

CHAPTER I

Introduction

This report is the third in a series prepared for the DuPage Area Local Circulator Study. The study is a project of the DuPage Area Transit Plan, adopted jointly in 2002 by the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference (DMMC) and the DuPage County Board to address congestion and mobility in DuPage County. DMMC contracted with LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. (LSC) to provide technical assistance for this study. The first report—Market Analysis—identified markets where circulator service was needed and wanted. The second—Service Type—identified service areas and defined general parameters for service.

This report provides a detailed set of specifications for the Wheaton Circulator Service. Vehicle type, stop locations, hours of operation, headways, and staffing requirements are addressed. Appropriate standards are provided for the service type selected for the Wheaton Circulator Service such as deviation service areas, scheduling procedures for deviations, and demand-response service (if necessary). A financial plan is included in this report that includes recommended fares to use the service, capital costs, operating costs, and existing and potential revenue sources. Finally, a recommended service plan is presented that includes a preferred route service and a recommended organizational structure.

Wheaton is located approximately 30 miles west of Chicago in west-central DuPage County. The City has a population of 54,700, and the Community Area (the geographic area defined by census blocks and therefore slightly larger than the municipality) has a population of 63,765. Elderly persons represent approximately 14 percent of the total population in the Community Area, and an estimated three percent of the population has some type of mobility limitation.

Based on the 2000 census, the average per-capita income for the Community Area is \$34,147. This is higher than the state's average of \$23,104. The portion of the population living below the poverty level in the Community Area is approximately

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three percent with the highest density of below-poverty populations being in areas around the College Station Metra station, areas to the east of Wheaton which extend from Evergreen Street to Pershing Avenue, and the area northeast of the intersection between 22nd Street and Blanchard Avenue. An estimated 692 households in the Community Area had no vehicle for use in 2004. An estimated 6,650 households had only one vehicle.

There is extensive public transit in the City of Wheaton with two Metra stations in the city and eight Pace routes. The City also purchases taxi vouchers at a discounted rate for qualified seniors and persons with disabilities. Pace recently started a new route (#714) that provides service to Wheaton College and Danada Square.

The proposed circulator service is designed primarily to meet the needs of people traveling between the DuPage County Government Center and the Wheaton Metra station. An alternative adds service to Central DuPage Hospital and the Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital.

Chapter II of this report describes the public input which was used to design the circulator service for Wheaton. Community input included a community survey which was made available at the DuPage County Government Center and the Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital. A focus group was held in April 2007 to obtain more detailed information and to pursue perceptions and preferences related to the community survey responses.

Chapter III presents service alternatives. The Planning Team has developed two alternatives for Wheaton. Alternative 1 presents a detailed service plan for the service plan developed in the Service Type Report. Alternative 2 is a service plan that includes recommendations from the Wheaton Focus Group and the community survey. Chapter III also presents several vehicle type recommendations for this service. There are many types of vehicles that have been developed for the public transit industry. The Planning Team (LSC and DMMC) used its knowledge of transit vehicles along with recommendations from the Wheaton Focus Group to identify the best types of transit vehicles for the circulator service. The preferred

vehicle type will be selected through input from the Steering Committee and community input from Community Choice Forums scheduled for July 2007.

Chapter IV discusses potential operating entities that can be used to operate the circulator service. This chapter identifies transit operating systems that may be used and presents the advantages and disadvantages of each. Basically, the City of Wheaton can operate the service in-house or contract the service to public agencies or private companies that specialize in operating public transportation services. Chapter IV also provides the Planning Team's recommendation on the amount and type of staffing needed for the City to operate the circulator. Staffing needs recommendations are also provided in case the City decides to contract out the service.

Chapter V presents the recommended service plan. This chapter describes the results of the Wheaton Community Forum where citizens were given a presentation on the service specification alternatives and selected their preferred alternative, details the criteria selected from previous reports made concerning the circulator plan to evaluate each alternative and select the preferred alternative, and presents the recommended service plan. This chapter also presents and details a recommended organizational structure for operating the circulator service.