

CHAPTER IV

Organizational Options

In order to implement circulator service in Wheaton, the community will have to decide which agency should operate the service and the organizational structure. This chapter presents options for the operating agency and expected staffing requirements based on the service alternatives.

OPERATING AGENCY

At this time an operating agency for the Wheaton Circulator Service is unknown. However, there are several agencies in the area that have expertise in transit operations and private national firms such as First Transit, Laidlaw, and MV Transportation that specialize in transit operations.

One option would be for the City to operate the service as an arm of municipal government. This would require additional staffing as described later in this chapter. An advantage to in-house operation is that the City would have direct control over all operations. However, this would also require the City to hire the additional personnel and assume all responsibilities for regulatory and fiduciary compliance.

The second option is for a transit agency to operate the service. The primary bus public transit operator in the county is Pace. The Planning Team has used the Pace cost of operating in our financial plan in the likelihood that Pace may incorporate the circulator service into its existing transit service. There are several advantages to using Pace to operate the circulator service. Pace provides or contracts out the vast majority of bus public transportation in DuPage County. Pace specializes in public transit and is very familiar with the various types of transit service (fixed-route, demand-response, and flex-route). Pace has operations and maintenance facilities and a trained transit workforce which can provide drivers, mechanics, schedulers, and administrative and supervisory support to the Wheaton Circulator Service. Finally, Pace is recognized by the federal government

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as a recipient of federal transit funds and is familiar with ways to fund public transit.

The third option available to the City of Wheaton is contracting the service through a competitive bid process. This would not only allow Pace to bid on the service, but also private transit operating companies such as those listed at the beginning of this chapter. This process generally ensures that the City will receive a competitive price for operating the service. It also allows for several ways in which the City can pay for services rendered. Many times the winning operator will provide skilled managers, buses, facilities, and other necessary equipment and services needed to operate a transit service so that the City only needs to pay a set amount annually for the transit service.

STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

Staffing requirements for the Wheaton Circulator are dependent on the type of operation agency that is selected by the City. Staffing needs for each type of organizational structure are presented.

Transit Manager

1. Develops and administers operational policies and procedures; enforces compliance with rules and regulations.
2. Develops, administers, and monitors the transit budget to include overseeing and approving purchasing procedures.
3. Researches and resolves complaints and problems; develops customer surveys to determine customer satisfaction.
4. Represents the city at meetings and on committees for transportation; provides administrative and technical support for the Transit Advisory Committee which should be developed to provide community input and support.
5. Supervises staff to include: assigning and reviewing work, ensuring staff are properly trained, evaluating performance, approving time off, handling disciplinary actions, and making hiring and termination recommendations.
6. Is the city’s liaison on transit matters with the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration.
7. Prepares transit reports; researches and applies for local, state, and federal funding.
8. Actively promotes public transportation within the community and develops marketing strategies to increase ridership and positive public perception.

9. Develops transit goals and objectives; develops short- and long-range plans.
10. Performs contract management to include: negotiating contracts, preparing contracts, and making or receiving payments.
11. Develops Annual Report on transit operations.

Lead Dispatcher (Reports to Transit Manager)

1. Assigns and monitors work; provides employee training on proper methods and procedures.
2. Coordinates the repair and maintenance of fleet vehicles by development of work orders, scheduling and monitoring work, service schedules, and tracking expenditures.
3. Orders and picks up supplies and other materials.
4. Completes and maintains required reports which include updating databases, coding and tracking expenditures, and informing supervisor of daily divisional activities.
5. Conducts daily road supervision and responds to vehicle accidents involving transit vehicles.

Schedulers/Dispatchers

Operation of the route-deviation service will require that two full-time and two-part-time schedulers/dispatchers be hired. The dispatchers will receive requests for any deviations from the route and will dispatch those requests to the drivers. This position must be staffed during all hours of service. The same number of schedulers/dispatchers will be required for each alternative. This function could be provided through a consolidated dispatch center such as Ride DuPage.

Bus Drivers

For Alternative 1 it is recommended that one full-time and two part-time drivers be hired. For Alternative 2, two full-time and four part-time drivers need to be hired. One or more of the part-time drivers and one full-time driver should also be cross-trained to perform the Lead Dispatcher's duties. This cross-training is needed to allow for vacation, weekend dispatch duties, and to cover in case of illness.

Maintenance Personnel

The Planning Team recommends that vehicle maintenance be contracted out or be performed by the city's Public Works Department.

Contract Manager

A Contract Manager should be hired if the City decides to contract out the circulator service to a professional transit agency. The duties of the contract manager should be:

1. Performs contract management to include: negotiating contracts, preparing contracts, and making or receiving payments.
2. Performs periodic inspections of contractor's facilities to assure they meet the standards provided in the contract.
3. Develops a monthly report and presents report to the City Council.
4. Reviews and approves changes to the route structure or schedule.
5. Is the city's liaison on transit matters with the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration.
6. Represents the city at meetings and on committees for transportation; provides administrative and technical support for the Transit Advisory Committee which should be developed to provide community input and support.
7. Actively promotes public transportation within the community and develops marketing strategies to increase ridership and positive public perception.
8. Develops transit goals and objectives; develops short- and long-range plans.