

Hiawatha Light-Rail Transit

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Hiawatha is state's first light-rail line

Minnesota's first light-rail transit (LRT) line, the Hiawatha Line, opened in 2004. The 12-mile line runs from the Warehouse District in downtown Minneapolis to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and the Mall of America in Bloomington.

LRT is part of the Metropolitan Council's long-term strategy for building transit ridership, improving mobility and slowing the growth of traffic congestion in the region. By 2020, the Council expects to have open for service, at a minimum, Northstar Commuter Rail (2009); Central Corridor LRT (2014); 35W Bus Rapid Transit - BRT - (2010); Cedar Ave. BRT; one additional LRT line and more possible BRT lines.

In 2008, Hiawatha LRT ridership topped 10 million for the first time, a gain of 12.3% over 2007.

Stations unique to neighborhoods

The Hiawatha line has 17 stations, each designed to reflect the unique character of

its location. Construction will be completed in 2009 on a four-block extension of the Hiawatha line in downtown Minneapolis to connect with future Northstar commuter rail service at a new station near the new Twins Ballpark. Northstar service will begin in late 2009.

LRT coordinates with bus service

Metro Transit service provides timed transfers between 46 bus routes and 13 light-rail stations with fares identical to bus service. Self-service machines allow riders to purchase their tickets at the stations.

Transit police conduct fare compliance checks. Officers may fine violators who ride without a ticket, transfer or pass; the current fine is \$180.

Frequent service improves mobility

LRT service begins daily at 4 a.m., with service every half hour until 6:30 a.m. During weekday commuting periods (6:30 to 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 to 6 p.m.), trains run every 7 to 8 minutes. During the day, and from 6 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.,

trains run every 10 minutes. From 7:15 to 10:15 p.m., trains run at 15-minute intervals; from 10:15 to 11:15, every half hour; and from 11:15 p.m. until 1 a.m., hourly. Ride time from downtown to the Mall of America is 36 minutes.

LRT cars are fully accessible

The line has a fleet of 27 cars, typically with two cars coupled together. Manufactured by Bombardier Transit Corp., each car is 94 feet long and weighs nearly 107,000 pounds. Each car has four doorways and can hold 66 seated passengers plus standing room for about 120. Inside each car are four luggage racks and four bicycle hangers.

The cars and stations are fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, with level boarding at each train door. All stations feature ramps and tactile edges, and stations on bridges have elevators.

Light-rail spurs local development

A strong and growing regional economy depends on a variety

of forms of transportation to keep goods and people moving freely throughout the region. Transit solutions—like light rail, commuter rail and exclusive busways—help slow the growth of congestion and support development and redevelopment of attractive, convenient neighborhoods with a diversity of complementary land uses.

Before construction, planners had predicted the areas surrounding LRT would draw 7,000 new housing units by 2020. By 2008, more than 8,000 new housing units were open or under construction along the line, with another 7,700 proposed by developers.

The success of the Hiawatha line has increased public interest and support for rail projects in the region. The Metropolitan Council plans to begin light-rail service in the Central Corridor, the second link in its light-rail system, in 2014.

Central will connect downtown St. Paul, the State Capitol complex, the Midway area, the University of Minnesota and downtown Minneapolis. Once outside

downtown St. Paul, the 11-mile line will run on University Avenue and then Washington Avenue until it connects with the existing Hiawatha line near the Metrodome station in downtown Minneapolis.

On the Hiawatha Line:

- The Council completed a new parking ramp at the 28th Avenue station in July 2008, providing 1,450 spaces for light-rail riders.
- In coordination with the City of Bloomington, the Council expects to begin construction in 2009 on the American Boulevard station.

Federal funds paid largest share

The total cost to design and construct the Hiawatha Line was \$715.3 million, with the largest share of funds (\$424 million) coming from federal appropriations and grants.

The Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$100 million; the Metropolitan Airports Commission, \$87 million; Hennepin County, \$84.2 million; and the Minnesota Department of Transportation, \$20.1 million.

For more information

- Visit the [Council's Hiawatha Light Rail information page](#):
- Related fact sheets
 - [Regional Transit Services](#)
 - [Metro Transit](#)
 - [Metro Mobility](#)
 - [Metro Transit Outreach](#)
 - [Transportation Planning](#)

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