

# Metro Transit

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## Metro Transit is heart of regional system

Transit in the Twin Cities area has many faces—buses, trains, car and van pools, park-and-ride lots, transit hubs, high-occupancy-vehicle lanes and soon, high-speed commuter rail. The heart of transit in the seven-county metro region is Metro Transit, provider of more than 90% of the region's transit service.

Metro Transit and other transit options play an important role in the regional economy. Transit gets workers to their jobs, eases traffic congestion, improves air quality, saves commuters money and reduces energy consumption.

## Facts about Metro Transit

- A service of the Metropolitan Council.
- Service area includes Minneapolis, St. Paul and dozens of suburban communities in the seven-county region.
- Provided nearly 82 million rides on 118 bus routes and one light-rail line in 2008, achieving the highest annual ridership since 1981.

Ridership was up 6.1% from 2007.

- Ridership on the Hiawatha light-rail line topped 10 million for the first time, a gain of 12.3% from 2007. Construction is nearly complete on a four-block extension of the line in downtown Minneapolis to connect with future Northstar commuter rail service near the site of the new Twins Ballpark. Northstar service opens in late 2009.
- Each weekday in 2008, customers took more than 268,000 trips on Metro Transit.
- More than 90% of customers say they are fully satisfied with the service.
- Most transit users own at least one car and about one-third have higher than median household income.
- 46% of train riders and 31% of bus riders say they would have driven alone were it not for transit service.
- 23% of bus riders and 10% of light-rail riders say that they could not have traveled to their destinations without Metro Transit service.
- Metro Transit buses travel 30 million miles a year.

## Transit fleet, staff and facilities

Metro Transit operates a fleet of 827 buses and 27 rail cars. The bus fleet includes 673 40-foot buses – including 67 hybrid-electric buses – and 154 articulated “accordion-style” buses. The entire fleet is equipped with wheelchair lifts or ramps, and bicycle racks to accommodate bicycle commuters.

As part of its “Go Greener” initiative, Metro Transit is purchasing 150 more hybrid-electric buses over the next several years. The initiative also includes:

- Purchasing 164 buses that use the latest clean diesel technology.
- Using 20% biodiesel-content fuel in warmer months and 10% in cold-weather months.
- Modifying bus engines for better fuel economy.
- Implementing an engine-idling reduction program.

Metro Transit employs about 2,640 people as drivers, mechanics, administrative and clerical staff, and police officers. Facilities include five

service garages, two rail operations centers, one fleet service center, an administrative building, a regional transit information center, an operations support center, three retail stores and its own police department.

Metro Transit and its partner suburban transit agencies also maintain an array of transit centers, passenger facilities and park-and-ride lots. The lots contain about 26,000 spaces, both on bus routes and along the rail line. Overall system usage grew about 17% (1,150 users) from October 2007 to October 2008. Overall system use is at 70% of total capacity and one-third of all park-and-ride lots are near, at or over capacity.

In 2008, 11 new facilities were added, including a 1,450-space parking ramp at the 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue Station on the Hiawatha light-rail line.

The majority of park-and-ride users are from the seven-county metro area. However about 10% drive from neighboring communities and beyond – even as far as St. Cloud, Rochester and Mankato.

**Bus and rail fares**

Transit fares during the rush hours (Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.) are \$2.25 on local routes and \$3.00 on express

routes. Non-rush-hour fares are \$1.75 and \$2.25, respectively. Seniors and youth pay only \$.75 for rides during non-rush hours; people with disabilities pay \$.75 regardless of the time of day. Transfers are good for unlimited rides for two and one-half hours.

Metro Transit offers a number of discount fare programs to employers and educational institutions, including Metro-pass, Transit-Works!, U-Pass and Go-To College Pass.

Participation in Metropass is impressive and growing. More than 225 employers now make the unlimited-ride pass available to more than 166,000 total employees. Ridership by Metropass users increased more than 20% in 2008.

In 2008, transit riders used the online trip planner to create 5.6 million itineraries, an increase of more than 40% over the previous year.

**Commuter rail debut**

Revenue service on the region’s first commuter-rail line is set to begin in late 2009. The 40-mile Northstar line will travel on existing railroad tracks along Highways 10 and 47 from Big Lake to downtown Minneapolis. Proposed fares range from \$3.25 to \$8 one way, depending on distance traveled.

Northstar will offer five morning and five afternoon rush-hour trips daily. Weekend and special-event trips will also be available. The Minneapolis station, adjacent to the new Minnesota Twins ballpark on the north side of downtown, will accommodate direct connections between Northstar and Hiawatha light rail. Bus connections will be a short walk to the 5th Street Transit Center.

In 2010, its first full year of operation, Northstar is expected to average an estimated 3,500 weekday rides.

**For more information**

Transit schedules and route information are available from Metro Transit’s website at <http://www.metrotransit.org>. The website offers custom trip planning and mapping, real-time bus departure information, online purchase of transit passes and other handy features. It also includes links to other transit services and special employer programs. To get live or automated help, you can call 612-373-3333 or TTY 612-341-0140.

- Related fact sheets:
- [Regional Transit Services](#)
  - [Metro Mobility](#)
  - [Metro Transit Rideshare](#)
  - [Hiawatha LRT](#)
  - [Transportation Planning](#)

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