

Chapter 1. Purpose

Legislative Requirement

In 1996, the Minnesota State Legislature adopted statutes requiring the Metropolitan Council to perform an audit of the Twin Cities transportation system. The statute reads as follows:

473.1466 Performance audit; transit evaluation.

(b) In 1999 and every four years thereafter, the council must evaluate the performance of the metropolitan transit system's operation in relationship to the regional transit performance standards developed by the council.

The Metropolitan Council completed the first Transit System Audit in 1999, per the legislative direction. This report is an update to that first report.

In addition, the Council conducted a Transportation Systems Audit in 1997 and an update to the Transportation Systems Audit in 2001, both of which had chapters on transit. This report is also an update of information in these reports.

Purpose

The Twin Cities transit system is fairly complex, with 24 separate entities providing public transit service in the region. Service is provided in both urban and rural areas and includes both regular-route and dial-a-ride service. Routes include express, urban local, suburban local, flex routes, limited stop, and other types of routes. One of the primary focuses of this report is to aggregate information from individual jurisdictions to give a picture of overall transit trends in the region.

The Metropolitan Council is not only the largest transit service provider in the region; it is also the region's federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization. In this capacity, it is responsible for developing long-range and short-range plans for all transportation modes in the region, including transit. This report provides performance information and trend information for the Twin Cities transit system to provide context for these planning activities. It also provides feedback on goals set in transportation planning documents and a longitudinal perspective on transit issues.

Another purpose of this report is to provide a national context for the Twin Cities transit system. This report provides comparative information with other peer regions and for other peer transit systems to provide a national perspective on Twin Cities transit issues.