

intransit



MATBUS will reach 2 million riders, new logo better reflects bus system

By LORI VAN BEEK, Moorhead Transit Manager

With ridership on the rise, and increased use of technology planned for the near future, the Moorhead & Fargo MATBUS has updated its logo and tagline to better reflect the advancing system.

Ridership

In 2009, MATBUS had a 15 percent increase in ridership over 2008. Year-to-date in 2010, ridership is up 17 percent. This places the MATBUS on track to reach 2 million riders this year.

A large portion of this ridership increase is attributed to college students, with the U-Pass program encompassing two universities, a private college and a community college.

Technology

Looking to the future, MATBUS has plans for technology innovations, including automatic vehicle location (AVL) technology and kiosks, Rider Alerts and public announcement systems. MATBUS will be debuting a new website within the next few months and be a participating agency in Google Transit within a year.

MATBUS was the first transit agency in the region to feature pages on Facebook and Twitter and offer SMS/Text Alerts; MATBUS will soon launch sites on Flickr and YouTube.

Branding

The goal for new logo and tagline was to reflect an organization that is modern and looking forward to the future.

Keeping MAT (Metro Area Transit) in the new logo was important, as the acronym has more than 30 years of recognition. To convey that MATBUS is a part of the nation's overall transit network, the logo features a prominent "M" that is consistent with logos used by other transit systems across the country. To further its commitment to be environmentally-friendly and passenger-focused, MATBUS' new tagline is "Go Green – Ride with Us!"

The new logo will be placed on the front of all of the buses and on the top sides of all the buses (along with the new tagline) using a reflective decal.

Pictured with a new New Flyer bus showcasing the new MATBUS logo is (from left to right): Julie Bommelman, Fargo Transit Administration; Lori Van Beek, Moorhead Transit Manager; Diane Wray-Williams, Moorhead Council Member; Shawn Anderson, Executive Dean of Students at M | State; Mike Williams, Fargo City Commissioner; Tim Vangerud, Sanford Health's Safety & Security Director; Prakash Mathew, Vice President for Student Affairs at NDSU; Shawn Affolter, Student Government Vice President at NDSU; Gregg Schildberger, Fargo Transit Asst. Planner. The bus is one of several purchased with 100 percent American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds.



NEW LOGO

Designed by
MATBUS
administrative staff



OLD LOGO

go green  ride with us!

NEW TAGLINE

From the President



Tony Kellen, President
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President's Column

Another annual Minnesota Public Transit Conference has come and gone, and this year's event was a huge success judging by the feedback we received from participants. "Thank You" to everyone who participated and contributed to making this year's event effective and informative.

Our theme this year was timely: "Public Transit: A vote for the future." As this column goes to press, we don't know the outcome of the November 2nd election, but we definitely know that the outcome will have a big impact on the future of transit service in Minnesota. Whether it's a local city or county race, governor's seat or a Congressional contest, the winners will have a key role in deciding how and at what level transit funding is provided and whether or not important policies will be enacted such as new transit governance policies.

You can have an impact on the future by contacting the newly elected officials.

Every elected official — whether an incumbent or a first-timer — needs to understand the role that transit service plays in your community and the challenges we face going forward. It only takes a few minutes to send an e-mail message with some basic information about your transit service and a request for elected officials to support transit service. Everyone can play a part in providing the education that all elected representatives need to do their jobs. Remember that it's easy to sit down over a cup of coffee in the district or invite newly elected officials to tour the local transit system.

The 2011 Legislative Session begins on January 4th. Between election day and the start of the session, MPTA will be busy preparing for the coming session. As we develop our legislative agenda and issue positions, we want to hear from you. Are there policy and funding issues that you believe need addressing during the coming session? You can drop a line to Sherry Munyon (smunyon@capitolaccess.us) or me (tkellen@stcloudmtc.com) and let us know if you have any concerns.

Remember — all indications are that the state will be facing an unprecedented deficit in the general fund for the coming biennium.

The general fund appropriation for transit will once again be at risk. We will all have to gear up to make our voices heard if we want to maintain the transit service we are providing today. It's not too early to start making the case by contacting your elected officials. When they hear from people in the district, it means that much more.

Please send a brief e-mail to your State Representative and State Senator, immediately after the election, and copy Sherry Munyon.

The general fund appropriation to transit will be seriously considered as a means of helping to solve the budget deficit rather than fund transit services in the metropolitan area and in Greater Minnesota. Last year this shift of millions of dollars in transit funding was made by the Finance Committee, not the transportation committee.

Legislative Update

Margaret Donahoe
Advocacy Director
Minnesota Public Transit Association

Legislative Report

President's Proposal

On October 11, President Obama called on lawmakers to back his initiative to modernize the nation's crumbling roads, transit systems, railways and airports, saying the strategy would not only improve the economy in the long run but create good jobs now. On the heels of a report last week showing the jobless rate stuck at 9.6 percent, Obama touted his infrastructure plan as the ideal antidote, noting that unemployment is particularly high in the construction trades.

Per a report released by the Treasury Department and Council of Economic Advisers:

This is the "optimal time" to invest in public works projects, not only because of the high jobless rate but also because of low prices in the construction sector.

"Today, the average American household is forced to spend more on transportation each year than food. Our roads, clogged with traffic, cost us \$80 billion a year in lost productivity and wasted fuel. Our airports, choked with passengers, cost nearly \$10 billion a year in productivity losses from flight delays. And in some cases, our crumbling infrastructure costs American lives. It should not take another collapsing bridge or failing levee to shock us into action," the President said.

"What we need is a smart system of infrastructure equal to the needs of the 21st century. A system that encourages sustainable communities with easier access to our jobs, to our schools, to our homes. A system that decreases travel time and increases mobility. A system that cuts congestion and ups productivity. A system that reduces harmful emissions over time and creates jobs right now."

The proposal would create an infrastructure bank to prioritize projects of national importance and fund it with \$50 billion generated by eliminating certain tax benefits

for oil and gas companies. The \$50 billion is being promoted as part of a new 6-year surface transportation authorization act.

The Treasury Department and Council of Economic Advisers released a report concluding that this is the "optimal time" to invest in public works projects, not only because of the high jobless rate but also because of low prices in the construction sector. And Obama met with a bipartisan group of mayors, governors and transportation officials, all eager to see money flow to neglected projects.

The new report provides a strong economic case for the benefits of infrastructure investments, noting that many studies have found evidence of large private sector productivity gains from public infrastructure investments, in many cases with higher returns than private capital investment. The report also notes that 19 out of 20 Americans are concerned about the country's infrastructure and 84 percent support greater investment to address infrastructure problems.

The lame-duck Congress will consider reauthorizing existing transportation programs for a short time because those otherwise expire after Dec. 31. But a six-year reauthorization has been stalled because supporters on the Congressional transportation committees — including a few Republicans — say a higher gas tax is needed to maintain America's roads, bridges, transit systems and ports. But most colleagues oppose raising the tax.

Transit Appropriations

On September 30, Congress enacted a continuing resolution (CR) to fund the federal government through December 3. The CR was required because Congress failed to enact any of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 appropriations bills prior the start of the 2011 fiscal year on October 1. The CR provides funds for all Department of Transportation (DOT) programs, including transit, passenger rail and security programs, through December 3, at FY 2010 levels.

Legislative update, continued...

Immediately after passage of the CR, Congress adjourned until after the November elections. Both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate are expected to return for a “lame duck” session on November 15 to continue consideration of the unfinished FY 2011 appropriations bills. Congress must also further extend current surface transportation authorizing law, which expires on December 31, during the lame duck session.

Prior to the August district work session, the House of Representatives passed its version of the FY 2011 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies (THUD) appropriations bill with a total Federal Transit Administration (FTA) budget authority of \$11.31 billion, an increase of \$574.89 million over FY 2010 funding levels. Of this total, \$8.96 billion is provided for Formula and Bus programs. However, Congress will be required to enact future authorization legislation to expand the contract authority for FTA programs to fund most of the increased amount.

The Senate bill, which was approved by the full Appropriations Committee, provides \$10.8 billion for FTA programs. MPTA members are urged to contact their members of Congress and ask them to support final passage of THUD legislation during the lame duck session containing the higher House-passed funding levels.

Transit Safety Legislation

Legislation to grant transit safety oversight authority to the federal government has not advanced in Congress. On July 22, 2010, Senate Banking Committee Chairman Chris Dodd, (D-CT) and Ranking Member Richard Shelby (R-AL) introduced the “Public Transportation Safety Act of 2010” (S.3638). This bill was based on an earlier proposal by the Obama Administration, but makes a number of key changes. This Senate legislation would provide authority to the Secretary of the Department of Transportation to develop and enforce safety standards and regulations for all transit operations and equipment. In addition, the legislation would enhance State Safety Oversight Agencies and give them the authority to implement and enforce standards for rail transit systems. The legislation would require all transit systems to develop an annual safety plan and to implement an asset management program.

A draft version of legislation was marked-up by the Senate Banking Committee in late June. However, a “hold” was placed on the bill by Senator James Coburn (R-OK) over objections to its cost and expansion of federal powers. The “hold” on the bill prevented further consideration the Senate floor. At this time, it is not likely the legislation will receive further consideration this year. However there remains strong interest in Congress to regulate transit safety, so it is likely this issue will continue to be debated into the next session.

New Transportation Authorization Act

APTA has adopted the following Funding and Finance Authorization Principles.

- Authorize guaranteed investment levels for the federal public transportation program of at least \$123 billion over 6 years so that by the final year of the next authorization bill finance no less than 50 percent of the total unaddressed costs of bringing existing public transportation capital assets into a state of good repair.
- Maintain and strengthen the federal public transportation program funding guarantees.
- Authorize guaranteed investment levels for the federal public transportation program that support at least a doubling of public transportation ridership over the next 20 years (3.5% annual compounded growth).
- Preserve the current 80 percent federal match shares on all public transportation capital investment (and higher federal match ratios under existing incentive programs) and increase the actual share to the 80 percent level in appropriations.
- Ensure stable and reliable investments in public transportation supported from federal, state and local governments, from public transportation-generated revenues, and from public-private partnerships.
- To streamline the project approval process, speed project delivery and reduce costs, convert the federal public transportation program from a “grant-based” program to a locally-driven federally assisted program where routine activities can receive advanced federal funding approval.

MVTA takes advantage of Dakota Electric Peak Alert Program at Apple Valley Transit Station

By ROBIN SELVIG, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority

The Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) has implemented a money-saving partnership with Dakota Electric Association, designed to reduce utility costs at the Apple Valley Transit Station. As of Oct. 1, 2010, the MVTA will participate in Dakota Electric's Peak-Alert Program.

The benefit of the Peak-Alert Program is that power at the Apple Valley Transit Station site can be automatically switched from the Dakota Electric system to on-site power generation supplied by an in-place 400KW emergency generator. Removing the site from Dakota Electric's grid during periods of peak use allows the electric co-op to better manage generation capacity. In return, MVTA receives a reduction in year-round utility rates estimated by Dakota Electric to be between 30 and 40 percent per month (estimated at \$700 depending on energy usage in any given month).

By joining the program, the MVTA has received a cash rebate from Dakota Electric of more than \$7,000 which covers the cost of equipment and labor required to make the connections between the on-site generator and Dakota Electric's automated control systems.

"This is definitely a 'win-win' situation for MVTA and Dakota Electric," said MVTA Facilities Manager Tom Bright. "Dakota Electric benefits because of reduced demand on their system at critical times; MVTA benefits through lower monthly utility costs and the installation rebate," he said.

MVTA's participation in the Peak-Alert Program resulted from working with Dakota Electric on an informal "energy audit" at the Apple Valley Transit Station. The audit included a review of the past year's bills, on-site observations of mechanical and electrical equipment/ other sources of energy consumption, inspection of delivery and control equipment, and examination of data on energy costs and trends.

The MVTA also has a program similar to Peak-Alert in place with Xcel Energy at its Burnsville Bus Garage.

Dakota Electric has also completed an energy use survey at the Burnsville Transit Station (BTS). It was determined that the two largest drivers of electrical costs at BTA were



Joe Miller (left) of Dakota Electric presents a rebate check to Beverley Miller, MVTA executive director and Tom Bright, MVTA facilities manager (right). Bright coordinated MVTA's installation of the necessary equipment to participate in the Peak Alert program.

security/parking deck lighting and mechanical systems (HVAC). "Our goal in looking at these programs is to improve efficiency and reduce energy costs," said MVTA Executive Director Beverley Miller. "We will continue to evaluate the safety, security and comfort of riders and others housed in these facilities," she said.

In the coming months, the MVTA will implement cost-reduction measures at BTS by updating lighting controls for the building/parking deck, adding light-reflecting paint to interior surfaces of the parking deck (thus allowing reduced use of lighting during daylight hours), and upgrading HVAC system controls to provide improvements in scheduling and setback capabilities. Similar updates to lighting controls and the addition of light-reflecting paint to interior surfaces of the Eagan Transit Station Parking Deck, are also planned.

"The MVTA will monitor the results of these efforts," Bright said, "and will continue to work with Dakota Electric and others to ensure that we are reducing or containing energy-related costs."



Pictured, from left, are: Wally Lyslo of Burnsville, MVTA Secretary; Jane Victory, Savage Councilmember and MVTA Treasurer; Sharon LaComb, Apple Valley Councilmember and MVTA Board member; Gary Hansen, Eagan Councilmember and MVTA Vice Chair; Rep. Will Morgan; Beverley Miller, MVTA Executive Director; Jon Ulrich, Scott County Commissioner and MVTA Board member; James Clark of Messerli & Kramer on behalf of the Suburban Transit Association (STA).

MVTA Congratulates Rep. Will Morgan for Transit Efforts during 2010 Session

By ROBIN SELVIG, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority

The Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) Board of Directors congratulates the 2010 recipients of the Suburban Transit Association (STA) Legislator Recognition Award. Rep. Will Morgan was honored at the September 22 MVTA Board meeting. Sen. Julianne Ortman will be honored at the September 23 meeting of the SouthWest Transit Commission.

“Rep. Morgan provided great leadership and support as the chief author of House File 3846 during the 2010 legislative session,” said James Clark of Messerli

& Kramer on behalf of STA. He continued, “This is the legislation that would have increased the suburban providers’ share of the MVST allocation from 3.74 percent to 6.25 percent. And, while the bill did not pass, the members of the Suburban Transit Association will continue to work with Rep. Morgan on passing this much needed legislation

during the 2011 legislative session.” Clark added, “Sen. Ortman provided similarly stellar leadership on the Senate side.”

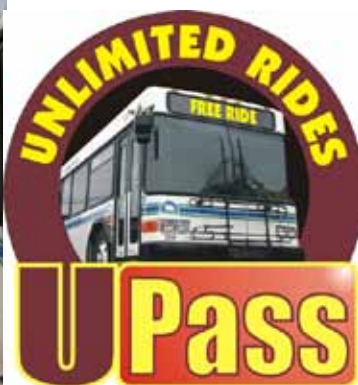
Rep. Morgan addressed the MVTA Board, stating, “I’m honored to have received this award. I, along with members of the STA, worked together during the legislative session on this legislation, as well as other issues, to help our providers remain a viable transportation option in the metropolitan area.”

The Suburban Transit Association (STA) was founded in 1995 to bring together suburban communities whose purpose was to provide flexible transit services. The STA is an innovative, public-private transit partnership that embraces and implements new technologies to respond to changing passenger needs. Recent ridership on STA member buses has increased by as much as 40 percent. In addition, the STA has had passenger satisfaction rates as high as 98 percent and many of their members have been honored with the Minnesota Transit System of the Year award.

“The Suburban Transit Association helps provide transportation services to residents in 12 communities in the metro area,” Rep. Morgan said. “The transit service helps get people to work, to medical appointments, to grocery stores, shopping malls and many other places in our local communities. Given that I’m from Burnsville, I really appreciate the work of the MVTA.”



Rep. Will Morgan thanks STA and the MVTA Board for the Legislator Recognition Award at the MVTA Board meeting on September 22.



DTA's U-Pass ridership on record-setting pace

By TOM ELWELL, Duluth Transit Authority

For the third consecutive year, the Duluth Transit Authority's U-Pass ridership in the Twin Ports is on pace to surpass .5 million riders.

Total U-Pass ridership for September was 92,159 – including 61,240 rides at University of Minnesota, Duluth (UMD), with the remainder generated at the College of St. Scholastica, Lake Superior College and University of Wisconsin, Superior. U-Pass ridership at UMD this September surpassed last year's total and was the second highest September ridership total at UMD since the U-PASS ridership began in 2000. The highest monthly ridership total at UMD occurred in October of 2008 when 75,825 rides were generated.

Prior to the implementation of the U-Pass program at UMD in 2000, monthly ridership there hovered around 4,000. Today, the DTA carries more than that every five days at UMD.

The DTA expects UMD to surpass the 4 million U-Pass rider mark in May of 2011.

DTA's U-Pass Program allows students, faculty and staff at participating colleges unlimited rides on the DTA without charge with their school photo I.D. Participating colleges are under contract with the DTA to provide the "free service."

In addition, UMD enrollment has increased every year since 2000, when the U-Pass program began. In the fall of 2000, UMD



enrollment was 9,087. This semester, enrollment at UMD totaled 11,825. That's a 30 percent increase in enrollment since 2000. This would not have been possible without the transporting of off-campus students on the U-Pass program. In addition, UMD has not added new on-campus student housing in the past ten years.

InTransit



2010 MPTA Fall Conference



InTransit



2010 Award Winners:

National Friend of Transit:

Congressman Tim Walz, First Congressional District

Friend of Transit:

Rep. Frank Hornstein, House of Representatives

Transit System of the Year:

U of M Transportation Services

Distinguished Career:

Kris Barrett, DARTS

Management Innovation:

MVTA, U of M ITS Institute

Transit Professional of the Year:

Jim Heilig, Duluth Transit Authority

Minnesota Bus Operator of the Year:

Duane Duffner, St. Cloud Metro Bus





Metro area is in line for color-coded transit

By KATIE HUMPHREY, Star Tribune

Last update: October 16, 2010 - 9:10 PM

A branding plan for transit across the metro area would link bus rapid transit and light rail in a web of colored lines. Will Cedar Avenue someday be known as the Red Line? For now, call it Cedar Avenue bus rapid transit.

But someday it may be the Red Line or the Blue Line or the Green Line — pick a color.

Following the example of cities around the country, the Metropolitan Council is hatching a plan to better brand transit in the metro area.

In the case of bus rapid transit and its track-riding cousin light rail, that brand comes in multiple colors.

“As we have a more complicated system that includes different modes, such as light rail and commuter rail, we need to illustrate to the customer

how they can use all the services in an efficient manner,” Cole Hiniker, a Met Council transportation planner, told Dakota County Board members recently as they learned how the plan could affect transit on Cedar Avenue.

The line colors, he said, would help people understand that light rail (LRT) and bus rapid transit (BRT) operate similar station-to-station services and offer easy transfers for longer trips, no matter who is running the bus or train.

Commuter lines, such as Northstar and other planned routes like the Red Rock Corridor down to Hastings, would not be part of the color-coded system map because they serve a different purpose and run only at certain times of day.

But all regional transit vehicles, including BRT buses and light rail

and commuter trains, would be painted with splashes of red, white, yellow and blue and be labeled by an undetermined systemwide name.

That would be a switch in the south metro, where riders are used to the orange and green buses operated by Minnesota Valley Transit Authority. Local MVTA routes and express routes would still bear that south-metro agency’s logo and colors.

“Branding is important, but I know that we have different organizations [providing transit] throughout this metro,” said Dakota County Commissioner Will Branning, who is also the chairman of the MVTA board. “It’s difficult [for those groups] to make decisions if everything is proscribed.”



Metro Transit Riders can plan their trips on their smartphones, using the Trip Planner Mobile page.

Metro Bus's new automated stop annunciation system is integrated with the Mentor STREETS vehicle location program, which uses GPS and routing information to make the stop announcements. This project is funded 100% by ARRA funds.



St. Cloud Metro Bus makes learning how to ride the bus easier

By STEVE WILLIAMS, IT & Data Specialist, Metro Bus

Metro Bus is committed to make learning how to ride the bus easier. Over the past couple of years a travel training program was developed, the website updated, a "How to Ride" video produced and outreach efforts to refugee and recent immigration populations increased. Two new efforts can be added to the list of system enhancements to make learning easier: an updated routing nomenclature and the inclusion of an automated stop annunciation system.

Nomenclature/Naming System

Metro Bus routes have always had names based on geographic area covered such as: Pantown, Waite Park, West Side, Sauk Rapids and East Side. This works, however, when a route travels through multiple neighborhoods or cities, this can be confusing for some riders — especially those who are new to the area. For instance, someone riding the Waite Park bus in St. Cloud may think the bus only travels in Waite Park. Also confusing to new riders is when a route, such as Pantown, refers to a historic St. Cloud neighborhood and is not well known. This historic kind of route naming convention becomes a barrier for those new to the system. A recently completed route restructuring study recommended changing the naming convention to a new numbering system. As a result of the study's recommendation, Metro Bus is transitioning to the route numbering system by adding the new numbers to the

front of the existing route names. This will be helpful to those who have difficulty reading or understanding the geographic reference of the current route naming system. This also helps make learning how to ride the bus easier for those who read or speak little or no English.

Both the route name and number appear on the buses and all printed materials as supplies are updated. It is our goal to make this transition easy for riders.

Audio and Visual Stop Annunciation System

Installation of an automated stop annunciation system is underway for the Metro Bus Fixed Route fleet. The system will automatically announce internal and external audio announcements, as well as on an internal LED sign.

The automated stop annunciation system will ensure that passengers will receive reliable, accurate information in both an audio and visual formats. It also enables drivers to concentrate on driving and other responsibilities rather than announcing stops themselves.

Metro Bus piloted the system on a small number of buses earlier this year, and is now moving forward with the full fleet second phase of the project. Hardware and software is being installed in the remainder of the fleet and software settings refined. In the final phase, the route name destination signs will also be integrated into and controlled by the system.

Learn More

More case studies are available on Mentor's blog "The Fleet Beat," which has a wide variety of transit-specific articles.

<http://www.mentoreng.com/blog/>

Case Study from Mentor Engineering: Hamilton Street Railway

Submitted by JESSICA PARSONS, Marketing Coordinator, Mentor Engineering Inc.



Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) provides over 21 million rides each year for the city of Hamilton, but with an aging technology system and a provincial human rights mandate to uphold, HSR needed more sophisticated technology to keep their operation running smoothly. Having always been at the forefront of technology, HSR looked to incorporate an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) to keep them on the leading edge.

Business Objectives

Before implementing an ITS solution, HSR used a radio system that was becoming outmoded and failing. Their radio system was integrated with an antiquated signpost Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL), so when it came time to replace it, HSR committed to replacing their AVL system as part of the project. HSR also had to meet an Ontario Human Rights Commission ruling requiring transit agencies to announce every bus stop on all routes. With 33 routes and over 3,000 bus stops, HSR wanted to automate this task to ease responsibility for drivers and provide consistent and reliable service for their passengers.

Technical Solution

The technical solution chosen by HSR includes the Mentor Streets® Transit CAD/AVL software suite integrated with HSR's existing Trapeze scheduling software in the office, and Mentor Ranger® mobile computers in the vehicle. Streets Transit interfaces with a Motorola Dispatch Radio Console that lets dispatchers know via AVL which drivers are operating specific buses. Dispatchers can also call drivers directly within the Streets Dispatch module through the radio console interface.

End Result

The biggest benefit of adding ITS technology to HSR's fixed-route operations has been the ability to automate stop announcements. "The drivers felt that this system was being put in to help them, and without it they would be required to announce all the stops themselves. The fact that we made the investment to put in a system that would automatically announce all the bus stops, our drivers really see this as a benefit to them," explains Carol Wildeman, Senior Project Manager at HSR.

Mentor Engineering helps Blacksburg Transit riders stay informed

Blacksburg Transit (BT) has released open source data to provide real-time bus information to riders, as well as improving their access to information through the use of mobile applications.

BT is providing data about their buses to third-party developers. BT collects data from Mentor Streets® Transit, an Intelligent Transportation

System (ITS) solution; using this open access to data, developers at Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center have created the VT Bus Tracker, an application which delivers up-to-date bus location information as well as passenger counts to the rider's mobile phone.

Riders text their location and route to the system's phone number, and

within seconds it will reply with the bus' estimated arrival time and the number of riders on board. The system works with regular cellphones, as well as smart phones such as a BlackBerry, Android, or iPhone. Users can also access this bus information by logging on to www.bustracker.org.

Click on headlines to read the complete Met Council article.

October Message from the Council Chair, Peter Bell

While the job has not been without challenges, I regard it as the most significant and rewarding opportunity thus far in my career. It has afforded me the opportunity to learn about and influence public policy on a wide range of issues – from transit and wastewater to planning and parks.

I leave the job more convinced than ever of the legitimacy of the Council and the valuable mission it performs. I also leave with great appreciation for the competency and commitment of our staff, which has provided invaluable assistance and support during these last eight years.

Transportation plan update readied for November adoption

After months of reviewing highway investment needs, identifying available resources and hearing from local officials, the Metropolitan Council is poised to adopt a 2010 update to the region's long-term transportation investment plan.

The TIP, the TAB and the TPP: Planning the regional transportation system

If you want to dig into the nitty-gritty of federally funded transportation projects in the Twin Cities metro area, a good starting point is the TIP. That stands for Transportation Improvement Program.

Express buses to serve downtown St. Paul from northeast metro

Starting on October 18, commuters in the northeast metro area will be able to travel to work in downtown St. Paul via express bus service.

In September, the Metropolitan Council approved a contract with First Transit, Inc., for a one-year demonstration route to provide rush-hour express service on contractor-provided coach buses from the Running Aces Park & Ride in Columbus. The new Route 285 also includes stops at the Forest Lake Transit Center and the White Bear Township Theater Park & Ride before traveling to downtown St. Paul.



Real-time signs can alert motorists to travel times and traffic accidents, allowing commuters to take alternative routes and reducing the risk of further incidents.

TIP Funding Sources
(in millions of dollars)



Central Corridor Making Tracks News

Central Corridor LRT Update



[Read News](#)

Mn/DOT seeks public comment on the draft State Management Plans (SMPs) for:

Section 5311 – Non Urbanized Public Transit Program

Section 5316 – Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) Program

Section 5317 – New Freedom Program

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires Mn/DOT, the direct grant recipient for these funding programs to develop SMPs for each federally funded program. The SMPs are the guiding management plans that identify how Mn/DOT is going to implement these federal programs in Minnesota.

We invite you to review and comment on these draft plans.

The deadline to comment is: Wednesday, November 24, 2010.

If you have questions or would like to submit comment on the drafts of the State Management Plans, please direct them to:

For Section 5311 - Non Urbanized Public Transit Program

Sarah Lenz
395 John Ireland Blvd., MS 430
St. Paul, MN 55155
Phone: 651-366-4177
E-mail: sb.lenz@state.mn.us

For Section 5316 – Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) Program

For Section 5317 – New Freedom Program

John Groothuis
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E-mail: john.groothuis@state.mn.us

View SMPs at Mn/DOT Office of Transit website:

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/transit/>

**The deadline to comment is:
Wednesday, November 24, 2010.**



InTransit newsletter is a bimonthly newsletter published by the Minnesota Public Transit Association (MPTA). Opinions and views expressed in this publication may not necessarily be those of the Minnesota Public Transit Association or its members.

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