

# **College of DuPage Connector:**

## **Implementing Suburban Bus-Rail Projects in DuPage County**

**Presentation to:**  
**Rail-volution**  
**Intermodal Centers Session**  
**November 7, 2006 – 8:30 am**

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**DuPage Mayors & Managers Conference**

*A project of the DuPage Area Transit Plan*



# Building Partnerships that Connect Centers



Wheaton Metra

Downtown Wheaton

College of DuPage

Danada Square

Naperville Metra

Downtown Naperville

Edward Hospital

# The Lesson of the Connector:



**Key Suburban Bus-Rail Connection**

# Today's Presentation

- Description and Destinations
- Building Consensus around Problems
- Creating a Plan of Solutions
- Focusing Partnerships on Action
- Implementing the First Project
- Sustaining Momentum for Implementation



# Description and Destinations



# Building Consensus Around Problems

# DuPage County At-a-Glance

- Location: 18 miles west of Chicago
- Size: 332 square miles
- Population: 904,161\* (2<sup>nd</sup> most populous Illinois county)
- Employment: 534,551\*
- Estimated daytime population: 969,339 \*\*
- Minority population increasing (11%-1990, 21%-2006) \*\*\*
- Three Metra commuter rail lines, 26 stations
- 75 Pace bus routes
- Ride-DuPage and other dial-a-ride services

\* 2000 Census

\*\* DuPage County Department of Economic Development and Planning

\*\*\* Healthy DuPage 2004.



# Gaps in the Transit Network Impact DuPage County

- Existing system is heavily geared toward peak-hour, week-day Metra commuters
- Many areas have insufficient or nonexistent transit
- North-south connections needed
- Difficult to link jobs with the available work force
- Mobility strongly linked to quality of life
- Localized trips important to DuPage riders



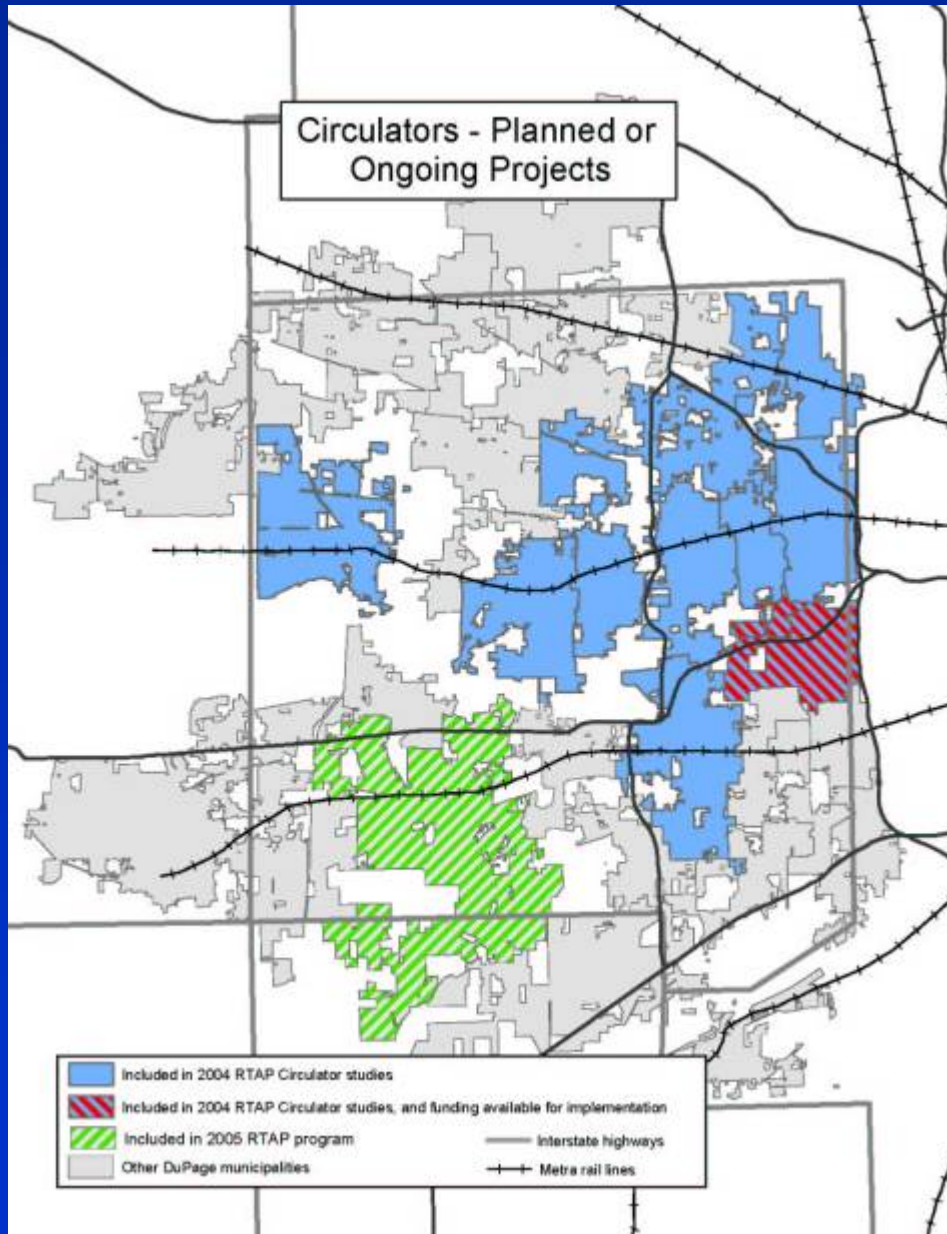


# Creating a Plan of Solutions

# DuPage Area Transit Plan Adopted in 2002

- Joint project of DuPage County and DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference
- Featured extensive public involvement process
- Included the business community (Chambers, UPS, McDonalds)
- Involved service providers
- Funded by Regional Transportation Authority and Illinois DOT
- Made innovative three-tiered recommendation for new transit

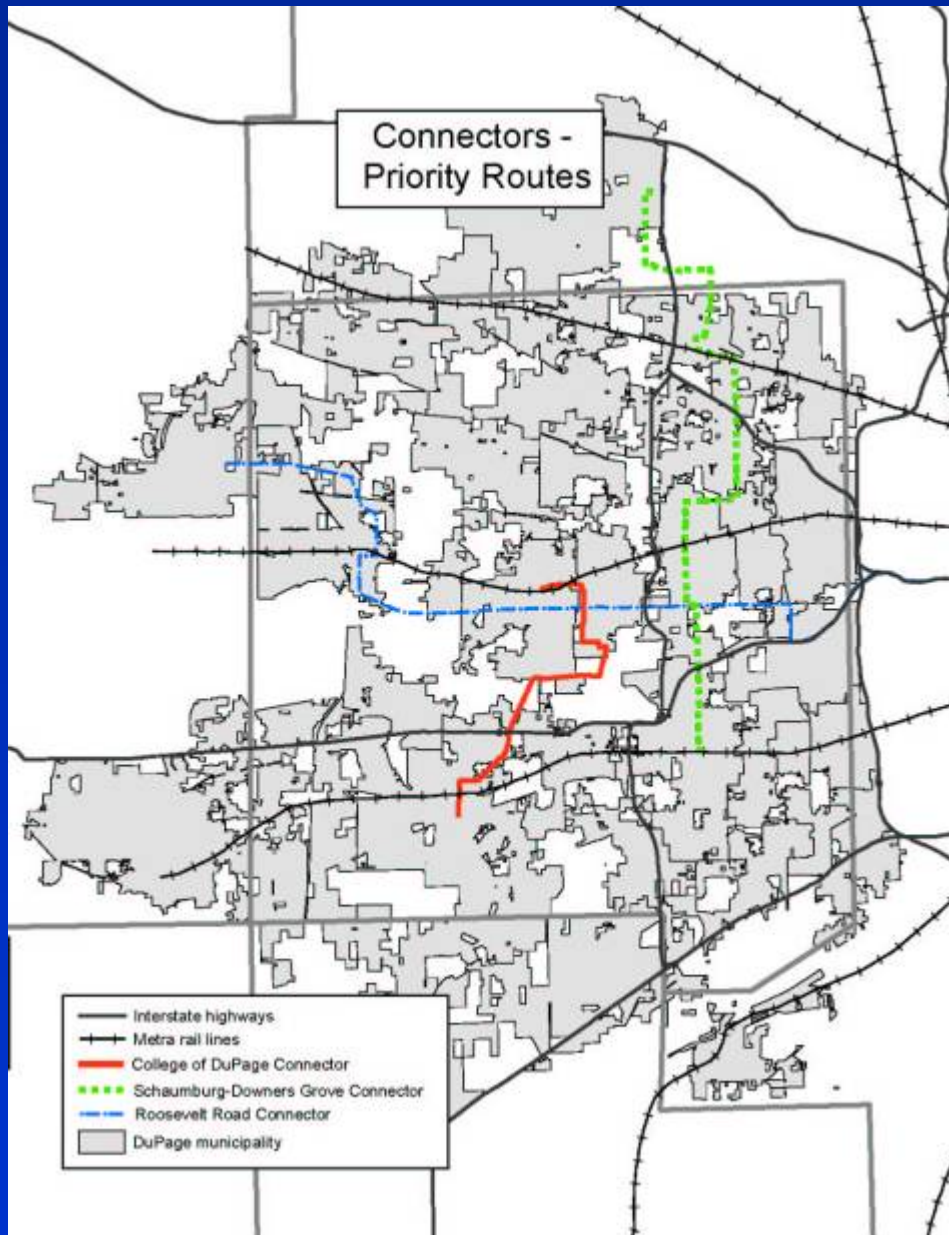




## Level 1: Circulators

- Local bus services providing local trips within a community





## Level 2: Connectors

- Bus services providing north-south or east-west service on major arterial streets





## Level 3: Bus Rapid Transit



- High-speed bus providing connections between key employment/service centers (e.g. Naperville, Oak Brook, O'Hare, and Schaumburg)





# Focusing Partnerships on Action

# Transit Plan Implementation Team Formed in 2003

- The County has limited existing transit service and relies heavily on automobiles
- Implementing the plan was a challenge
- DMMC and the County created the Transit Plan Implementation Team (TPIT)
- TPIT includes municipal and county officials and service providers – with experience in policy making AND program development
- TPIT meets regularly to discuss and resolve implementation issues, and guide overall plan implementation

# Key Plan Priorities Set in 2004

- To implement the plan, TPIT identified criteria to guide implementation of the Plan:
  - Set realistic goals, identify quick successes to build upon,
  - Work with existing providers to enhance existing service,
  - Refine recommendations and funding options, and
  - Form key partnerships with the business community



# Key Plan Priorities Set in 2004

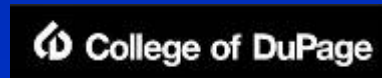
- Using this criteria, TPIT selected the COD Connector as its top priority:
  - COD is the largest two-year community college in the US (student population = 34,000; on-campus parking spaces = 7,000)
  - The bus route was a high priority for western DuPage
  - The project can serve as a model for community colleges in Illinois and throughout the country



# Implementing the First Project

# COD Connector Steering Committee Formed in 2005

- Unprecedented collaboration
- Cities of Wheaton and Naperville, College of DuPage, DuPage County, Pace, DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference, Metra, and the Regional Transportation Authority



*DuPage Mayors and  
Managers Conference*



# COD Connector Steering Committee Formed in 2005

- Gathered public input on where, how, and when service should operate
- Designed and developed the route

# Public Input Gathered in 2005 and 2006

- **Public Involvement Process**

- The team used an on-line survey to gather information about route preferences from potential riders
- 858 people completed the survey
- Most lived/worked in Naperville, Wheaton, Glen Ellyn

- **Important Feedback**

- Times to serve: weekday rush hours
- Places to go: College of DuPage, Danada Square, downtown Naperville/Wheaton, Metra stations
- Criteria for success: Coordination with class, work, and Metra schedules
- Standard Pace fare and fare instruments

# The COD Connector Helps to Close the Transit Gap

- Connects the Union Pacific West and Burlington Northern Metra commuter rail lines
- Links important destinations in SW DuPage County
- Offers important new north-south bus service
- Connects to major cross-county bus routes
- Increases access to Wheaton and Naperville downtowns
- Increases access to business, medical, and recreational, and retail/commercial centers
- Serves employees and students who commute to Wheaton and Naperville
- Provides the first ever transit service to Danada Square and Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT)

# Success to Date

- Pace began operating the route in August 2006
- Federal funding\* was secured for Year 1, supported by a local match from DuPage County and the City of Naperville

\* *Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)*



# Sustaining Momentum for Implementation



# Next Steps – Near-term

- Monitoring ridership
- Marketing the route and destinations
- Building partnerships with businesses
- Incorporating transit supportive features
- Sustaining service through continued funding

# Next Steps – Long-term

- Explore options for providing weekend service
- Maximize survey responses to design/enhance additional routes
- Explore options for extending the route north to locations in Schaumburg (Woodfield Mall), Carol Stream, and Bloomingdale (Stratford Square Shopping Center), and south to additional locations in Naperville.

.....●  
“This is market-driven mass transit. These types of connector routes are the future.”

*DuPage County Board Chairman Robert Schillerstrom*

“This is a major piece of our vision for improving transit.”

*Naperville Mayor George Pradel*

“The project will be a daily reminder of how government can work together on the regional and local level.”

*Wheaton Councilman Alan Bolds*

“This is the first of what I believe will be many pieces.”

*West Chicago Mayor Michael Fortner, former TPIT Chair*

“I love the word connector for a community college because it fits perfectly with our connections to Wheaton, Naperville, and IIT.”

*College of DuPage President Sunil Chad*

August 2, 2006

COD Connector Ribbon-cutting Ceremony



# Thank you!

