

## **Working Group to Identify Lake County Paratransit Lead Agency**

**January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020**

**500 West Winchester Road, Libertyville, IL Room 2220**

**1:30pm**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Working Group Members Present:** Steve Carlson, Lake County Board; Jessica Hector-Hsu, RTA (Advisory Member); Kathleen O'Connor, Libertyville Township (Working Group Vice-Chair); Deb Waszak, City of North Chicago (Alternate Member); Shane Schneider, Lake County/LCDOT (Alternate Member); Linda Soto, Lake County Director on the Pace Board (Working Group Chair); Terry Wilke, Lake County Board; Bethany Williams, Lake County Partners

**Working Group Members Absent:** Mayor Leon Rockingham Jr., City of North Chicago

**Other Attendees:** Emily Gelber-Maturo, LC Health Department; Jennifer Serino, LC Workforce Development; Eric Tellez, LC Planning, Building, & Development; Sally Ann Williams, Pace; Kisha Hearn, Pace; Gary Scott, Pace; Mary Donner, Pace; Kevin Carrier, LCDOT; Emily Karry, LCDOT; Joe Surdam, LCDOT; Georgeann Duberstein, Village of Hainesville; Shirleyann Russell, Dimensions HHC; Candance Joes, RTA; Glenda Love, AgeGuide; Jackie Forbes, Kane County DOT/Ride in Kane; Krystal Spracklen (via conference phone), Association for Individual Development (AID); Mary Keating, DuPage County Community Services; Tom Shaughnessy, Antioch Township

#### **1. Call to Order & Introductions**

Linda Soto called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m. To start off self-introductions, Linda Soto announced and introduced a new member of the Working Group, Deb Waszak, who serves as Mayor Leon Rockingham's Chief of Staff of the City of North Chicago and will serve as his alternate for future Working Group meetings. Self-introductions for the rest of the Working Group members shortly followed.

#### **2. Agenda Changes & Announcements**

Linda Soto asked the Working Group for any agenda changes or announcements. No changes to the agenda or announcements were raised.

#### **3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes from November 21, 2019**

Linda Soto asked for a motion on the approval of the meeting minutes from November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019. A motion was made by Bethany Williams with a second by Kathleen O'Connor. On a unanimous voice the meeting minutes were approved.

#### **4. Approval of 2020 Meeting Schedule**

Linda Soto started with noting that the Working Group currently doesn't know if all the meetings listed on the schedule will be necessary, but that the dates are set for the entire year if needed. Linda asked for a motion for the approval of the 2020 meeting schedule. A motion was made by

Kathleen O'Connor with a second by Shane Schneider. On a unanimous voice vote the meeting schedule was approved. Bethany Williams raised a question after the approval of the schedule asking if the list of meeting dates was the same as discussed at the previous Working Group meeting. Emily Karry responded that the list was the same.

## **5. Ride DuPage Presentation on Paratransit Service and Group Discussion**

Followed by the introduction of this agenda item by Linda Soto, Mary Keating who serves as Director of Community Services Department for DuPage County, introduced herself and provided information on the Ride DuPage Service. The Community Services Department of DuPage County is a multi-faceted department that focuses on social services and grant management. Mary's work experience features roles at Pace, RTA, and DuPage County who she has worked for since 1999. Following her self-introduction, Mary began with the events that took place in DuPage County prior to the creation of the Ride DuPage program. In the 1990s, the Chairman of DuPage County Board who later went on to become Chairman of the RTA, Gayle Franzen, had great interest in transportation for seniors and individuals with disabilities. In the 90s, the RTA conducted a study examining all the various Dial-A-Rides and subsidized taxi programs in the region in an effort to find a more efficient way of operating these transit services. The Technical Committee for this study later formed into an organization named the Inter-Agency Paratransit Coordinating Council (IAPCC). IAPCC was active for many years and was involved with 25 agencies at one point who regularly met on a monthly basis discussing transportation issues. The first major product that came out of IAPCC was a program called Pilot II (and she noted that there was not a Pilot I). Pilot II was a subsidized taxi program where DuPage County took the lead as an administrative agent and where communities and non-profit agencies could purchase taxi coupons from the County to either sell or give them to their constituents.

Steve Carlson raised a question on what DuPage County's duties as an administrative agent was. Mary Keating responded that the County's duty or role was to hold contract agreements with taxi companies on specific quality standards, coverage standards, and acceptance of paper vouchers (coupons). Elaborating on the paper vouchers, Mary explained that the County would print out vouchers and sell them to cities, municipalities, and townships who would in turn sell them at a subsidized rate to individuals who were seniors and individuals with disabilities. Passengers were able to give the coupons to taxi drivers, who would then give them to the County so that their respective taxi company would be reimbursed by the County. Mary concluded her response to Steve Carlson's question by discussing that the County's role included handling all the contractual work, creating ID cards, and collecting information from communities on what their subsidy levels were as well. Steve Carlson asked if they ever encountered counterfeit coupons. Mary replied that DuPage County had never ran into this situation.

Mary Keating noted the Pilot II program was discontinued roughly two years ago and that it was DuPage County's first real attempt at providing subsidized transportation primarily for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Several of the communities that had been sponsors of Pilot II are currently sponsors of Ride DuPage as well. A positive outcome of the program was that it allowed communities to have the ability to be able to firmly set and have control of their budget for transportation. A negative outcome of the program was the quality of the taxi service. Mary elaborated that the quality of the taxi service continued to decline over the years, that there wasn't a good method to keep track of the taxis, and that a centralized customer service ceased to exist.

Linda Soto raised a question on whether there were taxis available that could accommodate individuals who used wheelchairs. Mary Keating responded that throughout the existence of Pilot II, the lack of vehicles or taxis being able to accommodate for passengers who used wheelchairs was always an issue. DuPage County did attempt to address this issue through subsidizing a taxi company's purchase of vehicles that were compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) at the beginning of the program and those trips could bill the County for an enhanced rate, but over time the lack of accessible transportation vehicles really became an issue. This was a significant downside to the Pilot II program.

Mary Keating continued that through the late 1990s and into the early 2000s, the County and sponsors concerted their efforts working towards providing a comprehensive coordinated paratransit program with a centralized call-center, which became Ride DuPage. The County was aware from the beginning that communities would need to have as much control as possible due to communities providing their own subsidy. Sponsors (often were communities) providing subsidies also had freedom to choose who they would subsidize. With this knowledge, the County highly encouraged sponsors to subsidize seniors and individuals with disabilities. Mary noted that there were one or two communities who were sponsors that include the general public as part of their group that they subsidize. Referred by Mary as the "*Price of Admission*", communities had to accept that this would be a shared-ride service and that no one could expect an exclusive door-to-door or one-to-one service. Further elaborating on the "*Price of Admission*", Mary made clear that Ride DuPage service would follow the ADA regarding levels of accessibility. An additional requirement of the "*Price of Admission*" was that sponsors had to allow for the sharing of trips with clients under other sponsors in the program. The County highly encouraged Ride DuPage sponsors to use a standardized definition for seniors and a standardized already existing eligibility criterion for individuals with disabilities as well. The County didn't want a situation where sponsors could determine whether a potential passenger was a senior or had a disability.

Kathleen O'Connor raised a question on whether there was consistency in sponsors honoring the standardized definition (age) for seniors and a standardized eligibility criterion for individuals with disabilities. Mary Keating responded that sponsors were consistent in honoring standardized definitions and eligibility criteria. Mary Keating also noted that Sally Ann Williams was the project manager from Pace on Ride DuPage.

Steve Carlson followed up with a question on what age makes an individual eligible or to be considered as a senior for the Ride DuPage program. Mary Keating answered that the age of 65 is when individuals would be eligible to use the service under the senior classification or eligibility criterion.

With several communities taking a chance on the startup of Ride DuPage, the service was established in 2004. Compared to the level of control sponsors had under the Pilot II program on their subsidized budgets, sponsors did not have the same level of control under Ride DuPage. The cost of Ride DuPage service is based on utilization, meaning that sponsors receive a bill for service proportionate to their usage on a monthly basis and there is a detailed formula for how cost is allocated to the sponsors. In the initial years of the service, the County relied on general estimates on sponsors' level of usage based on their respective Dial-A-Ride, taxi service, or the number of people utilizing Pace's ADA accessibility service. Mary noted that another base level of service is that Ride DuPage is 24/7 365 days-a-year. Concerning the trips taken by passengers, Mary noted that all trips must begin or end in the County, but that there were no geographic boundaries within the

County. The County wanted to avoid having passengers be limited to only traveling within their respective township or community. Mary emphasized that the lack of geographic boundaries was an important component of the service.

Kathleen O'Connor raised a question about whether DuPage County encountered any issues with sponsors participating and maintaining their own "inhouse" services and whether dual services providing the same service for the same population in the similar geographic area existed. Mary responded that neither was the case under Ride DuPage and that the sponsors went "all in".

Kathleen O'Connor followed up with a question about whether Ride DuPage combined all the Pace subsidies for communities into one pot or did the specific subsidy continue to follow the specific local unit of government, and if so, does that continue today. Sally Ann Williams from Pace responded stating that Pace has continued to subsidize at the same level throughout the region. Mary Keating responded with several points, communities joining the service were able to bring their Pace subsidies with them and the subsidies continue to follow the local unit of government/sponsor today (meaning the various local subsidies were not combined into one large pot). Mary noted that there was one exception to this. Once Milton Township joined Ride DuPage, the Township's Pace subsidy was shared among Milton Township, the Village of Glen Ellyn and the City of Wheaton because those local governments formed a consortium.

Mary Keating continued with the fact that DuPage County needed certain technologies to exist for Ride DuPage to fit with their vision on how they wanted to operate and conceptualized the service. The lack of certain technologies contributed in the delay of the service launching in 2004. Issues that took place during the initial years of the service included an ineffective formula for assessing costs to sponsors. Originally Ride DuPage assessed sponsor cost based on passenger miles. The geography of the County, the location of taxi dispatch offices, and the lack of service coverage in the southwest portion (particularly in the Naperville area) of the County impacted costs of the sponsors. The combination of Naperville's utilization being based on a per-mile basis and having a significant portion of trips traveling to their community involving buses rather than taxis led to Naperville being billed higher costs than other communities participating in the Ride DuPage service. Contributing to the imbalance of costs between Naperville and other participating communities was that the other communities had more taxi services available whereas Naperville had more bus services available and the cost of providing the trip was higher on buses. To correct the imbalance of costs between certain sponsors (such as Naperville) and the other participating communities, the Ride DuPage service adopted a formula. The formula charges sponsors or communities a certain amount per trip (based on a set amount for the vehicle to arrive, wait and load passengers) which spreads the base cost among the partners per trip. This portion of the formula was referred to as the "Flagpole" by Mary, which sort of mimics the flagpole of a taxi trip. The remaining costs of the service gets divided among the sponsors based on mileage that their respective passengers utilized. This cost formula is still used today for the Ride DuPage service.

Kathleen O'Connor raised a question about whether Ride DuPage had issues in recruiting communities who did not have a Pace subsidy prior to potentially participating in the service. Mary Keating and Sally Ann Williams responded that they did have this situation occur and that there were communities who were paying 100% of the costs upon joining.

Mary noted that the communities who were paying higher costs after joining and after the cost formula was adjusted understood why they were paying that much and that they were either all in on the service together with the rest of the participating communities or they would end up failing separately. The communities understood the need to work together for the good of the service.

Mary Keating continued with noting that Ride DuPage was in operation beginning in 2004 and that they had their one-millionth rider in 2014. During the recession years, particularly in 2008/2009, the service was in a fragile state. During this difficult time, it was hard for participating communities to discontinue the service due to being in the presence of a large senior population and seniors enjoying and frequently utilizing the service.

Mary Keating transitioned into the topic of funding. She advised the group to find a sustainable dedicated funding source when starting a countywide paratransit service and to get as much funding that won't be subject to the general funds pot of funding from various entities. Ride DuPage is preserved by multiple layers of funding. Sources of funds the service can obtain comes from Park Districts, the state, DuPage County, municipalities, RTA, federal, and Pace.

Steve Carlson asked who Ride DuPage's largest funder is and what proportion of the funds are dedicated. Mary responded the biggest funders of Ride DuPage include a federal grant that comes through the RTA that subsidizes work trips for individuals with disabilities for the County and municipalities.

Steve Carlson asked if that grant was not available would Ride DuPage shut down. Steve raised a point on whether there is strength in having a diverse source of funds compared to just one large source of funding. Kathleen O'Connor responded that Lake County's paratransit service current source of funding is obtained through the Section 5310 grant and that funds used to be obtained through the JARC and New Freedom grants. Mary Keating followed up with noting that Ride DuPage's second largest source of funding is through DuPage County, which annually allocates about \$600,000.

Linda Soto raised a question about funds obtained from the Park District and whether it is from a single Park District or group of Park Districts. Mary Keating responded that Park District funds are solely from the Naperville Park District. Linda followed up asking Mary to clarify that by Naperville Park District contributing funds, their motivation is to get passengers from Ride DuPage to visit their programs. Mary clarified that this was indeed Naperville Park District's motivation and noted that they are a small funding partner. Linda followed up again asking if community colleges participate in the service. Mary confirmed that no community colleges contribute to the service. Steve Carlson followed up asking if any large employers contribute to the service. Mary responded that Ride DuPage has been unsuccessful in getting an employer as a partner. Steve Carlson responded asking if any partnerships with hospitals exist. Mary replied that they had been unsuccessful after talking to some medical practices and instead, have primarily been reaching out to municipalities.

Steve Carlson raised a question about a Health Department being a partner. Mary Keating responded that the Health Department does participate in the transportation-to-work program and is not a federally qualified health center, they are all non-profits. Mary added that Ride DuPage has plenty of potential partners and it's just a matter of themselves reaching out and convincing said potential partners to join.

Linda Soto asked if Ride DuPage is under DuPage County's Health & Human Services Department. Mary Keating confirmed that this was true. Linda followed up asking whether the service has more access to grants by being under the Health & Human Services Department. Mary responded that she couldn't confirm if that was the case or not and stated that the department was just where the service happened to land.

Linda Soto raised a question about whether there are issues when municipalities charge different fares. Mary Keating replied that DuPage County has highly encouraged participating communities to have a standardized fare for Ride DuPage service. When a community absolutely needs to raise their fares, it is done in a way that communities collectively raise fares together. Mary added that having a standardized fare makes things easier from a marketing perspective.

Shane Schneider asked if there are any cost-controls in place. Mary Keating responded that there were not any cost controls and there is a potential risk due to this. A colleague of Mary who works for one of the communities involved in Ride DuPage has gotten good at determining budgets, costs, and balances through looking at population and trends for the communities. Though there is no cost-control in place in real-time, there is enough information for communities to look at their trends and make an informed decision on their budget. Shane followed up asking about whether the \$600,000 DuPage County allocates gets spread out to all riders or just unincorporated areas or something else. Mary responded that this wasn't the case and that the \$600,000 is for 2 programs that the County subsidizes. The first program subsidized by the County is for individuals coming to the County campus to Mary's department or for a social service-based appointment. The second program subsidized is for transportation to work with 5 agencies for people with disabilities. The work trip of clients of these 5 agencies are subsidized by the County. Mary added that the passengers' location of residency does not matter for either program.

Mary Keating transitioned to the topic of community base versus social service-based sponsors. Community base are the municipal sponsors who typically sponsor for seniors and individuals with disabilities to ride anywhere at any time for any purpose. Mary noted that the service is based on distance fares. Distance fares are in place to encourage passengers to take the shortest trips. Only time an exception is made to the fare structure is when the trip is going to a fixed location.

Steve Carlson raised a question about the portion of DuPage County that is unincorporated and whether these areas create gaps in service. Mary Keating responded that Ride DuPage doesn't exist in every community, municipality, or township and that the service has approximately 50% coverage of the County. Kathleen O'Connor followed up asking if someone wants to come to the clinic at the County but they don't live in a participating municipality or township does that person still get to utilize the service. Mary replied it doesn't matter if that person is in the coverage area since the trip is a County subsidized trip. Linda Soto followed up asking the same question, but instead the person wants to go to a job. Mary replied that in this situation, that person isn't eligible for service due to not being in the coverage area but that most communities do have their own services available to accommodate these types of situations. Kathleen O'Connor followed up asking about whether local sponsors can keep their own in-house service and participate in the service. Mary responded stating she couldn't see why someone would do this. Kathleen responded that this is the case in some communities, because we believe that they want to keep some local control. Mary responded stating that one of the principals Ride DuPage adopted in the initial years was that the sponsoring agency would be responsible for registering riders, because if I'm a senior in the Village of Glen Ellen

the local community should get credit and the rider should know the local community is subsidizing the trip.

Steve Carlson asked whether Ride DuPage is growing, stagnant, or if there is pressure on municipalities that do not participate. Mary Keating replied that the service was stagnant for a while due to the recession but over time it has been slowly growing. Most recently, three new communities have joined over the last three or so years. Linda Soto followed up asking how much advanced notice riders must give for needing a ride and what is their wait time and pickup time. Mary replied answering that it is a day-in-advance and same day with a 2-hour notice but realized that the 2-hour notice was not cost-effective to do, so the service scaled back with just including day-in-advance and a 4-hour same day notice. Some of the communities do have subscription trips and that this is up to each sponsor but noted that this trip does not have a different cost.

Kathleen O'Connor asked how Ride DuPage handles all the marketing; consistency and uniformity makes it easier for the rider. Mary Keating responded with multiple things that are being done. Specifically, Pace produces a riders guide and marketing materials and each municipality can put their own name on it.

Steve Carlson asked how he can give a community a realistic estimate of what joining the service may cost them. Mary Keating responded by stating that Jodi Hefler (works for Village of Glen Ellyn) has a good feel for estimating what the costs would be joining, but it depends not only on population but also demographics such as percentage of senior citizens. As an example, Glen Ellen paid around \$6700 for the month of October – but I would caution because its various from region to region. Jessica Hector-Hsu also cautioned that that amount is not the entire cost of the service and this is important as the subsidies can vary from sponsor to sponsor.

Bethany Williams raised a question on whether any of the communities put limits on rides as in number of rides per month (concern for the impact on the budget). Mary Keating responded by bringing up the concern that communities have with no geographic boundaries and mentioned that the average distance per trip was just 5.2 miles. Mary added that for individuals not going to work, the average distance per trip is likely shorter than the 5.2 mile average. Being able to go anywhere you want is a tremendous benefit for the users. Kathleen O'Connor followed up asking Mary if she had to start up Ride DuPage again would there be anything she would do differently in her approach. Mary responded by emphasizing that she would lobby to get a single source of funding (countywide funding source) instead of cobbling together local and county general funds. DuPage County current contribution (\$600,000) comes from the general funds budget.

Steve Carlson raised a concern about how having a single source of funding would take away from others having skin in the game. Mary Keating responded by bringing up the idea of if there is a single source of funding, others could potentially still have skin in the game through a deeper subsidy (heightened service). Jessica Hector-Hsu followed up asking if a rider fits into multiple categories do they see themselves as a rider for the county service or just for their municipality, or possibly another entity. Mary responded stating the particular person would be registered under three different funding sources and then when they go to schedule a trip, the dispatcher will go ahead and identify the lowest fare option for them (dispatchers gets to this point after finding out what trips are eligible through each of the three funding source options). Mary also noted that she believes there isn't a lot of people who are double-registered (multiple funding sources). The issue of trips going to the County courthouse not being eligible through Ride DuPage was an issue of concern

brought up by the Working Group Committee. Mary responded noting that the service is a platform on which anyone can subsidize transportation for anyone else.

Shane Schneider asked Mary Keating if she thought her Community Services department was the most appropriate department to achieve the most success possible or did she think there was another department in the county or non-profit that could have leveraged their resources to be more successful. Mary responded stating that she doesn't know if there was a better agency out there at the time. Mary noted that with Community Services department as the lead agency, they are pretty hands off now, and that sponsors now have direct relationships with Pace. At the beginning of Ride DuPage, it made sense for the Community Services department to be the lead agency because of the functions of the department and the experience brought by Mary. The department is more in an oversight role whereas municipalities and sponsors are more involved in the service and process currently. Mary also noted at the beginning, the County would subsidize the call center, but after negotiations, Pace has taken on that responsibility.

Kathleen O'Connor followed up asking if the service has Inter-Governmental Agreements with any of the participants or that if all the billing and contracts is handled through Pace. Mary confirmed that everything is now directly through Pace. Pace asks that when a new agency comes into the service that the Community Services department state whether they're okay with the new agency joining the services. At the beginning it was different and DuPage was more involved at that time to help establish the service. Kathleen followed up by bringing up how from her perspective, Lake County is trending towards having the paratransit service be under one umbrella which is the opposite of the way we are moving here in Lake County. Mary responded that DuPage County is still the lead agency and there is a group comprised of the sponsor agencies who are providing or funding the service that makes up the advisory committee. DuPage County is still the lead agency to help facilitate when other agencies want to join.

## **6. Ride in Kane Presentation on Paratransit Service and Group Discussion**

Linda Soto moved the meeting forward and onto the Ride in Kane Presentation. Emily Karry introduced Jackie Forbes from Kane County DOT (KDOT) and Krystal Spracklen from Association for Individual Development (AID). Jackie has been with Ride in Kane for about a year-and-a-half (has been with KDOT for 4 years) and Krystal has been with the service since its establishment.

Jackie Forbes began the presentation by noting Ride in Kane has been in service since 2008 and that the AID is the lead agency. In 2003, a paratransit coordination study was conducted and adopted by the Kane County Board, which contributed to the start of the service. Later that year, Kane County Board created the Kane County Paratransit Coordinating Council which still exists today. An additional contributing factor to the start of the service included the Paratransit Coordinating Council, from 2004 to 2006, identifying a centralized call center model as the best method to address challenges identified in the paratransit coordination study. At the time of the study, separate Dial-A-Ride services existed in Kane County.

Jackie Forbes transitioned into the service component of Ride in Kane. Multiple entities are involved in the service including KDOT who directly partners with the service, AID serving as the grantee of funds, Pace serving as the provider, and local sponsors who cover the match. Apart from a few social service agencies, sponsors of the service primarily include municipalities and townships. Sponsors can set their own parameters including eligibility criterion for potential passengers. Eligibility for

potential passengers may vary among each sponsor as it is dependent on their respective budgets and the number of rides they can provide. Sponsors are responsible for registering their clients and sending registration-related info to Pace who then places the submitted info into their data system. Jackie noted that passengers must register locally. Standardized components of the service that all participating sponsors abide by include being in operation 24/7, 365 days a year, allowing for only seniors over the age of 65 and individuals with disabilities to utilize the service, allowing passengers to schedule a trip 24 hours in advance, and having a trip guarantee policy. The service has a standardized fare structure in place as well consisting of all the sponsors having the same rate, charging \$4.00 for the first ten miles of the trip and \$1.50 per mile after exceeding the ten-mile threshold. Jackie added that the service is a curb-to-curb service and is eligible for registered riders based on local sponsors' funding source and requirements, the service has various means to be in operation at all times through a variety of vehicles (buses, minivans, and taxis), and that the service is funneled through a centralized call model system. Concerning the service's coverage, the western part of the County, rural in nature, is not within coverage. A scheduled trip must begin within the County or within a designated adjacent area approved by the sponsors as well.

Jackie Forbes transitioned into the funding component of Ride in Kane. The service originally started out with obtaining federal funds from the Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program and the New Freedom Initiative (NFI) program. The intent of these funds was to help kickstart the service and get the call center established. Current sources of funding include JARC and the Section 5310 grant.

Steve Carlson raised a question about the number of riders Ride in Kane has. Jackie Forbes responded the service has 667 distinct riders each month and that there are 7,500 registered riders. Jackie noted these figures are as current as the end of 2018.

Jackie Forbes transitioned to discussing Ride in Kane's availability of information. The service has their own website providing details about the service and participating sponsors. There is a guide (hard copy) that is distributed by the service to all sponsors who can then make edits to the guide to include their own parameters.

Jackie Forbes continued onto Ride in Kane's coverage. There is no coverage in the western part of the County. One of the challenges for the service's coverage to expand is due to townships being required to come up with a local match for the service. The service has attempted to recruit additional townships in the past but has been unsuccessful.

Steve Carlson asked how much the local match is. Jackie Forbes confirmed that the local match does vary and that it is based on what the service cost is for a specific area.

Jackie Forbes transitioned to discussing continuing efforts being taken by Ride in Kane. Efforts being undertaken include inviting new sponsors, submitting applications for funds, continuing advocacy efforts to secure sustaining funds, and securing regional and legislative support as needed. The service reached out to five hospitals and several major employers in Kane County but were unsuccessful. Jackie believes the lack of success on recruiting new sponsors may be due to entities and communities feeling that they do not have a need.

Kathleen O'Connor asked about participation of the municipalities versus the townships. Jackie Forbes responded that issues have primarily been occurring with townships on the western half of the County that have smaller municipalities. Jackie added that all the large municipalities on the eastern side of the County participate along with their respective townships. Krystal Spracklen followed up noting that the City of Aurora is not participating and the reason being is that they believe it is the township's responsibility to partner with the service. Krystal added that there is a good balance of sponsors that are municipalities and townships currently participating in the service. Jackie followed up noting their presentation had finished and opened the floor for questions.

Linda Soto raised a question on whether the challenges that Ride in Kane endure primarily deals with demographics. Jackie Forbes confirmed that this was the case. Shane Schneider followed up asking what the relationship between KDOT and AID is and what are the rules and responsibilities for each. Jackie responded by stating that AID is the lead agency and that they handle all the paperwork for grants, working with sponsors to verify eligibility, forward documents to Pace and in-houses documents, providing an information line, and being responsible for audits. Jackie added that AID and KDOT have an agreement that AID conducts mobility management and is allowed more staff to work on the service. A three-way agreement is in place between Kane County (as a whole), AID, and Pace to provide the service as well. Shane followed up by asking whether having the agreement between two agencies has worked out well. Jackie responded by mentioning that there are some challenges but that the program is working. Neither agency has the ability to provide a full-time staff for the position so KDOT provides resources to AID to help with staff.

Steve Carlson asked who is responsible for handling the call center. Jackie Forbes replied that Pace is responsible. Terry Wilke followed up asking who does the call center cost fall on. Krystal Spracklen responded stating that there is a grant to accommodate most of the cost, but that 20% of the cost is passed onto the sponsors.

Linda Soto raised a question on what Pace could do differently and/or better when working with AID and KDOT. Krystal Spracklen replied that there is a delay in getting their invoices which can cause problems with billing sponsors but in general Pace is very helpful and accommodating. Mary Keating followed up with mentioning that Pace has been accommodating as well and raised a point on that the perception between on-demand paratransit and general public is different, in that paratransit is look at as *the other* and asked how could these two be integrated.

Kathleen O'Connor asked about the issues of funds being used in different areas or services. Jackie Forbes responded that Kane County puts in \$120,000 annually to be used for all the existing sponsors to help offset some of the local cost. Jackie noted that to receive this pot of money, an entity must be a sponsor of the service. Jackie added that the County has been approached about expanding but is unable to do so due to the way the system is structured.

Shane Schneider raised a question about whether the County's ¼% sales tax is include in the \$120,000 allocated by Kane County. Jackie Forbes responded that she believes the ¼% sales tax is where some of the \$120,000 comes from. Mary Keating followed up noting that DuPage County's money that is allocated to the specific services provided by DuPage County.

In the interest of time, Linda Soto opened the floor for departing comments. An audience member brought up the availability of information on services throughout the County is not as comprehensible as it's supposed to be and suggested to keep working on how the information is available and presented to riders going forward. Kathleen O'Connor followed up noting the number of services and each service having unique components is a nuisance to track and that Lake County is not at a user-friendly level when portraying information for riders. One of the challenges is that because there are so many individual services (around 50 services) it is not uniform and makes it hard to track and communicate – since we do not have a coordinated, borderless service. We're just not there yet.

Linda Soto brought up that we should all advocate at the state and federal level that paratransit becomes a permanent piece of the pie for grant funding

## **7. Public Comment**

Linda Soto opened the floor for public comments. No comments were made by the audience.

## **8. Reminder**

Linda Soto gave a reminder that the next Working Group meeting is set to take place on **Wednesday March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 1:00 pm. at Lake County Division of Transportation's Main Conference** room. Emily Karry followed up Linda's reminder informing the Working Group that the rest of the meetings scheduled for 2020 will be taking place Lake County Division of Transportation's Main Conference room as well.

## **9. Adjournment**

Linda Soto asked for a motion on adjourning the meeting. A motion was made by Bethany Williams with a second by Shane Schneider. On a unanimous voice the meeting was adjourned at 3:17 pm.