

Pace Updates in Lake County



NOVEMBER 2023



Innovative VanGo Service Launched

A recent innovation called VanGo has kicked off in Lake Forest, Deerfield, Itasca, and Palatine and can be brought to other areas as needed.

VanGo commuters reserve a Pace van for a day, for only \$5 per round trip. The customer unlocks the van with a code provided at the time of reservation and drives the van to/from work within a specified zone.

This service was borne of a recognition that many workers don't go to an office every day, but do need a reliable public transportation option when they do commute. Vans can be picked up at Metra or CTA stations to make reverse commuting to office parks affordable and convenient for those with non-traditional schedules



Zero-Emission Buses Coming to Waukegan Area

Pace's North Division in Waukegan, which provides bus service to most of Lake County, will be the first Pace garage to operate electric buses. Pace has one electric bus already in hand, and has another 22 electric buses on order, thanks in part to Community Project Funding from Congressman Brad Schneider. As part of our Project Zero, Pace has committed to converting the entire 52-bus fleet at North Division to electric vehicles by 2026, and the entire regional fleet to zero-emission buses by 2040.

We all know that when commuters ride public transit instead of driving their own cars, air quality improves. However, Pace has recognized our own responsibility for pollution reduction as an operator of hundreds of buses in our community. We are pleased to be working towards a reduction in our carbon footprint and improvement in the quality of our community's environment.

Since we first bought hybrid-electric paratransit buses in 2010, Pace has been a leader in the transit industry in reducing our carbon footprint. Hybrid-electric fixed route buses operate in the Highland Park area, and all 108 vehicles at South Division in Markham are low-emission buses powered by compressed natural gas. CMAP awarded Pace its Regional Resilience Award in 2023 for Project Zero.



847-364-PACE
PaceBus.com

New Pulse Rapid Transit Line Offers Frequent, Faster Service on Dempster Street

Pace launched daily service on our second rapid transit service—the Pulse Dempster Line—on October 29, 2023. This new line offers more frequent bus service, faster travel times, and enhanced stations, each with heated shelters and real time Bus Tracker signs. The Dempster Line follows the successful Pulse Milwaukee Line.

Building on that success, Pace is now developing our third and fourth rapid transit lines in the south suburbs—one on Halsted Street and the other on 95th Street.

Pulse service represents Pace’s long-term strategy to provide a fast, frequent service with high-quality amenities on corridors with heavy demand for transit service. Transit signal priority technology allows Pace buses to extend green lights and shorten red lights, keeping buses on schedule and shortening travel times for riders.



Pace Commits to Zero-Emission Bus Fleet by 2040



Pace has been a leader in clean energy vehicles since our purchase of hybrid-electric paratransit buses in 2010 and compressed natural gas buses in 2016, and is now doing even more to combat climate change. Pace has announced a plan to convert the entire Pace bus fleet to zero-emission buses by 2040.

Our North Division (Waukegan) garage will be the first to fully convert to an electric fleet by 2026.

Pace has one electric bus already and has awarded a contract to buy 22 more, expected in early 2024. In 2023, we completed plans for both our fleet conversion and our facility conversions. While this project will be expensive, Pace continues to pursue federal grants to offset the cost.

College of Lake County Among Several College Partnerships Helping Pace Recruit Bus Drivers

In the face of a nationwide shortage of bus drivers, Pace has embarked upon an innovative collaboration with College of Lake County, as well as Olive-Harvey, South Suburban, Oakton, Triton, Harper, Moraine Valley, and Prairie State Colleges to recruit, train, and hire prospective bus operators.

Pace is now paying the tuition of students who enroll in CDL “B” Permit courses held at the schools. Pace also covers the cost of the DOT physical and drug screening. These programs have led to the hiring of hundreds of new bus operators—with hopefully more to come!



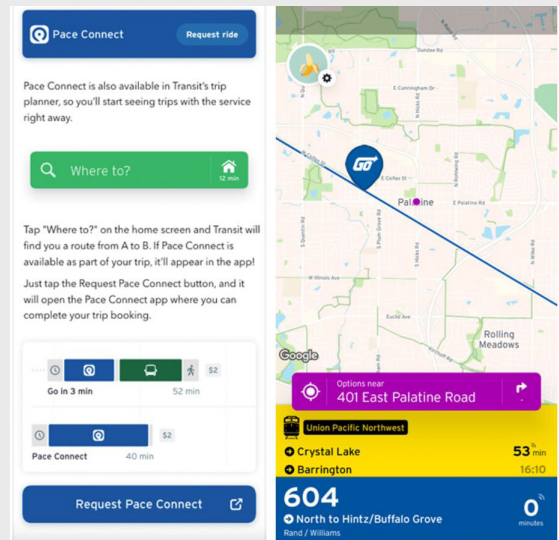


Transit App Puts All Forms of Regional Public Transit at Your Fingertips

Pace launched its partnership with Transit in November 2022, and Transit is now Pace's recommended trip planning app. It offers features that no other app does—most importantly, showing Pace's flexible, reservation-based transit options in trip planning search results.

As of November 2023, the Transit app has even more value for Pace riders with the inclusion of On Demand service in addition to the previously included Pace Connect and VanGo services. Those reservation-based options offer transit options within defined zones at certain times of day. On Demand operates in ten suburban zones, is open to the general public, and costs \$2 per ride.

Transit's trip planner integrates these flexible options together with results that include Pace's bus network, CTA and Metra services, ride hailing, biking, walking and more to give you the best possible trip.



Round Lake Area On Demand Service Expanded

Complements Lake County's Other On Demand Service in Vernon Hills/Mundelein

Pace expanded the zone covered by the Round Lake Area On Demand service, a change that more than doubles the service area and adds more vehicles to the program providing additional flexible weekday service to a larger portion of western Lake County. The zone now includes portions of Fox Lake, Long Lake, Ingleside, and Round Lake Heights.

Pace On Demand is an innovative alternative to traditional bus service which offers a reservation-based, shared-ride service in 10 designated service areas throughout the suburban region—including one in Vernon Hills/Mundelein—at the same \$2 fare as our fixed route bus services.

Pace and Lake County officials celebrated the service expansion at an October 5 event. "This exciting program will increase access to opportunity, employment, education, and more for the people of Lake County," said Pace Director Linda Soto. "It means increased accessibility, enhanced mobility, and stronger connections to transit services, businesses, and jobs in our area." The new zone enhances the area's overall transit network by providing new connections with Pace Routes 570 and 806 and with Metra's MD-North and NCS Lines.

"I'm proud of this service expansion and the tremendous work Pace has undertaken to enhance our family of services and create a strong network of access throughout our region, including the Round Lake area," said Pace Executive Director Melinda Metzger. "It truly reflects our commitment to finding innovative solutions that can help build a more comprehensive public transportation system for our region."

The service operates weekdays between 6:00am and 6:15pm. Passengers reserve a trip via the app, online, or by calling 847-847-9169. On Demand service is wheelchair accessible and is open to the general public.

ReVision Plan Seeks Stakeholder Input on Pace's Future

A key initiative from Pace's Driving Innovation strategic vision plan is a comprehensive overhaul of our bus route network, ensuring Pace's transportation offerings—be they fixed route or more nimble, reservation-based services—meet the current and future needs of today's commuter.

We are interested in your input about the future of transit service in your community. In the year ahead, Pace will reach out to stakeholders, including Lake County. However, feedback from our regional partners, external organizations and the public is always welcome at Driving.Innovation@PaceBus.com so Pace can better understand how *ReVision* can affect positive change at the community and individual level, and find new opportunities for collaboration and mutual support.



New Low-Cost Ridehailing Option Coming for Riders with Disabilities

Pace’s latest efforts to improve service and reduce costs for riders with disabilities began in late 2023 with the new Rideshare Access Program, which will offer riders certified for ADA Paratransit the option to use a ridehailing app to book a ride, with the rider paying \$2 and Pace subsidizing up to \$30 per trip.

Domestic Violence Survivors to Receive Free Transit Rides

The Regional Transportation Authority has provided 25,000 transit passes loaded with \$20 each to The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence, an Illinois membership organization advocating to end domestic violence through training, education and policy advocacy. The Network has distributed the cards to over 50 service providers throughout the six-county Chicago region so they can be given to survivors who need access to transportation. The passes are good for rides on Pace and CTA.

This initiative is the result of Public Act 103 - 0281, a state law passed in 2023 that includes several initiatives aimed at addressing some of transit’s most pressing challenges. The bill was sponsored by State Representative Kam Buckner (D-Chicago) and State Senator Ram Villivalam (D-Chicago), who worked closely with both The Network and the RTA along with Pace, CTA, and Metra to craft the legislation. While use of the cards and some anonymous demographic information will be tracked and reported by The Network, anonymity is key for survivors of gender-based violence. No names or other identifying information will be tied to the transit passes.

Paratransit Ridership Soars While Technology Offers New Benefits

Ridership on public transit across the region continues to rebound as the pandemic eases, but one service mode is already back to 2019 ridership levels: ADA Paratransit. Riders with disabilities often have no other transportation option and are using Pace’s quality service to access work, health care, shopping and school.

Pace has also implemented for riders with disabilities several new technologies in recent years—TripCheck (a self-service tool for managing upcoming trips), Ventra fare payment, and options to use ridehailing companies for convenient same-day reservations at a lower fare.



Riders with Disabilities to Ride Free on Pace Fixed Routes in 2024

Pace has proposed in our 2024 budget a free fare on Pace fixed route services for all riders certified for ADA Paratransit. While riders with disabilities already pay half price on Pace, Metra, and CTA fixed route services, this new fare policy further incentivizes a transit option with multiple benefits: convenience for riders who have last-minute plans and reduced expense for the taxpayer. This new fare policy builds on recent successes with lower pass prices and new shared products between Pace, CTA and Metra.



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