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## Study to evaluate ways to expand bus service in county

Comments

September 9, 2010

By **JOHN ROSZKOWSKI** [jroszkowski@pioneerlocal.com](mailto:jroszkowski@pioneerlocal.com)

A market study will be conducted of fixed route bus service in Lake County to determine ways to improve and hopefully expand bus service in different areas of the county.

The Lake County Division of Transportation is teaming up with Pace suburban bus service on the \$480,000 study, which will evaluate ridership on existing fixed routes, demographic trends and what changes are needed to improve service in the county.

"The purpose is really to do a market analysis and find out where are the best locations for fixed route bus service," said Paula Trigg, director of planning and programming for the Lake County Division of Transportation.

"At this point, we just know that there have been a lot of changes in the demographics of the county and we're looking to see if there are places we should be serving," she said. "There's been a lot of requests for weekend service and more service to certain areas. We need to look at the county as a whole."

The study is being funded in large by a \$350,000 federal grant through the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. The grant requires a 20 percent local match, which is being funded by the county.

Pace spokesman Patrick Wilmot said the study will include an analysis of usage on existing fixed routes and of potential future service needs in the county. He said the market study will take about a year to complete and will be used by Pace in making future decisions regarding possible future realignment of bus routes.

**'Later time'**

"It's going to be instrumental in helping us make decisions when we restructure our service in the county at a later time," said Wilmot.

"We're looking at segments of existing routes to determine how productive they are in terms of ridership," he said. "If there are segments that are not being used, we can move away from unproductive areas and relocate resources to areas where new development is occurring and there is greater demand for transit."

Pace operates fixed route bus service in a variety of areas of the county, including Gurnee, Vernon Hills, Waukegan, Grayslake, Fox Lake and some North Shore communities like Highland Park and Deerfield.

"A lot of the routes we have in Lake County have existed in their current form for many years," said Wilmot. "When we restructure our routes, we'll be looking to see if we can redesign them to serve areas where demand for service has increased."

Wilmot said the most heavily used route in the county is Route 565, which runs along Grand Avenue from downtown Waukegan to Gurnee Mills. Wilmot said Pace has also seen increased demand for fixed route service to the College of Lake County in Grayslake and to the commercial corridors in the southeastern end of the county along Lake Cook Road and Milwaukee Avenue.

Wilmot said there have been a lot of requests over the years for expanded service, such as weekend service or later evening hours, on some of the more heavily traveled routes.

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Wilmot said the market study will include surveys and focus groups to get opinions from residents on what improvements they would like to see in service.

"Right now, we're going into this project with an open mind," he said. "We're looking forward to getting the results of the market analysis before we make any changes."

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