to address the service side of the equation with additional investment in service. The ReVision Draft Plan shows how Pace can substantially increase the frequency of suburban bus service, and extend all-day and all-week service in more communities in all six counties than it does today.

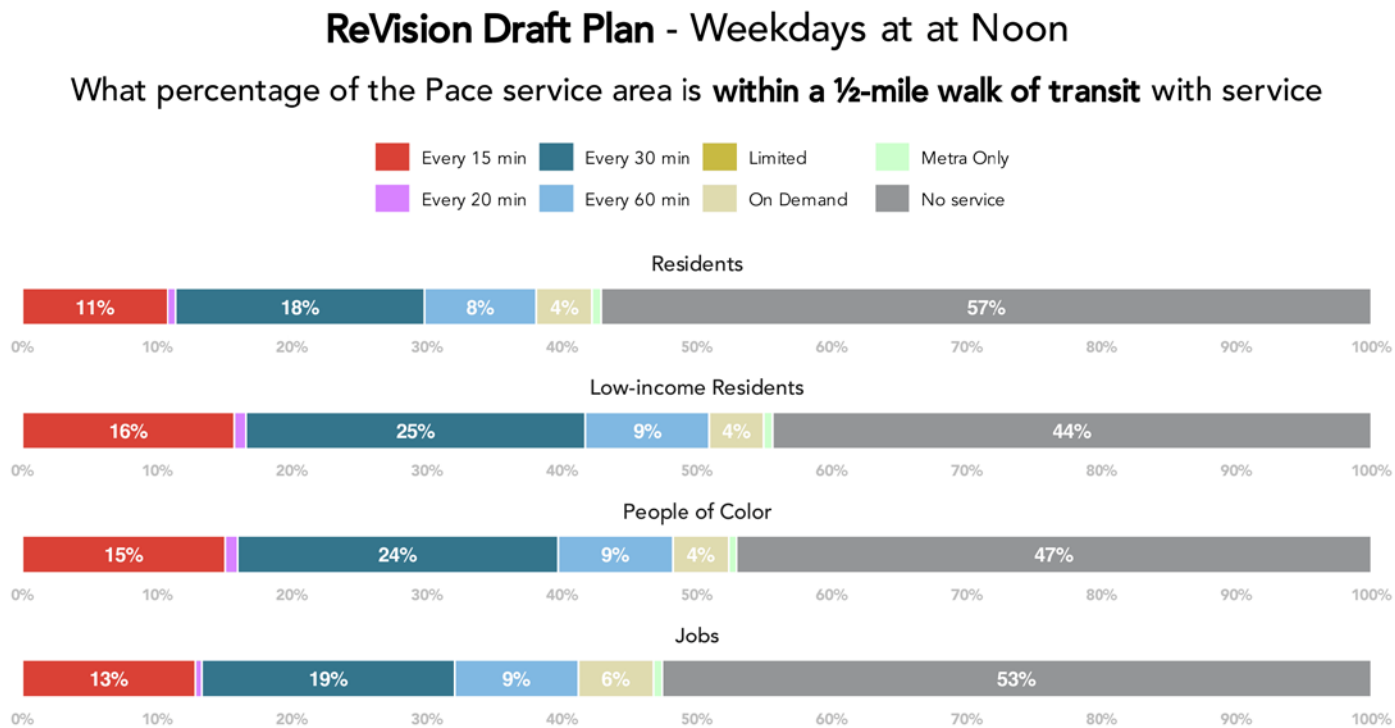


Figure 5: Chart showing the percentage of residents and jobs within a 1/2-mile walk of transit service at different frequencies in the Pace service area.

NITA makes it possible to imagine big improvements.

Regional transit funding is increasing.

The Northern Illinois Transit Authority (NITA) Act established new funding sources for regional transit, including an additional 0.25% sales tax and a dedicated portion of the State sales tax on gasoline. As a result, **annual regional transit revenues are expected to grow by over \$900 million from 2025 to 2028**, a 22% increase¹.

How will NITA decide what services to fund?

Under the new regional structure, NITA will develop service standards that will structure regional transit planning and funding:

- From 2027 to 2029, CTA, Pace and Metra will have their baseline public funding maintained at 2025 levels. New funding will be allocated in proportion to the amount of service each agency operates, and the amount of ridership each agency generates.
- From 2030 to 2032, baseline funding will still be maintained at 2025 levels, but new funding will be allocated among the three transit agencies according to new NITA service standards.
- Starting in 2032, all public funding will be allocated among CTA, Pace and Metra according to the new NITA standards.

The NITA Act establishes that the new service standards must relate different service types to transit propensity thresholds that take into account the following measures at minimum:

- Population density
- Employment density
- Low-income populations
- Disabled populations
- Zero-car households
- Intersection density
- Presence of sidewalks

In addition, starting in December 2027, NITA will develop a regional Service Plan to describe all transit service to be provided in the following one to three years. This plan will be developed in coordination with proposals provided by the three service boards, including Pace.

How much funding would ReVision require?

The ReVision Draft Plan would increase suburban bus service by about 50% compared to March 2025 levels. This level of service would require **approximately \$150 million annually** in new operating funds (in 2028 dollars), compared to 2025.

Although this would be a huge increase, this level of funding is the **minimum necessary to bring suburban bus service in the Chicago region in line with its closest peers**. A 50% service increase would bring Pace total service levels approximately in line with the amount of service provided by CT Transit in Connecticut.

This level of investment is consistent with the amount of service Pace is able to operate with its existing facilities. To achieve this level of service, Pace would significantly increase the number of drivers and maintenance staff it employs. This process may take several years.

Pace Proposed ReVision Service Levels vs. Peers
(annual revenue hours per capita)

Source: National Transit Database

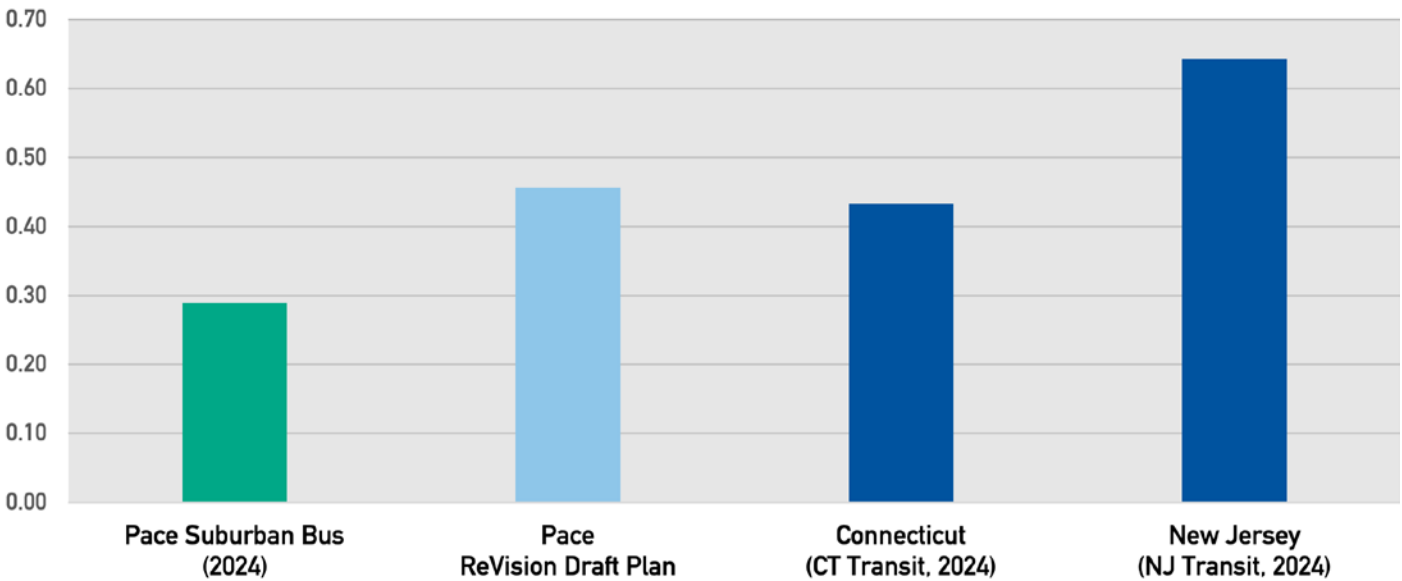


Figure 6: Chart comparing the amount of bus service available per resident in the existing Pace network, and in the ReVision Draft Plan network, compared to bus service per resident in Connecticut and New Jersey.

Thanks to the NITA Act, regional transit revenues are expected to grow by over \$900 million per year from 2025 to 2028.

An investment of \$150 million per year would allow for a 50% increase in suburban bus service. This would bring Pace in line with its closest peer agencies and make transit more useful to more people throughout Northeast Illinois.

¹ According to the [Adopted 2026 Operating Budget, Two-Year Financial Plan and Five-Year Capital Plan](#) for Northeastern Illinois, regional transit revenues will rise from an estimated \$4.085 billion in 2025 to an estimated \$4.991 billion in 2028.

What's in the ReVision Draft Plan?

Service would increase 50%.

For the first time in decades, new transit funding under the NITA Act¹ makes large investments in the suburban bus network possible.

Pace has already been increasing service in response. Since January 2026, Pace has implemented major service improvements on 12 routes, including higher frequencies, longer service hours, better weekend service, and route extensions.

The ReVision Draft Plan shows what Pace could do in the future if it receives enough new funding to increase suburban bus service by 50%.

Bus routes would be more frequent.

Pace has recently invested in better frequencies along 95th St, 159th St, South Western Ave, Cermak Rd, and Austin Blvd. This Draft Plan includes frequency upgrades to many more routes throughout the region.

Service frequency would be improved to **every 15 minutes** or better on corridors such as:

- **Touhy Rd, Central Ave/Niles Center Rd, and Algonquin Rd** in north Cook County.
- **Mannheim Rd, and 1st/5th Ave** in west Cook County.
- **West 79th St, and Cicero Ave** in south Cook County.
- The **I-90 express corridor**, from Elgin to Rosemont.

¹ Further information about new NITA Act funding is available here: <https://nita.illinois.gov/blog/2025/11/10/illinois-legislators-pass-landmark-transit-funding-and-reform-bill-averting-fiscal-cliff-what-does-it-mean-for-riders>

It would also include upgrading service to **every 30 minutes** on corridors such as:

- **Lewis Ave, and North Milwaukee Ave** in Lake County.
- **Dundee Rd, Harlem Ave/Waukegan Rd, and Oakton St** in north Cook County.
- **Grand Ave, 25th Ave, and Ridgeland Ave** in west Cook County.
- **Torrence Ave, and South Kedzie Ave** in south Cook County.
- **I-290/I-88 express service from Forest Park to Oak Brook**, continuing to Naperville via Ogden Ave.
- **Yorktown to Joliet**, via Woodridge and Bolingbrook.
- **Most local routes in Waukegan, Elgin, Aurora and Joliet.**

Bus routes would serve more places.

The Draft Plan would extend all-day bus service to more suburban areas including:

- Service **every 30 minutes** on Rand Rd and Dundee Rd in northwest Cook County; through Addison, Wood Dale and Itasca in DuPage County; and to Waubonsee Community College in Aurora.
- Service **every 60 minutes** to McHenry and Woodstock in McHenry County; on Crawford Ave south of 183rd in south Cook County; in Lombard, Villa Park and West Chicago in DuPage County; and on Lincoln Hwy between Joliet and Tinley Park.
- On Demand service in employment areas around I-55 in Bolingbrook and Romeoville.

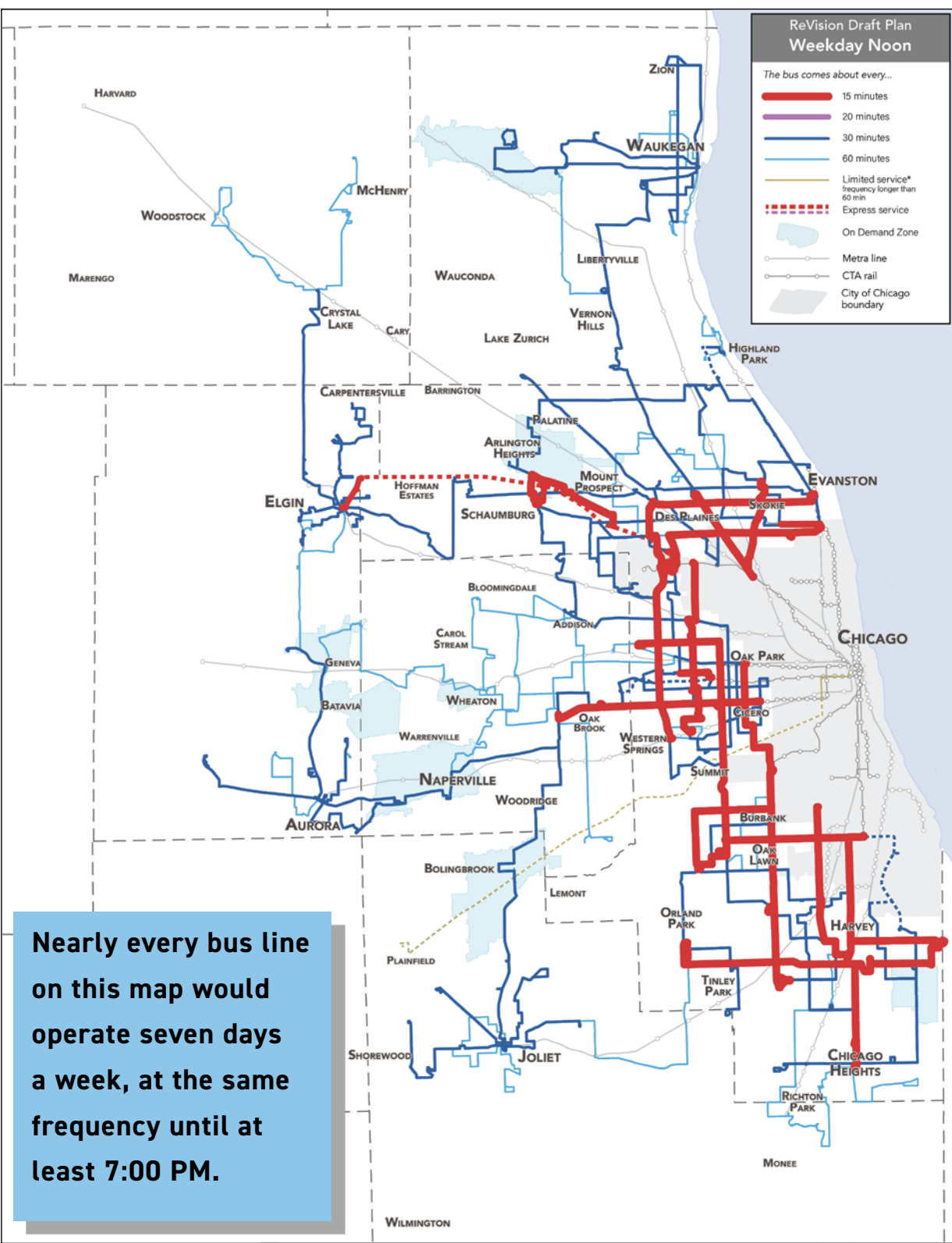


Figure 7: Map of the Draft Network Plan, showing routes at their planned frequencies on weekdays at noon. A more detailed map is shown on page 12.

More buses would run every day, and later in the evening.

Historically, Pace has provided much less service on Saturdays and Sundays than on weekdays, especially outside Cook County. Service has also been much lower after 6 PM than earlier in the daytime.

This has created known service gaps. Most people travel outside of rush hours for social, recreational, shopping and other purposes. Weekend and evening travel also includes many commutes. Most retail and service workers are required to take at least one weekend shift per week. Those same workers are also more likely than office workers to have at least one leg of their commute in the evening hours.

Based on regional travel data showing strong weekend demand, and ridership data suggesting increased demand in the evening², the Revision Draft Plan proposes that **every all-day bus route in the region would operate seven days per week**, with most routes running until 9:30 PM every day.

As shown in Figure 8, the Draft Plan would establish a region-wide frequency-based standard for spans of service:

- **Pulse** and **Frequent** routes (in **red** on the maps) would all operate every 15 minutes until 9:30 PM, and every 20 minutes until 12:30 AM, seven days per week.
- **Basic** routes (in **dark blue** on the maps) would operate every 30 minutes until 9:30 PM, and every 60 minutes until 12:30 AM on weekdays. On Saturdays and Sundays, Basic routes would operate every 30 minutes until 7:00 PM, and every 60 minutes and until 9:30 PM on Saturdays and Sundays.

² See the [ReVision Network Concepts Report](#), Chapter 3.

- **Coverage** routes (in **light blue** on the maps) would operate every 60 minutes until 7:00 PM every day.

Many routes would change; a few would be removed.

This plan is not just a service increase. It also redesigns many parts of the Pace network. In nearly all cases, the ReVision Draft Plan would **serve the areas Pace currently serves, but not necessarily with the same routes and stops**. Some of the most impactful changes would include the following:

- Many routes would be extended to enable **more direct to travel to major regional destinations** like Hawthorn Mall, Woodfield Mall, Loyola/Hines, Oakbrook Center, O'Hare Airport, Midway Airport, and many others.
- **Routes in Cook County would form a clearer grid** of north-south and east-west services. This would add service on some streets and remove service on some others.
- **Every route in Elgin would become a two-way route**, where buses operate on the same street in both directions, instead of the one-way loops that exists today.
- **Some On Demand zones would be replaced by regular bus routes** operating within or near the zone (e.g. Hoffman Estates, Southeast Aurora, Vernon Hills-Mundelein).
- **In a few areas with very low ridership, service would be discontinued**, if local densities of low-income or zero-vehicle households do not suggest overwhelming needs.

ReVision Draft Plan – Typical Weekday Frequencies					
How many minutes between two buses on the same route?					
	Morning	Daytime	Afternoon	Evening	Late
	about 5:30 AM to 9:00 AM	about 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM	about 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM	about 7:00 PM to 9:30 PM	about 9:30 PM to 12:30 AM
Route Category					
Pulse	15	15	15	15	20
Frequent	15	15	15	15	30
Basic	30	30	30	30	60
Coverage	60	60	60		
On Demand	On Demand	On Demand	On Demand		
Peak Only	Set Trips		Set Trips		

ReVision Draft Plan – Typical Saturday and Sunday Frequencies				
	Morning	Daytime	Evening	Late Evening
	about 5:30 AM to 7:00 AM ¹	about 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM ²	about 7:00 PM to 9:30 PM	about 9:30 PM to 12:30 AM
Route Category				
Pulse	15	15	15	20
Frequent ³	30	15	15	30
Basic	60	30	60	
Coverage	60	60		No service

¹ 6:30 AM to 8:00 AM on Sundays
² 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM on Sundays
³ Route 352 (Halsted) would retain overnight service every 30 minutes between 12:30 AM and 5:30 PM from 95th St to Harvey.

Figure 8: Frequencies and service spans by route type and day type in the ReVision Draft Plan.

What choices does this plan reflect?

Pace reviewed the existing network and its challenges.

Pace launched ReVision in late 2023. The initial stages of the project:

- Assessed the market and need for transit service in the Chicago suburbs, after the COVID pandemic.
- Evaluated the structure and the performance of the then-existing suburban bus network.
- Identified the limits to Pace’s ability to improve service, and the choices available to Pace to improve the network. The most important of these choices is between investing in **Higher Ridership** or **More Coverage**.

Chapter 2 of this report summarizes the most important observations about the existing network; strong markets and needs for more service; and the choices that can be made about future service.

The Network Concepts showed two different paths forward.

The ReVision Concepts Report, released in November 2024, included two very different visions for how Pace could improve service, if it received enough funding to increase service by 50%.

- The **Ridership Concept** showed a network of routes that operated **every 15** to 30 minutes, focused on the **denser and more active areas** of the region, where a more useful network could generate higher ridership.
- The **Coverage Concept** showed a network that extended service **every 60 minutes as far as possible into the suburbs**, with very few frequency increases.

As a result:

- The **Ridership Concept** would **increase access to destinations** for the average resident, but would reduce the number of people near service.
- The **Coverage Concept** would **increase the number of people near service**, but would reduce the average resident’s transit access to destinations.

Pace gathered feedback from the public.

From November 2024 to January 2025, Pace presented the Network Concepts to the public through many channels, as documented in the Outreach Summary Report. Much of this feedback was directed to an online survey that gathered over 3,800 responses.

Survey responses suggested nearly equal levels of interest in Ridership and Coverage goals:

- **40%** preferred or leaned toward the Ridership Concept.
- **36%** preferred or leaned toward the Coverage Concept.
- 17% were halfway in between and 7% did not know.

The survey also asked respondents to identify their top three service improvement priorities. **The most popular priorities for service improvement were:**

- **Higher frequency service** on weekdays in the daytime (51%).
- **New bus routes to places that don’t have transit now** (50%).
- **More service on Saturdays and Sundays** (46%).

The NITA Act gave new direction for the Draft Plan.

In March 2025, the Pace Board of Directors provided ReVision with initial guidance for this Draft Plan, mostly focused on increasing coverage. This direction was informed by the fact that, since 1980, population has grown more in the collar counties, where many of the service increases in the Coverage Concept were located.

However, as described on page 5, the NITA Act changes how transit funding will be allocated in the future. Future funding allocations will be based on service standards that include, but are not limited to, measures of density and walkability. The NITA Act also established that, from 2027 to 2029, regional system generated revenue (mostly fares) should equal at least 25% of the costs of providing transit.

In December 2025, in response to these ridership-oriented parameters in the NITA Act, the Pace Board Planning and Infrastructure Committee therefore directed the ReVision project team to develop a Draft Plan with:

- **70%** of new service invested towards Higher Ridership.
- **30%** of new service used to provide More Coverage.
- Improved frequencies on Saturdays and Sundays.

Those policy decisions are why the Draft Plan would:

- Improve frequencies in the places with higher densities of residents, jobs and destinations.
- Extend bus service to a few new areas on weekdays.
- Provide consistent frequencies seven days a week, on nearly all suburban bus routes.

How would this plan make transit more useful?

People could use transit to go more places, in less time.

The Draft Network would reduce the average suburban resident's travel time to reach destinations by transit. This is illustrated by the map in Figure 9, on which:

- Each dot shows where 100 people live.
- **Green dots are residents in areas where transit would become more useful**, if this plan is implemented. The number of jobs someone could reach within 60 minutes or less, door-to-door, using transit and walking would increase.
- **Brown dots are residents in areas where transit would become less useful**. The number of jobs someone could reach in 60 minutes would decrease.

Maps that show change in access to other destinations, like schools and shopping, are available in Chapter 3 of this report.

How many people would be affected?

If the ReVision Draft Plan is implemented, about:

- **2.24 million suburban residents**, or **40%** of the population, live in places where transit would provide access to at least + 5,000 more jobs within 60 minutes. This includes 48% of low-income residents, and 47% of people of color.
- **230,000 suburban residents**, or about **4%** of the population, live in places where transit would provide access to fewer jobs by transit within 60 minutes. This includes 4% of low-income residents and 4% of people of color.

This plan would also benefit many people living at the northern, western and southern edges of the City of Chicago, as shown by the number of green dots in those areas in Figure 9.

If this plan is implemented, the typical suburban resident will be able to reach:

- + 82% more jobs
- + 73% more stores
- + 66% more schools

...within 60 minutes or less, on transit, on weekdays.

People all over the region and at all income levels would benefit.

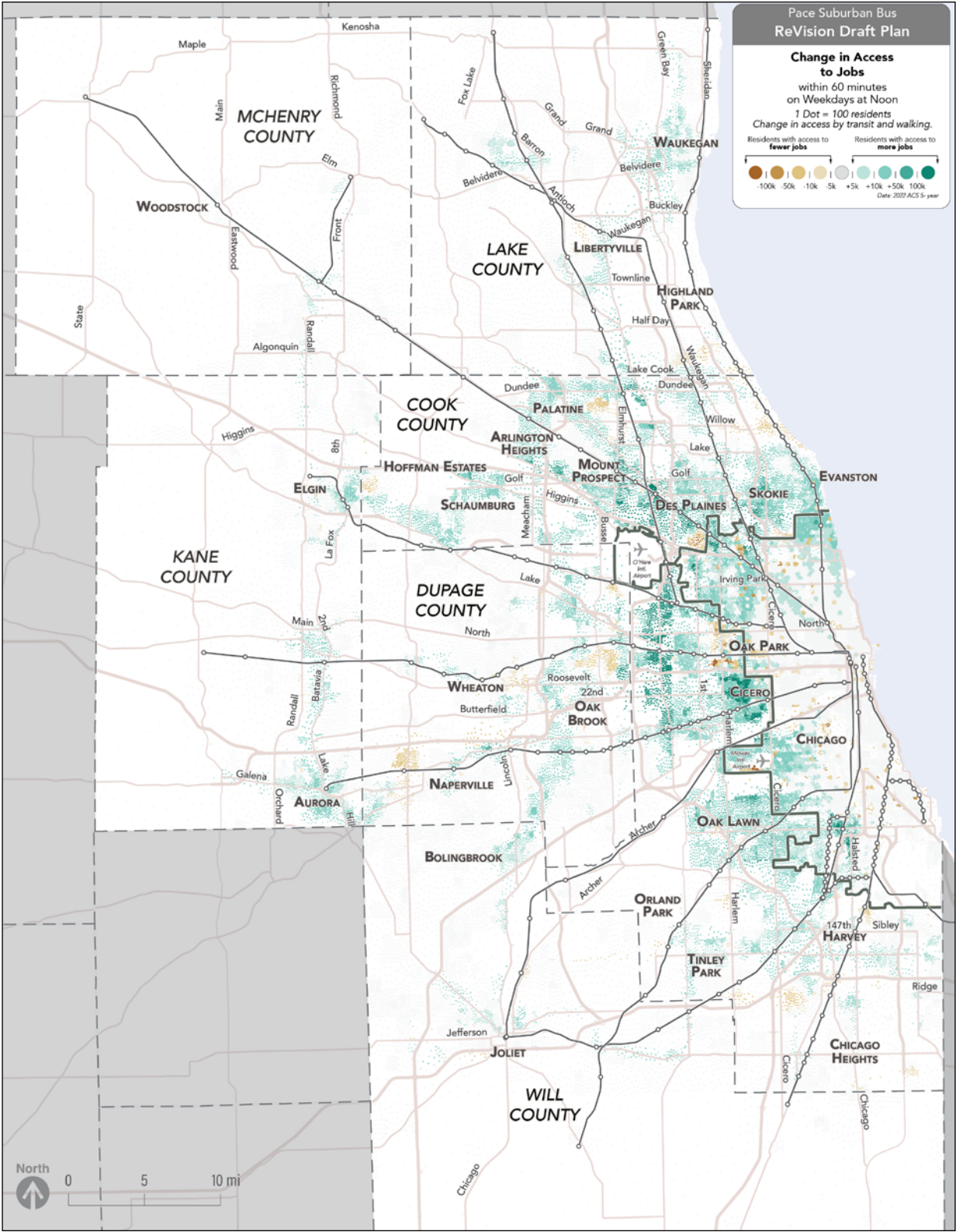


Figure 9: This map shows where transit would provide access to more jobs (in green) or fewer jobs (in brown) within 60 minutes, if the ReVision Draft Plan is implemented. Each dot represents 100 residents.

Your community's input can improve this plan, and help make it a reality.

Read on for more information.

This document is the **Executive Summary**. You can find this summary and further information in the Draft Plan Report. In that document:

- Chapter 2 provides more context on the challenge of planning effective transit service in the Chicago suburbs.
- Chapter 3 describes the mobility outcomes of the Draft Plan, including changes in coverage and access to destinations.
- Chapter 4 provides a route-by-route description of the service proposed in the Draft Plan, for every part of the Pace service area.

Let us know what you think!

From mid-October to mid-December 2026, Pace, NITA and the ReVision team will consult the public about this Draft Plan, through:

- Community meetings, workshops, and pop-up events throughout the region.
- Web-based information and feedback channels, including the project website, inbox, and an online survey.

Throughout this process, we will be asking:

- Does this Draft Plan meet your priorities for improvements in suburban bus service?
- Would the service proposed in this Draft Plan improve your life, or the life of someone you know?
- Did we get the network right in your area? What changes would you suggest?

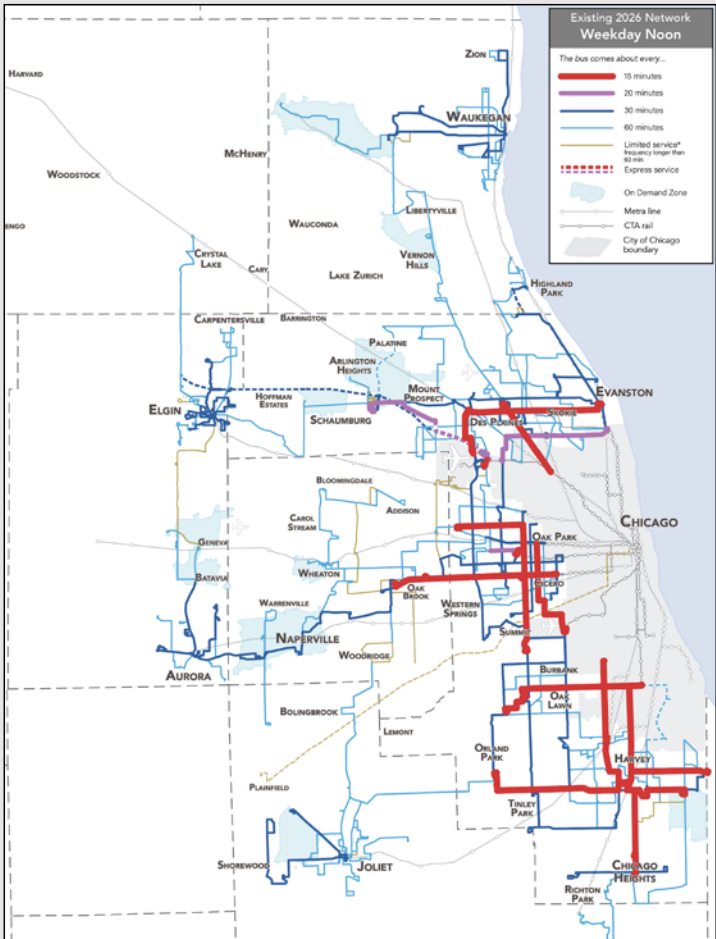


Does this Draft Plan match your priorities? Would it help you or someone you know? Do you have suggestions for how to improve it?

Let us know! Your feedback to NITA and Pace will help direct the future of suburban bus service in 2027 and beyond.

Key Facts and Outcomes - Existing Network vs. ReVision Draft Plan

Existing Network



Service Quantity

1.7 million annual vehicle revenue hours

Frequency

4% of suburban residents live within a 1/2-mile of service **every 15 minutes or better**, seven days per week.

11% of suburban residents live within a 1/2-mile of service **every 30 minutes or better**, seven days per week.

Coverage

20% of suburban residents live within a 1/2-mile walk of **any bus or rail service** on Sundays.

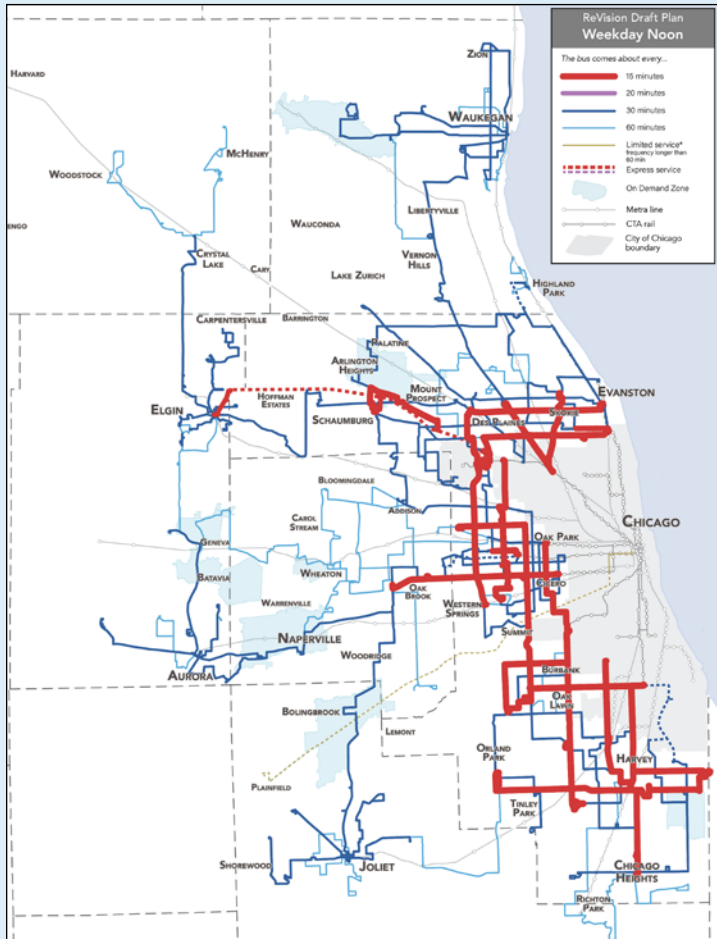
42% of suburban residents live within a 1/2-mile walk of **any bus or rail service** on weekdays.

Access to Opportunity

On a weekday, within 60 minutes:

- The median suburban resident can reach only **42,000** work, school and shopping destinations using transit.
- **Only 10%** of suburban residents can reach at least 500,000 destinations. This includes only 12% of low-income suburban residents.

ReVision Draft Plan



Service Quantity

2.6 million annual vehicle revenue hours

Frequency

11% of suburban residents would live within a 1/2-mile of service **every 15 minutes or better**, seven days per week.

30% of suburban residents would live within a 1/2-mile of service **every 30 minutes or better**, seven days per week.

Coverage

38% of suburban residents would live within a 1/2-mile walk of **any bus or rail service** on Sundays.

43% of suburban residents would live within a 1/2-mile walk of **any bus or rail service** on weekdays.

Access to Opportunity

On a weekday, within 60 minutes:

- The median suburban resident would be able to reach **73,000 (+74%)** work, school and shopping destinations using transit.
- **13%** of suburban residents would be able to reach at least 500,000 destinations. This includes 17% of low-income suburban residents.

Overview Map - ReVision Draft Plan

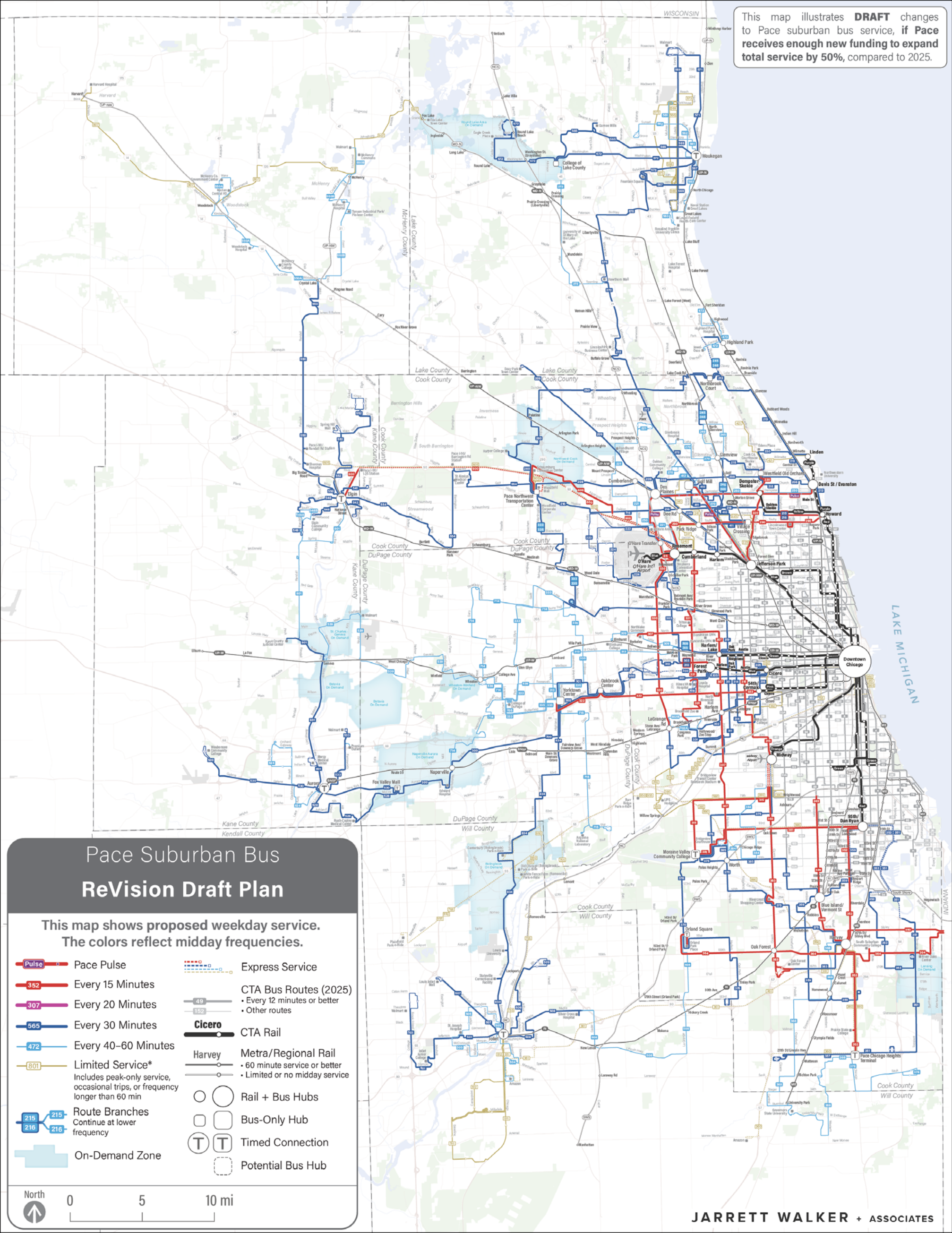


Figure 10: Map of the proposed suburban bus network in the Pace ReVision Draft Plan.

Overview Map - Existing Suburban Bus Network

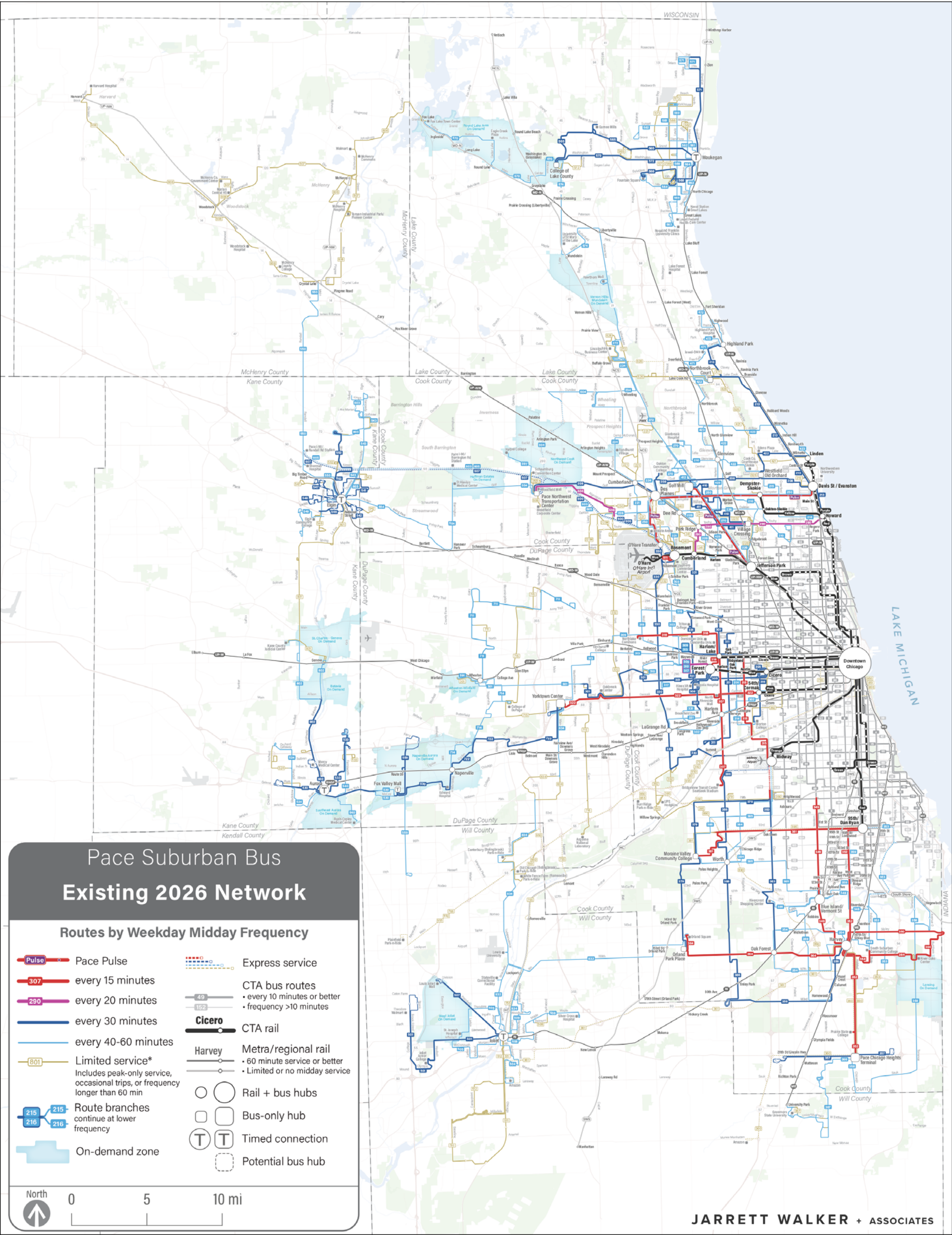


Figure 11: Map of Pace's existing suburban bus network, as of March 2026.