

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A circulator service is a local transit service with two purposes: to provide mobility within a local service area and to provide connections between the local service area and other regional services such as Metra train stations and Pace bus routes.

The overall goal of the Naperville Circulator Study is to evaluate current public transportation service options within the City of Naperville, analyze the potential markets for a local bus service in Naperville, determine the characteristics of a circulator transit service that will best meet the needs of Naperville residents, workers, and visitors, and to fully design such a service. The Study also set out to develop a feasible plan to effectively implement the transit service developed for Naperville.

The Naperville Circulator Study resulted in specific recommendations and service specifications for implementing a local bus service. The Study identifies potential funding sources, plans for marketing the service, and strategies for monitoring and evaluating the service's performance.

The Naperville Circulator Study was developed through an active public involvement process that invited the general public and private and public agencies to participate in the development of the Study. Public involvement was achieved throughout the course of the Naperville Circulator Study through Steering and Technical committees, stakeholder interviews, an online public survey, public meetings, a project webpage, and distribution of press releases.

MARKET ANALYSIS

The transit market analysis for Naperville was conducted in order to identify the largest potential markets suitable for a local bus service in Naperville. The market analysis conducted as part of the Naperville Circulator Study examined several different market segments including commuters, employment centers, shopping centers, colleges and medical facilities, and area attractions such as Downtown Naperville. Census data was also reviewed to determine the location of transportation disadvantaged residents in Naperville. People are considered transportation disadvantaged based on their need to use transit as their primary form of transportation due to their accessibility to a vehicle or their inability to drive. Transportation disadvantaged residents include disabled citizens, senior citizens, low-income residents, and residents with one or no vehicle.

Existing Public Transit Services

The City of Naperville is currently served by Pace Suburban Bus and Metra commuter rail service. Metra has two stations in Naperville and is the key transit link between Naperville and Chicago. Pace operates a total of 21 bus routes in Naperville. Eighteen feeder routes provide service to the Naperville and Route 59 Metra stations, and three routes operate throughout the day. Ride DuPage also provides demand response service for older adults and disabled persons in Naperville.

Potential Circulator Service Markets

The Circulator Study market analysis identified geographic areas where concentrations of potential service users are located, as well as groups of people who are potential users of the

service. A successful circulator service in Naperville will need to meet the needs of the transportation disadvantaged, but also attract new riders who choose to use the system.

Key geographic areas identified by the market analysis as being attractive for a local bus service include:

- Downtown Naperville
- North Washington Street/North Mill Street
- East Chicago Avenue
- I-88 corridor

Several groups of people were also identified through the market analysis as having a higher propensity to use a local bus service. These groups include:

- Senior citizens
- Commuters
- Students
- Local Naperville employees

It was also noted through the market analysis that a growing number of people in the general public are seeking alternative forms of transportation due to high fuel costs and environmental considerations.

PROPOSED CIRCULATOR ROUTES

Based on the market analysis, public feedback and Steering Committee input, eight potential circulator routes were identified for further evaluation. These preliminary routes were then evaluated by the public and Steering Committee based on five established service goals. The five service goals outlined in the Study are to:

- Provide service to a variety of people for a variety of trip purposes;
- Extend service operating hours beyond weekday peak hours;
- Minimize duplication of existing services provided by Pace and Ride DuPage;
- Connect residential areas to various local destinations;
- Provide convenient access to and from residential areas

Following the evaluation of the preliminary routes, three routes were selected as the preferred local circulator service routes. These routes are:

- *Washington St. and Rickert Dr.*

This route would serve the area southwest of downtown Naperville and run primarily on Washington St., Aurora Ave., Gartner Rd., Modaff Rd., 75th St., and Rickert Dr. This route would provide service to various residential and commercial areas along the route and would also provide service to Naperville Central High School and Edward Hospital.

- *95th Street*

This route would connect the south end of Naperville with downtown Naperville and the commercial area near Westfield Shoppingtown Fox Valley Mall. In addition, the route would also serve Neuqua Valley High School and the 95th Street Library.

- *Diehl Road*

This route would operate between the Naperville Metra Station and the Route 59 Metra Station serving the residential areas along Fairway Drive and Mill Street and the numerous employment and commercial areas along Diehl Road.

SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

As part of the Naperville Circulator Study, a set of service and performance standards have been developed to provide guidance in the planning and operation of a local bus service, and to evaluate the performance of a local bus service once it is operational. The use of these standards will also identify routes that are exceeding or not meeting the standards and can guide decisions regarding increases and/or decreases in service.

Additionally, the Naperville Circulator Service will need to be coordinated with the other service providers in Naperville to ensure that a cohesive transit network is developed. The three primary transportation services currently offered in Naperville include Pace fixed route and ADA services, Ride DuPage, and Metra commuter rail. Coordination will also need to occur with adjacent municipalities where destinations along proposed routes may be located outside of the city's municipal boundaries.

IMPLEMENTATION

Three options for implementation of the proposed circulator bus service were developed and evaluated through the Study. Options ranged from implementing all of the routes at the same time to phasing the implementation over a four year period. Following the evaluation of the proposed circulator routes, potential project implementation options, and financial considerations, a phased implementation is recommended. The recommended implementation for the preferred route identified in the Study would begin with the implementation of one route in Year 1 with Saturday service added to the initial route in Year 2. Implementation of the additional two routes and their corresponding Saturday service would occur in Years 3 and 4.

Phasing the implementation of the circulator routes will allow the city to focus on the successful implementation, marketing and monitoring of each route to ensure its success prior to the start of any additional routes. Implementing all of the proposed routes at once would also likely be cost prohibitive based on the projected route operating costs.

PROJECTED OPERATING COSTS

Costs for the routes were calculated based on the vehicle revenue hour per route using a contracted service rate of \$95 per vehicle revenue hour. Based on this estimated cost, the total operating costs for routes are shown in the table on the next page. Route costs are based on Year 1 dollars and would be adjusted for inflation for a phased implementation.

Projected Annual Operating Costs

Route	Annual Revenue Hours	Annual Operating Costs				
		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
Washington and Rickert	3,749	\$356,107	\$370,351	\$385,165	\$400,572	\$416,595
Washington and Rickert (Sat.)	712	\$67,678	\$70,385	\$73,200	\$76,128	\$79,173
95th Street	7,140	\$678,300	\$705,432	\$733,649	\$762,995	\$793,515
95th Street (Sat.)	1,352	\$128,440	\$133,578	\$138,921	\$144,478	\$150,257
Diehl Road	3,647	\$346,417	\$360,274	\$374,685	\$389,672	\$405,259
Diehl Road (Sat.)	692	\$65,702	\$68,330	\$71,063	\$73,905	\$76,862

*Route costs were increased using a four percent annual inflation factor.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

As part of the Naperville Circulator Study, potential funding sources for a local bus service were identified. A variety of funding sources exist for a local bus service, including federal funding, state funding, county funding through the ¼ percent sales tax increase, and grant programs. Each funding source has a different set of criteria and regulations that will need to be evaluated prior to applying for the funds in order to ensure that the proposed local bus service meets the needs, intent and criteria of the programs.

SERVICE OPERATIONS

There are three approaches to managing and operating a local bus service in Naperville. The three options include the City of Naperville directly managing and operating the bus service, contracting out the service to a private sector provider or using a current public provider to operate the service. Each of these approaches requires a different level of commitment and oversight by the City of Naperville as well as offering different benefits and drawbacks that should be taken into consideration prior to the start of any new service.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the Naperville Circulator Study evaluation, it is recommended that the City of Naperville contract out the operations of a local bus service to a private sector provider who is experienced and familiar with the technical knowledge and staff needed to operate a circulator service. By contracting out the service, responsibilities of the day-to-day supervision of the service would go to a private contractor, but the City of Naperville would be able to maintain control and oversight of the service.

Additionally, the implementation of a local bus service in Naperville is recommended to occur in phases over a multi-year period. The three recommended routes, Washington St. and Rickert Rd., 95th St., and Diehl Rd., are proposed to be implemented based on the route goals outlined as part of the Naperville Circulator Study. Each route was scored according to how well it met the defined service goals. Overall, the Washington St. and Rickert Dr. Route scored the highest, with the 95th St. Route and the Diehl Rd. Route scoring second and third, respectively from a total of eight evaluated routes.

The proposed phased implementation will begin with the Washington St. and Rickert Rd. Route in Year 1 with weekday service only. Saturday service on the Washington and Rickert Route would be introduced in Year 2. In Year 3, service on the 95th Street Route would begin and could include weekday service only or, depending on ridership, may also include Saturday service as well. Year 4 would incorporate the Diehl Road route into the Naperville local bus service.

Proposed Route Implementation

ROUTE	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
Washington St. and Rickert Rd.				
Washington St. and Rickert Rd. Saturday Service				
95th St.*				
Diehl Road*				

* Implementation of weekend service for these routes to be evaluated at time of route implementation.

Once a route is selected for implementation, the implementation plan for a local bus service in Naperville involves several steps in order to ensure a successful circulator service. These steps include securing funding for the operation of a local bus service, evaluating and selecting a service provider, finalizing route details including establishing a fare structure, finalizing route details, establishing a marketing plan for the new service, and finalizing the performance indicators. A full implementation plan to begin operating a local bus service in Naperville is anticipated to take approximately twelve months.