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:

- Local Leadership
- Widespread Participation
- Creative Partnerships

Sound Planning

Project Implementation

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* (2nd 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
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!