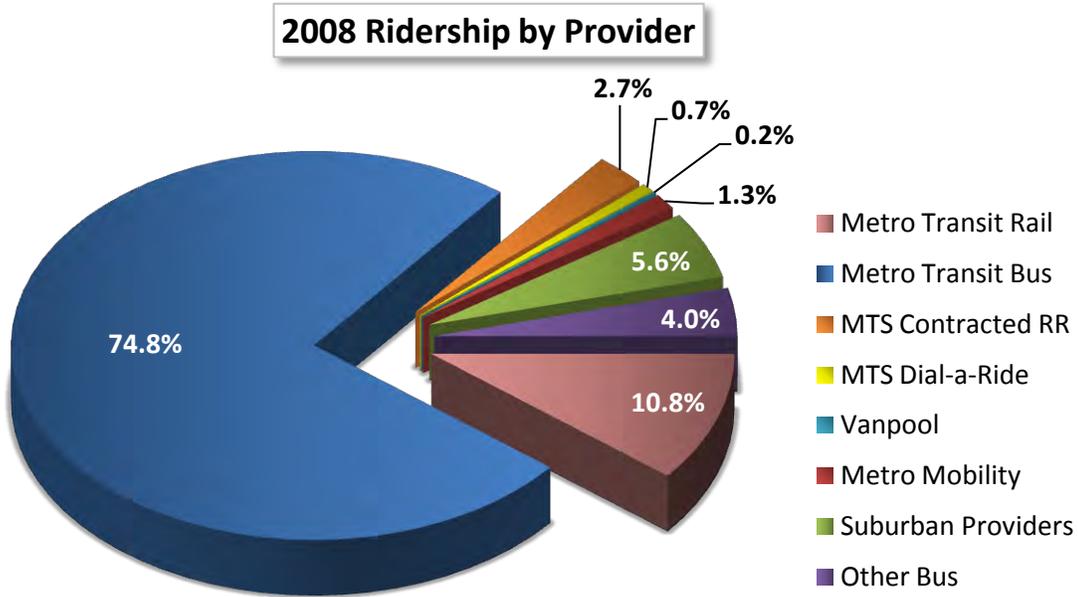# Chapter 4. Regional Transit Ridership and Operating Statistics

This chapter provides information on regional transit ridership and operating statistics. The statistics are grouped by the various service providers described in Chapter 2.

Summary of Transit System Statistics

Metro Transit carries 85% of the riders in the region.

2008 Ridership by Provider

74.8%	2.7%
	0.7%
	0.2%
	1.3%
	5.6%
	4.0%
	10.8%

- Metro Transit Rail
- Metro Transit Bus
- MTS Contracted RR
- MTS Dial-a-Ride
- Vanpool
- Metro Mobility
- Suburban Providers
- Other Bus

Metro Transit provides the largest number of transit service hours of any provider in the region.

2008 Revenue Hours by Provider

57.8%	7.5%
	6.9%
	0.9%
	17.3%
	6.8%
	4.0%
	1.3%

- Metro Transit Rail
- Metro Transit Bus
- MTS Contracted RR
- MTS Dial-a-Ride
- Vanpool
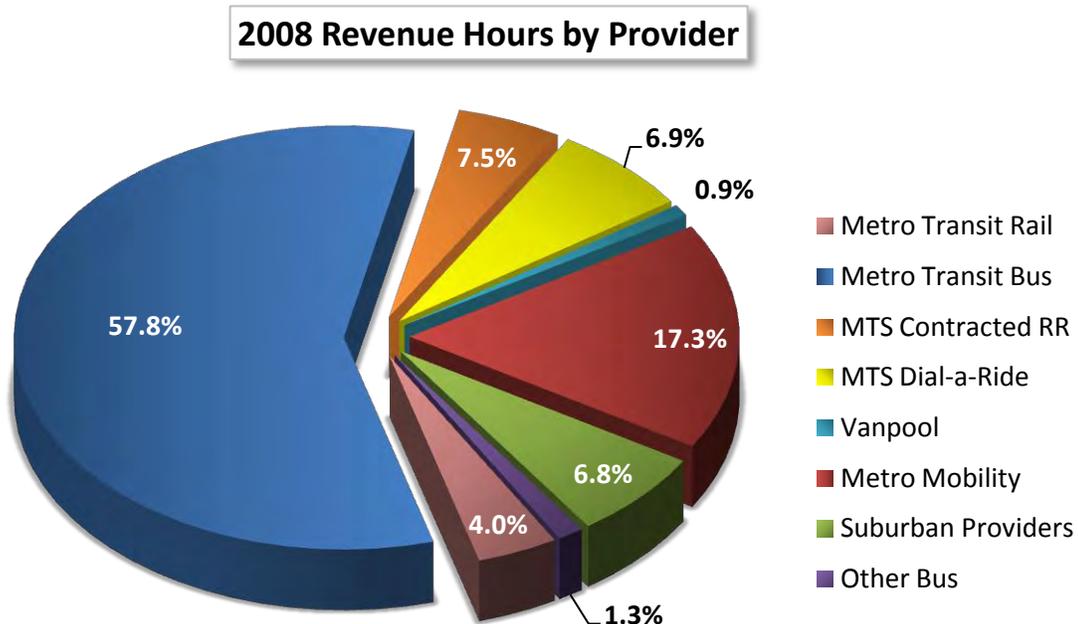- Metro Mobility
- Suburban Providers
- Other Bus

Table 4-1. 2008 Regional Transit Operating Statistics, by Provider

System (2008 statistics)	Operating Cost	Fare Revenue	Passengers	Revenue Hours	Subsidy Per Passenger	Cost Per Revenue Hour
Metropolitan Council – Directly Operated[1]						
Metro Transit Bus	$226,330,000	$69,540,000	70,852,000	1,971,000	$2.21	$123.81
Metro Transit Rail	$23,700,000	$8,990,000	10,222,000	134,800	$1.44	$175.82
Metro Transit Subtotal	**$250,030,000**	**$78,530,000**	**81,074,000**	**2,105,800**	**$2.12**	**$127.38**
Metropolitan Council – MTS Contracted						
Metro Mobility	$31,196,000	$3,950,000	1,221,000	591,500	$22.31	$52.74
Contracted RR	$11,520,000	$2,750,000	2,540,000	174,500	$3.40	$66.02
Dial-a-Ride	$12,985,000	$1,570,000	663,000	234,400	$17.22	$55.40
Vanpool	$1,350,000	$736,000	209,800	29,800	$2.93	$45.30
MTS Subtotal	**$57,051,000**	**$9,006,000**	**4,633,800**	**1,030,200**	**$10.37**	**$55.38**
Non-Metro Council Providers						
Suburban Providers	$32,900,000	$10,860,000	5,252,700	229,200	$4.28	$144.15
Northstar Commuter	$880,000	$581,000	169,000	3,500	$1.77	$251.43
Ramsey Star	$350,000	$141,000	56,000	1,400	$3.73	$250.00
University of Minn.	$4,690,000	$0	3,551,000	38,400	$1.32	$122.14
Regional Total	**$345,901,000**	**$99,118,000**	**94,736,500**	**3,408,500**	**$2.61**	**$105.97**

Table 4-2. 2008 Regional Transit Operating Statistics, by Mode/Type

System (2008 statistics)	Operating Cost	Fare Revenue	Passengers	Revenue Hours	Subsidy/ Passenger	Cost / Rev. Hour	Fare Recov.	Pass. / Rev. Hr.
Urban Local	$188,250,000	$51,461,000	63,009,000	1,685,500	$2.17	$111.64	27.3%	37.4
Suburban Local	$25,238,000	$3,867,000	4,290,300	281,400	$4.98	$89.69	15.3%	15.2
Express	$58,922,000	$27,333,000	12,713,400	365,800	$2.48	$161.08	46.4%	34.8
Bus Subtotal	**$272,370,000**	**$82,661,000**	**80,012,700**	**2,333,000**	**$2.37**	**$116.75**	**30.4%**	**34.3**
Light Rail	$23,700,000	$8,990,000	10,222,000	134,800	$1.44	$175.82	37.9%	75.8
Dial-a-Ride	$45,701,000	$5,643,000	1,971,000	856,000	$20.29	$53.39	12.4%	2.3
Other	$4,130,000	$1,824,000	2,530,800	84,800	-	-	-	-
Regional Total	**$345,901,000**	**$99,118,000**	**94,736,500**	**3,408,600**	**$2.60**	**$101.48**	**28.7%**	**27.8**

Ridership

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[1] Metro Transit also carries certain regional costs such as the cost of selling fare media, distribution of schedules and other regionwide costs.

Ridership in the region increased 20% between 1996 and 2001 due to increased funding, service redesign, customer service education and a strong economy, but there was a significant decline in ridership in 2004, when a Metro Transit driver strike occurred. The addition of light rail in mid-2004 and changes in the economy (growth and higher gas prices) have led to significant ridership increases since then, despite minimal funding increases and some service reductions. As of 2008, ridership continues to climb, reaching just under 95 million riders.

Transit Ridership by Program Type
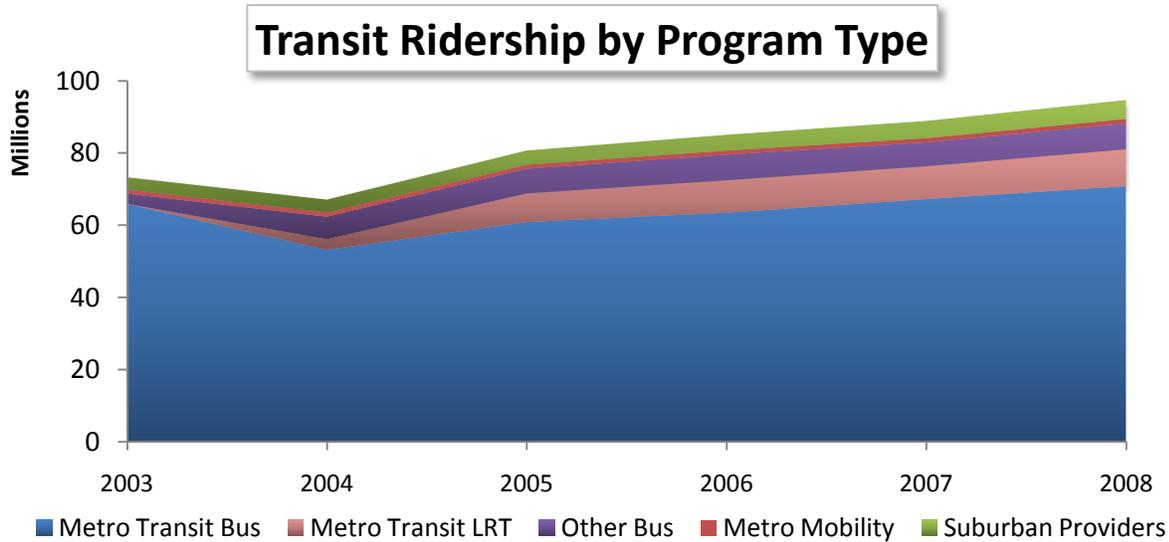
Table 4-3. Regional Transit Ridership, 2003-2008

|	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Metro Transit Bus[2]	65,956,000	53,224,000	60,933,000	63,517,000	67,270,000	70,852,000
Metro Transit Rail	-	2,940,000	7,900,000	8,960,000	9,100,000	10,222,000
Suburban Transit Providers	3,430,000	3,574,000	3,953,000	4,377,000	4,786,000	5,252,700
MTS Contracted Regular Route	1,915,000	1,727,000	2,056,000	2,439,000	2,294,000	2,540,000
MTS Dial-a-Ride	670,000	666,000	664,000	672,000	692,000	663,000
Metro Mobility / ADA	1,118,000	1,154,000	1,105,000	1,111,000	1,163,000	1,221,000
Vanpool	102,900	130,700	149,900	157,500	176,300	209,800
Subtotal	**73,191,900**	**63,415,700**	**76,760,900**	**81,233,500**	**85,481,300**	**90,960,500**
NCDA	144,300	174,200	180,200	181,900	188,000	225,000
University of Minnesota	-	3,553,000	3,801,000	3,688,000	3,273,000	3,551,000
Regional Total	**73,336,200**	**67,142,900**	**80,742,100**	**85,103,400**	**88,942,300**	**94,736,500**

Ridership, by Program

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[2] Metro Transit provides service under contract to some Suburban Transit Providers. These statistics are reported ONLY under Suburban Transit Provider statistics in this section.

Metro Transit Bus

From 2002 to 2005, Metro Transit Bus had seen a 10.4% decrease in ridership. This was due to a combination of factors: decreased funding, fare increases, service reductions, a drivers' strike in 2004, the economic downturn, and rider transitions to light rail.

However, from 2005 to 2008, ridership has increased by 16.3% as the economy recovered and gas prices increased. The opening of light rail also provided bus ridership with an additional transit link. In 2008, bus ridership topped 70 million for the first time since 2001.

Metro Transit Bus Ridership

Metro Transit Rail
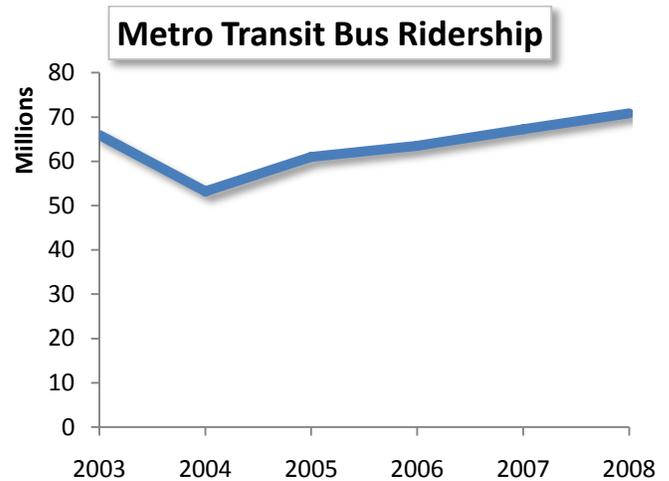
Metro Transit Rail Ridership
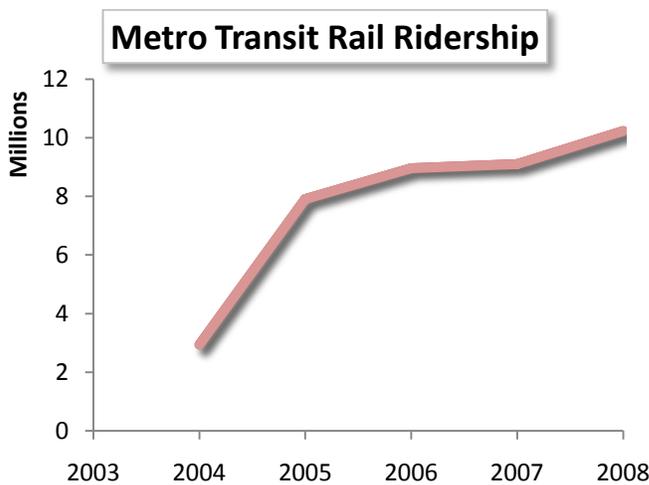
The Hiawatha light rail partially opened on June 26, 2004, and was fully operational by December 4, 2004. During its first full year of operation, the line carried 7.90 million trips. Since then, the Hiawatha light rail ridership has increased 22.7% to reach an annual ridership of over 10 million in 2008.

The Hiawatha light rail carried approximately one of every eight passengers on Metro Transit's system in 2008 and carried nearly twice as many riders as the next highest route in the regional transit system.

Contracted Regular Routes (RR)

Contracted routes are modified on an ongoing basis to provide the most efficient and demand-appropriate services. Service efficiency has increased significantly in recent years and ridership has been a strong indication. Since 2003, contracted routes have experienced a 33% increase in ridership and growth was 11% in the last year.

MTS Contracted RR Ridership

Dial-a-Ride Programs
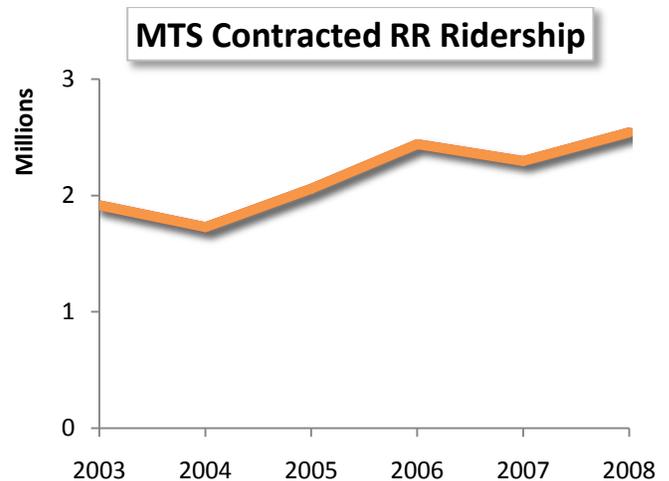
MTS Dial-a-Ride Ridership
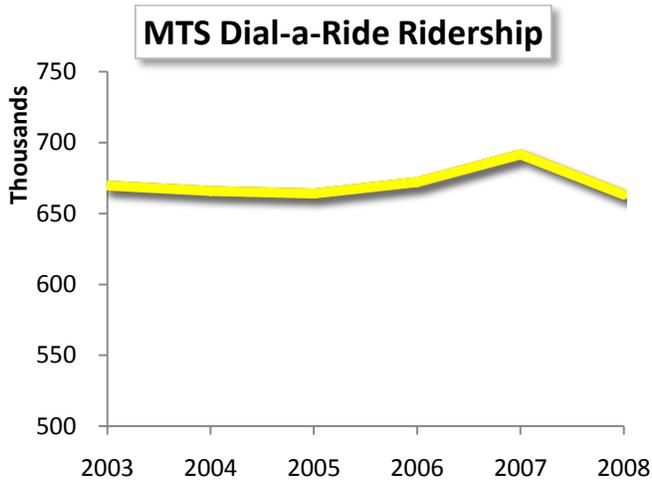
Ridership on dial-a-ride services is controlled in large part by the number of service hours delivered. MTS dial-a-ride programs include a variety of services ranging from county-based rural programs providing both ADA and general public rides to community-based dial-a-ride programs administered by local communities but funded, in part, by the Metropolitan Council. Some dial-a-ride programs are also privately contracted by MTS and in 2010, all dial-a-ride programs will transition to county-wide programs to more efficiently utilize dial-a-ride funding by eliminating duplication with regular routes.
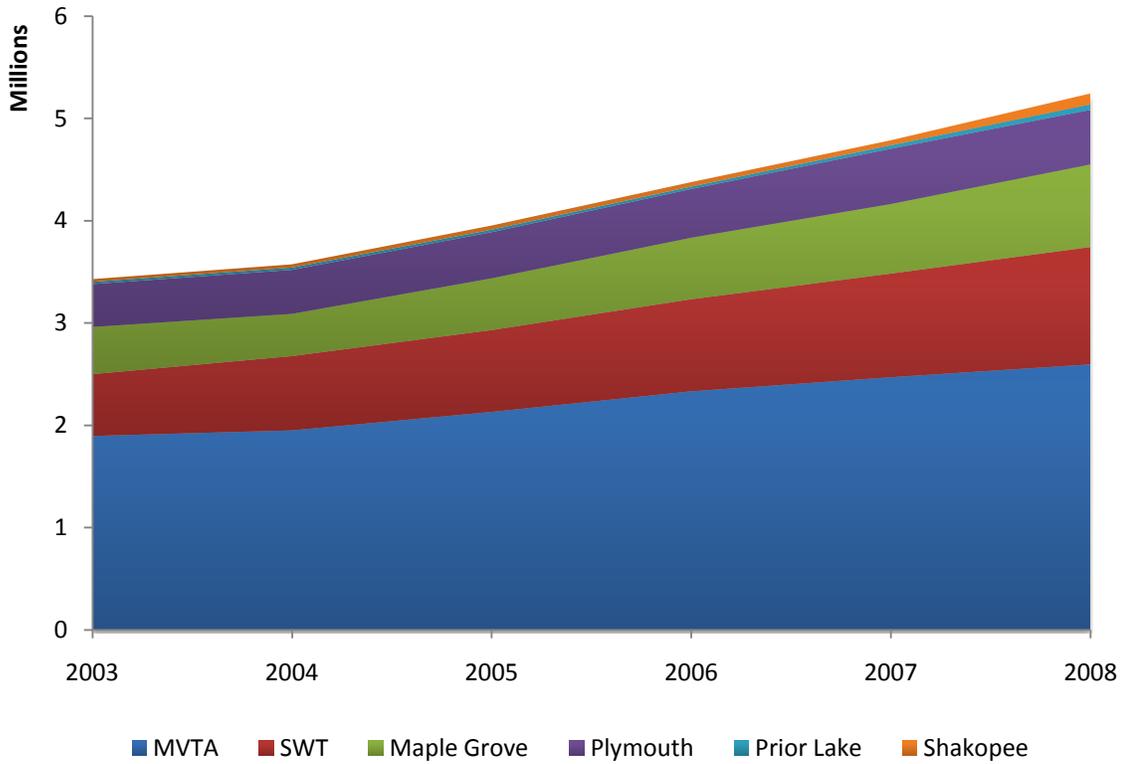
Metro Mobility

Metro Mobility (the region's mandated ADA program) ridership has fluctuated between 1.13 and 1.22 million trips between 2003 and 2008. The modest ridership decrease in 2005 and 2006 was due to implementation of a more thorough ADA certification process. Since then, ridership has been increasing steadily. The denial rate for rides was under 0.5% for 2006. Under federal requirements, the program must seek to have a 0% denial rate. Recent clarification by the FTA regarding ADA regulations prohibits the Council from denying any ADA trip requests.

Metro Mobility Ridership
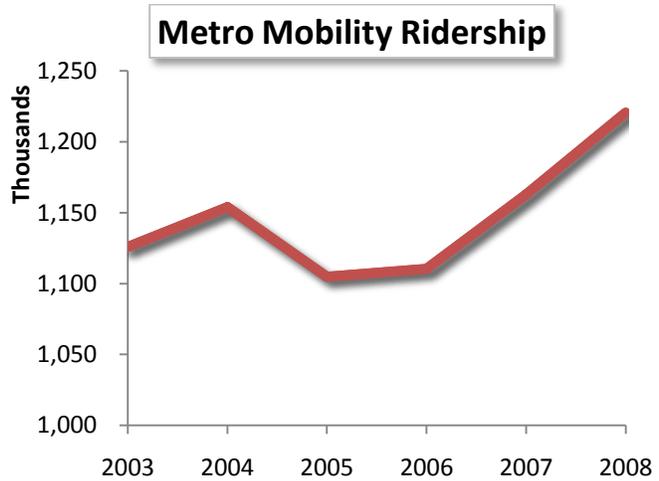
Suburban Transit Providers

Suburban Transit Provider communities have been serving the fast-growing suburban commuter markets in areas that have become increasingly congested. In addition, significant investments have been made in transit amenities such as park-and-rides, bus-only shoulders, and ramp-meter bypasses. Some of the largest regional transit stations built in recent years are in these communities. This has resulted in a ridership increase of 54% between 2003 and 2008 (doubled since 1998). In just the last three years, these communities have seen their ridership grow by 32%, helped significantly by the opening of several large transit centers. Each suburban provider has seen its ridership increase by at least 27% since 2003. Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) has experienced the largest growth with nearly 700,000 more riders in 2008 than 2003. SouthWest Transit (SWT) has grown by more than 543,000, or 90%, in the same period. Shakopee has seen the largest percentage growth (298%) in the last six years.
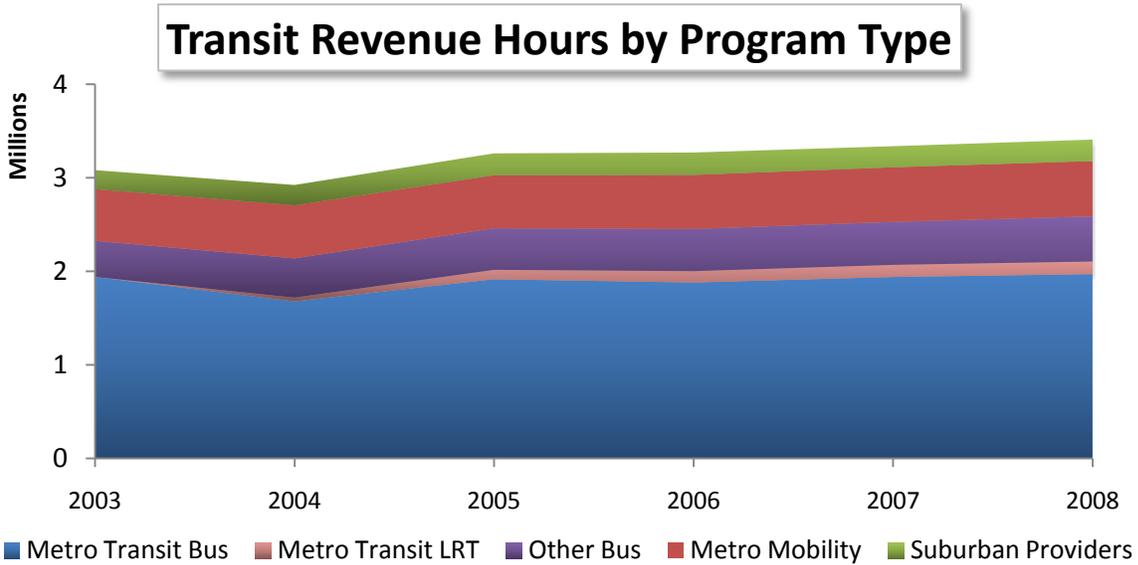
Suburban Transit Provider Ridership

Legend: MVTA, SWT, Maple Grove, Plymouth, Prior Lake, Shakopee

Revenue Hours and Revenue Miles

Transit Revenue Hours by Program Type

Legend: Metro Transit Bus, Metro Transit LRT, Other Bus, Metro Mobility, Suburban Providers

Table 4-4. Regional Transit Revenue Hours, 2003-2008

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Metro Transit Bus[3]	1,941,000	1,680,000	1,916,000	1,881,000	1,940,000	1,971,000
Metro Transit Rail	-	39,500	100,900	121,300	130,000	134,800
Suburban Transit Providers	203,300	217,600	233,500	239,800	225,400	229,200
MTS Contracted Regular Route	162,900	153,500	163,200	161,800	156,500	174,500
MTS Dial-a-Ride	201,900	205,700	216,900	224,600	234,600	234,400
Metro Mobility / ADA	552,200	566,600	567,200	577,600	583,600	591,500
Vanpool	16,200	19,500	22,800	23,800	27,300	29,800
Subtotal	**3,077,500**	**2,882,400**	**3,220,500**	**3,229,900**	**3,297,400**	**3,365,200**
NCDA	4,800	4,800	3,600	3,500	4,700	4,900
University of Minnesota	-	36,300	37,300	37,000	35,800	38,400
Regional Total	**3,082,300**	**2,923,500**	**3,261,400**	**3,270,400**	**3,337,900**	**3,408,500**

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[3] Metro Transit provides service under contract to some Suburban Transit Providers. These statistics are reported ONLY under Suburban Transit Provider statistics in this section.
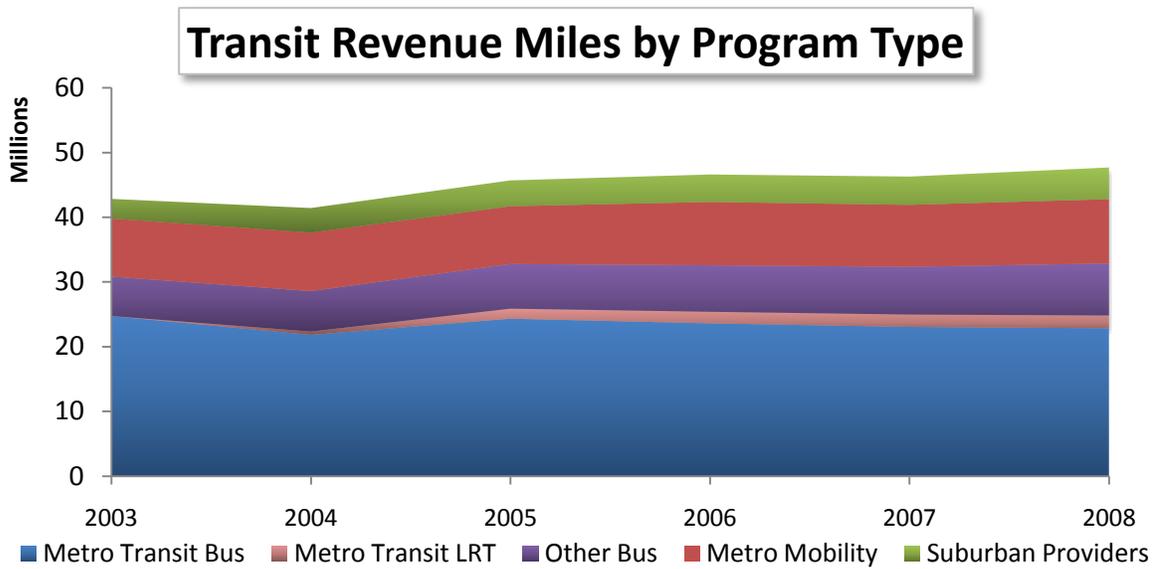
Transit Revenue Miles by Program Type

**Table 4-5. Regional Transit Revenue Miles, 2003-2008**

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Metro Transit Bus[4]	24,750,000	21,840,000	24,340,000	23,620,000	23,070,000	22,860,000
Metro Transit Rail	-	510,000	1,547,000	1,785,000	1,904,000	1,970,000
Suburban Transit Providers	3,027,000	3,801,000	3,997,000	4,242,000	4,375,000	4,891,000
MTS Contracted Regular Route	2,379,000	2,156,000	2,243,000	2,337,000	2,252,000	2,636,000
MTS Dial-a-Ride	2,893,000	2,679,000	3,090,000	3,240,000	3,315,000	3,444,000
Metro Mobility / ADA	8,977,000	9,030,000	8,923,000	9,780,000	9,563,000	9,933,000
Vanpool	692,000	831,000	953,000	1,004,000	1,125,000	1,248,000
Subtotal	**42,718,000**	**40,847,000**	**45,093,000**	**46,008,000**	**45,604,000**	**46,982,000**
NCDA	125,000	126,000	138,000	136,000	184,000	190,000
University of Minnesota	-	455,000	465,000	461,000	498,000	518,000
Regional Total	**42,843,000**	**41,428,000**	**45,696,000**	**46,605,000**	**46,286,00**	**47,690,000**

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[4] Metro Transit provides service under contract to some Suburban Transit Providers. These statistics are reported ONLY under Suburban Transit Provider statistics in this section.

## Revenue Hours and Revenue Miles, by Program

Metro Transit Bus

Over the last six years, Metro Transit bus has seen the number of revenue hours and miles reduced due to several factors including service reductions, a drivers' strike in 2004, economic downturn, and the opening of light rail. The bus drivers' strike and the economic downturn both reduced revenue hours during the first half of the decade. In 2008, revenue hours returned to 2002 level. With the opening of the Hiawatha light rail, there was a reduction in certain parallel routes, which has kept bus revenue hours from increasing.

Metro Transit Bus Hours and Miles
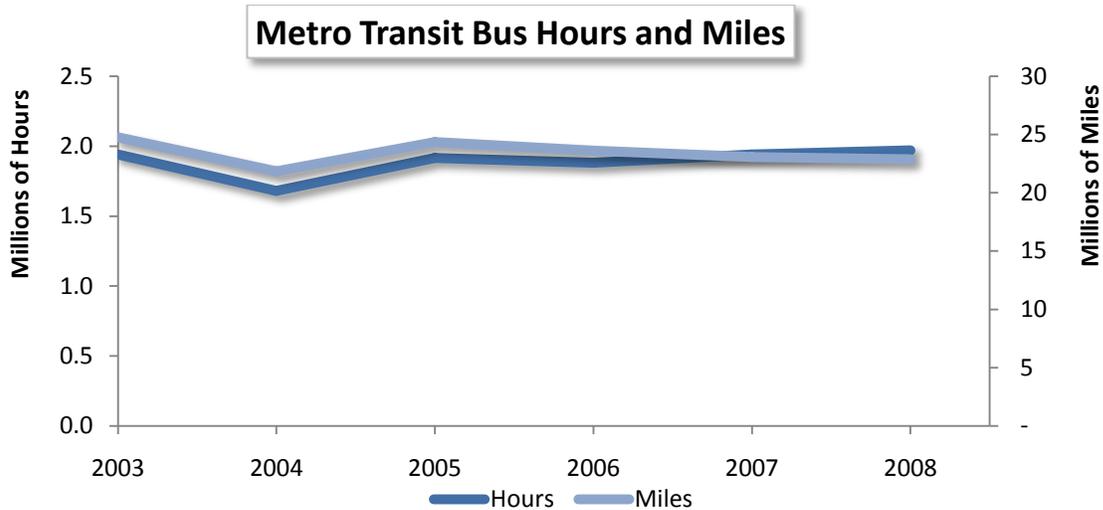
Metro Transit Rail

Since the Hiawatha light rail's first full year in operation, the line has been increasing the amount of revenue hours and miles it operates. As the line has become more popular, there has been a need to increase service frequency, which has lead to an increase in revenue hours and miles. From its first full year of operation in 2005, the line saw an increase in revenue hours by 33%. The trend of revenue miles has largely mirrored the trend of revenue hours. Revenue miles have increased by 27.9%, reaching 1.9 million by 2008.

**Metro Transit Rail Hours and Miles**
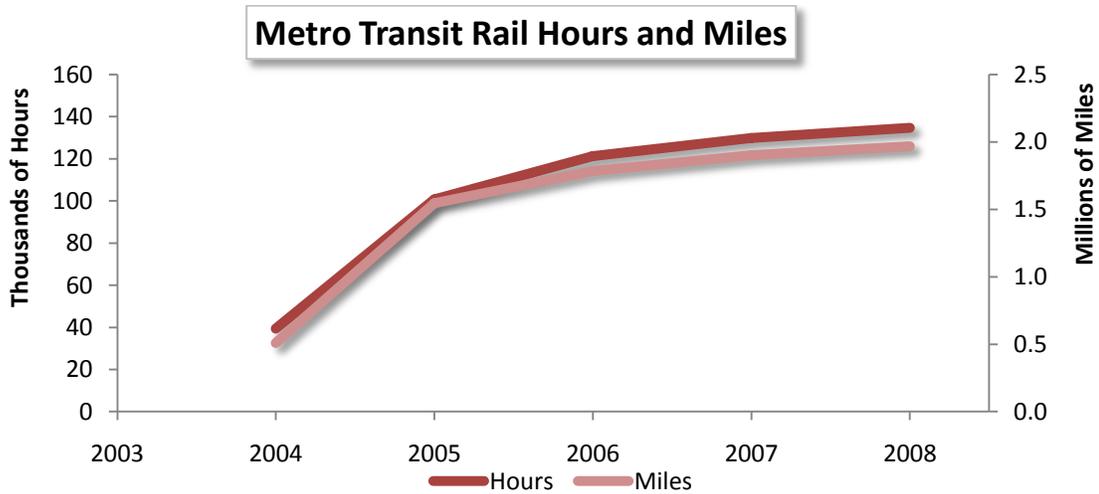
Contracted Routes

Contracted Routes saw a major increase in revenue hours and miles during 2008. Contracted Routes revenue hours and miles fluctuate due to the changes in routes and frequencies based on service demand. Many existing contracted service routes expanded the service and the frequency offered in 2008. The Forest Lake/Columbus express service saw its first full year of service. In addition, Bloomington/Edina lines expanded its service and frequency by nearly 12,000 revenue hours and 167,000 revenue miles and some reverse commute service was added throughout the region.

**MTS Contracted RR Hours and Miles**
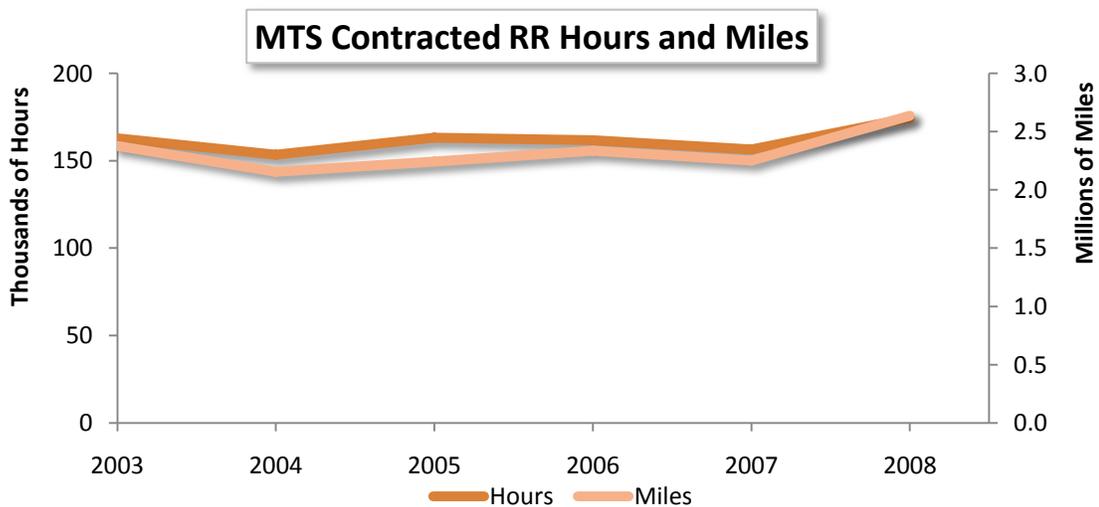
Community-Based Programs

Historically, community-based programs, which offer dial-a-ride services, have seen revenue hours and miles fluctuate as demand for their services fluctuate. Revenue hours have remained relatively level while revenue miles dropped in 2004 partially due to the bus drivers' strike. There have been no major changes in the providers of dial-a-rides services since the PRISM, Edina, and Minnetonka programs were introduced at the beginning of the decade.

MTS Dial-a-Ride Hours and Miles
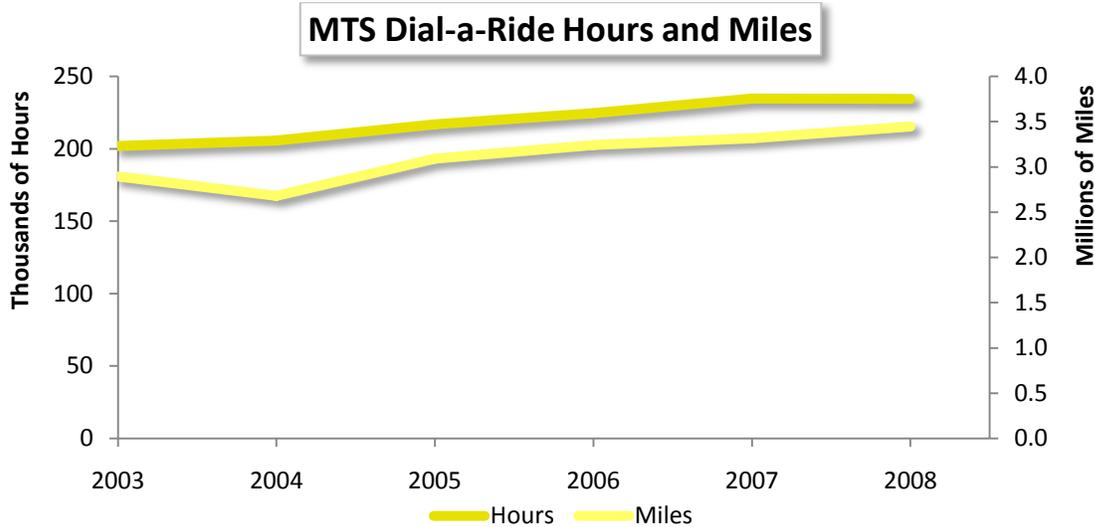
Metro Mobility

Metro Mobility has seen increases in both revenue hours and miles. Metro Mobility has seen an increase in its annual revenue hours by nearly 10% over the past six years. Revenue miles have also followed a similar trend increasing by over 16% over the same period. This is caused in part by increased demand, longer trips, and trying to reduce trip denials for the Metro Mobility service to zero over the past six years.

Metro Mobility Hours and Miles
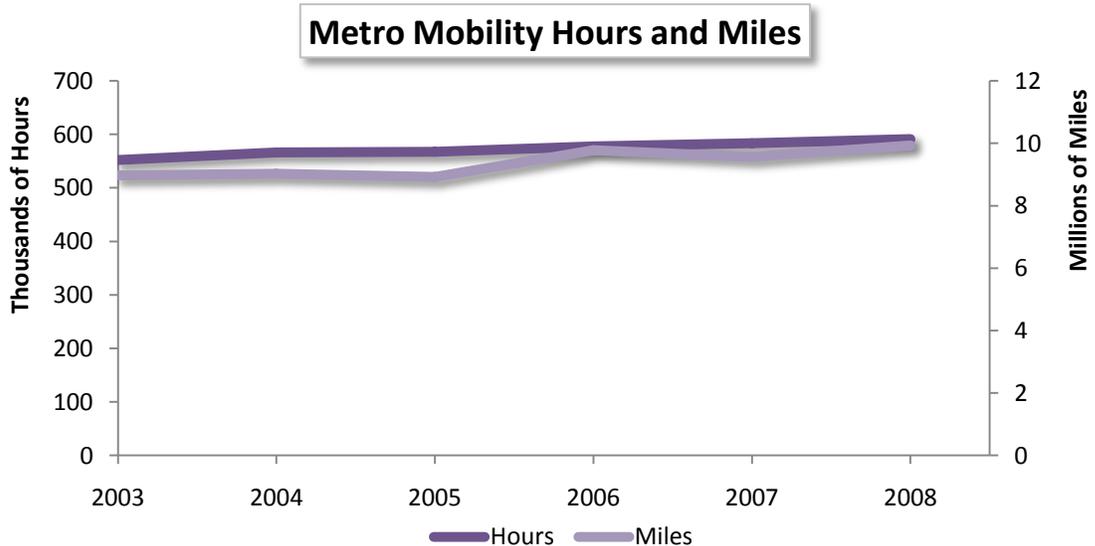
Suburban Transit Providers

As the southern and western suburbs have been growing, Suburban Transit Providers have been increasing services offered. Over the past six years, the amount of revenue hours has increased by over 14%. All of the Suburban Transit Providers have seen their revenue hours increase except Plymouth. SouthWest Transit has experienced the greatest increase in revenue hours having increased by over 60% in the past seven years. Minnesota Valley Transit Authority has also seen an increase in revenue hours, although not as large as SouthWest's increase. MVTA has increased by 17% over the past seven years. Suburban Transit Providers have seen large increases in revenue miles as well. Revenue miles have increased by nearly 62% since 2003. In addition, most of the individual providers have also seen large increases. Maple Grove's revenue miles have increased the most, by 36%. Prior Lake, MVTA, and SouthWest Transit have all seen increases of at least 20%.

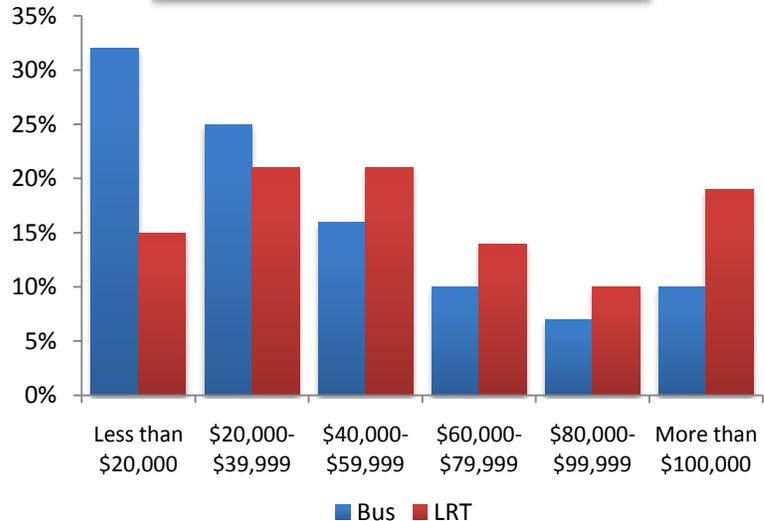**Suburban Transit Provider Hours and Miles**
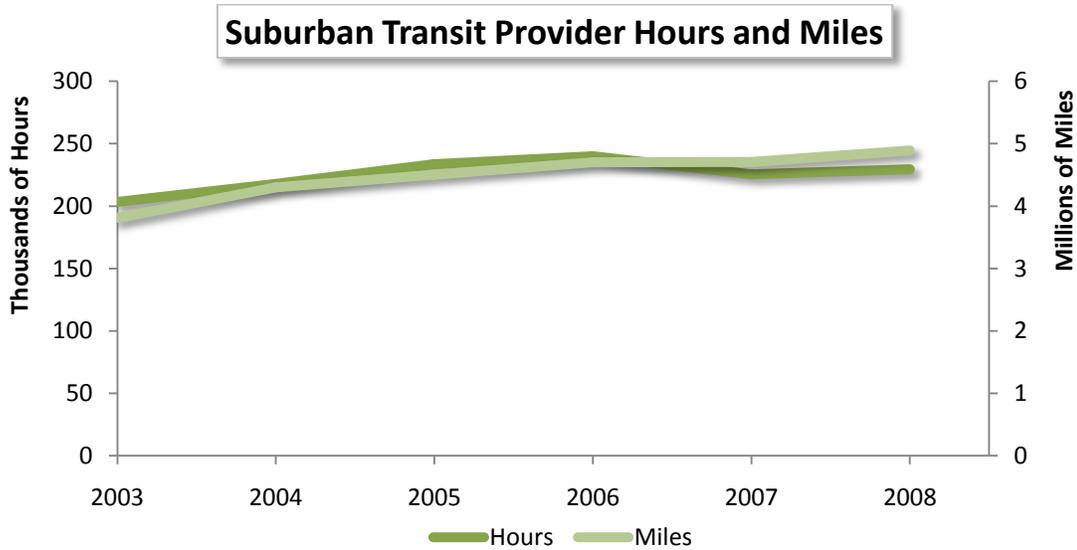
Metro Transit Rider Information

The Metropolitan Council surveys regular-route transit customers biennially to gain an understanding of who transit users are and why they use transit. In fall 2008, a survey was distributed to a statistically significant sample of riders of regular-route transit operated by Metro Transit. The data below does not include either Suburban Transit Providers or contracted regular routes. Beginning in 2005, Metro Transit added rail to its survey and compiled numbers for rail and bus separately.

Riders by Family Income

(Chart showing Bus and LRT percentages by family income bracket: Less than $20,000, $20,000-$39,999, $40,000-$59,999, $60,000-$79,999, $80,000-$99,999, More than $100,000)
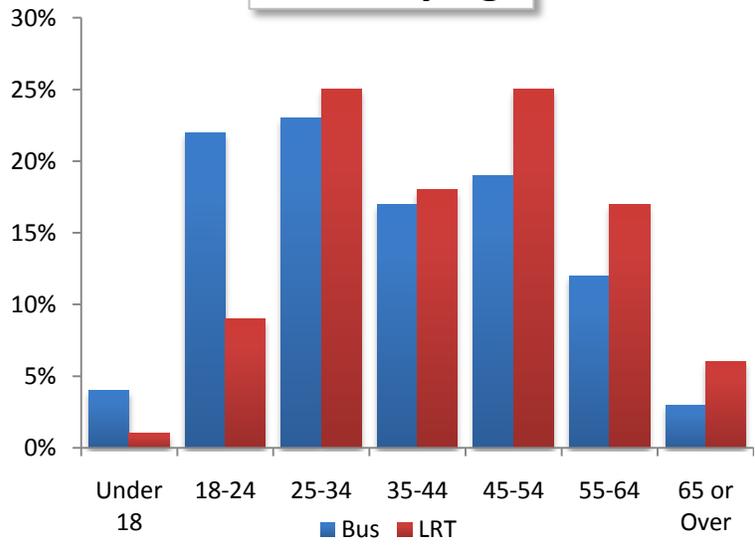
Among the findings:

- Transit plays a major role in the economy by bringing people to and from work. The majority of Metro Transit bus riders (62%) and rail riders (74%) are going to or from work. The next highest trip purpose on bus routes (14%) is going to school.

- Most people using transit are frequent riders. 71% of Metro Transit bus riders identified using the bus five or more days a week, while 60% of train users ride five or more days a week.

- 97% of bus riders were riding on a weekday, versus 96% of train riders.

- 74% of bus riders and 71% of train riders reported they usually rode during rush hour.

- More transit riders are female than male.

- Racial and ethnic backgrounds vary between bus and rail. Eighty four percent of rail riders identify themselves as Caucasian, versus 62% of bus riders. Six percent of train riders identify themselves as African-American, versus 23% of bus riders.

Riders by Age

(Chart showing Bus and LRT percentages by age group: Under 18, 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65 or Over)

- If transit were not available, 50% of riders would have driven alone, while 20% of bus riders would not have been able to make the trip.

- 20% of rail riders and 27% of bus riders pay with cash. The balance of riders use stored value cards, passes or other fare mediums.

- The primary reason bus riders use transit is because they do not own a car (41%). The primary reasons train riders use transit is to benefit from the convenience (31%) and save money on parking (30%).

Primary Reasons for Using Transit
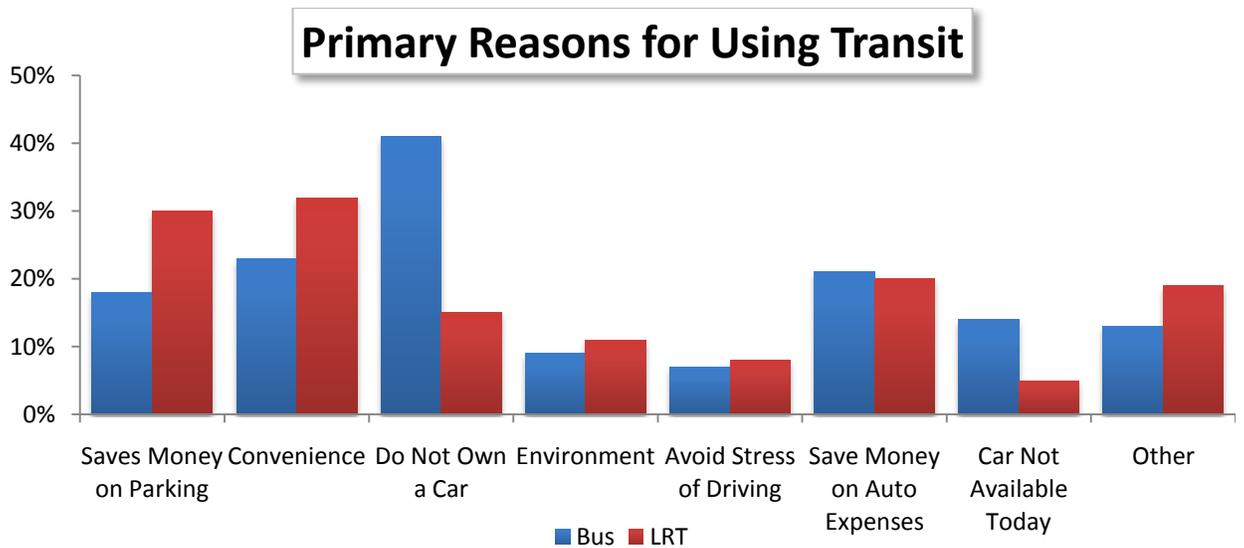
- Customer satisfaction is high. In 2006, 95% of light rail riders and 90% of bus riders said that they were satisfied overall with Metro Transit service. The results of 2008, 2006 and 2005 indicate a trend towards higher customer satisfaction when compared to the results from 2001 and 2003.

Customer Satisfaction

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2008 Rail	38%	57%	3%	2%
2008 Bus	28%	62%	7%	2%
2006 Rail	43%	53%	4%	1%
2006 Bus	29%	65%	6%	1%
2005 Rail	35%	58%	6%	1%
2005 Bus	27%	63%	7%	3%
2003	25%	59%	12%	4%
2001	24%	65%	9%	2%
2000	26%	70%	3%	1%