



# METRO Light Rail Service Update

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# 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!

**Brian Funk**

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