

Reaching new riders...

Reverse Commuters

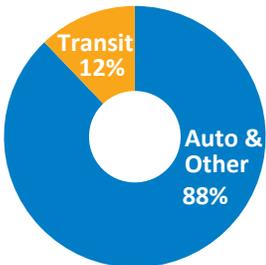
RTA Market Development Initiatives



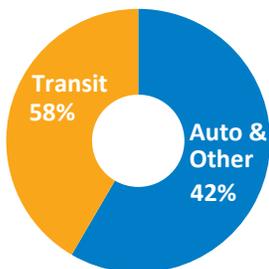
12% Market Share

Transit captures only 12% of trips in the reverse commute direction, compared to 42% in the traditional direction

City to Suburbs (Reverse)
~427,000 trips per day



Suburbs to City (Traditional)
~978,000 trips per day



Every 1% increase in transit ridership from this market could yield an additional 130,000 transit trips annually.

Reverse Commuters are travelers from the City of Chicago to suburban locations for work.

Over **400,000 people** commute daily from the City of Chicago to jobs outside of the CBD. Most of the region’s major suburban employment areas are located **within 5 miles** of existing Metra commuter rail and CTA rapid transit lines that have seats available in the reverse commute direction.

Only **51,000 reverse commute trips** (12%) are taken each day on transit. These commuters leave one hour earlier and take 20% longer to get to their destinations than their traditional commute counterparts, on average. The lack of transit usage and difference in travel patterns for the reverse commute market indicate that there may be barriers to transit use for this market.

The RTA is investing in projects that will target reverse commuters because it is a large, stable travel market that can be carried most of the way by the existing

transit network. Small improvements to the pedestrian environment like sidewalks, “last-mile” services like shuttle bugs, and joint fare products could help expand the transit market share for this population.

Opportunities

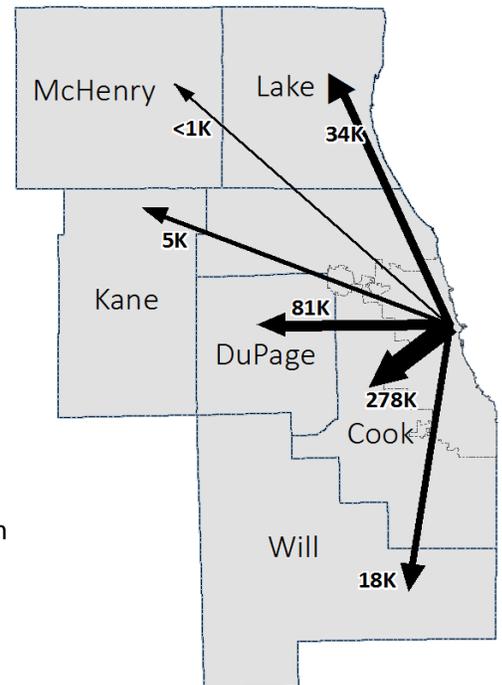
Established Employment Centers and Land Use Patterns. 1.2 million jobs are located in Suburban Cook County and 1.4 million in the collar county suburbs.

Consistent Volumes of Travelers. City residents are reverse commuting to all counties in the region, especially Suburban Cook, DuPage, and Lake Counties.

Transit Availability. Existing trains already moving in the reverse commute direction can accommodate more passengers.

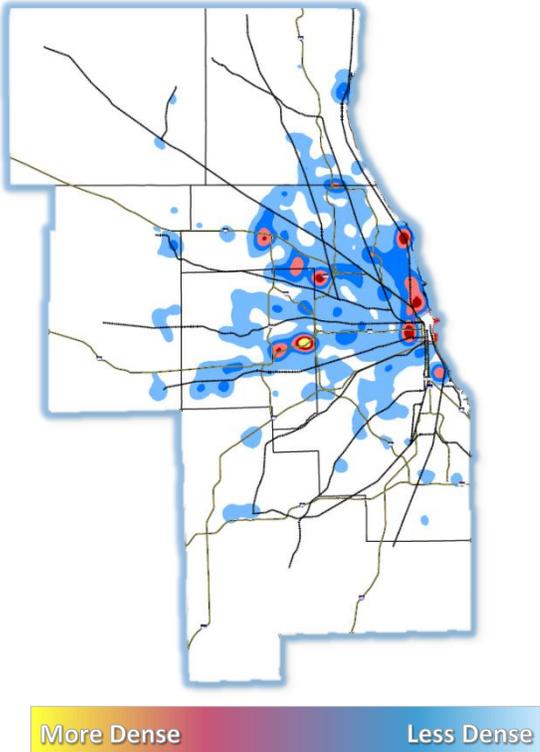
Employer Interest. Based on the RTA’s experience with Shuttle Bug development, many major suburban employers are interested in improving transit connections in order to broaden their workforce pool and “green” their workplaces.

Reverse Commute Trip Flows



Source: 2007-2008 CMAP Household Travel Survey

Suburban Employment Densities



Challenges

Last-Mile Connection from Transit to Offices. Many suburban employment centers are low-density developments with large parking lots and limited pedestrian amenities like sidewalks. These characteristics make it difficult for people to get from a transit station to an office.

Limited transit service. Metra has less frequent service in the reverse commute direction, partly due to low demand. Pace employment-based shuttle services are often limited to peak commute hours, making it hard for some transit users to leave during the day if a Guaranteed Ride Home or similar program is not available.

No disincentives to driving. Parking is free and plentiful in many suburban employment locations, so there are few incentives to take transit.

Cost of Transfers. Some transit riders from the City of Chicago to suburban locations must transfer between CTA, Metra, and/or Pace, but there are limited fare products to discount transfer trips.

Current Activities

Shuttle Bug Market Opportunity Analysis. The RTA, CTA, Metra, and Pace are working cooperatively with the TMA of Lake Cook to analyze potential markets, develop routes, secure private contributions, conduct targeted marketing, and develop a long range financial plan for the operation of service in other locations in the region.

Reverse Commute Bus Service to Augment Metra MD-N Line. This ICE funded project will be a two-year service demonstration for an early morning, reverse commute bus service to augment Metra MD-N service.

Customer Information Coordination. RTA staff, building upon the interagency signage standards, continues to coordinate with Metra and CTA to update the Metra Union Station and Ogilvie Transportation Center Travel Guides.

Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program. RTA staff is working with the Service Boards, IDOT, CDOT and MPC to establish a regional TDM program that will promote transit, bicycling, carpooling, vanpooling and additional transportation options as alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle commuting.

Success Story

Lake Cook TMA Shuttle Buses.

The Shuttle Bug program is a public-private partnership between the TMA of Lake Cook, Pace Bus, Metra, and area businesses to provide convenient shuttle service connections between participating businesses and Metra stations. The TMA of Lake Cook operates the Shuttle Bug program including 13 routes (serving 7 stations on 3 Metra lines) with daily ridership averaging 1,350.

