

# Access Will County

## Will County Paratransit Integration and Efficiency Study (PIES)

County of Will | June 2023



Provided by



MUSE  
COMMUNITY • DESIGN

# Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Project Overview</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2. Study Area and Scope</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3. Best Practices</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 Ride in Kane	14
3.2 Ride Lake County	20
3.3 MCRide Dial-a-Ride	27
<b>4. Existing Conditions and Future Needs Analysis</b>	<b>33</b>
4.1 Demographic and Socioeconomic Context	33
4.2 Public Transit in Will County	46
4.3 Future Needs	68
<b>5. Community and Stakeholder Engagement</b>	<b>72</b>
5.1 Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC)	72
5.2 Focus Groups	73
5.3 Survey	78
<b>6. Service Improvement Strategies</b>	<b>83</b>
6.1 Information	85
6.2 Eligibility	90
6.3 Service Quality	94
6.4 Service Area	98
6.5 Service Hours	102
6.6 Fares	106
6.7 Consolidation	111
<b>7. Financial Analysis</b>	<b>119</b>
7.1 Current Costs and Funding Sources	119
7.2 Funding Alternatives	121
7.3 Annual Budget for Countywide Dial-a-Ride Service	126
<b>8. Recommendations</b>	<b>129</b>
8.1 Governance and Coordination	129
8.2 Service Changes	131
8.3 Funding	137
<b>Appendix A: Peer County Background Research</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>Appendix B: Dial-a-Ride Provider Profiles</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Appendix C: Human Service Agency Profiles</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>Appendix D: Additional Survey Data</b>	<b>181</b>

# Acknowledgements

## County Team

Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant, Will County Executive

Elaine Bottomley, Deputy Chief of Staff for Will County Executive

Ann Schneider, Consultant to Will County Staff

Michael Theodore, Will County Director of Communications

## Consultant Team

Via Strategies

MUSE Community + Design

## Stakeholder Working Group

Troy Township

Frankfort Township

Joliet Township

Peotone Township

Monee Township

Will Township

Green Garden Township

Crete Township

Washington Township

Plainfield Township

Reed Township

Northeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging

Senior Services of Will County

Disability Resource Center

United Way of Will County

Will County Center for Economic Development (CED)

Will Co. Workforce Investment Board (WIB)

Workforce Center of Will County

Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)

Pace Suburban Bus

Sunny Hill Nursing Home

Village of Channahon

Village of Wilmington

Village of Manhattan

# Executive Summary

## Goals and Background

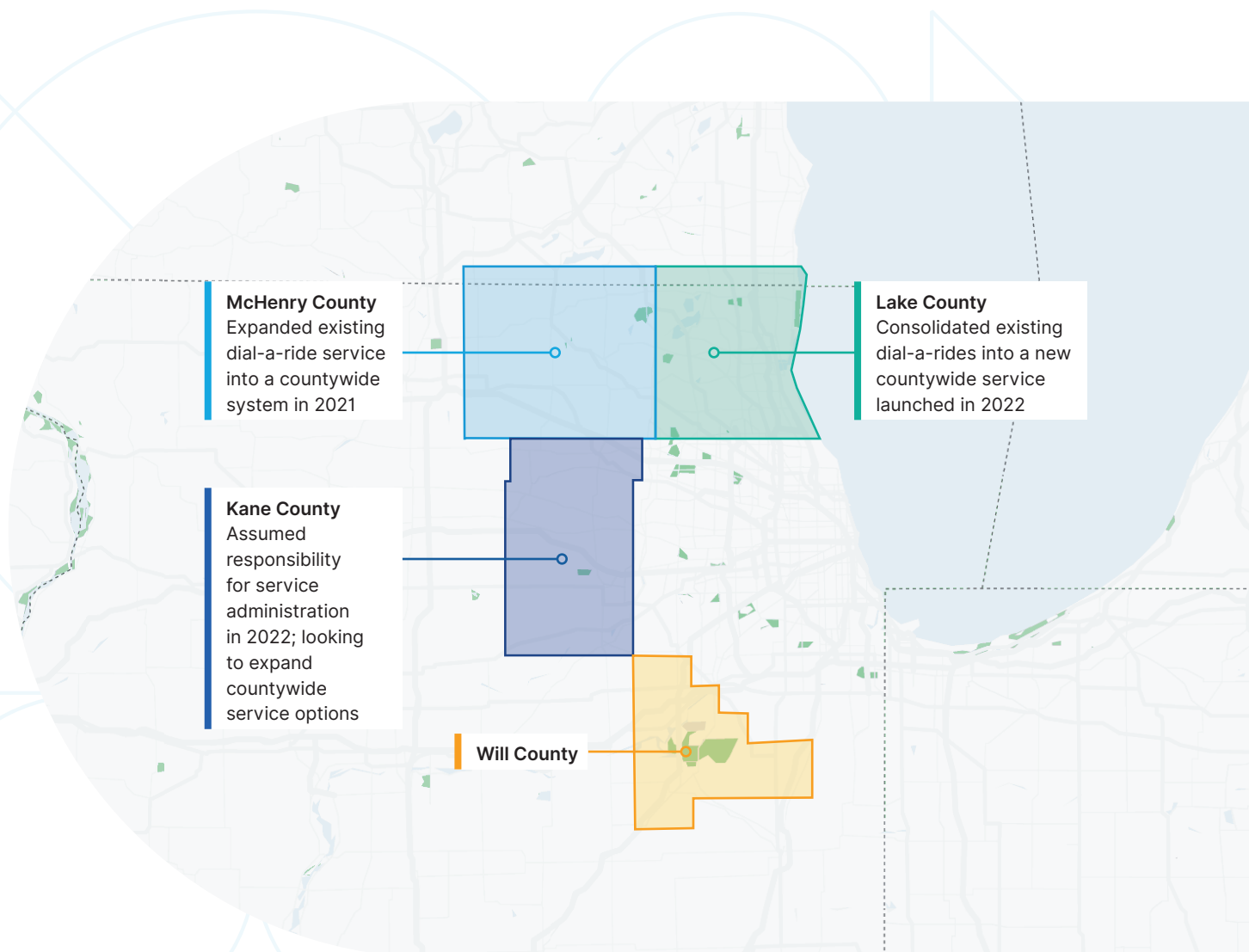
The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), which oversees and coordinates all public transit in northeastern Illinois, recently adopted a plan to make it easier for vulnerable residents to travel around the region. *Access Will County* is designed to implement RTA's regional recommendations within County borders, by:

- Better coordinating paratransit, demand-response, and human service agency transportation in the County.
- Closing gaps in geographic coverage, destination accessibility, and hours of operation.

- Improving the efficiency and performance of the overall transit system.

**If Will County implements this Study, it could unlock more funding for transportation services.**

- Lake and McHenry counties have launched consolidated, countywide dial-a-ride services, with Kane County following suit.
- They combined smaller existing dial-a-rides into one Countywide system supported in part by county funding.





## Challenges with Existing Services

Despite covering most of the County, the existing network of dial-a-rides is confusing for riders to use and difficult for funding parties to manage efficiently.



**12**

Separate dial-a-ride systems operating today



**18 of 24**

Townships are covered by at least one dial-a-ride

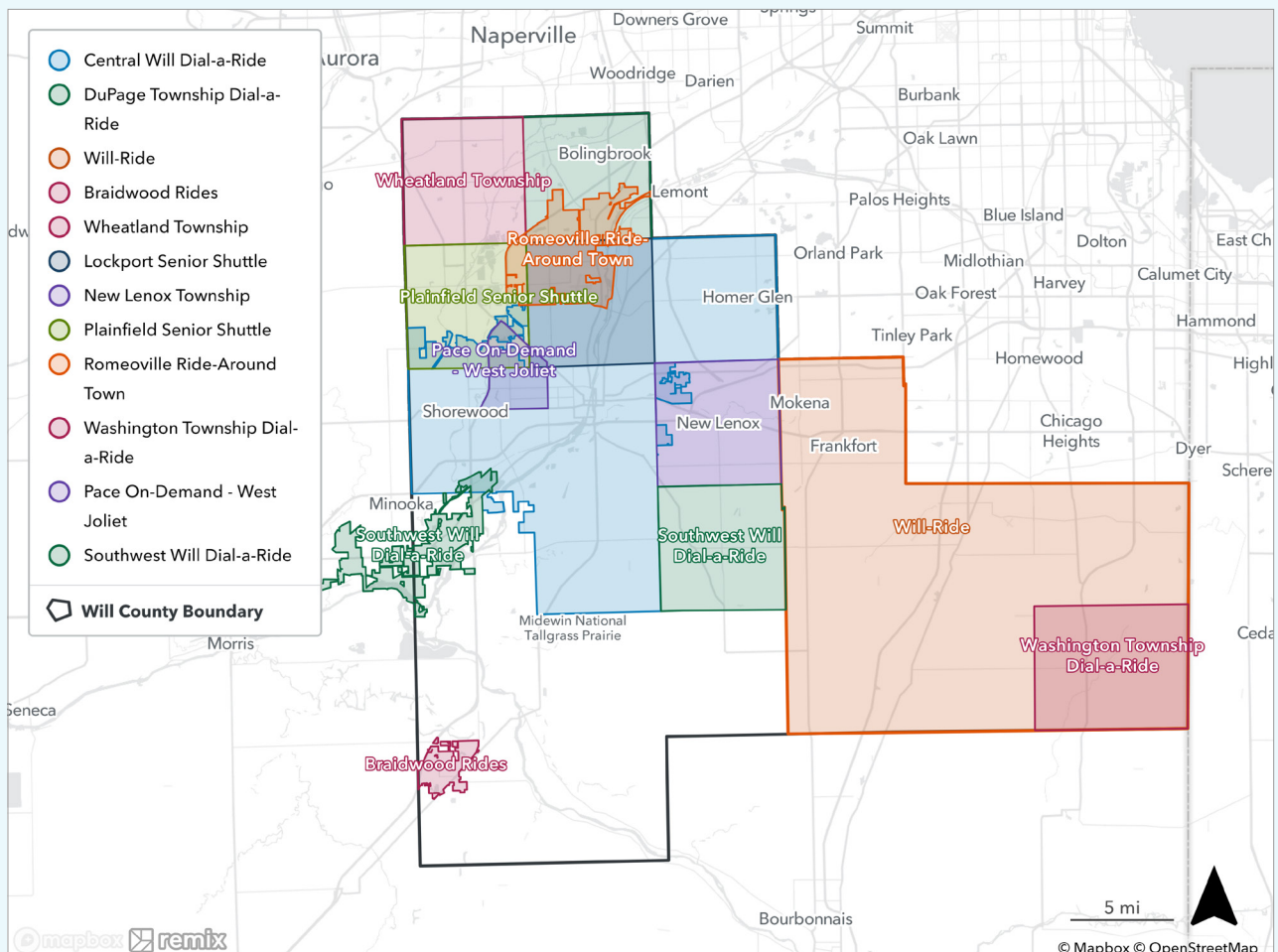


**95%**

Of Will County's population lives in a covered township

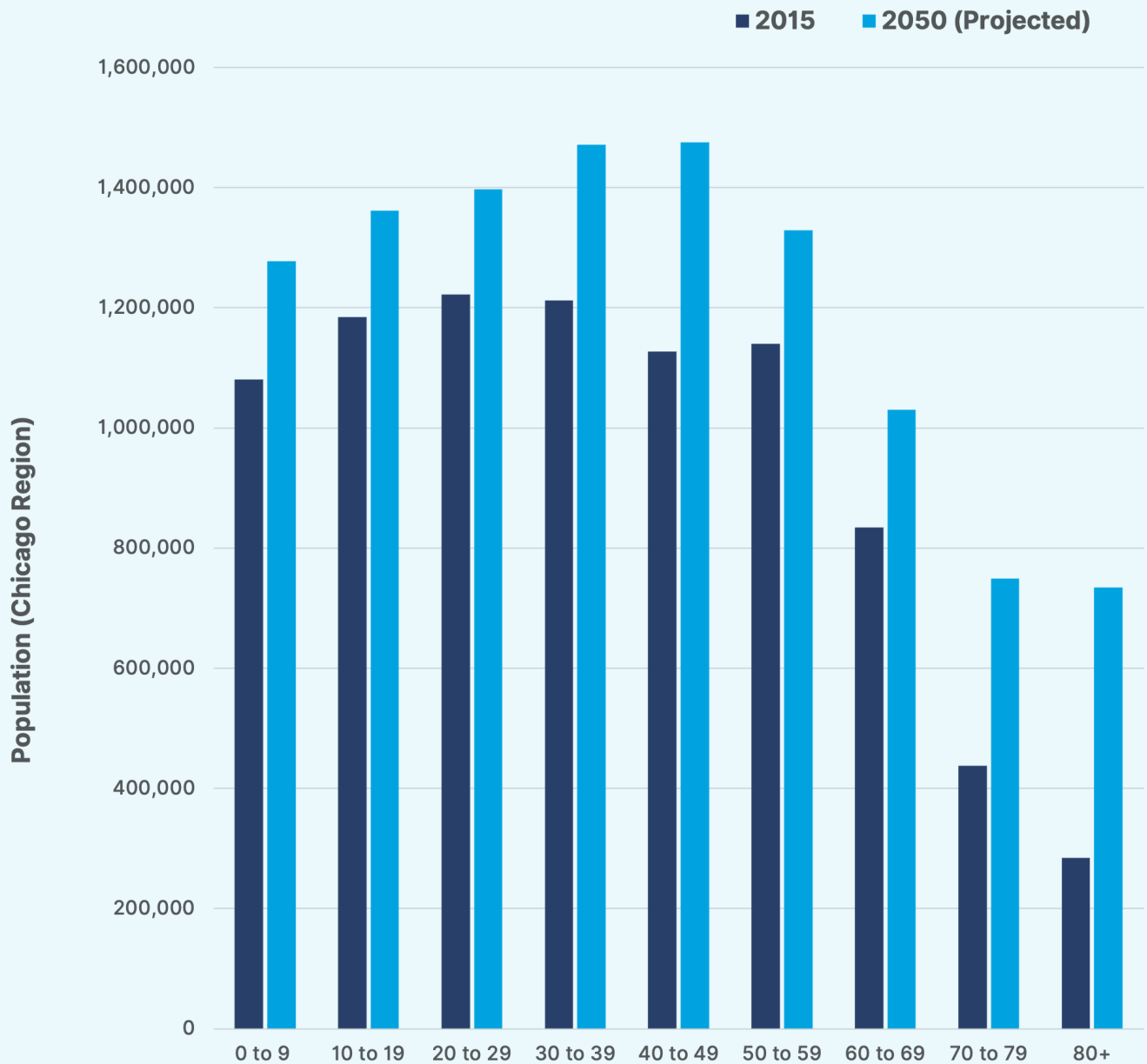
### Operating a fragmented system presents several challenges:

- Complicated rider registration processes
- Disjointed eligibility requirements
- Different hours of operation, fare policies, and travel rules



## Challenges with Increasing Demand

Dial-a-ride service is an important mobility option for many residents, especially seniors. Will County, like the region as a whole, has an aging population. Between 2015 and 2050, the number of Chicagoland residents age 70 or older will double.



**Data Source:** Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, ON TO 2050 Socioeconomic Forecasts

## Community and Stakeholder Input

The recommendations in *Access Will County* are shaped by a robust community and stakeholder engagement program. Outreach activities included:

- A survey to understand barriers and usage patterns of current services.
- Conducting focus group sessions to understand barriers and involve users in shaping the study.
- Forming a stakeholder working group to gather institutional knowledge and engage decision-makers.



**1,200+**

Online and paper survey responses collected



**24**

Participants engaged across four focus group sessions



**25+**

Townships, cities, and agencies engaged across stakeholder meetings



## Key Takeaways

- Riders were concerned with the quality of existing service – including customer experience, on-time performance, and vehicle condition. While not initially a focus of the project team, consistent feedback from survey and focus group participants led to this being developed into a recommended improvement strategy.
- Focus group participants prioritized expanded service hours higher than any other improvement. More than half of survey respondents cited inadequate service hours as a barrier to usage, and only one-third of rider respondents satisfied with the current service hours.
- Stakeholders prioritized improving access to information the highest, followed closely by expanding service hours and closing coverage bullets.

## Recommendations

*Access Will County* recommends implementing the changes described below. Together, they serve as a roadmap to eventual consolidation of all existing dial-a-rides under the County banner. The first six changes can be implemented somewhat independently of one another as interim steps on this path.



### Information

Existing online information is difficult to locate and sometimes contradictory, and the registration process for new riders is unclear. To better attract and retain riders, Will County should improve the ways people find and register for dial-a-ride service.



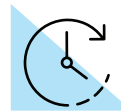
### Eligibility

Existing eligibility rules vary by service, making it difficult for residents to understand what is available to them. Will County should standardize eligibility requirements Countywide so that all residents 55 or over, living with a disability, or needing transport to work can ride.



### Service Quality

Rider feedback demonstrates concerns about customer experience, on-time performance, and vehicle condition. Will County should use performance metrics to improve the quality of dial-a-ride service.



### Service Hours

Existing services operate on weekdays only, typically between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM. To improve mobility for residents and make the service useful for more trip types, Will County should add evening and weekend service.



### Service Area

Six townships – all with a higher percentage of senior citizens than the County as a whole – do not currently provide any dial-a-ride service. Will County should close these gaps in coverage to help riders reach more destinations.



### Fares

The price riders pay per trip varies across the existing services, and fares are typically cash-only. Will County should launch a unified fare structure and add fare payment options.



### Long term goal: Consolidation

Existing dial-a-rides should be consolidated into a single Countywide service supported in part by funding from Will County. As part of the transition, townships and municipalities would no longer have to fund service.

## Funding

Fully implementing the recommendations in this study will create a single, consolidated dial-a-ride system covering all of Will County. **The total cost of operating this system is expected to fall between \$2.5M and \$3.1M each year.**

	Current Structure	Proposed Structure
 Townships	Townships and municipalities <b>pay some or all of the cost</b> for providing service within their boundaries.	Townships and municipalities <b>do not have to fund dial-a-ride service.</b>
 County	<b>No county-level funding is currently provided</b> for operating dial-a-ride service.	Will County <b>funds approximately one-third of the total cost</b> of providing service countywide.
 Pace	Some legacy dial-a-rides receive subsidies from Pace to help defray operating costs. Subsidy levels vary, and some existing services receive no subsidy.	Existing <b>subsidies are transferred to the County.</b> Together, they fund about one-third of the total operating cost.
 Grants	<b>A patchwork of Federal, state, and local grants are used</b> to fund dial-a-ride service.	Consolidated service is <b>eligible for larger Federal grant awards.</b> Grants cover about one-third of the total operating cost.

# Moving Towards Service Consolidation

Fully implementing the service improvements and consolidation recommended in this study will require multiple prerequisite steps to be completed.



## Communication

Ongoing outreach to the townships and municipalities currently providing service.



## County Funding

Identify and secure a County-level funding stream to support dial-a-ride service.



## Negotiation

Transfer legacy Pace subsidies from townships to the County.



## Grants

Secure grant funding for service improvements.

## At the conclusion of the process, dial-a-ride service in Will County will be dramatically reshaped:

- ✓ Funding burden removed from townships.
- ✓ Existing services consolidated into an expanded Will-Ride covering all of the County.
- ✓ Funding split between Will County, Pace, and grant sources.



# 1. Project Overview

In recent years, multiple counties in the Chicago region have launched consolidated demand-response services, improving the quality of service offered to residents while enjoying the benefits of a more streamlined operation. Will County is interested in evaluating the benefits of adopting a similar model within its jurisdiction. To that end, the County launched Access Will County.

Officially titled the Paratransit Integration and Efficiency Study, Access Will County was launched in early 2022 to develop a mobility management structure in Will County that:

- Better coordinates paratransit, demand-response, and human service agency transportation in the County
- Closes gaps in geographic coverage, destination accessibility, and hours of operation
- Improves the efficiency and performance of the overall transit system

Access Will County is a continuation of ongoing efforts, led by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), to improve the quality and efficiency of paratransit and demand-response transit across Chicagoland. In early 2021, the RTA adopted the Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP), which articulates nine regional mobility management goals:

1. Establish mobility management and travel training networks
2. Expand service areas and hours of operation
3. Coordinate fare media and implement capped fares for certain trips
4. Coordinate volunteer driver support programs
5. Improve access to suburban jobs for low-income residents
6. Expand the types of vehicles available in consolidated vehicle procurement (CVP) programs
7. Explore collaboration and/or consolidation of similar services
8. Establish a regional 1-Call / 1-Click service for trip booking and planning
9. Create an accessibility infrastructure database to help seniors and persons with disabilities navigate transit in the region

This study is tasked with implementing the recommendations in the regional HSTP at the County level. Through the study, Will County will develop a roadmap to outline its dial-a-ride services regional and national best practices in demand-response coordination.

## 2. Study Area and Scope

The *Access Will County* study area included all of Will County, along with adjacent areas with demand-response transit services that overlap with Will County. The following tasks were completed as part of the study:

- 1. Project Management:** To oversee the project, the project team worked closely with Will County staff. This task also included a presentation to the Will County Board and reviews of interim deliverables.
- 2. Public Involvement and Stakeholder Engagement:** The project team conducted a range of public and stakeholder engagement activities to gather feedback from the community. This task included establishing and meeting with a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC), conducting two rounds of focus groups, and administering a survey. More than 1,200 survey responses were gathered as part of *Access Will County*.
- 3. Paratransit and Demand Response Inventory:** The project team developed a list of demand-response transportation providers operating in Will County and conducted research on each provider to understand the scope and design of their current operations.
- 4. Assessment of Existing Conditions:** The project team used the information gathered in Task 3 to compare transit needs with existing service availability. Particular focus was paid to identifying temporal and spatial gaps in service coverage.
- 5. Projection of Future Needs:** The project team used population and employment data, as well as long-range planning forecasts and Census results, to develop an understanding of how demand for demand-response transit service will evolve in Will County over the coming years.
- 6. Best Practices and Peer Review:** To understand how peer counties around Chicagoland (and the Midwest as a whole) are providing coordinated dial-a-ride services, the project team conducted a data review and interviewed staff at select counties.
- 7. Financial Analysis and Funding:** The project team conducted a review of available funding streams and developed a proposed budget for consolidated dial-a-ride service in Will County.
- 8. Recommendations:** To guide a future implementation process, the project team developed recommendations for dial-a-ride governance and coordination, service design, and funding.

### 3. Best Practices

This chapter presents a review of how peer counties provide paratransit and specialized transportation services to residents. Based on discussions with Will County staff and a review of key demographic indicators, a shortlist of six counties was established:

- McHenry County, IL
- Kane County, IL
- Kendall County, IL
- Lake County, IL
- Johnson County, IN
- Hamilton County, IN

A high-level transit analysis for each of the six counties on the shortlist was completed. The analysis included a review of service area, service details, service design, operating model, costs and funding, and key performance indicators. The results of this analysis are presented in [Appendix A: Background Research for Review of Best Practices](#).

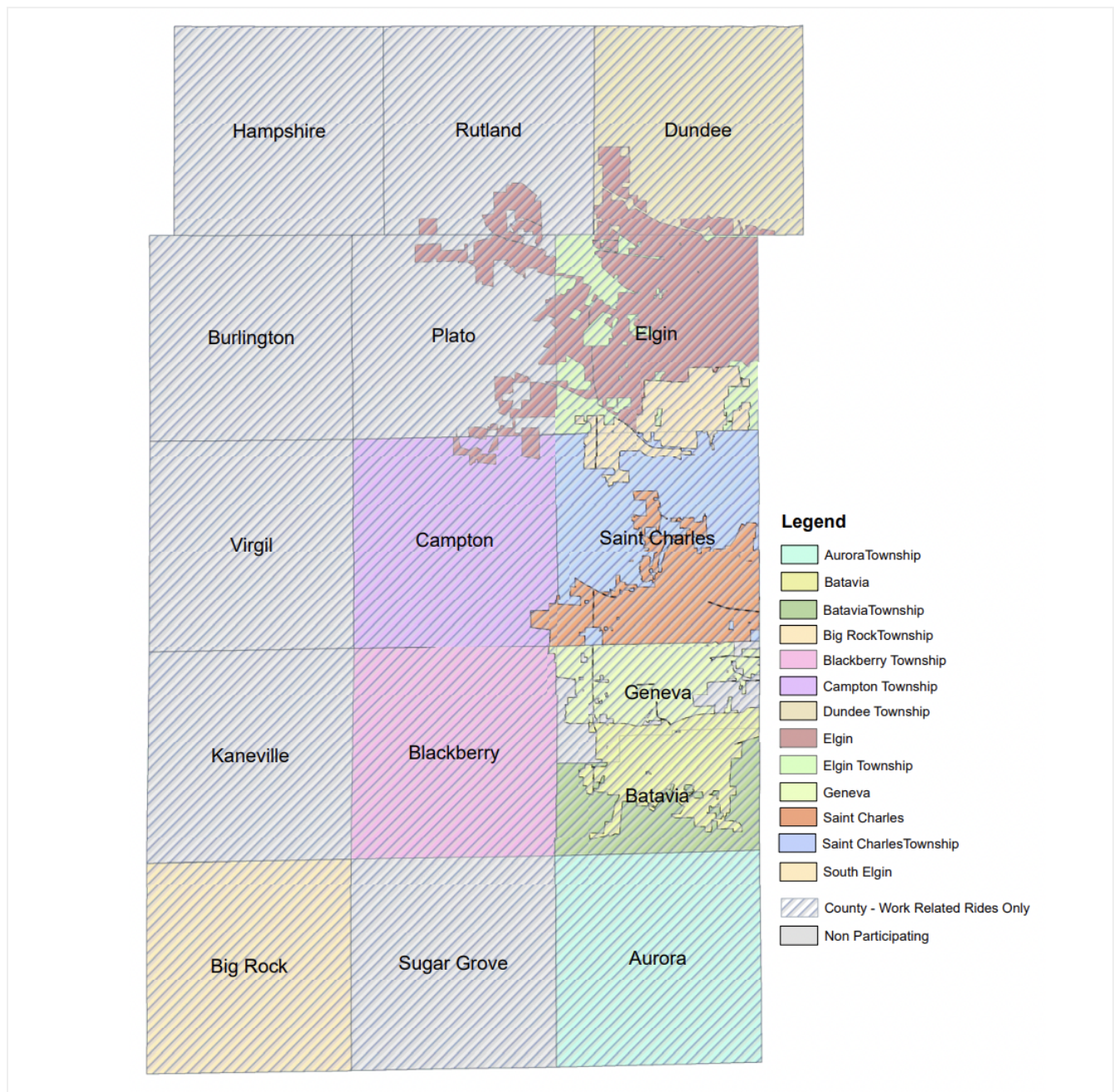
Based on the outcomes of the transit analysis, three jurisdictions — Kane County, Lake County, and McHenry County — were identified as peer comparisons and selected for staff interviews. The project team interviewed one or more staff members at each peer county to better understand how demand-response transit is provided in their jurisdictions. The following three sections summarize the results of these conversations.

#### Key Takeaways – Best Practices in Peer Counties

- Lake County and McHenry County have both recently launched consolidated, countywide dial-a-ride services. To do this, smaller **existing dial-a-rides were combined into one system** under county leadership. Kane County is currently moving their system in this direction.
- Peer counties expect to provide between **50,000 and 90,000 trips per year** at current ridership levels. Services experienced higher pre-Covid ridership.
- Kane, Lake, and McHenry Counties **all offer dial-a-ride service on weekends**. Service in Kane County is available 24/7.
- The peer counties use **RTA collar county sales tax** funding to support consolidated dial-a-ride service. Counties in the RTA region, including Will County, receive this money to fund local transit and transportation projects.

# 3.1 Ride in Kane

The townships and municipalities shown in color in **Figure 1** illustrate the Ride in Kane service area. Work related trips are covered everywhere in the county, including in the gray-shaded townships where service is otherwise unavailable.



**Figure 1: Ride in Kane Service Area<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Figure produced by the Kane County Division of Transportation (KDOT)

### 3.1.1 Demographics

Kane County is a close match to Will County in terms of overall population density. Like Will County, it also contains a substantial urban-to-rural gradient. Development patterns in the counties are broadly similar. The Cities of Elgin and Aurora have historically served as the major population centers in Kane County, although the County has become more suburban in recent decades as development sprawled out from the regional center. Key demographic characteristics for the counties are summarized in **Table 1**.

**Table 1. Demographic Comparison, Will County and Kane County**

Key Facts	Will County, IL	Kane County, IL
Total Population	700,000	516,000
Area (mi <sup>2</sup> )	836	520
Density (persons / mi <sup>2</sup> )	833	995
Median Age	38	38
% Seniors (65+)	14.0%	14.9%
% Living w/ Disability	5.9%	5.6%
% Minority	39.0%	43.9%

### 3.1.2 Interview Notes

Notes from the project team's interview with Kane County staff are summarized in **Tables 2 through 5**.

**Table 2. Ride in Kane – Service Details and Design**

Service Details	
Service Name	Ride in Kane
Launch Year	2008; Administration taken over by County in 2022
Service Area	Generally the service area is countywide, although the service available to residents varies by the area of the County a rider lives in. Kane County residents living in the Village of Huntley are also eligible for McHenry County's MCRide system, as it covers this portion of Kane County.
Use Case	<p>Each <a href="#">sponsor organization</a> within the Ride in Kane network has different restrictions riders and trip purposes allowed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Senior citizens and persons with disabilities are eligible in the vast majority of sponsor areas.</li><li>• Low-income persons are eligible in some sponsor areas.</li><li>• All County residents are eligible for work-related transportation, thanks to additional County funding starting in 2022. Trip purposes are verified using the honor system.</li><li>• Due to an ongoing driver shortage, non-medical and non-work trips are only allowed during hours outside 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.</li></ul>
Service Type	"On-demand" shared ride service; curb-to-curb service provided.
Destination Restrictions	Travel is permitted between any location within the service area, as long as the rider and trip type meet all sponsor requirements.
Service Hours	24/7, including holidays
Reservation Type	Pre-booked, 4 hours to one week in advance, depending on the sponsor
Reservation Style	Phone-based. Riders register with their local sponsor organization, then call a single Pace number to book trips.
Fare Type	Base + cost/mile
Fare Amount	\$5.00 first 10 miles + \$1.50 each additional mile thereafter



**Table 3. Ride in Kane – Operations Summary**

Operations	
<b>Service Manager</b>	The service is administered by the Kane County Division of Transportation (KDOT). KDOT convenes the Kane County Paratransit Coordinating Council- a consortium of citizens, local advocates, and agencies invested in Ride in Kane. To improve the service, the County has hired a mobility manager and developed a unified information number to call with questions about the service (e.g., which sponsor area a rider lives in).
<b>Vehicle Operator</b>	Pace (call center + operations)
<b>Fleet Size</b>	Information not available
<b>Operating Model</b>	Operated as a single service, with centrally-coordinated funding distribution and rider scheduling; rider eligibility verified by local sponsor organizations.
<b>Service Origin + History</b>	<p><b>Pre-2022:</b> Service administered by the non-profit Association for Individual Development (AID). Kane County funded \$120,000 annually, divided equally among each sponsor organization, to reduce local match burdens. KDOT led a coordinating council and maintained the service website.</p> <p><b>2022:</b> KDOT took over program administration from AID in 2022, hired a mobility manager, and increased funding to cover work-related trips in areas without local sponsor organizations. Kane County funded \$200,000, divided equally among each sponsor organization, to reduce local match burdens. In addition, the County allocated \$300,000 to cover work-related trip costs outside sponsor areas and a mobility manager salary. Higher levels of 2022 County funding is due to a one-time Pace grant.</p> <p><b>2023 and beyond:</b> Each year, the County will distribute \$175,000 to sponsors to reduce local match burdens, and allocate \$125,000 for work-related trip costs and a mobility manager. Due to low rider uptake (19 riders registered) for work-related trips, this level of funding is anticipated to be sufficient. KDOT offers two months of free trips before charging riders for work-related trips.</p>
<b>Operational Coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KDOT coordinates; sponsors are responsible for verifying rider eligibility and forwarding the rider's information to Pace.</li> <li>• Pace is responsible for ensuring trips meet sponsor guidelines, booking, and providing the rides.</li> </ul>
<b>Regulatory Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally not a concern; Pace handles regulatory and compliance obligations as part of operating the service.</li> <li>• Kane County updated their Title VI Plan in 2022 as part of expanding eligibility for work-related trips.</li> </ul>

**Table 4. Ride in Kane – Costs, Funding, and Lessons Learned**

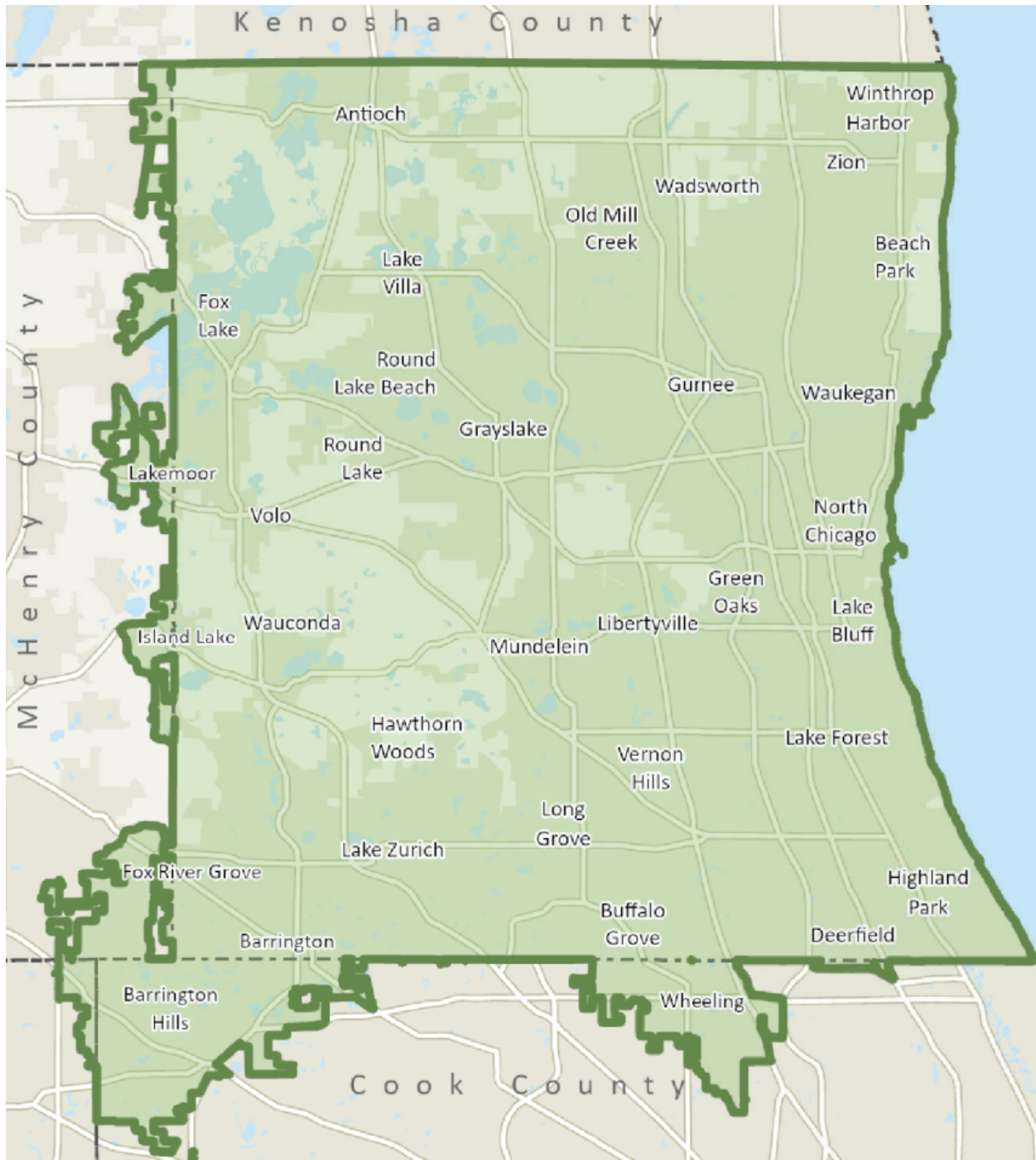
<b>Costs, Funding, and Lessons Learned</b>	
<b>Service Cost and Funding (2021)</b>	<p><b>Costs</b>  Total: \$2.12M  Net after fares: \$1.85M</p> <p><b>Funding</b>  Federal subsidy: \$0.93M  Local match for sponsor organizations: \$0.81M  Kane County local match defrayment: \$0.12M</p>
<b>Funding Sources</b>	<p><b>Federal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 5310 (~85% of funding) - covers all trip types</li> <li>• Section 5316, also known as Job Access Reverse Commute, or JARC (~15% of funding) - covers work-related trips only</li> </ul> <p><b>Partner organizations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsors receive funding from Kane County to defray a portion of local match costs. Some communities (e.g., Elgin) receive a legacy Pace subsidy to further defray local match costs</li> </ul>
<b>Funding Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsors pay Pace directly for their local match portion without passing money through KDOT. KDOT invoices the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) for federal subsidies and distributes to sponsor organizations</li> <li>• Prior to 2022, AID applied for and distributed federal grants</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<p><b>Key takeaways:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, the County staff and leadership (and sponsor organizations) are happy with the results and PR benefits of taking over service administration.</li> <li>• County funding has allowed for accommodation of new riders.</li> <li>• County now has control over pulling reports from the Pace Trapeze database, streamlining the process performance tracking.</li> </ul> <p><b>Lessons learned:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After taking over service, KDOT experienced some struggles with the RTA around communication, deadlines, and invoicing.</li> <li>• Low uptake on work-related trips. To get word about the service, KDOT is purchasing promotional items (lanyards, bags, etc.) to distribute. KDOT has started working with the local Workforce Board and Sheriff's Department to proactively engage with potential riders.</li> <li>• KDOT has struggled to get the more rural western townships bought into the service. Existing sponsor organizations have previously offered to run rider registrations if townships would provide funding.</li> <li>• Would like to move towards a coordinated County-wide system starting in 2023, similar to systems in Lake and McHenry County.</li> </ul>

**Table 5. Ride in Kane – Key Performance Indicators**

Key Performance Indicators	
<b>Trips per Year</b>	<b>2021:</b> 50,000 rides <b>2022:</b> ~50,000 (annualized, based on first 3 months of 2022), with an average trip length of 5 miles.
<b>Trips per Vehicle Hour</b>	Information not available
<b>Cost per Trip</b>	<b>2021:</b> \$42 <b>2022:</b> expected to be ~\$40
<b>Estimated and Actual Wait Times</b>	The service operates with 95% on time performance (no information was provided on the time window for “on time”)
<b>Notes on Rider Experience</b>	Different rules between local sponsors can confuse riders
<b>Other</b>	<p>The following performance metrics are reviewed quarterly to identify overall trends in service performance. Each metric is calculated separately for bus and taxi trips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-time performance</li> <li>• Number of complaints - Sponsor agencies and KDOT tell riders to direct all complaints to Pace so they can be tracked and addressed.</li> <li>• Number of late-cancel and no-show rides - Tracks the number of trips where riders fail to appear for a scheduled pick-up.</li> <li>• Number of missed trips - Tracks the number of trips a transit vehicle fails to appear for a scheduled pick-up</li> <li>• Board Metrics - County staff present the number and type of trips taken to the Kane County Board on a regular basis.</li> </ul>

## 3.2 Ride Lake County

The Ride Lake County service area includes all of Lake County, plus the portions of Lake County municipalities that stretch into neighboring counties. This service area is illustrated in **Figure 2**.



**Figure 2: Ride Lake County Service Area<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>2</sup> Figure produced by the Lake County Division of Transportation (LCDOT)

# 3.2.1 Demographics

Lake County is positioned opposite the Chicagoland region from Will County. While the total population is similar, Lake County is about twice as densely-populated. Development patterns in Lake County are generally similar to the northern half of Will County. The City of Waukegan historically served as the major population center in Lake County, although the County has become more suburban in recent decades as development sprawled out from the regional center. Key demographic characteristics for the counties are summarized in **Table 6**.

**Table 6. Demographic Comparison, Will County and Lake County**

Key Facts	Will County, IL	Kane County, IL
Total Population	700,000	711,000
Area (mi <sup>2</sup> )	836	443
Density (persons / mi <sup>2</sup> )	833	1,610
Median Age	38	39
% Seniors (65+)	14.0%	15.4%
% Living w/ Disability	5.9%	6.2%
% Minority	39.0%	40.7%

### 3.2.2 Interview Notes

Notes from the project team's interview with Lake County staff are summarized in **Tables 7 through 10**.

**Table 7. Ride Lake County – Service Details and Design**

Service Details	
<b>Service Name</b>	Ride Lake County
<b>Launch Year</b>	2022 for countywide service
<b>Service Area</b>	Lake County, along with the full municipal boundaries of communities located partially within Lake County.
<b>Use Case</b>	Seniors aged 60+ and persons with disabilities
<b>Service Type</b>	"On-demand" shared ride service; curb-to-curb service provided.
<b>Destination Restrictions</b>	Travel is permitted between any locations within the county. For travel outside of the county, pickup or drop-off needs to be within Lake County.
<b>Service Hours</b>	<b>Trips:</b> 6:00 AM - 6:00 PM, seven days a week <b>Reservations:</b> 5:30 AM - 6:00 PM, weekdays only <i>Service does not operate on select holidays</i>
<b>Reservation Type</b>	Pre-booked, 2 hours to one week in advance
<b>Reservation Style</b>	Phone-based. Riders register with Pace first, then call a single Pace number to book trips.
<b>Fare Type</b>	Distance-based
<b>Fare Amount</b>	\$2.00 0-5 miles \$4.00 5-10 miles \$6.00 10+ miles



**Table 8. Ride Lake County – Operations Summary**

Operations	
<b>Service Manager</b>	Lake County DOT
<b>Vehicle Operator</b>	Pace operates and manages the call center. They contract with First Transit (private provider) and taxi services to operate vehicles. Pace oversees the subcontractors to ensure high quality of service.
<b>Fleet Size</b>	Lake County aims to have 36 drivers for the service per day, but usually has around 24. Vehicles are supplied by Pace and their subcontractors.
<b>Operating Model</b>	Operated as a single service. Some smaller township services continue to exist; these are operated separately by Pace.
<b>Service Origin + History</b>	<p><b>Prior to coordination:</b> Pace provided subsidies for individual township and municipal services, at different rates and with different ridership restrictions. Community members established the Lake County Coordinated Transportation Services Committee (LCCTSC) in 2006 as an advocacy group for countywide services. It had representatives from townships, Catholic Charities, private providers, and other advocates.</p> <p><b>County consolidation:</b> Consolidation took many years. Initially, Lake County DOT got involved in paratransit when the board dedicated funding to a paratransit coordinator position from the RTA sales tax. The County initiated a paratransit market study that took place from 2016 until 2019; the key recommendation was to identify a lead agency that would champion a countywide service. Once the market study was adopted, the County board created a 'lead agency working group' subcommittee. Providers, RTA, Pace, and other key stakeholders were part of the group, which met about 8 times in 2019-2020 and hosted guest speakers from other counties in the region. The group recommended that the Lake County government serve as executive sponsor for a countywide service. At that time, the County thought they would be the coordinator and municipalities and townships would participate by paying for the service.</p> <p>After further engagement with the topic, the County pivoted and decided to be the primary sponsor of the service. The following reasons informed this decision:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The new County Administrator was able to take on a bigger role in countywide paratransit.</li> <li>2. The RTA sales tax generated new revenue, which the County agreed to spend on transit.</li> <li>3. McHenry launched MCRide, providing a model of countywide on-demand service.</li> <li>4. New members of the local board were more supportive of expanding transit access countywide, since everyone's tax dollars would go towards service everywhere, not just select areas.</li> <li>5. Complexity of coordination: with 52 municipalities and 18 townships, 70 annual intergovernmental agreements would be administratively</li> </ol>

Operations	
	<p>complex; the funding required for coordination could be spent on the service instead.</p> <p>6. Municipalities and townships were supportive because they did not have to contribute funding, and the service covered a greater geography than they could locally (with expanded hours). The cities gave their Pace subsidies to the County DOT; the only requirement was a letter from the County saying all subsidies should be directed towards them.</p> <p><b>Current coordination:</b> Pace transferred subsidies from individual townships and municipalities to the County. Some local townships still pay for their own service, which can be infrequent (e.g., every Tuesday). It is expected that over the coming years some of these may disappear, as happened in McHenry County.</p>
<b>Operational Coordination</b>	The County coordinates with Pace to operate the service.
<b>Regulatory Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally not a concern; Pace handles regulatory and compliance obligations as part of operating the service.</li> <li>• Lake County has a Title VI Plan for compliance with federal Section 5310 funding requirements.</li> </ul>

**Table 9. Ride Lake County – Costs, Funding, and Lessons Learned**

<b>Costs, Funding, and Lessons Learned</b>	
<b>Service Cost and Funding (2021)</b>	<p><b>Costs (Estimated 2022):</b> \$2.2M for 59k rides/year, estimated cost per trip: \$37</p> <p><b>Costs (Actual 2022):</b> About \$0.6M for 25k rides per year (27% of costs and 42% of ridership compared to the initial estimates). Estimated cost per trip: \$24</p> <p><b>Funding (Estimated 2022):</b> Pace subsidy: \$0.69M Federal subsidy (Section 5310): \$0.75M County match: \$0.6 - \$1M, depending on federal funding</p> <p><b>Funding (Actual 2022):</b> Pace subsidy: \$0.6M (Pace subsidy is constant regardless of # of rides), and 80% of call center costs (using federal funds) Federal subsidy (Section 5310): not used, as the funding structure indicates that Pace funding is used first, and total service costs can be covered by the Pace subsidy County: 20% of call center</p> <p><b>Future:</b> The County allocated \$1M this year (from the RTA .25% sales tax), double the previous allocation, for Ride Lake County service. However, the resolution did not specify that it was for 2022 service so the funding will be used in the future, and the service will request another appropriation from the County Board when needed. Once the service requires regular funding, the service anticipates requesting an annual allocation from the County Board.</p>
<b>Funding Sources</b>	<p><b>Federal:</b> Section 5310 (received but not used)</p> <p><b>State or regional:</b> Pace Subsidy</p> <p><b>Local:</b> Allocation from 0.25% local-share of RTA sales tax</p>
<b>Funding Management</b>	Managed centrally through Lake County DOT.
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<p><b>Key takeaways:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This model allowed for a fast launch in 1.5 years, after previous efforts for countywide integration had taken a decade.</li> <li>• County wishes they had pivoted to this model earlier, as countywide service is more cost effective, easier for riders, and easier to administer than separate services. Board members also “love” this model.</li> <li>• Doing a paratransit market study enabled momentum to launch the countywide service.</li> <li>• The County focused on seniors and persons with disabilities because it was their first time doing a countywide service and they wanted to be able to slowly scale up, rather than have to scale back from a</li> </ul>

## Costs, Funding, and Lessons Learned

bigger launch. The County may open eligibility to low-income populations.

- Funding models matter. Ridership has been lower than estimated, and due to the structure of the funding the Pace funding is used first, meaning federal 5310 funding and county funding is unused.

### Lessons learned:

- It was difficult to get agreement between many actors, but it has been key to the service's success.
- Having other regional first-movers, such as McHenry County, paved the way for smooth conversations with Pace and the County board.
- There can be issues not using allocated federal funding such as 5310, as the government expects the funds to be used within a specified timeframe and there can be onerous reporting requirements for noncompliance
- Relying on an operator such as Pace means some performance issues are more difficult to control for. For instance, the service has capacity constraints even though Pace contracts for a specific amount of capacity (not a dynamic amount) from six separate taxi companies.

**Table 10. Ride Lake County – Key Performance Indicators**

Key Performance Indicators	
<b>Trips per Year</b>	<b>2022:</b> About 25,000 rides anticipated
<b>Trips per Vehicle Hour</b>	Information not available
<b>Cost per Trip</b>	<b>2022:</b> \$24
<b>Estimated and Actual Wait Times</b>	The service operates with 99% on time performance according to Pace. Pace considers on-time to be within 30 mins earlier or later than the scheduled pickup time, although Lake County considers this to be a poor quality of service. Prior to Covid, most rides arrived within 15 minutes of the indicated pickup time.
<b>Notes on Rider Experience</b>	Riders must register to ride. Capacity limitations exist, especially during peak hours, which may prevent riders from scheduling a ride when they call (especially the 1/3 of riders who use the service for commuting). There are occasional issues with the ability to book rides in advance due to capacity constraints. Limited operating hours mean that second shift workers cannot use the service.
<b>Other</b>	The service receives an average of 1.3 complaints per week. There were some growing pains at the beginning of the service, but complaints have decreased as Pace has increased capacity.

# 3.3 MCRide Dial-a-Ride

The MCRide service area includes all of McHenry County, plus the portions of McHenry County municipalities that stretch into neighboring counties. This service area is illustrated in **Figure 3**.

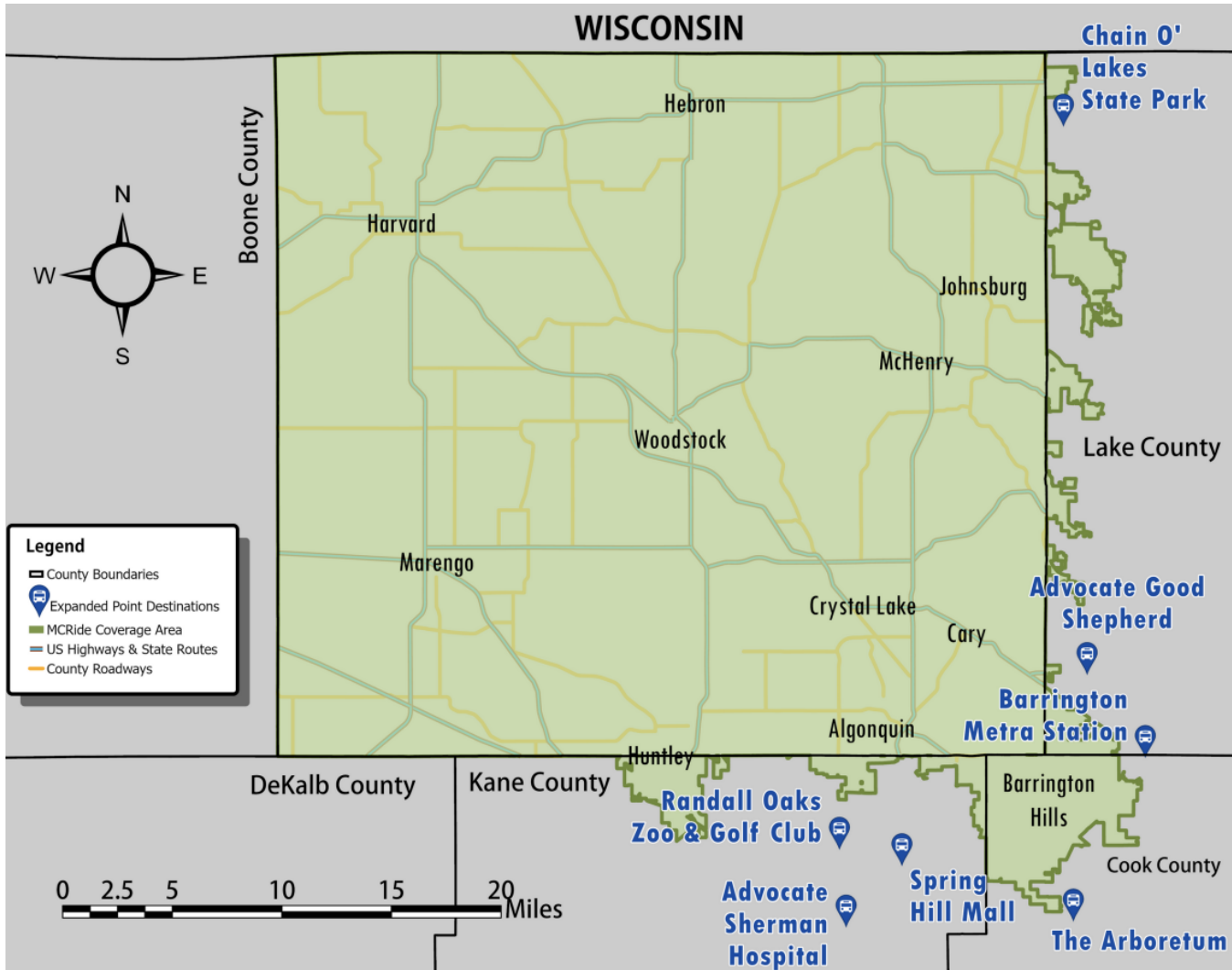


Figure 3: MCRide Service Area<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Figure produced by the McHenry County Division of Transportation (MCDOT)

### 3.3.1 Demographics

McHenry County is less populous and less dense than Will County. Historically, McHenry County did not contain a population center of comparable size to Joliet, with most recent growth coming in the form of low to moderate-density suburban development. Key demographic characteristics for the counties are summarized in **Table 11**.

**Table 11. Demographic Comparison, Will County and McHenry County**

Key Facts	Will County, IL	Kane County, IL
Total Population	700,000	311,000
Area (mi <sup>2</sup> )	836	603
Density (persons / mi <sup>2</sup> )	833	514
Median Age	38	40
% Seniors (65+)	14.0%	15.9%
% Living w/ Disability	5.9%	6.1%
% Minority	39.0%	21.0%



### 3.3.2 Interview Notes

Notes from the project team's interview with McHenry County staff are summarized in **Tables 12 to 15**.

**Table 12. MCRide – Service Details and Design**

Service Details	
Service Name	MCRide Dial-a-Ride
Launch Year	2021 for countywide service
Service Area	<p>McHenry County plus the portions of McHenry County municipalities that stretch into adjacent counties. Travel is also allowed to/from the following out-of-county destinations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital (Lake County)</li> <li>• Advocate Sherman Hospital (Kane County)</li> <li>• The Arboretum Shopping Center (Cook County)</li> <li>• Barrington Metra Station (Lake County)</li> <li>• Chain O'Lakes State Park (Lake County)</li> <li>• Randall Oaks Park/Zoo/Golf Course (Kane County)</li> <li>• Spring Hill Mall (Kane County)</li> </ul>
Use Case	<b>Open to the general public</b> , with all trip types allowed (no exclusions). The service is primarily used for non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) and commuting.
Service Type	"On-demand" shared ride service; curb-to-curb service provided.
Destination Restrictions	Travel is permitted between any locations, including point destinations, without restrictions.
Service Hours	6:00 AM - 7:00 PM 7 days/week, excluding holidays
Reservation Type	<b>Pre-booked</b> , 2 hours to 2 weeks in advance
Reservation Style	Phone-based. Riders call a single number countywide to book a trip. Eligibility verification is not required.
Fare Type	Base + cost/mile
Fare Amount	<p><b>General public:</b> \$3.00 for first 5 miles + \$0.25 each additional mile</p> <p><b>Age 60+ or disabled:</b> \$1.50 for first 5 miles + \$0.25 each additional mile</p>

**Table 13. MCRide – Operations Summary**

Operations	
<b>Service Manager</b>	McHenry County Division of Transportation (MCDOT)
<b>Vehicle Operator</b>	Pace operates and manages the call center. They contract with First Transit (private provider) and taxi services to operate vehicles. Pace oversees the subcontractors to ensure high quality of service.
<b>Fleet Size</b>	Information not available.
<b>Operating Model</b>	Operated as a single service countywide
<b>Service Origin + History</b>	<p><b>Pre-Coordination:</b> Dial-a-ride service began in 2012 in a few locations, and grew organically over time.</p> <p><b>Initial coordination:</b> Until 2021 there was an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) between McHenry County, Pace, and 15 local cities/townships. The County had an IGA with Pace, and separate IGA with municipal and township partners. During this time, the County served as a manager and liaison between Pace and the townships, paying Pace for the service, and receiving reimbursement from grants and the townships for their local share. This worked well before this was a countywide service because the cities/townships were willing partners. However, only about half of townships thought it was “worth it” to partner with the County.</p> <p><b>Consolidation:</b> When the program first started, MCRide was funded with the County’s share of the RTA collar county sales tax, but did not receive a Pace subsidy. Moving the Pace subsidies spread across individual townships/municipalities to the County (enabling countywide service) was a major impetus for service consolidation. MCDOT coordinated with the legacy services to transfer Pace subsidies to McHenry County. Pace required the County to obtain letters from the participating townships stating that they would give up their subsidies in perpetuity.</p> <p>When combined, the <b>Pace subsidies totaled over \$1 million annually</b>, and allowed MCRide to expand into areas that did not have legacy subsidy programs. The single consolidated program has made it easier for the County to advocate for higher Pace contributions to the program.</p> <p><b>McHenry County also started funding 100% of the local match requirements for grants</b> internally, with local townships and municipalities no longer contributing financially to MCRide. The RTA sales tax was essential for this change. Consolidating service has reduced administrative burdens and minimized logistical complexity (e.g. accounting and billing jurisdictions by rider, staff presentations to city councils/boards around the County).</p>
<b>Operational Coordination</b>	MCDOT coordinates with Pace, applies for grants, and manages County funding.
<b>Regulatory Environment</b>	Generally not a concern; Pace handles regulatory and compliance obligations as part of operating the service.

**Table 14. MCRide – Costs, Funding, and Lessons Learned**

Costs, Funding, and Lessons Learned	
<b>Service Cost and Funding (2021)</b>	<p><b>Cost (2021):</b> \$2.5 - 3M</p> <p><b>Funding:</b> Federal: \$0.6M Pace subsidy: \$1.5M County: Up to \$1.8M allocated per year from McHenry County's share of the RTA collar county sales tax. The County receives about \$13M annually from this levy, with the rest going to MCDOT for a variety of projects.</p>
<b>Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Federal:</b> FTA Section 5310. About \$600k goes from the federal government to RTA, which provides a 50/50 operating grant only for people with disabilities and seniors.</li> <li>• <b>State or regional:</b> \$1.5 M from Pace for operating the service, and \$200k for the call center (which Pace receives from a federal grant).</li> <li>• <b>Dedicated county funding source:</b> RTA Collar County Sales Tax. In 2007 the tax doubled from 0.75 to 1.5% and gave collar counties additional funding for transportation and public safety.</li> <li>• <b>Other:</b> Until 2015 had money from a county senior services tax levy which led to a grant \$1.7M per year → eventually were not getting sufficient funding from this and stopped pursuing it.</li> </ul>
<b>Funding Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McHenry County receives a bill at the end of the month from Pace and pays it, on average approximately \$100-105K per month. There is also some grant administration for the federal components of the funding.</li> <li>• The townships that joined the program are realizing cost savings through consolidation and not needing to spend money administering the service.</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a countywide process led to more uniformity for townships; previously, subsidies varied widely across townships</li> <li>• The service currently only takes cash. Next steps for growth are (1) to establish a tech-enabled payment system and (2) a better reservation and booking system. Currently the service is call-in only, with most trips booked 3-7 days in advance. MCDOT is considering moving towards an app-based booking system.</li> <li>• For growth, they prioritized geography first. Now that the whole county is covered, expansions to morning and evening times are under consideration, followed by additional investment into the rider experience.</li> <li>• The County encourages others considering a countywide service to provide rides to all, rather than having eligibility criteria for riders or trip types. "Think more broadly about who is deserving of good transit."</li> </ul>

**Table 15. MCRide – Key Performance Indicators**

Key Performance Indicators	
<b>Trips per Year</b>	<p><b>2021:</b> 88,000+ rides, with about 60% of rides taken by seniors or persons with disabilities</p> <p><b>2018:</b> ~105,000 rides with 70% coverage of McHenry County. Ridership trending upwards year-over-year pre-Covid; Covid reduced ridership and it has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.</p>
<b>Trips/Vehicle Hours</b>	<p><b>Pre-Covid:</b> 3.2 - 3.5 trips/vehicle hour</p> <p><b>2021-2022:</b> 2.2 - 2.4 trips/vehicle hour</p>
<b>Cost/Trip</b>	<p><b>Pre-Covid:</b> \$18-20 per trip</p> <p><b>2021-2022:</b> \$30-32 per trip</p>
<b>Estimated and Actual Wait Times</b>	Wait + trip maximum time is 45 mins. Once a time is confirmed, there is a 10 minute earlier/later buffer for the vehicle to arrive.
<b>Notes on Rider Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A survey conducted in 2022 found that 36% respondents were aware of MCRide, but found it difficult to schedule a non-medical or non-senior ride.</li> <li>• The service is not always on time, but those who do not have better transportation options rely on it regardless. It is often used by individuals with disabilities for work purposes as there are no transit alternatives.</li> <li>• MCRide is the primary public transit option across many areas due to the lack of fixed-route bus network across the county.</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	The County tracks farebox recovery ratio; County Board members are fiscally conservative and value this metric. Pre-pandemic, they usually hit their target of 10%. Since 2020 the recovery ration has been at 6-7%.

## 4. Existing Conditions and Future Needs Analysis

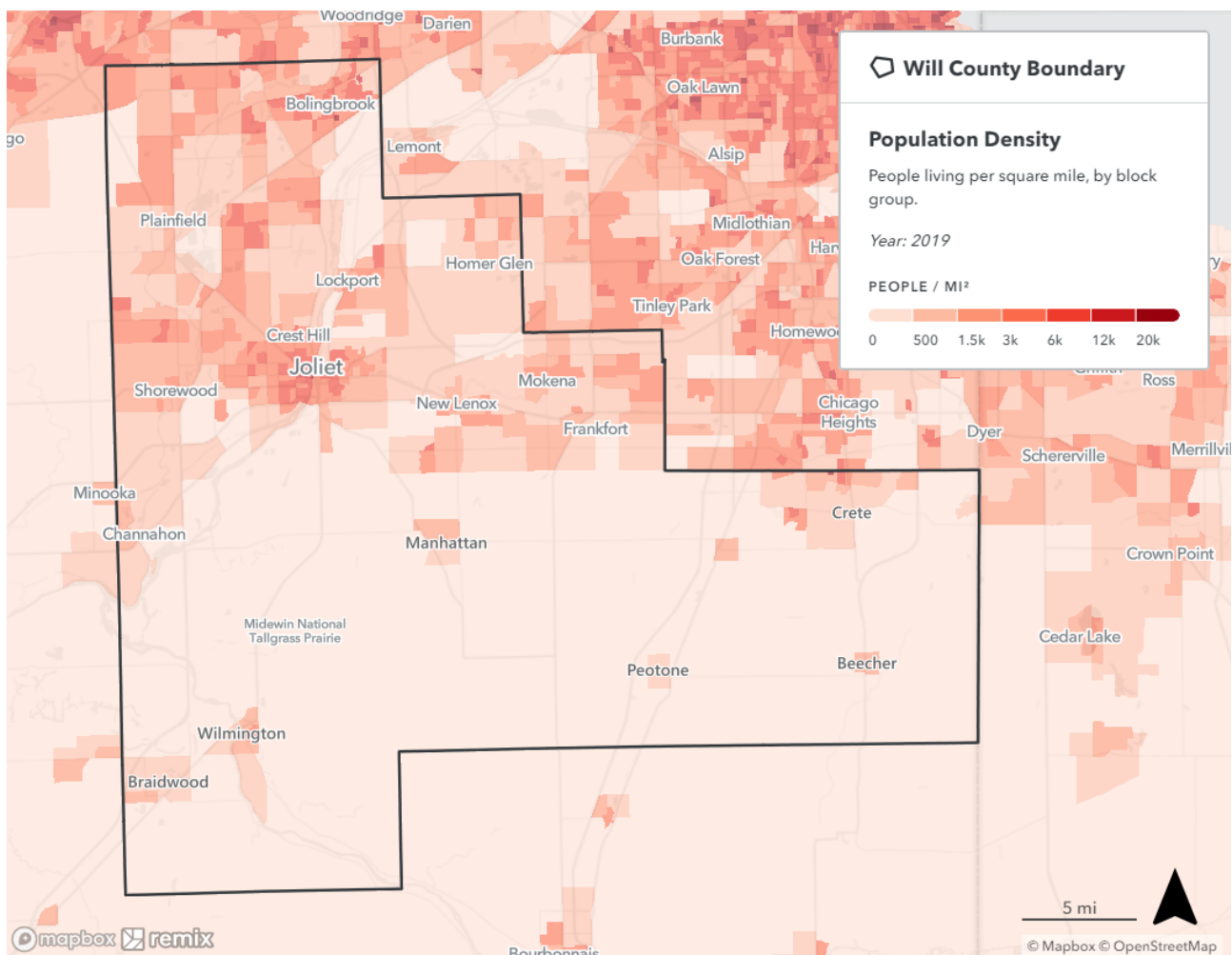
This chapter identifies areas of need in Will County for new or improved demand-response transit. This analysis is supported with demographic data, a coverage and performance review for existing transit options, and population and employment growth projections.

### 4.1 Demographic and Socioeconomic Context

In the United States, several demographic and socioeconomic factors are positively correlated with transit usage. Mapping these factors can help illustrate how well existing transit options meet the needs of Will County residents.

#### 4.1.1 Population Density

Population density (mapped in **Figure 4**) varies widely across Will County.



**Figure 4. Population Density**

The northern half of the County — especially areas near Joliet and the I-55 / I-80 corridors — exhibit much higher densities than the southern half, which remains predominantly rural and agricultural. Despite population growth and suburbanization in recent decades, agricultural land still represents nearly half (46%) of the County's total land area.<sup>4</sup>

As of 2020, Will County had approximately 696,300 residents.<sup>5</sup> It is the fourth most-populous of the six counties in the Chicago region (behind Cook, DuPage, and Lake Counties). After a period of robust growth and rapid suburbanization in the 1990s and 2000s, the rate of population increase has cooled substantially. Between 2010 and the present day, the County has added approximately 20,000 residents.

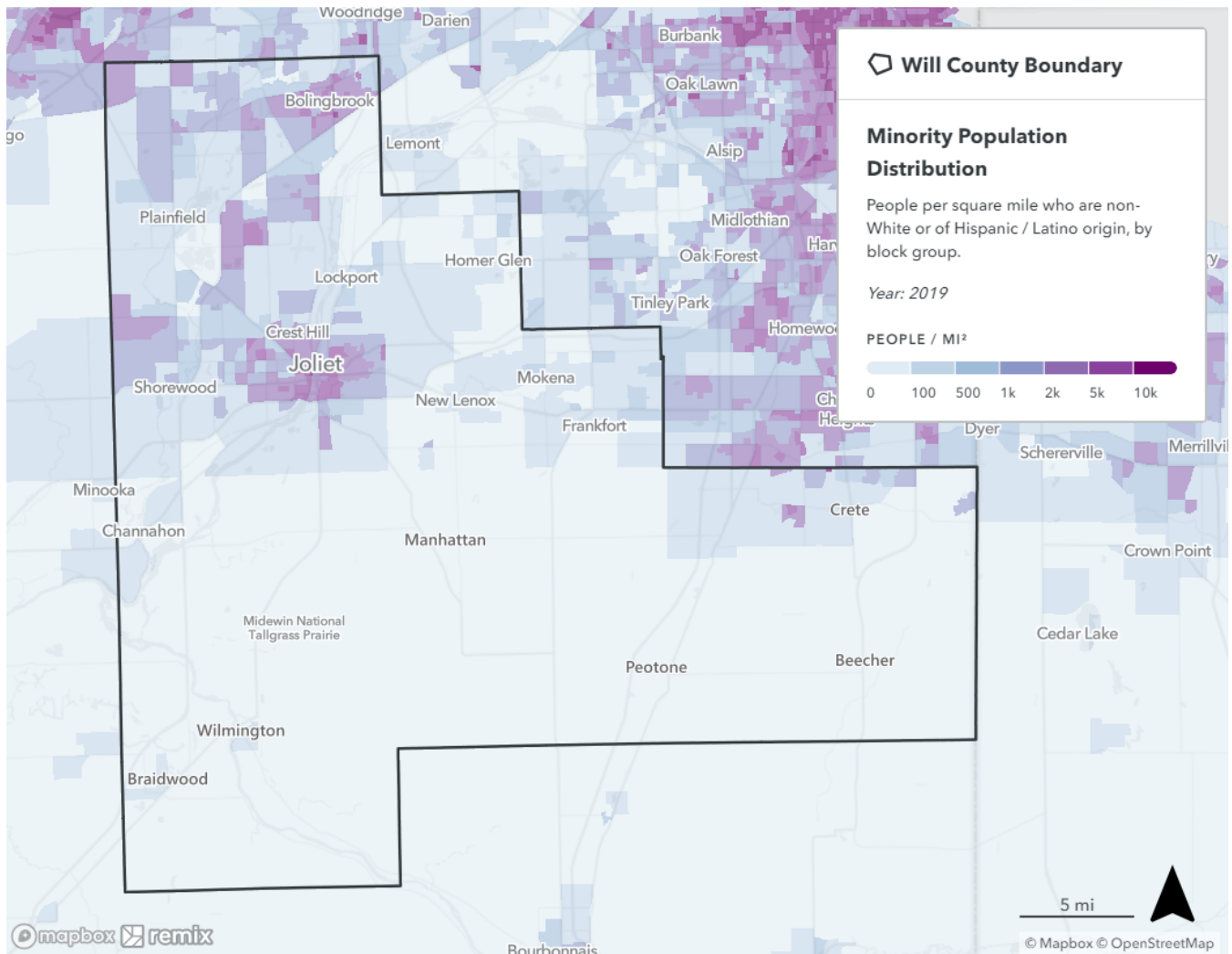
---

<sup>4</sup> Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015 Land Use Inventory

<sup>5</sup> US Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program

## 4.1.2 Minority Population

Although Will County continues to have a lower percentage of non-white residents (36%) than the Chicago region as a whole (49%), the area is becoming increasingly diverse. Since 2000, the percentage of white, non-Hispanic residents has dropped from 77% of all residents to 63%, while the percentage of Hispanic/Latino residents has doubled (from 9% to 18%).<sup>6</sup> Approximately 20% of County residents speak languages other than English at home at least some of the time, while 7% of residents indicate that they are able to speak English less than “very well”. As shown in **Figure 5**, the majority of non-white and/or Hispanic residents live around Joliet, Bolingbrook, and Plainfield.



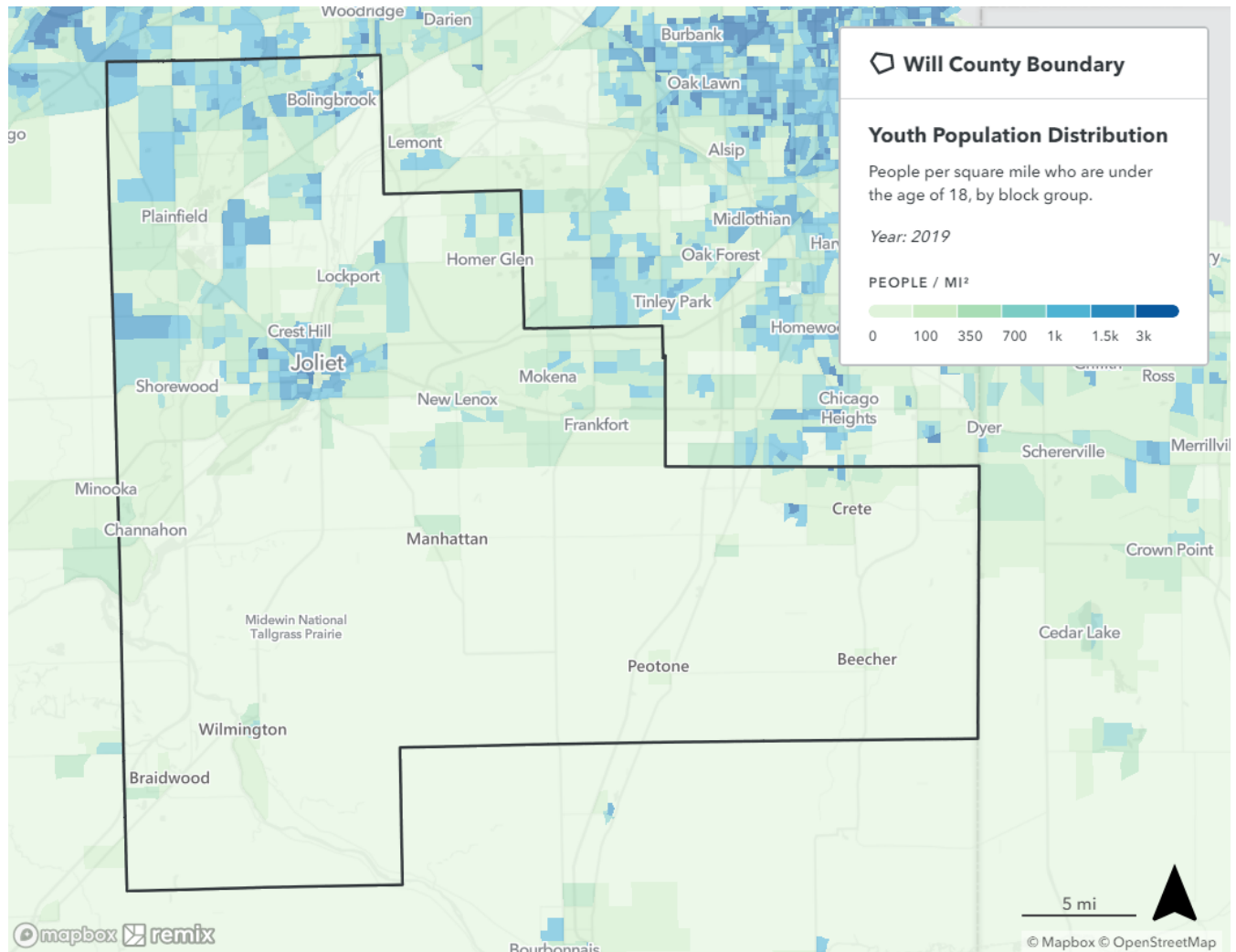
**Figure 5. Minority Population Density**

<sup>6</sup> US Census Bureau, 2000 Census and 2016-2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates



### 4.1.3 Youth Population

Due to lower levels of access to personal vehicles, teenagers may exhibit higher than average rates of transit use. As shown in **Figure 6**, the distribution of youth population largely mirrors overall population density. As of 2022, Will County has a slightly higher percentage of youths (28% 19 or under) than the Chicago region (26% 19 or under).<sup>7</sup>

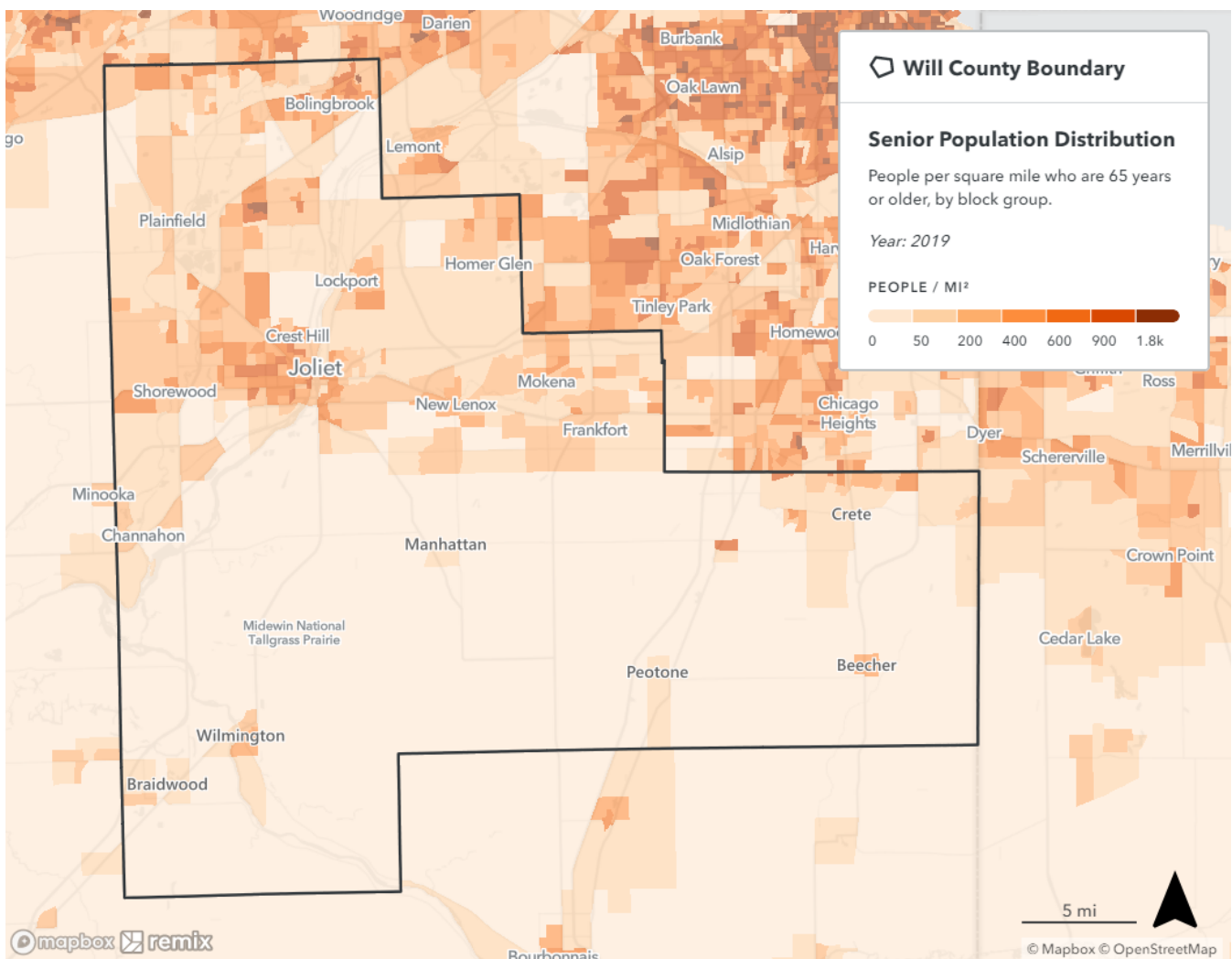


**Figure 6. Youth Population Density**

<sup>7</sup> US Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates

# 4.1.4 Senior Population

Seniors are one of two primary user groups of existing demand-response transit in Will County. As shown in **Figure 7**, the senior population is relatively dispersed across the County, with some clusters in more densely-populated areas. The percentage of residents over 65 has increased in recent years, growing from 9% in 2010 to 13% in 2020.<sup>8</sup> As national trends point towards continued aging of the population, ensuring transit options meet the needs of seniors will be critical going forward.

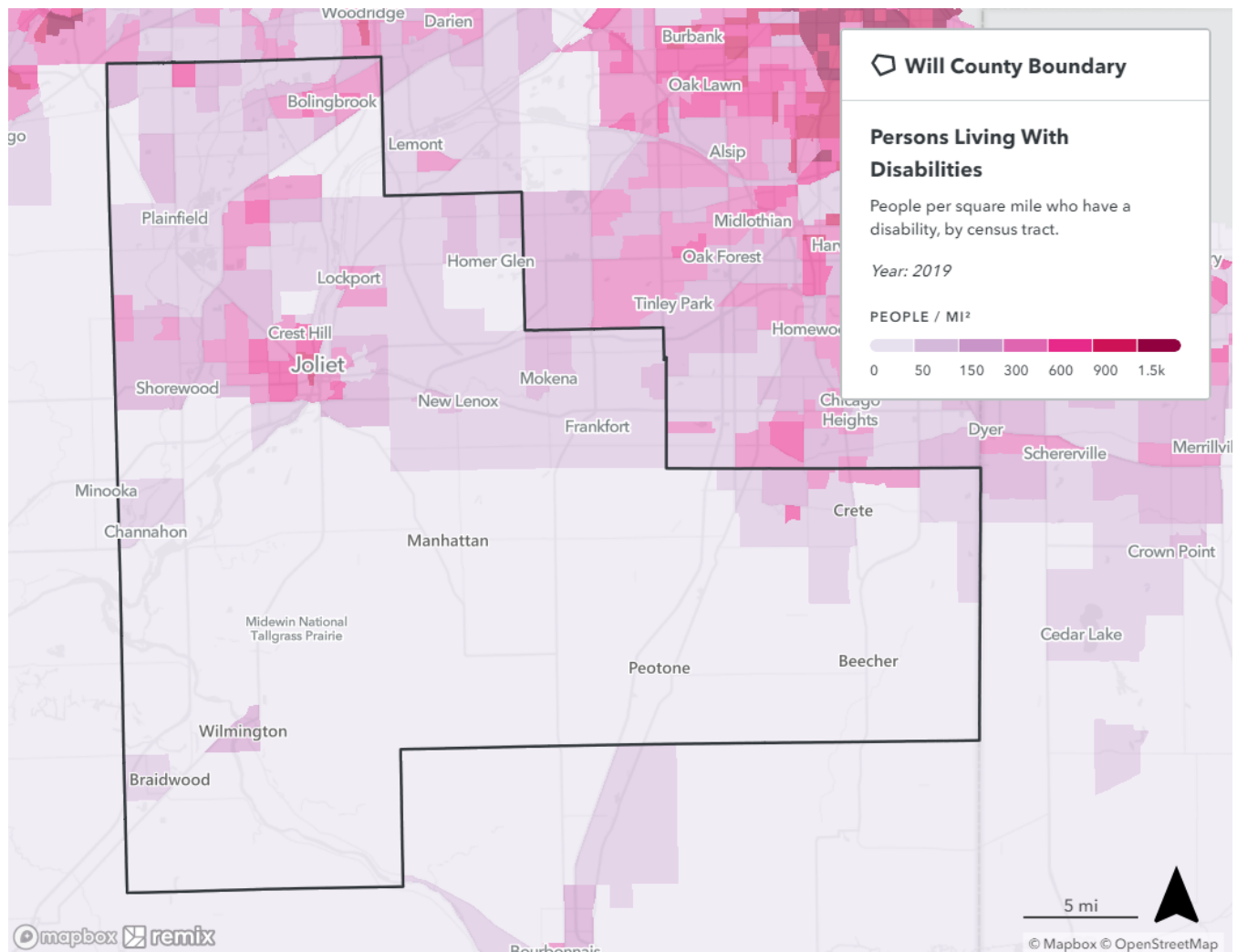


**Figure 7. Senior Population Density**

<sup>8</sup> US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2006-2010 and 2016-2020

## 4.1.5 Persons with Disabilities

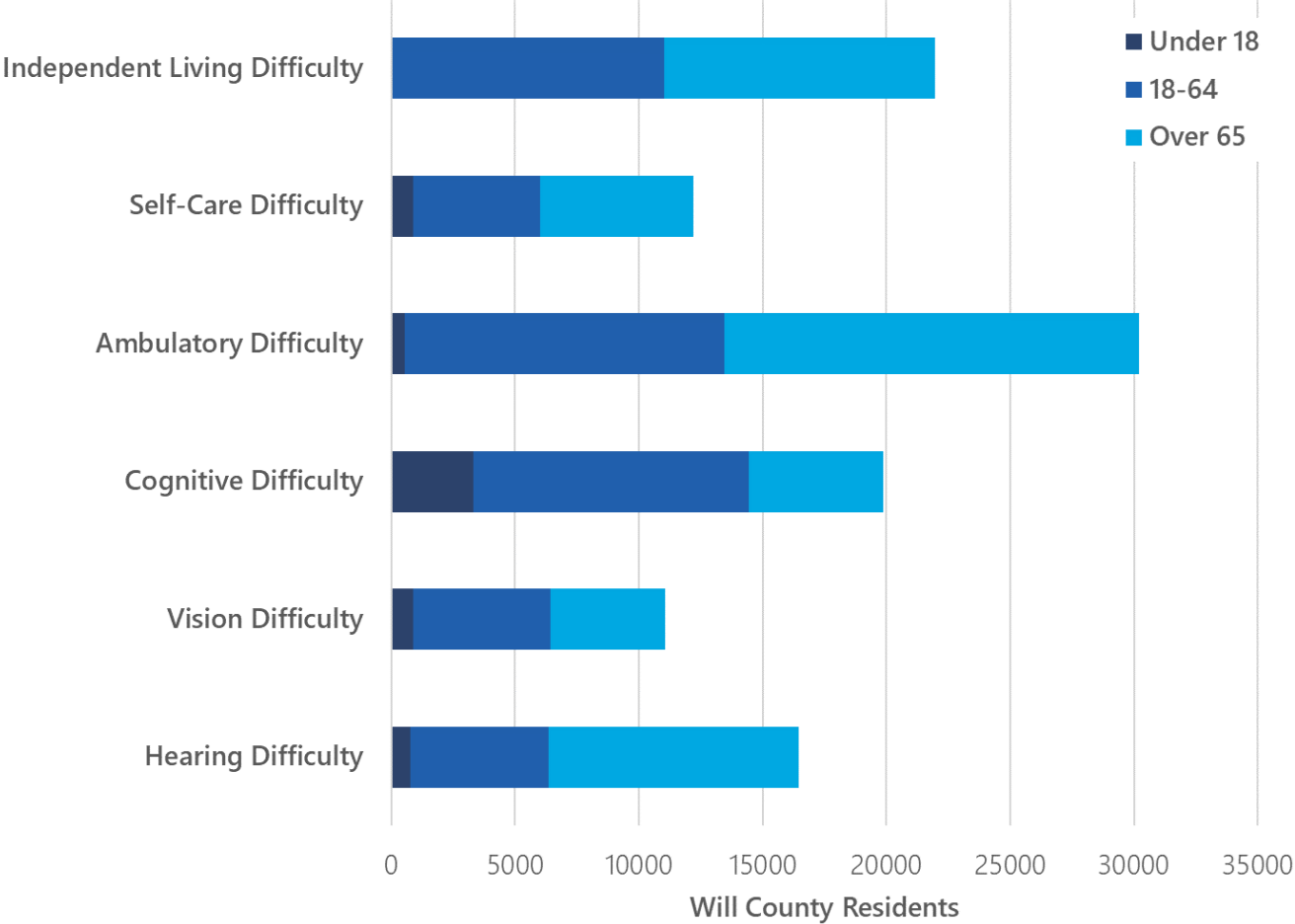
Along with seniors, persons with disabilities form one of the core rider groups for existing demand-response services in Will County. Just under 10% of all residents (approximately 62,000 people) live with a disability.<sup>9</sup> Seniors are somewhat overrepresented in this group, as approximately 30% of all persons over 65 live with a disability. As shown in **Figure 8**, the distribution of these residents broadly mirrors overall population density.



**Figure 8. Distribution of Persons with Disabilities**

<sup>9</sup> US Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates

Data available from the US Census Bureau estimates the number of persons living with seven different types of disabilities. The number of Will County residents living with each disability type is illustrated in **Figure 9**, alongside the age distribution of residents. The totals in Figure 9 do not sum to 62,000 (the total number of residents with disabilities), as persons living with multiple disabilities are counted in more than one category.

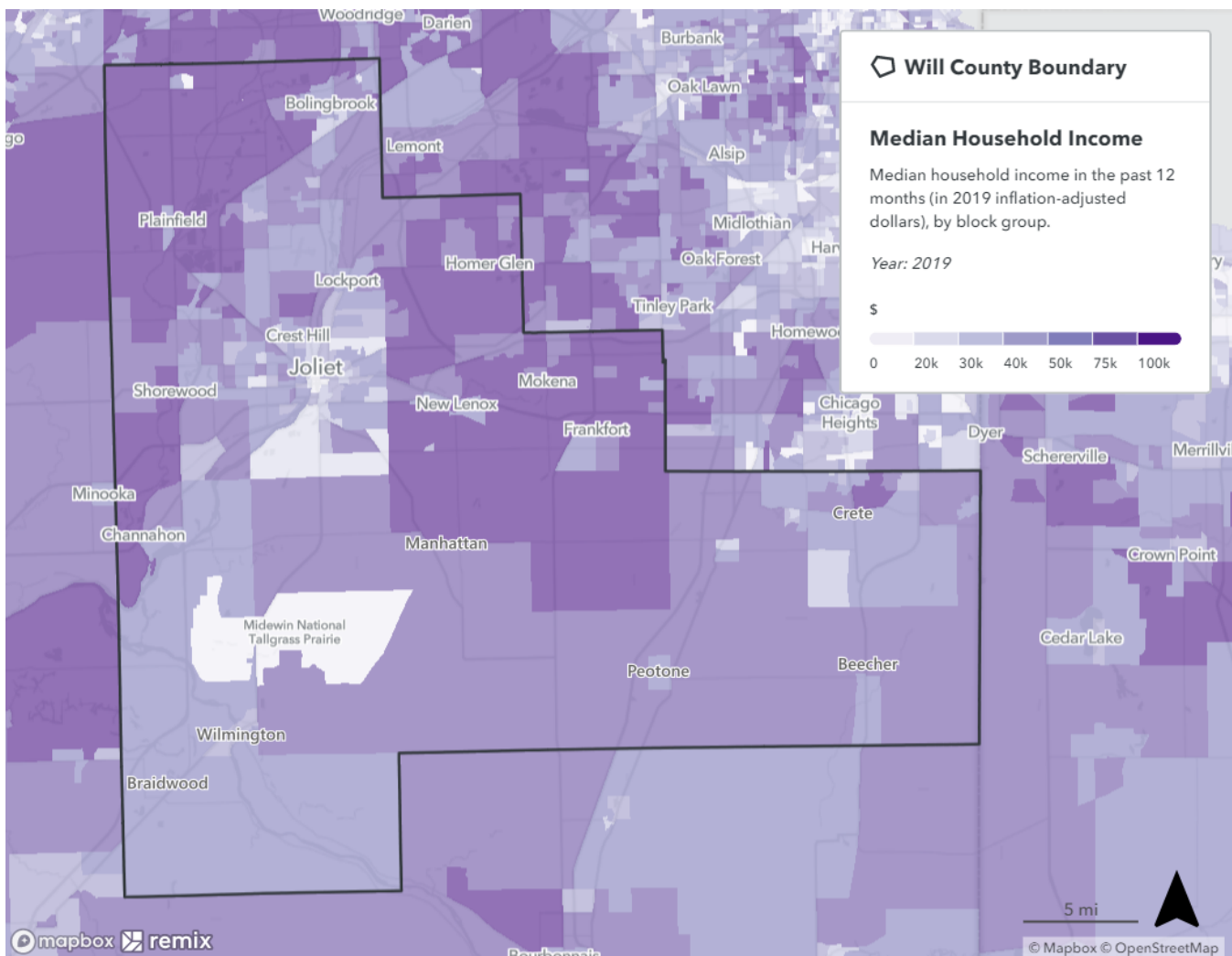


**Figure 9. Persons with Disabilities by Disability Type and Age Cohort**

The distribution of disability type across age cohorts varies substantially. As shown in Figure 9, just over 30,000 residents live with ambulatory difficulties. More than half of these residents are over the age of 65. Approximately 22,000 residents, roughly split between adults (18-64) and senior citizens (65+), have independent living difficulties. In contrast, more than half of all youths living with a disability have cognitive difficulties.

# 4.1.6 Income and Poverty

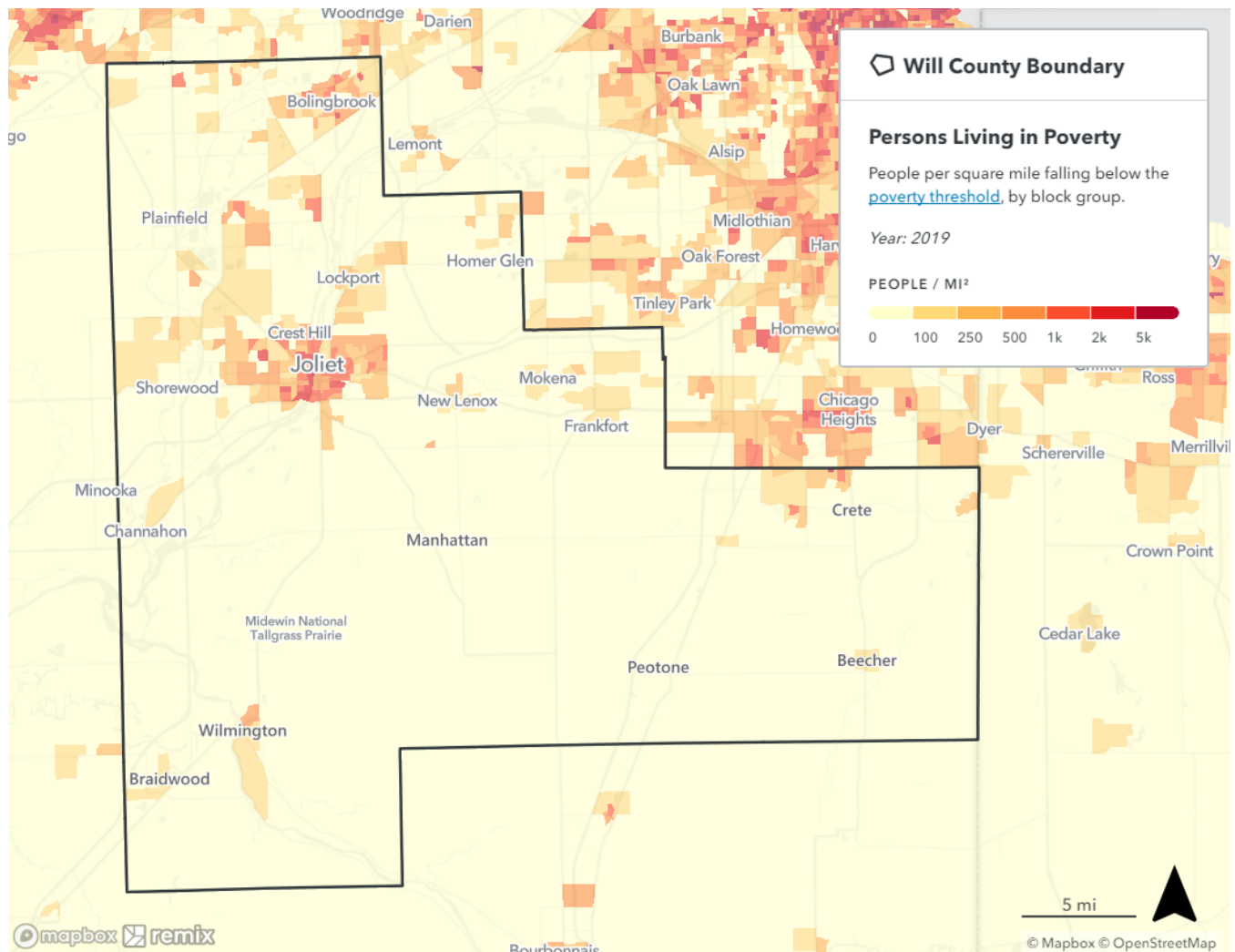
In 2020, the median household income for Will County residents was \$86,960, substantially higher than the regional average of \$73,570.<sup>10</sup> As shown in **Figure 10**, income tends to be highest in the central (New Lenox, Frankfort, Green Garden, and Homer townships) and northwest (Plainfield and Wheatland townships) portions of the County. These areas align closely with the footprint of commuter-focused transit in the region — Metra rail service for the central townships, and Pace Express bus service for the northwest townships.



**Figure 10. Median Household Income**

<sup>10</sup> US Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates

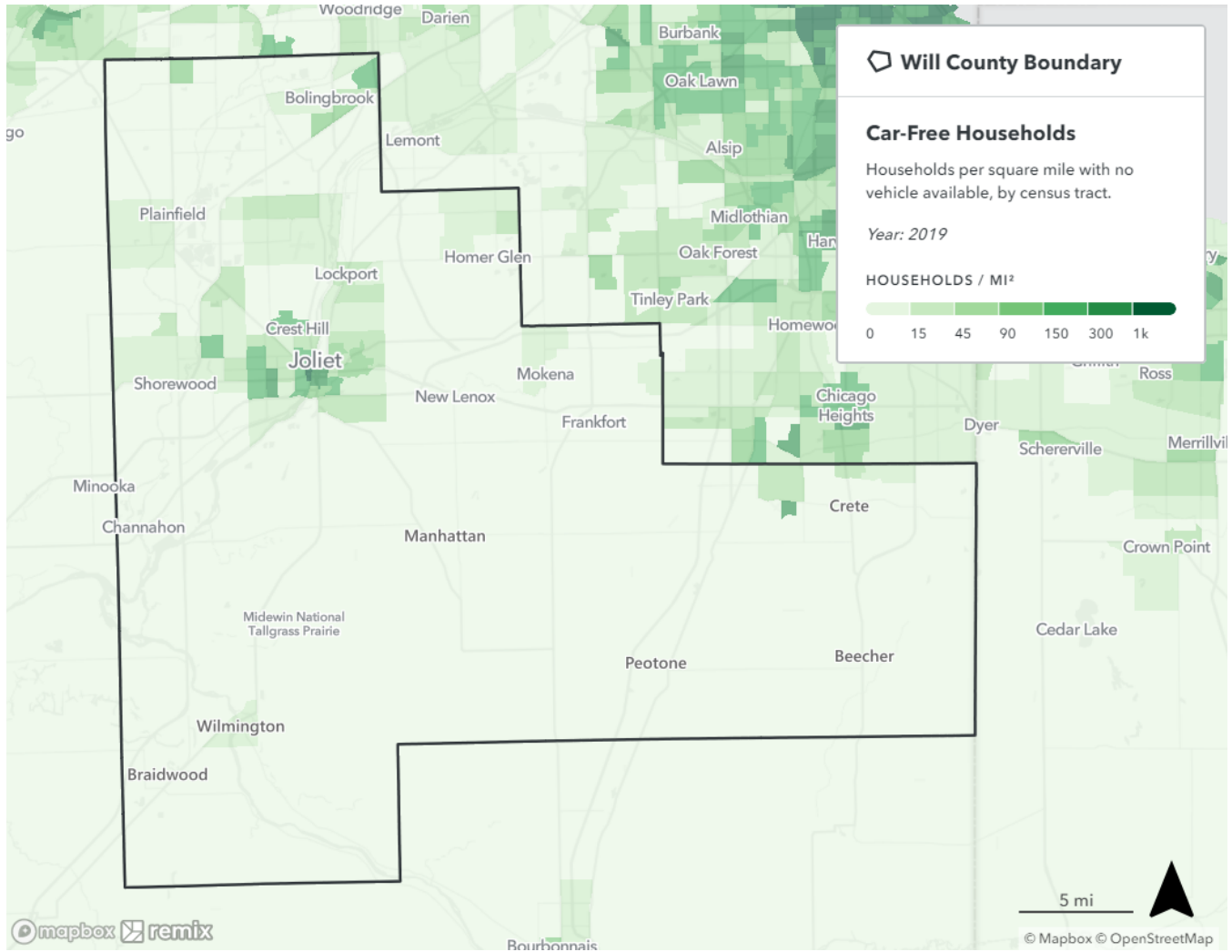
Although median household incomes for Will County are higher than the regional average, slightly more than 10% of households have incomes below \$25,000. As shown in **Figure 11**, these households are concentrated largely around Joliet, with smaller clusters dispersed through the rest of the County. Approximately 7% of residents live below the poverty threshold. The largest cluster of residents below the poverty line is within the City of Joliet, with smaller clusters distributed through the rest of the County.



**Figure 11. Distribution of Persons Living in Poverty**

## 4.1.7 Access to Personal Vehicles

Outside of the densest city centers, vehicle ownership is one of the best predictors of transit usage in the United States. As of 2020, 4% of Will County residents did not have access to personal vehicles, well under the regional average of 13%.<sup>11</sup> As shown in **Figure 12**, the distribution of these residents closely matches the distribution of residents living below the poverty line (Figure 11). This correlation indicates that the majority of car-free residents are such out of necessity, not choice. Access to essential services for these residents - particularly those outside the Joliet area - may be severely limited.

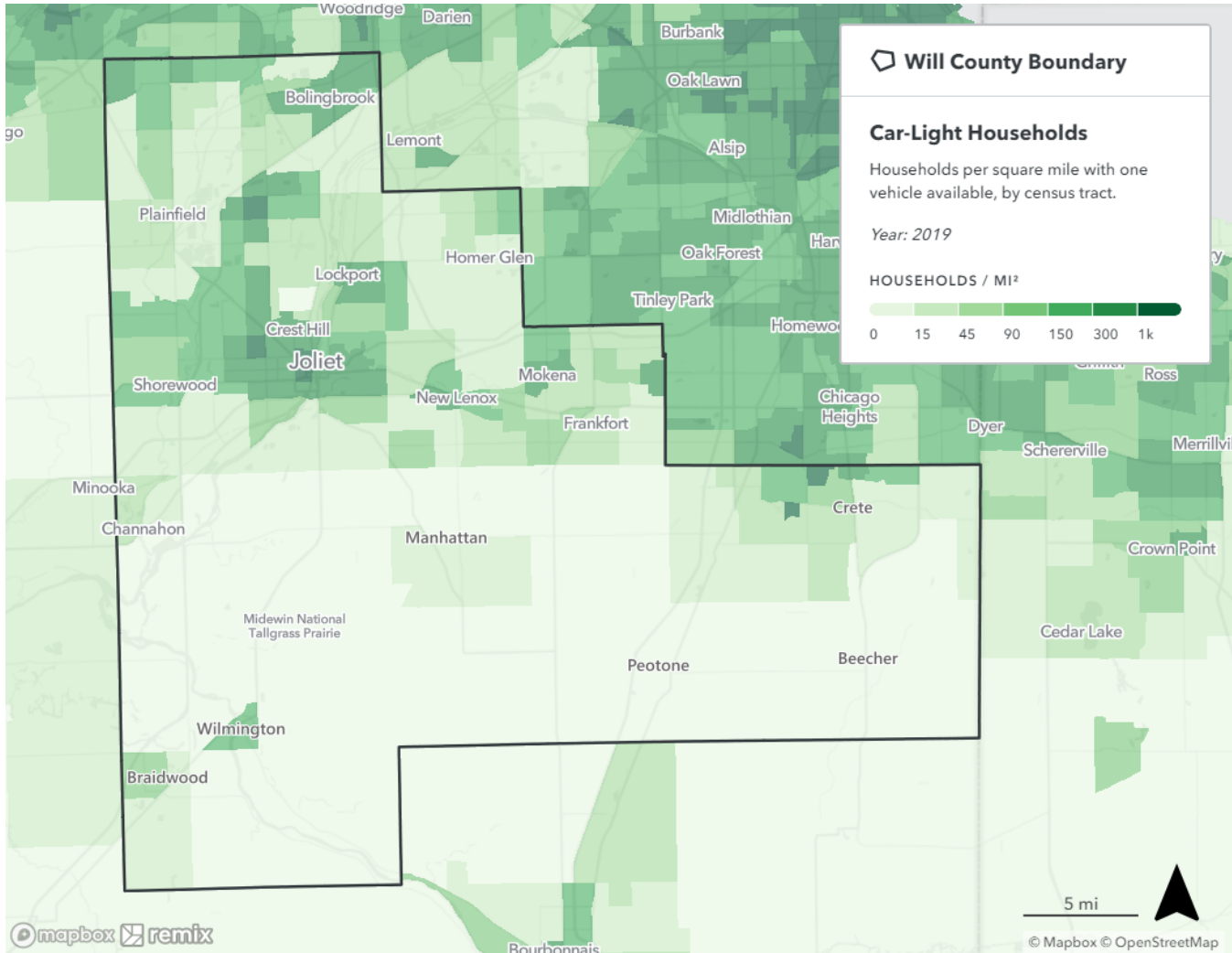


**Figure 12. Car-Free Households**

<sup>11</sup> US Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates



In areas of Will County characterized by lower-density development, access to one vehicle per family may still limit household mobility. Just over 70% of households have access to two or more vehicles, leaving approximately 30% of households with access to zero (“car-free”) or one (“car-light”) households. The location and density of car-light households in Will County (mapped in **Figure 13**) largely correlates with overall population density.

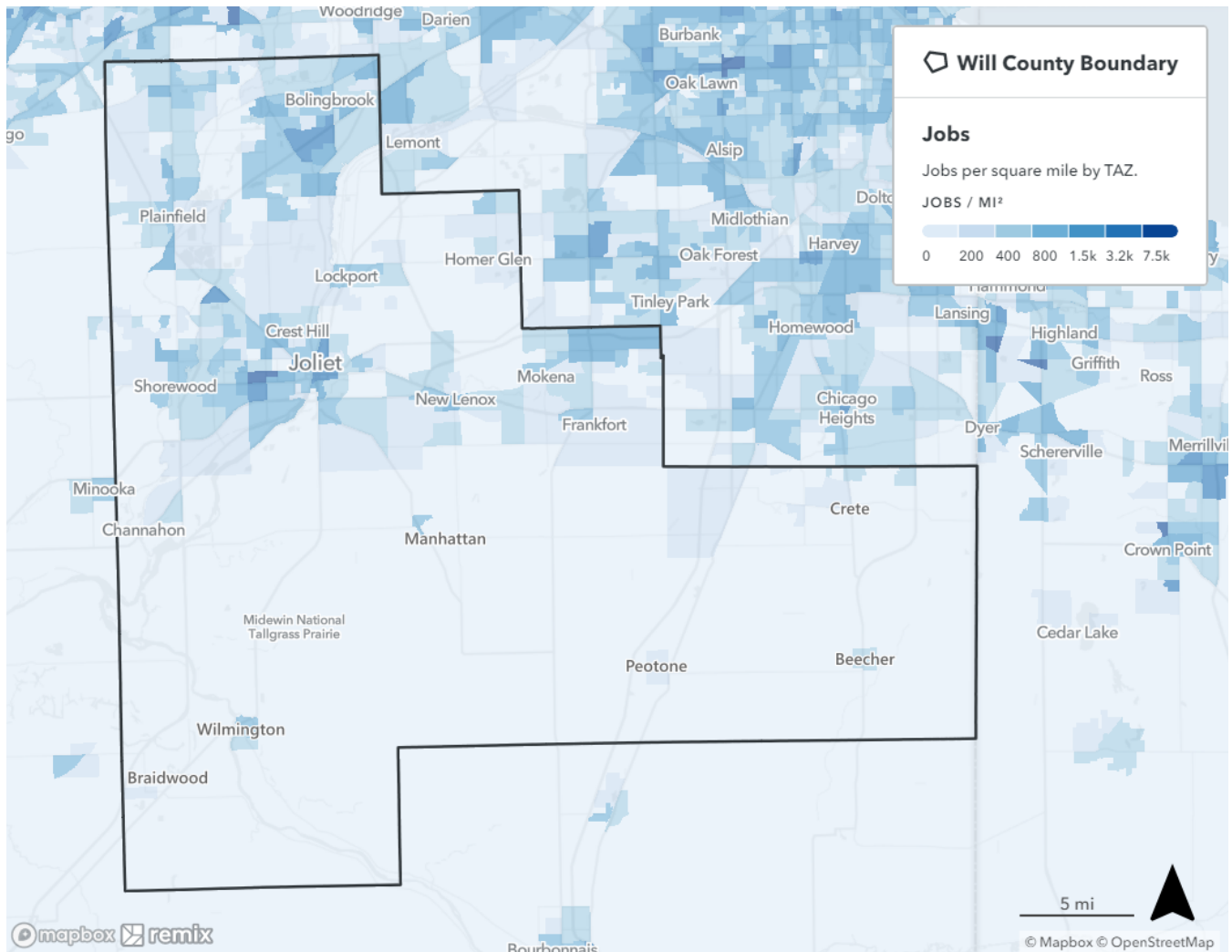


**Figure 13. Car-Light Households**

## 4.1.8 Employment Density and Commuting

Employment density (mapped in **Figure 14**) is an indicator of where people travel on a daily basis.

Employment in Will County is concentrated in three large clusters: the area in and around Joliet, the area along the I-55 corridor through Bolingbrook, and an area in Frankfort Township near Tinley Park.



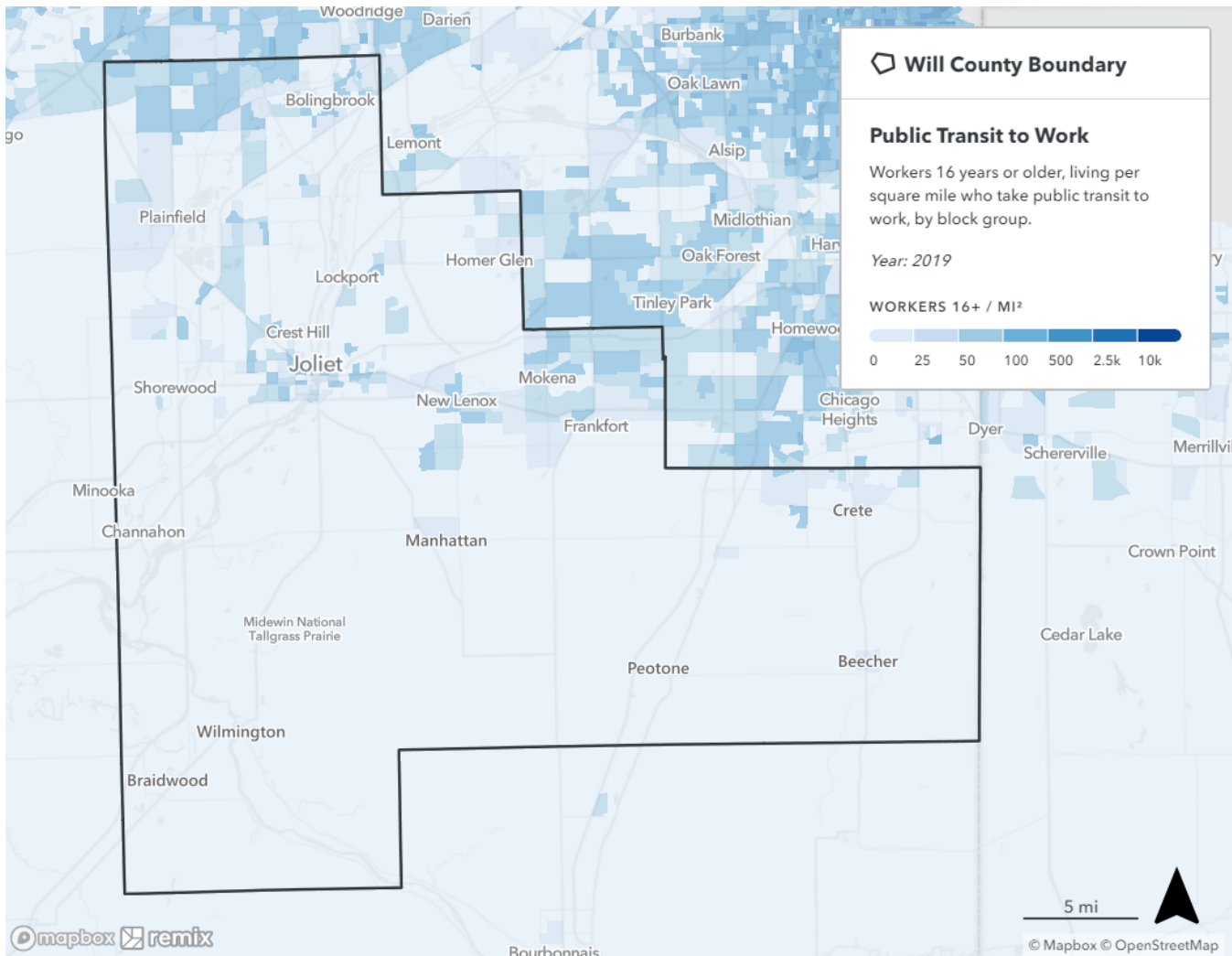
**Figure 14. Employment Density**

Slightly more than two-thirds of Will County residents commute to employment outside the County, with the most common destinations being Cook County (34% of all workers) and DuPage County (19% of all workers).<sup>12</sup> Although average commute times (33 minutes) are in line with the regional average (32 minutes), Will County residents drive, on average, approximately 7,800 miles more each year (25,000 miles per year) than the average Chicagoland resident (17,200 miles per year).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> US Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employment Household Dynamics (LEHD) Survey

<sup>13</sup> CMAP, 2017 analysis of Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, HERE Technologies, and US Census Bureau data

High levels of vehicle ownership, cross-county commutes, and a limited footprint of commuter-focused transit services combine to produce low transit ridership for work-related trips. As of 2020, just 4% of residents commuted to work via public transit, less than a third of the regional average. The distribution of these residents (shown in **Figure 15**) largely mirrors the footprint of commuter-focused transit (Metra rail and I-55 Pace Express bus service).



**Figure 15. Public Transit to Work**

## 4.2 Public Transit in Will County

A variety of agencies and organizations provide transit service in Will County. The availability of transit services varies heavily across the County, with more service provided in the northern half of the County, especially in relatively population-dense areas in and around Joliet. Service can be generally categorized into three groups:

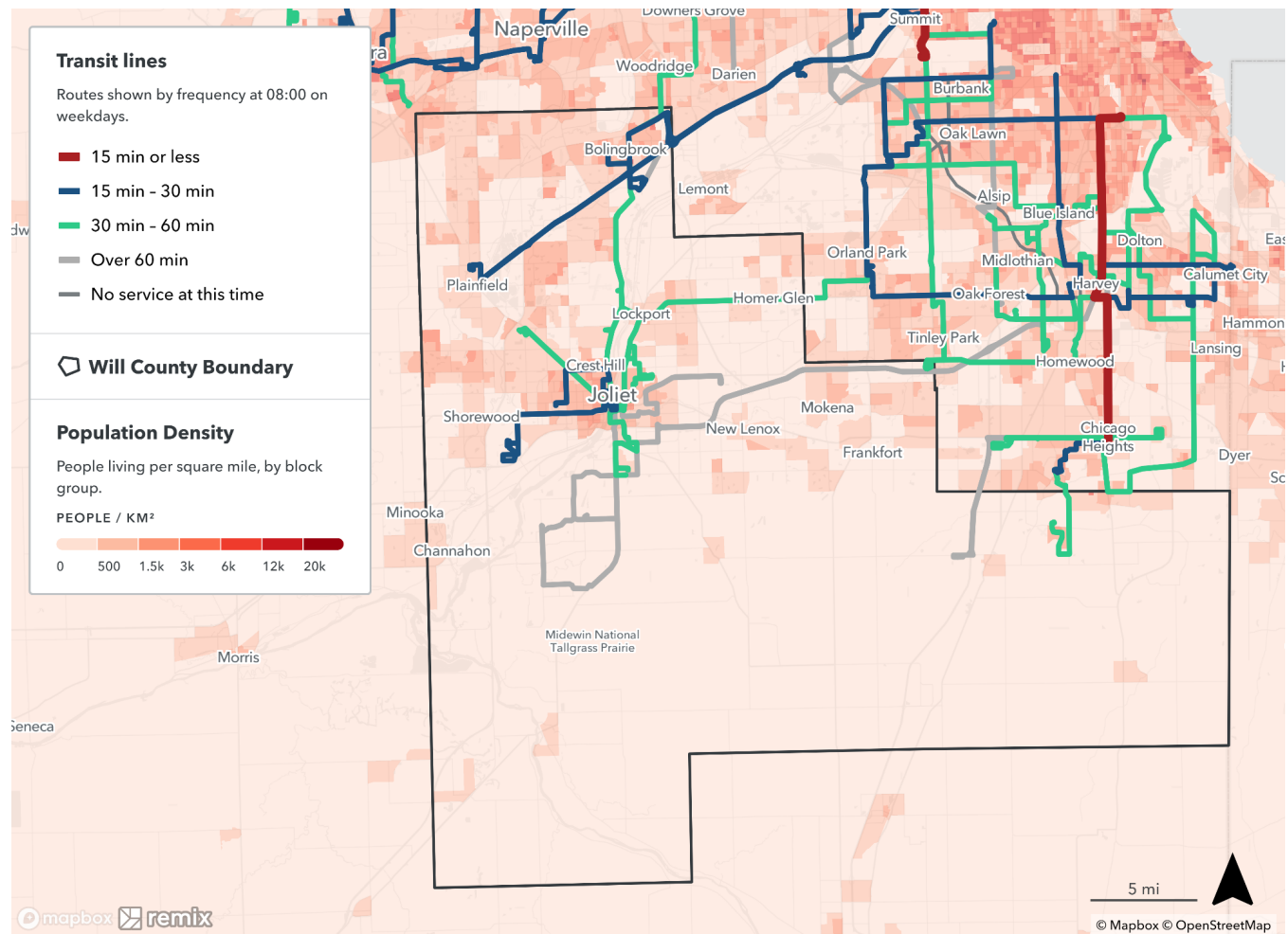
- **Fixed-Route Services:** These services are open to the general public, and serve a predetermined order of stops on a fixed schedule. Schedules typically do not change day-to-day (although services may be reduced on weekends).
- **Demand-Response Transportation Services:** These services do not operate on a fixed timetable, and serve stops in a changing order each day. Each day's route may be based on pickup and dropoff requests collected over the preceding few days ("pre-booked" service), or be dynamically created based on real-time requests submitted using an app, website, or call center ("on-demand" service). Service may be open to the general public, but in Will County is typically limited to particular groups - seniors, persons with disabilities, and/or persons needing transportation to work. Approximately one dozen groups or agencies operate demand-response service in Will County.
- **Human Service Agencies:** This term describes a range of agencies that serve disadvantaged groups - often older adults or persons with disabilities. In Will County, several agencies operate transportation services for their clients.

### 4.2.1 Fixed-Route Services

Although not a direct focus of this study, understanding fixed-route services (as well as the gaps in the fixed-route network) is a critical step in identifying areas where quality and efficiency of demand-response transportation can be improved. Pace Suburban Bus, Metra, and Amtrak provide fixed-route transit service in Will County. A brief profile of each agency's services in the County is provided in the following sections.

### 4.2.1.1 Pace Suburban Bus

In Will County, fixed-route bus services are provided by Pace Suburban Bus. These services are concentrated in the northern half of the County, especially in the area around Joliet. Outside of a handful of routes, buses typically do not come more frequently than 30 minutes. The location and frequency of Pace services in Will County is mapped in **Figure 16**.



**Figure 16. Frequency of Pace Bus Network and Population Density<sup>14</sup>**

As shown in Figure 16, coverage is limited primarily to more densely populated areas in the northern half of the County. Pace serves approximately 1,200 stops in Will County, placing approximately 121,000 residents - or 17% of the total population - within easy walking distance of a bus stop.<sup>15</sup> Frequency on most Will County routes is 60 minutes or higher, limiting the overall utility of the system.

<sup>14</sup> Service provided by the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) in the City of Chicago is not shown on this map.

<sup>15</sup> Walking distance is typically assumed to be 0.25 miles, although it may vary based on the surrounding road network and land use patterns.

#### 4.2.1.2 Metra

Metra provides commuter-focused rail service across the Chicagoland region, including in Will County. Service is generally concentrated in the peak commute direction (i.e. the majority of AM trains travel towards Chicago, and the majority of PM trains travel away from Chicago). Typical frequencies between trains vary across the network, from as little as 20 minutes on the busiest lines to several hours on lower-ridership services. Will County is served by four Metra lines, all of which terminate in the northern half of the County. Service characteristics for each line are summarized in **Table 16**.

**Table 16. Metra Service in Will County**

Service	Areas of County Served	Number of Weekday Departures <sup>16</sup>	Weekend Service	Notes <sup>17</sup>
<b>Heritage Corridor</b>	Joliet, Lockport	3 inbound 3 outbound	No	Service operates in AM and PM peak periods only; no reverse-peak service provided
<b>Rock Island</b>	Joliet, New Lenox, Frankfort	21 inbound 21 outbound	Yes (reduced schedule)	Service operates from 4:00 AM to 1:00 AM
<b>SouthWest Service</b>	Manhattan, New Lenox	2 inbound 3 outbound	No	Service operates in AM and PM peak periods only; one reverse-peak train provided in each direction
<b>Electric District</b>	Monee	27 inbound 27 outbound	Yes (reduced schedule)	Service operates from 4:00 AM to 11:00 PM

#### 4.2.1.3 Amtrak

Amtrak provides intercity passenger train service from the Gateway Center in downtown Joliet. The Lincoln Service (Chicago to St. Louis, six trains daily), Missouri River Runner (Chicago to Kansas City, two trains daily), and Texas Eagle (Chicago to Los Angeles, two trains daily) stop in Joliet. The Gateway Center also serves as the terminus of two Metra lines and a transfer center for 11 Pace bus routes.

<sup>16</sup> As of October 2022. Totals only include departures from Will County stations.

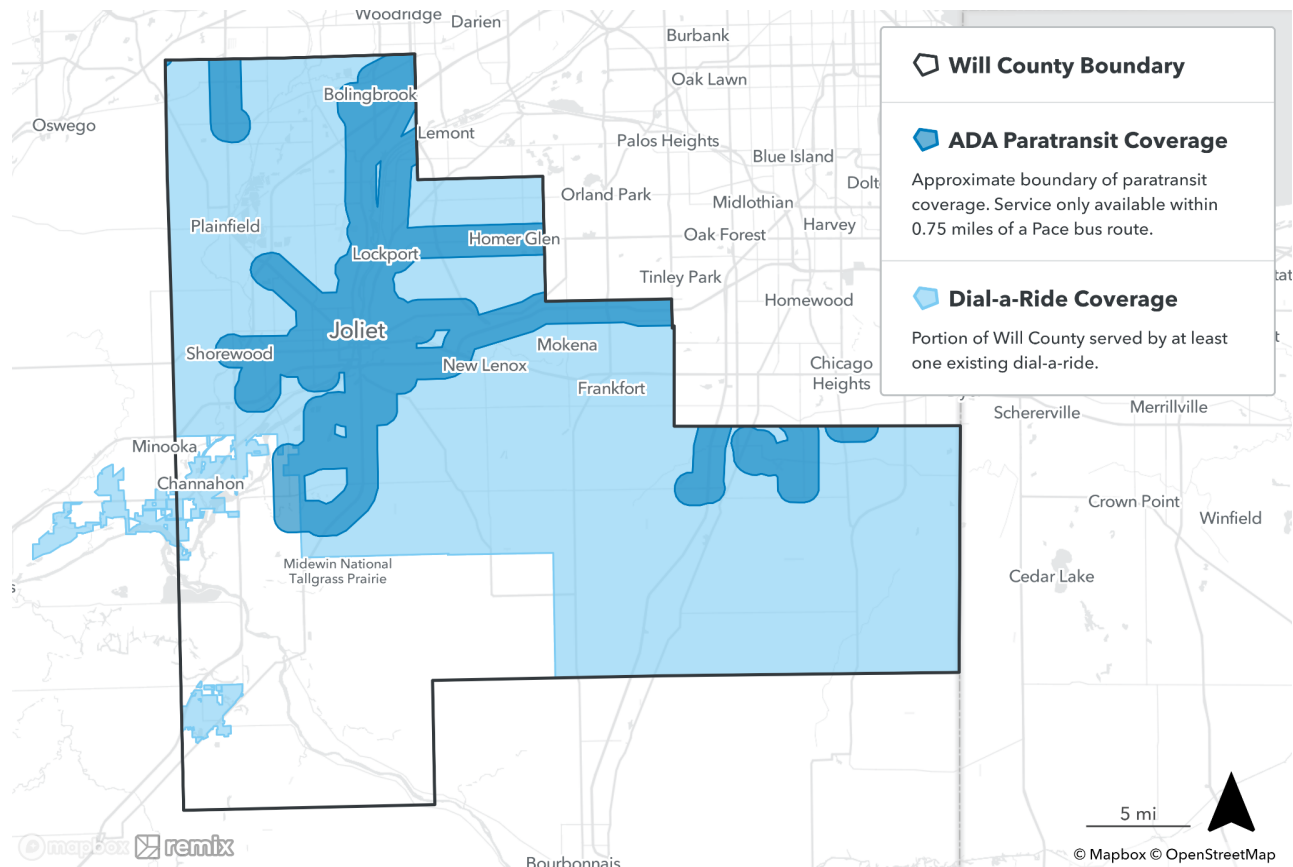
<sup>17</sup> AM and PM peaks generally 6:00-10:00 AM and 3:00-7:00 PM, respectively. Reverse-peak refers to trips departing Chicago in the morning or trips traveling towards Chicago in the evening.

## 4.2.2 Demand-Response Transportation

Multiple types of demand-response transit services are available in Will County. As a whole, the system covers the majority of the population. However, the patchwork of operators and services can be confusing to riders and difficult to manage efficiently.

### 4.2.2.1 ADA Paratransit

Per Title VI of the US Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), persons with disabilities may not be denied the benefits of Federally-funded services, including public transit. To maintain equitable transit access, agencies are required to operate accessible paratransit service in the vicinity of fixed-route services. In Will County, this service is operated by Pace. Paratransit riders must be certified by the RTA to be eligible for the service, and must be traveling at the same times and within the same general areas as fixed-route service. In areas that overlap with Pace-operated dial-a-rides, paratransit riders may be commingled with dial-a-ride users. However, the services maintain distinct funding mixes, eligibility requirements, and service areas. As the coverage footprint and eligibility requirements for ADA paratransit are fixed by Federal law, paratransit service is not a core focus of this report. The relative footprints of ADA paratransit and dial-a-ride coverage is compared in **Figure 17**.



**Figure 17: Relative Coverage Footprints of Paratransit and Dial-a-Ride Services in Will County<sup>18</sup>**

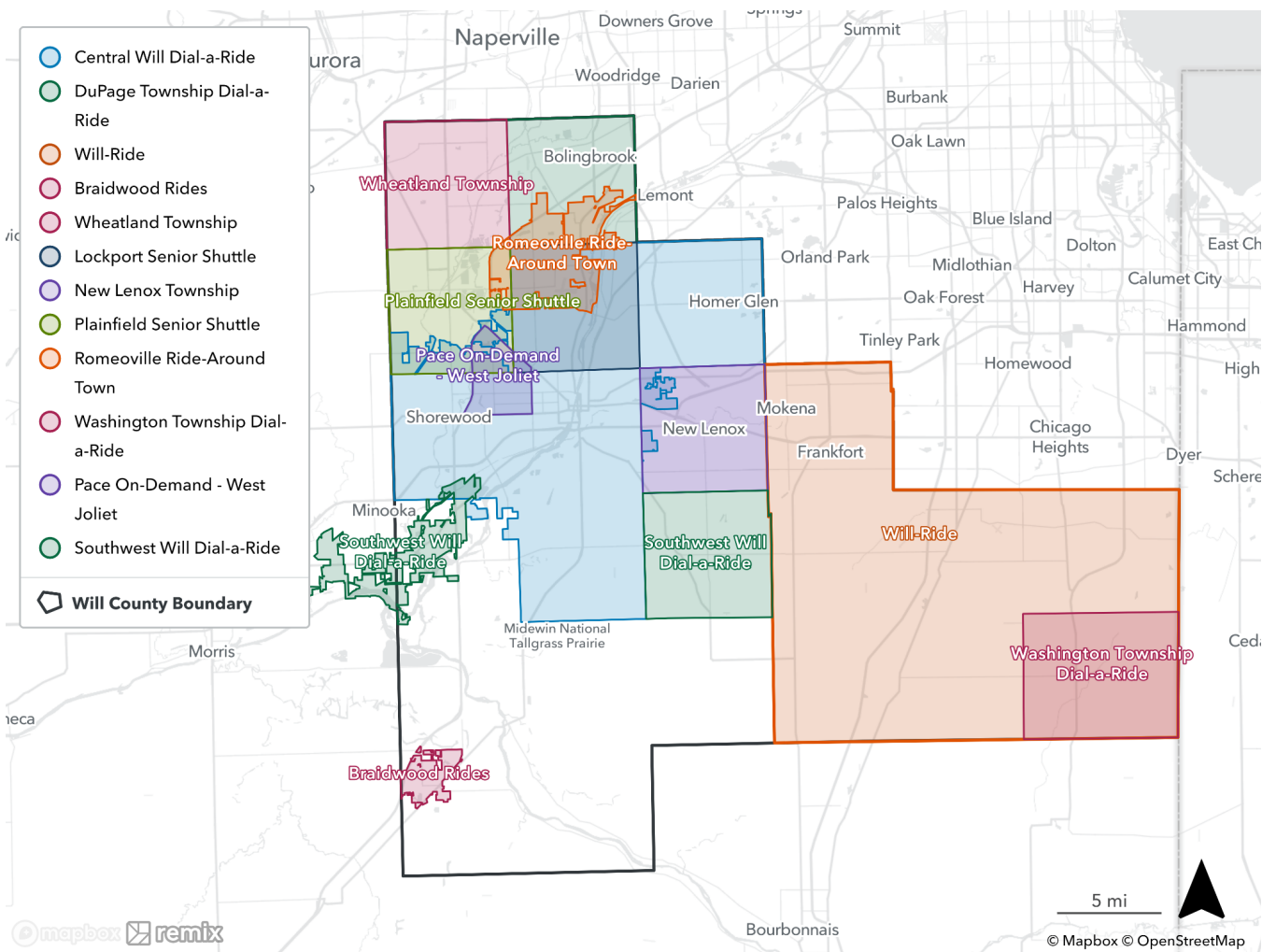
<sup>18</sup> Pace Express routes along I-55 to Plainfield excluded from the paratransit service area calculation. Per ADA Sec. 37.121, commuter bus routes are not required to be complemented by paratransit service.



As shown in Figure 17, paratransit coverage is largely limited to the areas of Will County around Joliet, Lockport, and Bolingbrook. In contrast, dial-a-ride service provides broader coverage over the majority of Will County.

4.2.2.2 Dial-a-Rides

Approximately one-dozen dial-a-ride services are operated in Will County. The service areas of each demand-response transit service are illustrated in **Figure 18**.



**Figure 18. Coverage of Existing Demand-Response Transit Services**

Taken together, these services cover all or part of 18 of the 24 townships in the County, and more than 95% of the population. Each service is sponsored by one or more jurisdictions, resulting in service areas based largely on municipal and township boundaries (instead of fixed-route service footprints). Eligibility is restricted to residents - typically seniors and persons with disabilities - who meet specific criteria. Services are split roughly equally between those operated by Pace, and those operated by municipalities. A snapshot of how each type of service operates, and Pace's role in delivering service, is provided in **Table 17**.

**Table 17. Characteristics of Dial-a-Rides by Operator Type**

Experience	Pace-Operated <sup>19</sup>	Municipally-Operated
<b>Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Will Dial-a-Ride</li> <li>• DuPage Township Dial-a-Ride</li> <li>• Southwest Will Dial-a-Ride</li> <li>• Wheatland Township (as part of Ride DuPage)</li> <li>• Will-Ride</li> <li>• Pace On-Demand (West Joliet)<sup>20</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Braidwood Rides</li> <li>• Lockport Township Senior Shuttle</li> <li>• New Lenox Transportation Services</li> <li>• Plainfield Township Shuttle</li> <li>• Romeoville Ride-Around Town</li> <li>• Washington Township Dial-a-Ride</li> </ul>
<b>Confirming Eligibility</b>	Potential riders contact their township/city, who approve applications and forward to Pace.	Potential riders contact their township/city for eligibility information and decisions.
<b>Booking a Trip</b>	Riders call a unified booking line, which is routed to a Pace dispatch center. Trips are booked based on the rules established by the rider's home service.	Riders call their township/city. Dispatch staff varies by service - some maintain dedicated transportation staff, others use police or public works staff.
<b>Service Delivery</b>	Vehicles are driven, owned, and maintained by third-party providers under contract to Pace. For longer-distance trips, a taxi may be used under a separate contract. Riders with accessibility needs are always assigned lift-equipped vehicles.	Riders are picked up by township/city staff in a vehicle owned or leased directly by the municipality.
<b>Rider Commingling</b>	Riders may be commingled with those on other Pace-operated services, including ADA paratransit and other dial-a-rides.	Riders are not commingled between services.

Key characteristics for each service — including service area, eligibility criteria, service hours, fares, and covered population — are summarized in **Table 18**. A detailed profile of each service is provided in [Appendix B. Dial-a-Ride Provider Profiles](#).

<sup>19</sup> The Park Forest Jolly Trolley, which primarily operates in Cook County, is excluded from this report.

<sup>20</sup> This service allows same-day bookings up to an hour before desired pickup. All other services officially require pre-booking at least the day prior, although some municipalities indicated in phone interviews that they work to accommodate same-day requests whenever capacity is available.

**Table 18. Summary of Existing Demand-Response Services**

Agency	Service Area	Eligible Riders	Times Operational	Fares (One-Way)	Service Area Population
<b>Central Will Dial-a-Ride</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lockport Township</li> <li>• Homer Township</li> <li>• Troy Township</li> <li>• Joliet Township</li> <li>• Jackson Township</li> <li>• City of Joliet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior citizens (60+)</li> <li>• Persons with disabilities</li> </ul>	Weekdays 6:00 AM - 5:00 PM	\$2 per trip	280,000 persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 38,000 seniors</li> <li>• 27,800 disabled</li> </ul>
<b>DuPage Township Dial-a-Ride</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DuPage Township</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior citizens</li> <li>• Persons with disabilities</li> </ul>	Weekdays 7:00 AM - 5:00 PM	\$2 per trip	90,000 persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11,000 seniors</li> <li>• 7,500 disabled</li> </ul>
<b>Southwest Will Dial-a-Ride</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village of Channahon</li> <li>• Manhattan Township</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All residents of participating townships</li> </ul>	Weekdays 6:00 AM - 5:00 PM	\$4 for up to 20 miles + \$1 per mile thereafter	25,000 persons
<b>Will-Ride</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frankfort Township</li> <li>• Green Garden Twp.</li> <li>• Peotone Township</li> <li>• Monee Township</li> <li>• Will Township</li> <li>• Crete Township</li> <li>• Washington Township</li> </ul> <p><i>Trips can begin or end within a 10-mile buffer of participating townships</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior citizens</li> <li>• Persons with disabilities</li> <li>• Needing transport to work<sup>21</sup></li> </ul>	Weekdays 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	\$2 within township; \$4 outside township	115,000 persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18,500 seniors</li> <li>• 11,700 disabled</li> <li>• 500 households without vehicle</li> </ul>

<sup>21</sup> A specific income threshold is not established, although the majority of these riders are lower-income residents.

Agency	Service Area	Eligible Riders	Times Operational	Fares (One-Way)	Service Area Population
<b>Braidwood Rides</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City of Braidwood</li> </ul> <i>Destinations outside city served on request</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior citizens</li> <li>Persons with disabilities</li> <li>Caretakers</li> </ul>	Weekdays 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Fares not charged	4,100 persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>550 seniors</li> <li>400 disabled</li> </ul>
<b>Wheatland Township (Ride DuPage)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wheatland Township</li> <li>DuPage County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior citizens (65+)</li> <li>Persons with disabilities (18+)</li> </ul>	All days 24 hours / day	\$2 base fare + \$1 / mile	85,000 persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6,800 seniors</li> <li>5,100 disabled</li> </ul>
<b>Lockport Township Senior Shuttle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lockport Township</li> </ul> <i>Select medical facilities outside township served on request</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior citizens (55+)</li> </ul>	Weekdays 7:00 AM - 3:00 PM	\$1 base fare + \$1 per additional stop	60,000 persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12,000 seniors</li> </ul>
<b>New Lenox Transportation Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Lenox Township</li> <li>Frankfort Township</li> <li>Joliet Township</li> </ul> <i>Service in Joliet Township only provided east of the Des Plaines River</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All New Lenox residents</li> </ul> <i>Limited eligibility for trips outside New Lenox Township</i>	Weekdays 7:00 AM - 3:30 PM	\$3 Children / Seniors \$5 Adults  <i>Fares doubled for trips outside New Lenox Township</i>	43,000 persons
<b>Plainfield Township Shuttle Bus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plainfield Township</li> </ul> <i>Select destinations in Joliet served on request</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior citizens (55+)</li> <li>Persons with disabilities</li> </ul>	Weekdays 7:30 AM - 3:00 PM	\$2 per person + \$2 per additional stop	82,000 persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7,400 seniors</li> <li>6,600 disabled</li> </ul>

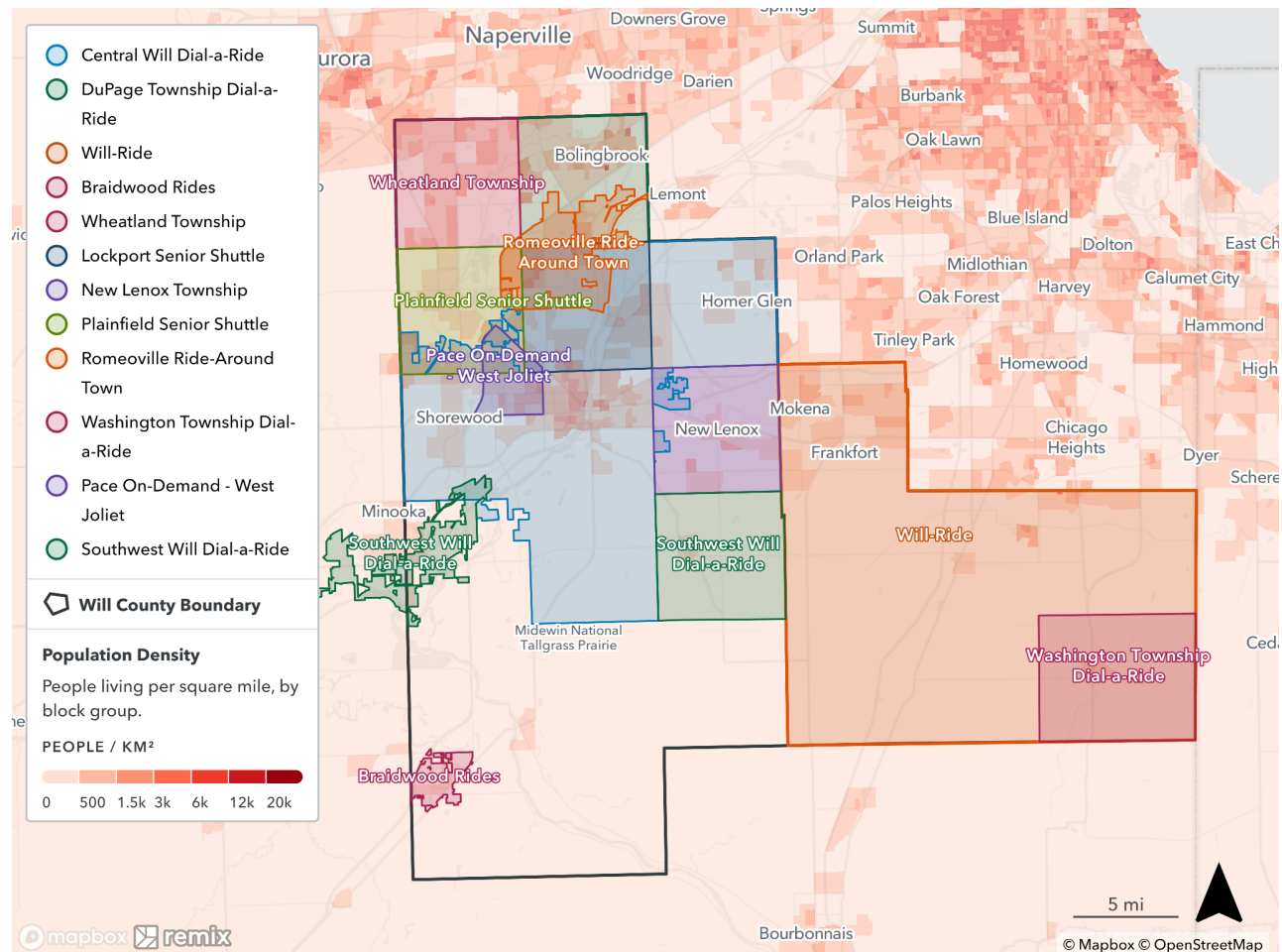
Agency	Service Area	Eligible Riders	Times Operational	Fares (One-Way)	Service Area Population
<b>Romeoville Ride-Around Town</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village of Romeoville</li> <li>• Plainfield Carillion Community</li> </ul> <p><i>Trips can begin or end within a 10-mile buffer of Romeoville</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Romeoville residents</li> <li>• Riders 50 or older receive reduced fare</li> </ul>	Weekdays 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM	\$3 - \$9  <i>Varies by distance; reduced fares available for seniors</i>	48,000 persons
<b>Washington Township Dial-a-Ride</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Washington Township</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior citizens</li> <li>• Persons with disabilities</li> </ul>	Thursdays 9:00 AM - 2:30 PM	\$2  <i>Suggested donation</i>	6,300 persons • 1,000 seniors • 900 disabled
<b>Pace On-Demand (West Joliet)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Joliet</li> </ul> <p><i>Refer to map for exact service area boundaries</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General public, riders to not need to be residents of the service area</li> </ul>	Weekdays 6:00 AM - 6:15 PM	\$2 - Standard \$1 - Reduced  <i>Available to seniors and persons with disabilities</i>	32,000 persons

### 4.2.3 Client Transportation at Human Service Agencies

More than a dozen human service agencies provide client transportation services in Will County. These agencies serve a range of client types, from seniors to veterans to people with disabilities, with diverse transportation needs. Profiles of each agency are presented in [Appendix C. Human Service Agency Profiles](#). The scale of each program varies from issuing vouchers to operating fleets of several dozen vehicles, underscoring the complex nature of providing services that meet client needs.

### 4.2.4 Coverage of Existing Dial-a-Ride Services

About three-quarters (18 of 24) of the townships in Will County are served by some form of transit service. Gaps in coverage are limited to a cluster of six townships in the southwestern portion of the County, as well as the unincorporated portion of Channahon Township. Due to the service gaps being confined to the less-populated southern portion of the County, more than 95% of residents have access to a dial-a-ride service (mapped in **Figure 19**).<sup>22</sup>



**Figure 19. Coverage Footprint of Existing Services and Population Density**

<sup>22</sup> Four services allow riders to travel outside the boundary of participating jurisdictions: Will-Ride, Wheatland Township, New Lenox Township, and Romeoville. Additional information is presented in [Appendix B: Dial-a-Ride Provider Profiles](#).

## 4.2.5 Rider Eligibility

Rider eligibility by demand-response service is summarized in **Table 19**.<sup>23</sup> All demand-response services in Will County allow senior citizens to ride, while coverage for disabled riders is similarly well-developed. Five services allow work-related trips, and four services are open to all residents living within the jurisdiction(s) providing the transit service. **Figures 20 to 22** illustrate the spatial coverage available to each group of riders.

**Table 19. Eligibility for Demand-Response Transportation by Rider Group**

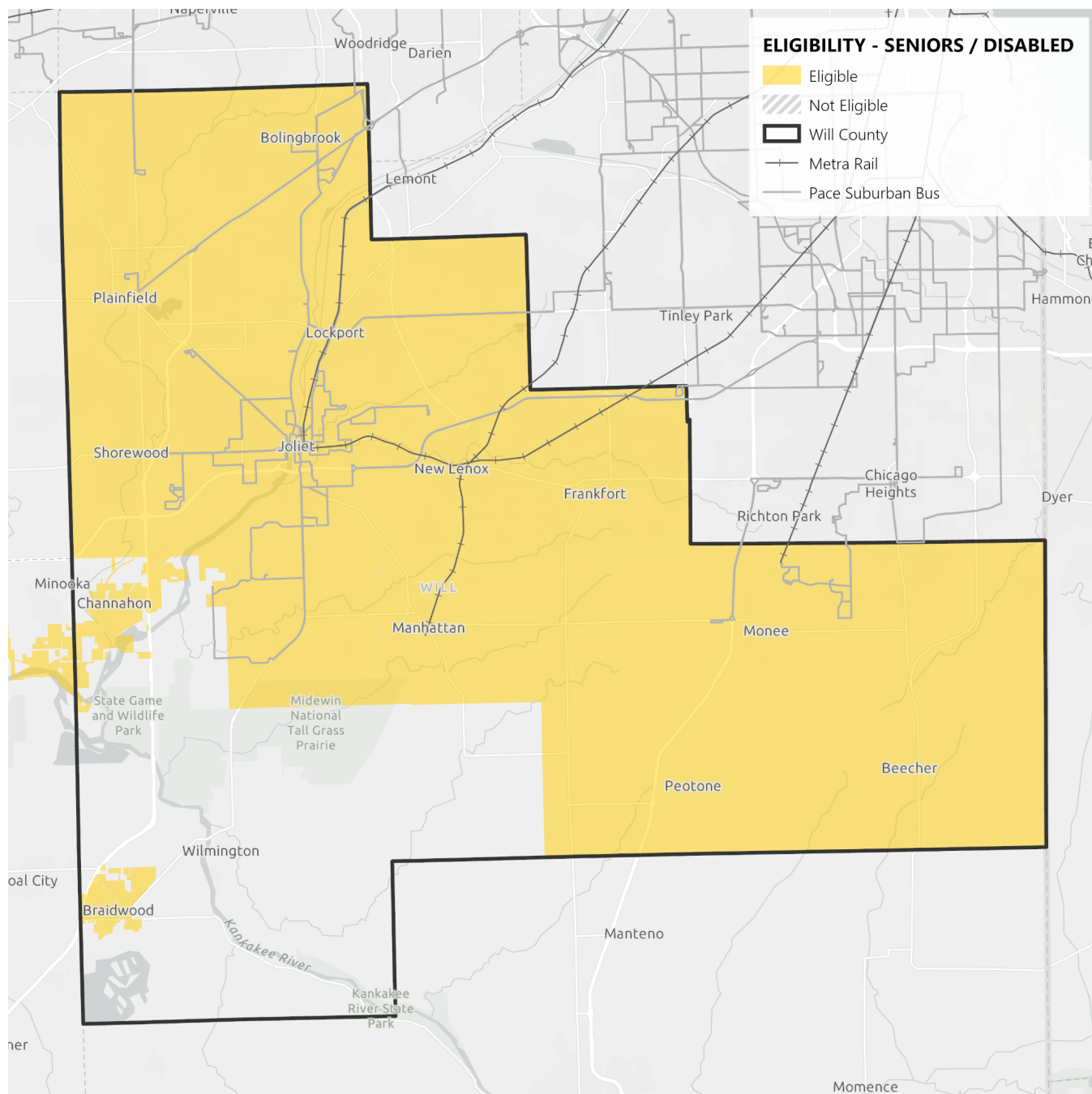
Service	Seniors	Disabled	Employment	All Residents
Central Will Dial-a-Ride	✓	✓	—	—
DuPage Township Dial-a-Ride	✓	✓	—	—
Southwest Will Dial-a-Ride	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wheatland Township (Ride DuPage)	✓	✓	—	—
Will-Ride	✓	✓	✓	—
Braidwood Rides	✓	✓	—	—
Lockport Township Senior Shuttle	✓	—	—	—
New Lenox Township Dial-a-Ride	✓	✓	✓	✓
Plainfield Township Shuttle Bus	✓	✓	—	—
Romeoville Ride-Around Town	✓	✓	✓	✓
Washington Township Dial-a-Ride	✓	✓	—	—
Pace On-Demand (West Joliet)	✓	✓	✓	✓

<sup>23</sup> Transportation services provided by HSAs are excluded from this analysis. These programs are typically not used for general-purpose transportation and restricted to clients already engaged in other agency programs.



#### 4.2.5.1 Trips for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

Coverage for seniors and disabled riders is summarized in **Figure 20**. All demand-response services currently operating in Will County allow seniors to ride (although the minimum age varies from 55 to 65 between services). The coverage footprint is identical for disabled riders.<sup>24</sup>

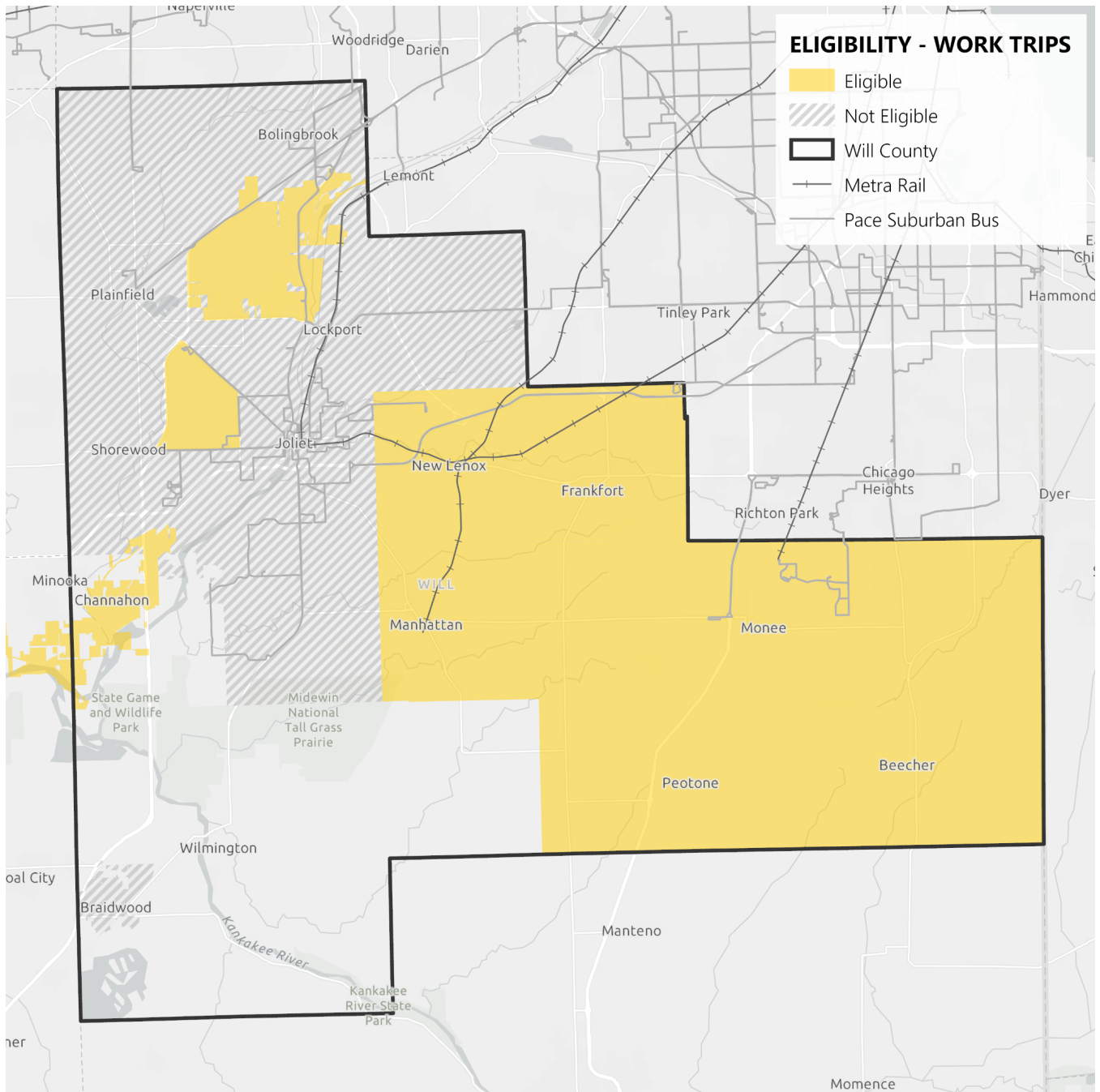


**Figure 20. Demand-Response Coverage for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities**

<sup>24</sup> The Lockport Township Senior Shuttle does not typically provide transportation to disabled riders unless they are also seniors. Since the Township also participates in the Central Will Dial-a-Ride, no gap in coverage is created.

#### 4.2.5.2 Trips for Work

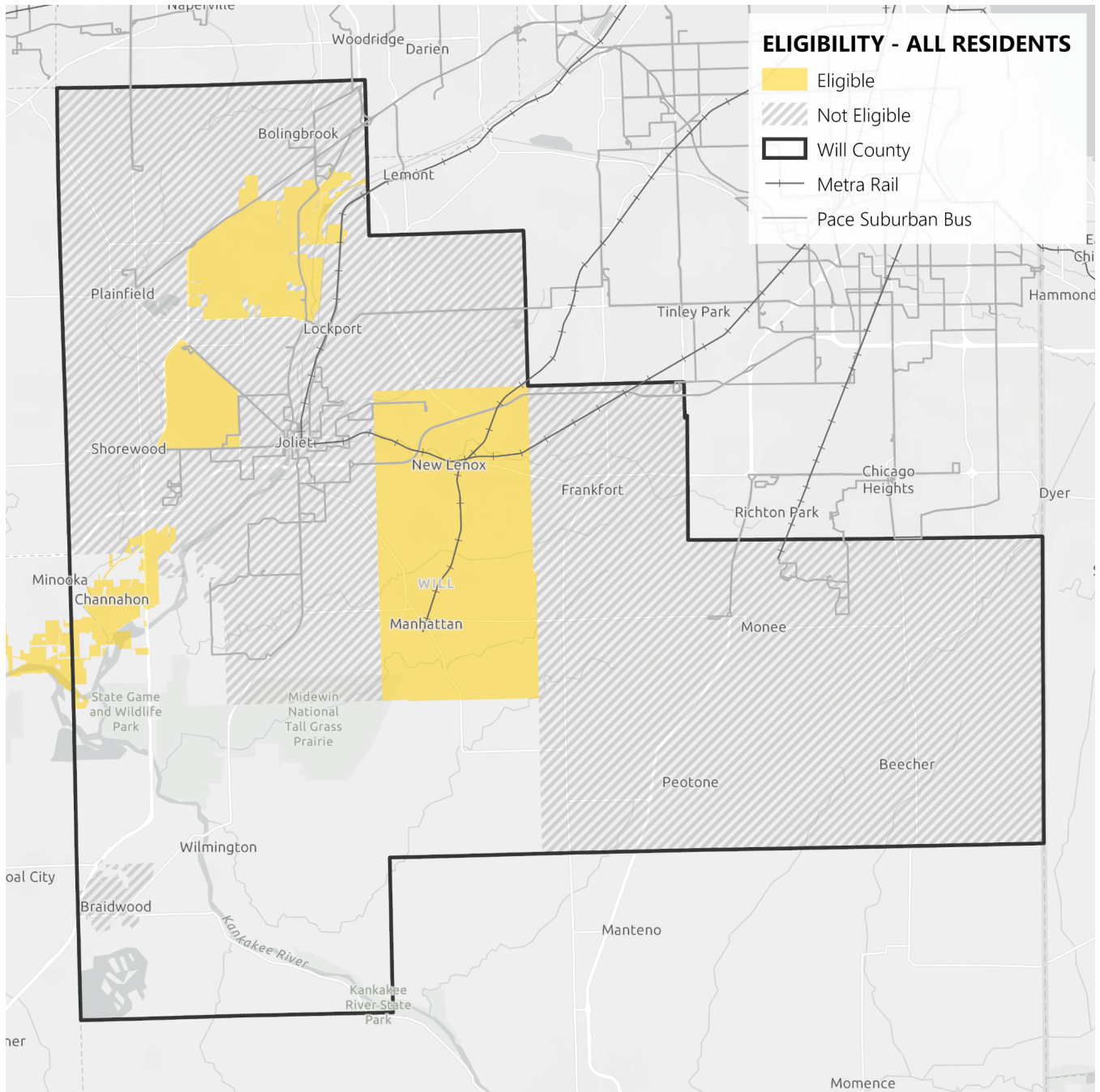
Five services maintain eligibility for all riders needing trips to and from places of employment, as shown in **Figure 21**. This restricted eligibility creates large service gaps in the northwestern portion of the County, including the two largest employment centers (Joliet and Bolingbrook). The impact of these gaps is somewhat mitigated by the fixed-route transit, although the quality and frequency of fixed-route service may still limit mobility options for some residents.



**Figure 21. Demand-Response Coverage for Employment-Related Trips**

#### 4.2.5.3 Trips for All Residents

Four services allow all residents residing within the jurisdiction(s) providing the transit service to ride.<sup>25</sup> The location and coverage of these services is shown in **Figure 22**. These services are located primarily along the periphery of the fixed route network, potentially speaking to a desire for expanded transit service in these areas.



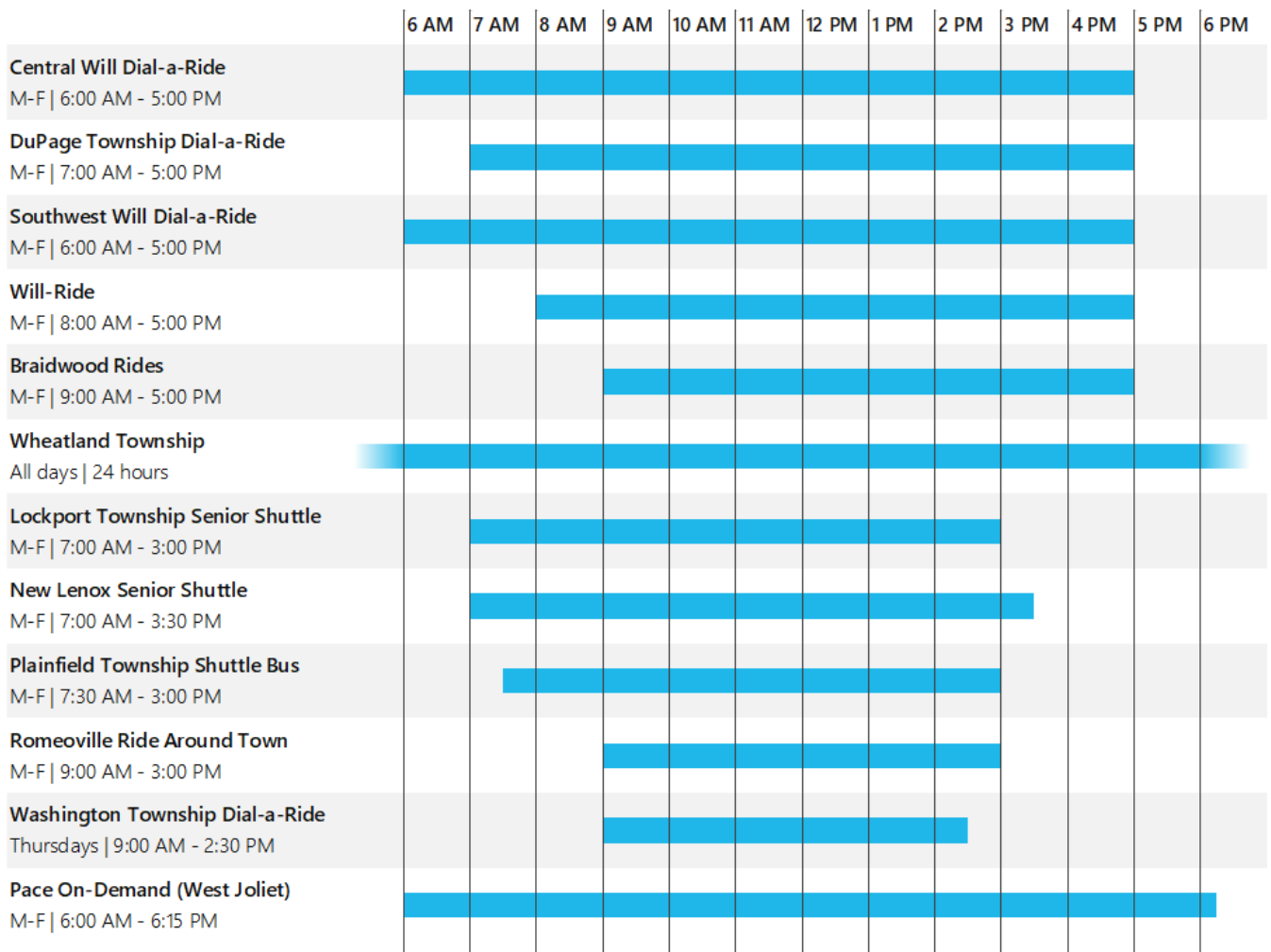
**Figure 22. Demand-Response Coverage for Employment-Related Trips**

<sup>25</sup> Pace On-Demand (West Joliet) is open to the general-public, and is primarily designed to fill a coverage gap in the fixed-route system.

# 4.2.6 Hours of Operation

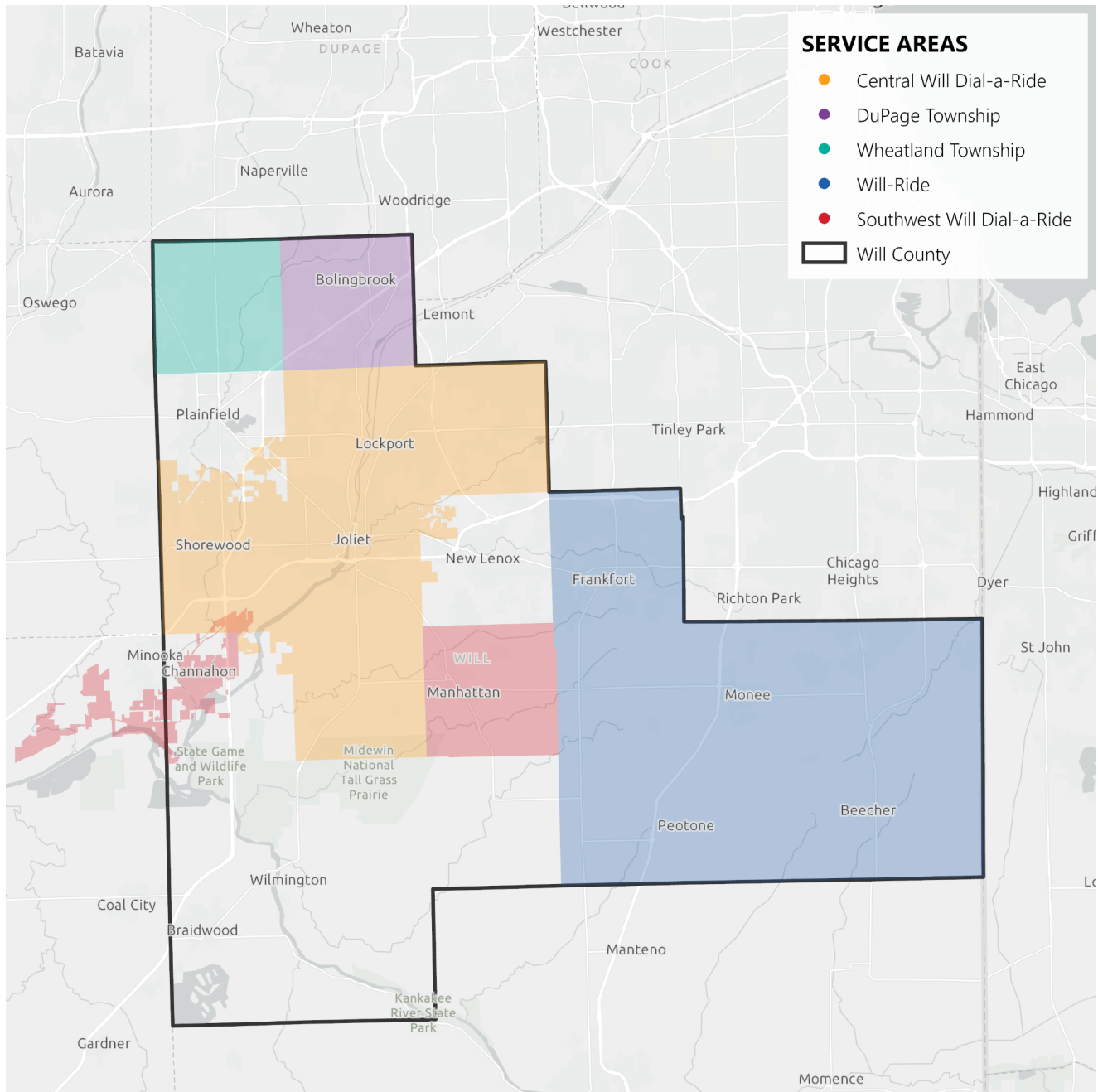
The majority of demand-response services in Will County operate on weekdays only, with one service continuing to operate on weekends (Wheatland Township, as part of Ride DuPage) and one service restricted to Thursdays only (Washington Township Dial-a-Ride). As shown in **Figure 23**, service is typically provided from mid-morning to mid-afternoon. Coverage during peak commute times is generally limited, potentially limiting the usefulness of services to residents needing transportation to or from work.

**Figure 23. Hours of Operation by Demand-Response Service**



## 4.2.7 Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics

To analyze ridership patterns and service performance, trip-level data was solicited from demand-response transit operators in Will County. This data (which typically includes origin and destination locations for each trip, as well as trip purpose, scheduled pickup time, and actual pickup time) was received from five operators, as shown in **Figure 24**. Collectively, these five operators represent the majority of all dial-a-ride trips in Will County, and serve 15 of the 17 townships with some form of municipal demand-response transit.

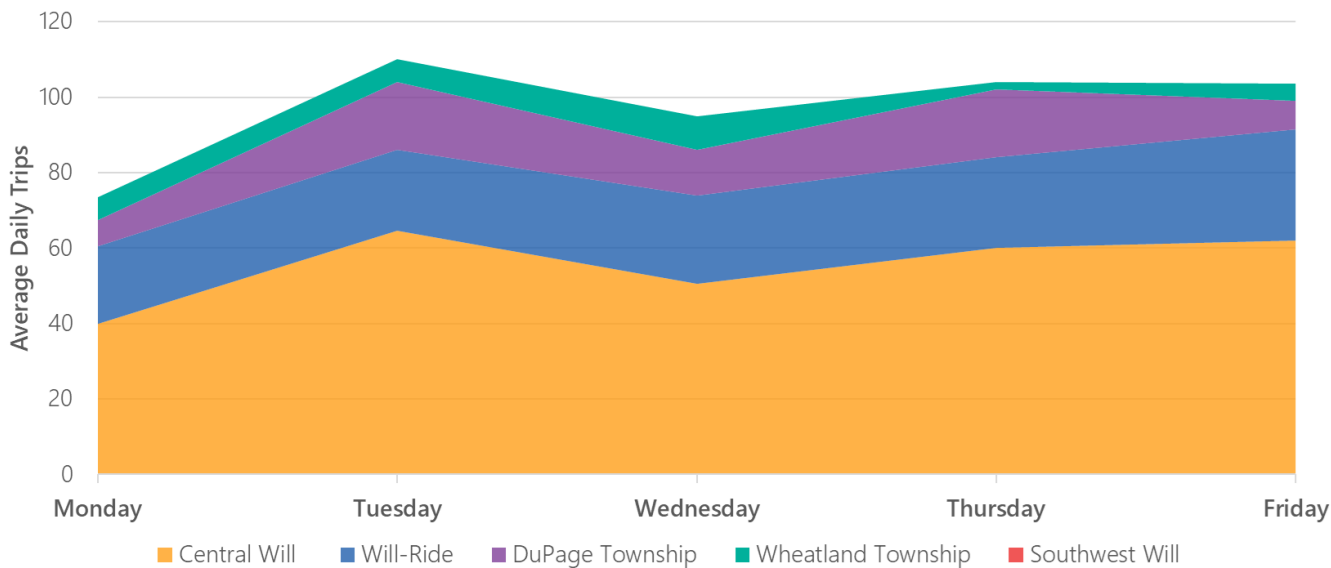


**Figure 24. Service Areas Represented in Trip-Level Data Analysis**

### 4.2.7.1 Trips by Service and Length

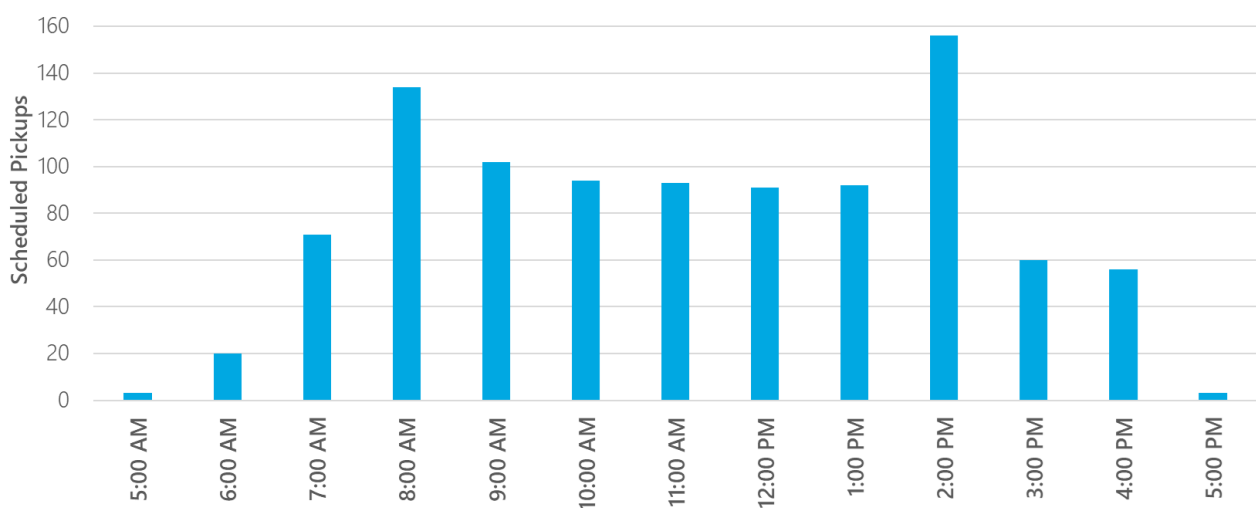
To understand broader ridership trends in Will County, trip data from July 10-23, 2022 was analyzed. Over this time period, a total of 975 trips were provided across the Central Will Dial-a-Ride, Will-Ride, DuPage Township Dial-a-Ride, and Wheatland Township Dial-a-Ride. The Southwest Will Dial-a-Ride did not provide any trips in this timeframe. The number of trips per weekday, averaged across both weeks in the sample period, is illustrated in **Figure 25**.

**Figure 25. Average Daily Trips by Weekday - July 10-23, 2022**



As shown in Figure 25, The number of daily trips is relatively consistent from Tuesday to Friday, with approximately 20% fewer trips completed on Monday. The number of scheduled pickups per hour is illustrated in **Figure 26**.

**Figure 26. Scheduled Pickups by Hour - July 10-23, 2022**



As shown in Figure 26, the most trips are requested from 8:00-9:00 AM and 2:00-3:00 PM. The number of trip requests remains relatively constant between these two peaks.

Approximately 55% of the trips included in the dataset were provided by the Central Will Dial-a-Ride, with a further 25% provided by Will-Ride. The remaining trips were split between DuPage Township (13%) and Wheatland Township (7%). The number of trips provided by each service, as well as the average trip length, are summarized in **Table 20**.

**Table 20. Trips by Service and Length**

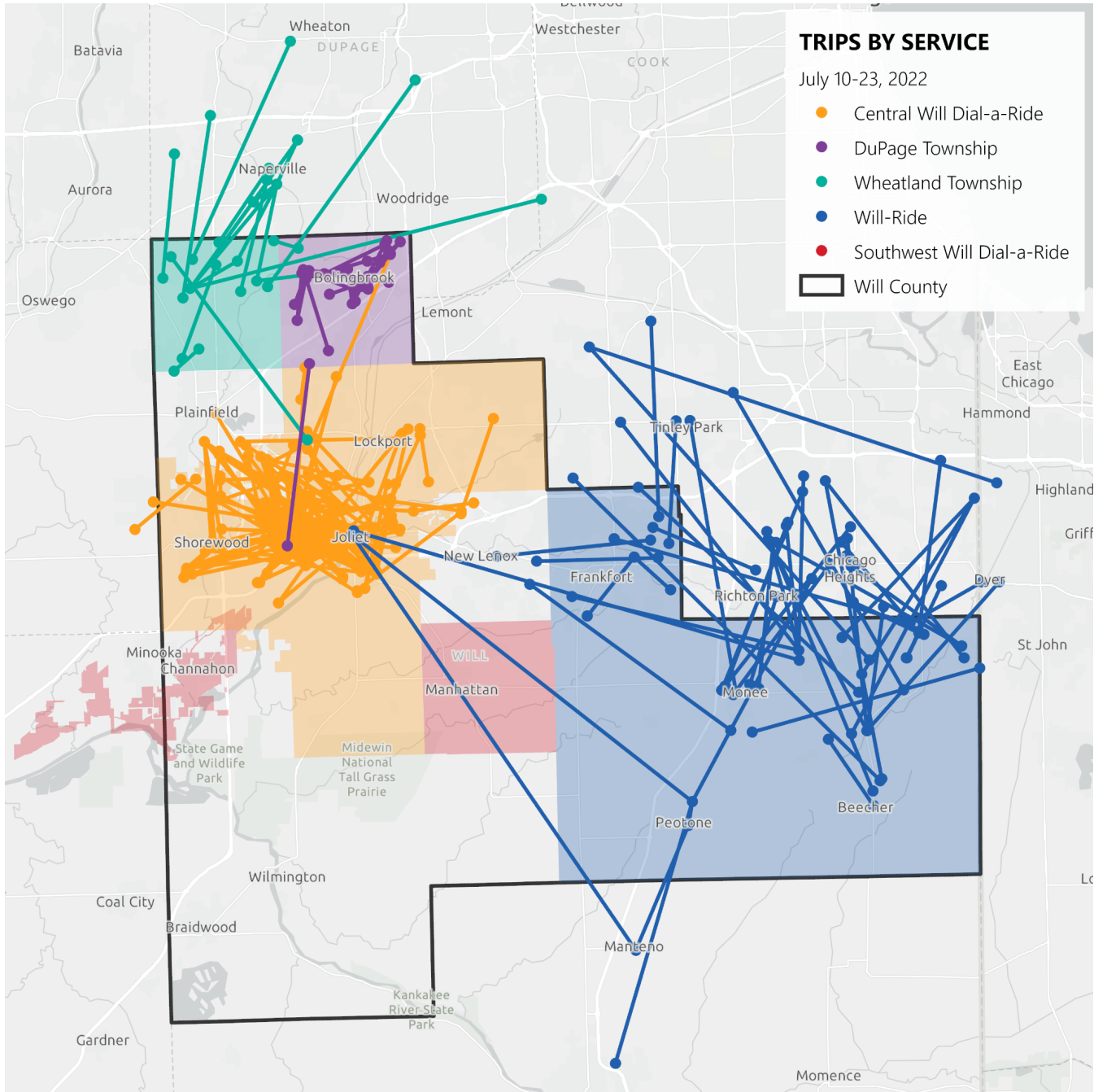
Service	Trips (July 10-23)	Service Area Population	Average Trip Length	Service Area Size
Central Will Dial-a-Ride	554	280,000	4.7 mi	195 mi <sup>2</sup>
DuPage Township Dial-a-Ride	125	90,000	2.7 mi	35 mi <sup>2</sup>
Southwest Will Dial-a-Ride	-	25,000	-	72 mi <sup>2</sup>
Wheatland Township (Ride DuPage)	58	85,000	5.7 mi	370 mi <sup>2</sup> <sup>26</sup>
Will-Ride	238	115,000	12.9 mi	1,320 mi <sup>2</sup> <sup>27</sup>
<b>Overall System</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>591,000</b>	<b>6.6 mi</b>	<b>-</b>

<sup>26</sup> Total area accessible to Wheatland Township riders, including the portions of the Ride DuPage service area outside the Township.

<sup>27</sup> Total area accessible on Will-Ride, including a 10-mile buffer around participating jurisdictions.



The origin and destination of each trip within the two-week sample period is mapped in **Figure 27**. Table 20 and Figure 26 show a clear correlation between average trip length and service area size: services with larger service areas see longer trips. In the case of Will-Ride, which serves a largely rural area in the southeastern portion of the county, this can largely be ascribed to potential destinations being more spread out than in more densely-developed parts of the County. For other services, including Wheatland Township, this may be a reflection of riders being able to travel to the destination (hospital, doctor, salon, etc.) they want, not the one closest to their address.



**Figure 27. Origin and Destination of Demand-Response Trips**

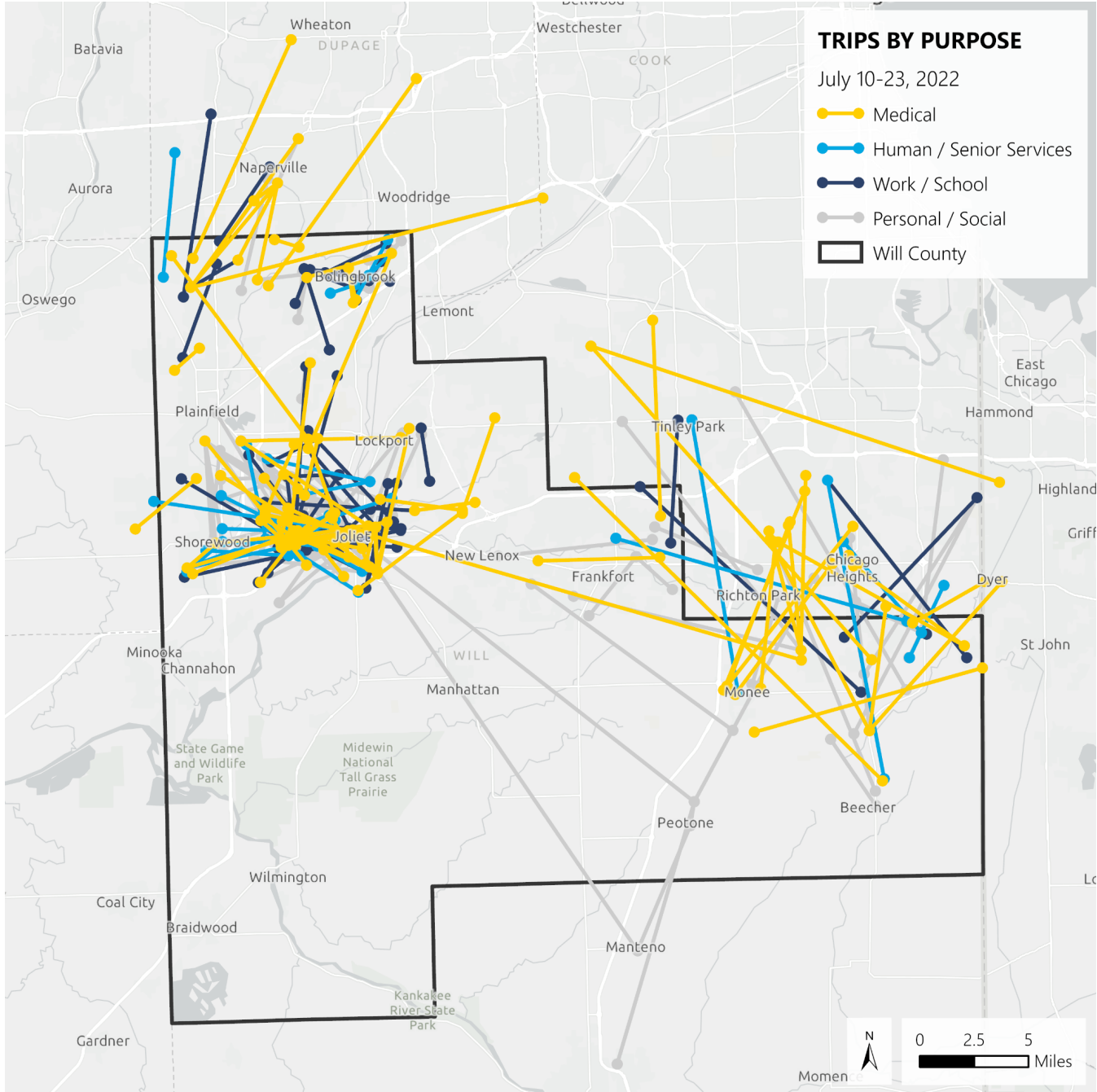
### 4.2.7.2 Trip Purpose

Trips within the two week dataset were aggregated into four types for analysis. As shown in **Table 21**, approximately one third of all trips were taken for employment or education. The proportion of medical and personal trips is similar, but slightly lower.

**Table 21. Trips by Purpose**

Trip Type	Purposes	Total Trips	Percent of Trips
Medical	Medical appointment; Dialysis	272	28%
Human / Senior Services	Human services; Senior services	100	10%
Work / School	Work; School	321	33%
Personal	Hair appointment; Library; Shopping; Social	282	29%
Total	-	975	100%

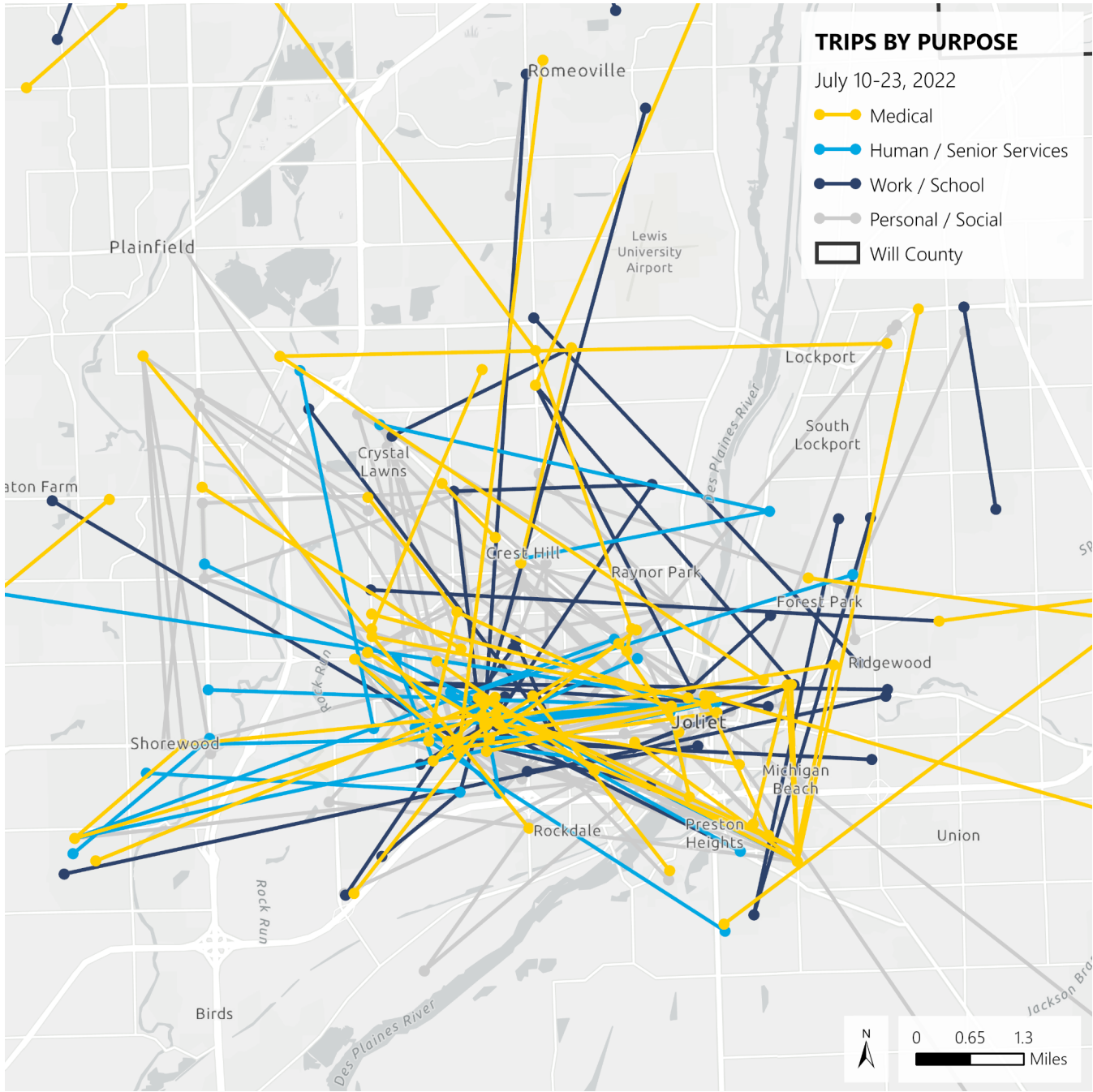
The origin and destination of trips, grouped by purpose, is presented in **Figure 28**. This data reinforces the correlation between service area size and trip length - riders from Wheatland Township take advantage of expanded service areas to reach destinations in DuPage County, while Will-Ride users frequently travel to destinations in south Cook County.



**Figure 28. Trips by Purpose**

These broad “flows” of trips align with the distribution of services throughout the south suburban region. Will-Ride users largely travel north-south along the I-57 corridor, instead of east-west to Joliet. Figure 28

also illustrates the longer distance traveled for medical trips, with many trips ending in one of a few clusters (Joliet, Naperville, Flossmoor / Chicago Heights). **Figure 29** shows the same trip origin and destination pairs for the Joliet area only. The dense nature of this area results in a relatively even distribution of trips across the city, rather than clear travel patterns between major destinations or along regional corridors.



**Figure 29. Trips by Purpose (Joliet Area)**

## 4.3 Future Needs

To understand how demand for demand-response transit service is expected to evolve in Will County over the coming years, the project team reviewed a range of projections developed by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP).<sup>28</sup> Three long-term trends were identified as being likely to increase overall demand for service:

- **Population growth:** A growing population will increase the pool of eligible riders for existing dial-a-ride service.
- **Employment growth:** New jobs will generate additional commute trips across Will County and may attract additional residents. The amount and location of new jobs within the County can be used to predict demand for dial-a-ride trips among residents who use the services to get to work.
- **Population aging:** The average age of the population is increasing nationwide. In Will County, a larger pool of senior citizens will directly increase demand for dial-a-ride service.

Key takeaways from this process are summarized below, with supporting analysis presented in **Section 4.3.1** to **Section 4.3.3**.

### Key Takeaways – Future Needs

- Will County is expected to add slightly **more than 300,000 residents by 2050**. Much of this growth will occur in the eastern and southern portions of the County. These areas have limited or no fixed-route transit service, leaving dial-a-ride service as the primary way for residents to get around without a personal vehicle.
- Will County is expected to add **about 130,000 new jobs by 2050**. These jobs will be dispersed around the County, but further growth is forecasted along the IL-53 corridor between Joliet and Wilmington. Ensuring potential employees have a way to get to work — even on overnight shifts — will help ensure the County's future competitiveness for new development.
- Across the Chicago region, **the number of residents age 70 or older will double by 2050**. Residents over 70 are three times as likely to have a disability as the overall population. Improving dial-a-ride service will help ensure these residents have the option to stay in their homes and communities as they age.

---

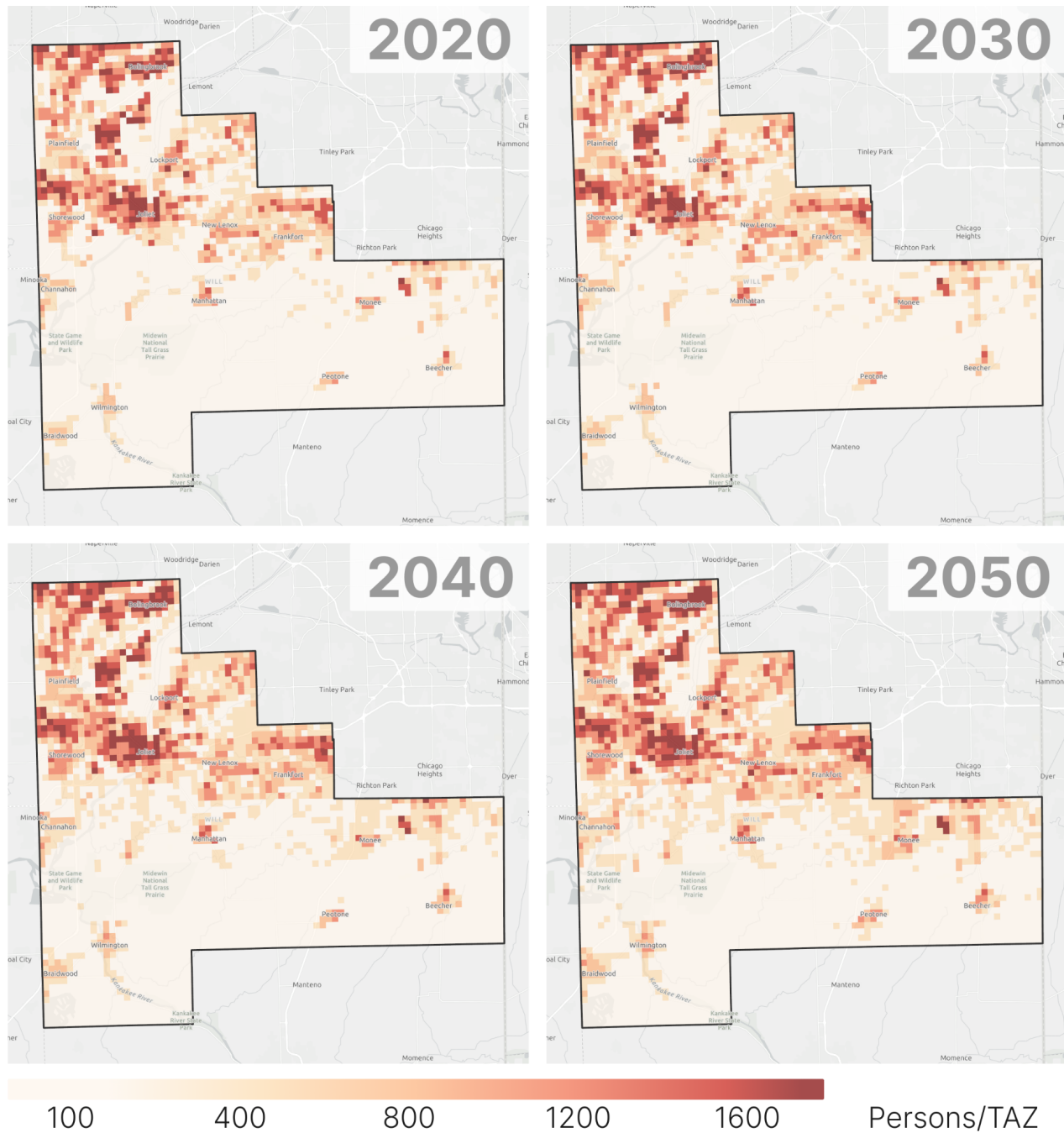
<sup>28</sup> Population and employment growth were analyzed using model inputs developed and updated as part of *On To 2050*. These projections represent CMAP's best estimation of the location and magnitude of future growth, and are used to inform future decisions about regional infrastructure spending. Socioeconomic forecasts for *On To 2050* were also reviewed to understand population aging trends.



### 4.3.1 Trend 1: Population Growth

CMAQ projects that Will County's population will grow by 1.2% per year between 2020 and 2050. By 2050, the County will be home to approximately 1,060,000 residents, an increase of 45% from 2020 levels. Anticipated population density by future year is mapped in **Figure 30**.

**Figure 30. Population Density by Decade, 2020 – 2050**<sup>29</sup>

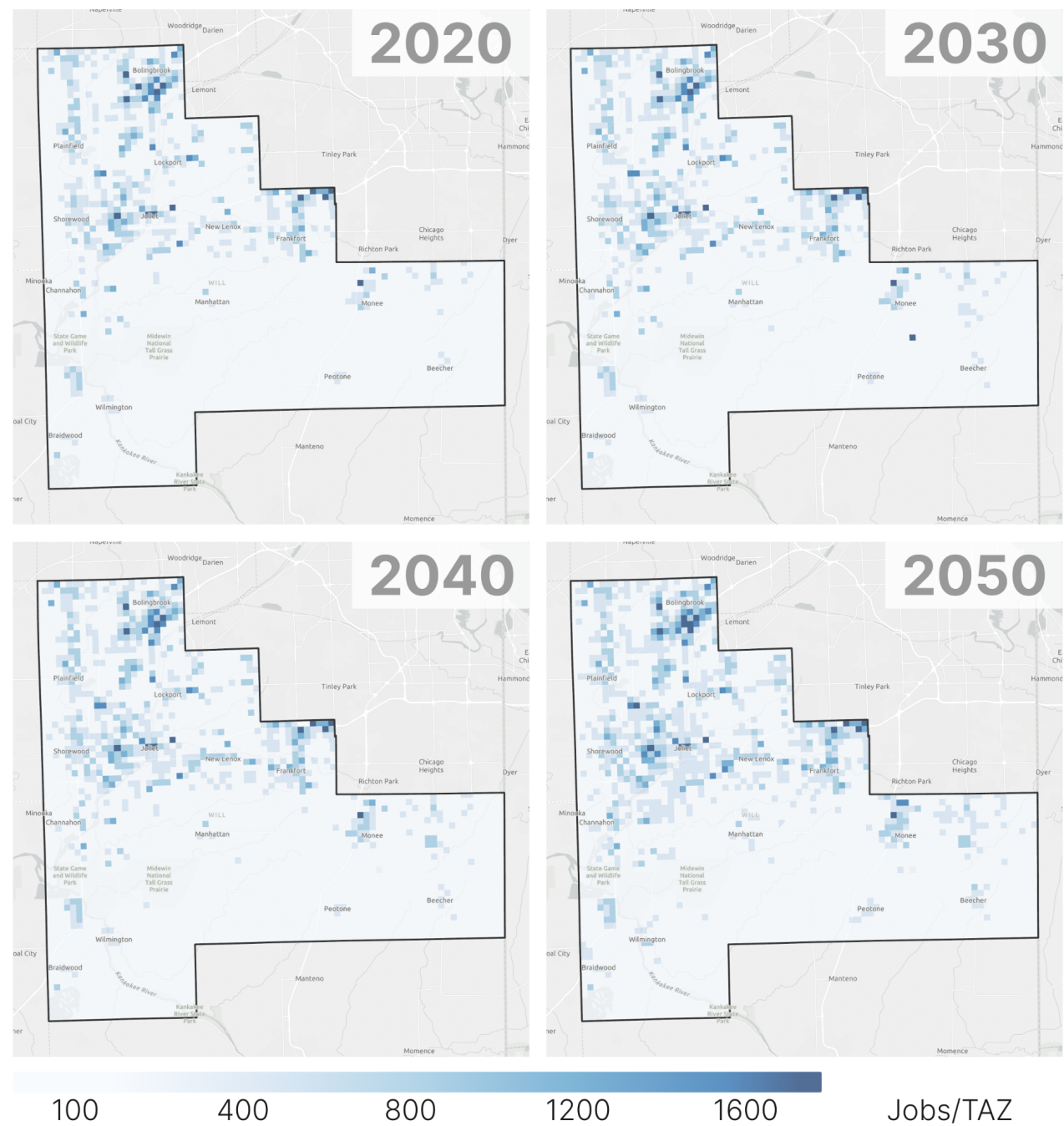


<sup>29</sup> Data Source: CMAQ On To 2050 Plan, Q4 2020 Conformity Analysis. To track change in population over time, the dataset divides Will County into 1,980 discrete traffic analysis zones (TAZs).

# 4.3.2 Trend 2: Employment Densification

CMAQ projects that Will County employment is expected to grow by about 1.5% per year between 2020 and 2050. By 2050, the County will be home to approximately 360,000 jobs, an increase of 55% from 2020 levels. Anticipated employment density by future year is mapped in **Figure 31**.

**Figure 31. Employment Density by Decade, 2020 – 2050**<sup>30</sup>

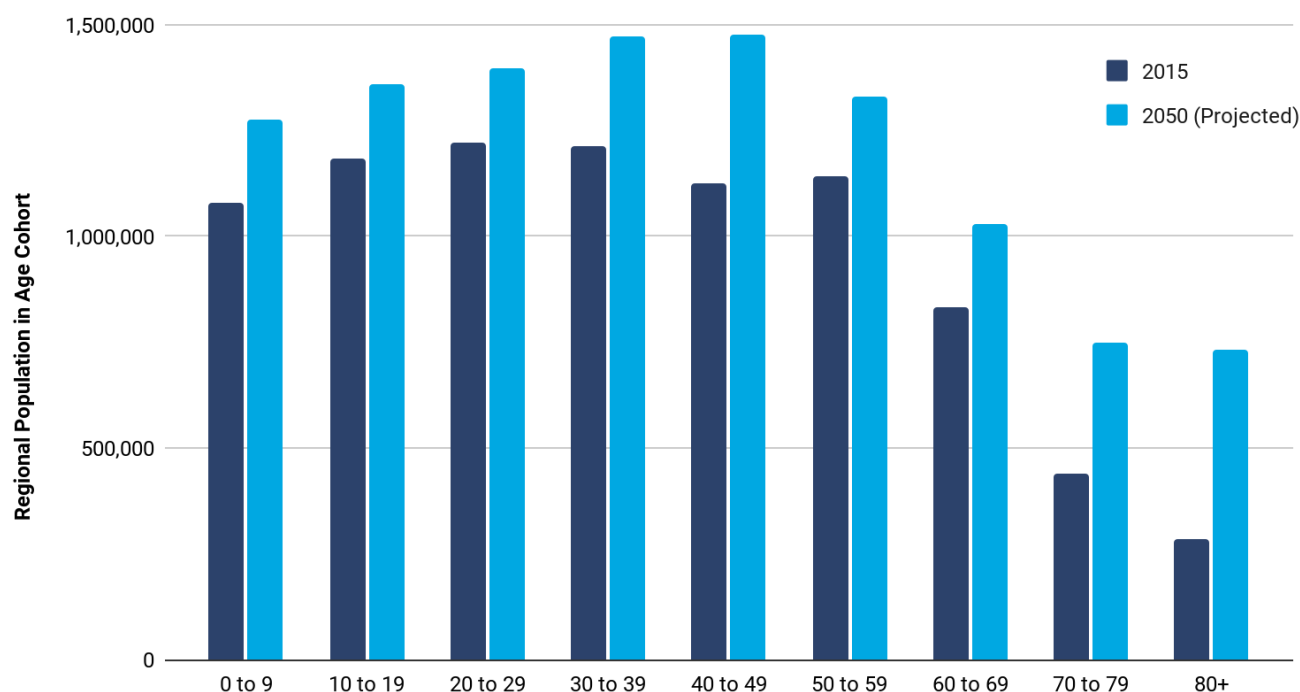


<sup>30</sup> Data Source: CMAQ On To 2050 Plan, Q4 2020 Conformity Analysis. To track change in employment over time, the dataset divides Will County into 1,980 discrete traffic analysis zones (TAZs).



### 4.3.3 Trend 3: Population Aging

Between 2015 and 2050, the percentage of Chicagoland residents 60 or older will increase from 18% to 23%, while the number of residents 70 or older will double.<sup>31</sup> This demographic change represents a substantial increase to the core ridership base for dial-a-ride services. Recent and projected future population counts by age cohort are presented in **Figure 32**.



**Figure 32. Total Chicago Region Population by Age Cohort, 2015 and 2050**

The number of residents with disabilities will rise in tandem with the senior population. About 30% of Will County seniors live with a disability, three times the rate of the overall population (slightly under 10% of all residents, or 62,000 people). More information on disability status and age is presented in [4.1.5 Persons with Disabilities](#).

<sup>31</sup> Data Source: CMAP ON TO 2050 Draft Socioeconomic Forecasts

## 5. Community and Stakeholder Engagement

The development of *Access Will County* was guided by the outcomes of a substantial community and stakeholder engagement program. This chapter summarizes the composition, timing, and outcomes of the engagement activities conducted for the study.

### 5.1 Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC)

Delivering high-quality dial-a-ride in Will County requires the involvement of a complex network of stakeholders, including operators, sponsors, government units, advocates, and users. To that end, the project team convened a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (“the Committee”) consisting of invited representatives from several key groups. Engaging with the Committee helped the project team gather local knowledge, paratransit operations expertise, lived experience, and connections to additional groups. The following groups were represented on the Committee:

- Troy Township
- Frankfort Township
- Joliet Township
- Peotone Township
- Monee Township
- Will Township
- Green Garden Township
- Crete Township
- Washington Township
- Plainfield Township
- Reed Township
- NE Illinois Area Agency on Aging
- Senior Services of Will County
- Disability Resource Center
- United Way of Will County
- Will County Center for Economic Development (CED)
- Will Co. Workforce Investment Board (WIB)
- Workforce Center of Will County
- Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)
- Pace Suburban Bus
- Sunny Hill Nursing Home
- Village of Channahon
- Village of Wilmington
- Village of Manhattan
- Senior Services of Will County

A total of three SAC meetings were held with the following goals:

1. **Meeting 1 (February 1, 2023):** Established goals for the study, discussed current transit needs, and shared findings from the first round of focus group meetings.
2. **Meeting 2 (March 8, 2023):** Presented potential improvement areas and gathered feedback on each idea. Conducted a prioritization exercise.
3. **Meeting 3 (June 1, 2023):** Presentation of the final report and discussion of implementation steps.



*An in-person focus group conducted as part of the study.*

## 5.2 Focus Groups

Two rounds of focus groups were conducted, with each round consisting of two meetings. Three meetings were conducted virtually, and one meeting was in-person at the Will County offices in Joliet.

### Round 1

- **Purpose:** Allow users to provide deeper insights into their paratransit experiences in Will County
- **Dates:** December 13, 2022 from 10am – 11:30am and December 14, 2022 from 6:30pm – 7:00pm
- **Location:** Both virtual meetings

### Round 2

- **Purpose:** Allow users to react to initial recommendations and system improvements.
- **Dates:** March 7, 2023 from 11am – 12:30am and March 8, 2023 from 10am – 11:30am.
- **Location:** One meeting was held in the Will County offices in Joliet, and one was virtual

Focus group attendees were compensated for their time, recognizing their local knowledge and value they bring to the process. These stipends also provide opportunities for people of all income levels to participate in this process.

### 5.3.1 Round 1 Focus Groups

The purpose of these two focus group meetings was to **allow participants to share their experiences regarding the current range of transportation services available in Will County**. Most participants were active users of services such as Pace ADA or Will Ride. Others were interested in using these services but were not current users.

### Key Findings:

- **Current Experiences:** Participants generally like the experience of using paratransit because it gives them the freedom they wouldn't otherwise have. Participants rely on the paratransit services to get to work, medical appointments, and school/classes. However, participants shared that they have been left stranded at locations, sometimes in the extreme cold or heat, because drivers forget to pick them up, or their trips are elongated because routes of service are not efficient.
- **Planning and Booking:** Overall, participants agreed the sooner you plan a trip the better. Participants said they will get up right when call lines open to try to get the best slot for travel. The timing of a trip is very important because many participants rely on transportation services for doctors' appointments, and they often must cushion the travel and pick-up/drop-off times with multiple hours on either end. The date of the event or appointment is also critical since the paratransit services in many areas don't operate on the weekends or past 5:00 PM. Riders also talked about the lack of flexibility with getting or rescheduling rides. If there is an emergency or a desire to get somewhere urgently, there are very few mobility options which is made worse by a lack of taxis in Will County.
- **Improvement Areas:** Participants were excited and ready to share the other areas of improvement in their paratransit experience. The main improvement centered around increased availability not only in time of service, beyond 5pm, but also weekend availability. Other improvements included:
  - More vehicles and a newer bus fleet
  - Enhanced bus stops, such as shelters and concrete pads
  - Improved communication and information for available services
  - More forms of transit (such as vanpools and taxis) in the area

## 5.3.2 Round 2 Focus Groups & Stakeholder Meeting 2

During the second round of focus groups and the second stakeholder working group meeting, attendees were **asked to provide feedback on six categories of potential service improvements**. Improvement categories included:

- **Information:** Improving the way people find and register for service.
- **Branding or Service Quality:** Creating a unified look for demand-responsive service in Will County; Improving customer service, reliability, and performance
- **Service Area:** Closing gaps in coverage and helping riders reach more destinations.
- **Eligibility:** Expanding eligibility to all residents 55-64 (and older) and those needing work transport.
- **Service Hours:** Adding evening and weekend service to improve mobility for residents.
- **Fares:** Developing a unified fare structure and making it easier to pay for trips.

### Received Feedback - Information

- **Focus Groups:** The feedback from focus group participants centered on centralizing information and making it more readily available. The creation of an app came up in both sessions to track drivers, order rides, and learn more about available services. Participants also suggested using

social media to spread the word online, in addition to advertising in doctors' offices and local papers for those without smartphones.

- **Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC):** SAC members agreed that this improvement area is considered "low-hanging fruit" in terms of implementation and budget constraints. Suggestions to enhance this strategy included co-locating information on monthly water bills and other targeted outreach such as town halls to ensure that hard to reach populations do not miss centralized information.

## Received Feedback - Branding and Service Quality

- **Focus Groups:** There was general agreement among the first focus group participants that the strength of a company's brand stems from the quality of service from its employees and representatives. In the case of paratransit and dial-a-ride services, quality customer service from drivers, dispatchers, and other managers is important to attract and retain ridership. This prompted the consultant team to present the improvement area "Service Quality" instead of "Branding" to the second focus group.

In addition to service quality, participants agreed that a unified brand would help Will County residents identify dial-a-ride vehicles and bring awareness to the transportation options in their area. Brand ambassador training for staff is necessary to address user complaints of poor customer service, and an increased enthusiasm for the service might help the current driver shortage.

- **Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC):** Unlike in the focus groups, this improvement area had the least feedback and fewest votes from SAC members. The representative from Pace was not sure that universal branding would be suitable for dial-a-ride vehicles as they might be confused with the paratransit fleet. Another concern was that physical branding (such as vehicle wraps or magnetic decals) might be too expensive for townships to cover. Notably, SAC members assumed a "Service Quality" improvement was inherent in any service changes, prompting members to unanimously award "Branding" none of the vote share in the budgeting exercise.

## Received Feedback - Service Area

- **Focus Groups:** Focus group participants largely agreed that filling the service gap in the southwest corner of Will County is a top priority. One suggestion to begin filling this gap was to host a town hall meeting in the low-density areas of Will County to help bring awareness to programs like Dial-a-Ride or Will Ride.
- **Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC):** Members suggested that townships may need the estimated number of trips generated from joining the system to feel comfortable opting in and closing service gaps. Some argued that ultimately, elected municipal and township officials should

be advocating for expanding these services. This sparked a discussion on whether county-wide funding would be an option for a county-wide service area.

### Received Feedback - Eligibility

- **Focus Groups:** Participants thought the eligibility requirements should be less restrictive to help a wider population. By opening the eligibility threshold, more people would use the services, which could yield more funding for the program down the road. However, there was also a concern that building a wider ridership could conflict with PACE fixed routes or make it harder for target dial-a-ride users (such as seniors or people with disabilities) to successfully schedule rides.
- **Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC):** This improvement area had the least consensus among SAC participants. There were concerns that opening eligibility would be too expensive for townships, especially where federal grant funding is restrictive to certain populations. There was one suggestion to include low-income registrants into the eligibility pool. Other concerns centered around eligibility verification and who in a county-wide system would be responsible for approving registrants.

### Received Feedback - Service Hours

- **Focus Groups:** Participants found that current services did not offer rides late enough into the evening, with consensus that hours should extend first to 10:00 PM or even midnight before offering early morning operation times. This would help 2nd shift workers who might have no trouble requesting a ride to work in the afternoon but would be left stranded when their evening shifts ended.
- **Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC):** Like the focus groups, SAC members agreed that operation hours should extend past 8:00 PM to include late shift workers. One participant noted that more and more late-shift employees in need of transportation are also seniors, so evening service hours would still cater to target populations. There were fewer concerns about costs to townships with regard to extending service hours, however participants noted – for the sake of drivers – that there are different safety needs when operations extend into the late evening.

### Received Feedback - Fares

- **Focus Groups:** Participants agreed that fares should be unified across the county, and having different fare structures across the fragmented systems increases the barriers to dial-a-ride usability. There was also agreement that paratransit or dial-a-ride vehicles should have contactless forms of payment, such as Ventra or tap-to-pay credit cards, in addition to cash payments for underbanked riders. This helps differently-abled riders pay for fares more easily. Other suggested improvements were to increase fares for overnight hours (to help offset costs) and allow Medicare/Medicaid to help cover fares.



- Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC):** This improvement area received little feedback, though SAC members agreed that contactless forms of payment, in addition to a unified fare structure, would improve reliability and usability for riders. Like the focus groups suggested, cash forms of payment must continue to be accepted in addition to contactless payments.

## Prioritization of Improvement Areas

After discussing each improvement area, participants were asked to prioritize each category.<sup>32</sup> Overall, the **“Service Area” improvement strategy received the highest number of points across both focus groups and the stakeholder meeting**, receiving 23% of the vote share. “Service Hours” was ranked the second highest priority across all three groups with 22% of the total vote, and “Information” was a close third with 21%. Next were “Fares” (13%), “Eligibility” (10%), and last ranked was “Branding/Service Quality” (9%).



*A worksheet filled out during the improvement prioritization exercise.*

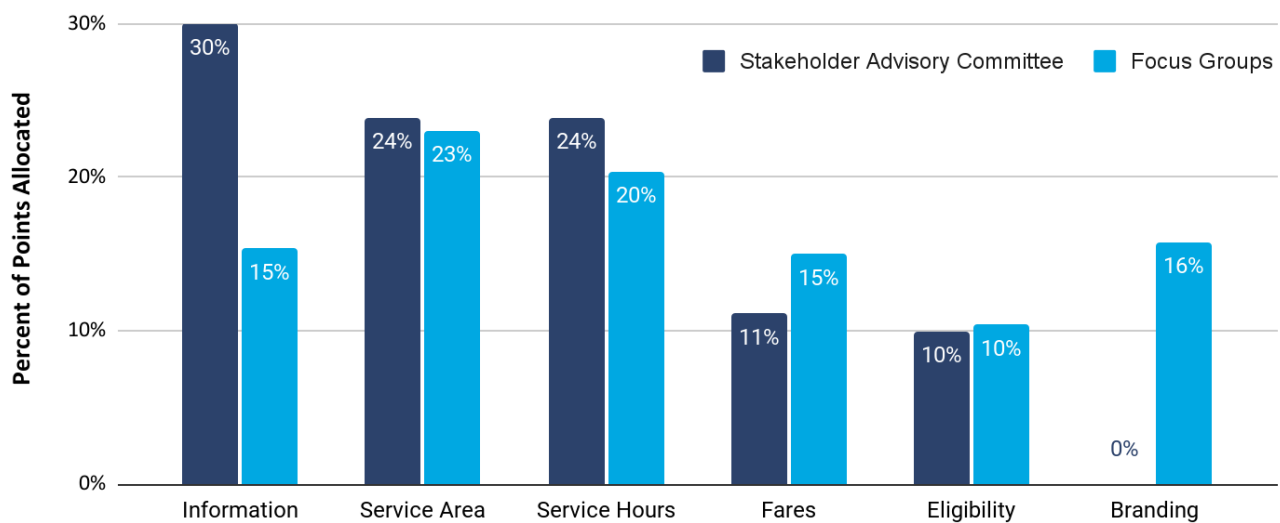
<sup>32</sup> Participants could budget 10 coins (for in-person groups) or 100 points (for the virtual session) to the 6 improvement areas to rank which were more important. For the purposes of this engagement memo, one chip is the equivalent of 10 points to the virtual participants. There were 22 overall participants, or 2,200 total points, across the two focus groups (13 participants) and SAC meeting (9 participants).



**“Information” was the highest priority for Stakeholder Committee participants**, receiving twice as much of the vote share among the SAC members than focus group participants. On the opposite end of the SAC ranking, SAC participants unanimously gave “Branding” no points, whereas focus group participants ranked this improvement area as the third highest priority with 16% of the vote share.

**For focus group participants, “Service Area” was the highest ranked improvement** with 23% of the vote share. Variation in vote totals for focus group participants was smaller than SAC participants. Essentially, the vote share was more evenly distributed across all six improvement areas among focus group participants.

Overall improvement priorities are summarized by group in **Figure 33**.



**Figure 33. Percent of Budget Allocated to Improvement Category by Group**

### 5.3 Survey

In fall 2022, a survey was conducted to solicit input from current and potential paratransit and demand-response users. The purpose of this survey was to gather feedback from current users of dial-a-ride services, as well as interested riders who may want to use these services in the future. The survey results include input from both paratransit riders (those eligible for paratransit or dial-a-ride services and use them) as well as non-riders (respondents who do not use paratransit or dial-a-ride services regardless of eligibility).

In addition to demographic questions, respondents were asked a series of questions pertaining to how they get around, why they choose certain mobility options, and their satisfaction with those options, among others. A summary of response data is provided in **Table 22**.

**Table 22. Response Statistics for *Access Will County Survey***

Overall Statistics	
Total Responses	1,226
Completion Rate	52%
Time Spent	1 minute, 23 seconds (average)
Top ZIP Codes Collected	60435 (49 responses) 60481 (40 responses) 60423 (32 responses)
Key Collection Dates <sup>33</sup>	9/26/22 (391 responses) 9/19/22 (363 responses) 10/3/22 (249 responses)

Additional detail, including a question-by-question summary of responses, is provided in [Appendix D: Additional Survey Data](#). Findings are summarized in Section 5.3.1 to Section 5.3.4. The **survey did not differentiate between paratransit and dial-a-ride services**. Unless otherwise noted, the terms are used interchangeably in survey questions and results documentation.

### 5.3.1 Findings – Information and Eligibility

- Many non-users indicated they expect having to rely on paratransit and dial-a-ride services in the future as they age, aligning with other data that suggest a possible increase in user demand in the coming years.
- Riders most frequently discovered paratransit services from social service agency referrals, highlighting a large group of potential community partners for communicating service information.
- Providing disability and senior training for dispatchers and vehicle operators may increase usability for eligible riders and trust in the system.

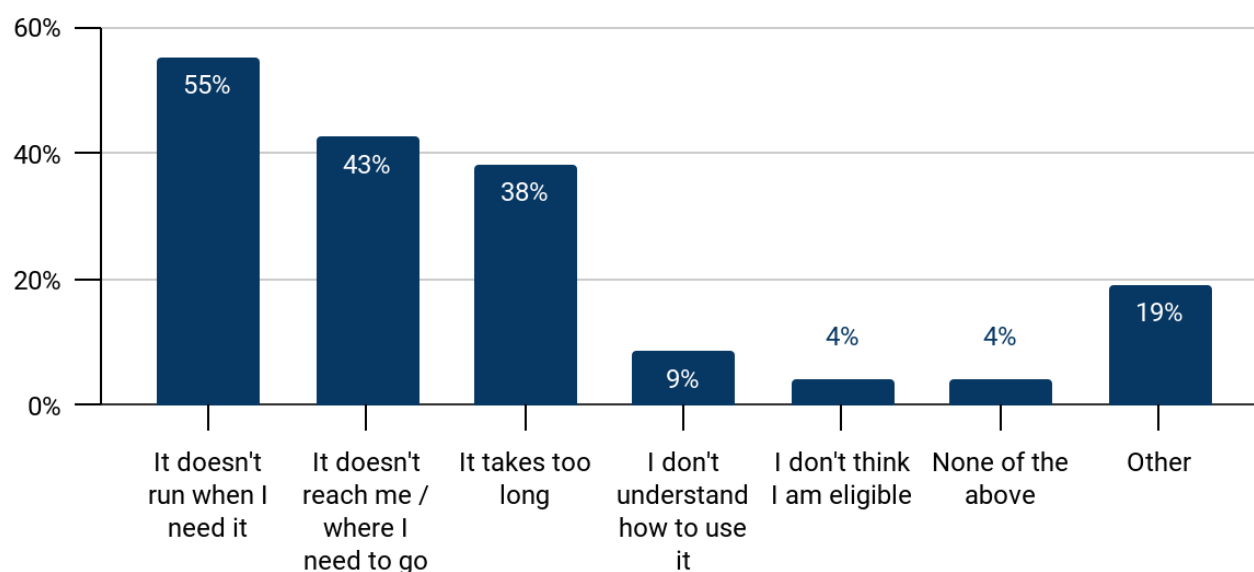
### 5.3.2 Findings – Barriers to Use

- For many respondents, both users and non-users, paratransit and dial-a-ride services are generally too slow, or the service network is too small. This poses the greatest barrier for residents who need to arrive at medical appointments or cannot drive themselves otherwise.
- Reported barriers to usage are summarized in **Figure 34**. Limited service hours was the largest barrier to usage among current riders. Non-users frequently indicated that they believe themselves to be ineligible to request paratransit service, or that they can drive themselves in personal vehicles. Many non-riders acknowledged that driving is a skill they may eventually lose, resulting in them becoming more reliant on paratransit and dial-a-ride services in the future.

---

<sup>33</sup> 80% of responses were collected on these dates, although the survey was open from 8/22/2022 to 10/10/2022.

- Only 9% of current riders marked “I don’t understand how to use it” as a barrier to paratransit services. The share of non-riders who marked this answer is twice as high at 18%.



**Figure 34. Barriers to Usage of Paratransit and Dial-a-Ride Systems**

#### Highlighted User Feedback

- “I don’t take the system for nothing more than appointments, never for pleasure. A client would be many hours getting home.”
- “Difficulty in scheduling.”
- “Difficult to use for numerous reasons”
- “May have to go early as time slot not available”
- “Connecting from one county [service] to another should be more reliable”
- “Constantly late so I get in trouble with work”

# 5.3.3 Findings – Service Quality

- As shown in **Figure 35**, a majority of paratransit users (60%) are either satisfied or very satisfied with the reservation process for Will County transportation services. Sentiments are less favorable for service hours – only 36% of paratransit users are satisfied or very satisfied with this aspect of Will County transportation services and most (56%) indicated either neutral sentiments or dissatisfaction with current service hours.
- Respondents concerned with booking trips were mainly commenting on poor booking reliability, poor customer service, or late drivers.
- Almost 80% of user respondents believe vehicle operators drive safely and a majority of users (59%) indicate drivers communicate well with riders.
- Despite high satisfaction rates, paratransit services can benefit from easier, more efficient booking and riding processes, including better customer service, routing, and communication of information.
- Desired changes to paratransit among both users and non-users are mainly concerned with increased frequency and timeliness, enhanced accessibility, and better communication of current service.

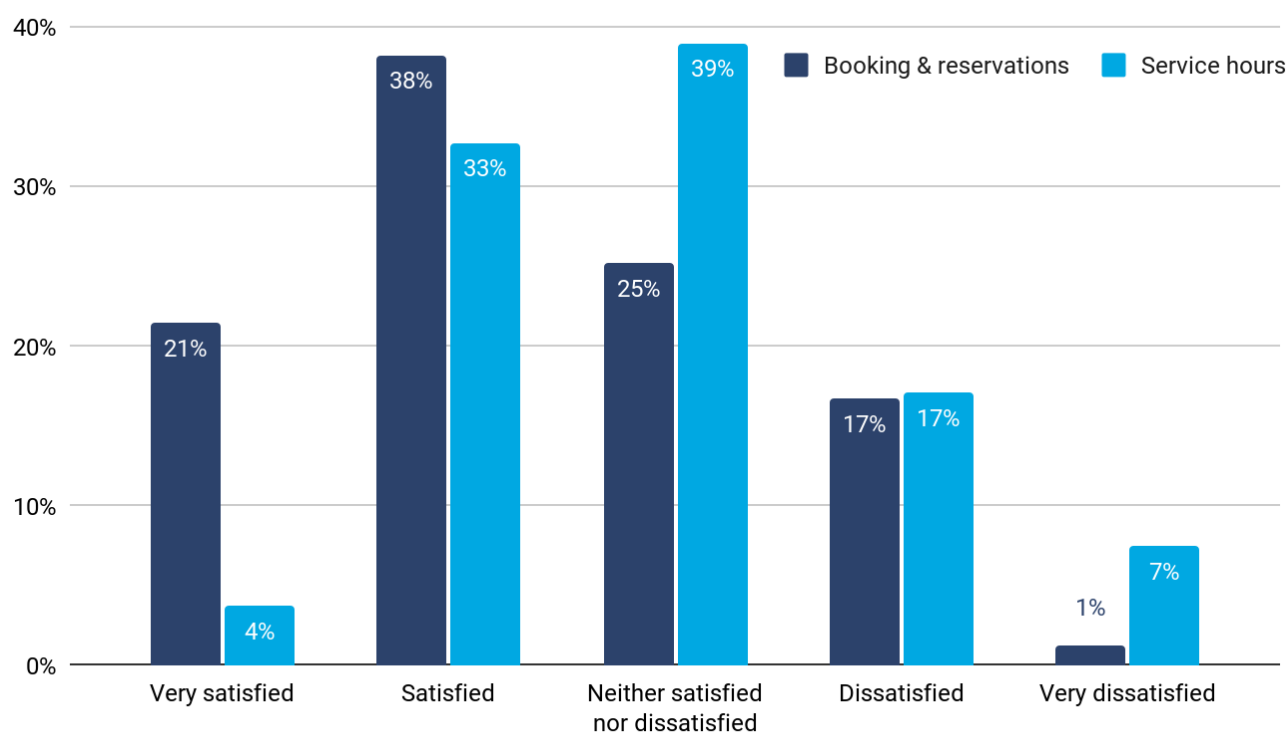


Figure 35: Satisfaction with Booking Process and Service Hours

### 5.3.4 Findings – Providers and Travel Patterns

- Of the respondents who use a transportation service in Will County, the most common were Pace ADA (26%) following by Will Ride (19%) and AMITA St. Joseph Medical Center (11%).
- Overall, rider and non-rider respondents are mostly aligned when asked where they would go using a transportation service. A notable exception occurs with commercial destinations – a greater share of current paratransit riders (24%) wish they could access more retail and grocery stores than non-riders (13%). Other common desired destinations for riders and non-riders are Chicago, Joliet, and various hospitals throughout Will County.
- The most frequently answered destinations for both current users and non-users are other towns/cities both within and outside of Will County. Chicago, Joliet, Naperville, and businesses or services therein are common destinations.


#### Key Takeaways – Public Survey

- **More than 1,200 responses were collected** online and through paper survey forms.
- Many non-user respondents indicated they expect to **rely on paratransit and dial-a-ride services in the future as they age**, echoing demographic data that suggest a possible increase in user demand in the coming years.
- Inadequate service hours, limited coverage, and slow/late service were the most common barriers to use among current riders. **Only one-third of current users are satisfied or very satisfied with existing service hours.**


# 6. Service Improvement Strategies

Dial-a-rides provide a critical mobility link for some of Will County’s most vulnerable residents, although the current structure relies heavily on individual townships and municipalities for funding and oversight. Although well-intentioned, this design is difficult for governments to manage efficiently and confusing for riders to use.


This chapter summarizes an analysis conducted to find the best overall service design for Will County. The project team used the results of existing conditions and future needs analysis, public and stakeholder engagement, and research into best practices to generate a list of recommended improvements. This information was then grouped into **six core strategies**:




**Information**  
Improving the way people find and register for service.




**Eligibility**  
Expanding eligibility to all residents 55–64 and those needing work transport.




**Service Quality**  
Improving customer service, reliability, and performance.



**Service Hours**  
Adding evening and weekend service to improve mobility for residents.



**Service Area**  
Closing gaps in coverage and helping riders reach more destinations.



**Fares**  
Developing a unified fare structure and making it easier to pay for trips.

Although some of the core strategies can be implemented independently of each other, they are best read collectively as a roadmap for the future of dial-a-ride service in Will County. The end of this roadmap — a single consolidated system covering the entire County — is described in detail as part of a seventh strategy. Launching a countywide system would **require dedicated County-level funding**. As part of this process, **townships and municipalities would no longer have to fund service** within their boundaries. For more information on funding alternatives and a proposed budget for the recommended alternatives, refer to [7. Financial Analysis](#).

## How to Read Each Improvement Strategy

Each strategy is split into five components:

- **Description of Problem/Challenge:** An overview of why the strategy should be pursued, alongside information on how the problem being addressed was identified.
- **Background and Supporting Data:** How each strategy aligns with the regional Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP), alongside other relevant context. Alignment with the HSTP is a prerequisite for some common dial-a-ride funding sources. For more information, refer to [7.2 Funding Alternatives](#).
- **Description of Proposed Solution(s):** The components that should be pursued to improve service in each area.
- **Implementation:** Start-to-finish guidance on the strategy can be launched, including information on timeline, interdependencies with prior steps, required coordination between County departments and outside groups, and associated costs. For a breakdown of launch steps by time frame instead of category, refer to [8.2 Service Changes](#).
- **Issues to Consider:** Potential roadblocks and additional implementation guidance.





## 6.1 Information

Improve the way people find and register for service.

### Description of Problem/Challenge

**Source:** Discussion with focus groups and stakeholders; technical review of existing services.

**Description:** Existing online information regarding eligibility, service area, and hours of operation is difficult to locate and sometimes contradictory. The registration processes for new riders signing up for services are often unclear. These factors present a high barrier for attracting and retaining riders.

Vehicles for each system are either unbranded, branded in operator liveries (typically Pace), or branded in township/municipality liveries. This disjointed approach may limit customer awareness of the services available to them and cause confusion regarding eligible trip types.

### Background and Supporting Data

In the 2021 *Human Services Transportation Plan Update* (HSTP), the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) identified several goals relevant to this area, including:

- Developing a regional network of mobility managers and increasing access to travel training (in-person, virtual, or pre-recorded events showing riders how to use dial-a-ride services). These changes help reduce barriers to signing up for and using transit service. Will County has already staffed the mobility manager position to provide a central point-of-contact for riders and services.
- Creating an Accessibility Infrastructure Database to make it easier for seniors and persons with disabilities to navigate transit.
- Improving collaboration between and/or consolidating similar services. Will County has already consolidated dial-a-ride service in several townships into Will-Ride. Developing a brand for Will-Ride will present a consistent and understandable service to riders.

### Description of Proposed Solution(s)

Several changes are recommended to make existing services easier to find and use, many of which involve better using technology to lower the barriers to ride. Specific recommendations include:

- **Centralizing Information:** Will County could create, host, and update a webpage showing eligibility information, contact information, hours of service, and service areas for each

existing service in the County. This webpage could also include an address-based search tool that shows riders what paratransit and/or dial-a-ride services are available to them, along with relevant contact information, eligibility rules, service hours, and service areas. A brochure (or similar printed document) could also be distributed to reach potential riders via traditional media.

- **Streamlining Eligibility Verification:** In addition to creating a centralized information database, Will County could streamline the process of onboarding new riders by providing a unified point of contact and/or application portal. When applications are received, the County could then forward them to the relevant party. Currently, riders wanting to start riding a dial-a-ride service (including the County-operated Will-Ride) must contact their township or home municipality first. This contact is typically different from the agency contacted to schedule a ride. The streamlining recommended in this strategy is intended to be an interim step on the way to full consolidation. For more information, refer to [6.2 Eligibility](#).
- **Establish a Brand for Will-Ride:** Will County could build on the existing Will-Ride brand, pairing the existing name with a logo, wordmark, and colors. All aspects of the service — including vehicle liveries, social media template posts, and other items as needed — should display this branding. Once the brand is fully developed, vehicles can be wrapped to increase awareness of the service. If desired, a social media campaign could launch alongside the new brand to take advantage of the visibility generated by the new vehicle wraps.
- **Advertising and Targeted Outreach:** Will County could look to increase public awareness and usage of Will-Ride via advertising, or through targeted outreach to residents most likely to benefit from the service. The County could partner with other public agencies (i.e. Pace, Senior Services, or the Workforce Investment Board) or private groups (i.e. Trinity Services, Catholic Charities) to identify individuals for outreach.
- **Travel Training:** Will County could partner with human service agencies (HSAs) or other municipalities to help show residents how to use paratransit and dial-a-ride services. In addition, the County can produce simple webinars or videos that give a step-by-step overview of the registration and ride process.

## Implementation

### Timing

The majority of this strategy (**Centralizing Information**, **Streamlining Eligibility Information**, **Advertising and Targeted Outreach**, and **Travel Training**) can be implemented in the short term, without dedicated County-level funding or consolidation of any existing services.

The **Establish a Brand for Will-Ride** component can be implemented as soon as funding is secured, but could be delayed until after service consolidation if desired. Will County should begin by developing the brand assets, and budget several weeks to fully roll it out across the vehicle fleet and the service's web presence. If preferred, branding adjustments could be held

back until future service consolidations are complete. Although this approach would allow the County to launch the expanded Will-Ride brand alongside a countywide service, it forfeits the brand awareness that can be built in the short- and medium-term.

### Interdependencies

The **Centralizing Information, Establish a Brand for Will-Ride, Advertising and Targeted Outreach**, and **Travel Training** strategy components can be implemented separately or together, depending on budget and staffing constraints. The Centralizing Information component should be completed as a precursor to **Streamlining Eligibility Information**.

### Coordination

This strategy would primarily be implemented through the **Will County Mobility Manager**.

- Coordination with paratransit and dial-a-ride operators will be required on an annual or semi-annual basis to maintain the accuracy of information hosted on the County website. Due to the scattered and limited nature of available data, this process will likely need to be completed manually.
- Coordination with townships and municipalities will be required on a regular basis to provide a unified rider eligibility contact. If the volume of applications received by the County grows substantially, an online platform could be implemented to automate the process.
- Coordination with other groups or agencies will be required on an as-needed basis to provide targeted outreach and travel training programs.
- Coordination with County Communications staff will be required to ensure the Will-Ride brand is developed and executed in a manner aligned with the County's overall communications strategy. Additional coordination with the County Executive's Office may be helpful in identifying ways to promote the new brand in local media.

### Cost

This strategy includes multiple components with varying levels of probable cost.

**Centralizing Information:** This task can be implemented by the Mobility Manager and other Will County staff, and therefore is not assumed to add significant costs.

- **Initial setup:** Initial setup will largely include formalizing the service hour and service area information collected for *Will County Access* into a webpage hosted on the County site. The staff time required to create this webpage will vary depending on the complexity and design of the page. If desired, 20-40 hours of additional staff time should be budgeted to create a GIS-based address search tool.
- **Semi-annual updates:** To maintain the accuracy of information presented on the County website, a semi-annual update cycle is recommended. Approximately 1 hour of staff time should be budgeted per provider for outreach in each update cycle. Additionally, 2-4 hours of staff time should be budgeted per cycle for coordination between County teams and for webpage updates. On an annual basis, approximately 24-30 staff hours will be required to

keep the webpage up to date.

- **Ongoing cost:** Outside the semi-annual data update cycle, ongoing costs (web hosting, design updates, etc.) are expected to be minimal. Depending on the structure the County uses to host GIS data, additional hosting and licensing costs may be incurred.
- **Streamlining Eligibility Verification:** Cost components to implement this strategy component are summarized below.
- **Pre-launch coordination with townships / municipalities:** Prior to launching a unified eligibility determination portal, the County should reach out to the jurisdictions that are currently responsible for determining eligibility. A point-of-contact for each jurisdiction should be identified, along with the information required for jurisdictions to make eligibility distinctions. Protocols regarding response time and responsibility for follow-up communication with potential riders should be agreed upon. A standard verification form across townships should be developed. The amount of time for County staff to complete these tasks is expected to vary, but will likely require 2-5 hours per jurisdiction.
- **Initial setup:** Once communication protocols and information requirements are finalized, an online eligibility verification request form should be built by the County. Applications should also be taken by phone from riders who do not wish to (or are unable to) apply online. Approximately 10-20 staff hours should be allocated to build and test the online eligibility form.
- **Ongoing staffing cost:** The ongoing staff cost to forward online applications to the relevant jurisdictions and handle phone requests will vary depending on the volume of requests. At launch, 5-10 staff hours per week should be budgeted for these tasks.

**Establish a Brand:** Design of the basic components of a transit brand — including the creation of a logo, wordmark, color palette, and vehicle wrap design — are expected to take a professional designer between 50 and 100 hours of effort. Depending on the scope and number of revisions requested, this labor estimate could increase. If this task is contracted to an outside firm, the total cost may include additional budget for project management outside the core design process. Time for County staff to update relevant web pages with the new Will-Ride brand should also be budgeted. Once the brand is designed, rollout will consist of wrapping vehicles and promoting the service:

- **Vehicle Wraps:** The per-vehicle cost of wraps varies based on (1) the size of the vehicle and (2) the percentage of the vehicle covered with the wrap. For a cutaway bus, partial wraps typically cost between \$3,500 and \$5,000 per vehicle. Full wraps for the same size vehicle typically cost \$7,000 to \$10,000 per vehicle. Pricing for full sized transit buses can be up to twice these values, while smaller microtransit vehicles (typically minivans) cost about half the ranges provided. The portion of the vehicle covered by the wrap can be tweaked during the design process. For example, a wrap design that covers only the rear third of the bus and the areas where logos are placed will be substantially less expensive than a full wrap. Wraps typically need to be replaced every two years. In instances where the vehicle is in a crash,

the refresh cycle will be shorter.

- **Promotional Activities:** The launch of vehicles wrapped in the new Will-Ride brand is an ideal time to promote the service in local news outlets and social media. Coverage in local news media is not expected to generate any new cost burden for the County, while the cost of social media campaigns can be scaled to the available budget.

**Advertising and Targeted Outreach:** The cost associated with this strategy can vary substantially depending on the methods pursued — advertising activities can generally be matched with available budget. The County can coordinate with human service agencies to ensure their clients are aware of Will-Ride (or other dial-a-ride services) without incurring costs beyond staff time. If advertising funds are directly available, online campaigns could be pursued.

**Travel Training:** The staff requirements and cost outlay to provide travel training to riders will vary, depending on the County's role in the process.

- Other transit providers and non-profits may already be offering travel training services. The County could extend the reach and effectiveness of these services by publicizing event times or recruiting participants.
- For County-run sessions, a capacity of between 5-20 individuals and budget of 10 staff hours (including prep, setup, and teardown) should be assumed per event.
- The staff time required to create on-demand webinars or videos posted on the County website will vary depending on the format and level of production required, but can be assumed as 10 hours at minimum.

## Issues to Consider

- Consistent work will be needed to maintain the accuracy of information shown on the County website. Pace currently hosts this information for five dial-a-ride services in the County, although it appears to be out of date.
- If the County moves to a consolidated dial-a-ride system managed by one organization, many of these steps will no longer be required.



## 6.2 Eligibility

Expand eligibility to residents 55–64 and those needing work transport.

### Description of Problem/Challenge

**Source:** Technical review of existing service designs; discussion with stakeholders and focus groups.

**Description:** More than 95% of Will County residents live in a township where some form of demand-response transit is available. Service in these townships is typically open to seniors and persons with disabilities, although specific eligibility requirements (such as age thresholds) vary by service. In addition, some groups (such as persons needing transportation to work) are only eligible for certain services. These disjointed eligibility requirements make it harder for residents and social service organizations to understand if they (or their clients) can use demand-response transit. Eligibility is typically restricted to limit operating costs.

This strategy is focused on expanding and standardizing eligibility requirements across townships that already provide dial-a-ride service. Based on discussion with stakeholders, there is little appetite for supporting expanded and unified eligibility requirements with additional township-level funding. As such, this strategy is most likely to be implemented through a County-funded Will-Ride service. For coverage expansions to areas that do not currently provide dial-a-ride service, refer to the [6.4 Service Area](#).

### Background and Supporting Data

In the 2021 *Human Services Transportation Plan Update* (HSTP), CMAP identified improving access to suburban jobs for lower-income residents as a priority goal. Workforce transportation is provided through the Will-Ride service, but coverage for employees in other parts of the County is limited.

### Description of Proposed Solution(s)

Existing services almost-universally accommodate seniors (65+) and riders with disabilities (18+). This strategy contemplates expanding service to two additional groups:

- **Residents Needing Transport to Work:** In suburban and rural areas with limited transit options, lack of access to a personal vehicle can become an insurmountable obstacle to employment. The Will County Workforce Investment Board provides discounted Pace Bus

passes to some residents, but the footprint of the Pace network in Will County is broadly limited to the Joliet area. Across the 18 townships with dial-a-ride service, up to 63,000 residents may need transportation to work<sup>34</sup>. Approximately 23,000 of these residents live in townships where existing services allow them to travel to work, leaving up to 40,000 residents unserved by the current structure.

- **Residents Age 55 – 64:** All current services in the county allow seniors to ride, although the exact minimum age varies by service between 55 and 65. In car-dependent areas, residents in this age bracket may begin to feel that their mobility options are limited. Slightly more than half of non-disabled residents in this age bracket are eligible for existing services. By implementing a uniform minimum age of 60 to ride, two-thirds of all non-disabled residents in the age bracket (12,000 additional people) would become eligible across all the existing services. If the uniform minimum age was dropped further to 55, a total of 30,000 additional residents across the existing services would become eligible.

In addition to expanding service to the two groups noted above, service could be expanded to the **general public**. Since the current eligibility requirements (seniors, disabled, or needing work transportation) cover the vast majority of likely riders, removing eligibility restrictions is not anticipated to lead to a substantial increase in rider demand if the service remains in its current form. However, if a mobile booking app and other customer-friendly steps are taken, this could result in significantly higher ridership. By removing eligibility requirements, the change would simplify the marketing and administration of the service(s). In addition to rider benefits, the positive externalities associated with opening service to the general public — such as reduced vehicle emissions, improved roadway safety, and lower highway maintenance and expansion costs — can help the County meet future transportation and sustainability goals.

## Implementation

### Timing

Implementing the rider eligibility changes prescribed in this strategy is a medium- to long-term effort (further than 24 months out). that will likely require a dedicated funding stream at the County level.

### Interdependencies

The eligibility changes prescribed in this strategy will likely require passage of a dedicated funding stream at the County level prior to implementation. Notes on each aspect of the strategy are summarized below.

---

<sup>34</sup> Based on 2017-2021 5-Year American Community Survey (ACS) estimates. Calculated as the number of non-disabled residents aged 16-64 living in households *with no access to a personal vehicle*, plus one-half of the number of non-disabled residents aged 16-64 living in households *with one personal vehicle*.



- **Residents Needing Transportation to Work:** These riders are already eligible to use Will-Ride, and currently account for about one-quarter of all trips on the service (based on analysis of July 2022 trip data). The County should expand the number of jurisdictions where these riders are eligible as existing services are consolidated into Will-Ride. For more information on adding evening and overnight service to better accommodate residents needing work transport, refer to the *Augment Existing Services with Evening and Weekend Options* strategy.
- **Residents Age 55-64:** As an interim step, Will-Ride can drop the minimum age for the service from 60 to 55. Similar to work transportation, this eligibility rule will then spread around the County as existing services are consolidated into Will-Ride.
- **General Public:** This potential future expansion should be explored after implementing the other recommended eligibility changes Countywide.

#### Coordination

This strategy would primarily be implemented through the **Will County Mobility Manager**.

- Coordination with the townships and municipalities that currently sponsor dial-a-ride service to articulate the benefit of eligibility expansion and to seek additional funding.

#### Cost

The additional cost associated with implementing the eligibility changes prescribed in this strategy is calculated below.

- **Cost per Trip:** Over the period 2019 to 2021, it cost between \$40 and \$50 to operate each Will-Ride trip. After accounting for fare revenue and 80% of call center costs subsidized by Pace, the local share of this cost is between \$30 and \$35 per trip.
- **Trip Generation:** Based on the current service area, approximately 42,000 people are eligible for Will-Ride (including residents over 60, residents with disabilities, and residents needing transportation to work). Eligible residents represent about 35% of all residents. Based on pre-Covid boardings and current population data, the Will-Ride service area generates between 240 and 270 annual boardings for every 1,000 currently-eligible residents.
- **New Eligible Riders by Service Change:** The number of Will County residents made newly-eligible for dial-a-ride service is summarized in **Table 23**. These figures only account for the areas of the County with at least some form of dial-a-ride service today.

**Table 23: Additional Eligible Riders from Proposed Service Design Changes**

Eligibility Changes	Will-Ride Service Area Only	All Townships with Service
<b>Residents Needing Transportation to Work</b>	N/A, already served	40,000 additional eligible residents
<b>All Residents, Age 60–64</b>	N/A, already served	12,000 additional eligible residents
<b>All Residents, Age 55–59</b>	8,000 additional eligible residents	30,000 additional eligible residents
<b>General Public, Under Age 55</b>	Up to 65,000 additional eligible residents	Up to 400,000 additional eligible residents

- **Additional Ridership from Eligibility Adjustments:** As noted above, between 240 and 270 Will-Ride boardings are generated annually for every 1,000 eligible residents. This rate is based on currently-eligible populations, who are much more likely to use the service than the additional groups this strategy suggests making eligible.
- **Age 55–59:** As a conservative estimate, residents in this category are assumed to produce one-third the number of Will-Ride trips as currently-eligible residents. Each additional 1,000 residents in this category is assumed to generate between 80 and 90 boardings each year. With 8,000 additional eligible residents across the Will-Ride service area, a total of 640 to 720 trips are assumed to be added by this change each year. At an assumed local share of \$40 per trip, this equates to an additional \$25,000 – \$29,000 per year across Will-Ride.
- **General Public:** As a conservative estimate, residents in this category are assumed to produce only 5% the number of Will-Ride trips as currently-eligible residents. Each additional 1,000 residents in this category is assumed to generate between 12 and 15 boardings each year. With 65,000 additional eligible residents across the Will-Ride service area, an approximate total of 780 to 980 trips are assumed to be added by this change each year. At an assumed local share of \$40 per trip, this equates to an additional \$31,000 – \$39,000 per year across the current Will-Ride service area. Costs are not expected to exceed this amount, provided the service is modified as recommended.

## Issues to Consider

- The current eligibility requirements for Will-Ride (seniors, disabled, or needing work transportation) cover the vast majority of likely riders. As a result, removing eligibility restrictions is not anticipated to lead to a substantial increase in rider demand if the service remains in its current form. However, if the general public are able to use the service, and a mobile booking app is introduced along with other customer-friendly initiatives, could grow significantly.



## 6.3 Service Quality

Improve customer service, reliability, and performance.

### Description of Problem/Challenge

For many riders, dial-a-ride service is the only way to access goods and services. When service is unreliable, riders risk losing their primary way of accessing medical appointments, jobs, and school. During the focus groups conducted for *Access Will County*, participants voiced concerns over the quality and reliability of existing service. Issues raised typically fell into one of a few categories:

- **Customer service:** Concerns about poor experiences with call center staff, unsafe and/or unhelpful driver behavior, and complaints not being addressed.
- **Trip scheduling:** Difficulty registering for service, difficulty scheduling trips, trips at preferred times being unavailable, and particular difficulty scheduling wheelchair trips due to lack of supply.
- **Ride experience:** Concerns about late or missing pickups, inefficient routing, late arrivals, and dirty and/or unsafe vehicles. Participants shared stories about being stranded when drivers were late or did not arrive at all.

The volume of feedback received highlights some of the challenges of providing dial-a-ride service under the current, largely-decentralized model. Call center staff can be required to know the booking rules for several services at once, some of which operate in different counties. Dispatchers and drivers have to accommodate trip requests on multiple services and service types, each with different eligibility rules, levels of customer assistance, and fare policies. Customers may also approach services with unclear or unrealistic expectations — especially around advance booking rules, routing, and the degree of assistance that drivers are allowed to provide.

### Background and Supporting Data

The nature of service quality complaints received is tied to the way each existing service is operated. Existing dial-a-rides in Will County typically use one of two models:

- **Pace-Operated:** Funding jurisdictions pool resources and sign an operating contract with Pace. Dial-a-ride service is delivered by Pace and its subcontractors. This model prioritizes scale, coverage, and efficiency — riders benefit from larger service areas with more destinations, while rider commingling between services improves efficiency. However, introducing layers of contractors and subcontractors limits the accountability of each involved group, as well as the ability of the overall organization to quickly and effectively address rider complaints.

- **Municipally-Operated:** Services are operated directly by the municipality or township that funds the service. This model prioritizes quality of service, as the municipality or township is more clearly accountable to its riders. However, this approach limits the number of destinations riders can reach, results in duplicated services, and requires governments to develop new competencies in staffing and operating transit services.

## Description of Proposed Solution(s)

To realize the benefits of a large, consolidated system — including scale, coverage, and efficiency — while maintaining effective ways to respond to rider complaints and quality of service issues, the following steps should be taken:

- **Establish performance and customer service targets:** Will County should begin by identifying a set of clear and measurable benchmarks for dial-a-ride service. These benchmarks should be separate from efficiency goals (overall service cost, cost per trip, utilization, etc.), and can include the items listed below. To minimize staff time spent tracking, selection of a subset of key metrics from the list below is recommended. The County can then begin tracking the selected metrics for Will-Ride (and partnering with other services to track the same metrics voluntarily). Sample metrics are outlined in **Table 24**.

**Table 24: Potential Metrics for Tracking Service Performance and Quality**

Metric	Description	Suggested Benchmark
<b>Ride Availability</b>	The percentage of trip requests where the scheduled pickup time varies from the requested pickup time by more than 30 minutes.	Percent of trip requests deferred: - Good: Under 5% - Average: 5-10% - Poor: More than 10%
<b>On-Time Performance</b>	The average time between a passenger's scheduled pickup time and the actual pickup time.	Minutes: - Good: Under 10 min - Average: 10-20 min - Poor: More than 20 min
<b>Customer Service</b>	The rating provided by riders post-trip, ranked from one to five stars. Riders can also be asked to rate specific aspects of their experience, such as booking, pickup, or wait time.	Stars (out of five): Good: 4.8+ Avg: 4.6+ Poor: <4.4
<b>Accessibility</b>	The percentage of trip requests <i>with wheelchair accommodation required</i> where the scheduled pickup time varies from the requested pickup time by more than 30 minutes. The value should not differ from Ride Availability (see above).	Percent of wheelchair trip requests deferred: - Good: Under 5% - Average: 5-10% - Poor: More than 10%
<b>Cancellation Rate</b>	The percentage of scheduled trips either canceled or rescheduled by the operator.	Percent of trips canceled or rescheduled : - Good: Under 1% - Average: 1-3% - Poor: More than 3%

- **Enforce targets through operations contract:** Pace-operated services, including Will-Ride, are typically governed by 10-year operating contracts. To ensure all parties are equally invested in raising service quality, the County's final list of quality benchmarks should be incorporated into the next Will-Ride operating contract. At minimum, the contract should include (1) a description of each quality metric, (2) target thresholds for each metric, (3) an agreed-upon standard for how each metric will be measured and calculated, and (4) penalties for non-attainment. If desired, the County can establish contract incentives for exceeding quality targets.
- **Collect rider feedback on an ongoing basis:** At present, customer satisfaction with Will-Ride (and peer services around Will County) is not consistently tracked. Riders have the ability to submit complaints to Pace or their home jurisdiction, but feedback from focus groups shows riders do not feel that this process is effective. The County should work with Will-Ride's operating partner to survey riders on a regular basis. Riders would ideally have the opportunity to provide feedback after each trip, likely in the form of an automated one-question SMS survey asking riders to rate their trip from one to five stars. Alternatively, short surveys can be sent monthly, quarterly, or semi-annually to registered riders via phone or email.
- **Clearly communicate the purpose of dial-a-ride service to users:** In addition to setting and enforcing service quality benchmarks, Will County should make sure the service information and eligibility application webpages (refer to [6.1 Information](#) for more details) address some common rider complaints about dial-a-ride service. In particular, riders should understand that (1) trips have an advance booking requirement, (2) trips will likely be shared with other passengers and routes may not be direct, and (3) drivers are unable to provide door-to-door service. If desired, new riders applying through the County's application could be directed to read and affirmatively agree to these limitations as part of the sign up process.

## Implementation

### Timing

Will County can then begin tracking the selected quality of service metrics for Will-Ride (and other existing services) immediately using data provided voluntarily by Pace. Over the longer term, the metrics can be tracked and enforced through the Will-Ride operating contract. If Will-Ride service is expanded dramatically prior to the expiration of the current contract, a new agreement can likely be negotiated sooner.

### Interdependencies

- Performance targets can be finalized in the short-term, and data can be requested from Pace to understand how the current Will-Ride service performs against proposed thresholds. Adding performance targets into the operations contract is contingent upon expiration of the current contract (or a dramatic change in the structure of Will-Ride).
- The timeline for rolling out regular rider surveys will depend on the selected method and

numbers of partner organizations. For example, a quarterly email outreach to registered Will-Ride patrons can be completed in-house by County staff. In contrast, a more robust post-ride SMS survey would require integration with the Pace dispatch system (to understand when rides end).

- Website updates can happen independently of the other elements of this strategy.

#### Coordination

- This strategy would primarily be implemented through the **Will County Mobility Manager**, with potential additional involvement from **Communications** staff (for ongoing rider outreach and website updates) and the **County Executive's Office** (for contracting discussions).
- Ongoing coordination with dial-a-ride operating partners will be required to track performance against agreed-upon benchmarks, as well as for survey administration.

#### Cost

The costs associated with implementing this strategy will vary substantially based on the structure of the next operating contract for Will-Ride. It is likely that by including service quality benchmarks and non-attainment penalties, the County will be charged a marginally-higher per-hour operating cost than under the current structure. This change is anticipated as a result of the additional financial risk borne by the operating partner under the revised structure. Additional potential costs could arise from including performance incentives in the new operating contract.

### Issues to Consider

- Service quality metrics should be easy to track and calculate. To limit the additional workload generated by introducing performance metrics, the County should consider tracking no more than 3-4 specific metrics.



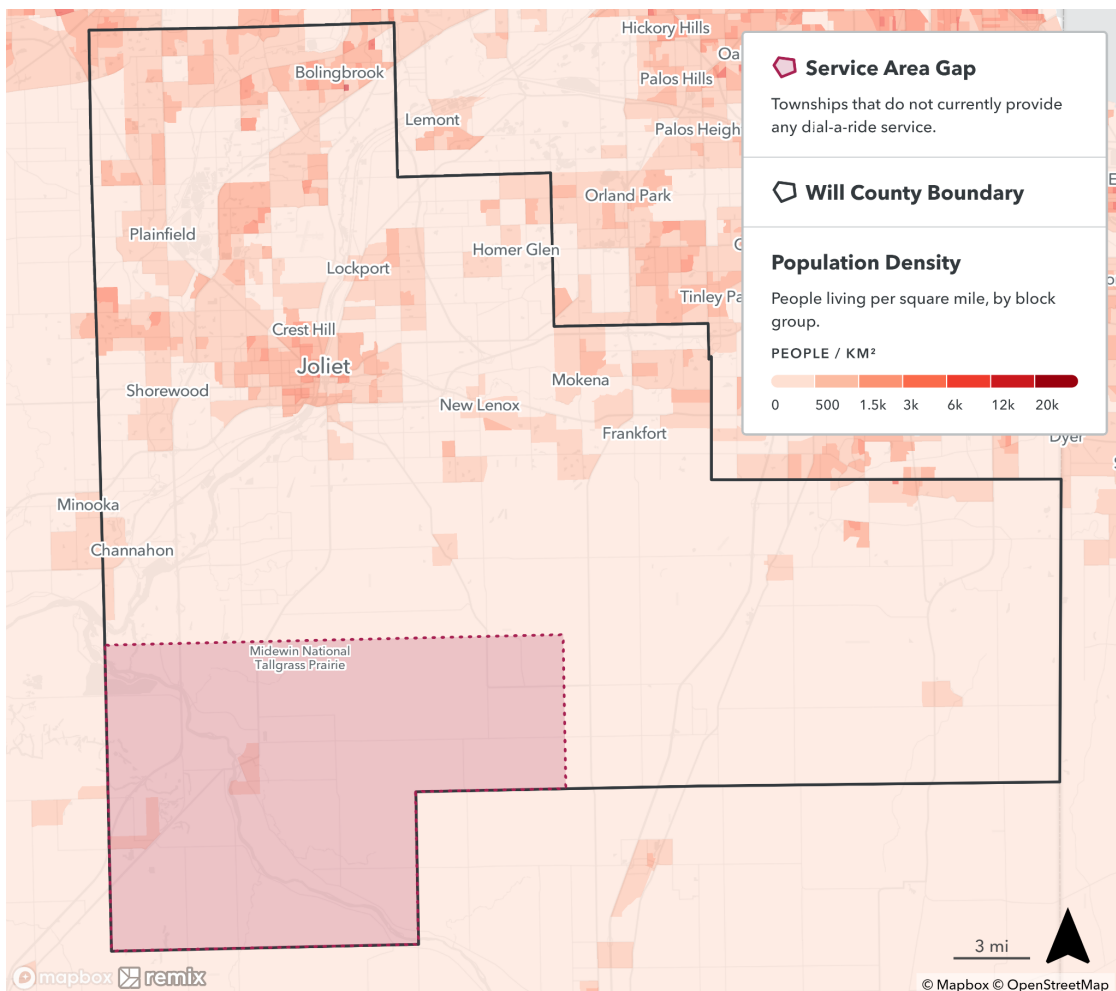
## 6.4 Service Area

Close gaps in coverage and help riders reach more destinations.

### Description of Problem/Challenge

**Source:** Technical review of existing service coverage.

**Description:** Six Will County townships do not currently provide any dial-a-ride service. These townships (Wilmington, Florence, Wilton, Reed, Custer, and Wesley) are clustered in the southwestern portion of the County, as shown below in **Figure 36**. The area is predominantly rural, with approximately 18,000 residents living across the six townships.



**Figure 36.** Current Service Area Gap in Southwest Will County



Demographic data suggests that despite the low population density of these areas, they could benefit substantially from dial-a-ride service. The six unserved townships all have a higher proportion of seniors than the County as a whole. By median age, the unserved cluster contains three of the four oldest townships in Will County.

## Background and Supporting Data

Will County is close to entirely eliminating geographic gaps in dial-a-ride coverage, with existing services covering more than 95% of the total population. Closing these coverage gaps is one of the primary goals of the overall *Access Will County* study.

## Description of Proposed Solution(s)

The **Will-Ride service area should be expanded** to include Wilmington, Florence, Wilton, Reed, Custer, and Wesley townships. Previous discussions regarding expanding the Will-Ride service area to this area have faltered due to a hesitance from the townships to provide the necessary funding. Nevertheless, expansion of Will-Ride into these currently-unserved areas offers both immediate and long-term strategic benefits:

- Expansion into the six unserved townships completely **closes all remaining geographic coverage gaps**. Following the expansion, every senior and disabled resident in Will County would be able to access at least some form of dial-a-ride transportation.
- Adding six new townships to Will-Ride **positions the service as the “default” dial-a-ride provider** in Will County. After closing the remaining geographic gaps, Will-Ride will serve more than half of all townships in the County. The relatively easy win from adding these townships can be used to generate momentum for further consolidation of services into Will-Ride, moving the County towards one unified dial-a-ride system.
- If the townships are able to join under the current (township-funded) Will-Ride structure, service can likely be launched as soon as administratively possible. If the townships are unable to join without at least some of the cost offset by County funding, the service expansion will have to wait until the County is able to identify a dedicated funding stream.

## Implementation

### Timing

This strategy can generally be implemented as soon as funding is secured. Funding can come from the townships joining Will-Ride under the current structure (leading to the quickest expansion of service), or from the County identifying a dedicated funding stream for Will-Ride.

### Interdependencies

Although this strategy calls for six townships to be added to Will-Ride, each township can be added independently as funding agreements are finalized. Addition of dial-a-ride service in adjacent communities can create political momentum for service expansion in the last unserved

areas. Addition of all six remaining townships will prove to be the most equitable option, and will contribute to making the service less confusing for riders.

### Coordination

This strategy would primarily be implemented through the **Will County Mobility Manager**.

- Ongoing coordination with the townships funding new service will be required for eligibility verification and billing purposes.

### Cost

Under the current funding structure for Will-Ride, the costs of providing service in each township are borne by the townships benefitting from the service. The County does not currently fund the day-to-day operation of Will-Ride beyond staffing the Mobility Manager position. Costs to expand service into the six unserved townships can broadly be divided into pre-launch expenses and ongoing operational costs.

**Pre-Launch Expenses:** This task primarily consists of the staff time required to negotiate with each township added to Will-Ride. The time required for this task will likely vary by township, but as a rough estimate can be assumed as 20-40 hours of staff time per jurisdiction.

### **Ongoing Operational Expenses:**

- **Cost per Trip:** Over the period 2019 to 2021, it cost between \$40 and \$50 to operate each Will-Ride trip. After accounting for fare revenue and 80% of call center costs subsidized by Pace, the local share of this cost is between \$30 and \$35 per trip.
- **Expected Boardings:** Based on pre-Covid boardings and current population data, the Will-Ride service area generates between 80 and 100 annual boardings per 1,000 residents. Assuming pre-Covid ridership levels, and a similar trip generation rate for the newly-added townships, between 1,400 and 1,800 trips are expected to be added annually across the six currently-unserved townships.
- **Cost to Townships:** The anticipated annual local share cost per township for Will-Ride service is shown in **Table 25**. These estimates are based on pre-Covid ridership and the current operating contract with Pace. These costs will vary if the contract structure is changed.

**Table 25: Additional Trips Generated by Closing Current Service Gaps**

Township	Population	Expected Annual Trips	Expected Annual Local Share (\$) <sup>35</sup>
Custer	1,650	130 – 170	\$5,200 – \$7,700
Florence	840	70 – 90	\$2,800 – \$4,100
Reed	7,040	550 – 700	\$22,000 – \$31,500
Wesley	1,920	150 – 190	\$6,000 – \$8,600
Wilmington	5,930	470 – 590	\$18,800 – \$26,700
Wilton	920	70 – 90	\$2,800 – \$4,100

## Issues to Consider

- For more information on available funding mechanisms for expanded dial-a-ride service, refer to [7.2 Funding Alternatives](#).
- Will County has previously worked to engage the six currently-unserved townships in Will-Ride. However, the townships indicated they did not believe there was sufficient demand to justify providing service. If townships are unwilling to subsidize the cost of Will-Ride service in their jurisdictions, a dedicated County-level funding source will need to be identified prior to service expansion.
- The ridership and cost estimates presented in this section are based on current eligibility restrictions and hours of service. Once these parameters are adjusted, the number of trips expected to be generated by the six currently-unserved townships will grow.
  - For more information on the anticipated ridership growth from adjusting eligibility requirements, refer to [6.2 Eligibility](#).
  - For more information on the anticipated ridership growth from expanding the hours of operation, refer to [6.5 Service Hours](#).

<sup>35</sup> Based on an assumed local share cost per trip of \$40 – \$45. Costs escalated from a 2019 – 2021 local share cost per trip of \$30 – \$35.



## 6.5 Service Hours

Add evening and weekend service to improve mobility for residents.

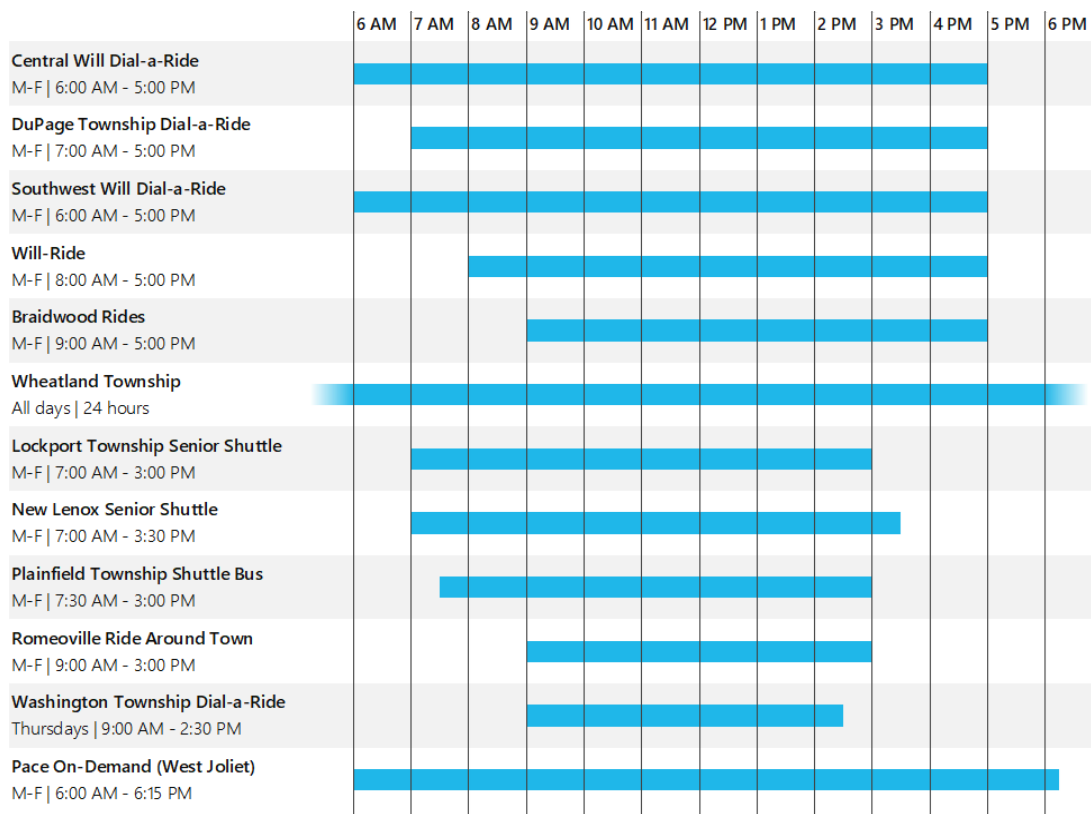
### Description of Problem/Challenge

**Source:** Discussion with focus groups and stakeholders

**Description:** Across the County, existing services operate on weekdays only, typically between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM. Although these service hours accommodate the majority of trips for senior citizens, they limit the number of other rider groups who can benefit from the services. For example, limited coverage during peak commute times makes it difficult for residents needing transportation for work to use dial-a-ride services, even if they are eligible.

### Background and Supporting Data

The span of service for each existing dial-a-ride service in Will County is illustrated in **Figure 37**.



**Figure 37. Span of Service for Existing Dial-a-Rides**

As shown in Figure 37, late-night and weekend coverage is very limited — only Wheatland Township allows trips to be booked at these times. To better match vehicle supply with rider demand during these slower periods, overnight and weekend trip requests are typically fulfilled with taxi services (rather than dispatching dedicated transit vehicles).

## Description of Proposed Solution(s)

The **hours of service for Will-Ride should be expanded** to a minimum of 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM on weekdays, and 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM on weekends. Expanding weekday service hours will allow more riders needing transportation for work to benefit from Will-Ride. Meanwhile, adding weekend service hours will address a common point of rider feedback and allow new trip types.

- **Phased Rollout of Overnight Service for Work Trips:** Will County is home to a significant and growing contraction of warehousing, transportation, and logistics development. This development is staffed by an expanding number of second and third-shift workers. About 25,000 Will County residents leave for work between 4:00 PM and midnight, with a further 21,000 residents leaving for work between midnight and 5:00 AM.<sup>36</sup> In total, about 15% of Will County residents start their commutes between 4:00 PM and 5:00 AM.

The Will-Ride service area does not currently include the parts of the County — largely but not exclusively the IL-53 corridor south of Joliet — with the greatest density of second and third-shift jobs. Additionally, the current service area largely lacks the population density required to support overnight service. As the Will-Ride service area is expanded to include the western portion of Will County, overnight service should be launched to provide these employees with safe, affordable transportation to work. Although overnight service can practically be launched as soon as funding is available, service area expansion is recommended as a precedent step to ensure adequate ridership and resources.

## Implementation

### Timing

This strategy can be implemented as soon as the necessary funding is secured (either via the participating townships or the County).

- If the townships currently involved in Will-Ride have the appetite for expanding service hours under the current funding structure, expanded service hours can likely be launched within the next 24 months (two budget cycles).
- If the additional service hours are not able to be funded without a dedicated revenue stream from the County, an additional 24 months (two budget cycles) should be added to the launch timeline. This additional time will be necessary for the County to draft, approve, and implement a transit funding stream.

<sup>36</sup> US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017-2021 5-Year Estimates (Table B08132)

### Interdependencies

To avoid confusing riders and complicating operations, launching expanded service hours in only some of the Will-Ride townships should be avoided. Expanded hours should only be launched once funding is secured (whether by coordination with townships on an individual basis or by provision of County funding) across the entire Will-Ride service area.

### Coordination

This strategy would primarily be implemented through the **Will County Mobility Manager**.

- Outreach to the townships funding Will-Ride will be required to articulate the benefits of expanded service hours and to seek funding.
- Coordination with the County Executive's Office can help secure County-level transit funding.

### Cost

Under the current funding structure for Will-Ride, the costs of providing service in each township are borne by the townships benefitting from the service. The County does not currently fund the day-to-day operation of Will-Ride beyond staffing the Mobility Manager position. Costs to expand service hours for townships already participating in Will-Ride can broadly be divided into pre-launch expenses and ongoing operational costs.

**Pre-Launch Expenses:** This task primarily consists of the staff time required to negotiate with each township participating in Will-Ride. The time required for this task will likely vary by township, but as a rough estimate can be assumed as a one-time staff expenditure of 20-40 hours of staff time per jurisdiction.

**Ongoing Operational Expenses:** Operational expenses associated with expanding the hours of operation for Will-Ride across the existing service area are summarized below.

- **Cost per Trip:** Over the period 2019 to 2021, it cost between \$40 and \$50 to operate each Will-Ride trip. After accounting for fare revenue and 80% of call center costs subsidized by Pace, the local share of this cost is between \$30 and \$35 per trip.
- **Growth Assumptions:** The proposed changes roughly double the number of hours Will-Ride operates, growing from 45 to 86 service hours each week. However, since the current service hours encompass the busiest hours of the week for trip requests, ridership — and cost — are not expected to grow linearly with the number of service hours operated. Assuming pre-Covid ridership levels as a base, weekday ridership is expected to grow about 35% across the current service area with expanded service hours only. With both expanded weekday hours and new weekend service, total ridership across the current service area is expected to grow by about 50%.
- **New Trips:** In the last year prior to Covid-19, Will-Ride completed 10,750 trips. Using this value as a baseline, expanding weekday service hours is expected to add between 2,800 and 4,200 trips annually across the existing service area. Expanding weekday service and adding

weekend service is expected to generate between 4,800 and 6,400 additional trips annually across the existing service area.

- **Cost to Townships:** The anticipated annual local share cost per township for Will-Ride service is broken out in **Table 26**. These estimates are based on pre-Covid ridership, current population data, and the current operating contract with Pace.

**Table 26: Additional Trips from Extending Service Hours for Current Will-Ride Service**

Township	Population	Expected Additional Annual Trips	Expected Annual Local Share (\$) <sup>37</sup>
Frankfort	59,800	2,200 - 2,900	\$86,000 - \$130,000
Green Garden	3,900	140 - 180	\$5,600 - \$8,100
Peotone	4,400	160 - 220	\$6,400 - 9,900
Monee	15,500	560 - 740	\$22,000 - \$33,000
Will	1,800	60 - 80	\$2,400 - \$3,600
Crete	23,800	850 - 1,150	\$34,400 - \$51,300
Washington	24,600	900 - 1,200	\$36,000 - \$53,100

## Issues to Consider

- The additional service hours proposed in this strategy are expected to produce fewer boardings per hour than the currently-operated hours. As a result, the fleet size operating during these additional hours will be smaller than that required at peak times.
- Taxis and/or ride-hail services could potentially be used for overnight service in the long-term. However, ride-hail services in particular are a poor fit to serve the recommended additional hours in the current Will-Ride service area, as these services require a number of vehicles to already be on the road to accept trip requests. In lower-density areas, and particularly at night, this service prerequisite is unlikely to be met.

<sup>37</sup> Based on an assumed local share cost per trip of \$40 - \$45. Costs escalated from a 2019 - 2021 local share cost per trip of \$30 - \$35.





## 6.6 Fares

Develop a unified fare structure and make it easier to pay for trips.

### Description of Problem/Challenge

**Source:** Decision with focus groups; technical review of existing fare structures; discussion with Pace.

**Description:** Existing fare structures vary greatly by service — current models in place in the County include fare-free operation, solicitation of suggested donations, collection of flat per-trip fares, and collection of variable distance-based fares. Services typically accommodate both full-fare and reduced-fare riders. Fares are usually collected in cash only, which can increase vehicle dwell times at stops (reducing the number of trips a vehicle can complete in a given amount of time) and increase operational overhead (as staff have to collect, count, and deposit cash fares). Particularly in larger/coordinated systems, these disparate fare structures and cash-only fare policies have the potential to confuse riders and complicate operations.

### Background and Supporting Data

In the 2021 *Human Services Transportation Plan Update* (HSTP), CMAP identified coordinating fare media across providers and implementing capped fares for certain trip types as priority goals. In peer counties, Ride Lake County caps fares for trips over 10 miles in length, while McRide (McHenry County) collects distance-based fares for trips over 5 miles in length.

### Description of Proposed Solution(s)

Three primary changes are recommended to improve fare media and policy coordination:

- **Adopt a Unified Fare Policy:** Will County should adopt a unified fare policy for all services combined into Will-Ride. The current Will-Ride fare policy – \$2.00 one-way for trips that begin and end in the same township and \$4.00 one-way for trips that cross township boundaries – offers multiple benefits. Namely, the system avoids the complication of variable per-mile fares, and aligns with the capped fare structure recommended in the HSTP. Additional changes to the system are recommended to improve the structure for a larger, consolidated system:
  - **Collect fares in lieu of suggested donations:** Currently, passenger revenue is generated through suggested donations instead of fares. To help Will-Ride transition to

a larger, more unified system, and to lay the necessary groundwork for future electronic fare card integration, fares should be collected instead of donations.

**Note:** Some operating funds for the current Will-Ride service are distributed through AgeGuide (the Northeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging). AgeGuide requires grant recipients to collect suggested donations in lieu of fares, although Will-Ride users almost exclusively donate the suggested amount. As such, this terminology change — from suggested donations to fares — cannot be implemented until Will-Ride is funded without passing grants through AgeGuide. Moving to a consolidated, countywide system will position Will County to directly receive Federal grants. Alternatively, the County could seek to negotiate an exemption with AgeGuide. Implementing a standardized fare structure is an important precedent step to enabling electronic and tap-to-pay fare collection, which will substantially improve the rider experience for mobility-limited users.

- **Set distance-based fare categories:** The vast majority of residents do not have an intuitive understanding of where township boundaries fall. Similarly, the distribution of services – jobs, medical care, and other destinations – does not respect township boundaries. To create a more equitable fare structure, fare levels should be set on distance: trips under 5 miles cost \$2.00 one-way, while longer trips cost \$4.00 one-way.
- **Add a new fare level for the longest trips:** Will-Ride maintains a generous service area policy, allowing trips up to 10 miles outside participating jurisdictions (including to out-of-County and out-of-state destinations). The County should consider adding a new fare category, likely to be set at \$6.00 one-way for trips over 10 miles, to better match fares with the cost of providing service.
- **(Optional) Implement reduced fares for core rider groups:** Some peer services, most notably McRide, provide less-expensive fares for seniors and residents with disabilities. If Will-Ride is opened to the general public, higher fares could be charged to the new rider groups (potentially \$4/\$8 one-way instead of \$2/\$4) while offering a low cost option for those unable to afford taxis or trips on ride-hailing services. This option could assuage partner concerns about broadly eliminating eligibility requirements, at the cost of complicating the overall fare structure. Reduced-fare cards could be financed and distributed through a partner agency, such as the Will County Workforce Development Board.
- **Enable Electronic Fare Collection:** Currently, existing services collect fares via cash only. This policy can lengthen vehicle dwell times, as the bus is stationary while customers search for the correct number and denomination of bills at pick-up. The mechanics of cash fares — collecting, processing, and depositing fares each day — also adds additional staff time. Will County should require operating companies to use modern trip booking software that allows

for fare payment at the time of booking. Modern scheduling software allows users to save debit/credit cards to their rider profiles, enabling the user (or call center staff) to charge rides to a card already on file. In addition to decreasing dwell times during pickups, robust rider profiles will help call center staff save time when booking trips for frequent riders. To continue serving unbanked customers equitably, the County should ensure the option to pay fares in cash remains, although this could be through a ride voucher system if in-vehicle cash handling is removed entirely.

- **Explore Integration with Regional Fare Media:** Existing systems in the County generally do not support fare-free transfers between fixed-route services (i.e. Pace bus or Metra rail) and dial-a-rides. This presents a barrier for riders looking to travel to destinations outside their immediate community, such as their place of work. Additionally, tapping a physical card can be much easier for limited-mobility riders than paying in cash. To facilitate transfers between services and improve access for limited-mobility passengers, Will County should integrate Will-Ride into the regional Ventra system (or its successor regional/statewide equivalent).

## Implementation

### Timing

The implementation timeline for this strategy varies by component:

- The existing Will-Ride fare structure can be revised and relaunched in the short-term (the next 24 months).
- Updating internal trip booking and scheduling software to allow time-of-booking fare collection will require close coordination with Pace (who is responsible for booking trips on Will-Ride). As such, this is assumed to be a medium-term task (within the next 24-48 months).
- Integration with regional fare systems will only become a substantial benefit when the Will-Ride service area includes the areas around Joliet that overlap the Pace and Metra fixed-route networks. As such, this item is dependent on consolidation into a countywide system, and is thus assumed to be a long-term objective.

### Interdependencies

Each component of this strategy should be implemented sequentially: fare structure updates are a precursor to rolling out electronic fare collection, which is itself a precursor to integration with regional fare collection systems.

To complete the recommended fare structure updates and position a countywide Will-Ride service for integration with Ventra, funding changes will likely be required. For more information, refer to the *Issues to Consider* section at the end of this strategy.

### Coordination

This strategy would primarily be implemented through the **Will County Mobility Manager**.

- Coordination with paratransit and dial-a-ride operators will be required to enable electronic fare collection.
- Coordination with regional partners, especially Pace, will be required to integrate with regional fare collection systems.

### Cost

This strategy includes multiple components with varying levels of probable cost.

**Adopt a Unified Fare Policy:** This component can be implemented by internal staff. The recommended fare changes are not expected to decrease fare revenue.

**Enable Fare Collection at the Time of Booking:** Collection of electronic fares at the time of booking is largely dependent on the software used by operating partners.

- This capability may be available but unused within Pace's current trip booking and scheduling platform. Should that be the case, the capability can be requested as part of Will-Ride's next operating contract without substantially increasing the cost per service hour.
- Electronic time-of-booking fare collection may not be supported in Pace's current trip scheduling system. If these functions are unavailable, Pace would need to procure updated software prior to Will County launching these functions. Will County could partner with other counties that use Pace as a dial-a-ride operator to advocate for adoption of the necessary technology.

**Explore Integration with Regional Fare Media:** As of November 2020, Pace riders are able to pay for ADA-complementary paratransit trips with a Ventra card. As the vehicle pool used to serve Will-Ride trips also serves paratransit trips in south Cook County, the majority of vehicles used for Will-Ride already have tap-on/tap-off equipment installed, removing the largest cost barrier to integration.

As noted above, integrating Will-Ride with Ventra will benefit riders transferring to Pace/Metra services (particularly once the service is expanded to include the areas around Joliet) and lower barriers for limited-mobility riders. In previous discussions, Pace has indicated that counties must adopt a single, unified fare structure before integration with Ventra can be pursued.

### **Issues to Consider**

- Fare structure changes will need to be carefully communicated with riders. As even a countywide service will have well under 50 transit vehicles operating at one time, a Title VI Fare Equity Analysis is not expected to be required as part of the fare structure update process. The identified changes to the Will-Ride policy deliver riders a substantially improved service (with easier registration, better coverage, more hours of service) in exchange for a

marginal fare increase applied only to the longest trips. Additionally, moving to a distance-based fare structure ensures fares are collected equitably based on the amount of time trips take to complete, as opposed to penalizing riders who live near township boundaries (and have to pay elevated fares for short trips under the current system). The proposed fare structure mirrors the structure adopted for countywide dial-a-ride service in Lake County, while maintaining a lower maximum one-way fare than the countywide service in McHenry County.

- As noted above, some operating funds for the current Will-Ride service are distributed through AgeGuide (the Northeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging). AgeGuide requires grant recipients to collect suggested donations in lieu of fares, although Will-Ride users almost exclusively donate the suggested amount. As such, this terminology change — from suggested donations to fares — cannot be implemented until Will-Ride is funded without passing grants through AgeGuide. Moving to a consolidated, countywide system will position Will County to directly receive Federal grants. Alternatively, the County could seek to negotiate an exemption with AgeGuide. Implementing a standardized fare structure is an important precedent step to enabling electronic and tap-to-pay fare collection, which will substantially improve the rider experience for mobility-limited users.



## 6.7 Consolidation

Combine Existing Systems into Larger Coordinated Systems

### Description of Problem/Challenge

**Source:** Technical review of existing services; discussions with peer counties and analysis of best practices; recommendations from previously-completed RTA plans

**Description:** Existing dial-a-ride service in Will-County is split across ten providers. The scale of each provider varies substantially, ranging from single-township services operating one day a week to large, multi-jurisdiction services like Will-Ride. These fragmented services can be confusing for passengers, while providing unequal levels of service and access to destinations.

This strategy is intended to serve as a roadmap for consolidating existing services into a County-funded Will-Ride service. For service consolidation to be a realistic option, a County-level transit funding stream will need to be identified. This strategy can be used as (1) an intermediate step on the path towards a single Countywide system, or (2) an alternate outcome should full consolidation prove infeasible. For more information regarding closing existing gaps in service coverage, refer to [6.4 Service Area](#).

### Background and Supporting Data

In the 2021 *Human Services Transportation Plan Update* (HSTP), CMAP identified the consolidation of similar services as a priority goal. Consolidation of services will help increase efficiency and create cost savings, freeing up funding to improve service quality for riders.

### Description of Proposed Solution(s)

The **Will-Ride service area should be expanded** through consolidation with existing services, with the goal of covering all of Will County through one system. Service consolidations should be completed with the goal of operating a countywide service with the following design:

- **Service Area:** All areas within Will County, plus a five-mile buffer area. All trips must either begin or end within the County.

Will-Ride currently allows riders to travel up to 10 miles outside of participating jurisdictions, although slightly more than 75% of trips (based on analysis of July 2022 trip data) begin and end within five miles of Will County. The 10-mile buffer policy should be maintained as long as Will-Ride primarily serves rural townships in the east and south of the County, as riders from

these areas may need to travel well outside Will County to access essential services. Once the Will-Ride service area is expanded to include more densely-populated portions of the County (near Joliet and around the I-55 corridor), the buffer distance can be dropped to five miles. This service change recognizes the fact that under an expanded service, riders will have a greater choice of in-County destinations. Additionally, the policy better aligns a countywide Will-Ride system with peer services and best practices for consolidated demand-response transit.

Dispatchers should work on a case-by-case basis to find alternate destinations (where possible) for the limited number of riders currently traveling more than five miles from the County. In select cases, riders could be connected with other agencies operating more targeted services (such as the shuttle to the Hines VA Hospital operated by the Will County Veterans Assistance Commission).

- **Hours of Operation:** As a long-term goal, service is available Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM, and on Saturdays and Sundays from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. For more details regarding the expansion of service hours, refer to [6.5 Service Hours](#).

(Optional) Some peer systems, most notably Ride DuPage, provide 24/7 service. These systems typically use taxis to serve trip requests in the lower-demand overnight hours. Due to the substantial number of second and third-shift workers employed in industrial and logistics jobs around the County, a similar service expansion may prove desirable. Overnight service does not need to be launched alongside the fully-consolidated Will-Ride, but could prove to be a valuable option in the long run.

- **Eligible Riders:** At a minimum, service should be available to all residents age 55 or over, living with a disability, and/or needing transportation to work. These categories collectively include about 300,000 of the County's 700,000 residents. The proposed eligibility policy largely mirrors the current Will-Ride policy, with the addition of residents age 55 – 59. For more details regarding eligibility adjustments, refer to [6.2 Eligibility](#).

(Optional) Once the countywide service is established, eligibility could be opened to the general public. The minimum eligibility requirements described above (older adults, persons with disabilities, and persons needing work transport) cover the vast majority of likely riders. Removing eligibility restrictions will simplify administration of the service by eliminating at least part of the manual rider eligibility verification process. If the service remains in its current form, removing eligibility restrictions is not anticipated to lead to a substantial increase in rider demand as those who are able to drive will continue to do so, given the phone booking requirement and other hurdles to using the service. However, overall ridership will grow significantly if the removal of eligibility restrictions is paired with the launch of a mobile booking app, alongside other customer-friendly initiatives.

- **Fare Structure:** At full consolidation, fares are capped and distance-based: \$2.00 for a one-way trip less than five miles, \$4.00 for a one-way trip between five and ten miles, and \$6.00 for one-way trips over ten miles. Fares can be paid in cash, via a credit/debit card stored with rider



profiles at the time of booking, or with a Ventra card. This structure mirrors the fare schedule proposed for Will-Ride in [6.6 Fares](#).

(Optional) If Will-Ride is opened to the general public, higher fares could be charged to the general public while still offering a lower cost option than taxis or ride-hailing services. This option could assuage partner concerns about broadly eliminating eligibility requirements, at the cost of complicating the overall fare structure.

## Implementation

### Timing

This strategy can generally be implemented as soon as selected prerequisite steps (noted below) are complete.

### Interdependencies

**Prerequisite Tasks:** Before the service consolidation process is begun, the existing Will-Ride service needs to be positioned to succeed in a larger, countywide role. The following steps are recommended to accomplish this:

- **Identify new transit funding sources at the County level:** Several funding sources should be explored, including using the County's share of the existing RTA sales tax, new tax levies, onboarding new partner organizations, and fully-leveraging federal matching funds. Further discussion of funding sources will be provided in future *Access Will County* deliverables.
- **Negotiate a standard Pace subsidy:** Legacy dial-a-ride services in Will County receive varying levels of direct financial subsidy from Pace. The County should look to follow the model pioneered by McHenry County and negotiate a flat subsidy rate for all services rolled into Will-Ride. To receive the Pace subsidy directly, McHenry County was required to obtain letters from all townships receiving legacy subsidies stating they would give up their subsidies to the County in perpetuity. McHenry County also agreed to fund 100% of the local match for services themselves, effectively shifting all cost burden off of townships and municipalities.
- **Implement the recommended eligibility, service hour, and fare structure updates:** Will-Ride should seek to generally match or exceed the service quality of potential consolidation partners prior to combining services so passengers do not experience reduced mobility after consolidation.
- **(Optional) Close existing service gaps:** For a quick win and an intermediate step on the road from present day to full consolidation, Will-Ride should be launched in the six townships that currently do not provide dial-a-ride service as soon as possible. This expansion can be used to generate momentum for further consolidation efforts. For more information, refer to [6.4 Service Area](#).

**Will-Ride will be well-positioned to pursue consolidation** with other services once the prerequisite tasks are completed. Although this strategy calls for up to nine existing services to be consolidated

into Will-Ride, each service can be added independently as funding and consolidation agreements are finalized. Improvements to dial-a-ride service in adjacent communities can create political momentum for integrating remaining services into a growing County-supported system. Although not strictly required, consolidating services adjacent to the existing service area first will help support an efficient transition process.

Between initial consolidation and achieving a Countywide service, **fares should be integrated with the regional Ventra system**. Integration will facilitate fare-free transfers, especially benefiting riders in the areas around Joliet that overlap with the Pace and Metra fixed-route networks. The majority of Pace-operated dial-a-ride vehicles in Will County already have tap-on/tap-off fare collection equipment installed, following the agency's November 2020 Ventra rollout for ADA-complementary paratransit trips. This step is not listed as a prerequisite to consolidation, since the current Will-Ride service area largely does not overlap with Pace fixed-route buses and Metra. As a result, the number of Will-Ride patrons who would benefit from fare-free transfers is expected to remain low until the service area is substantially expanded.

#### Coordination

This strategy would primarily be implemented through the **County's Executive Office**, with additional support from **elected officials** and the **Will County Mobility Manager**. Successful implementation will require substantial coordination between these internal parties with partner services, Pace, and the RTA.

Relevant characteristics for each potential service consolidation partner are summarized in **Table 27**. The table summarizes the service area, population (including the number of riders eligible based on each service's *existing* criteria), ridership, and notes potential issues that may arise in consolidation discussions.

**Table 27. Service Consolidation Partners – Scale and Potential Obstacles**

Service Name	Service Area	Service Area Population	Ridership	Notes
<b>Central Will Dial-a-Ride</b>	Lockport Twp. Homer Twp. Troy Twp. Joliet Twp. Jackson Twp. City of Joliet	280,000 persons <i>38,000 seniors</i> <i>27,800 disabled</i>	2019: 25,619 2021: 12,668	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highest ridership service</li> <li>• Operated by Pace</li> </ul>
<b>DuPage Township Dial-a-Ride</b>	DuPage Twp.	90,000 persons • 11,000 seniors • 7,500 disabled	2019: 4,807 2021: 2,738	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operated by Pace</li> </ul>
<b>Southwest Will Dial-a-Ride</b>	Manhattan Twp. Village of Channahon	21,000 persons	2019: 594 2021: 180	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open to all residents</li> <li>• Operated by Pace</li> </ul>
<b>Wheatland Township (Ride DuPage)</b>	Wheatland Twp.	85,000 persons • 6,800 seniors • 5,100 disabled	2019: 4,419	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents can currently travel anywhere in DuPage Co.</li> <li>• Shorter lead times required to book trips</li> <li>• 24/7 service</li> <li>• Operated by Pace</li> </ul>
<b>Lockport Township Senior Shuttle</b>	Lockport Twp.	60,000 persons • 12,000 seniors	2019: 7,558 2021: 4,515	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overlaps with Central Will Dial-a-Ride</li> <li>• 55+ only service</li> <li>• Operated by Township</li> </ul>
<b>New Lenox Transportation Services</b>	New Lenox Twp.	43,000 persons	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open to all residents</li> <li>• Service to adjacent townships for medical trips</li> </ul>
<b>Plainfield Township Shuttle Bus</b>	Plainfield Twp.	82,000 persons • 7,400 seniors • 6,600 disabled	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operated by Township</li> </ul>
<b>Romeoville Ride-Around Town</b>	Village of Romeoville Plainfield Carilion Community	48,000 persons	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open to all residents</li> <li>• 10-mile service area buffer</li> <li>• Operated by Village</li> </ul>
<b>Washington Township Dial-a-Ride</b>	Washington Twp.	6,300 persons • 1,000 seniors • 900 disabled	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplement to existing Will-Ride service</li> <li>• Thursday-only service</li> <li>• Operated by Township</li> </ul>

### Cost

The exact cost of consolidating each existing service into Will-Ride will depend on a number of future decisions regarding service design, timing, and funding. To help estimate approximate costs and guide future budgeting decisions, the **current cost per trip for each existing service** is

summarized in **Table 28**. To gauge how well existing services are patronized within their home communities, the number of annual trips per 1,000 residents is also provided.

**Table 28. Service Consolidation Partners – Patronage and Cost per Trip**

Service Name	Annual Trips per 1,000 Residents <sup>38</sup>	Approximate Cost per Trip <sup>39</sup>
<b>Central Will Dial-a-Ride</b>	85 - 95	\$35 - \$45
<b>DuPage Township Dial-a-Ride</b>	50 - 60	\$25 - \$35
<b>Southwest Will Dial-a-Ride</b>	25 - 35	\$60 - \$70
<i>Baseline: Will-Ride existing service area</i>	<i>85 - 95</i>	<i>\$40 - \$50</i>
<b>Wheatland Township (Ride DuPage)</b>	45 - 55	\$35 - \$45
<b>Lockport Township Senior Shuttle</b>	120 -130	\$50 - \$60
<b>New Lenox Transportation Services</b>	Unknown ridership	\$40 - \$60 (Assumed based on peers)
<b>Plainfield Township Shuttle Bus</b>	Unknown ridership	\$40 - \$60 (Assumed based on peers)
<b>Romeoville Ride-Around Town</b>	Unknown ridership	\$30 - \$50 (Assumed based on peers)
<b>Washington Township Dial-a-Ride</b>	Unknown ridership	\$30 - \$50 (Assumed based on peers)

The results summarized in Table 28 illustrate two broad trends:

- **Services in denser areas tend to have lower costs per trip.** Trip lengths in these areas are shorter due to clustering of homes and services, allowing more trips to be completed in each revenue hour. Additionally, higher population densities lead to more opportunities to aggregate

<sup>38</sup> Based on pre-Covid ridership.

<sup>39</sup> Assumed: 2022 hourly operating cost / pre-Covid (2019) service productivity. Productivity defined as average boardings / revenue hour.

multiple trips onto one vehicle. By increasing the service area where trips can be aggregated, a consolidated system can help increase productivity. For example, a vehicle completing a trip from Peotone to Joliet cannot currently stop to pick up additional riders outside the Will-Ride service area along the way. Under a countywide system, more passengers traveling in the same direction could also be picked up.

- **Services with low rider uptake are more expensive to operate:** The Southwest Will Dial-a-Ride produces the least trips per 1,000 residents of the services reviewed, and has the highest cost per trip. Low ridership means fewer opportunities to aggregate multiple trips onto one vehicle, as well as a low number of trips to spread fixed costs over. A consolidated system would increase the number and type of destinations available to riders, making the service more useful. Additionally, larger systems are more favorably positioned to compete for grants and funding streams that can be used to improve service quality further.

## Issues to Consider

**Potential obstacles to consolidation** will vary from service to service, but will likely fall into one of the following categories:

- **Different eligibility requirements:** Some services allow all residents of the sponsor jurisdiction(s) to ride. At minimum, Will-Ride should allow all residents over 55, all residents with disabilities, and all residents needing transport to work. Although these categories cover the vast majority of expected riders, additional funding will be required to serve the general public. Maintaining a uniform eligibility policy will thus either require additional funding (potentially from townships that do not currently allow this group to ride) or removing eligibility for a small number of riders.
- **Service area policy:** A few services, most notably in Wheatland Township and Romeoville, allow travel into areas of DuPage County not recommended for inclusion in the countywide service area (Will County + five miles). Riders currently traveling to these areas will experience a change in mobility options as the service shifts to prioritize destinations in Will County. However, the larger service area will provide more opportunities to connect to Pace and Metra for onward travel. A consolidated service will elevate the overall quality of service countywide, with the vast majority of riders experiencing improved service quality.
- **Booking Policy:** Although the majority of higher-ridership services all require one day of notice prior to booking a ride, some services allow notice windows as short as two hours. By adopting a day-before policy countywide, some riders currently taking advantage of same-day booking options will have to adjust to the new policy. At launch, maintaining a day-before booking policy will provide several operational benefits, including:
  - Dial-a-ride service fulfills a high percentage of critical, cannot miss trips — such as doctor's appointments, dialysis treatment, or visits to social service agencies. Riders accustomed to the security of a confirmed booking the day before may be negatively

impacted by switching to an on-demand model.

- A blended booking model, where trips can be booked both ahead of time and on-demand, can result in riders racing to confirm trips as soon as the booking window opens. This effectively leaves no slots available for riders looking to make same-day bookings.
- Under an on-demand model, riders from less-dense parts of the County could experience disproportionately long pickup waits, as vehicles will be more spread out in these areas.
- **Funding hesitancy:** The majority of townships already feel like they are paying as much as they are able to (or more) for dial-a-ride service, and could be hesitant to sign on to a service with more hours of service and/or more generous rider eligibility policies. Provision of additional funding sources will be critical to holding partner costs steady after joining Will-Ride.
- **Funding structures:** Existing levels of legacy Pace subsidy vary between services, and it is likely that a newly-negotiated uniform subsidy level for countywide service will land near the mean of current subsidy levels. As a result, some services may see the effective Pace subsidy decrease. Securing additional revenue streams to hold partner costs steady will help address these concerns.
- **Perception of low-quality service:** In discussions with representatives from existing services, perceptions of lower-quality service on Pace-operated services were noted multiple times. Essentially, some sponsoring jurisdictions feel that independent operation allows them to give riders the “local touch”. Emphasizing the improved rider experience provided by a consolidated countywide service will be an important step in addressing partner concerns. A larger, consolidated service will also be able to draw from a larger employee pool to address concerns about driver shortages, while being better positioned for Federal grants to renew the existing vehicle fleet. In addition to removing the burden of funding service from townships, the County can stress the steps taken to ensure high-quality service (as described in [6.3 Service Quality](#)).

## 7. Financial Analysis

Implementing this study's recommendations will require substantial changes to the way dial-a-rides are funded in Will County. To support a consolidated, countywide service, the funding burden currently borne by townships will shift to Will County. The total amount of local funding (supplied by the County) will also grow from the amount currently spent by townships. The County will need to identify a funding stream for dial-a-ride service, such as the existing Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) sales tax.

### 7.1 Current Costs and Funding Sources

The following section reviews the way dial-a-ride service is currently funded and identifies roadblocks resulting from the current model. Unless otherwise noted, all costs are annual operating costs. The majority of current systems purchase service from a third-party operator and do not accrue capital expenses. For more information on operating models, refer to [6.3 Service Quality](#).

#### 7.1.1 Cost of Current Services

The annual operating cost of each existing dial-a-ride service is presented in **Table 29**. Across the County, the total annual cost of all services is estimated to be \$2.4M – \$2.8M per year.

**Table 29. Estimated Annual Operating Cost for Existing Dial-a-Ride Services**

Existing Service	Residents in Service Area	Ridership (2019) <sup>40</sup>	Annual Cost (2021) <sup>41</sup>
Central Will Dial-a-Ride	280,000	25,600	\$859,000
Will-Ride	115,000	10,747	\$441,000
DuPage Township Dial-a-Ride	90,000	4,807	\$138,000
Southwest Will Dial-a-Ride	25,000	594	\$33,000
Lockport Township Senior Shuttle	60,000	7,558	<i>\$360,000</i>
Wheatland Township	85,000	4,419	<i>\$210,000</i>
New Lenox Transportation Services	43,000	<i>2,900</i>	<i>\$140,000</i>

<sup>40</sup> **Ridership:** The annual total of boardings for each service pre-Covid. Values in *green italics* were estimated using a trip generation rate. The assumed trip generation rate — 68 annual boardings per 1,000 residents — was developed using a weighted average of ridership data from similarly-sized dial-a-ride in Will County.

<sup>41</sup> **Annual Cost:** The total annual operating cost for each service, in the most recent year available. Values in *green italics* are estimated using productivity and hourly cost assumptions. Productivity (the number of boardings per vehicle revenue hour) was assumed based on a weighted average of similarly-sized dial-a-rides in Will County. Hourly cost (the total cost per vehicle revenue hour of dial-a-ride service) was taken from current operating contracts where available. When this data was unavailable, a cost of \$80 per vehicle revenue hour was assumed.



Existing Service	Residents in Service Area	Ridership (2019) <sup>40</sup>	Annual Cost (2021) <sup>41</sup>
Plainfield Township Shuttle Bus	82,000	5,600	\$260,000
Romeoville Ride-Around Town	48,000	3,300	\$150,000
Washington Township Dial-a-Ride	6,300	400	\$20,000
<b>Total (Rounded)</b>		<b>65,950</b>	<b>\$2,610,000</b>

The current funding model for each service in Table 29 can vary widely. However, each existing service relies on townships or municipalities to fund at least a portion of service costs. In some cases, jurisdictions are directly operating dial-a-ride service, bearing the financial burden of vehicle procurement and maintenance, dispatch staff, and day-to-day operation.

## 7.1.2 Issues with Current Funding Structure

The current funding structure presents challenges that limit the quality, coverage, and efficiency of dial-a-ride service, including:

- Funding burden falls on townships:** At present, Will County does not contribute any funding to the day-to-day operation of dial-a-ride services.<sup>42</sup> This forces townships and municipalities to fund essential mobility services for some of their most vulnerable constituents. These jurisdictions have annual budgets that are significantly smaller than the County and may not have staff time to dedicate to complex grant applications.
- Funding stability:** At the county and regional levels, public transportation is supported by a dedicated sales tax. This levy provides a sustainable way to fund mobility services over the long term. At the township and municipal level, this funding is not available. As a result, dial-a-ride funding typically comes out of each sponsor jurisdiction's General Fund. Available funding can vary substantially each budget cycle, leaving services more vulnerable to year-on-year changes.
- Management complexity:** The patchwork of existing services and funding streams creates a difficult service to track and manage. As a result, a larger share of limited funding dollars are spent on administration instead of service delivery.
- Uneven and/or unequal service availability:** Townships vary widely in size and appetite for providing dial-a-ride service. As a result, coverage can be uneven or missing in certain jurisdictions. It is unrealistic for the smallest townships — with fewer than 1,000 residents — to take on the administrative and funding burden of providing service.
- Reduced competitiveness for grants:** Large federal grants are often awarded on a competitive basis in the Chicagoland region. Maximizing the size of awards from these grant programs is a

<sup>42</sup> Although Will County does not currently fund service operations, the County has created and filled a Mobility Manager position to oversee the Will-Ride program.

critical step in minimizing the local cost burden for dial-a-ride service. Smaller services in the current, largely-decentralized system may not have the staff time to apply for and manage grants. In addition, the existing township-based services are not as well aligned with grant selection criteria as consolidated services in the surrounding counties. Taken together, this means that Will County services are not all taking advantage of available grant funding, and may be less competitive for grant awards when they do.

#### **Key Takeaways – Current Costs and Funding:**

- Combined annual operating costs for all current systems in Will County are estimated at **\$2.4M – \$2.8M per year**.
- Existing services receive no funding from Will County and all require at least some township or municipal funding.
- The existing structure introduces unnecessary complication and inefficiency, and **can limit the amount of grant funding received in competitive applications**.

## **7.2 Funding Alternatives**

The following section presents funding breakdowns for countywide dial-a-ride services in peer counties, in addition to a review of potential funding streams available to Will County. For each funding category (federal, Pace, and local) recommended focus areas are established.

### **7.2.1 Funding in Peer Systems**

Will County is not the only jurisdiction considering consolidated, countywide dial-a-ride service: McHenry County and Lake County currently operate similar systems, and Kane County is moving towards a fully-consolidated system. These peer systems provide Will County with a proven roadmap for funding similar improvements.

A breakdown of funding sources in peer systems is provided in **Table 30**. The breakdown shows a split between federal funds (typically FTA Section 5310 grants), Pace subsidies (transferred from townships to the county), and county-level contributions. County contributions are typically a combination of fare revenue and sales tax dollars remitted back to the counties as part of the local share for an existing Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) levy. For more information on funding models in peer counties, refer to [3. Best Practices](#).

**Table 30. Budgets for Peer Dial-a-Ride Systems**

Peer System	MCRide <i>McHenry County</i>		Ride Lake County <i>Lake County</i>		Ride In Kane <i>Kane County</i>	
Annual Ridership	88,000 2021		59,000 2022, budgeted		50,000 2021	
<i>Funding Source</i>						
Federal Grants	\$1,000,000	32%	\$750,000	34%	\$930,000	44%
Pace Subsidy	\$1,000,000	32%	\$700,000	32%	\$630,000	30%
County Funds	\$800,000	26%	\$600,000	27%	\$300,000	14%
Fares	\$320,000	10%	\$150,000	7%	\$270,000	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,120,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$2,200,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$2,130,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Key Takeaways – Peer Systems:

- Annual operating costs in peer systems range from about \$2.1M to \$3.1M per year. Peer systems delivered between 50,000 and 88,000 trips per year, in line with the estimated 66,000 trips delivered across Will County pre-Covid.
- Overall funding responsibility **split approximately into thirds** by federal grants (FTA Section 5310), Pace subsidies (transferred the the counties from smaller predecessor systems), and the counties.
- Counties typically fund their portion through a **combination of existing sales tax** (local share of the existing Regional Transportation Authority collar county levy) **and fare revenue**.
- Taken together, Will County townships are spending a similar amount of money as peer counties, but getting less service back — in terms of coverage, hours of operation, and quality — than their neighbors.

## 7.2.2 Sources - Federal Funding

Multiple grant programs are available at the federal level to help defray the cost of providing dial-a-ride service. Key characteristics for each program are summarized below:

- **FTA Section 5310:** The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) administers the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program, commonly referred to as Section 5310. The program is a major source of funding for demand-response transit in the area, with the RTA distributing \$10.8 million in Federal funding to local counties for FY2021.

Section 5310 funding is awarded through the RTA on a competitive basis, with **selection criteria based on alignment with the regional HSTP**. Funds from the program can be used to **cover 50% of all eligible operational costs**.<sup>43</sup> Applications are accepted biannually, with the next call for projects expected in spring 2025. In the grant cycle covering FY2020 – FY2021, Will-Ride was awarded \$200,000 per year. Over the same time period, MCRide was awarded \$700,000 per year, Ride DuPage was awarded \$950,000 per year, and Ride In Kane was awarded \$1,250,000 per year.

By moving towards a consolidated, countywide system, Will County can increase its grant competitiveness to match peer counties. At the same time, the overall program size is growing. In FY2022, the total annual size of the Section 5310 program jumped to \$421 million from \$292 million the preceding year. By 2026, the total program size will reach \$457 million, a 57% increase over five years.

- **FTA Section 5311:** The FTA also maintains the Section 5311 Formula Grant for Rural Areas program. In Illinois, the program is managed by IDOT. The 5311 program is intended to fund general-purpose public transportation outside urbanized areas (UZAs). The southern portion of Will County falls outside the Chicago UZA, and is eligible at the federal level for Section 5311 funds.<sup>44</sup>

However, multiple practical constraints make pursuit of 5311 funds difficult and infeasible. The vast majority of Will County residents live within the Chicago UZA, and a countywide sales tax helps support RTA transit services like Pace and Metra. Due to being part of RTA, Will County is considered to be part of the Chicago region at the state level.

- **Title IIIB:** The Older Americans Act, Title IIIB is administered at the state level by the Illinois Department on Aging (IDOA) and at the local level by AgeGuide, can be used to support a range of transportation services for seniors.<sup>45</sup> Will-Ride currently receives funding through AgeGuide.

As part of their disbursement strategy for Title IIIB funds, AgeGuide prohibits recipients from collecting fares for transportation services. As a result, Will-Ride currently operates with a suggested donation policy in lieu of fares. This policy complicates future integration with the regional Ventra fare collection system, since Ventra requires services to adopt a single fare structure. For more information, refer to [6.6 Fares](#).

- **Medicaid Reimbursement:** As an additional source of revenue, Will-County can register a countywide Will-Ride service as a provider of non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT). A substantial subset of NEMT-eligible trips — such as going to a medical appointment — are already occurring on dial-a-ride service. By registering as an NEMT provider, Will County can collect trip payments from Medicaid and other insurance programs.

---

<sup>43</sup> Funds can also be used to cover 80% of eligible capital and mobility management expenses. All services provided to seniors and persons with disabilities are considered eligible for Section 5310. For more information on program uses and restrictions, refer to: <https://www.rtachicago.org/region/section-5310>.

<sup>44</sup> Wilmington, Elwood, Manhattan, Peotone, and Beecher all fall outside the 2020 Chicago UZA. For more information, refer to: <https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-maps/2020/geo/2020-census-urban-areas.html>

<sup>45</sup> At the federal level, Title IIIB funding can count towards FTA Section 5310 local match requirements, since the program originates outside USDOT. This practice is prohibited at the state level in Illinois. For more, refer to: <https://www.rtachicago.org/uploads/files/general/Drupal-Old/documents/plansandprograms/section5310/Sustainable%20Funding%20Study%20Final%20report%20112116.pdf>

Providing NEMT transportation would introduce an additional administrative burden. The recommended structure for Countywide service determines eligibility by *rider profile*: service is available to residents age 55 or older, living with a disability, or needing work transportation. In contrast, NEMT eligibility is determined by *trip purpose* (e.g. visiting primary care physician, dialysis appointment). Essentially, an individual always eligible for Will-Ride could only be eligible for medicaid reimbursement on some trips. Tracking and collecting reimbursement for these trips would require additional technology and resources. Similarly, the trip booking process would become more complicated for some riders, and NEMT trips may not always line up with Will-Ride service area boundaries.

At the same time, offering NEMT transportation offers multiple benefits to Will County. First and foremost, it ensures every resident has a way to get to critical medical appointments if they need to. Second, NEMT-eligible trips are already happening on dial-a-ride service, and registering as a provider ensures the County is reimbursed to the fullest extent possible for providing service. Finally, it has the potential to drive down operating cost per trip by increasing overall ridership.

At present, Will County should prioritize successfully executing the transition to a consolidated, countywide Will-Ride system. The County can choose to expand into NEMT transport provision in the future.

### 7.2.3 Sources - Regional Funding

In addition to operating dial-a-ride services around Chicagoland, Pace Suburban Bus provides subsidies to some legacy systems. Multiple systems in Will County receive Pace subsidies, although the subsidy amount varies by service. Some services, including the existing Will-Ride system and smaller municipally-operated dial-a-rides, do not receive any direct subsidy from Pace.

Review of funding models in peer counties and discussions with key stakeholders both indicate that the total Pace subsidy across existing services in Will County is roughly equivalent to the 50% local match required for the FTA Section 5310 program. The County should partner with Pace and the townships to **transfer all Pace subsidies to Will County**. Under the consolidated, countywide service model recommended in this study, townships and municipalities will no longer be required to fund dial-a-ride service. As a result, they will no longer have need for direct Pace subsidies.

Peer counties have successfully negotiated subsidy transfers in recent years. For example, McHenry County was able to receive previously-dispersed Pace subsidies directly after obtaining letters from all townships stating the townships would transfer their subsidies to the County in perpetuity. In exchange, McHenry County agreed to fund 100% of the local match for services. These agreements permanently removed the cost burden from townships, even if the Pace subsidy became insufficient to fulfill local match requirements.

## 7.2.4 County Funding

Through the **RTA collar county sales tax**, Will County has pre-existing access to a funding stream for dial-a-ride service. The tax, collected in DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will Counties since 2008, is intended to fund transit service provided by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). One-third of the 0.75% rate — a 0.25% levy — is remitted from the RTA back to the collecting counties to fund local transit and transportation projects.

In FY2023, Will County is expecting to receive \$31 million from the RTA for local transit and transportation projects.<sup>46</sup> About 37% of this revenue is allocated to debt service, with the remaining money passed on to the Will County Division of Transportation (WCDOT) for roadway design and construction. No money from the fund is currently allocated to transit service. Based on [7.3.2 Estimated Annual Budget](#), allocating approximately 3% of this fund annually to dial-a-ride service would fully fulfill the County's share of a consolidated, countywide system.

In addition to the RTA sales tax, other options — such as dedicated property or gas taxes — could be used to raise funding for dial-a-ride service. Unlike the RTA tax, these taxes are not currently collected and would all have to overcome substantial hurdles prior to implementation.

### Key Takeaways – Funding Sources

- Federal funding should be pursued first and foremost through the **FTA Section 5310** program. This program funds 50% of the operating cost for dial-a-ride service, and requires a local match.
- To provide the bulk of local match requirements, Will County should **negotiate a transfer of existing Pace subsidies** from townships to the County. Under a consolidated countywide system, townships will no longer be tasked with providing dial-a-ride service.
- The County should dedicate a portion of the **RTA collar county sales tax** towards expanded dial-a-ride service. Fully funding the County's cost share of a consolidated system for a year would account for only 3% of the money received from the RTA in 2023.

---

<sup>46</sup> The expenditures programmed from the RTA tax fund for 2023 sum to \$34.7 million, due to revenue in previous years exceeding budget projections.

## 7.3 Annual Budget for Countywide Dial-a-Ride Service

Supporting assumptions and a sample annual budget for consolidated dial-a-ride service in Will County are presented in the following section.

### 7.3.1 Budget Assumptions and Supporting Information

Key assumptions underpinning the estimated budget are noted below:

1. **Purchased service model:** Service is assumed to be delivered on a per-revenue hour basis by a contracted third-party operator. Under this model, the County does not incur capital costs for dial-a-ride service, since vehicles are owned by the operating partner. Will-Ride currently operates under this structure, along with other consolidated, countywide services in Lake County and McHenry County. A purchased service model is recommended for multiple reasons, including:
  - a. Flexibility to merge existing services without going through lengthy vehicle procurement and driver staffing processes.
  - b. Ability to assume a predictable annual operating cost for consolidated service in future budgets.
  - c. Service productivity benefits from operators commingling dial-a-ride and ADA paratransit trips where appropriate.

Should the County wish to own and/or operate vehicles directly in the future, the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) Consolidated Vehicle Program (CVP) can be used to defray capital costs. Each year, IDOT uses the CVP to distribute FTA Section 5310 grant awards to agencies statewide. Grant awards can be used to cover 80% of vehicle procurement costs.

2. **Baseline cost per trip:** Per [7.1.1 Cost of Existing Services](#), approximately 66,000 trips were provided across Will County in a typical pre-Covid year at a present value cost of approximately \$2,600,000. The cost of providing each individual trip will decrease in a consolidated system, as increasing the number of trips delivered through a single service will also increase the chance multiple riders are traveling in the same direction. Productivity — the number of trips completed by one vehicle each hour — will increase, and the overall system will become more efficient. To quantify this benefit, simulations were performed using recent trip origin-destination data.<sup>47</sup> Results indicate that overall productivity will increase by 15-20% from current levels, resulting in a system-wide cost per trip between \$30 and \$33 in 2022 dollars.
3. **Annual trip volume:** A consolidated system will experience ridership growth from two primary sources — new trip volume generated by adding currently-unserved areas to the system, and increased trip volume generated by service quality improvements in already-served areas. Per [6.4 Service Area](#), expanding dial-a-ride service to all currently unserved areas is expected to add

---

<sup>47</sup> Simulations performed to quantify the efficiency improvement from serving all existing demand (across 12 services) with a single fleet of vehicles. Where available, trip origin and destination data for July 10-23, 2022 was used. For services where this data was unavailable, simulation demand was estimated based on the trip capture rate for similarly-sized services with available data.



between 1,400 and 1,800 additional trips each year. Ridership increases resulting from the recommended service hour, service quality, and eligibility changes are more difficult to precisely estimate, but assumed to be between 10% and 15%.<sup>48</sup> By closing the remaining geographic gaps and implementing the recommended service improvements, annual ridership is expected to rise to 74,000 to 78,000 trips per year.<sup>49</sup>

4. **Cost inflation:** Full consolidation of existing dial-a-rides into a consolidated, countywide service will not happen immediately. To reflect this, a launch date of 2024-2025 was assumed, and an annual cost inflation rate of 5% was applied for a minimum of three years.<sup>50</sup>

## 7.3.2 Estimated Annual Budget

Based on the information presented in [7.3.1 Budget Assumptions and Supporting Information](#), an annual budget for consolidated, countywide dial-a-ride service in Will County was developed. This budget, shown in **Table 31**, estimates the annual cost at \$2.6 million – \$3.1 million per year. The County share, assumed to be about 30% of the total cost, is expected to fall in the range of \$770,000 – \$930,000 per year.

---

<sup>48</sup> Based on the project team's experience with similar service improvements.

<sup>49</sup> This total assumes a return to pre-Covid ridership levels among existing users. Dial-a-ride ridership is likely to return to pre-Covid levels more quickly than general transit ridership, as the majority of trips are not for commute purposes.

<sup>50</sup> The assumed cost escalation rate represents a conservative estimate of future change based on the US Bureau of Labor Statistics' Producer Price Index (PPI) for Transportation Services. This subset of the larger PPI index specifically captures the provider-facing cost vehicles, fuel, maintenance, and labor. Over the eight-year period from March 2015 to March 2023 (the most recent data available at time of writing), the index increased at 4.0% per year. An eight-year benchmark period was selected to capture five years of typical pre-Covid data in addition to recent trends. For more, refer to: <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/graph/?g=133Vh>

**Table 31. Estimated Annual Budget for Consolidated, Countywide Dial-a-Ride Service**

<b>Consolidated, Countywide Dial-a-Ride Service</b>	<b>Lower Bound</b> <i>Fewer trips at a lower cost / trip</i>		<b>Upper Estimate</b> <i>More trips at a higher cost / trip</i>	
<i>Annual Ridership</i>				
Base ridership (pre-Covid)	66,000		66,000	
New trips from closing coverage gaps	+1,400		+1,800	
New trips from quality improvements	+10%		+15%	
<b>Annual ridership (2024-2025)</b>	<b>74,000</b>		<b>78,000</b>	
<i>Annual Cost</i>				
Cost per trip in consolidated service (2021)	\$30		\$33	
Cost inflation factor to 2024-2025	+5% per year, 3 years		+5% per year, 4 years	
Cost per trip (2024-2025)	\$35		\$40	
<b>Total annual cost (2024-2025)</b>	<b>\$2,550,000</b>		<b>\$3,100,000</b>	
<i>Target Share by Partner</i>				
Federal Grants	\$820,000	30% – 35%	\$990,000	30% – 35%
Pace Subsidy	\$770,000	30%	\$930,000	30%
County Funds	\$770,000	30%	\$930,000	30%
Fares	\$190,000	5% – 10%	\$250,000	5% – 10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,550,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$3,100,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 31 also shows the approximate cost share by partner. The assumed percentage shares are based on the best available estimates of funding availability, and are aligned with the breakdowns seen in peer systems. Actual percentage shares may vary for a variety of reasons, including the outcome of future grant applications, subsidy negotiations with Pace, and/or fare revenue varying from targets.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Budgeted fare revenue based on the distanced-based structure described in [6.6 Fares](#). The budget assumes an average fare revenue between \$2.60 and \$3.20 per trip.

## 8. Recommendations

The recommendations presented in this chapter outline a strategy to build a consolidated, countywide dial-a-ride system that serves some of the County's most vulnerable residents, and ensures every resident has a way to get around when they need to. The recommendations are based on an analysis of existing conditions and future needs, a review of best practices in peer counties analysis, and in-depth technical research. The process was accompanied by a months-long community and stakeholder engagement process, including 1,200 survey responses, four focus groups, and three stakeholder meetings. The recommended approach aligns closely with the regional Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP), ensuring the County is as competitive for grant funding as possible.

Recommendations are broken into **three core areas**:

- **Governance and Coordination:** Personnel and oversight considerations for carrying out the recommended implementation plan.
- **Service Changes:** The service design, operation, and eligibility steps required to transition Will-Ride to a consolidated, countywide service.
- **Funding:** Recommendations for funding consolidated, countywide dial-a-ride service.

### 8.1 Governance and Coordination

To successfully consolidate existing dial-a-rides into a unified service, Will County should ensure that there is adequate internal capacity to oversee and administer the program. Additionally, the County should continue engaging with key stakeholders.

#### 8.1.1 Ensure Adequate County Staff Capacity for Dial-a-Ride Management

Will County currently employs a dedicated Mobility Manager to coordinate the current Will-Ride service. This position is housed within the Will County Executive Office. Day-to-day implementation of this plan's recommendations, as they are described below, is assumed to be led by the Mobility Manager, with support from other members of the Executive Office as needed. Certain aspects (e.g. branding and marketing Will-Ride) will require partnership with other County offices. The recommendations in this plan will **change portions of the Mobility Manager** role, including the following items:

- **Additional responsibilities:**
  - Maintaining accuracy of the new County webpage listing key characteristics and contact information for each service (semi-annually until all services consolidated)
  - Processing received rider eligibility verification forms (ongoing once County assumes responsibility for eligibility verification), and forwarding to townships where appropriate
  - Tracking service performance against key metrics (ongoing once metrics established)

- Tracking customer satisfaction with service provided (ongoing once feedback collection program launched)
- Assisting as-needed with operator negotiations for service design and funding changes (e.g. fare policy changes, operating contracts, legacy Pace subsidy transfers)
- **Retained responsibilities:**
  - Delivering travel training sessions (or outsource to other agencies)
  - Encouraging additional townships to join Will-Ride, with the goal of closing service gaps and expanding hours of service (ongoing until County-level funding secured and township funding burden removed)
- **Reduced responsibilities:**
  - Billing townships for service provided (not required once County-level funding secured)
  - Grant applications and administration (reduced once County-level funding secured, Pace subsidies are transferred, and FTA Section 5310 funding increased)

Over the assumed implementation timeline of 2-3 years, it is assumed that these additional responsibilities can be accommodated without increasing headcount. However, the County may desire adding additional staff to improve its ability to administer dial-a-ride service (or to support a faster implementation timeline). Additional staffing would be an eligible mobility management expense under FTA Section 5310, and could thus be 80% covered by Federal funding, with only a 20% local match required.

The proposed implementation plan will also create **additional responsibilities for other County staff**, including the items summarized below:

- **Communications staff:** Creating and updating dial-a-ride webpages as-needed, developing and updating an online address-based eligibility verification tool, leading development of a Will-Ride brand, and conducting targeted advertising campaigns for the service
- **County Executive's staff:** Leading negotiations for recommended service design and funding changes (e.g. fare policy changes, operating contracts, legacy Pace subsidy transfers), as well as championing dial-a-ride service in the County budget process

## 8.1.2 Form an Implementation Working Group from the *Access Will County* Stakeholder Committee

To help guide this study, a stakeholder committee was convened. The committee included representation from the following groups:

- Townships and municipalities across Will County
- Pace Suburban Bus
- Advocates for core rider groups (e.g. senior citizens and residents with disabilities)

After the completion of the *Access Will County* study, this group should be retained as a working group focused on implementing the recommended improvements to dial-a-ride service. As the lead agency, the

County will be responsible for the majority of recommended changes. However, successful implementation will require close coordination with townships/municipalities, operators of current service, and rider advocates. Creating an implementation working group will give the County a chance to provide regular progress updates and get buy-in from key stakeholders.







#### **Key Takeaways – Governance and Coordination**

- The recommended changes to Will-Ride will **change and expand the role of Mobility Manager** in County government. If additional staff are required, costs can be 80% covered by the FTA Section 5310 program.
- The County should engage key stakeholders from the townships, Pace, and advocacy groups throughout the implementation process.

## **8.2 Service Changes**

Proposed service changes are grouped into six categories and split across three phases. A **snapshot of the County's role in dial-a-ride service during each phase** is provided in the following sections. Detailed descriptions of the need, background, proposed solutions, implementation steps, and potential issues for each category are provided in [\*6. Service Alternatives Improvement Analysis\*](#).

## 8.2.1 Summary by Phase

	Short Term	Medium Term	<b>Consolidated System</b> Long Term
 <b>Information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centralized information about each provider</li> <li>Improved travel training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County provides centralized intake point for rider applications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One source of information (Will-Ride)</li> <li>One eligibility application (Will-Ride)</li> </ul>
 <b>Service Quality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish service and performance targets</li> <li>Tracking with data from Pace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track additional metrics</li> <li>Adjust operates to improve metrics as necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforce service quality standards (with penalties for non-attainment) through operations contract</li> </ul>
 <b>Service Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will-Ride partners with townships and municipalities to expand into remaining unserved areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All municipalities either:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide their own service</li> <li>Buy into Will-Ride</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will-Ride operates as a countywide, consolidated service</li> </ul>
 <b>Eligibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service expanded to all residents over 55</li> <li>Eligibility for work trips expanded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service available to over 55s, disabled, and employees</li> <li>(Optional) Opened to general public</li> </ul>
 <b>Service Hours</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evening and weekend service launched in Will-Ride townships with available funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanded hours launched across the entire Will-Ride service area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evening and weekend service available throughout County</li> <li>(Optional) Overnight service launched</li> </ul>
 <b>Fares</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will-Ride policy modified: \$2 for trips under 5 miles, \$4 for trips 5–10 miles, \$6 for trips over 10 miles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Electronic fare collection at time of booking enabled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unified fare structure across County</li> <li>Fare payment integrated with Ventra system</li> </ul>

## 8.2.2 Snapshot: Short-Term

At this stage, the **majority of existing services continue to operate as usual**. Will County partners with townships to modify the existing Will-Ride service in preparation for future consolidation. This phase generally describes changes expected to occur in the first 12-18 months following adoption of the *Access Will County* plan, although the exact timing of specific components may vary.

- **Information:** The County takes on a more visible role promoting dial-a-ride service, focusing first on low-cost, easy-to-implement changes:
  - **Website:** The County creates and maintains a webpage showing eligibility information, contact information, hours of service, and service areas for each existing dial-a-ride. Brochures, cards, and/or other printed documents are distributed to reach potential riders with traditional media.
  - **Travel training:** County staff work with human service agencies (HSAs) or other groups to show residents how to use dial-a-ride services. The County produces simple webinars or videos that give a step-by-step overview of the registration and ride process.
- **Eligibility:** No substantive changes are assumed as part of the short-term phase. The additional cost burden of expanding rider eligibility is assumed to require dedicated County-level funding.
- **Service Quality:** To improve its quantitative understanding of service performance, the County begins tracking select metrics on a voluntary basis:
  - **Data sourcing:** Data is solicited from service operators (i.e. Pace, townships operating their own service) and analyzed by the County to inform future quality targets for consolidated service.
  - **Metrics:** Metrics are tracked where data is available and easy to analyze. Metrics could include items such as ride availability (the percentage of scheduled pickups within 30 minutes of the original requested pickup), on-time performance (the average time between a passenger's scheduled pickup time and the actual pickup time), or cancellation rate (the percentage of scheduled trips either canceled or rescheduled by the operator).
- **Service Area:** The County works to expand Will-Ride into the six currently-unserved townships under the current funding structure. If the townships are unable to join without at least some of the cost offset by County funding, the service expansion will likely be delayed to future phases.
  - **Funding:** Will-Ride previously received \$200,000 of FTA Section 5310 funding that is currently unallocated. If a local match can be identified for this funding in the short term, it could be used as an alternative way to close existing service gaps.
- **Service Hours:** No substantive changes are assumed as part of this phase. The additional cost burden of expanding service hours to nights and weekends is assumed to require dedicated County-level funding.



- **Fares:** The County leads an update to the Will-Ride fare policy, moving from township-based to distance-based fares. A new \$6 fare level is added for one-way trips over 10 miles, helping offset the higher cost of serving longer trip requests. At this stage, suggested donations are still collected instead of fares, as the behind-the-scenes funding method for Will-Ride is unchanged.

### 8.2.3 Snapshot: Medium-Term

This stage represents an **interim period where some existing services have been consolidated into Will-Ride**. During this period, **dedicated County-level funding is secured to support Will-Ride**, enabling the introduction of broader changes to the service. This phase generally describes changes expected to occur 12-36 months from adoption of the *Access Will County* plan, although the exact timing of specific components may vary.

- **Information:** The County takes on a more visible role promoting dial-a-ride service, focusing first on low-cost, easy-to-implement changes:
  - **Unified eligibility portal:** The County streamlines the process of onboarding new riders by providing a unified point of contact and online application portal. Applications for the County-funded Will-Ride system are handled directly by County staff. When applications are received for systems not yet incorporated into Will-Ride, the County forwards them to the relevant township.
  - **Branding and advertising:** As Will-Ride expands, the existing name is paired with a new logo, wordmark, and color palette. Once the brand is fully developed, vehicles can be wrapped to increase awareness of the service. If desired, a social media campaign could launch alongside the new brand to take advantage of the visibility generated by the new vehicle wraps.
- **Eligibility:** With County-level funding secured, recommended eligibility changes are rolled out in the portions of Will County covered by Will-Ride. As more existing services are consolidated into Will-Ride, requirements become standardized countywide.
  - **Residents needing transportation to work:** These riders are already eligible to use Will-Ride, and currently account for about one-quarter of all trips on the service (based on analysis of July 2022 trip data). As existing services are combined into Will-Ride, eligibility for these residents will become standardized.
  - **Residents age 55-64:** Current services have minimum ages ranging from 55 to 65 years. To provide a consistent baseline while ensuring no current riders lose eligibility, the minimum age to use Will-Ride should be dropped from 60 to 55. As the Will-Ride system grows through consolidation, this minimum age will become standard across the County.
- **Service Quality:** With County-level funding secured, a more robust quality tracking program is instituted. County staff review both performance and satisfaction data on a regular basis.

- **Refined metrics tracking:** The metrics tracked in the short-term phase are refined and expanded upon. Over time, the County is able to develop a strong understanding of availability, on-time performance, cancellation rate, and customer satisfaction.
- **Rider feedback:** Customer satisfaction with Will-Ride is tracked after each trip, potentially using an automated one-question SMS survey asking riders to rate their trip from one to five stars. Alternatively, short surveys can be sent monthly, quarterly, or semi-annually to registered riders via phone or email.
- **Service Area:** With County-level funding secured, service is added across the six currently-unserved townships. At this stage, dial-a-ride service is available in every Will County township. In the majority of townships, dial-a-ride service is provided by Will-Ride.
  - **Timing:** Expansion to unserved townships may be possible in the short-term phase under the current funding model. If so, funding responsibility for service in these townships will transfer to the County in the same way as in the townships currently participating in Will-Ride.
- **Service Hours:** With County-level funding secured, evening and weekend service is launched in the portions of Will County covered by Will-Ride. As more existing services are consolidated into Will-Ride, this service hour pattern becomes standardized countywide.
  - **Operations:** To better serve riders, service should be available from a minimum of 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM on weekdays, and from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM on weekends. The expanded hours proposed in this strategy are expected to produce fewer boardings per hour than the currently-operated hours, resulting in a lower number of vehicles operating during off-peak periods.
- **Fares:** In this stage, the new distance-based fare model for all trips is in effect. With provision of a County-level funding stream, the suggested donation policy is discontinued and fares are collected. The fare collection process is improved for both riders and the service operator.
  - **Impact of transition away from donations:** Implementing a single, uniform fare structure is an important precedent step to enabling electronic and tap-to-pay fare collection. Adding these fare collection methods will substantially improve the rider experience for mobility-limited users, and as such are a high-priority improvement. Currently, Will-Ride receives operating funding from AgeGuide (the Northeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging). AgeGuide requires grant recipients to collect suggested donations in lieu of fares, although Will-Ride users almost exclusively donate the suggested amount. Once County funding is secured, AgeGuide funding will not be required, allowing this change to be implemented. However, the County can seek to negotiate an exemption with AgeGuide based on the substantial rider benefits unlocked by changing to a fare-based model. As a conservative assumption, AgeGuide funding is not assumed to be available in the proposed operating budget.

- **Electronic fare collection:** Will County should require operating companies to use modern trip booking software that allows for fare payment at the time of booking. Modern scheduling software allows users to save debit/credit cards to their rider profiles, enabling the user (or call center staff) to charge rides to a card already on file. In addition to decreasing dwell times during pickups, robust rider profiles will help call center staff save time when booking trips for frequent riders. To continue serving unbanked customers equitably, the County should ensure the option to pay fares in cash remains, although this could be through a ride voucher system if in-vehicle cash handling is removed entirely.

## 8.2.4 Snapshot: Long-Term

This stage represents **full-consolidation of existing dial-a-rides into a countrywide Will-Ride service**. The service is supported by the mix of federal, Pace, and local funding outlined in [7.3.2 Estimated Annual Budget](#), and ridership has returned to or grown beyond pre-Covid levels. All recommended changes are implemented, and optional improvements are being considered. This phase generally describes changes expected to occur more than 24 months from adoption of the *Access Will County* plan, although the exact timing of specific components may vary.

- **Information:** Will County is the go-to source for information on dial-a-ride service, as the Will-Ride system covers the entire County. The County maintains an online application portal to onboard new riders. Will-Ride vehicles are branded to promote the service, and online and physical marketing helps reach potential riders.
- **Eligibility:** Will-Ride service is available to all County residents age 55 or over, living with a disability, and/or needing transportation to work. These categories collectively include about 300,000 of Will County's 700,000 residents. Opening the service to the general public is under consideration. The recommended eligibility requirements cover the vast majority of likely riders, so removing eligibility restrictions has the potential to simplify operations without substantially increasing rider demand.
- **Service Quality:** The performance and customer satisfaction metrics refined over the short-term and medium-term phases of this plan are enshrined into the Will-Ride operating contract. The County has a mechanism to penalize the operator for non-attainment of relevant goals.
- **Service Area:** Will-Ride covers all areas within Will County, plus a five-mile buffer area. All trips must either begin or end within the County.
- **Service Hours:** Will-Ride service is available Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM, and on Saturdays and Sundays from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. To better serve second- and third-shift workers employed in industrial and logistics jobs around the County, launching overnight service is being considered.
- **Fares:** Fares across the Will-Ride system are distance-based: \$2.00 for a one-way trip less than five miles, \$4.00 for a one-way trip between five and ten miles, and \$6.00 for one-way trips over

ten miles. Fares can be paid in cash, via a credit/debit card stored with rider profiles at the time of booking, or with a Ventra card.

## 8.3 Funding

Fully implementing the proposed changes to Will-Ride is expected to cost between \$2.5 and \$3.1 million each year. The majority of this cost can be covered with Federal grants and Pace subsidies transferred from townships to the County.

The County is expected to shoulder about one-third of the total cost burden, for an **expected annual total of between \$770,000 and \$930,000 per year**. This total represents less than 3% of the transportation funding received by the County from the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) each year. For more information, refer to [\*7.3 Annual Budget for Countywide Dial-a-Ride Service\*](#).

# Appendix A

## Background Research for Review of Best Practices

The following tables include additional data related to [Chapter 3: Best Practices](#).

Category	Criteria	McHenry County, IL	Kane County, IL	Kendall County, IL	Lake County, IL	Johnson County, IN	Hamilton County, IN	Will County, IL
Service Area	Land Use	Slightly less dense than Will County; moderate-density suburban development; no historic population center	Close match to Will County in density; also contains substantial urban-to-rural gradient; Elgin comparable to Joliet as population hub	Smaller in both size and population than Will County; further out from regional center	Collar county with approx. twice the density of Will County; Waukegan comparable to Joliet as population hub	Smaller in both size and population; near a major metropolis; has several pop centers	About half the size and population of Will County, but same density, near a major metropolis, has several pop centers	Moderate-density suburban collar county; contains a mid-size, population center (Joliet) historically independent from Chicago
	Total Population	311,000	516,000	135,000	711,000	164,000	357,000	700,000
	Area (sq. mi.)	603	520	320	443	320	394	836
	Pop. / sq. mi.	514	995	412	1,610	505	881	833
	Median Age	40	38	36	39	38	38	38
	% Seniors (65+)	15.9%	14.9%	10.9%	15.4%	15.0%	13.3%	14.0%
	% Living with Disability	6.1%	5.6%	5.1%	6.2%	7.6%	5.7%	5.9%
	% Minority	21.0%	43.9%	35.4%	40.7%	14.0%	18.5%	39.0%

Category	Criteria	McHenry County, IL	Kane County, IL	Kendall County, IL	Lake County, IL	Johnson County, IN	Hamilton County, IN
Service Details	Service Name	MCRide Dial-a-Ride	Ride in Kane	KAT (Kendall Area Transit)	Ride Lake County	ACCESS	Hamilton County Express
	Start year	2021	2008	2010	2022	1990s	<i>Not listed</i>
	Service Area	McHenry County + key destinations outside county	For eligible riders, all ride types in sponsor areas, only work-related travel in rest of county	Kendall County + select destinations outside county including Aurora, Joliet, Plainfield, and Sandwich	Lake County + full municipal boundaries of communities located partially within Lake County	Johnson County + 2 locations outside of the county.	County + 5 IndyGo bus stops in Indianapolis
	Use Case	Open to all, all trip types allowed (no exclusions), primarily used for non-emergency medical transportation	Eligible riders in Age 65+, disability, and qualifying low-income; mostly doctor appts + work	General public transportation service with a priority for those with disabilities and seniors	Seniors aged 60+ and people with disabilities	Open to all, all trip types allowed (no prioritization by purpose).	Open to all, all trip types allowed.
	Service type	"on-demand" shared ride service	"on-demand" shared ride service	"on-demand" shared ride service	"on-demand" shared ride service	fixed route, deviated fixed route, and "on-demand"	"on-demand" shared ride service



Category	Criteria	McHenry County, IL	Kane County, IL	Kendall County, IL	Lake County, IL	Johnson County, IN	Hamilton County, IN
Service Design	Door-to-door or corner to corner	curb-to-curb	curb-to-curb	curb-to-curb, door-to-door for select riders	curb to curb	curb to curb	curb to curb
	destination type	many-to-many, many-to-one to beyond county boundaries	many-to-many	many-to-many, many-to-one to beyond county boundaries	many-to-many, many-to-one to beyond county boundaries	many-to-many, many-to-one to beyond county boundaries	many-to-many, many-to-one for 5 stops outside county
	service hours (excludes holidays unless specified)	6:00 AM - 7:00 PM 7 days/week	24/7 including holidays	6:00 AM - 7:00 PM M-F; Reservation hours 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM M-F	6:00 AM - 6:00 PM M-F; Reservation hours 5:30 AM - 6:00 PM M-F	6:15 AM - 7:30 PM M-F; Reservation hours 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM M-F w/ 30 min lunch break	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM M-F, 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM Sat; Res. hours 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM M-F
	Reservation type	pre-booked 2 hour to 2 weeks in advance	pre-booked 4 hours to one week in advance	pre-booked 2-6 days in advance, med trips 2-14 days in advance	pre-booked 2 hours to one week in advance	pre-booked 1 - 28 days in advance	pre-booked 1-14 days in advance
	Reservation style (all phone-based)	single number across county	register with local sponsor, then call single number across county	phone: register with KAT, single phone number across county	register with Pace first, single number across county	single number across county	single number across county
	Fare type	base + cost/mile	base + cost/mile	flat fee	distance	flat fee	flat fee
	Fare amount	\$3.00 first 5 miles + \$0.25 each additional mile	\$5.00 first 10 miles + \$1.50 each additional mile	\$3.00 within the county, additional \$2.00 outside.	\$2.00 0-5 miles, \$4.00 5-10 miles, \$6.00 10+ miles	fixed: \$1.00 deviated: \$2.00 on-demand: \$4.00 Double fare for same-day request	\$3.00 per ride

Category	Criteria	McHenry County, IL	Kane County, IL	Kendall County, IL	Lake County, IL	Johnson County, IN	Hamilton County, IN
Operating Model	Service coordinator/ manager	McHenry County DOT; Intergov agreement between County, Pace, and 15 towns	Kane County Paratransit Coordinating Council- a consortium of citizens, local advocates, and agencies. County administers grants, has mobility manager	Service is coordinated by the operator. KAT was founded through the cooperative effort of Kendall County Board, Voluntary Action Center of Dekalb County, and nine municipalities	Lake County Coordinated Transportation Services Committee (LCCTSC), comprised of community members	Transportation Access Committee, a group of local volunteers, assists with financial planning and policies regarding the operation of ACCESS	Hamilton County Transportation Advisory Committee advises the operator
	Vehicle operator	Pace - to be confirmed	Pace (call center + operations)	Voluntary Action Center (VAC), a nonprofit	<i>not available</i>	Access Johnson County Public Transit	Janus Developmental Services, Inc
	Operations description	Operated as a single service across the county	Centrally coordinated for both federal funding and rider scheduling, eligibility verified by sponsors	Operated as a single service across the county, nonprofit operator hired by county. 12 full time and 9 part time staff (2022)	Appears to be operated as a single service; further information needed	Operated as a single service across the county, operator also serves two other more rural counties	Operated as a single service across the county
	Vehicles	<i>not available</i>	3 buses, 5 taxis	<i>not available</i>	<i>not available</i>	8 large buses (16-18 seats), 6 medium buses (12 seats), 9 small buses (8 seats), 6 mini vans (3-6 seats)	24 Ford buses, each 13 seat WAVs

Category	Criteria	McHenry County, IL	Kane County, IL	Kendall County, IL	Lake County, IL	Johnson County, IN	Hamilton County, IN
<b>Costs and Funding</b>	Service Cost	~\$2M annually	\$2.12M in 2021 (net \$1.85 after fares)	\$1.49M in 2021, \$1.78M in 2022	200,000 from Pace for coordination, 15% increase to every provider	\$563K for fixed route, \$1.57M for on-demand	\$1.51 million
	Service sponsor	McHenry County DOT; Intergov agreement between County, Pace, and 15 towns	Federal subsidy \$0.93M (85% 5310, 15% Section 5316 JARC)  Kane County, local sponsors, Pace offer local match	In 2020: \$25.5K transfer from general fund, \$25.5k transfer from senior services fund, 700,000 from Illinois DOAP, \$51k from municipalities, \$55.6K from IDOT Section 5311, \$125.0K from RTA Section 5310. Received CARES funding in 2022-2021.	Ride Lake County is sponsored by Lake County and Pace Suburban Bus. The service is funded in part by grants from the Regional Transportation Authority. Local matching funds for these federal grants are provided by Lake County.	\$78k fare revenue, 154k Contra, 1.9M Federal	\$90k in fare revenue, \$28k in auxiliary funding, 4.7k Contra, \$1.38M Federal assistance
	Sponsor same as operator	Sponsored by intergov agreement group	Partial; pace offers a local match	No	No	No	No

Category	Criteria	McHenry County, IL	Kane County, IL	Kendall County, IL	Lake County, IL	Johnson County, IN	Hamilton County, IN
Key Performance Indicators	Trips	88,000+ in 2021 63% of rides taken are seniors or individuals w/ disabilities	~54,000 (based on first 3 months of 2022)	<i>not available</i>	~21,500 (based several months of operations in 2022)	67,000 across Johnson + 2 other (more rural) counties	52,000 in 2021
	Trips/vehicle hours	<i>not available</i>	<i>not available</i>	<i>not available</i>	<i>not available</i>	1.47 (across 3 counties)	1.68
	Cost/trip	<i>not available</i>	\$42 (2021)	<i>not available</i>	<i>not available</i>	\$31.90 (across 3 counties)	\$29.16
	Satisfaction	<i>not available</i>	0.4% rides yield complaints	<i>not available</i>	<i>not available</i>	<i>not available</i>	<i>not available</i>
	Actual wait time	<i>not available</i>	<i>not available</i>	<i>not available</i>	<i>not available</i>	<i>not available</i>	<i>not available</i>
	Notes on rider experience	2022 survey found 36% respondents aware of McRide, difficult to schedule a non-medical or non-senior ride	Must register with a local sponsor; have a ride with Kane service coordinator number. 95% on time performance.	Must register with KAT to ride	Must register to ride	Capture rate 0.34	Capture rate: 0.19

# Appendix B

## Dial-a-Ride Provider Profiles

## Central Will Dial-a-Ride

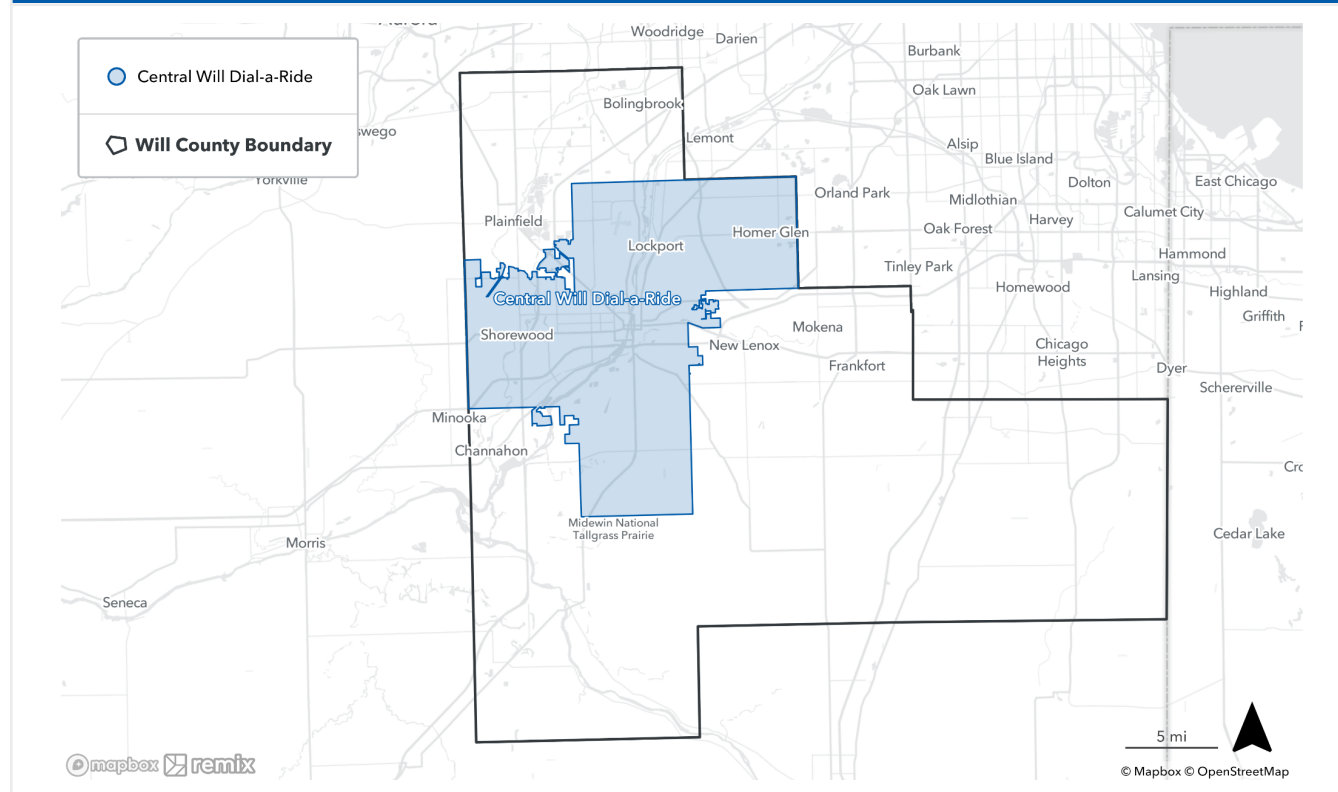
### Summary

Central Will Dial-a-Ride provides transportation to residents of **Lockport, Homer, Troy, Joliet, and Jackson Townships**, as well as the **City of Joliet**. There are no restrictions on travel between jurisdictions - all riders can travel anywhere in the service area. To be eligible, riders must live in a participating jurisdiction, and be either a senior citizen or disabled.

### Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Fares	Annual Ridership
Participating townships and cities	Weekdays 6:00 AM - 5:00 PM	\$2 one-way	2019: 25,619 2021: 12,668
Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process	Service Area Size	Population
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior citizens (60+)</li> <li>Persons with disabilities</li> </ul>	Contact call center (1-800-244-4410) up to 24 hours prior to desired pick-up time.	195 square miles	280,000 persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>38,000 seniors</li> <li>27,800 disabled</li> </ul>

### Service Area Map



Operations			
Service Model	Revenue Hours	Vehicles Required	Typical Vehicle
Vehicles operated, dispatched, and maintained by Pace for hourly all-in price	2019: 11,165 (Annual) 2021: 7,085 (Annual)	Varies; vehicles pooled with nearby services	Cutaway bus with 14 seats and wheelchair positions
Dispatch Process		Additional Notes	
Vehicle dispatching is handled by Pace. Riders may be commingled with those from other Pace-operated dial-a-rides. For longer trips, taxis may be used in lieu of buses.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Residents contact township or city to confirm eligibility; information is then forwarded to Pace</li><li>Participating jurisdictions work with riders on a case-by-case basis to approve rides to hospitals outside the service area</li></ul>	
Costs and Funding			
Operating Costs	Capital Costs	Major Funding Sources	
<i>Annual</i> 2021: \$540,000  <i>Hourly</i> 2021: \$76.95 / hour	Pace bills participating jurisdictions per hour of service provided. Capital costs are accounted for in the hourly rate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Pace:</b> Provides a subsidy of between 65% and 70% of total annual operating cost. Subsidy percentage varies slightly year-to-year after accounting for revenue (e.g., fares and liquidated damages).</li><li><b>Participating Jurisdictions:</b> Pays local share not covered by Pace subsidy.</li></ul>	
Additional Notes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In 2021, a pool of 20 vehicles was used to provide 28,600 trips across the Central Will Dial-a-Ride, DuPage Township Dial-a-Ride, Southwest Will Dial-a-Ride, and ADA paratransit.</li><li>Hourly operating costs include a base contractor rate (paid to third-party companies operating the service for Pace), as well as a fuel surcharge.</li><li>As of late 2021, fuel surcharges accounted for approximately \$5 of the total hourly cost.</li></ul>			



# DuPage Township Dial-a-Ride

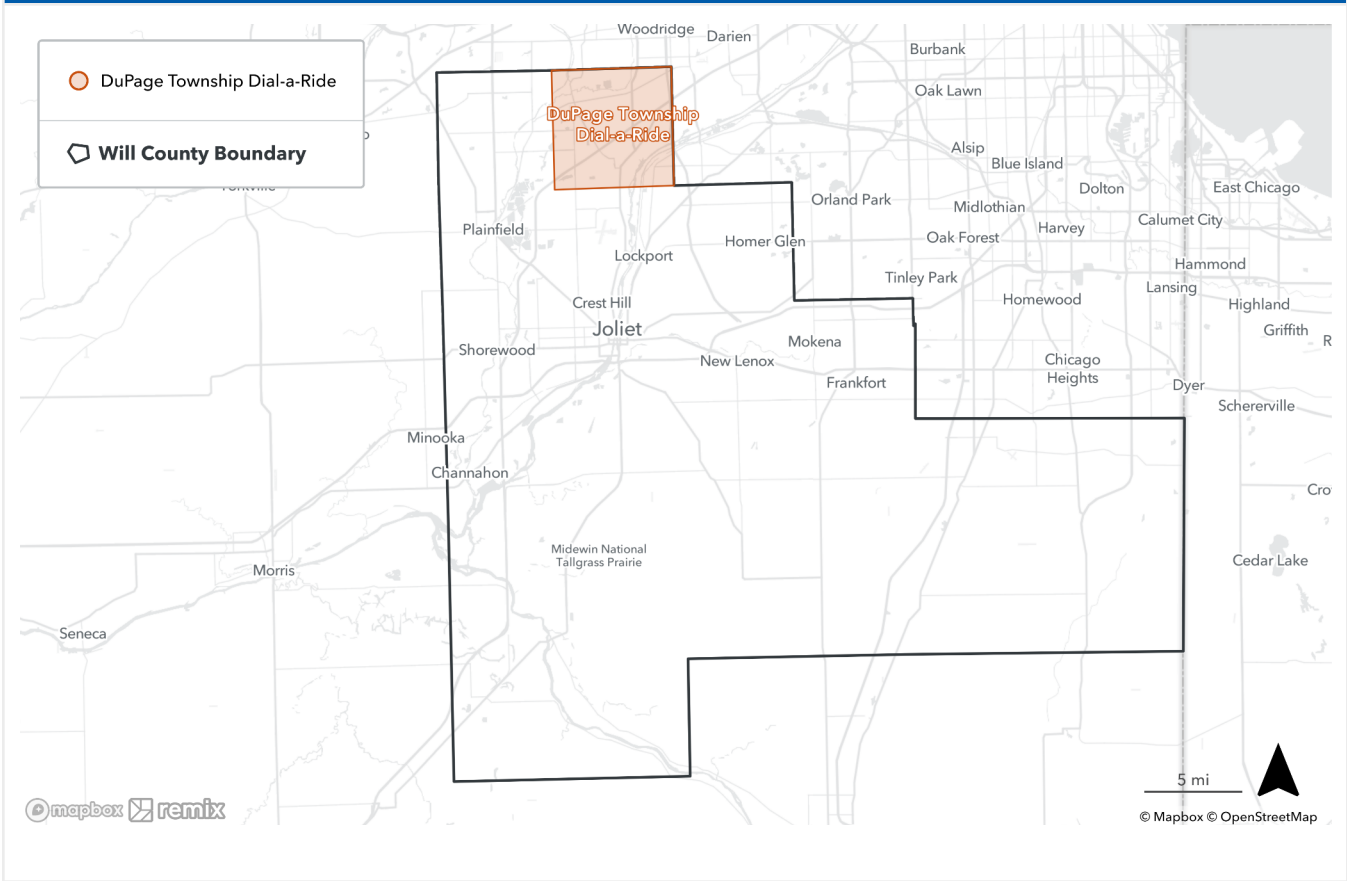
## Summary

The DuPage Township Dial-a-Ride service provides transportation within Township boundaries. To be eligible, riders must live in the Township, and be either a senior citizen or disabled.

## Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Fares	Annual Ridership
DuPage Township	Weekdays 7:00 AM - 5:00 PM	\$2 one-way	2019: 4,807 2021: 2,738
Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process	Service Area Size	Population
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior citizens</li> <li>Persons with disabilities</li> </ul>	Contact call center (1-800-244-4410) at least 1 day prior to desired pick-up time.	35 square miles	90,000 persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11,000 seniors</li> <li>7,500 disabled</li> </ul>

## Service Area Map



Operations			
Service Model	Revenue Hours	Vehicles Required	Typical Vehicle
Vehicles operated, dispatched, and maintained by Pace for hourly all-in price	2019: 1,798 (Annual) 2021: 1,098 (Annual)	1 (township estimate); vehicles pooled with adjacent services	Cutaway bus with 14 seats and wheelchair positions
Dispatch Process		Additional Notes	
Vehicle dispatching is handled by Pace. Riders may be commingled with those from other Pace-operated dial-a-rides. For longer trips, taxis may be used in lieu of buses.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Residents contact township to confirm eligibility; information is then forwarded to Pace</li></ul>	
Costs and Funding			
Operating Costs	Capital Costs	Major Funding Sources	
<i>Annual</i> 2019: \$112,515 2021: \$83,836  <i>Hourly</i> 2019: \$63.08 / hour 2021: \$76.95 / hour	Pace bills participating jurisdictions per hour of service provided. Capital costs are accounted for in the hourly rate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Pace:</b> Provides a subsidy of between 65% and 70% of total annual operating cost. Subsidy percentage varies slightly year-to-year after accounting for revenue (e.g., fares and liquidated damages).</li><li><b>DuPage Township:</b> Pays local share not covered by Pace subsidy.</li></ul>	
Additional Notes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In 2021, a pool of 20 vehicles was used to provide 28,600 trips across the Central Will Dial-a-Ride, DuPage Township Dial-a-Ride, Southwest Will Dial-a-Ride, and ADA paratransit.</li><li>Hourly operating costs include a base contractor rate (paid to third-party companies operating the service for Pace), as well as a fuel surcharge.</li><li>As of 2021, fuel surcharges accounted for approximately \$5 of the total hourly cost.</li></ul>			

# Southwest Will Dial-a-Ride

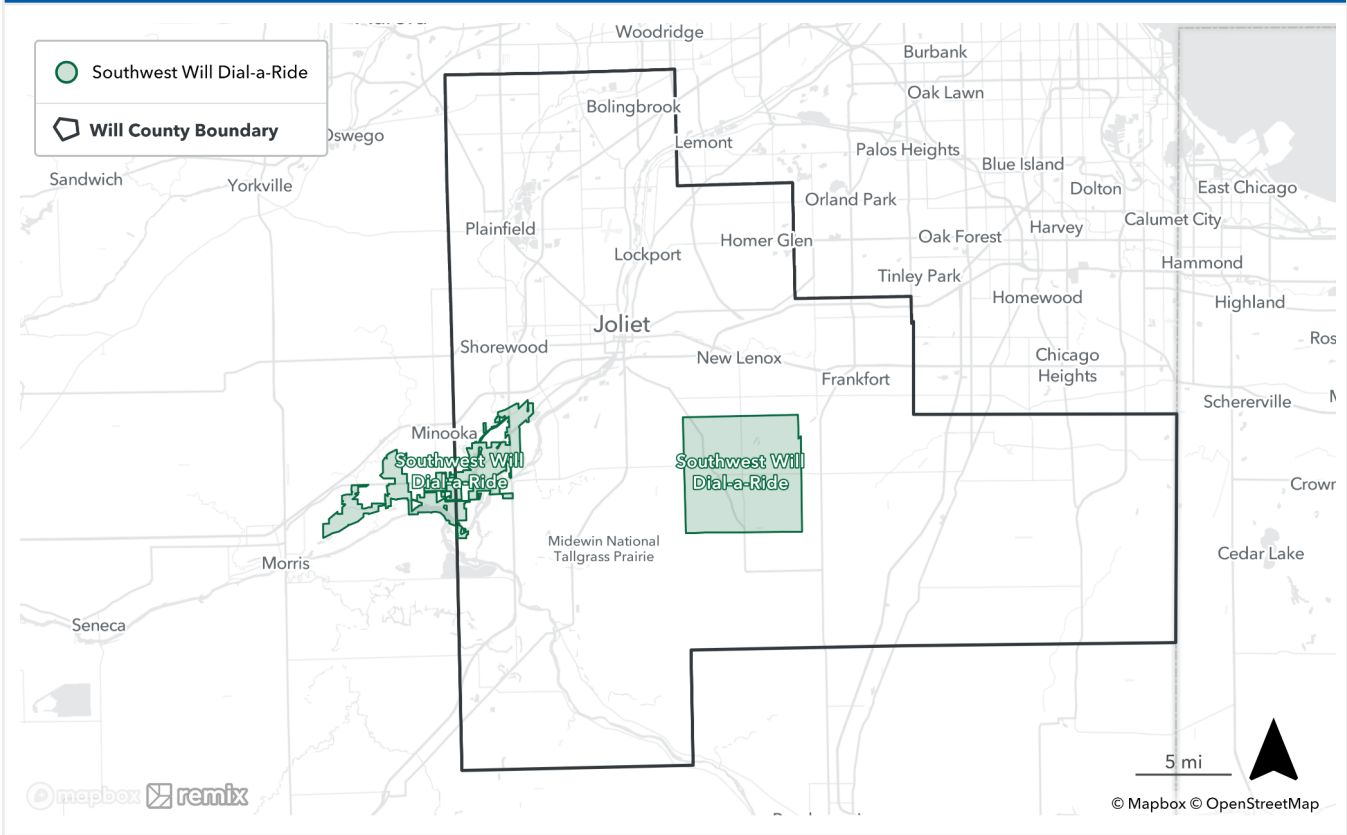
## Summary

The Southwest Will Dial-a-Ride provides transportation to residents of **Manhattan Township**, as well as the **Village of Channahon**. The service is open to the general public. Travel between the two discontiguous portions of the service area is permitted. Village of Channahon residents living in Grundy County are also eligible to use the service.

## Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Fares (One-Way)	Annual Ridership
Manhattan Twp. + Village of Channahon	Weekdays 6:00 AM - 5:00 PM	\$4 for up to 20 miles + \$1 per mile thereafter	2019: 594 2021: 180
Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process	Service Area Size	Population
All residents of the participating jurisdictions.	Contact call center (1-800-244-4410) up to 7 days before desired pick-up.	54 square miles	25,000 persons

## Service Area Map



Operations			
Service Model	Revenue Hours	Vehicles Required	Typical Vehicle
Vehicles operated, dispatched, and maintained by Pace for hourly all-in price	2019: 430 (Annual) 2021: 170 (Annual)	Varies; vehicles pooled with nearby services	Cutaway bus with 14 seats and wheelchair positions
Dispatch Process		Additional Notes	
Vehicle dispatching is handled by Pace. Riders may be commingled with those from other Pace-operated dial-a-rides.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Although the service is available to the general public, it is primarily intended for and used by seniors and persons with disabilities.</li></ul>	
Costs and Funding			
Operating Costs	Capital Costs	Major Funding Sources	
<i>Annual</i> 2021: \$12,800  <i>Hourly</i> 2021: \$76.95 / hour	Pace bills participating jurisdictions per hour of service provided. Capital costs are accounted for in the hourly rate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Pace:</b> Provides a subsidy of between 65% and 70% of total annual operating cost. Subsidy percentage varies slightly year-to-year after accounting for revenue (e.g., fares and liquidated damages).</li><li><b>Participating Townships:</b> Pays local share not covered by Pace subsidy.</li></ul>	
Additional Notes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Hourly operating costs include a base contractor rate (paid to third-party companies operating the service for Pace), as well as a fuel surcharge.</li><li>As of late 2021, fuel surcharges accounted for approximately \$5 of the total hourly cost.</li><li>In 2021, a pool of 20 vehicles was used to provide 28,600 trips across the Central Will Dial-a-Ride, DuPage Township Dial-a-Ride, Southwest Will Dial-a-Ride, and ADA paratransit.</li></ul>			

## Will-Ride

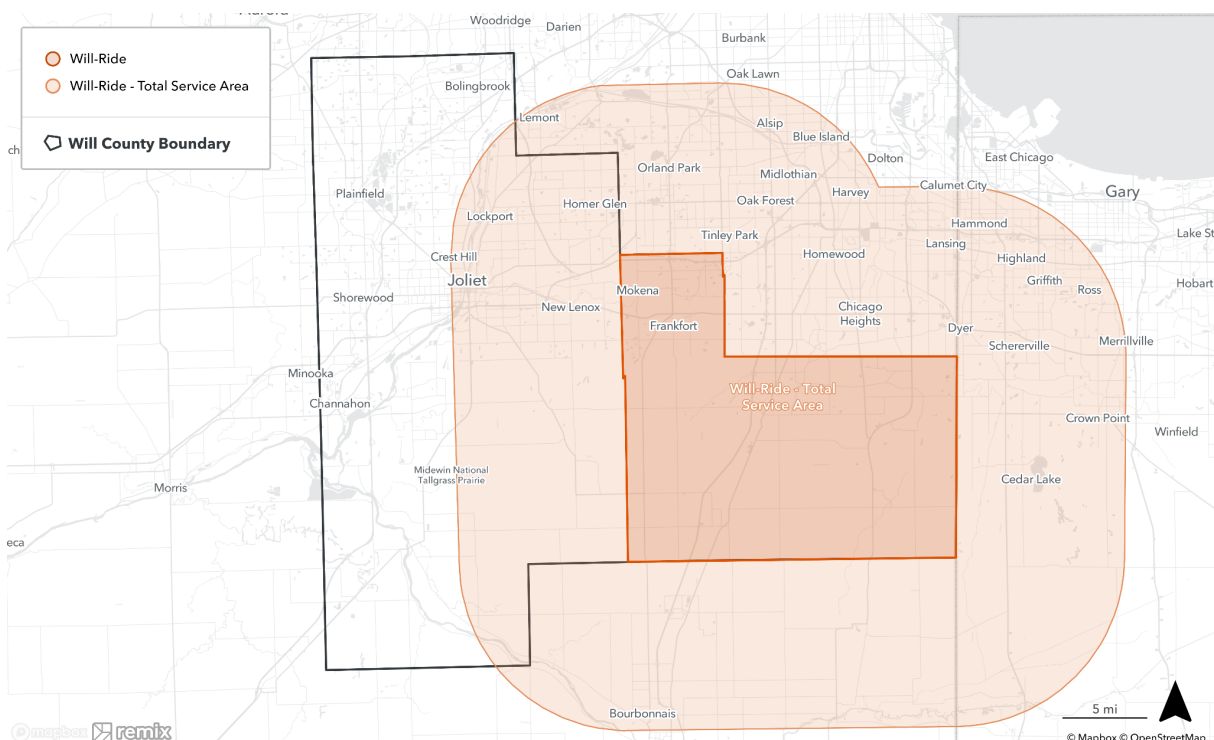
## Summary

Will-Ride provides transportation to residents of **Frankfort, Green Garden, Peotone, Monee, Will, Crete, and Washington Townships**. The service area includes seven participating townships and a 10-mile buffer. Riders from each township can travel anywhere in the service area. To be eligible, residents must be senior citizens, disabled, or needing transportation to work.

## Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Fares (One-Way)	Annual Ridership
Townships + 10 mile buffer	Weekdays 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	\$2 within township \$4 outside township	2019: 10,747 2021: 5,350
Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process	Service Area Size	Population
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Senior citizens</li><li>• Persons with disabilities</li><li>• Residents needing transport to work</li></ul>	Contact call center (1-800-244-4410) at least 24 hours in advance.	270 square miles <i>Excluding 10-mile buffer</i>	115,000 persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 18,500 seniors</li><li>• 11,700 disabled</li><li>• 500 households without vehicle</li></ul>

## Service Area Map



Operations			
Service Model	Revenue Hours	Vehicles Required	Typical Vehicle
Vehicles operated, dispatched, and maintained by Pace for hourly all-in price	2019: 8,484 (Annual)	Varies, vehicles pooled with south Cook services	Cutaway bus with 14 seats and wheelchair positions
Dispatch Process		Additional Notes	
Vehicle dispatching is handled by Pace. Riders may be commingled with those from other Pace-operated dial-a-rides. For longer trips, taxis may be used in lieu of buses.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Residents contact township to confirm eligibility; information is then forwarded to Will-Ride</li><li>Will-Ride works with townships on a case-by-case basis to approve rides to destinations outside the 10-mile buffer area</li></ul>	
Costs and Funding			
Operating Costs	Capital Costs	Major Funding Sources	
<i>Annual</i> 2019: \$440,000 2021: \$260,000  <i>Hourly</i> 2019: \$43 / hour 2021: \$52 / hour	Pace bills Will-Ride per hour of service provided. Capital costs to operate transit service are accounted for in the hourly rate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Northeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging:</b> Funds trips for senior citizens at 85% of total cost, townships pay remaining 15%.</li><li><b>RTA:</b> Funds trips for other riders at 50%, township pay remaining 50%.</li><li><b>Townships:</b> Local match for funding from other sources.</li></ul>	
Additional Notes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In 2021, a pool of 83 vehicles was used to provide 212,100 trips across Will-Ride and various services in southern Cook County.</li><li>Hourly operating costs include a base contractor rate (paid to third-party companies operating the service for Pace), as well as a fuel surcharge.</li><li>As of late 2021, fuel surcharges accounted for approximately \$5 of the total hourly cost.</li><li>Pace bills Will-Ride an hourly cost per rider, effectively charging 2x the cost if two Will-Ride passengers share a vehicle. However, the hourly rate charged to Will-Ride is lower than the rates billed to other Pace-operated services.</li><li>Prior to August 2022, rides within Frankfort Township were provided through a separate service, while rides from Frankfort Township to the rest of the service area were provided by Will-Ride. All rides are now provided by Will-Ride.</li><li>Green Garden Township joined Will-Ride in early 2023.</li></ul>			

# Braidwood Rides

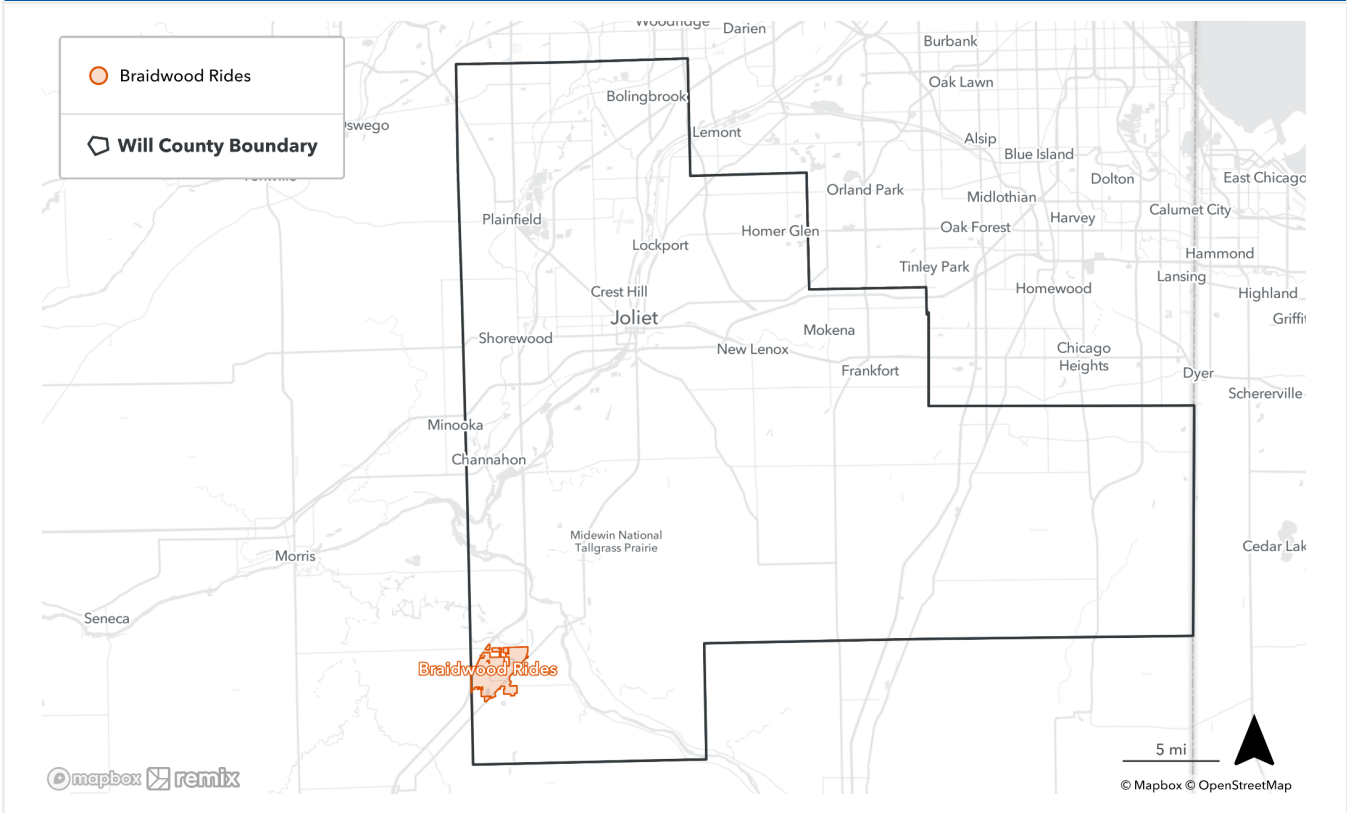
## Summary

This service provides trips primarily within the **City of Braidwood**, although trips to Wilmington, Morris, Joliet, and Bourbonnais are accommodated upon request. To be eligible, residents must be either a senior citizen, disabled, or a caretaker. Based on local newspaper reporting, the service is not well-patronized and is **effectively discontinued**.

## Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Fares (One-Way)	Annual Ridership
City of Braidwood, others upon request	Weekdays 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Fares not charged	Unknown
Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process	Service Area Size	Population
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior citizens</li> <li>Persons with disabilities</li> <li>Caretakers</li> </ul>	Call the City of Braidwood; three-day notice recommended	5 square miles	4,100 persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>550 seniors</li> <li>400 disabled</li> </ul>

## Service Area Map



Operations			
Service Model	Revenue Hours	Vehicles Required	Typical Vehicle
Service provided by municipality	Unknown	1 (leased from Pace)	Van bus with 7 seats and 2 wheelchair positions
Dispatch Process		Additional Notes	
Vehicle manually dispatched by municipal police department.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Inconsistent availability (service suspended for vehicle maintenance all of May 2022)</li></ul>	
Costs and Funding			
Operating Costs	Capital Costs	Major Funding Sources	
<i>Annual</i> 2019: \$30,000 2021: \$33,500	Vehicle leased from Pace; City responsible for fuel and maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Senior Services of Will County:</b> Funds operating cost of service using Title III grant (approximately \$33,500 / year)</li><li><b>City of Braidwood:</b> Funds costs above Senior Services grant on as-needed basis</li></ul>	



# Wheatland Township (Ride DuPage)

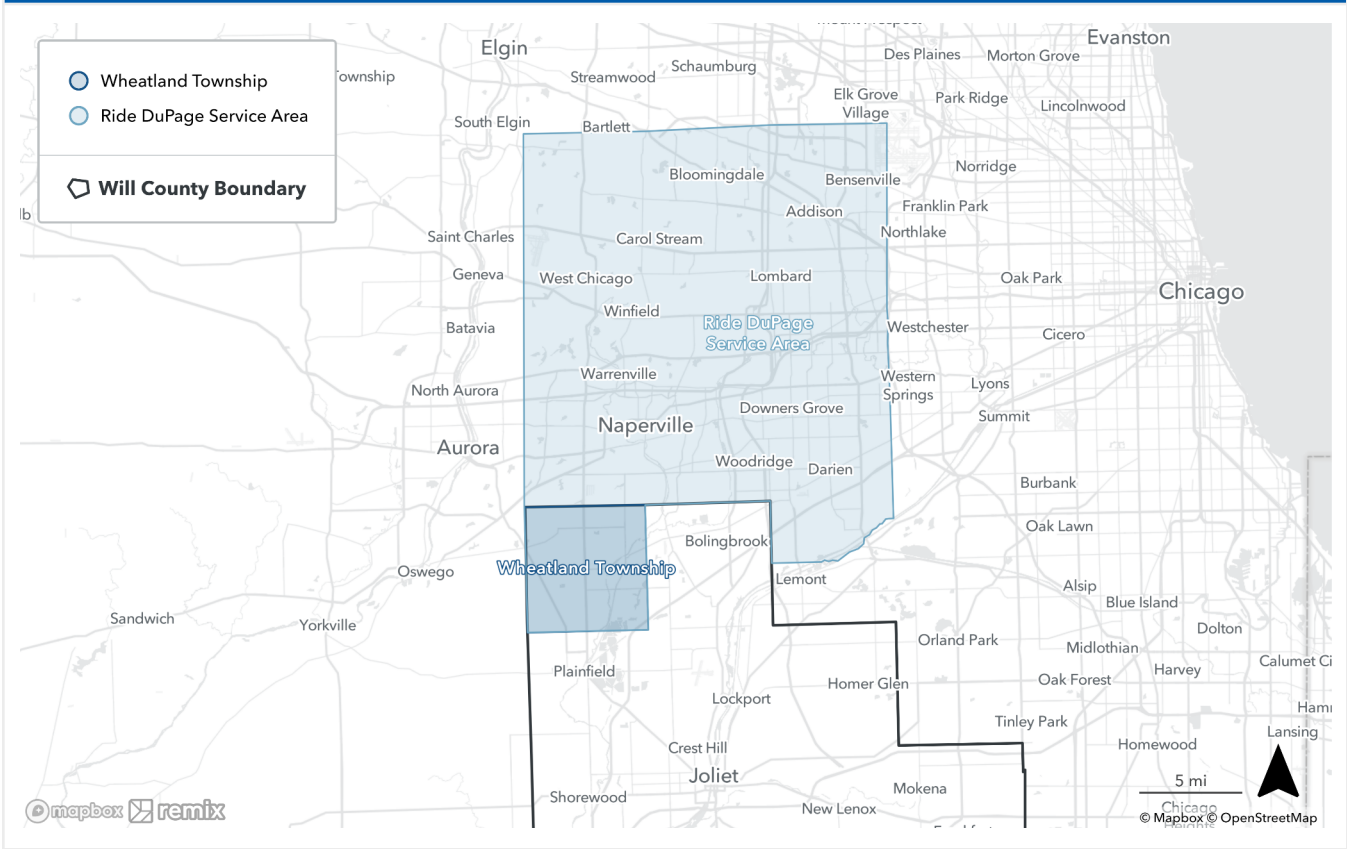
## Summary

**Wheatland Township** sponsors rides for older residents (65+) and residents with disabilities (18+) through the Ride DuPage program. Ride DuPage provides on-demand transit throughout DuPage County.

## Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Fares (One-Way)	Annual Ridership
Wheatland Township + DuPage County	All days 24 hours / day	\$2 base fare + \$1 / mile	2019: 4,419 <i>Wheatland Twp. only</i>
Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process	Service Area Size	Population
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior citizens (65+)</li> <li>Persons with disabilities (18+)</li> </ul>	Call Ride DuPage (1-800-713-7445); same-day requests not guaranteed	36 square miles <i>Wheatland Township</i> 370 square miles <i>Total</i>	85,000 persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6,800 seniors</li> <li>5,100 disabled</li> </ul>

## Service Area Map



Operations			
Service Model	Revenue Hours	Vehicles Required	Typical Vehicle
Township sponsors service from Ride DuPage for residents	2019: 785 (Annual)	Varies, vehicles pooled with other Ride DuPage sponsor organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Taxi</li><li>• Cutaway bus with 14 seats and wheelchair positions</li></ul>
Dispatch Process		Additional Notes	
Vehicles dispatched by Pace. Depending on the time of day and potential of aggregating trips, a taxi or bus will be assigned to each trip request.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The majority of Ride DuPage trips are completed using third-party taxi services.</li><li>• Persons with a wheelchair are always assigned to Pace buses with wheelchair lifts and accessible seating positions.</li></ul>	
Costs and Funding			
Operating Costs	Capital Costs	Major Funding Sources	
<i>Annual</i> 2021: ~\$45,000 <sup>52</sup>  <i>Hourly</i> 2021: \$57.95 / hour	Capital costs to provide the service are billed to sponsors as part of one all-in hourly rate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Pace:</b> Provides a subsidy of between 65% and 70% of total annual operating cost. Subsidy percentage varies slightly year-to-year after accounting for revenue (e.g., fares and liquidated damages).</li><li>• <b>Wheatland Township:</b> Pays local share not covered by Pace subsidy.</li></ul>	
Additional Notes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hourly operating costs include a base contractor rate (paid to third-party companies operating the service for Pace), as well as a fuel surcharge.</li><li>• As of late 2021, fuel surcharges accounted for approximately \$5 of the total hourly cost.</li><li>• Ride DuPage is funded by several sponsor groups, each with distinct eligibility requirements and service area restrictions.</li><li>• Wheatland Township is part of the Naperville / Lisle Area Transportation Partners sponsor group. The group also includes Naperville and Lisle Townships, and the City of Naperville (all in DuPage County).</li></ul>			

<sup>52</sup> Estimated cost based on annualizing the December 2021 monthly invoice.

# Lockport Township Senior Shuttle

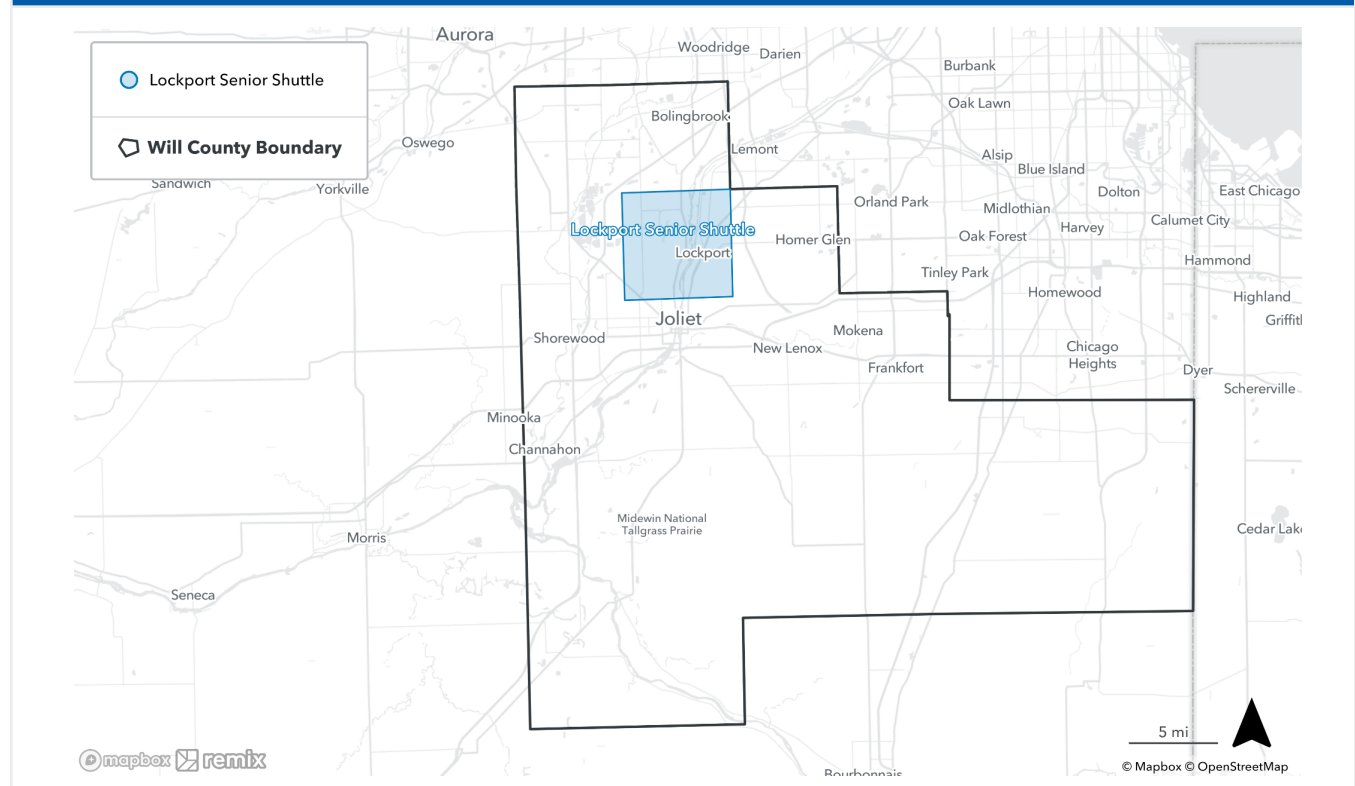
## Summary

This service provides trips to residents of **Lockport Township** who are 55 or older. Service is primarily limited to township boundaries, although trips to and from medical facilities in adjacent communities are allowed upon request.

## Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Fares (One-Way)	Annual Ridership
Lockport Township + select medical facilities outside twp.	Weekdays 7:00 AM - 3:00 PM	\$1 + \$1 per additional stop	2019: 7,558 2021: 4,515
Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process	Service Area Size	Population
Senior citizens (55+)	Call the township (1-815-293-6320) the day prior to desired pickup.	37 square miles	60,000 persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12,000 seniors</li> </ul>

## Service Area Map



Operations			
Service Model	Revenue Hours	Vehicles Required	Typical Vehicle
Service operated by Township.	2021: ~4,000 (Annual)  <i>Calculated from fleet size and hours of service</i>	2 (typical) 3 (peak)	Lift-equipped cutaway bus
Dispatch Process		Additional Notes	
Vehicle manually dispatched by Township staff.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trip requests accepted up to one month in advance; same day bookings accommodated as availability permits</li><li>• Medical trips prioritized</li></ul>	
Costs and Funding			
Operating Costs	Capital Costs	Major Funding Sources	
<i>Annual</i> 2022: ~\$280,000	2022: \$128,000  <i>Purchased new buses in 2022; vehicles leased in prior years.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Lockport Township:</b> Service funded using local property taxes since 2000.</li></ul>	
Additional Notes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lockport Township operates a fleet of three vehicles (two cutaway buses and one van) in transit service. The van is typically only used for peak days, or when a bus is out of service.</li><li>• On a typical day, two vehicles are used: one to serve trips west of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, and one to serve trips east of the Canal.</li></ul>			

# New Lenox Transportation Services

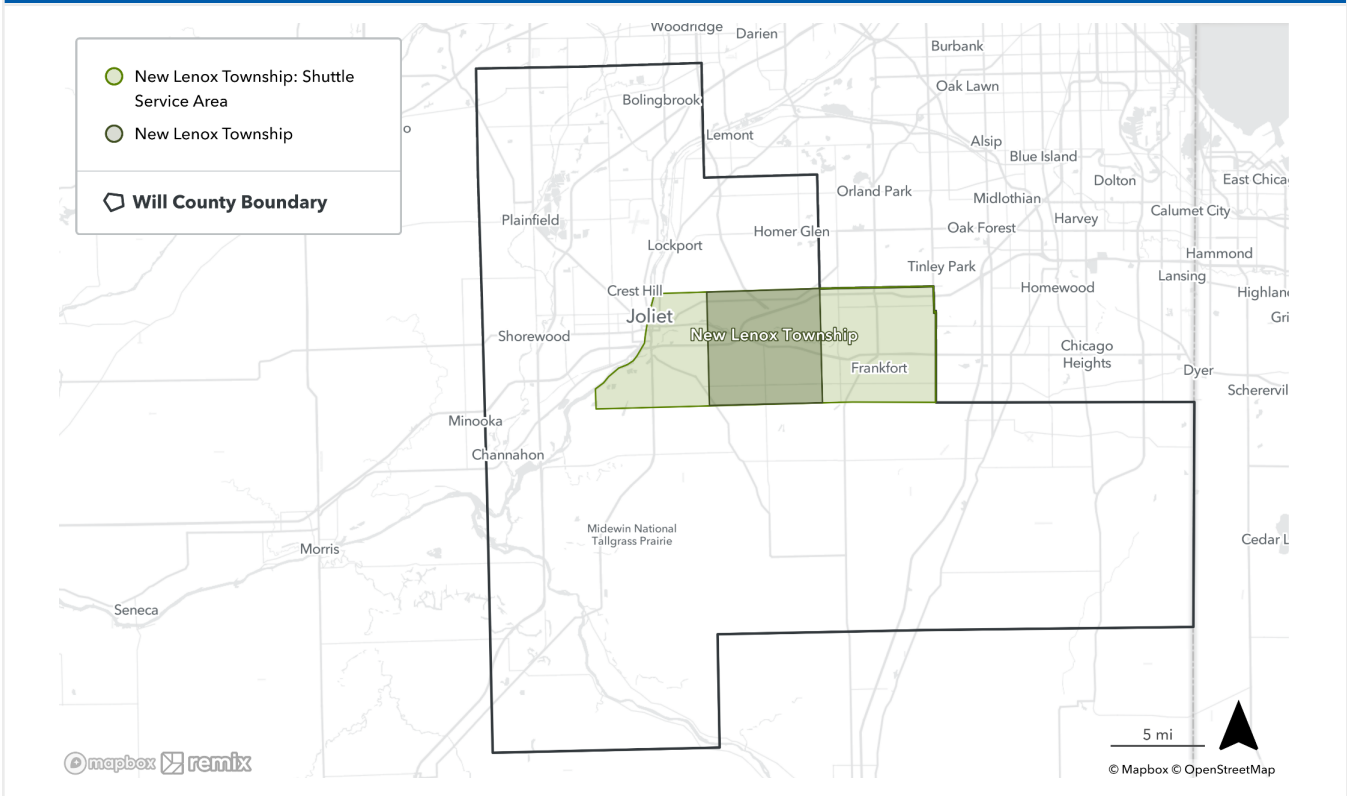
## Summary

This service provides trips primarily within **New Lenox Township**, although trips to and from adjacent areas are permitted for medical appointments and employment access for disabled residents. To be eligible for the service, riders must be residents of New Lenox Township.

## Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Fares (One-Way)	Annual Ridership
New Lenox Twp. + Frankfort & Joliet Twps. (east of river)	Weekdays 7:00 AM - 3:30 PM	\$3 Ages 9-13 / Seniors \$5 Adults <i>2x if outside New Lenox</i>	Unknown
Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process	Service Area Size	Population
All residents, with limited eligibility for trips to adjacent townships.	Call the township (1-815-485-6431) as soon as possible to schedule a trip.	36 square miles <i>New Lenox Township</i> 100 square miles <i>Total</i>	43,000 persons

## Service Area Map



Operations			
Service Model	Revenue Hours	Vehicles Required	Typical Vehicle
Service operated by Township.	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Dispatch Process		Additional Notes	
Vehicle manually dispatched by Township staff.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Scheduled trips to and from area malls are offered on occasion, but are not a primary ridership driver.</li></ul>	
Costs and Funding			
Operating Costs	Capital Costs	Major Funding Sources	
Annual Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	
Hourly Unknown			

# Plainfield Township Shuttle Bus

Summary			
<p>This service provides trips primarily within <b>Plainfield Township</b>, although trips to Ascension Saint Joseph Medical Center (and adjacent medical offices) in Joliet are completed upon request. To be eligible, residents must be either disabled or a senior citizen (55+).</p>			
Key Facts			
Service Area	Times Operational	Fares (One-Way)	Annual Ridership
Plainfield Township, select destinations in Joliet on request	Weekdays 7:30 AM - 3:00 PM	\$2 per person + \$2 per additional stop	Unknown
Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process	Service Area Size	Township Population
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior citizens (55+)</li> <li>Persons with disabilities</li> </ul>	Call the township (1-815-436-1112) as soon as possible to schedule a trip.	35 square miles	82,000 persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7,400 seniors</li> <li>6,600 disabled</li> </ul>
Service Area Map			
<p>The map displays the service area for the Plainfield Senior Shuttle, which is a purple-shaded region primarily covering Plainfield Township and parts of Joliet. The map includes labels for various locations such as Woodridge, Bolingbrook, Lemont, Orland Park, Tinley Park, Homewood, and Chicago Heights. A legend in the top-left corner identifies the shuttle service area and the Will County boundary. A scale bar in the bottom-right corner indicates a distance of 5 miles.</p>			

Operations			
Service Model	Revenue Hours	Vehicles Required	Typical Vehicle
Service operated by Township.	Unknown	1-2 (typical)	Lift-equipped cutaway bus
Dispatch Process		Additional Notes	
Vehicle manually dispatched by Township staff.			
Costs and Funding			
Operating Costs	Capital Costs	Major Funding Sources	
Annual Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	
Hourly Unknown			



# Romeoville Ride-Around Town

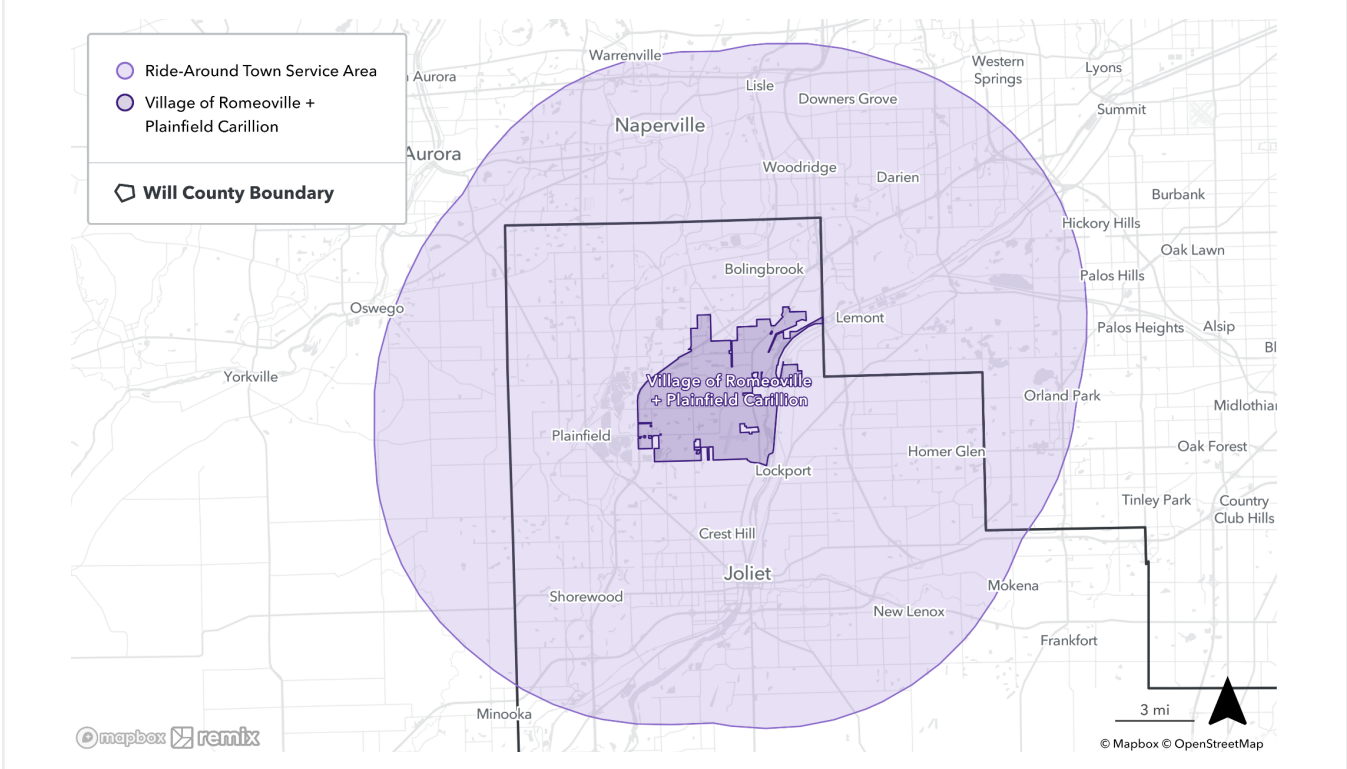
## Summary

The Ride-Around Town service provides transportation to all residents of the **Village of Romeoville**, as well as residents of the nearby Plainfield Carillon community. Service is provided within a 10-mile radius of municipal boundaries.

## Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Fares (One-Way)	Annual Ridership
Village of Romeoville & Plainfield Carillon Community; 10 mile buffer	Weekdays 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM	\$3 - \$9 <i>Varies by distance; reduced fares available for seniors</i>	Unknown
Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process	Service Area Size	Population
All residents; riders 50 or over receive reduced fare	Contact village (1-815-886-6222) at least 48 hours prior to desired pick-up.	23 square miles <i>Village + Carillion</i> 560 square miles <i>Total</i>	48,000 persons

## Service Area Map



Operations			
Service Model	Revenue Hours	Vehicles Required	Typical Vehicle
Service operated by Township.	Unknown	2 vehicles owned	Cutaway bus - unknown capacity
Dispatch Process		Additional Notes	
Vehicle manually dispatched by Village staff.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Trips can be taken for any purpose, although trips to and from medical appointments are prioritized.</li></ul>	
Costs and Funding			
Operating Costs	Capital Costs	Major Funding Sources	
Annual Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	
Hourly Unknown			

# Washington Township Dial-a-Ride

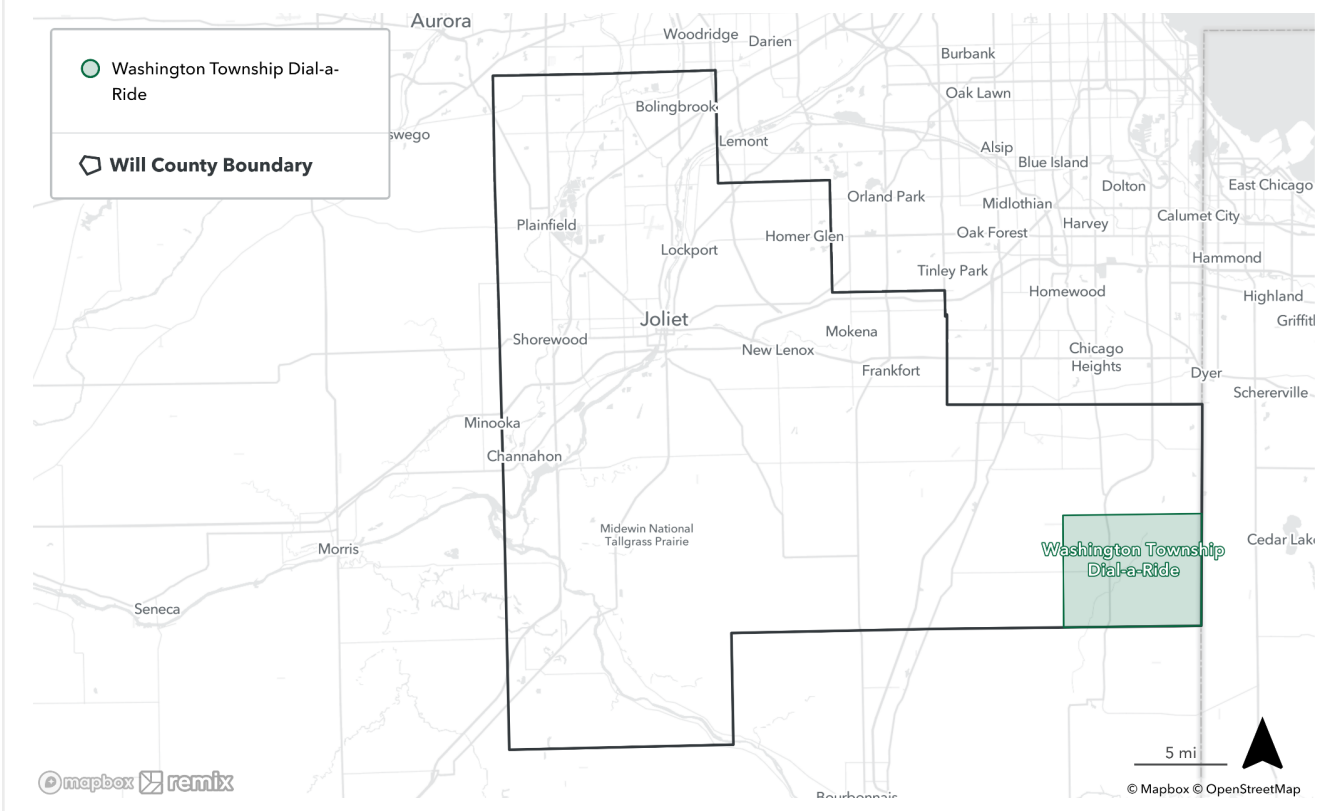
## Summary

This service provides trips within **Washington Township**, supplementing Will-Ride service. The dial-a-ride only operates on Thursdays. To be eligible, riders must be township residents and be either a senior citizen or disabled.

## Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Fares (One-Way)	Annual Ridership
Washington Township	Thursdays 9:00 AM - 2:30 PM	\$2 <i>Suggested donation</i>	Unknown
Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process	Service Area Size	Township Population
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior citizens</li> <li>Persons with disabilities</li> </ul>	Call the township (1-708-231-1172) on the Monday before the desired pick-up date.	45 square miles	6,300 persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1,000 seniors</li> <li>900 disabled</li> </ul>

## Service Area Map



Operations			
Service Model	Revenue Hours	Vehicles Required	Typical Vehicle
Service operated by Township.	Unknown	1 vehicle owned	Lift-equipped cutaway bus
Dispatch Process		Additional Notes	
Vehicle manually dispatched by Township staff.			
Costs and Funding			
Operating Costs	Capital Costs	Major Funding Sources	
Annual Unknown	Vehicle purchased and maintained by township.	Unknown	
Hourly Unknown			

## Pace On-Demand (West Joliet)

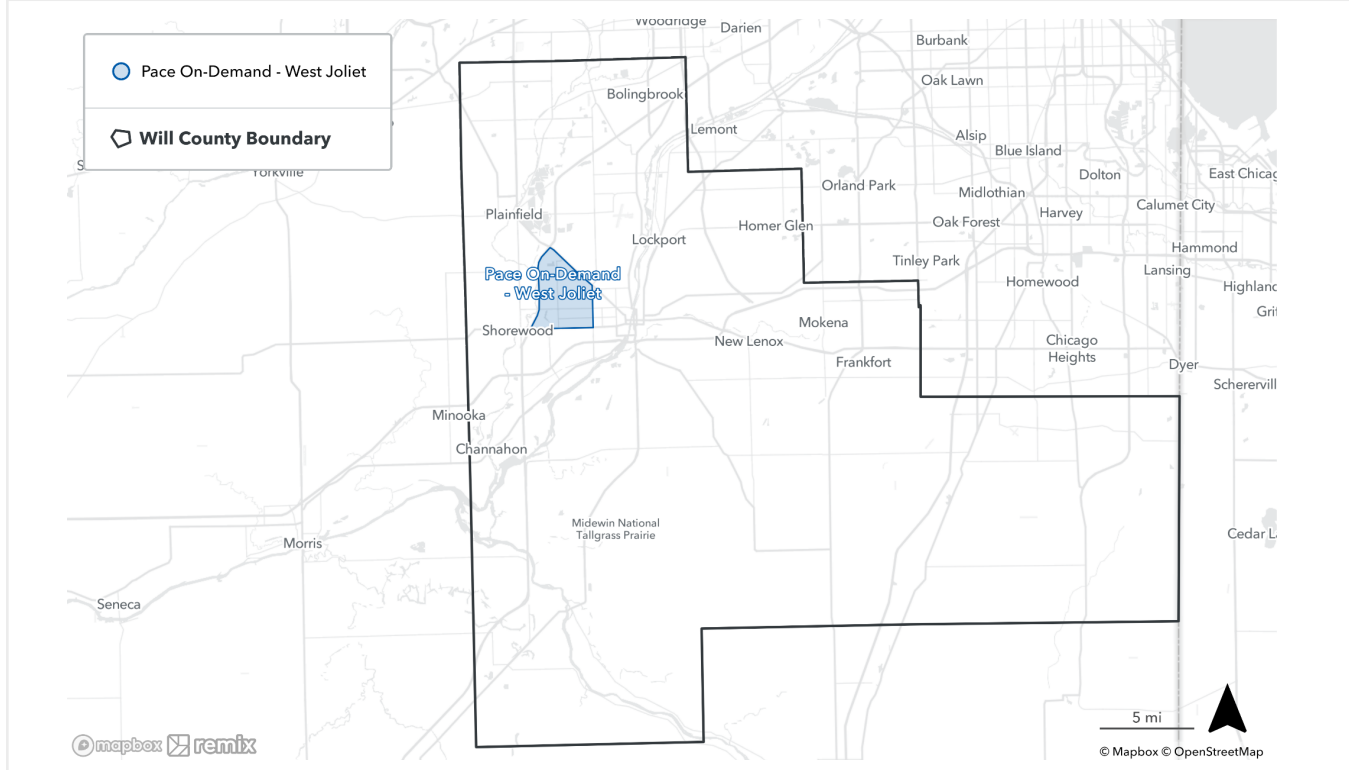
### Summary

This service provides on-demand service to the general public in **west Joliet**. Riders are able to book trips using an online portal, or over the phone. Trips must be booked at least one hour in advance of the desired pick-up time.

### Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Fares (One-Way)	Annual Ridership
West Joliet <i>Refer to map for exact boundaries</i>	Weekdays 6:00 AM - 6:15 PM	\$2 - Standard \$1 - Reduced <i>Available to seniors and persons with disabilities</i>	2019: 7,550
Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process	Service Area Size	Population
General public, no residency restrictions	Book at least 1 hour in advance online or over the phone (1-815-210-6960)	10 square miles	32,000 persons

### Service Area Map



Operations			
Service Model	Revenue Hours	Vehicles Required	Typical Vehicle
Microtransit service operated by Pace	Unknown	Unknown	Lift-equipped cutaway bus
Dispatch Process		Additional Notes	
Vehicle dispatch and ride aggregation handled using third-party technology platform		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Scheduled stops are made at Ascension Saint Joseph Medical Center every 60 minutes</li></ul>	
Costs and Funding			
Operating Costs	Capital Costs	Major Funding Sources	
<i>Annual</i> Unknown  <i>Hourly</i> Unknown	Vehicles purchased and maintained by Pace at depot in Plainfield	Unknown	
Additional Notes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Fare collection integrated with regional Ventra system</li></ul>			

# Appendix C

## Human Service Agency Profiles

## Beecher Manor Nursing and Rehabilitation Center

### Summary

Beecher Manor Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center is a 128-bed facility located in Beecher, IL. The facility contracts with private operators to provide non-medical trips covered by Medicare and Medicaid.

### Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process
Will County and adjacent Counties	Varies	Facility residents	Unknown

### Additional Notes

- The total number of trips provided to residents is unknown - trips are generally provided through a patient's insurance brokers.

## Catholic Charities

### Summary

Catholic Charities provides a range of programs in Will County to assist older adults and persons with disabilities. The organization will provide transportation to older adults participating in foster grandparent and school volunteer programs. The organization does not maintain a formal transportation service.

### Additional Notes

- Transportation in the foster grandparent program remains suspended due to Covid-19, although staff continue to provide client transportation to agency programs on an as-needed basis.



## Cornerstone Services

### Summary

Cornerstone Services provides client transportation to and from agency programs, work, or training events. Transportation services are available to clients only. The type and availability of transportation services offered changes by event.

### Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process
Will County	Varies, based on program schedule	Agency clients traveling to programs, work, or training events.	Unknown

### Additional Notes

- Vehicles directly owned by Cornerstone Services are used to provide client transport. Current fleet size is unknown, although the agency has previously procured transit vehicles through the IDOT Consolidated Vehicle Program (CVP).

## Guardian Angel Community Services

### Summary

Guardian Angel Community Services (based in Joliet) provides clients with transportation to agency activities on an as-needed basis. Transport is only provided when staff are available to drive; the organization does not maintain a formal transportation service.

### Additional Notes

- Guardian Angel Community Services serves approximately 4,000 children, individuals, and families each year.

## Individual Advocacy Group

### Summary

Individual Advocacy Group (IAG) provides a range of services to persons living with disabilities, including transportation for clients engaged with the group. The type and availability of transportation services offered to each client is dependent on the IAG program(s) the client is enrolled in. Trips are not restricted to specific purposes.

### Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process
Will County	Varies, based on program and client needs	Agency clients	Unknown

### Additional Notes

- A fleet of 4 vehicles, leased from Pace through the Vanpool Advantage Program, is used to provide client transport.

## Ascension Saint Joseph Medical Center

### Summary

Ascension Saint Joseph Medical Center provides patients with taxi vouchers if they are discharged from the hospital without any other transportation. The organization does not directly provide transportation service.

### Additional Notes

- Vouchers can be used for trips ending anywhere in Will County or adjacent counties.

## New Star Services

### Summary

New Star Services provides three distinct services to support persons with disabilities in and around Will County: community day programs, community-integrated living arrangements (CILAs), and job placement services. Client transportation is provided directly by New Star.

### Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process
Varies, generally Will and Cook Counties	Varies, generally: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• AM and PM peaks for day programs</li><li>• Midday for job services</li><li>• All day for CILAs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Day program clients</li><li>• CILA residents</li><li>• Job placement services clients</li></ul>	Unknown

### Additional Notes

- New Star serves approximately 300 clients through day programs, and operates 22 CILAs
  - Day programs are located in Crete (Will County) and Chicago Heights (Cook County)
  - CILAs are located in Crete, Flossmoor, Thornton, Matteson, South Holland, Steger, Oak Forest, Park Forest, and Alsip
- Trip purposes for CILA residents are generally limited to jobs, grocery stores, medical appointments, and social activities
- As of 2021, New Star operates a fleet of 69 vehicles to provide transportation services:
  - 48 lift-equipped conversion vans leased from Pace to provide transport to users of community day programs in Crete (Will County) and Chicago Heights (Cook County)
  - 4 lift-equipped conversion vans leased from Pace to serve larger CILAs
  - 17 minivans purchased by New Star to serve smaller CILAs
- Leased vehicles are obtained through the [Pace Advantage](#) program, which provides transit vehicles to non-profits at a monthly lease cost of \$250/vehicle. Vehicles are fueled and maintained by Pace, and insured by the non-profit.

## Senior Services of Will County

### Summary

Senior Services of Will County provides four distinct transportation services: (1) fare subsidies for seniors using the Central Will Dial-a-Ride, (2) a minibus for five senior homes in Joliet without other transportation service, (3) a shuttle for medical appointments only, and (4) a volunteer driver program for a range of trip purposes.

### Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process
Will County <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Fare subsidies only available for Central Will Dial-a-Ride</li><li>Out-of-county trips permitted for medical appts.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Minibus</b> Mondays</li><li><b>Medical Shuttle</b> Weekdays 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM</li><li><b>Volunteer Program</b> Weekdays 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM</li></ul>	Will County residents (60+)	Call Senior Services and ask for Transport Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>At least 48 hours notice preferred</li><li>Medical shuttle rides first-come, first-serve</li></ul>

### Additional Notes

- As of August 2022, the volunteer driver program is suspended due to COVID-19
- A \$2.00 suggested donation is requested for each one-way trip on the minibus and medical shuttle. Volunteer driver trips are fare-free
- All trips cannot exceed 21 miles in one-way length without case-by-case approval from Senior Services
- The minibus serves five senior homes in and around Joliet: Joshua Arms, Park Tower, JFK Terrace, Victory Centre, and Senior Suites

# South Suburban Special Recreation Association

Summary			
The South Suburban Special Recreation Association (SSSRA) provides client transportation to and from agency programs and/or events. The type and availability of transportation services offered changes by event.			
Key Facts			
Service Area	Times Operational	Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process
Member agencies in Cook and Will Counties	Varies, based on program schedule	Residents with disabilities who are unable to participate in traditional park district programs	Reserved on a per-event basis as part of the registration process
Additional Notes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The following agencies, primarily located in Will County and south Cook County, participate in the SSSRA:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Country Club Hills Parks and Recreation Department</li><li>◦ Hazel Crest Park District</li><li>◦ Homewood-Flossmoor Park District</li><li>◦ Lan-Oak Park District</li><li>◦ Matteson Recreational Division</li><li>◦ Oak Forest Park District</li><li>◦ Olympia Fields Park District</li><li>◦ Park Forest Recreation and Parks Department</li><li>◦ Richton Park Parks and Recreation Department</li><li>◦ Tinley Park-Park District</li></ul></li><li>• Fares for transportation vary by program/event.</li><li>• A centralized pick-up point for transportation to most events is provided at the Coyote Run Golf Course in Flossmoor, with door-to-door transportation provided for select events only.</li></ul>			

## Sunny Hill Nursing Home of Will County

### Summary

Sunny Hill Nursing Home is a 157-bed facility located in Joliet. The facility, which is owned and operated by Will County, contracts with private operators to provide non-medical trips covered by Medicare and Medicaid.

### Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process
Residents can travel to destinations in Will, Cook, DuPage, and Grundy Counties.	Varies	Facility residents	Transportation services for residents are coordinated by staff.

### Additional Notes

- Residents generally do not pay any per-trip cost. Private pay residents may be billed for trip costs if they/their families are unable to provide alternative transportation.
- In 2021, Sunny Hill Nursing Home worked with three private ambulance companies to provide resident transportation. All other transportation is acquired by insurance brokers on a case-by-case basis. This poses an issue on an ongoing basis, as **frequently the insurance brokers are unable to meet resident needs** for transportation to medical appointments.
- The total number of trips to and from medical appointments is not tracked.
- A total of 9 Life Engagement group resident trips were provided in 2021 (total limited due to Covid-19). These trips allow residents to attend community events. Life Engagement trips are provided using a bus owned and operated by Sunny Hill.

## Trinity Services

### Summary

Trinity Services provides a wide range of programs to support persons with disabilities and/or behavioral health needs, including several community-integrated living arrangements (CILAs) in Will County and surrounding areas. Transportation for CILA residents is provided directly by Trinity Services.

### Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process
As-needed, based on resident requests	Weekdays 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM	CILA residents	Unknown

### Additional Notes

- Trinity Services operates CILAs in the following communities: Homewood, Park Forest, Frankfort, Matteson, Mokena, New Lenox, Peoria, Lockport, Elwood, Naperville, Crete, Crest Hill, Wilmington, Braidwood, Marion, and Joliet.
- Trip purposes are not restricted for CILA residents
- Trinity Services supports more than 400 people across all CILAs.
- Trinity Services operates a fleet of vans to provide transportation services to CILA residents. The agency has previously procured vehicles through the IDOT Consolidated Vehicle Program (CVP).

## UCP of Will County

### Summary

United Cerebral Palsy of Will County (UCP) provides client transportation to and from agency events. The type and availability of transportation services offered changes by event.

### Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process
Will County	Varies, based on program schedule	Agency clients only	Unknown

### Additional Notes

- UCP of Will County maintains dedicated vehicles to provide client transport.

# Veterans Assistance Commission of Will County

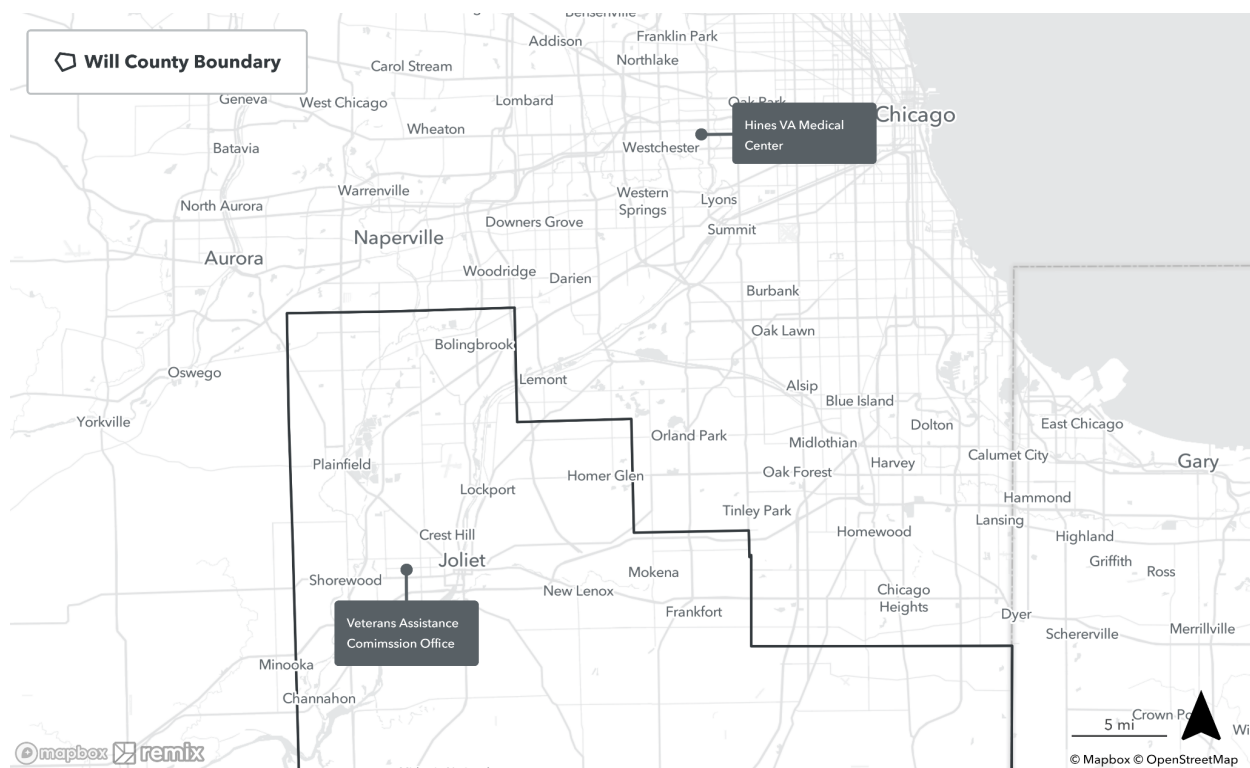
## Summary

The Veterans Assistance Commission of Will County provides free rides to and from the Hines VA Medical Center in Cook County. Riders can be picked up anywhere in Will County.

## Key Facts

Service Area	Times Operational	Eligible Riders	Trip Booking Process
Will County	Weekdays, as-needed <i>No Friday afternoon service</i>	Veterans in Will County	Contact the agency as soon as possible, and at least one day in advance.

## Service Area Map



## Additional Notes

- Transportation service is provided on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- Fares are not charged for this service.
- Transportation is provided directly by the Commission.
- One Commission-owned van is used to provide the service.



# Workforce Investment Board of Will County

## Summary

The Workforce Investment Board of Will County covers a portion of the cost of Pace bus passes for customers. The organization does not directly provide transportation service.

## Additional Notes

- Bus passes are part of a larger suite of job training and placement services funded by the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act.

# Appendix D

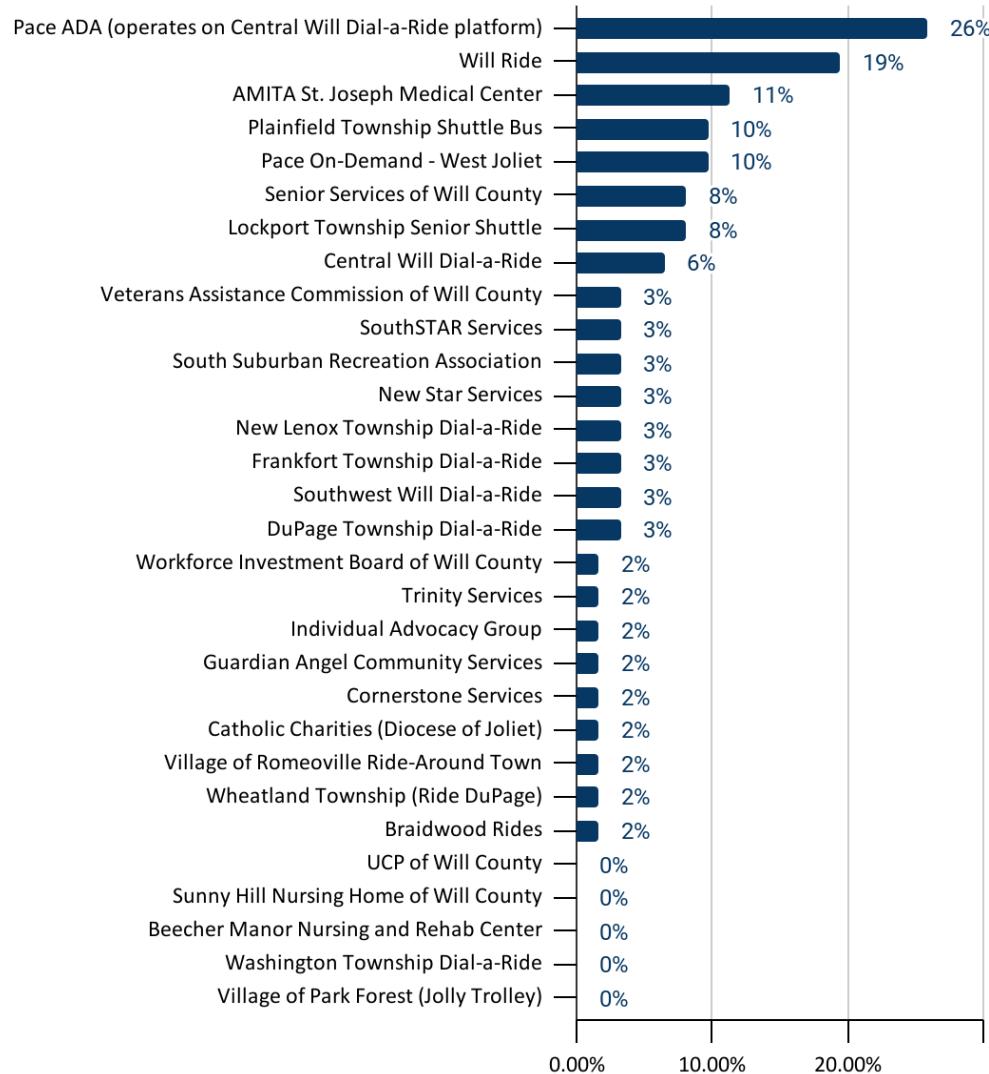
## Additional Survey Data

**Question: Do you currently use a transportation service? Transportation services mean dial-a-ride, paratransit, and demand response services**

- Yes: 7%
- No: 93%

**Question: Select all transportation services you currently use. Transportation services mean dial-a-ride, paratransit, and demand response services**

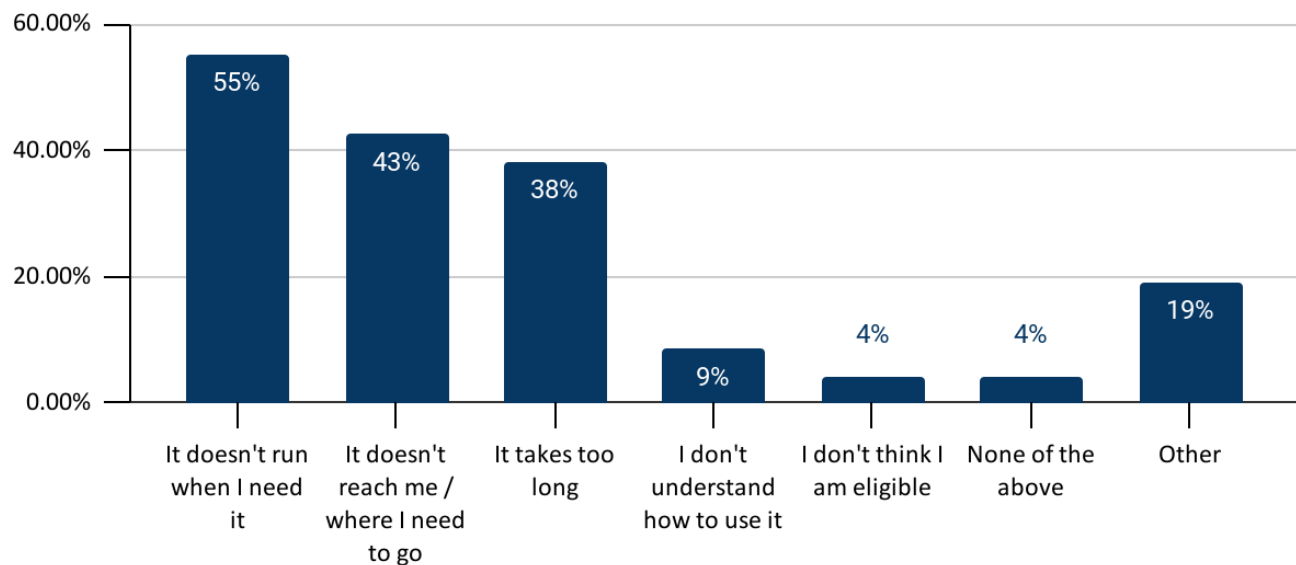
*Respondents: Only those who use a transportation service.*



**Figure D-1:** Paratransit Services Used by Current Riders (62 answered)

**Question: Do any of the following limit your use of transportation services in Will County? Select all that apply.**

*Respondents: Only those who use a transportation service.*



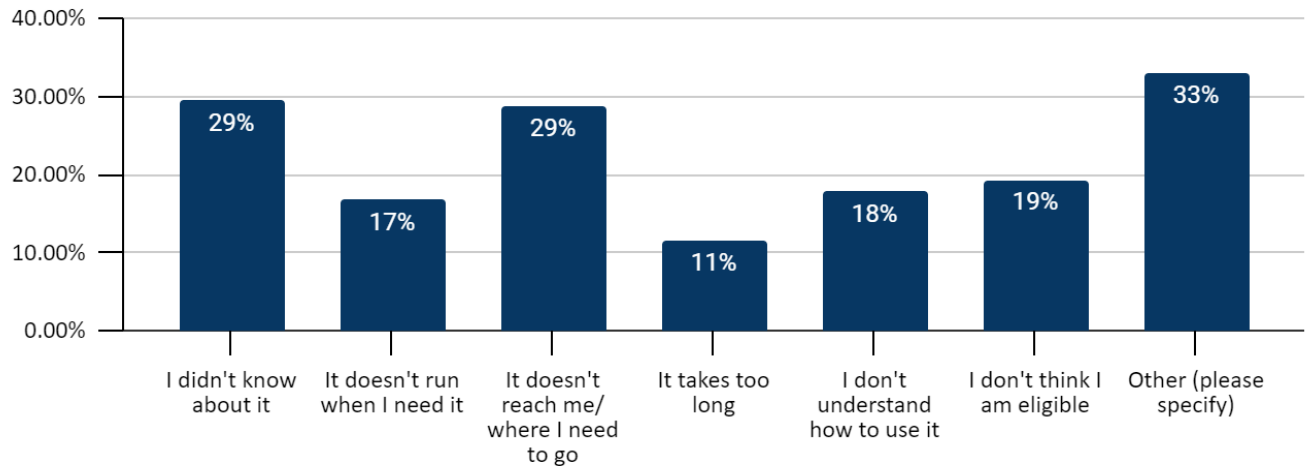
**Figure D-2:** Respondents' Barriers to Expanded Use of Services (47 responses, multiple answers allowed)

**Highlighted feedback from paratransit users:**

- "I don't take the system for nothing more than appointments, never for pleasure. A client would be many hours getting home."
- "Difficulty in scheduling."
- "Difficult to use for numerous reasons"
- "May have to go early as time slot not available"
- "Connecting from one county [service] to another should be more reliable"
- "Constantly late so I get in trouble with work"

**Question: Why are you not currently using transportation services in Will County? Select all that apply.**

*Audience: Non-paratransit users*



**Figure D-3:** Reasons for Not Using Services

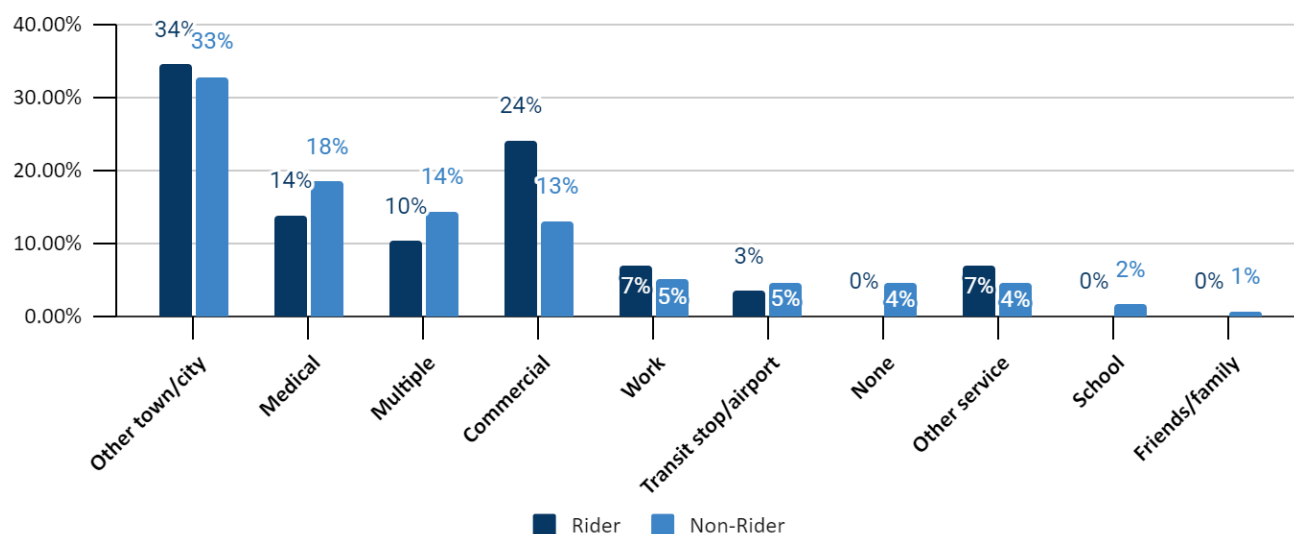
After eligibility requirements, many respondents (31%) believe paratransit service does not reach them or their destinations (670 answered). A similar share of respondents (30%) were not aware paratransit services existed.

**Highlighted feedback from non-paratransit users:**

- "Van service refuses to transport our young adults with special needs and PACE service is unsafe and unreliable."
- "Not available when needed for a wheelchair user"
- "Right now I can still drive but I'm 75 years old" / "Still drive but vision issues are progressing"
- "Information about available routes & schedules & costs not readily accessible"
- "Too hard to get information on how to use it when I had a need"

**Question: Where do you wish you could go using a transportation service?**

*Audience: All*



**Figure D-4:** Riders (29 answered) vs. Non-Riders' (423 answered) Desired Destinations

Overall, rider and non-rider respondents are mostly aligned when asked where they would go using a transportation service. A notable exception occurs with commercial destinations – a greater share of current paratransit riders (24%) wish they could access more retail and grocery stores than non-riders (13%). Other common desired destinations for riders and non-riders are Chicago, Joliet, and various hospitals throughout Will County.

Riders and non-riders most frequently listed another town or city as a desired destination using paratransit. Responses in the “Multiple” category include those that desire to use paratransit for more than one trip type, including medical appointments, shopping trips, and social outings. “Other service” includes non-medical public and/or religious services, such as the library or church.

**Question: Is there anything else you would change about transportation services in Will County?**

Desired changes for paratransit service in Will County were reviewed for both users and non-users. Overall, feedback among both groups is mixed, but most responses are concerned with key themes related to frequency and timeliness, accessibility, and communication. Highlighted feedback is included below:

- **Frequency + timeliness**

- Paratransit users:
  - "More please. Like an uber or also regularly scheduled shuttle for hire"
  - "More bus stops throughout [Will County] & early hours and longer hours for transportation. Low cost to ride public transportation."
  - "Being on time - running on weekends"
  - "Saturday service"
  - "24-hour service"
- Non-paratransit users:
  - "Longer hours of service. Also, I currently live just outside of the pickup area in relation to the bus stop. I am on Pinecrest in Bolingbrook. The pickup area needs to increase."
  - "The bus doesn't run on Sundays. People working second shift have no bus options. There are too many gaps in the service areas."
  - "Again, Hard to schedule. Only 3 days given. Often no rides available for date & time needed. Will County needs to expand by getting taxi service to supplement their own Pace drivers."

- **Accessibility**

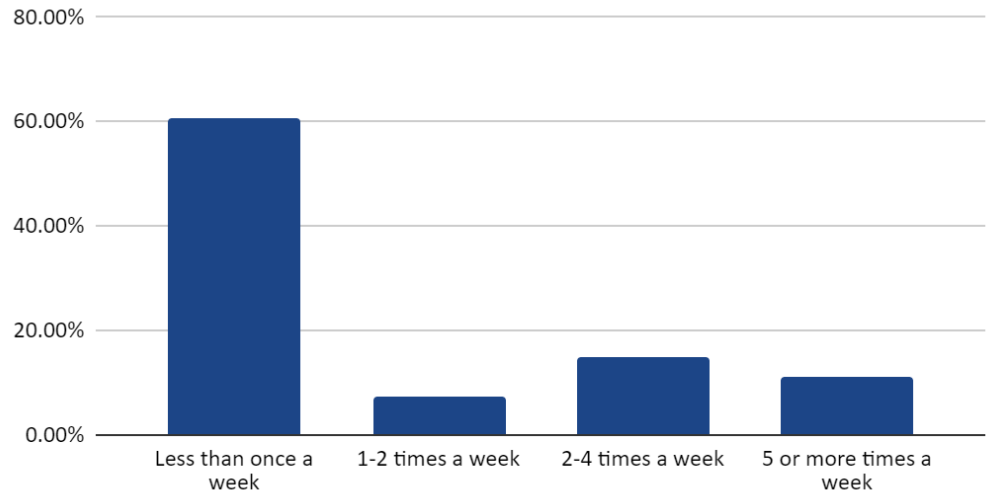
- Paratransit users:
  - "Make it free or billable so there is no exact money needed."
  - "More affordable and easily accessible options, the ability to cross county lines for appointments outside of Will County"
  - "It's hard to get rides at times with phone system"
  - "Needs to reach a bigger range of people. Like the Door-to-Door Service in Cook County"
  - Provider training: In addition to comments regarding accessibility, paratransit users had more to say about staff training and their ability to provide suitable service for riders' needs. Here is some highlighted feedback.
  - "Dispatchers need to use Google. Driver picks up someone on West side in Joliet then a pickup in Lockport bypassing west side drop off. Then drop-off Lockport THEN Westside dropped off."
  - "Educate representatives who schedule ride."
  - "[I would change] the professional manner concerning customer service"
  - "The customer service makes it complicated if you need to go somewhere out of service area and does not let you know you may be able to use the local service"

- Non-paratransit users:
  - “Not needing so much advance notice to get a ride, very inconvenient”
  - “While some services may be available to some. It is not equal- especially if you don’t ‘live within required distance.’ THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE TO INDEPENDENCE FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES IS LACK OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES! I will repeat this until you all understand!!!”
  - “When I called PACE for Dial A Ride information, they told me I would have to go to CHICAGO to get the ID I would need to use those services. If I can't drive across town, how was I supposed to get to the City?? ... My daughter has been paying for Uber rides for me for the last year. If you want people to use this system, you have to make it simpler.”
  - “Needs to cater more to Seniors. A senior can't get to the bus stop but when you ask for transportation i.e. PACE they won't come to the door to help get one into a vehicle. They want you to come to curb.”
  - “Add more wheelchair vehicles”
- Communication
  - Paratransit users:
    - “[Change] the chain of command. The complaint department never addresses any of your concerns and will take your information but no one ever asks how the situation can be changed or make the situation right the next time you take your trips.”
    - “Clarification of payment”
    - “Better advertised and explained”
  - Non-paratransit users:
    - “Communicate with the many organizations for people with disabilities about options available.”
    - “I didn't even know there was a transportation service in Will County.”
    - “Advertise them more, make them more available to those in the suburbs and safe and clean”
    - “Make it... not so hard to find the information that is needed.”



**Question: How often do you use a paratransit service?**

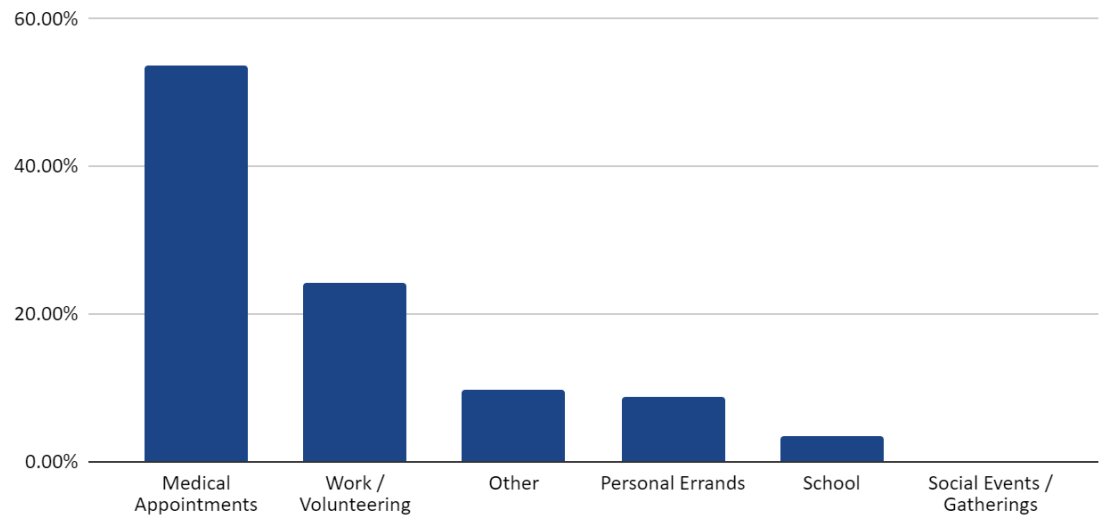
*Respondents: Only those who use a transportation service.*



**Figure D-5:** How often do you use a paratransit service?

**Question: Where do you go most often using this service?**

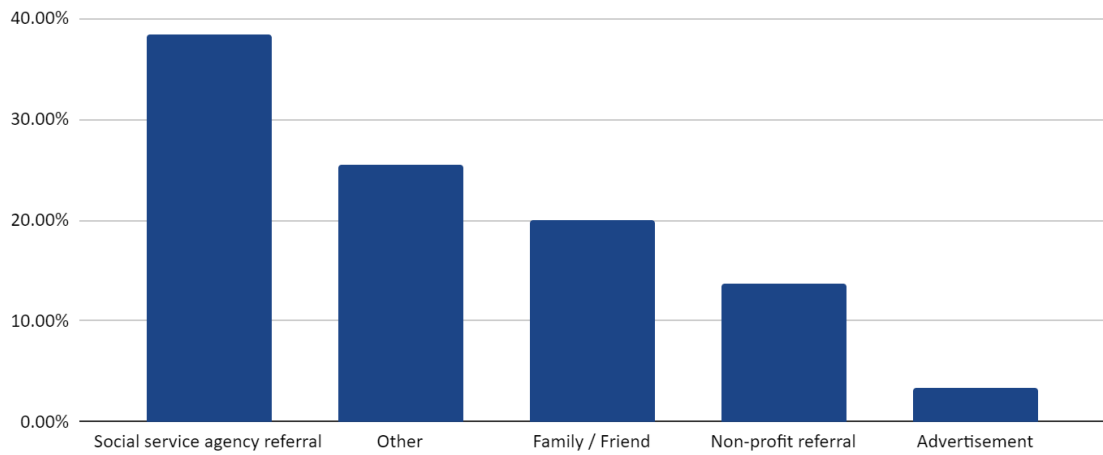
*Respondents: Only those who use a transportation service*



**Figure D-6:** Where do you go most often using paratransit?

**Question: How did you become aware of this service?**

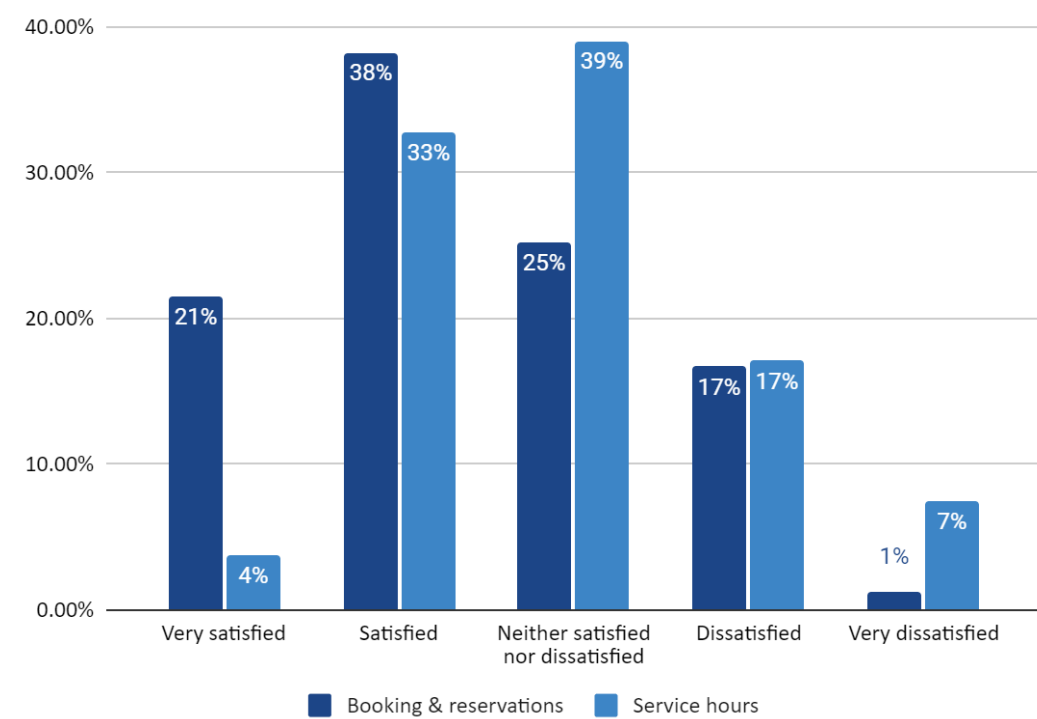
*Respondents: Only those who use a transportation service*



**Figure D-7:** How satisfied are you with ride reservation process vs. How satisfied are you with service hours?

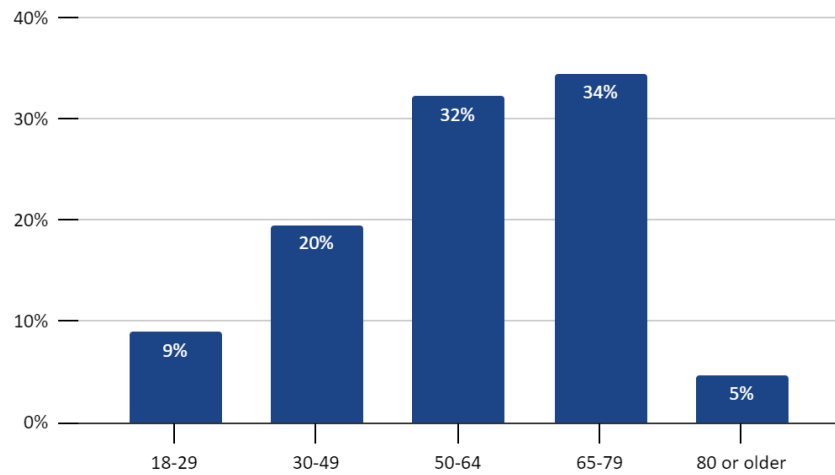
**Question: How satisfied are you with the ride reservation and booking process and service hours?**

*Respondents: Only those who use a transportation service*



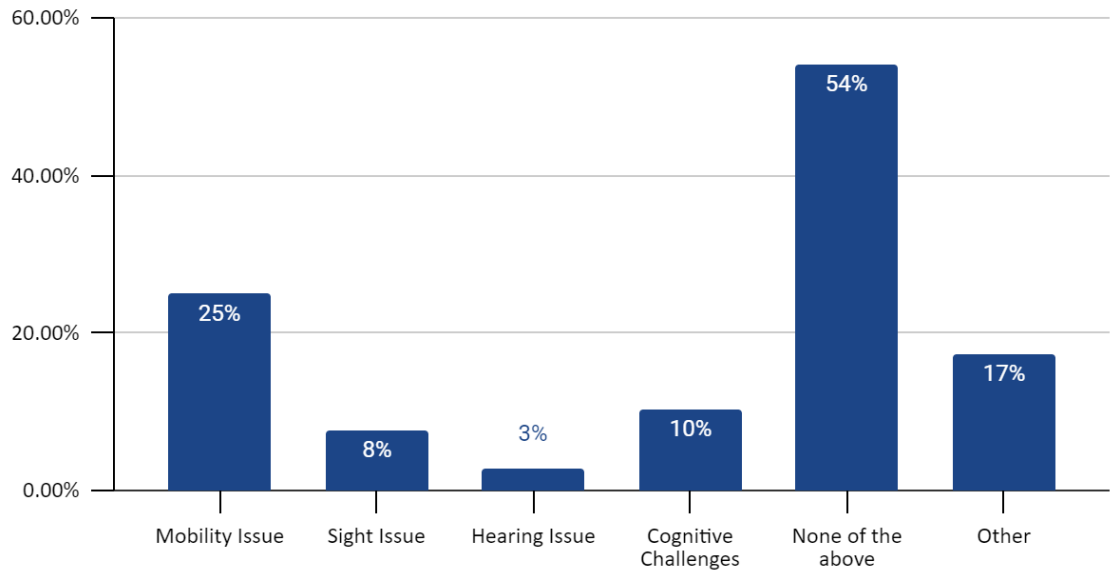
**Figure D-8:** How satisfied are you (1) with the ride reservation process and (2) with service hours?

**Question: What is your age?**



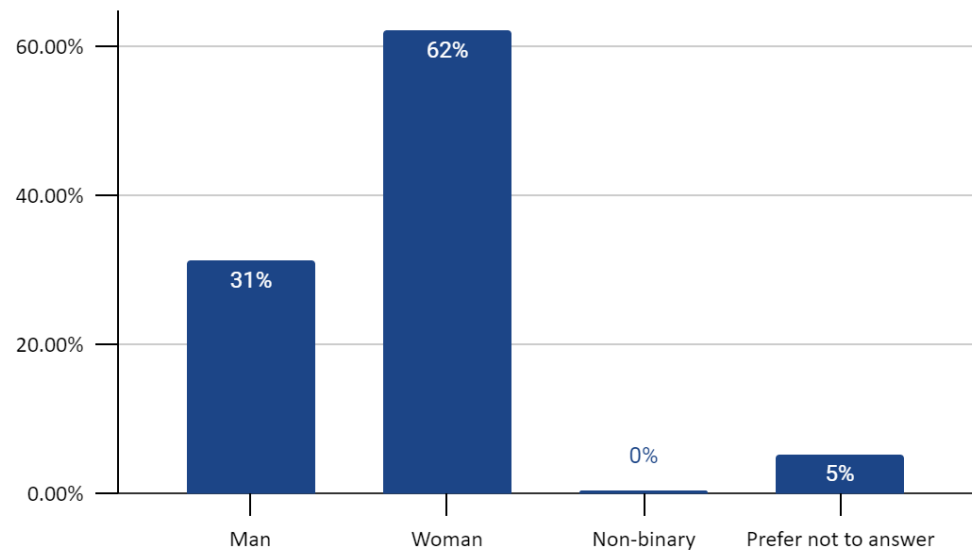
**Figure D-9:** Age Distribution of Survey Respondents

**Question: Disability: Do you use, or want to use, transportation services due to any of the following?**  
*Select all that apply*



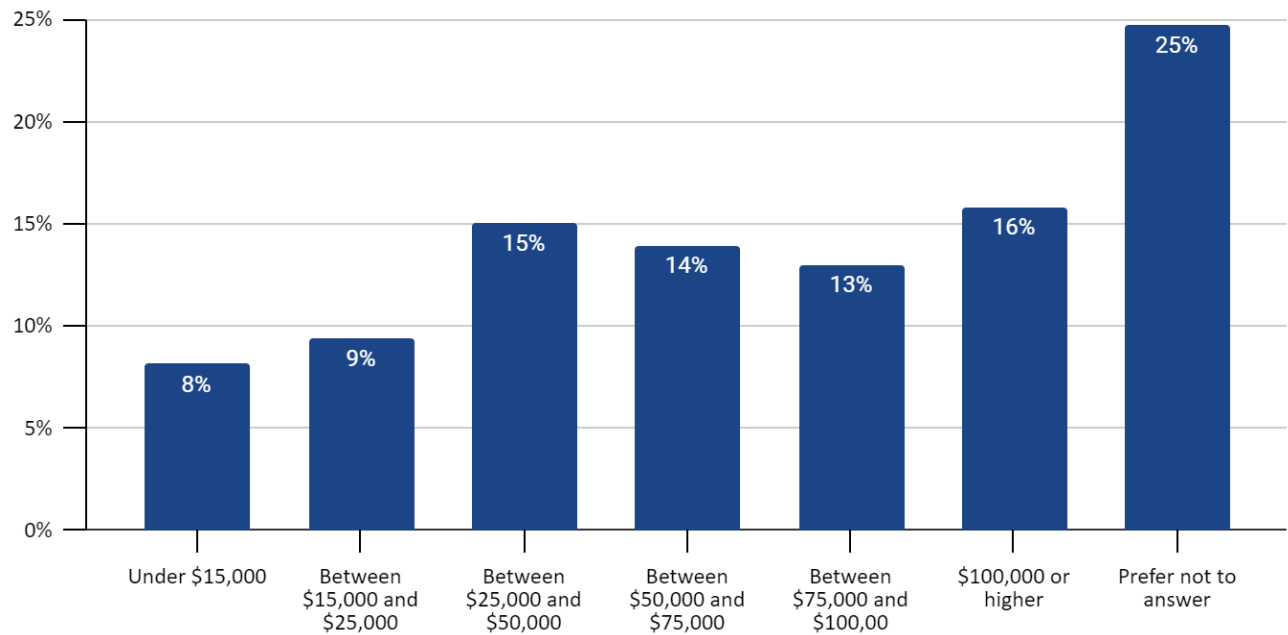
**Figure D-10:** Disability Status of Survey Respondents

**Question: Gender: How do you identify?**



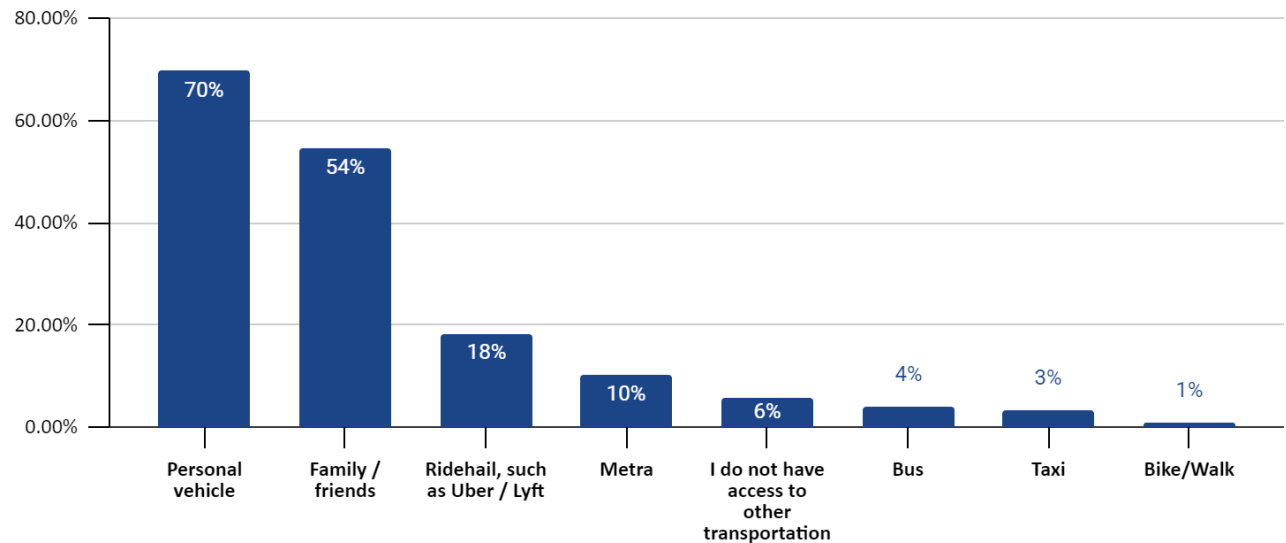
**Figure D-11:** Gender of Survey Respondents

**Question: What is your approximate annual household income?**



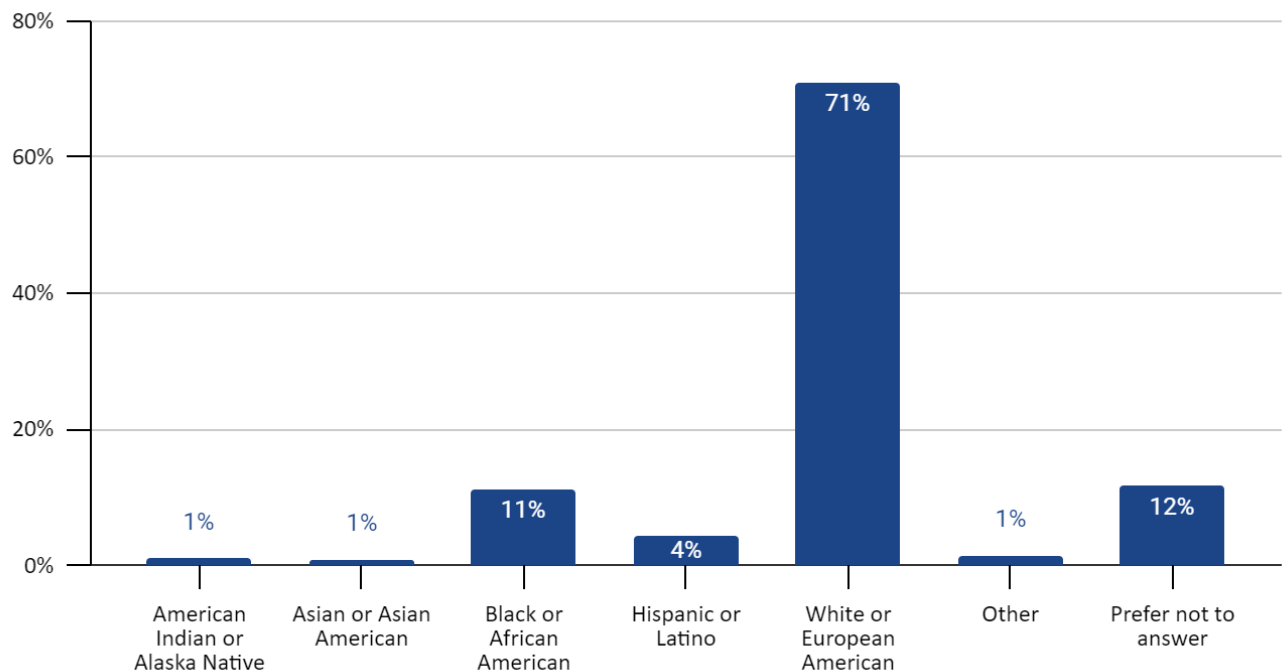
**Figure D-12:** Income of Survey Respondents

**Question: What are your other primary transportation options? Select all that apply**



**Figure D-13:** Transportation Options for Survey Respondents

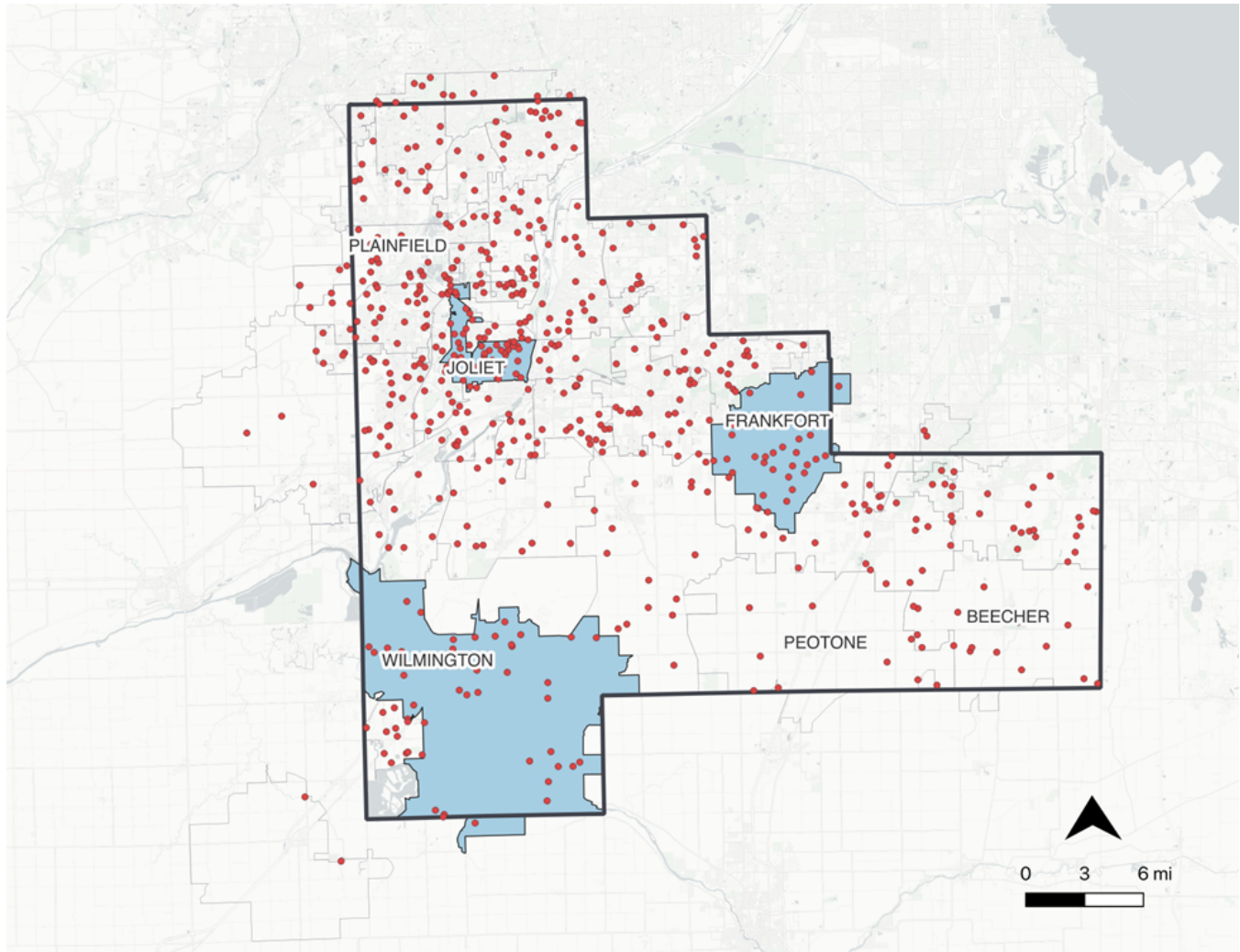
**Question: Race and ethnicity: How do you identify? Select all that apply**



**Figure D-14:** Race/Ethnicity for Survey Respondents

**Question: What is your ZIP Code?**

ZIP Codes in Will County are represented below where 1 dot represents 1 survey response, randomly distributed for visualization purposes. Blue geographies are ZIP Codes with the highest response rates – 60435 (Joliet and surrounding areas, 49 responses), 60481 (Wilmington and surrounding areas, 40 responses), 60423 (Frankfort and surrounding areas, 32 responses).



**Figure D-15:** ZIP Codes of Survey Respondents