

2013

# Setting Ideas in Motion

Funding Programs



**Regional  
Transportation  
Authority**



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# What is the RTA?

## RTA Facts and Figures

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is the third largest public transportation system in North America, providing more than two million rides each weekday to a regional population of approximately eight million people throughout six counties with 7,200 route miles.



## Purpose

The RTA provides financial oversight, funding and planning for the Chicago Transit Authority's (CTA) bus and rail, Metra commuter rail, Pace suburban bus and Pace ADA paratransit service. The Agency was created in 1974 by a referendum of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will county residents in Northeastern Illinois. The RTA is a special purpose unit of local government and a municipal corporation of the State of Illinois. The RTA's mission is to ensure a financially sound, comprehensive and coordinated public transportation system for Northeastern Illinois.



# RTA Tools

The RTA offers **planning**, **capital** and **operating** funds to transit service providers, local governments and other agencies. The funds support programs and projects to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the region's transit system for both frequent and occasional riders.

The RTA administers three funding programs used to finance projects that provide better mobility for all, with special consideration for older adults and people with disabilities, and improve access to jobs for the traditional and reverse commuter.



## Planning

Planning funds and technical assistance help communities develop a vision and plan for improving their future. These planning tools enable communities to assess existing conditions of a transportation corridor or an area around a transit station to identify its strengths and weaknesses, and develop and implement a plan to improve the area. The plans are used by the community to guide its decisions and actions. Examples of planning projects include station access improvement plans, transit corridor plans, zoning updates and transit-oriented development plans.

**Community Planning program** provides funds for assistance in planning projects that benefit the region's communities and transit system.



## Capital

Capital funds help agencies and communities make infrastructure improvements in preparation for a new service, or for improvements that compliment an existing service, by making it more accessible and easier to use. Capital projects are usually tangible and can be constructed or installed. Examples of capital improvements include the purchase of a new vehicle, installation of information displays at bus stops or rail stations, or the construction of a new bus stop or train platform.

RTA's **Innovation, Coordination, and Enhancement (ICE)** program provides funds to enhance the coordination and integration of public transportation, and to develop and implement innovations to improve the quality and delivery of public transportation.



## Operating

Operating funds help agencies and communities by providing or enhancing a service used by the general public. These services are often a result of a previously completed plan. Examples of operating assistance funds include support of door-to-door transportation service, a customer service center, or increasing service on an existing bus route.

**Job Access and Reverse Commute and New Freedom (JARC/NF)** are federal programs that provide funds to the RTA to distribute throughout the region for capital and operating projects that meet the needs of reverse commuters, older adults and people with disabilities.

# RTA-Supported Programs and Projects Led to...



**6.7**

million metric tons of carbon emissions are not released into the region's atmosphere every year because people use the public transportation system. This is equal to if 86% of the households in the City of Chicago were to stop using electricity for an entire year.

**666.1**

million trips were taken in 2012 on public transportation in the Chicago region. It's the highest annual ridership number since 1990.

**\$11,839**

is saved every year by households in the Chicago region that use public transportation.



**750**

million gallons of gasoline are saved annually in the Chicago region because people choose to take public transportation.

**16**

cents of every dollar is spent in the average household on transportation. Ninety-four percent of this goes toward buying, maintaining and operating personal automobiles and is the largest expenditure after housing.





# The RTA's Strategic Plan

The RTA developed a strategic plan in partnership with the CTA, Metra and Pace (the Service Boards), as the agency recognized the need for a unified regional vision for the transit system. The plan contains a vision, goals and objectives to shape and direct much of transit's strategic activities in the region. In collaboration with the Service Boards, the RTA regularly updates the strategic plan to reflect its accomplishments and to continue to anticipate the region's future needs.

The strategic plan identifies the key actions the RTA, CTA, Metra and Pace need to take to achieve four primary goals:



- Provide valuable, reliable, accessible and attractive transportation options
- Ensure financial viability of the transit system
- Promote a green, livable, and prosperous region
- Continue to be advocates and trusted stewards of public transportation.

There are five **strategic plan** objectives:

1. Provide public transportation choices that **link people to jobs**, education, **services**, cultural activities and other life commitments.
2. **Connect communities** within the region through an enhanced and coordinated transit network that provides reliable and time-competitive transportation options.
3. Ensure that the transit system is **more accessible** and easier to use.
4. Provide a customer experience that offers modern amenities, utilizing state-of-the-art **technology**.
5. Encourage **Transit-Oriented Development** by partnering with communities, employers and other stakeholders.

The following pages contain examples of the important work the RTA did in 2013 and how it relates to these five objectives. All of these activities improve the transit experience for not only the typical daily transit rider, but also for more specific market groups the RTA is targeting: **older adults**, **reverse commuters** and **occasional riders**.



RTA Programs

# RTA Programs:

# Linking People to Jobs and Services

## Ray Graham Association's Safety Transportation Training Program

The RTA allocated federal New Freedom (NF) program grant dollars to the Ray Graham Association of Lisle in DuPage County which uses the funds to run its Safety Transportation Training Program. The program assesses and trains individuals with disabilities and **older adults** to safely utilize the various regional transportation services

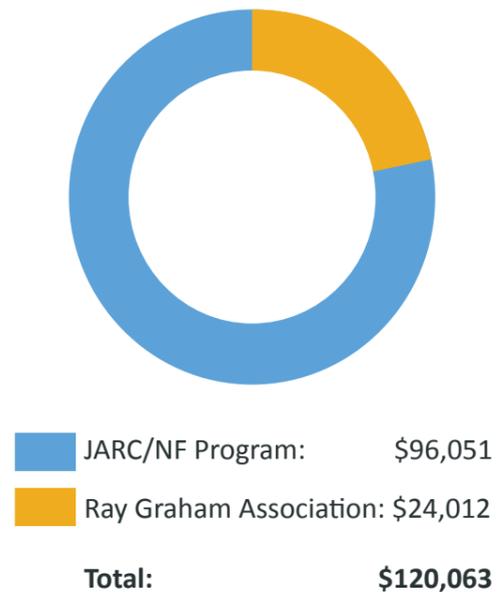
available to them. This work, which links people to jobs, schools, services and cultural activities, boosts independence and self-esteem, two key results of a successful training program.

Over the past year, 100 individuals have been trained through this transportation training program.

**100**  
individuals  
have been  
trained



FUNDING SINCE 2008



## Pace Shuttlebug and I-90 Express Services

**“Not only have our overall ridership levels increased dramatically, but we have increased the general satisfaction of our employee base by offering a commute option for employees residing in Chicago.”** —Chelsea A. Mathis, Facility Division Manager

—Allstate Insurance

The RTA is focusing efforts on ensuring adequate transportation options for the **reverse commuter**. With that goal in mind, the RTA awarded Job Access and Reverse Commute and New Freedom (JARC/NF) program funds for two projects, the Pace/CTA Skokie Swift Willow Road Connector and the Pace I-90 Service Expansion, to enhance Pace bus service to reverse commuters

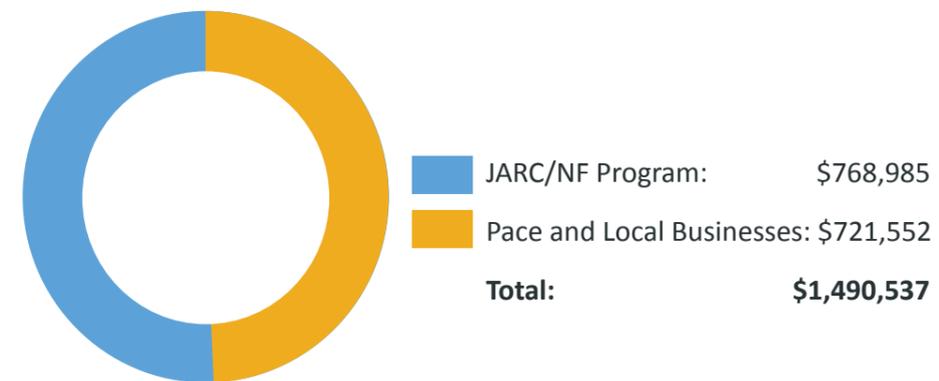
traveling to suburban offices from a Metra train station.

On August 19, 2013, Pace started operating service on a new route connecting riders from the CTA Yellow Line (Skokie Swift) Dempster Station to employers along the Willow Road corridor in northern Cook County. On the same day, Pace expanded bus routes 600 (Northwest

Express) and 610 (Prairie Stone Express) to provide bi-directional service aimed to attract reverse commuters instead of the previous one-directional service that was aimed at the traditional commuter.

The average number of daily riders during the first three full months of service increased 28%.

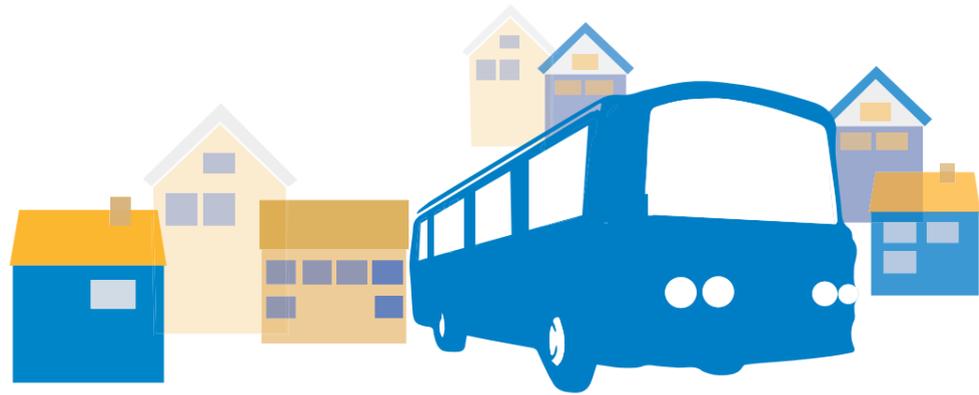
FUNDING SINCE 2013



**28%**  
increase in  
the number  
of boardings

# RTA Programs:

## Lake County Dial-A-Ride



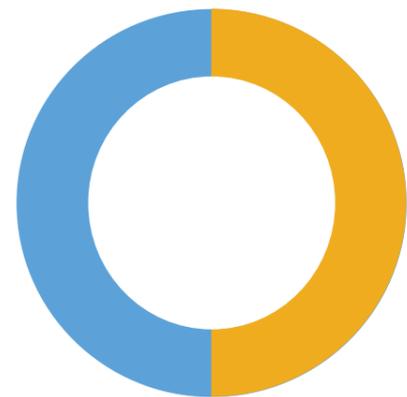
With Job Access and Reverse Commute and New Freedom (JARC/NF) program funds awarded through the RTA, in January, 2010, the Lake County Northwest Demonstration Project began to provide transportation service in the Lake County northwest townships of Antioch, Avon, Grant, and Lake

Villa. These services allow transit dependent people who cannot use buses and trains to reserve door-to-door service for greater access to employment opportunities. The service recently expanded to the townships of Fremont and Wauconda.

A portion of the service is flexible and can deviate from following a specified fixed-route, thereby **connecting travelers to three Metra stations** on the North Central Service line, and Milwaukee District North line.



### FUNDING SINCE 2009



JARC/NF Program: \$900,000  
Lake County: \$900,000  
**Total: \$1,800,000**

# Connecting Communities

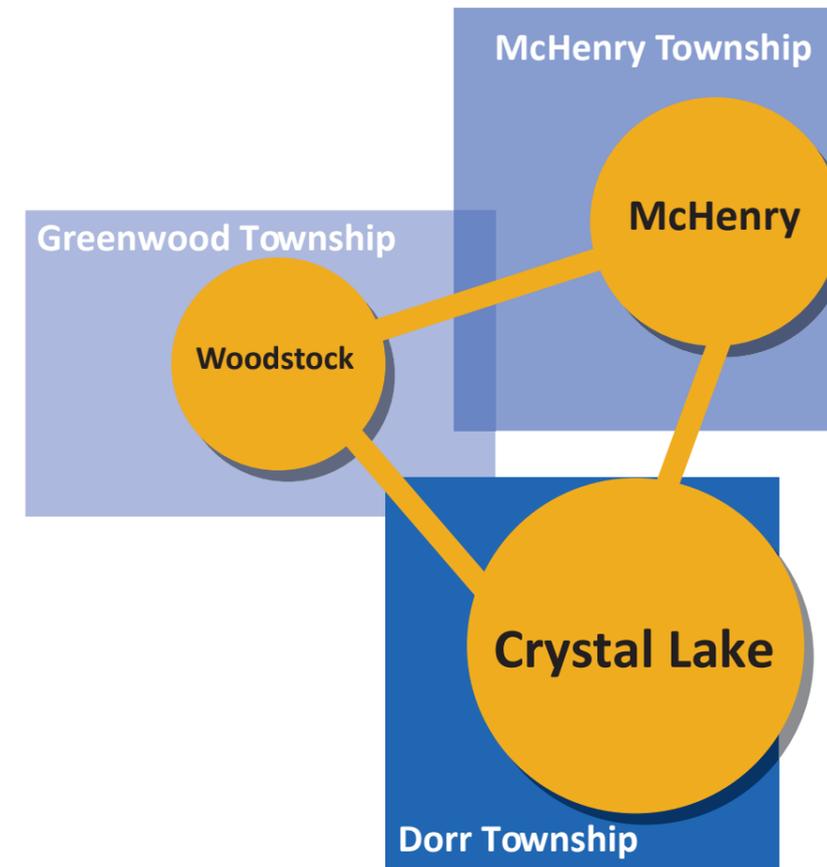
## McHenry County's MCRide

With Job Access and Reverse Commute and New Freedom (JARC/NF) program funds awarded through the RTA, McHenry County teamed up with local agencies, including the RTA, to offer "MCRide." This expanded transit service allows transit dependent individuals who cannot use buses and trains to reserve door-to-door service to make trips across geographic boundaries, including Greenwood and Dorr Townships. Built upon previous individual

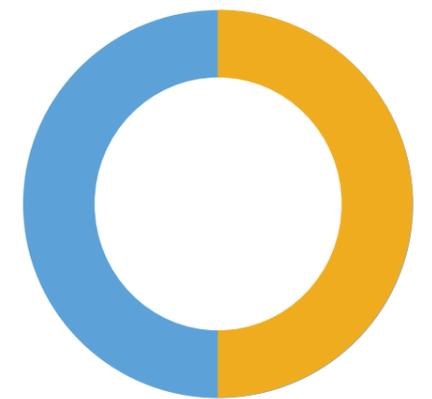
services offered by the Crystal Lake, McHenry, and Woodstock municipalities, as well as **older adult** transportation provided by McHenry Township, this combined service is now **integrated and coordinated** into one easy-to-use program.

From January through May, 2013, passengers using this system boarded a MCRide vehicle 35,357 times, setting the pace for a total of over 84,000 annual boardings in 2013.

More than  
**84,000**  
annual  
boardings  
in 2013



### FUNDING SINCE 2011



JARC/NF Program: \$805,442  
McHenry County: \$790,979  
**Total: \$1,596,421**

# RTA Programs:

# Making Transit More Accessible

## Pace Bus Stop Improvements

“Through the Community Planning program, Kane County received valuable planning assistance and was able to strengthen collaborative partnerships with the local municipalities and transit providers. These partnerships have led to securing nearly \$2 million worth of investments in transit infrastructure throughout the study area and beyond.” —Mike Sullivan, Chief of Planning and Programming —Kane County Division of Transportation

The RTA contributed funds to multiple projects within the region to increase system accessibility. Infrastructure improvements at bus stop locations such as sidewalks, concrete waiting areas that include shelters, benches and other amenities to use while waiting **improve the transit environment** and make the system

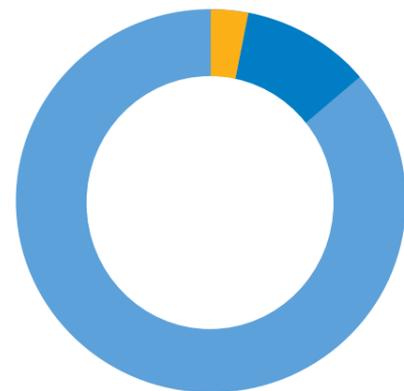
more appealing. Along Pace Bus Route 529 Randall Road in Kane County, bus stops have been improved thanks to the allocation of funds awarded through the RTA’s Innovation, Coordination, and Enhancement (ICE) program. Job Access and Reverse Commute and New Freedom (JARC/NF) program funds were also awarded through

the RTA to Pace for the installation of sidewalks, concrete waiting areas and shelters to create accessible pathways to these stops.

Infrastructure improvements have been made at 70 bus stop locations throughout the Pace system through these two projects.



### FUNDING SINCE 2010



	RTA ICE Program	\$80,000
	Pace:	\$20,000
	JARC/NF Program:	\$600,000

**Total: \$700,000**

## DuPage County’s Door-to-Door Service

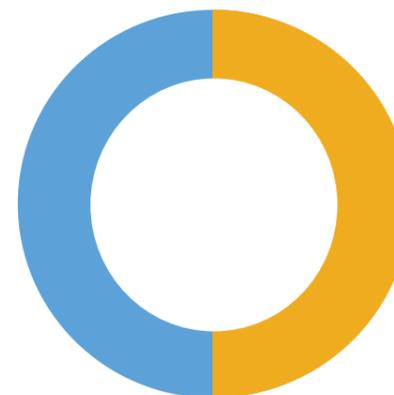


Ride DuPage is an innovative transportation-to-work program that provides bus or taxi service for people who need travel assistance due to physical or cognitive limitations. This program enables people to obtain and maintain employment through more affordable transportation options.

Subsidized by Job Access and Reverse Commute and New Freedom (JARC/NF) program funding awarded through the RTA, and a partnership of townships, cities, villages, Pace and DuPage County, Ride DuPage offers **curb-to-curb transportation, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week** at significantly reduced rates.

Through August, 2013, passengers using this system boarded a Ride DuPage vehicle 18,527 times, setting the pace for 28,000 annual boardings in 2013.

### FUNDING SINCE 2007



	JARC/NF Program:	\$1,719,970
	DuPage County:	\$1,719,970
<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$3,439,940</b>

**More than  
28,000  
annual  
boardings in  
2013**

# RTA Programs:

# Utilizing Technology

## Real-Time Schedule Information

State-of-the-art technology is a key component to transit rider satisfaction and is important in attracting new riders to the system. Through the RTA Innovation, Coordination and Enhancement (ICE) program, this project supports the CTA's

efforts to install digital customer information displays at bus stops and rail stations throughout the CTA system. In 2013, 153 digital displays were installed to provide real-time bus arrival and train arrival information, system status updates and CTA customer alerts.

This information is interspersed with paid advertisements, which supports the operation of the displays, as well as provides time and weather information.

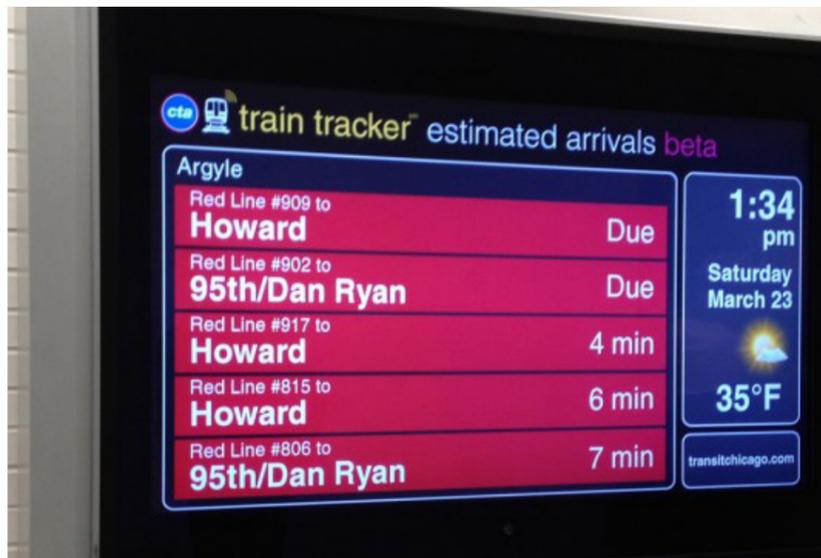
## Pace Call Center

With the assistance of the Job Access and Reverse Commute and New Freedom (JARC/NF) program funds awarded by the RTA, Pace is consolidating multiple call centers to increase efficiency and create more centralized call centers. Door-to-door services meet an important regional need, allowing riders to call a system representative to schedule transportation when it is not possible

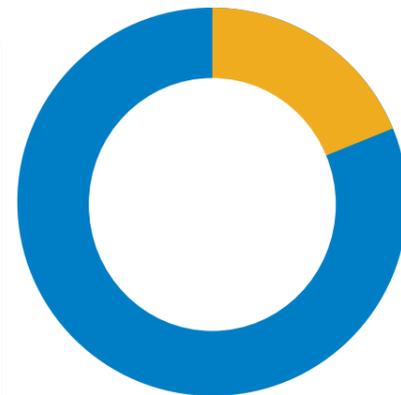
for the resident to use buses and trains. Therefore, there must be call centers in the region, staffed with professionals who can arrange this transportation. The newest consolidated call center utilizes the most recent **technological advancements to promote, enhance and facilitate access to transportation services**, including the integration and coordination

of services for individuals with disabilities, older adults and low-income individuals.

The call center funded by this program now serves paratransit services including ADA paratransit services in DuPage, Kane and Will counties.



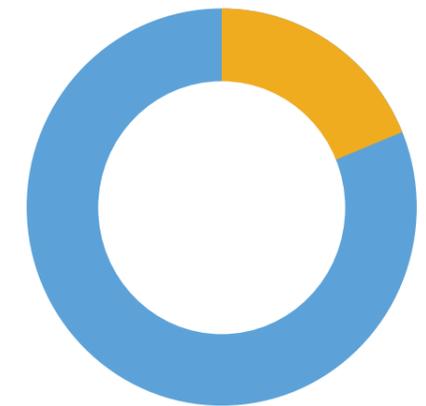
FUNDING SINCE 2012



RTA ICE: \$2,000,000  
CTA: \$500,000  
**Total: \$2,500,000**



FUNDING SINCE 2008



JARC/NF Program: \$13,676,831  
Pace: \$3,409,112  
**Total: \$17,085,943**

# RTA Programs:

# Implementing Transit-Oriented Developments

## Orland Park

The RTA partners with local communities to plan developments near rail stations that will attract more riders to the transit system. The RTA has funded two studies in the Village of Orland Park. One is the Orland Park Transit-Oriented Development Planning Study, funded by the RTA Community Planning program, which created a plan to facilitate mixed-use development in the New Downtown Orland Park area, near the 143rd Street Metra Station with a specific focus on 36-acres adjacent to the station. The second study was the completion of the federally

funded Orland Park LaGrange Road Transit Improvement Plan. This project identifies transit and pedestrian-friendly improvements for development along the heavily used LaGrange Road corridor from 131st Street to Interstate 80, a corridor providing access to the 143rd Street Station.

Following recommendations from the Transit-Oriented Development study, in 2011 the Village approved a 295-unit apartment development with ground floor retail adjacent to the 143rd Street Metra Station. Construction is complete. As a result

of the LaGrange Road plan, the Illinois Department of Transportation has reconstructed the intersection of 143rd Street to include enhanced pedestrian features and a pedestrian overpass near the Metra station. Reconstruction of the remainder of the corridor will begin soon.

Based on a methodology developed by RTA staff, the new apartment development has the potential to add an additional 61,920 annual boardings at the 143rd Street Metra Station.

## Wheeling



The RTA funded the Village of Wheeling's Station Area Plan to redevelop the area around the Metra station to be a more transit-friendly area. The plan identifies more appropriate and compatible uses of the land such as a mix of residential, commercial and retail development, improving pedestrian access, and alleviating congestion. The study also determines the development potential of the area and provides

realistic development strategies for the Village to implement.

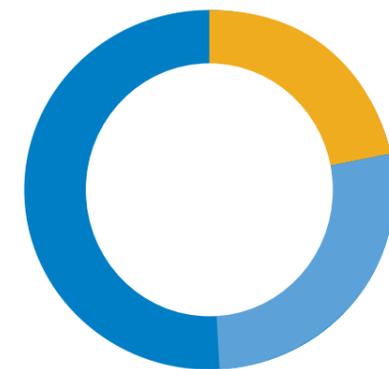
Following recommendations from the Station Area Plan, in 2008 the Village completed land acquisition near the Metra station to create a downtown center. In September, 2013, the Village gave preliminary approval to a development company for a \$100 million development that will include a 300-unit, 5-story apartment complex, along with

retail and commercial development adjacent to the Metra Station, transforming the area into Wheeling's new town center. The first phase of construction is expected to start in the summer of 2014.

Based on a methodology developed by RTA staff, this new development has the potential to add an additional 63,840 annual boardings at the Wheeling Station.

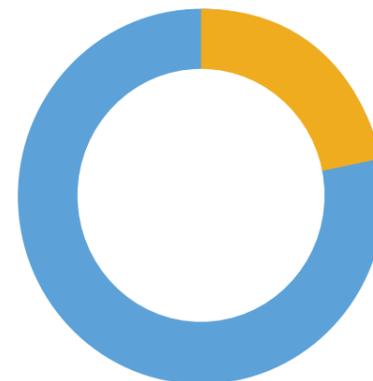


FUNDING SINCE 1999



	Federal Funding:	\$79,884
	RTA Community Planning:	\$30,000
	Village of Orland Park:	\$39,971
<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$149,855</b>

FUNDING SINCE 2002



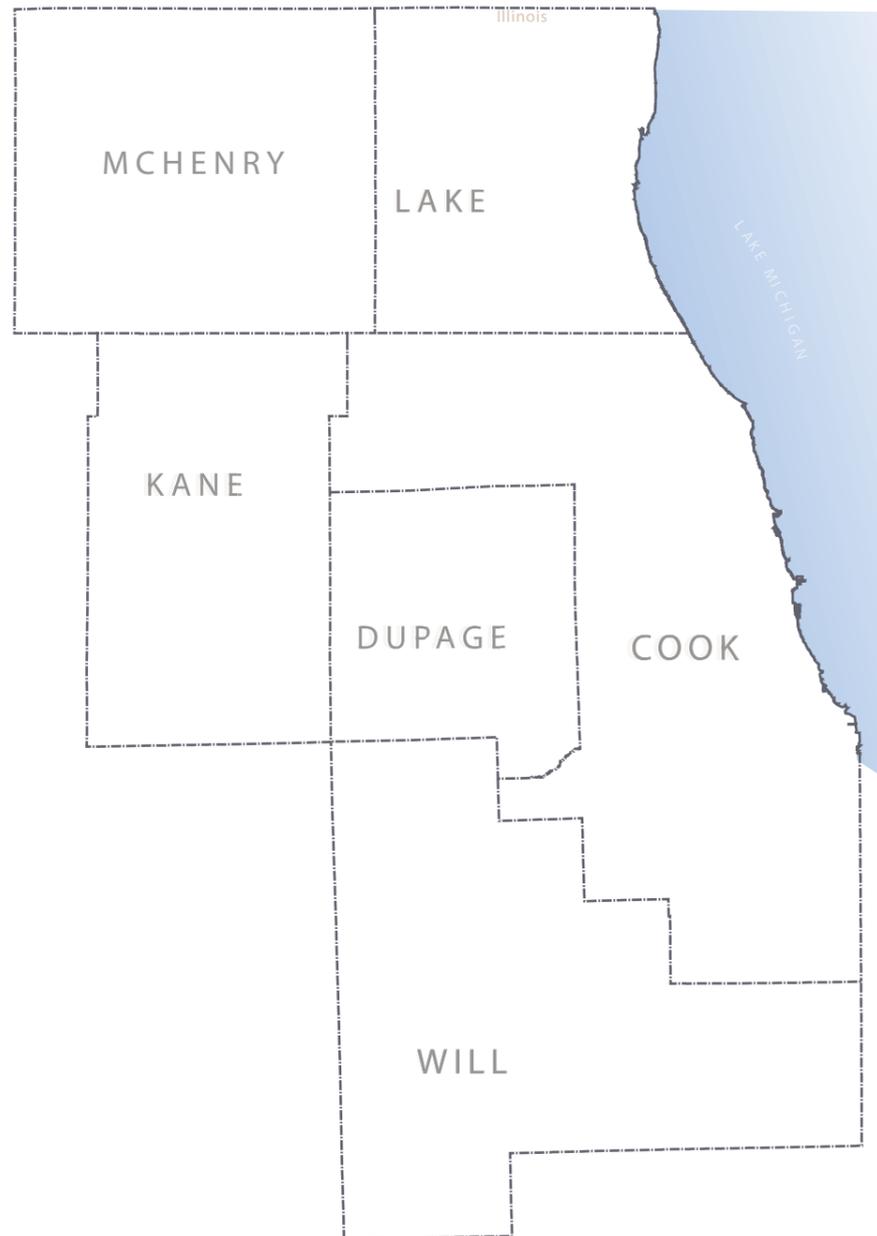
	Federal Allocation:	\$60,000
	Village of Wheeling:	\$15,000
<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$75,000</b>

## Potential Ridership Increase



**63,840**  
additional annual boardings

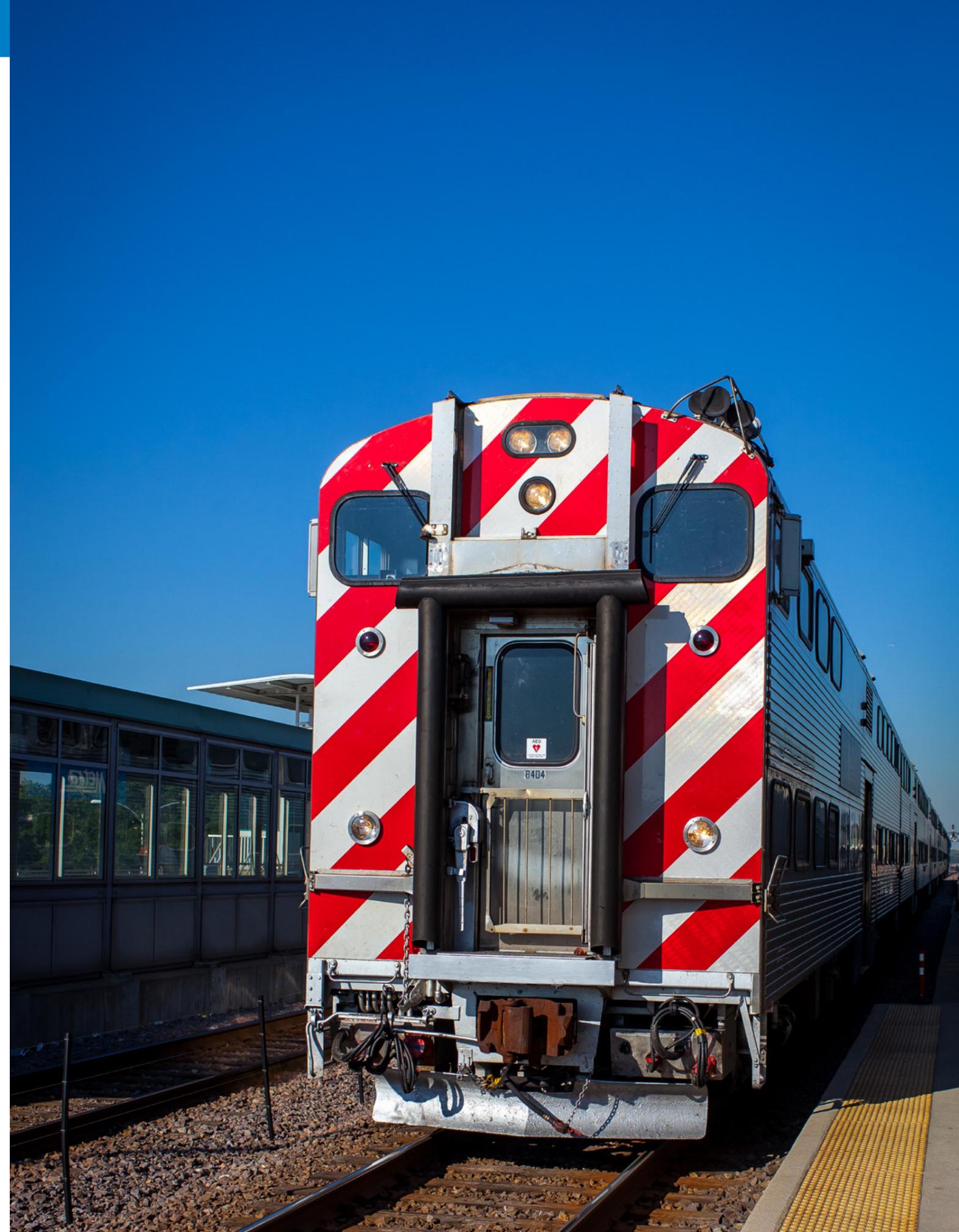
# The RTA's Work in Your Area



- Blue Island
- Buffalo Grove
- Chicago
- Clarendon Hills
- DuPage County
- Fox River Grove
- Hanover Township
- Joliet
- Kane County
- Lake County
- Manhattan
- McHenry County
- Mundelein
- Naperville
- New Lenox
- Orland Park
- Park Forest
- Richton Park
- Skokie
- Villa Park
- Wheeling
- Will County

For more information about the RTA's implementation activities, please go to

[www.rtams.org/rtams/planningHome.jsp](http://www.rtams.org/rtams/planningHome.jsp)



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