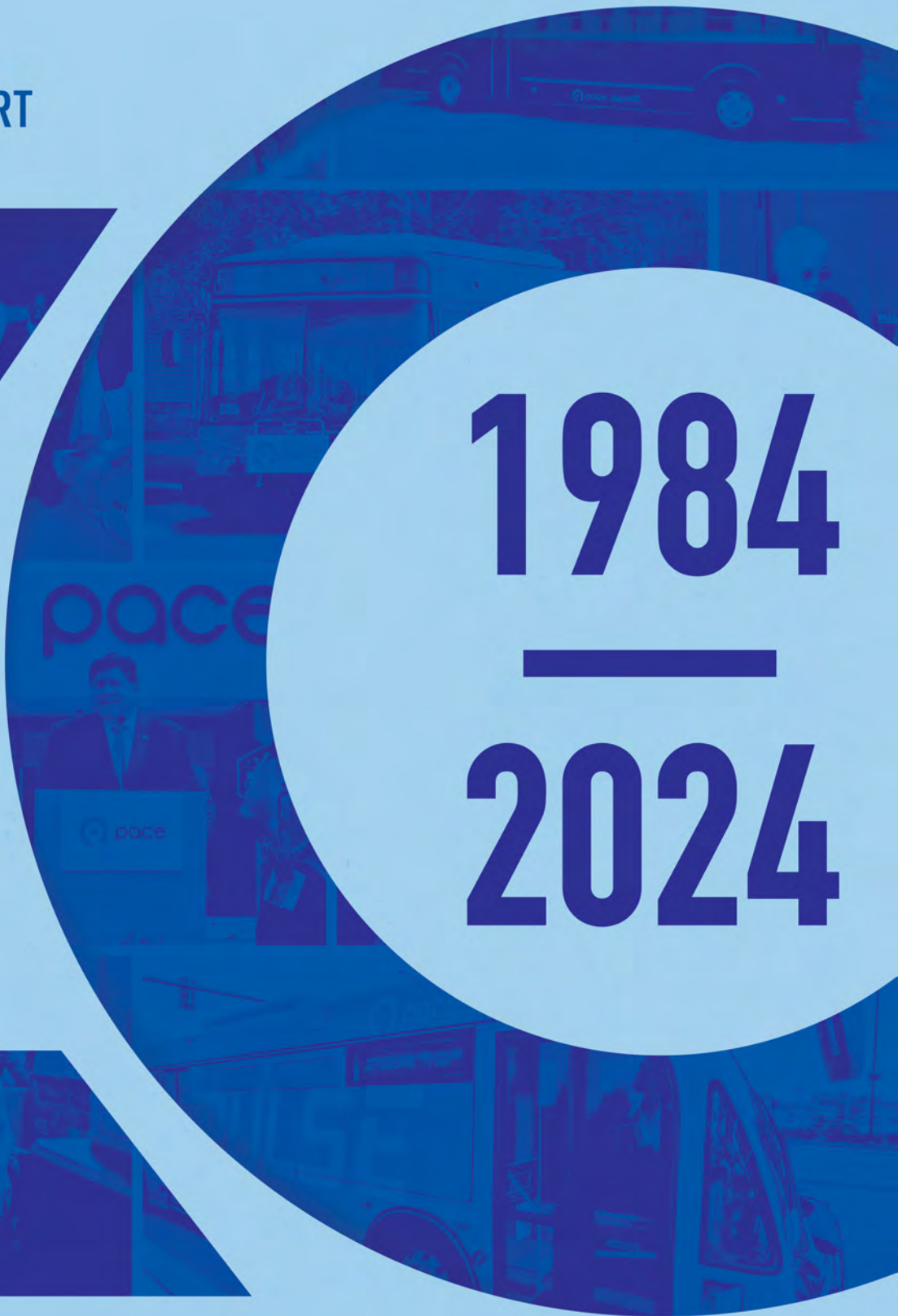




2024 ANNUAL REPORT



1984



2024

CELEBRATING  
40 YEARS *of* SERVICE



# CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

## DEAR RESIDENTS, INTERESTED CITIZENS, AND PUBLIC OFFICIALS:

Pace's work in 2024 has culminated in our agency implementing critical investments and service initiatives that put the needs of our riders first and continue our positive momentum in addressing our region's evolving mobility habits. This report on our activities in 2024 represents Pace's commitment to maximizing service within our budget and operating a transit network that can deliver fast and frequent service, easier connectivity, greater accessibility, and sustainable transportation solutions.

Pace's momentum has been on display this past year with increasing ridership, historic infrastructure investments, and innovative service enhancements. As we implemented strategic fare adjustments, expanded service offerings, and targeted marketing campaigns to attract new riders, our system's ridership continued to grow.

We engaged with communities, allowing us to tailor our services to local needs more effectively in the post-pandemic era. The past year also marked the launch of *ReVision*, Pace's ambitious network revitalization and system restructuring plan. *ReVision* will position Pace to better serve the diverse and evolving needs of our suburban communities.

Stakeholder engagement will be crucial throughout this process. In 2025, we look forward to working closely with our partners, passengers, and community leaders to shape the future of transit in northeastern Illinois. Visit [PaceBus.com/Revision](https://PaceBus.com/Revision) to submit your comments on the future of Pace service.

The successes highlighted in this report show we have delivered on the cornerstone of Pace's mission—operational excellence. We have implemented service enhancements designed to improve our riders' transit experience, including increased frequency along high-demand routes, expanded On Demand services, and improved weekend and late-night service.

We also look forward to continuing major projects that center the needs of our riders and enhance accessibility and connectivity. The year ahead includes work to complete the new ADA Paratransit Transfer Facility at our Northwest Transportation Center and to open the second building on our South Campus project in Markham. We will continue progress on reconstructing the Harvey Transportation Center to improve service reliability and deliver increased capacity for our riders in the south suburbs. We will also break ground on Pace's North Division transition to a fully electric garage. The Waukegan facility will be the first garage to house a fully battery electric fleet by 2027.

Pace's ability to innovate and provide critical mobility that our communities and economy depend on cannot happen without meaningful investments in public transportation from our state and federal leaders. We continue to advocate for transformational funding that will not only allow us to maintain our current system but also build a modern, resilient transit network for generations to come.

I am deeply grateful for the strong relationships we have with our municipal, township, county, and state partners. Their collaborative spirit has been instrumental in our success throughout our vibrant 40-year history and will continue to benefit the region as we work together to address our fiscal challenges and build a stronger, more sustainable transportation network for our region.

Sincerely,

**RICK KWASNESKI**  
Chairman

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of Northeastern Illinois' Regional Transportation Authority, 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



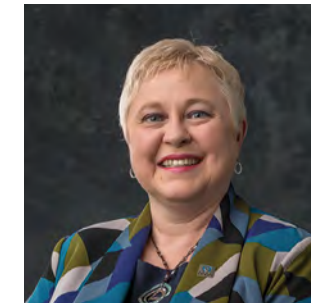
**JOHN D. NOAK**  
Will County



**JEFFERY D. SCHIELKE**  
Kane County



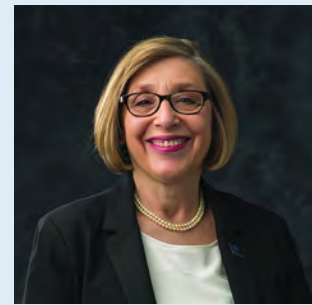
**ERIN SMITH**  
McHenry County



**LINDA SOTO**  
Lake County



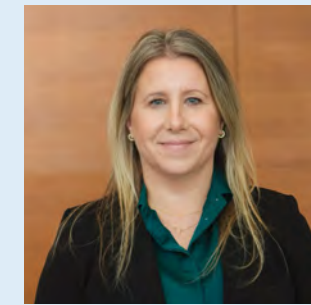
**TERRY R. WELLS**  
South Suburban  
Cook County



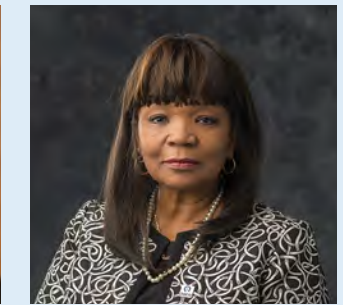
**MELINDA J. METZGER**  
Executive Director



**NANCY ZIMMER**  
Chief Administrative Officer/  
General Counsel



**LINDSEY UMEK**  
Chief Operating Officer



**COLETTE THOMAS GORDON**  
Chief Internal Auditor

# DEAR STAKEHOLDERS:

**WE ARE PLEASED TO SHARE PACE'S 2024 ANNUAL REPORT, WHICH HIGHLIGHTS MANY PROJECTS AND MILESTONES ACHIEVED OVER THE PAST YEAR AS WE ADVANCE OUR MISSION TO DELIVER ACCESSIBLE, EQUITABLE, AND INNOVATIVE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION WHILE UPHOLDING OUR COMMITMENT TO FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY.**

This year's report tells the story of a landmark year for Pace, as we introduced our first electric vehicle into service along 95th Street, marking a significant step in our sustainability journey. The debut of our inaugural battery-electric bus is a testament to our dedication to environmental stewardship. Our Project Zero fleet and facilities transition plans are complete, and our first electric ADA paratransit vehicle will soon be serving Kane County. We are also constructing the necessary infrastructure to support the next 23 electric buses, which will begin operating next year. These efforts position us well on our path to achieving our 2040 zero-emission goal.

Throughout 2024, we continued to enhance our network and expand our service offerings. On Demand services in Arlington Heights, Rolling Meadows, and the Round Lake Area were expanded and a new Lansing Area On Demand launched in October. Our Pulse network grew with major ridership increases on the new Pulse Dempster Line and work continued on 95th Street, Halsted, and Cermak lines. We also made fixed-route service free for passengers certified for ADA Paratransit service. Further, we integrated more services into our preferred mobility-as-a-service app, Transit, and launched the Rideshare Access Program (RAP), which provides flexible rideshare options for people with disabilities across the region. These improvements, along with our efforts to enhance passenger amenities and push forward on meaningful capital and long-range planning initiatives, demonstrate our ongoing commitment to better serving our communities.

But we won't rest on our laurels! In fact, 2025 will see more service on the road to meet the growing market demand from both returning and new riders. Pace prides itself on being a good steward of taxpayer dollars while offering essential mobility across the region. Our fiscal responsibility and nimble approach have earned us the trust of our communities and made us a sound investment. This trust is evident in the significant funding awards we received in 2024, including more than \$4 million in federal Community

Project Funding and \$30.9 million from the Federal Transit Administration to accelerate our ongoing transition to a zero emissions fleet. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) announced a \$27 million award to Pace for the purchase of electric buses. This funding was made possible through the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust.

Ridership continues to grow. Our ADA Paratransit ridership is already higher than its 2019 level, and our system as a whole grew back to more than 70% of pre-COVID levels. In fact, Pace's ridership growth in 2024 was the fifth-highest in Amercia for systems of our size.

We are doing good work, and we are eager to do even more. These initiatives and others will continue our momentum to build the modern, world-class transit system our region deserves. Thanks to the ongoing support of our federal, state, and local partners, Pace remains uniquely positioned to build on our 40-year history of innovation and deliver a reimagined transit system that ensures public transit is a preferred travel choice for northeastern Illinois.

Pace deeply appreciates your continued support. Together, we will continue to provide essential transportation services to the people of northeastern Illinois and we look forward to serving you in the coming year.

Sincerely,



**MELINDA J. METZGER**  
Executive Director

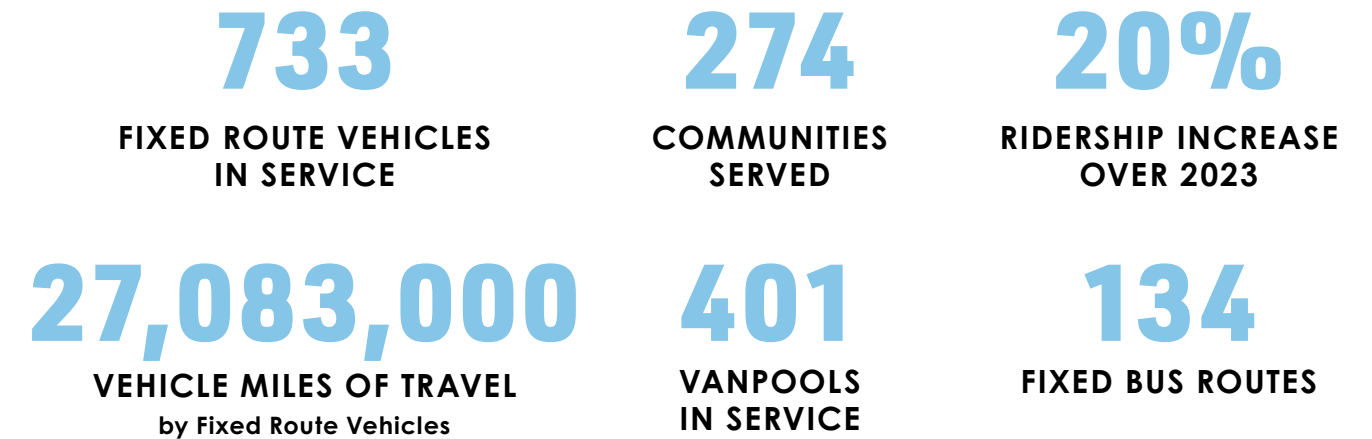


## PACE IN 2024: BY THE NUMBERS

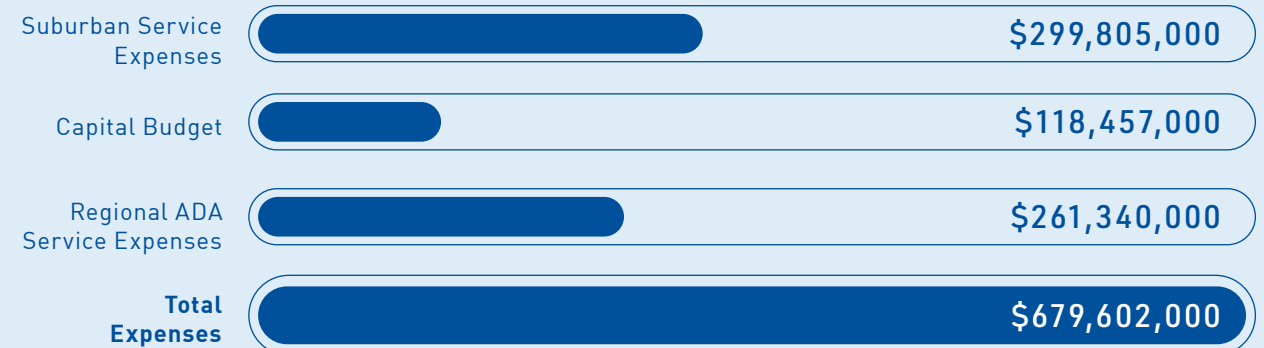
2024 RIDERSHIP

**22,847,000 TRIPS**

BY OCTOBER 2024, DAILY RIDERSHIP INCREASED TO 70% OF ITS 2019 LEVEL.

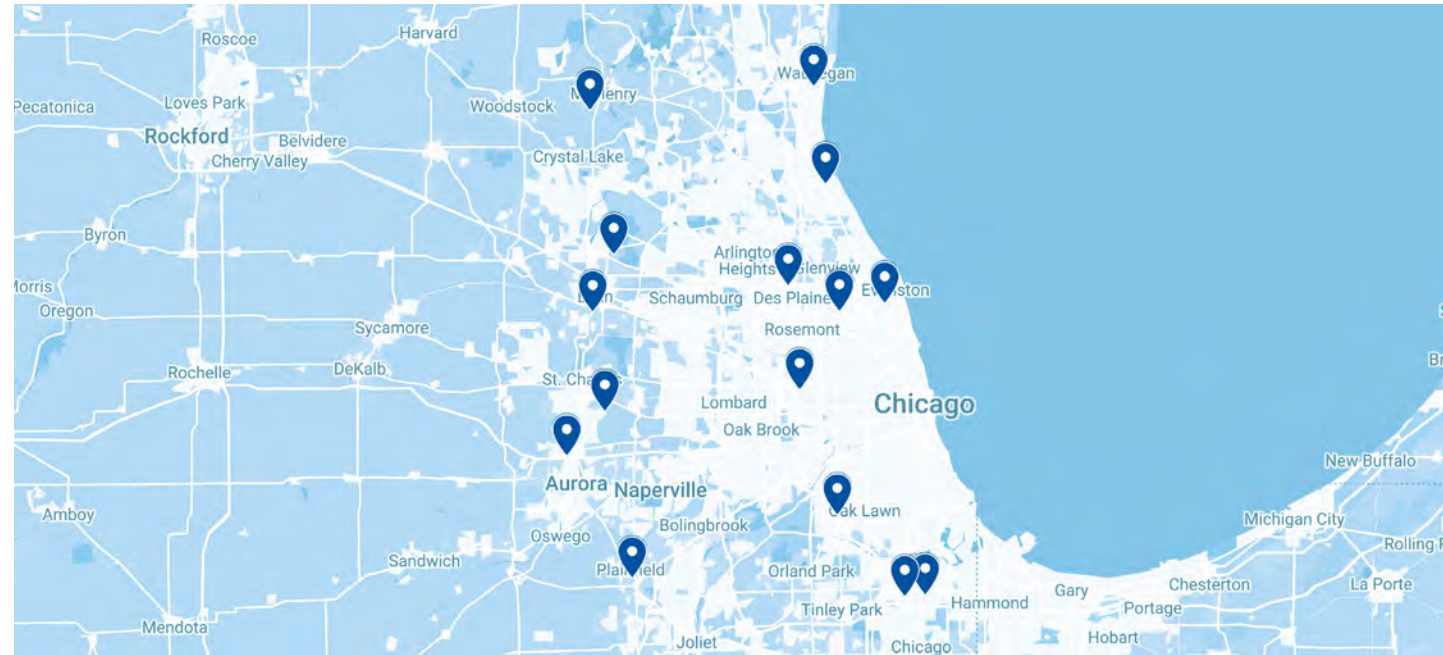


## 2024 BUDGET



# 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 as well as bus operator training at a 16th site. The Acceptance Facility will be relocating in early 2025 to a building under construction adjacent to our newest worksite in Markham.



## GARAGE/DIVISION

## ADDRESS

West	3500 W. Lake Street, Melrose Park, IL 60160
Southwest	9889 S. Industrial Drive, Bridgeview, IL 60455
South	2101 W. 163rd Place, Markham, IL 60428
Heritage	14539 S. Depot Drive, Plainfield, IL 60544
Village of Niles	6859 Touhy Avenue, Niles, IL 60714
City of Highland Park	1150 Half Day Road, Highland Park, IL 60035
McHenry	5007 Prime Parkway, McHenry, IL 60050
North	1400 W. 10th Street, Waukegan, IL 60085
Northwest	900 E. Northwest Highway, Des Plaines, IL 60016
North Shore	2330 Oakton Street, Evanston, IL 60202
River	975 S. State Street, Elgin, IL 60123
River (East Dundee)	401 Christina Drive, East Dundee, IL 60118
Fox Valley	400 Overland Drive, North Aurora, IL 60542
Acceptance Facility	405 Taft Drive, South Holland, IL 60473
Headquarters	550 W. Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60005
Central Training and Customer Relations Facility	2107B W. 163rd Place, Markham, IL 60428



## FIRST ELECTRIC BUS GOES INTO SERVICE

**U.S. SENATOR DICK DURBIN AND ILLINOIS STATE SENATOR BILL CUNNINGHAM JOINED PACE AND RTA TO CELEBRATE PACE'S FIRST ELECTRIC BUS ON JANUARY 19, 2024, AT SOUTHWEST DIVISION IN BRIDGEVIEW.**

That day, Pace Suburban Bus “charged” into the future with the debut of its inaugural battery-electric bus. The state-of-the-art Gillig bus is now operational on Route 381 95th Street serving riders in the southwest suburbs. This significant step towards sustainable transit comes after the bus underwent rigorous testing in 2023.

Pace, with its commitment to environmental stewardship as a key priority of the agency's *Driving Innovation* strategic vision plan, is actively working to reduce its carbon footprint and enhance air quality in the region. Pace's ambitious initiative, Project Zero, aims to convert its entire fleet of over 700 buses to zero-emission vehicles by the year 2040.

“This is a tremendous milestone in our Project Zero initiative,” said Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski.

**“...ALREADY, 23 MORE ELECTRIC BUSES ARE ON ORDER THANKS TO FEDERAL FUNDING. WE THANK YOU, SENATOR DURBIN, AND THE ILLINOIS DELEGATION FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN THIS ENDEAVOR.”**

“By embracing cutting-edge technology, Pace is not just transforming its fleet; it's catalyzing a broader conversation about the intersection of public transportation and environmental responsibility,” said U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL). “Pace's leadership in embracing clean energy showcases the potential for transformative change, and aligns with our shared vision of propelling our communities towards a greener tomorrow.”

“Pace's legacy of progress and innovation has led us to this vehicle you see today—which is better for passengers, easier for our bus operators, and cleaner for the environment,” said Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger. “This marks a pivotal moment for Pace and our commitment to sustainable mobility solutions.”

Event speakers included U.S. Senator Dick Durbin; Illinois State Senator Bill Cunningham; RTA Board Member Michael Lewis; Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski; and Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger. Event guests included Illinois State Representative and Mayor of Evergreen Park Kelly M. Burke; members of the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 241; and representatives from Moraine Valley College.

## PACE HOSTS FEBRUARY 15 MEETING OF WILL COUNTY GOVERNMENTAL LEAGUE AT HERITAGE DIVISION



**AS PART OF A SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT OF TIME IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR LOCAL LEADERS AND COMMUNITIES, PACE HOSTED THE WILL COUNTY GOVERNMENTAL LEAGUE.**

Our relationships with our communities are instrumental in helping Pace develop and sustain the innovative transit services that can meet the needs of our riders. Pace was able to showcase our newest facility and our first electric-powered paratransit vehicle.

## PACE UNVEILS FIRST ELECTRIC PARATRANSIT BUS

**AT PACE'S FEBRUARY 21 BOARD MEETING, BOARD MEMBERS PARTICIPATED IN A CEREMONIAL UNVEILING OF OUR FIRST- EVER BATTERY ELECTRIC PARATRANSIT VEHICLE.**

That zero-emissions vehicle was recently added to our fleet and will remain at our Acceptance Facility as staff familiarizes itself with its operations and technology. It will soon operate from our River Division garage in Elgin.

Pace continues to make progress on our Project Zero initiative, and we thank our supporters and our elected leaders for helping us invest in these important initiatives.





## GOVERNOR PRITZKER CELEBRATES PACE'S SOUTH CAMPUS OPENING

On July 16, 2024, Pace welcomed Governor JB Pritzker, Illinois State Representative William Q. Davis, Illinois State Representative Robert Rita, Illinois State Representative Debbie Meyers-Martin, Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman, and Mayor Roger Agpawa of Markham, along with state and community leaders to celebrate the completion of its new administrative facility in Markham.

Pace's latest investment in the south suburbs marks a significant milestone in modernizing operations, bolstering the agency's south suburban workforce, and enhancing our central Safety and Training, including the introduction of a bus operator training course.

"Not only does this project make Pace a more efficient and modern part of our transit system, but it also prioritizes clean and efficient energy growth—a win across the board," said Governor JB Pritzker.



**"REBUILD ILLINOIS IS FUNDING PROJECTS LIKE THIS ALL ACROSS THE STATE, MAKING A STRONGER ILLINOIS THAT WORKS BETTER FOR ITS PEOPLE."**

The Markham campus project was made possible by a \$7.1 million investment from the governor's historic, bipartisan *Rebuild Illinois* capital program and an additional \$27.1 million in state funding. Additional funding was provided by the Federal Transportation Authority (\$1.3 million), Regional Transportation Authority Bonds (\$1.9 million), and Pace capital funds (\$2.6 million).

"*Rebuild Illinois* has been a gamechanger for transit in the Chicago area and our entire system of multimodal transportation in Illinois," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. "Under Gov. Pritzker, IDOT is proud to help deliver these important projects that ultimately make buses and trains safer, more reliable and accessible for the public."

The Markham project has spurred economic development through job creation and will improve access to employment by supporting Pace service throughout the south suburbs. "One of the hallmarks of my administration as Chairman of the Pace Board is ensuring that Pace contributes to economic development in our region. This project is another example of that value we create," said Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski.

"Investing in Pace and public transportation is not only a commitment to mobility and access to opportunity but also a strategic investment that generates returns for our region's economy," said Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger. "In addition to this building, this campus will be home to our Customer Relations, Sign and Shelter crew, our IT backup data center, and Safety and Training Staff."



## PACE AND SOUTH SUBURBAN COLLEGE CELEBRATE NEWEST CLASS OF PACE PROFESSIONAL BUS OPERATORS



**STUDENTS AND OFFICIALS GATHERED ON JANUARY 24, 2024, AT SOUTH SUBURBAN COLLEGE (SSC) TO CELEBRATE THE SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PACE AND SSC THAT HELPS RECRUIT, PREPARE, AND EMPLOY THE NEXT GENERATION OF PROFESSIONAL BUS OPERATORS.**

The partnership provides students with a customized two-week commercial driver's license (CDL) course that prepares them to obtain their CDL permit and start their careers as professional bus operators. Five classes have already graduated,

and 17 students are now working at Pace.

This partnership provides a pathway to meaningful careers in public transportation. Pace removes financial barriers for students by covering the costs of tuition and other expenses associated with the Class "B" CDL permit course at South Suburban College.

"Through our impactful partnership with Pace, we're not just training bus operators; we're forging paths to meaningful careers in public transportation," said SSC President Dr. Lynette D. Stokes.

**"THIS COLLABORATION REMOVES FINANCIAL BARRIERS, EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS TO PURSUE THEIR PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY AS BUS OPERATORS. TOGETHER, WE'RE SHAPING A FUTURE WHERE OPPORTUNITIES ARE CREATED."**

**Dr. Lynette D. Stokes**  
SSC President

Pace Director and SSC Chairman Terry R. Wells also spoke at the event. "I proudly serve as Chairman of South Suburban College and, just as proudly, represent

south suburban Cook County on Pace's Board of Directors," he said.

**"IT IS VERY FULFILLING TO SEE THESE TWO ORGANIZATIONS PARTNER TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT FOR OUR COMMUNITIES."**

**Terry R. Wells**  
SSC Chairman

Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Director of Intermodal Project Implementation, Jason Osborn, said, "This program is a great example of institutions working together to provide the training needed for good paying

jobs. Congratulations to the graduates on behalf of IDOT."

RTA Board Member Michael Lewis was also present to congratulate graduates before Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger concluded the program by presenting students with certificates to mark their completion of the program. "Partnerships, especially with institutions like South Suburban College, are instrumental to further enhancing Pace's recruitment efforts. Coming on board as a professional bus operator with Pace provides a career path with opportunity for growth, excellent health, retirement, and vacation benefits, and

allows those with a passion for public service to give back to their community. And in turn, Pace can operate a transit system that is safe, modern, and accessible to all."

Other guests included RTA Board Member Elizabeth "Liz" Doody Gorman, SSC Trustee Dr. Sherelene Harris, and SSC Trustee Kevin Daly. Pace offers careers for people who are passionate about public service. Becoming a Pace bus operator can lead to further advancement with opportunities to move into dispatch, safety, and administrative positions.



## NEW RIDESHARE ACCESS PROGRAM OFFERS AFFORDABLE ALTERNATIVE FOR PARATRANSIT RIDERS



### AFTER A SUCCESSFUL PILOT DEMONSTRATION THAT BEGAN IN DUPAGE COUNTY IN 2022, PACE LAUNCHED THE REGION-WIDE RIDESHARE ACCESS PROGRAM (RAP) ON MARCH 11, 2024.

ADA-certified riders who choose to use Uber or UZURV for their trips are eligible for a Pace subsidy, allowing them to take a trip worth up to \$30 for only a \$2 fare. The RAP subsidy offers riders with disabilities a more affordable and more convenient travel option, while allowing Pace to expand capacity for the growing demand for ADA Paratransit service overall. The program

also saves taxpayer money, as each RAP ride costs Pace less than an ADA Paratransit ride.

Eligible riders enrolled in RAP pay the first \$2.00 of the cost of a trip taken with Uber or UZURV if the origin and destination of the trip are within Pace's ADA paratransit service area (i.e., 3/4 of a mile from any Pace or CTA fixed bus route). Pace subsidizes the cost of the trip after the first \$2.00 up to \$30.

Pace subsidizes up to eight trips per day for each eligible rider enrolled in RAP.

Enrollment in RAP is a quick and easy online process. Once enrolled,

customers book rides directly in the app of their choice (either Uber or UZURV), with web and telephone options available.

The former DuPage Uber Access program evolved into the new RAP program on February 26, 2024, and then as of March 11, 2024, ADA-eligible riders in all six counties could begin enrolling and taking advantage of the RAP subsidy.

RAP was quickly adopted by riders who valued the convenience and lower price. In June 2024, 42,402 total RAP trips were taken, an average of more than 1,400 per day.



## FREE RIDES ON PACE FIXED ROUTES NOW AVAILABLE TO ADA-CERTIFIED CUSTOMERS

As of February 19, 2024, Pace passengers who are certified for ADA Paratransit service by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) can ride for free on any Pace fixed route. This fare change expands travel options and makes public transportation more convenient and affordable for many people with disabilities.

Pace's accessible fixed route buses and transit centers play an important role in regional connectivity. "By removing financial barriers, we aim to expand transportation options for people with disabilities. Our mission is to encourage and facilitate increased usage of our fixed route system," said Pace's Executive Director Melinda Metzger.

Pace's fixed route buses are fully accessible with ramps, dedicated seating areas, audio and visual stop announcements, and other accessibility features. This program is for Pace fixed route service only; ADA Paratransit, Pace On Demand, and CTA and Metra fares remain as is.



# REVISION— PACE'S PLAN FOR A MODERNIZED BUS ROUTE NETWORK



## REVISION IS THE ONGOING PROJECT WHICH CONTEMPLATES A COMPLETE OVERHAUL OF PACE'S BUS ROUTE NETWORK.

In 2024, after months of data collection and stakeholder input, Pace's ReVision project team released three transit network concepts for public input on November 15. ReVision builds on the principles of accessibility, equity and productivity defined in the Driving Innovation strategic plan.

This project has reviewed and reimagined where and how often Pace routes should run, and what types of transit service are appropriate in different areas of the Chicagoland region.

ReVision combines comprehensive technical analysis with an ongoing regional conversation about the values and priorities that stakeholders, riders, and the general public want the Pace network to reflect. This past year saw meetings with regional stakeholders in June and then again in November, while similar briefing sessions were held with municipal-level stakeholders in April and again in October.

With network concepts available for public review, the next step is to gather input and develop a draft network plan. The draft plan will be released in 2025 for further review. Service changes are anticipated to begin in 2026.

As our region emerges from the pandemic, we recognize that travel patterns have changed, and Pace needs to adjust to meet the needs of today and tomorrow. We plan to update and modernize our service offerings to continue being a good steward of taxpayer resources while maximizing access to jobs, education, medical services, and other destinations.

## TO MEET THESE OBJECTIVES, THE PROJECT TEAM HAS:

- Analyzed existing transit services, and relevant demographic and travel patterns.
- Developed and presented future network concepts to illustrate both key trade-offs (such as the ridership vs. coverage trade-off) and the opportunities that could be opened up with new funding.

## THE NEXT STEPS IN THE PROJECT ARE TO:

- Gather public and stakeholder feedback on these concepts/alternatives and use this feedback to develop a Draft Plan.
- Gather public and stakeholder feedback on the Draft Plan and incorporate the feedback to develop a Final Plan for 2026.

Throughout the process, Pace staff across the organization will be engaged

to ensure a viable plan and successful implementation of service changes.

During winter 2024-2025, Pace is gathering transportation suggestions from our stakeholders—riders, former riders, employers, advocates, and business and community leaders. We hope to gain valuable insights and ideas that can lead to more efficient and convenient bus routes and other transit options, while continuing to provide equitable and environmentally responsible transit options for the residents of the six counties and 274 municipalities we serve.

This initiative will help us find specific areas where improvements are needed, such as increasing bus frequency on certain routes, optimizing route planning, identifying new pickup and drop-off locations, and even adding other mobility options where none existed before. By involving the community in this process, we hope to create a more user-centered and responsive public transportation system that meets the diverse needs of area residents.

Check out the latest news on this project at [PaceBus.com/ReVision](https://PaceBus.com/ReVision)



We are here





## LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY EFFORTS CONTINUE AS FISCAL CLIFF LOOMS

**THE FEDERAL OPERATING FUNDS THAT HAVE ALLOWED PACE, ALONG WITH EVERY TRANSIT AGENCY IN AMERICA, TO KEEP OUR OPERATIONS STABLE DURING AND AFTER THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC WILL BE EXHAUSTED IN 2026.**

That date represents a 'fiscal cliff' that we are fast approaching, by which point difficult decisions will need to be made about the future of transit in Illinois—will the agencies have much smaller budgets with which to operate? Or will the state or region find a way to provide new revenues to the transit system that allow us to continue today's service level, or perhaps even expand beyond today's level?

In 2022, the Illinois General Assembly commissioned a report by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency (CMAA). That report, issued in October 2023, is called the Plan of Action for Regional Transit



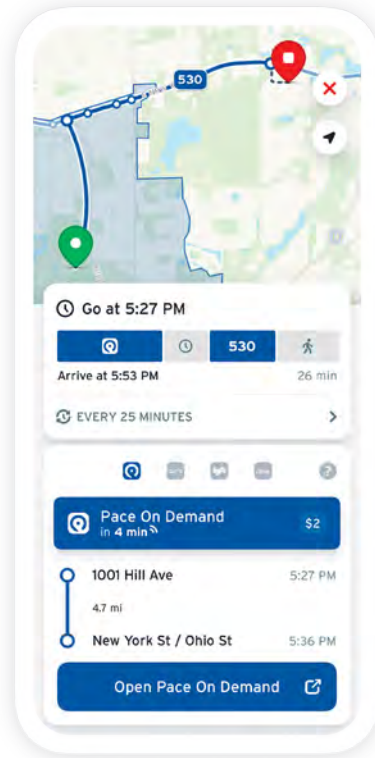
(PART), and offered options for future funding of the system as well as reform of our operations and governance.

In May 2024, several state legislators introduced a slate of related bills that reflected several of the issues raised in the PART report. Between July and October, the State Senate held six hearings to discuss that proposed legislation as well as the broader issue of public transit funding.

Executive Director Melinda Metzger testified at the first five hearings, stressing Pace's value to the region, our recent successful innovations, our post-pandemic evolution, and our desire to offer even more service to suburban riders and businesses.

The Illinois General Assembly is expected to take on this issue in their Spring 2025 session, in time for Pace, CTA and Metra to appropriately plan our 2026 budgets.

## ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONALITY FOR PACE RIDERS USING THE TRANSIT APP



The Transit mobile 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.

As of late 2023, Pace's On Demand and VanGo services were integrated in the Transit app. Then, beginning in May 2024, ADA Paratransit riders are now able to link from the Transit app to the TripCheck web portal, where they can view or cancel their upcoming paratransit reservations. The integration with ADA Paratransit will, in the coming years, offer even greater functionality for customers who are certified for Paratransit but who seek information

about other transit options available to them, depending on their destination.

Transit's trip planner integrates these new additions together with results that include Pace's bus network, ride hailing, biking, walking, and more to give you the best possible trip!

Usage of the Transit app by Pace customers continues to grow. In September 2024, there were 12,628 unique users, a 31% increase from September 2023. Additionally, nearly 3,000 new Pace Bus riders downloaded the app for the first time in September. Each Pace rider opened the app an average of 49 times during the month. On a typical weekday, 2,648 Pace riders opened the Transit app. A total of 5,992 riders are subscribed to service alerts for at least one Pace bus route.



## PROGRESS CONTINUES ON THE EXPANSION OF THE NORTHWEST TRANSPORTATION CENTER WHICH INCLUDES AN ADA TRANSFER FACILITY



**THROUGHOUT 2024, CONSTRUCTION CONTINUED ON PACE'S NORTHWEST TRANSPORTATION CENTER IN SCHAUMBURG. THE PROJECT WILL RESULT IN A NEW ADA PARATRANSIT BOARDING AND TRANSFER FACILITY.**

The Northwest Transportation Center is Pace's busiest hub in northwestern Cook County, with over 1,000 daily boardings for Pace service, including Express buses which utilize the Illinois Tollway I-90 Flex Lanes to bypass congestion and connect commuters to the CTA Blue Line at Rosemont. The new transit center and ADA Transfer Facility will include two new dual-port car charging stations, with capacity for four electric cars, an expanded drop-off area, and new Pace-branded signs

with real-time bus departure information. New sidewalks will provide pedestrian access from Mall Drive and Kimberly Drive to the bus terminal, and parking capacity will increase from 192 to 301 spaces to support the popular I-90 Express services. Other improvements include landscaping and site furnishings, seating, a Ventra vending machine, and digital and audio bus arrival information.

# DIVERSITY IS OUR STRENGTH

Among the hallmarks of Executive Director Melinda Metzger's administration is a renewed emphasis on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Those principles guide all the work Pace does, from hiring new employees, to awarding 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 below for the current makeup of the Pace workforce. Of note, 77% of employees are

non-white. New in 2024 was an expanded summer internship program in accordance with Illinois Public Act 103-0281.

Along with a commitment to a diverse workforce, Pace has established a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program in accordance with regulations set by the U.S. Department of Transportation, 49 CFR part 26. DBE programs are intended to remove barriers and create a level playing field while providing opportunities to small businesses owned and controlled by individuals who are socially

and economically disadvantaged. Per federal guidelines, Pace sets a DBE goal on projects with DBE subcontracting opportunities, and prospective bidders must show a good faith effort to meet that goal at the time of bid. Pace's DBE program is continually reviewed to ensure continued compliance with federal guidelines.

**FOR MORE INFO ON HOW TO BE A DBE, SEE [PACEBUS.COM/DBE](https://pacebus.com/dbe).**

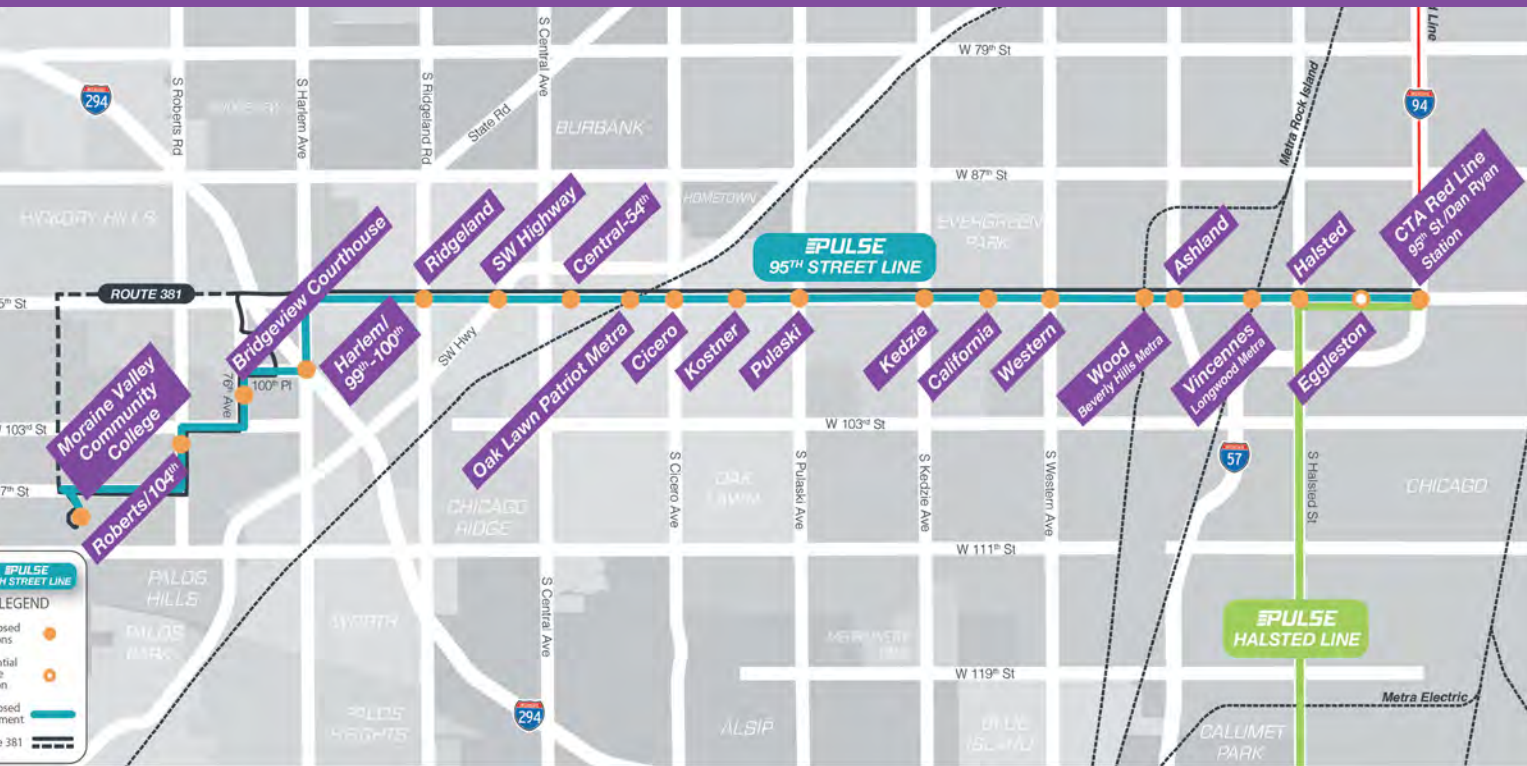
## DEMOGRAPHICS OF PACE'S WORKFORCE

AS OF: 12.01.2024

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

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	90	62	28	38	12	7	4	0	0	1	16	10	1	1	0	0	0
PROFESSIONALS	302	192	110	96	47	35	8	1	0	4	48	41	13	5	0	1	2
TECHNICIANS	8	8	0	4	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT (including clerical and sales)	73	13	60	8	2	2	0	0	0	1	27	16	11	3	0	0	3
SKILLED CRAFT WORKERS	132	131	1	41	28	53	6	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
SERVICE/MAINTENANCE	1284	784	500	127	487	125	14	5	0	28	24	414	36	1	2	0	20
<b>TOTAL WORKFORCE</b>	<b>1889</b>	<b>1190</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>

# PLANNING WORK CONTINUES ON PULSE LINES ON SOUTH HALSTED, 95TH STREET, AND CERMAK ROAD



## 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.

In 2019, Pace launched Pulse Milwaukee Line, serving thousands of commuters between Niles and Chicago. Then, the Pulse Dempster Line started on August 13, 2023, bringing fast, frequent service between Evanston and O'Hare Airport.

Pulse offers a variety of benefits compared to regular fixed route bus service including:

- **Faster service with limited stops**
- **Free Wi-Fi and other amenities on Pulse-branded buses**
- **Modern, easy-to-find branded stations with heated shelters, pavement snowmelt system and real-time bus arrival information**
- **Faster boarding and improved accessibility**
- **Easier ADA accessibility with raised bus platforms at all stations**

In addition to the Pulse Milwaukee and Pulse Dempster lines, there are three corridors currently in project development -- Halsted, 95th Street, and Cermak.

South Halsted Street is Pace's highest-ridership corridor and has seen among the strongest post-COVID ridership recovery, indicating the importance of public transportation for people living and working along the corridor. A new Pulse line will improve travel times and frequency of bus service for the thousands of current customers and make transit a more attractive option for many more. This project, in conjunction with Pace Transportation Center in Harvey next to the Metra Electric Line Station and the Pulse 95th Street Line, represents significant investment by Pace to improve transportation in South Cook County. The Pulse Halsted Line project 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. 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 the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

The Pulse Cermak Line will provide service between the CTA Pink Line 54th/Cermak Station in Cicero and the Yorktown Center area in Lombard.

In 2024, Pace identified preliminary service recommendations, station locations, and related corridor improvements for further evaluation in future phases. As the project progresses, Pace will seek public feedback to ensure the Pulse Cermak Line meets the needs of the communities and transit riders in western Cook County and eastern DuPage County. During the Pulse Cermak Line's Project Definition phase, Pace, in coordination with project stakeholders, determined the corridor limits and preliminary station locations. Pace is now progressing the proposed recommendations into the federally-required Environmental Review phase. Pace's goal is to launch the Pulse Cermak Line service in 2030.



## PACE PARTNERS WITH DUSABLE MUSEUM FOR MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. AND JUNETEENTH HOLIDAYS



### ON JANUARY 15, 2024, 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 "We are One" event at the DuSable Black History Museum. At the event, there was a storyteller 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 DuSable. Unfortunately, cold weather prevented its appearance this year. It was, however, on display at Southwest Division later in the week.

During June, Pace buses throughout the region carried ads marking the Juneteenth holiday. On June 20, 2024, Pace once again partnered with DuSable to hold an educational seminar for Pace staff.



## CONGRESSMAN CASTEN PROVIDES FUNDING FOR ELECTRIC PARATRANSIT BUSES

### ON JUNE 7, 2024, PACE AND CONGRESSMAN SEAN CASTEN UNVEILED THE AGENCY'S FIRST ELECTRIC PARATRANSIT VEHICLE.

Pace received the 15-passenger, accessible vehicle earlier this year thanks to Community Project Funding secured by Congressman Sean Casten. This vehicle represents a milestone for Pace's Project Zero plan for the transition to a zero-emissions fleet by 2040.

"I was thrilled to secure the federal funding for the brand new all-electric Pace buses. These buses will lower fuel costs, make our environment healthier and cleaner, and work to combat climate change in Illinois" said Congressman Sean Casten. The Community Project Funding of \$1 million allows Pace to purchase a total of five new battery-electric paratransit buses to replace existing fossil-fuel buses at Pace's River Division in Elgin. The first new vehicle, a Coach and Equipment Phoenix bus, will be placed into service in the western suburbs in 2025 after training and vehicle testing are complete.



Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger welcomed Congressman Casten to Pace's Burr Ridge Park-n-Ride, a popular station for the agency's successful I-55 express bus service, which uses the shoulder of the Stevenson Expressway. "As exciting as our I-55 express service is, today we're here to celebrate another Pace success story—that of our climate change mitigation efforts," Metzger said. "Pace's legacy of progress and innovation has led us to this vehicle you see today—which is better for passengers, easier for our bus operators, and cleaner for the environment. We are grateful for Congressman Casten's support of our efforts."

Pace is committed to the goal of operating 100 percent zero-emissions vehicles by the year 2040. Pace recognizes its responsibility for pollution reduction as an operator of hundreds of vehicles across the region. This is why one of Pace's top priorities is to reduce its carbon footprint and improve the quality of the region's environment.





## PACE AND FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTERS MAKE NARCAN AVAILABLE AT THE HARVEY TRANSPORTATION CENTER



### ON MAY 31, 2024, PACE AND FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTERS, INC. WERE EXCITED TO UNVEIL A NEW NARCAN VENDING MACHINE AT THE PACE HARVEY TRANSPORTATION CENTER.

This life-saving resource is a crucial public health tool in combating the effects of the opioid crisis.

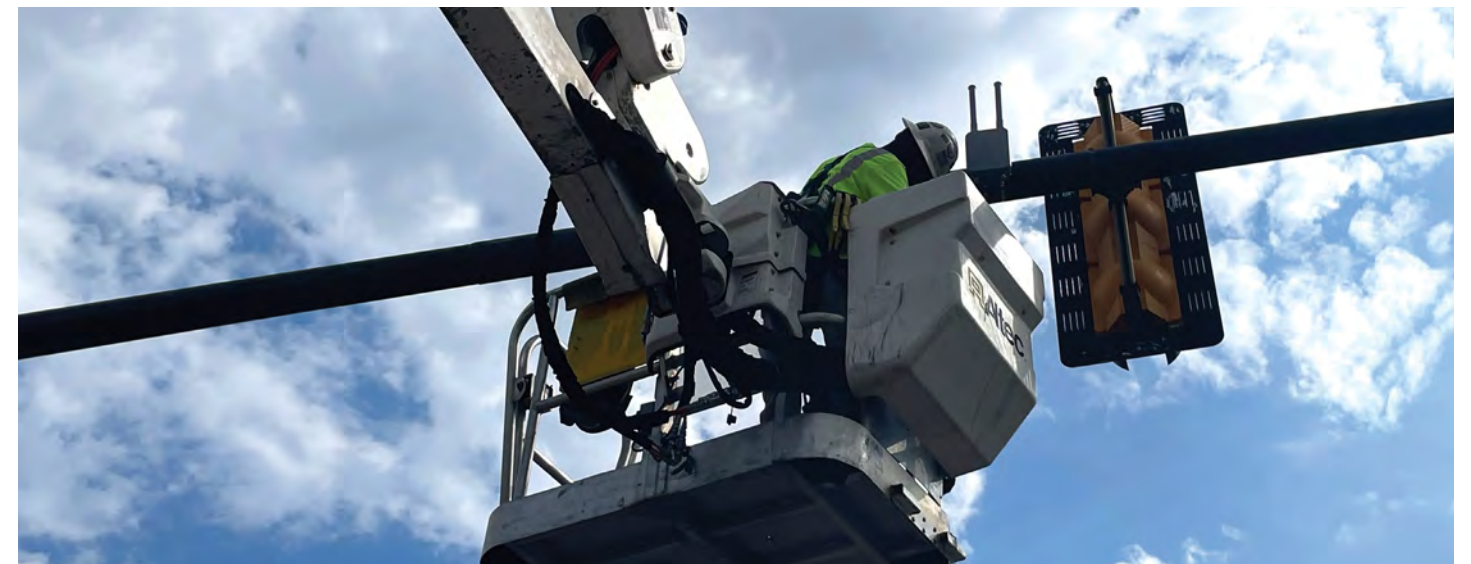
Distinguished speakers included Illinois State Representative Will Davis; Cook County Commissioner Monica Gordon; Pace Board Chairman Rick Kwasneski; Pace Board Member and Phoenix Mayor Terry R. Wells; Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger; and Family Guidance Centers, Inc. Chief Operating Officer Ronald J. Vlasaty Jr. Honored guests included former Cook County Commissioner Deborah Sims and Harvey City Administrator Corean Davis on behalf of Harvey Mayor Christopher J. Clark.

## ILLINOIS CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION SUPPORTS SUBURBAN BUS RIDERS WITH SEVERAL GRANTS

Thanks to the support of five members of the Illinois Congressional delegation, Pace is pleased to announce the inclusion of five Community Project Funding grants in the FY24 federal budget, signed into law in March 2024 by President Biden. These grants will allow Pace to improve transit service for riders across the six-county region while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

### THIS YEAR'S CPF GRANTS TO PACE ARE:

- 1: From Congressman Bill Foster, \$1,000,000 for electric paratransit vehicles for McHenry County service. This funding helps Pace meet our Project Zero commitment to transitioning to a zero-emission fleet by 2040.
- 2: From Congressman Jonathan Jackson, \$840,000 for implementation of transit signal priority on Western Avenue in southwestern Cook County. This funding extends green lights and shortens red lights for buses on Route 349, reducing travel times for riders and setting the stage for full-fledged Pulse rapid transit service on this corridor.
- 3: From Congresswoman Delia Ramirez, \$840,000 for implementation of transit signal priority on Harlem Avenue in western Cook County. This funding extends green lights and shortens red lights for buses on Route 307, reducing travel times for riders and setting the stage for full-fledged Pulse rapid transit service on this corridor.
- 4: From Congressman Brad Schneider, \$840,000 for implementation of transit signal priority on Washington Street in Gurnee and Waukegan (Lake County). This funding extends green lights and shortens red lights for buses on Route 572, reducing travel times for riders.
- 5: From Congresswoman Lauren Underwood, \$826,779 for an electric coach bus for I-55 service between Plainfield and Chicago. This funding helps Pace meet our Project Zero commitment to transitioning to a zero-emission fleet by 2040.



"We are incredibly grateful to the Members of Congress who supported public transit in their districts by providing this funding. We share their vision of better public transit for northeastern Illinois, and this funding continues our progress towards meeting our common goal," said Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger.





# PACE CELEBRATES 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

## REP. MAYFIELD PRESENTS RESOLUTION, STAFF THANK CUSTOMERS, ARTISTIC BUS STOP BENCHES INSTALLED

At Pace's June 26, 2024 Board of Directors meeting, the agency commemorated four decades of dedicated service and approved an innovative Regional Day Pass Pilot program, reflecting Pace's ongoing commitment to enhancing passenger convenience and adapting to evolving transit needs.

Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger welcomed Illinois State Representative Rita Mayfield, who presented Pace with a resolution honoring the agency's 40-year history. "I would like to thank the regional leaders who continue to support Pace on all levels. One of those leaders is here with us today," said Metzger. "It

is fitting that a former Pace employee can join us today as we mark this milestone. I am honored to welcome State Representative Rita Mayfield, who gave 15 years of service to Pace and continues to serve the public as representative for the 60th District and as Chair of the Appropriations-Public Safety Committee."

**"I AM HONORED TO BE HERE AS A FORMER EMPLOYEE. I JUST WANT TO SAY THANK YOU AND CONGRATULATIONS. THE FACT THAT YOU TOOK A CHANCE ON ME WHEN I WAS YOUNG — THIS WAS MY FIRST REAL JOB RIGHT OUT OF [HIGH] SCHOOL."**

**Rita Mayfield**  
State Representative

She shared that Pace's tuition reimbursement program for employees paid for her higher education.

**"I AM HERE BECAUSE OF YOU AND ALL THE INVESTMENT YOU PUT INTO ME. THANK YOU FOR THAT OPPORTUNITY."**

**Rita Mayfield**  
State Representative

In July, Pace's 40th anniversary celebration continued with staff acting as transit ambassadors at our busiest hubs to thank riders for decades of loyalty. Staff also distributed information and hundreds of bottles of water as a small token of appreciation to the riders who make Pace's existence possible.



Later in 2024, Pace began the process of installing artfully decorated bus stop benches at some of our bus stops. Those benches were painted by local artists, who participated in the "40 Benches for 40 Years" public art project, with the goal of beautifying their communities and giving waiting riders a place to sit. The forty benches will eventually be installed across all six counties.





## CONGRESSWOMAN LAUREN UNDERWOOD CELEBRATES FUNDING FOR PACE ELECTRIC BUS

On July 1, 2024, Pace welcomed Congresswoman Lauren Underwood to Heritage Division in Plainfield to celebrate Community Project Funding secured by the Congresswoman for the purchase of an electric bus for use in the agency's I-55 express bus service. The \$826,779 in funding will be put toward a new electric coach bus to serve passengers boarding in Plainfield and other southwest suburbs as they travel to downtown Chicago.

"Pace Suburban Bus serves tens of thousands of riders, including seniors, those with disabilities, and veterans receiving care from the Department of Veterans Affairs," said Congresswoman Underwood. "The project will help fight climate change in our community, reduce traffic on I-55, strengthen Illinois' suburban transit system, and help reduce health risks associated with air pollution."

This funding helps Pace meet its Project Zero commitment to transitioning to a zero-emission fleet by 2040. The agency has received both an electric fixed route bus and an electric paratransit bus, with another 23 electric buses on order. Charging stations have been installed at

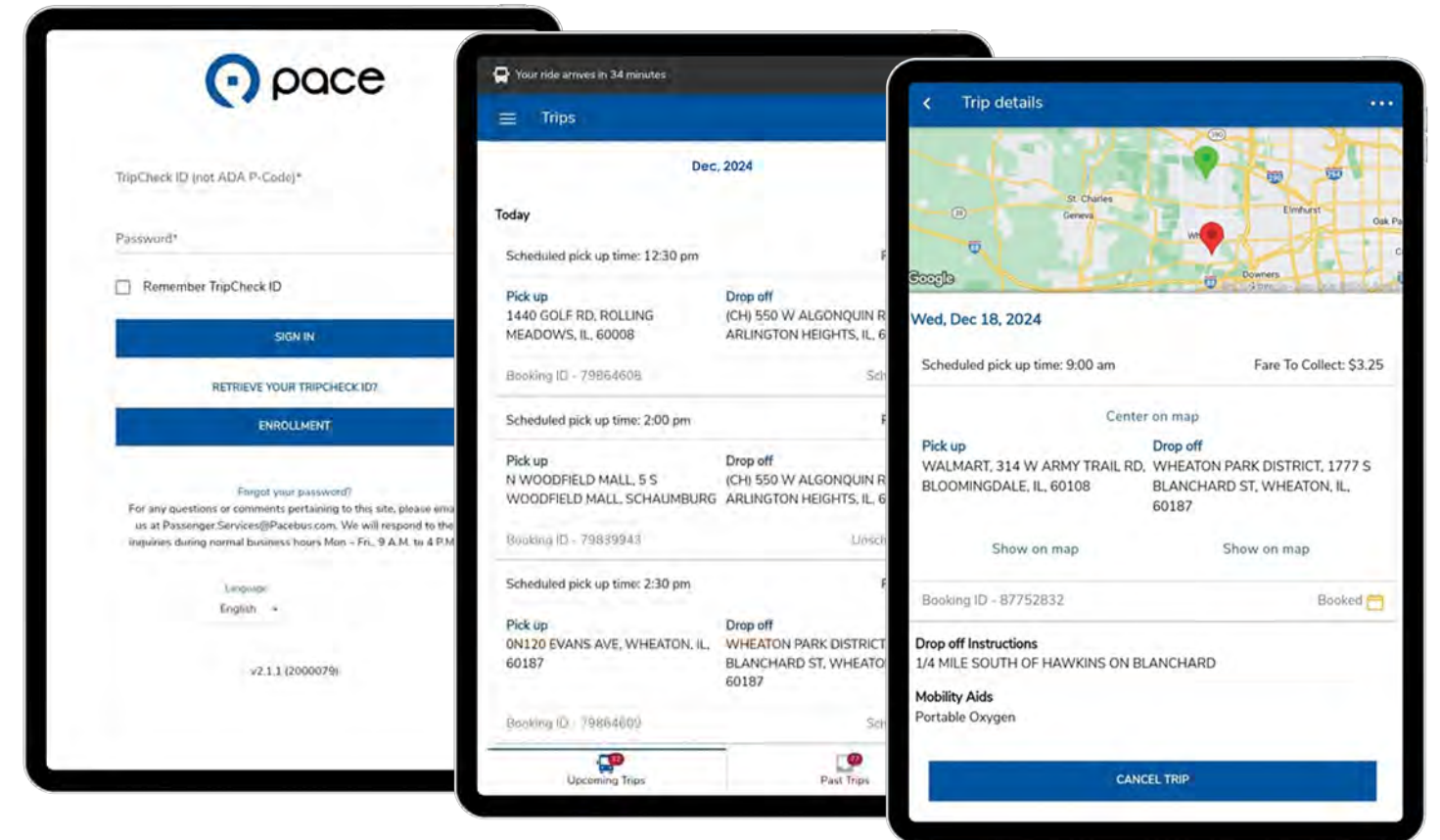
multiple garages, but the work to secure funding for this transition continues.

"Pace's congressional delegation has been a significant factor in support of this electrification effort," said Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski. "To convert our fleet and all nine Pace garages into charging facilities that can charge 50-100 buses all at once overnight, nearly \$2 billion in new capital funding is needed."

**"I-55 BUS-ON-SHOULDER SERVICE IS ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL ENDEAVORS IN PACE HISTORY AND IS JUST ONE OF MANY INNOVATIONS THAT PACE HAS BROUGHT TO NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS IN OUR 40-YEAR HISTORY."**

said Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger. "These grants will allow Pace to improve transit service for riders across the six-county region while reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

## PACE INTRODUCES TRIPCHECK MOBILE APP FOR PARATRANSIT RIDERS



### FOR EASIER MANAGEMENT OF PARATRANSIT TRIPS WHILE ON THE GO, PACE INTRODUCES A TRIPCHECK MOBILE APP.

It offers similar functionality to the user-friendly TripCheck website and is a new option for those who prefer using smartphone apps.

The new app can be downloaded from Google Play (for Android) or App Store (for iPhone). The TripCheck app and longstanding web portal both allow passengers to manage some contact

information as well as opt in and out of email and text message alerts. This can be done on the My Profile page.

### AUTOMATIC EMAIL AND TEXT MESSAGE ALERTS INCLUDE:

- Trip booking (sent whenever you book a trip)
- Trip cancellation (sent whenever you cancel a trip)
- Imminent arrival (sent 20 minutes prior to scheduled pickup time)
- Next-day itinerary (sent nightly with scheduled trips for the next day)

Customers can also request trip information from the system at any time to review or cancel upcoming trips and change their password by calling, using the app, or using the web portal; or to send a text message to see the next day's first scheduled trip.

# PACE EXPANDS SERVICE AS RIDERSHIP GROWS

**As more and more Chicagoland workers are traveling to work in person more often, and social events are back in full swing, demand for more transit service continues to grow.**

In particular, with people's commuting habits shifting in the new post-pandemic reality, bus service later at night and on weekends is an increasingly important facet of the commute market Pace is charged with serving.

To that end, Pace expanded evening and weekend service on Routes 318, 332 and 381 as of June 2, 2024.

Route 318 North Avenue now has service one hour earlier and one hour later on Sundays, as well as increased frequency. Buses are available approximately every 20 to 30 minutes. Weekend service and frequency along Pace Route 381 95th Street in the south suburbs also increased due to high ridership totals. Route 332 now has four more late night/early morning trips on weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays to provide service to late-night riders, especially third-shift workers who need to connect to the cargo area south of O'Hare International Airport.

On August 12, 2024, Pace expanded the I-55 express bus service schedule on Routes 755, 850, 851, and 855. Those

routes all operate along the I-55 Bus on Shoulder corridor and will see additional inbound and outbound trips in the mornings and afternoons under the pilot program.

Also in August, Pace expanded service along Pace Routes 330 and 331 in western Cook County. Pace Route 330 now has improved hours and frequency for its Saturday service, resulting in a 56% increase in Saturday service. Riders of 330 also benefited from improved frequency during weekday evening service. Route 331 saw improved Saturday service hours, which also increased the route's Saturday service by 56%, and the addition of new Sunday and holiday service.



The efforts to expand service along select Pace fixed routes come at a time when more and more riders are using Pace's system. Pace saw average weekday ridership in April reach approximately 78% of its pre-pandemic weekday ridership compared April 2019, a figure which rose to above 80% by September. ADA paratransit ridership also returned to 100% of its pre-pandemic level by March 2024.

"More riders are demanding Pace's family of services, and we've capitalized on this momentum by expanding fixed-route services and introducing innovative improvements like our rapid transit Pulse Dempster Line and the Rideshare Access Program for our paratransit riders," said Pace Executive



Director Melinda Metzger. "Pace remains focused on living within its resources to create a highly efficient and responsive transit system that can best serve our passengers' evolving post-pandemic needs. The latest service expansions are another step in that direction."

In the post-pandemic era marked by dramatically changing commuting patterns, Pace generally has seen a stronger demand for off-peak and weekend service, leading to Pace's expansions of service during those times.

In December, several more routes saw service increases, including:

- 564:** More service and extended weekday hours
- 350:** More trips and extended hours, seven days a week
- 322:** More service and extended hours, seven days a week
- 364:** More service, seven days a week, and extended weekend hours
- 301:** More weekend service and extended weekend hours.
- 563:** New weekend service

"Pace always prides itself on being flexible, nimble, and responsive to our riders' travel needs," said Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski.

**"THE NEWEST SERVICE EXPANSIONS REFLECT PACE'S COMMITMENT TO MAKING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS THAT CAN HELP MEET OUR RIDERS' NEEDS FOR ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION THAT GOES BEYOND THE TRADITIONAL 9-TO-5 COMMUTE."**

# PACE DEDICATES JOLIET TRANSIT CENTER TO LARRY WALSH, SR.



**ON AUGUST 3, 2024, PACE HOSTED A DEDICATION CEREMONY TO HONOR THE LATE LARRY M. WALSH, SR. MEMBERS OF THE WALSH FAMILY, INCLUDING ILLINOIS STATE REPRESENTATIVE LARRY WALSH, JR., ATTENDED THE EVENT TO HELP UNVEIL A PLAQUE FOR THE FORMER ILLINOIS STATE SENATOR AND WILL COUNTY EXECUTIVE.**

A staunch advocate for Pace, Walsh, Sr. played an integral role in securing authorization for buses to use the shoulder of Interstate 55 and bolster Pace service.

Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski welcomed guests and spoke fondly of Walsh, Sr., who was a close friend, noting how Pace and many community leaders gathered together four years ago in Will County to commemorate Walsh, Sr.'s legacy and vowed then to make a formal dedication in Larry's honor.

"Thanks to Governor Pritzker and the General Assembly for passing *Rebuild Illinois*, we are here today to formally honor Larry Walsh, Sr., at our new Joliet Transit Center," Chairman Kwasneski said. "Larry's support for transportation was always at the forefront of his tenure as a state senator and also as a Will County executive. His support for Bus on Shoulder on I-55 helped provide northern Will County, in particular Plainfield, Bolingbrook, and Romeoville, with a true commuter option. Larry was a true friend to public transit and to me personally, and we all miss him every day."



Moments later, Representative Larry Walsh, Jr. spoke at the podium to recount his father's dedication to public service before unveiling the memorial plaque in Walsh, Sr.'s honor. He was joined by his mother, Irene, and brother, Frank.

**"I JUST WANT TO SAY THANK YOU. FIFTY YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE GOES A LONG WAY. THERE WERE A LOT OF SACRIFICES IN THE WALSH FAMILY OVER THOSE YEARS. WHEN YOU GET INVOLVED IN POLITICS AND PUBLIC SERVICE, THOSE CONSTITUENT NEEDS GO FAR AND BEYOND. I KNOW DAD DID RESPOND TO HIS CONSTITUENTS EVERY TIME HE NEEDED TO,"**

Representative Walsh, Jr., said. "I wish he was here. A life's work that gets recognized is a true accomplishment."

A dedicated public servant of more than 50 years and a lifelong resident of Will County, Walsh, Sr. was known for his bipartisan approach to governing. He built a reputation

for working collaboratively to find solutions at every level of government he served. Walsh, Sr. began his public service at age 21 on the Elwood School Board and went on to serve as a Jackson Township Supervisor, a Will County Board member, an Illinois Senator, and finally as Will County's longest serving County Executive.

Beyond his advocacy for Pace, Walsh, Sr. was a driving force behind the expansion of paratransit service across Will County, especially the eastern portion. His commitment to expanding paratransit services for seniors and residents with disabilities helped ensure greater access to safe and reliable public transportation, enhancing the quality of life for all in Will County.

Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger said,

**"I ONLY KNEW COUNTY EXECUTIVE WALSH AT THE LATTER STAGES OF HIS CAREER, BUT I TRULY APPRECIATED HIS DOWN-TO-EARTH DEMEANOR, SENSE OF HUMOR, AND HIS PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIP. I WAS GRATEFUL FOR HIS SUPPORT AS WE IMPLEMENTED SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS IN WILL COUNTY, SUCH AS PACE'S I-55 BUS-ON-SHOULDER SERVICE, A NEW BUS GARAGE IN PLAINFIELD, THE COORDINATED DIAL-A-RIDE PROGRAMS, AS WELL AS THIS TRANSIT CENTER WE GATHER IN TODAY."**

Distinguished guest speakers included Pace Director and Mayor of Romeoville John Noak and Pace Director and Mayor of Batavia Jeff Schielke, who spoke about Walsh, Sr.'s regional perspective to governing, as well as Mayor of Joliet Terry D'Arcy and State Representative Harry Benton. Mayor D'Arcy shared how Walsh, Sr. was instrumental in developing the Joliet Transit Center and also how much he influenced his public service career.

The Joliet Transit Center opened in December 2021, with a memorable ribbon-cutting ceremony including U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and Governor JB Pritzker in 2022. This \$9.7 million project was largely funded by *Rebuild Illinois*. Thanks to this critical funding and collaboration with the City of Joliet, transit users now have a convenient, safe, and attractive facility, with amenities like restrooms and real-time bus departure data screens.



## PACE HOSTS “ACTIVATE JOLIET” AT NEW TRANSIT CENTER

ON A HOT AND SUNNY SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 2024, MANY PACE EMPLOYEES HELPED SHOWCASE THE NEW JOLIET TRANSIT CENTER DURING PACE’S “ACTIVATE JOLIET” EVENT.

The community event featured a live band, a caricature artist, and plenty of free food, as well as Pace vehicles and buses.

It was a great time seeing the community come out for the event, including many Pace employees' families. Thanks to a grant from the Regional Transportation Authority, Pace was able to host a fun and entertaining event with the Joliet community. RTA's grant was one of many for station activation events across the region, highlighting regional transit centers and stations as safe places for the community to gather.

At the Pace event in Joliet, kids were able to board buses, trucks and vans in a welcoming environment.

## ACCESS WILL COUNTY LAUNCHES

**IN AUGUST 2024, PACE PARTNERED WITH WILL COUNTY TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE DIAL-A-RIDE SERVICE.**

The renamed *Access Will County Dial-a-Ride* service now serves the county, and is open to people with disabilities and seniors 60 and older.

“With *Access Will County*, residents with mobility issues now have a convenient option for travelling easily throughout the region,” said County Executive Bertino-Tarrant at an August 6, 2024 celebration at Wilmington City Hall. “This expansion into southwest Will County connects seniors and people with disabilities to safe and reliable transportation. This has been a long time coming, and I appreciate the local leaders who worked with us to implement this expansion.”

The new service area includes several townships that previously did not have access to a dial-a-ride transportation service, including the City of Braidwood and the City of Wilmington.

“Pace is proud to partner with Will County to provide critical access to independence, community life, and essential services,” said Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski. “We have made significant investments in new services, infrastructure, and technologies in Will County, and we will continue to innovate and meet the evolving needs of those we serve.”

Previously called “Will-Ride,” Will County’s dial-a-ride service has operated for 10 years in the eastern Will County townships of Crete, Frankfort, Green Garden, Monee, Peotone, Washington, and Will. Following the allocation of \$200,000 in Will County’s Fiscal Year 2024 budget, both the County Executive Office and Pace worked closely with partners in southwest Will County on an expansion strategy. Residents in Custer, Florence, Reed, Wesley, Wilmington, and Wilton Townships will now be able to utilize *Access Will County Dial-a-Ride*.

“The need for a consistent dial-a-ride system in our community has been apparent for years,” said Wilmington Mayor Ben Dietz. “This system will connect people with jobs, human services, and basic living needs. I appreciate our partnership with Will County and Pace to get this important program launched locally.”

The new service area also coincides with an expansion of the distance that

users can travel with *Access Will County Dial-a-Ride*. Previously, residents could request a ride within a 10-mile radius of the borders of their township. The new service boundary allows residents to travel anywhere in Will County and locations within one mile of the Will County border, plus parts of southern Cook County.

“Having access to a reliable dial-a-ride service has been one of the top issues we’ve been hearing from residents for years,” said Braidwood Mayor Karen Hart. “I am looking forward to our residents being able to travel throughout Will County.”

The expansion follows the completion of a Pace-funded study of Will County’s dial-a-ride and paratransit services, which was overseen by the County Executive’s Office. The study examined the 12 dial-a-ride systems operating within Will County and identified a variety of gaps and barriers for residents who require mobility assistance. The study outlined short- and long-term goals, which included

expanding coverage of Will County’s dial-a-ride service into southwest Will County.

“Making our system accessible for seniors and people with disabilities makes our system more accessible for everyone,” said Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger. “*Access Will County Dial-a-Ride* improves mobility for those who depend on us most.”

The newly expanded service runs Monday–Friday 8am–5pm. Residents who live within participating townships in Will County must sign up to use the program. The fare is \$2 one-way (within a township) or \$4 to travel outside your township. Accompanying caretakers ride free.

Like most Pace dial-a-ride services, *Access Will County Dial-a-Ride* accepts Ventra for fare payment, enabling riders to conveniently pay for their trips without having to carry exact change.



## PACE LAUNCHES NEW ON DEMAND IN LANSING AREA

On October 7, 2024, Pace launched its eleventh On Demand service—this one serving Lansing, Calumet City, and South Holland. Like the other ten On Demand services, this new Lansing Area On Demand is open to the general public, and rides cost only \$2 with a Ventra Card. The newest shared-ride, reservation-based public transportation option marks another step in improving mobility across the region.

On October 25, Pace celebrated the launch of the service at Lansing Village Hall with local dignitaries. Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle, State Representative Marcus Evans, Cook County Commissioner Stanley Moore, Lansing Mayor Patty Eidam, and other local officials attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"Today's event celebrates a goal achieved — we have brought an innovative mobility option to people who need it," said Chairman Rick Kwasneski. "Hardworking people who need affordable access to transportation. Families who need access to education, medical care, groceries, and employment."

Building on this, Pace Board Member Terry Wells emphasized the agency's strong presence in the region. "While some might deem the communities in the Southland as under-served, I can tell you that they're certainly not underserved by Pace," Wells said. "This latest improvement for residents of South Cook comes alongside our newest safety, training and customer relations center in Markham, the future



Pulse Halsted Line, the future Pulse 95th Street Line, and the forthcoming \$70 million dollar rebuild of the Harvey Transportation Center. Great things are happening in the south suburbs."

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle echoed these sentiments, highlighting the broader benefits of expanding transit access. "I'm proud to see Pace launching this new On Demand service, which will provide residents of Lansing and surrounding communities with more convenient, accessible, and affordable transportation options," Preckwinkle said. "Expanding transit access is a crucial part of our commitment to improving the quality of life in Cook County, and I commend Pace for their dedication to serving our communities. We look forward to seeing the positive impact this service will bring."

Underscoring the benefits of community participation in public transit, Illinois State Representative Marcus Evans shared how residents can help elevate services like Pace's On Demand initiative through consistent use and involvement. "You know, public transit is one of those things that gets better when you participate," said Evans. "We can get folks off the road. We can improve our ecosystem. We can improve our traffic, but we've got to use public transit. So, thank you, Pace, for prioritizing public transit for the Southland, and thank you to all our executive leaders for bringing this great program to the citizens in the Village of Lansing."

Commissioner Stanley Moore further highlighted the broader impact of the Lansing Area On Demand service, emphasizing Pace's commitment to ensuring that all residents have the tools they need to succeed and thrive. "I want to emphasize that this service is not just about transportation.

It's about improving the quality of life. It's about ensuring that everyone in Lansing has an opportunity to thrive. I commend Pace for its commitment to innovation. They are so representative, and they have been a great partner," said Moore.

Lansing Mayor Patty Eidam emphasized the local benefits of the new service. "I'm pleased that Pace has selected Lansing to launch its OnDemand service in the Chicago Southland. Safe, affordable, accessible transportation is a vital resource for many in our community, including older adults, teens, one-car households, and residents with disabilities. This service will open new opportunities for shopping, employment, and recreation, enhancing the quality of life for all who call Lansing home," Eidam said.

Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger closed by highlighting the positive impact of Pace's recent service improvements. "Our agency is doing so many great things here in the south suburbs and throughout the region, and it is working as our

ridership trends are reflecting our success. Pace September ridership hit a milestone, reaching over 2 million trips. Pace ADA Paratransit ridership has surpassed pre-pandemic levels," said Metzger. "While we continue to make the case for much more funding for suburban transit service in the years and decades ahead, for now, we'll continue providing cost-effective service options to the people who rely on it for a strong quality of life."

The Lansing Area On Demand offers affordable, flexible, and accessible transportation to residents in Lansing and surrounding communities. This service allows riders to book rides by phone, web, or mobile app for local trips or to connect with major transit routes, providing essential first-mile/last-mile connections. It's designed to improve access to critical destinations such as schools, healthcare facilities, shopping centers, and workplaces. By offering convenient, on-demand rides, this service enhances transportation options for all residents, including those who may have limited access to traditional public transit.



# MILLION MILERS

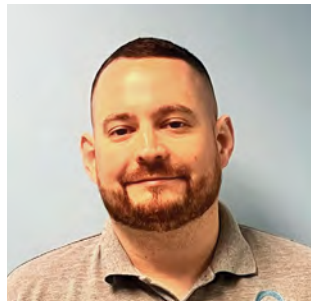
Safety is Pace's top priority, and always has been. To that end, Pace recognizes bus operators who, by embodying our commitment to safety, meet the National Safety Council's stringent standards for accident-free driving. Any employee who operates a bus for one million consecutive miles without a preventable 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 11 new and returning employees to the Million Miler club for 2024.

## ONE MILLION MILER DRIVERS

These eight operators reached the One Million Miler level this year:



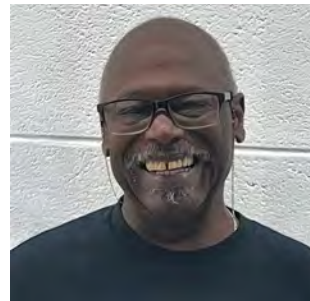
**ROBERTO CAMPOS**  
FOX VALLEY DIVISION



**CHRIS CASTRO**  
SOUTHWEST DIVISION



**JAMES WILLIAMS**  
WEST DIVISION



**THELONIOUS ROBEY**  
NORTH DIVISION



**JERROLD SHAW**  
SOUTH DIVISION



**DENISE HANKS**  
NORTHWEST DIVISION



**EVOL MILLER**  
NORTHWEST DIVISION



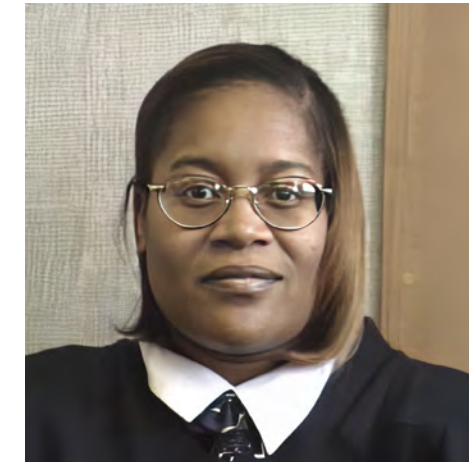
**ARNALDO PALENTINIS**  
NORTHWEST DIVISION

## TWO MILLION MILER DRIVERS

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



**ANTHONY WESTON**  
NORTH SHORE DIVISION



**CARLA CHARLES**  
RIVER DIVISION

## THREE MILLION MILER DRIVER

This superstar bus operator achieved the amazing Three Million Miler level in 2024:



**GIOVANNI BANDACCARI**  
NORTHWEST DIVISION

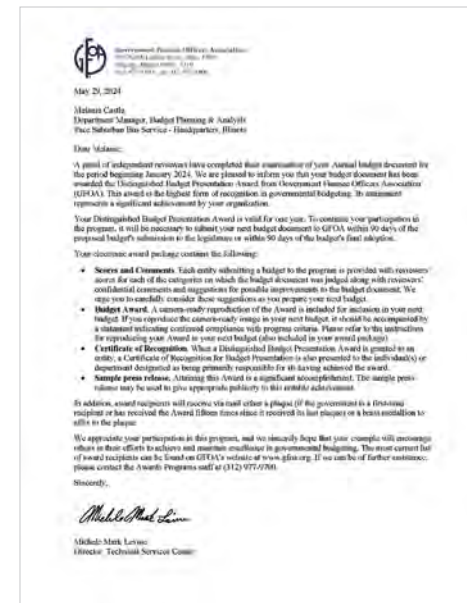
Giovanni's amazing achievement was accomplished over the course of 37.5 consecutive years of safe driving. The distance he covered in an accident-free Pace bus is equivalent to going back and forth between the earth and the moon 6 times! We honor Mr. Bandaccari for his dedication to the riders of the northwest suburbs.

# AWARDS & HONORS



## 2023-24 DES PLAINES CHAMBER'S COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT AWARD

Des Plaines Chamber of Commerce has selected Pace as a recipient of the 2023-24 Des Plaines Chamber's Community Enhancement Award for its Pulse Dempster Line project. The award was presented to Pace on Thursday, March 7, 2024, at the Mayor's Address to Business & Community Enhancement Awards event hosted at the Des Plaines Theatre. State Senator Laura Murphy subsequently commemorated the award-winning Pulse Dempster Line project with a Senate Certificate of Recognition in 2024.



## DISTINGUISHED BUDGET PRESENTATION AWARD FROM GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION (GFOA)

The GFOA's panel of independent reviewers completed their examination of Pace's annual budget document for the period beginning January 2024 and awarded the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from Government Finance Officers Association. This award is the highest form of recognition in governmental budgeting. GFOA said in their letter to Pace: "Its attainment represents a significant achievement by your organization. Your Distinguished Budget Presentation Award is valid for one year."



## PRSA SKYLINE AWARD AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

On September 26, 2024, Pace's On Board with Pride campaign won an Award of Excellence in the Events and Observances category at the PRSA Skyline Awards! The award recognized Pace's "On Board with Pride" bus activation at several Pride parades throughout the month of June.



## GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE AWARD

Pace was awarded a Project Experience award from the Center for Digital Government. The Center for Digital Government (CDG) is a national research and advisory institute focused on technology policy and best practices in state and local government. CDG is a division of e.Republic, the nation's only media, data and events company focused exclusively on state and local government and education. In addition to the overall awards, CDG also presents Project Awards (which have a single focus area). Government departments, agencies, and special districts across the country submit entries describing their digital solutions that will make it easier for citizens to do business with their government. Thirty-six Government Experience Project Awards were presented in four categories (city, county, state, and special districts). Their dedication, creativity and focus on better government is impressive. Special District Experience winners included Pace for our Mobility as a Service (MaaS) project with the Transit app. Unlike Google and other third-party trip planning apps, Pace's work with the Transit app now allows people to see trip plans with not only fixed route services but also Pace's demand-response services.



# RETIRING EMPLOYEES

THE PACE FAMILY THANKS THESE RECENTLY RETIRED MEMBERS OF THE PACE TEAM FOR THEIR HUNDREDS OF YEARS OF COLLECTIVE SERVICE TO SUBURBAN PUBLIC TRANSIT RIDERS.



Dave Tomzik, 34 years, HQ



Karen Shinnars, 25 years, HQ



Brett Burkhardt, 41 years, North Region  
Larry Winston, 47 years, North Shore

## AS WELL AS:

Giovanni Bandaccari, 38 years, Northwest  
James Bogan, 31 years, Southwest  
Odell Calloway, 16 years, West  
Roberto Campos, 18 years, Fox Valley  
Michael Cannon, 44 years, Southwest  
Durrell Carroll, 20 years, South  
John Chamblee, 12 years, Heritage  
Norvell Clark, 32 years, Heritage  
Jeffery Duncan, 31 years, Northwest  
Gordan Fry, 8 years, Fox Valley  
Alexander Garcia, 12 years, HQ  
James Garner, 12 years, HQ  
Larry Gawczynski, 44 years, Heritage  
Cecilia Givens, 14 years, South  
Rickey Howard, 17 years, Fox Valley  
Benjamin Jackson, 34 years, River  
Shweta Jain, 8 years, HQ  
Robert Johnson, 13 years, Northwest  
Dwayne Jones, 27 years, West

Robert Marciniak, 45 years, South  
Roy McCaslin, 31 years, River  
Bill McClain, 28 years, West  
Brian McEllen, 9 years, HQ  
Celia Molina, 9 years, South  
Jeffrey Moore, 17 years, South  
Luis Noriega, 47 years, Northwest  
Cheryl Patrick, 34 years, Northwest  
Katherine Roach, 12 years, Chicago Paratransit  
Ray Siegel, 36 years, West  
Jennifer Stanford, 10 years, Heritage  
Robey Thelonus, 17 years, North Shore  
Salina Tillman, 9 years, West  
Miriam Toledo, 14 years, West  
Rodney Vantrease, 18 years, Southwest  
Betty Veasey, 8 years, Chicago Paratransit  
Rick Willman, 9 years, HQ  
Kenneth Wilson, 30 years, West  
Miller Zachary, 7 years, Fox Valley

# IN MEMORIAM



We honor here the lives of former Pace employees whom we lost in 2024, while fondly remembering the times we shared with them and the service they gave to Northeastern Illinois public transit riders.



## AL LARSON

Former Director

**ROSS MCGINNIS**, Corporate  
**JACK SEABORG**, Northwest  
**ROBERT COLE**, West  
**MARTIN SOUTHARD**, West  
**CHESTER MORGAN**, Northwest  
**RICHARD GARZA**, West  
**WILLIE BROWN**, West  
**ROBERT NIVEN**, South  
**LINDA SCOTT**, South  
**THOMAS FREEMAN**, West

# COMMENDATIONS FROM RIDERS

In 2024, Pace was pleased to receive more than 3,000 commendations that riders submitted by phone, email, or the new self-service Feedback Center. Below are a few samples of exemplary customer service from the year:



I want to tell you a story about something that happened yesterday. Yesterday I took the Pace Bus for the first time in my life. As I get on the bus, I say good morning to the bus driver and take my seat. I rode with a friend and told her that I recognized the bus driver from somewhere, but I can't remember how I know him. As I'm about to get off the bus, I say goodbye to the bus driver, tell him to have a good day and then he said, you work at the Job Center? I tell him I do, and he said that I had helped him months ago to get his CDL and after he got his CDL he got a job working with Pace. He said he was so thankful that I was able to help him. I knew I remembered him! This made my entire day. This is why I love what I do. I know we don't always get to hear the stories from the people that come to the Job Center, and this is so encouraging for us to keep doing what we're doing, changing people's lives."



One rider thanked their driver for acting like "Superman" after she nearly slipped on ice while walking to the vehicle. She said the driver caught her before she seriously injured herself, and she said she greatly appreciates the driver's compassionate service."



I just read the latest paratransit/fix route newsletter and to say the least, I am VERY excited about all the new programs and projects Pace has rolled out for people with disabilities. If you drive, you have no idea how important day-to-day mobility is. I appreciate how Pace's initiatives, for its paratransit riders, are beginning to gear more toward independent traveling. I took special notice of RAP. I believe this program will give me the freedom to travel on-demand, without having to book a trip the day before. It also gives me the flexibility to run other errands before going home."



A paratransit rider, who had been recovering from a recent surgery, also thanked their operator for delivering a smooth and comfortable trip, as well as the operator's attentiveness to helping paratransit riders deboard. The rider said the operator "represents all that is right in this world."



A passenger said they misplaced their wallet while on a Pace bus traveling from Chicago to Plainfield. After driving back to the Plainfield bus stop to look for it, the passenger said they told an operator who was there what had happened. The operator called Dispatch, which provided the passenger with a number to call. During that call, the passenger learned that the original operator had found the wallet and gave it to security for safekeeping until the passenger could retrieve it. The passenger was extremely grateful, sharing: "Luckily for me, there are still good, honest, and helpful people."



A student at Moraine Valley Community College was especially grateful for the attentiveness of their fixed-route operator recently. The student shared how they began to panic after seeing their bus turn off the route after it was unexpectedly rerouted. But the student said the driver spotted them and pulled the bus over along a side street to allow the student time to run down the block and catch the bus. The student said they would have missed their class if it wasn't for the operator's quick reactions."



PACEBUS.COM