

Hiawatha Light-Rail Transit

Hiawatha is state's first light-rail line

A smooth trip to work or school. A quick hop to lunch. A family adventure starting with shopping and dinner at the Mall of America, topped by a Twins game at Target Field.

Minnesota's first light-rail-transit (LRT) line, the Hiawatha line, connects residents and visitors to several major Twin Cities metro area destinations: Target Field, downtown Minneapolis, the Metrodome, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and the Mall of America in Bloomington. The 12-mile line also serves 11 Minneapolis neighborhoods and Minnehaha Falls Regional Park.

Hiawatha LRT, which opened for service in 2004, is part of a growing network of transitways in the Twin Cities region that improve regional mobility and enhance economic development. Northstar Commuter Rail opened in 2009, and Central Corridor LRT is scheduled to begin service in 2014. By 2020, additional light rail and/or bus-rapid-transit lines are expected to open for service.

People love the train

Since Hiawatha LRT opened in June 2004, customers have boarded the train more than 65 million times. In 2010, customers boarded Hiawatha 10.5 million times, the highest annual ridership on the line to date. This represents more than 13% of Metro Transit's total ridership – and exceeds by nearly 30% the preconstruction ridership projections for Hiawatha LRT for the year 2020.

Hiawatha LRT played a big role in the success of the Minnesota Twins' 2010 opening season at Target Field. About one in five Twins fans arrived at Target Field via transit. Although most used LRT, many others chose commuter rail and bus service, greatly reducing congestion in downtown Minneapolis during these popular events.

Hiawatha LRT is served by three major park-and-ride lots with a total of 2,800 spaces.

Frequent service improves mobility

Throughout the day, trains run about every 10 minutes. Trains run about every 15 minutes in the evening and less frequently later at night. The travel time from Target Field to the Mall of America is about 40 minutes.

Metro Transit service provides timed transfers between bus routes and light-rail stations with fares identical to bus service. Self-service machines allow riders to purchase their tickets at the stations. Many customers pay their fare on the platform by simply touching their Go-To "smart card" to a reader on the platform.

Transit police conduct fare compliance checks. Officers may fine violators who ride without a ticket or pass; the fine is \$180.

Trains and stations are fully accessible

Each LRT car holds 66 seated passengers plus standing room for about 120; trains typically consist of two or three cars, depending on time of day or if the Twins or Vikings are playing a home game. Each car has four luggage racks and four bicycle hangers.



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Ridership in 2010 reached 10.5 million, the highest annual ridership to date.

About one in five Twins fans arrive at Target Field via Metro Transit rail and bus service, most of those on Hiawatha LRT.

All cars and stations are fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, with level boarding at each train door. All 19 stations feature ramps and tactile edges, and stations on bridges have elevators. Each of the stations was designed to reflect the unique character of its location.

Light-rail spurs local development, helps regional economy

A strong and growing regional economy depends on a variety of forms of transportation to keep goods and people moving freely throughout the region. Transit solutions—like light rail, commuter rail and exclusive busways—help to slow the growth of congestion. A 2010 Metro Transit customer survey found that 80% of Hiawatha LRT riders had an automobile available to them that they could have used for their trip. About eight in 10 customers ride Hiawatha for work or school trips.

Fixed transitways like light rail, commuter rail and bus-rapid transit support development and redevelopment of attractive, convenient neighborhoods with a diversity of complementary land uses. Before construction, planners had predicted the areas surrounding Hiawatha LRT would draw 7,000 new housing units by 2020. By December 2010, 8,100 new housing units were open or under construction along the line, with another 7,700 proposed by developers.

Mixed-use and commercial/office development is also spurred by transitway investments. Recent examples in the Hiawatha Corridor include the American Academy of Neurology, Cowles Center for Dance and the Performing Arts, and the East Phillips Park Cultural and Community Center.

Federal funds paid largest share

The total cost to design and construct the Hiawatha Line was \$715.3 million, with the largest share of funds (\$424 million) coming from federal appropriations and grants. The Minnesota Legislature contributed \$100 million; the Metropolitan Airports Commission, \$87 million; Hennepin County, \$84.2 million; and the Minnesota Department of Transportation, \$20.1 million.

For more information

Visit [Metro Transit's Hiawatha Light Rail](#) information page.

Related fact sheets include:

[Regional Transit Services](#)

[Metro Transit](#)

[Metro Mobility](#)

[Employer and Commuter Outreach](#)

[Transit Link](#)

[Transportation Planning](#)



LRT and other transit options take cars off the region's congested roadways. A 2010 Metro Transit customer survey found that four out of five Hiawatha riders had an automobile available that they could have used to take the trip.