METRO Light Rail Consist Size Update

Brian Funk | Chief Operating Officer
Overview of the Issue

• Metro Transit is preparing to add LRT service with improved frequency in August

• Metro Transit is currently operating 3-car trains all day, every day regardless of ridership demands

• This results in unnecessary mileage accumulating, placing inspection and repair demands on Light Rail Maintenance staff that is currently understaffed
  – Note: We are currently hiring Technicians ($37.80 to start) and Helpers ($22.81)

• Right-sizing the light rail vehicles deployed for service yields important savings
  – ~1,000,000 miles and $500,000 parts and labor in annual savings
  – Significant savings toward future overhaul programs
LRT Service Snapshot

- Current Service start (ALL Days):
  - 4:29am Green Line from Union Depot
  - 5:08am Green Line from Target Field
  - 4:13am Blue Line from Mall of America
  - 4:43am Blue Line from Target Field
    - Trips start at 3:20am from Franklin
  - 24/7/365 service between T1-T2 at MSP International Airport

- Current Service end (ALL Days):
  - 11:17pm Green Line from Union Depot
  - 11:23pm Green Line from Target Field
  - 12:09am Blue Line from Mall of America
  - 11:19pm Blue Line from Target Field

- Frequency (ALL Days):
  - 15 minutes from about 5:00am to 9:00pm
LRT Ridership Snapshot

• Green Line
  • February 2024: 779,513
  • Year to date 2024: 1,542,343
  • Up 28% from 2023
  • Remains down 21% from 2019
  • Weekends lower than Weekday
    • Heavy University of Minnesota influence

• Blue Line
  • February 2024: 495,847
  • Year to date 2024: 966,082
  • Steady with 2023
  • Remains down 33% from 2019
  • Weekends similar to Weekday
    • Continued impacts of remote work
Data-based analysis & forecasting

• Reviewed recent maximum observed onboard counts with current 15-minute frequency

• Current weekday ridership would result in overcrowding with 2-car trains on several Green Line trips around UofM Campus stations; no/minimal impacts on Blue Line

• Current weekend, non-event ridership will not result in overcrowding with 2-car trains on either line

• Reviewed forecasted maximum onboard counts with future 12-minute frequency

• Expect Green Line weekday onboard counts will be similar to 2019-levels (more people per car) with minimal change on Blue Line

• Expect weekend, non-event onboard counts will not result in overcrowding with 2-car trains on either line
Planned Approach (slide 1 of 2)

• Deploy 2-car trains strategically to gain additional experience & feedback

• Starting **April 13**, utilize 2-car trains on Saturday & Sunday service days
  – 3-car service planned for Twins & MN United weekend games
  – Data supports minimal customer impact; will measure & document
  – First opportunity to solicit customer feedback since Summer 2022 Pilot

• Communication Planning
  • Advance communications on website, social media, subscription Rider Alerts
  • On-platform audio and visual reader-board announcements on impacted dates
  • On-platform signage to denote the 2-car vehicle boarding area
  • **Additional suggestions from TAAC members are appreciated**
Planned Approach (slide 2 of 2)

• Starting **June 15** with quarterly service update, utilize 2-car trains on all non-event service days
  - 3-car service planned for Twins, MN United, PRIDE, Aquatennial, major concerts, etc event dates
  - Data supports minimal customer impact but we will measure & document
  - Will continue to solicit customer feedback

• Starting **August 17** with quarterly service update, goal to improve frequency to 12 minutes for significant portion of each service day and continue to utilize 2-car trains on all non-event service dates
  - 3-car service planned for Twins, MN United, Vikings, Marathon, Gopher football, major concerts, etc event dates
  - Dependent on Train Operator hiring, training and retention
  - Final communication of “Go/No Go” frequency change expected in May

• Future Goal: Continue to hire Train Operators, Technicians and Helpers to restore 10-minute service frequency for majority of each service day
Thank You!

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