

intransit

St. Cloud Metro Bus awarded \$3.3 million federal Clean Fuels grant

BY BERTA HARTIG, St. Cloud Metro Bus

In September, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood visited St. Cloud Metro Bus to award the agency \$3.3 million to construct a CNG fueling station and renovate its Operations Center facility to accommodate a new fleet fueled by Compressed Natural Gas (CNG).

“In Minnesota and across the country, President Obama is committed to investing in sustainable transportation systems that improve access to jobs, education and medical care for millions of riders, while bringing cleaner air to our communities and reducing our dependence on oil,” said Secretary LaHood. “These projects will also help transit agencies operate more efficiently, so they save money in the long run.”

As a prelude to future delivery of CNG fueled replacement buses, the Operations Center storage and maintenance facility will undergo heating, ventilation, and safety monitoring modifications and improvements as a requirement for housing, fueling and maintaining CNG fueled vehicles. The grant will cover 80 percent of the cost to do that.

“This is a great milestone in our state’s efforts to move toward a cleaner, more efficient transit system,” said guest speaker Sen. Amy Klobuchar, DFL-Minn., “St. Cloud is already home to the great Minnesota company New Flyer, which manufactures these types of buses, and as more of our transit systems make these energy upgrades this will mean new opportunities for good jobs in the region.”

“We have researched alternative fuel buses for our next generation bus fleet and prefer CNG,” said David W. Tripp, Metro Bus Executive Director. “CNG not only reduces our dependence on foreign oil, it is an improvement over diesel for air quality and lower cost.”

“Using CNG will save Metro Bus \$500,000 annually based on today’s cost of diesel fuel,” said Tony Kellen, Metro Bus Director of Operations & Technology.



U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and Sen. Amy Klobuchar visited St. Cloud Metro Bus in September to announce a grant award to construct a CNG fueling station and make facility renovations. St. Cloud Mayor Dave Kleis (far left), who also serves on the Metro Bus Board of Commissioners, introduced the speakers and Tony Kellen (far right), Director of Operations & Technology, accepted the award on behalf of Metro Bus.

From the President



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President's Column

We can chalk up another very successful Annual Transit Conference with this year's joint Minnesota/Wisconsin conference in LaCrosse, Wisconsin.

Thanks go out to everyone who participated and everyone who helped organize this year's event. The conference provided a great opportunity to learn about the federal transportation bill — MAP-21—and to share experiences and ideas with our counterparts in Wisconsin. The conference is one of the main activities that MPTA organizes and we want to hear from you about the quality of the sessions and how we can improve the training and information you receive in

the future. It's all about improving transit service in Minnesota.

Be sure to visit the MPTA web site: www.mpta-transit.org where you will find many of the presentations from the conference break-out and general sessions.

We were able to involve a huge number of vendors who provide products and services to transit systems this year. Their support and financial contributions allow us to give you a great experience at each year's transit conference.

We also want to thank everyone who participated in the Transportation Candidate Forums this fall. Through these events,

we were able to educate over 70 candidates for the legislature about transit funding and how important this service is for constituents in their districts. We appreciate having representatives from local transit systems speak up for riders and help prepare legislators for the coming session.

The 2013 Legislative Session will be here sooner than you think. We'll all need to be active and working to ensure our budgets are not cut and transit service is maintained. Thanks for everything you do to provide quality service to the thousands of Minnesotans who rely on us every day.

Welcome Heath Hickock

The Minnesota Public Transit Association is pleased to announce that we have hired a part-time staff person, Heath Hickock, to assist with outreach to transit systems and the industry. You'll be receiving information from Heath and hearing from him in the near future.



Margaret Donahoe
Advocacy Director
Minnesota Public Transit Association

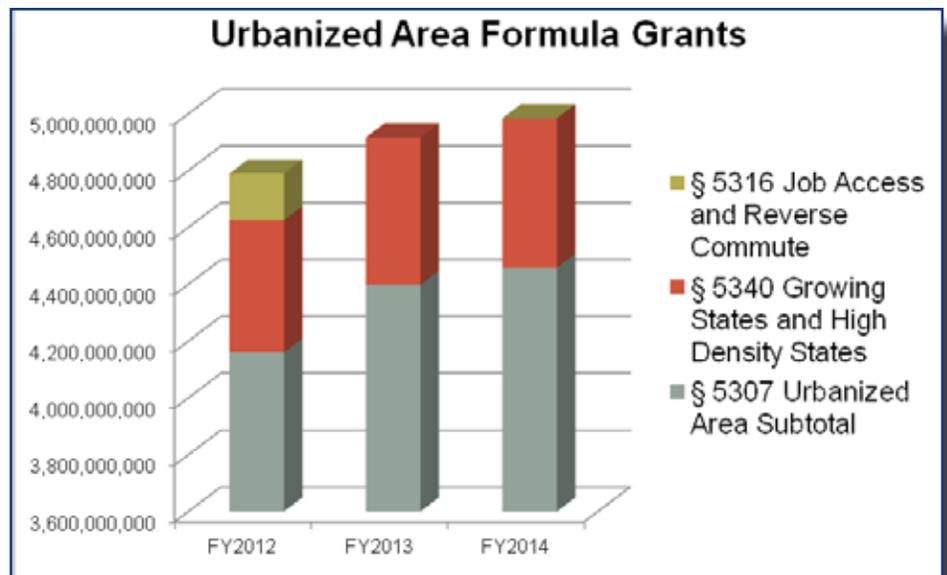


Legislative Report

The ramifications of the passage of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century or MAP-21 continue to be the major focus of attention. The Federal Transit Administration continues to develop guidelines and information for transit systems as the policy changes enacted by Congress are put into place.

Overall, the legislation provides an increase in funding for transit for the next two years while providing much more stability than we would have with ongoing, short-term continuing resolutions.

The new authorization consolidates a number of programs into larger programs with more flexibility for states to determine exactly how funds are spent. The law emphasizes the use of performance measures and maintaining existing equipment in a state of good repair. A big goal of the new law is to reduce the amount of time and effort needed to get projects completed as well.



The bill authorizes \$422 million in FY 2013 and \$427.8 million in FY 2014 for a Bus and Bus Facilities Formula program. The funding level, while significantly below current law (\$984 million in FY 2012), was a major change from what the Senate bill had originally proposed, with essentially no funding as the bill was reported from committee and only \$75 million authorized as a takedown from the Capital

Investment Grants account when S. 1813 was passed by the Senate. The new program is a formula grant program (as opposed to a discretionary grant program in current law) and does not restrict agencies that operate rail services from eligibility, as proposed in the House T&I Committee bill, H.R. 7. A minimum allocation is made available to all states, with the remaining funds distributed based on population and service factors.

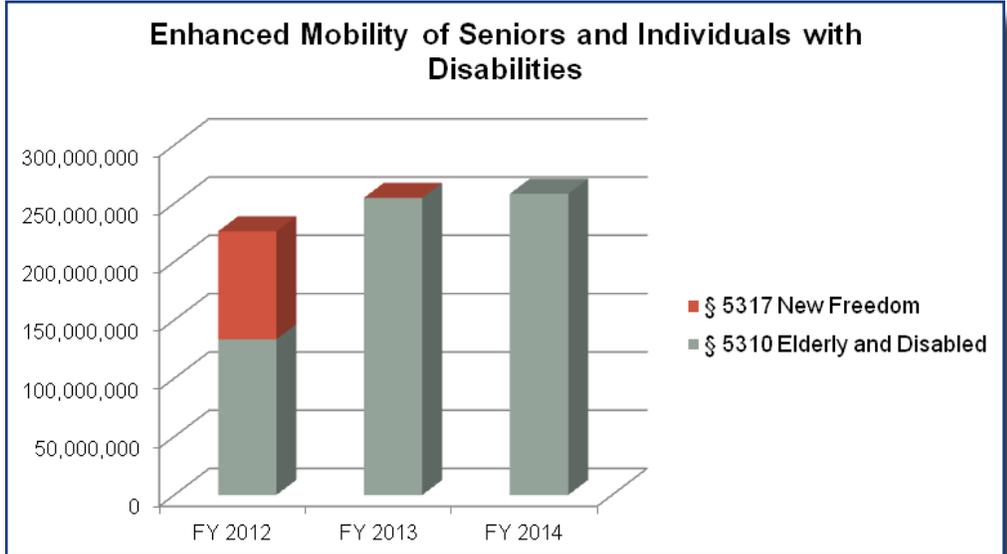
Legislative Report, continued...

Legislative Report Continued...

Consistent with the APTA recommendations for program consolidation, the Elderly and Disabled (Sec. 5310) and New Freedom (Sec. 5317) Programs are combined into a single program that will fund activities designed to enhance the mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities (the new program remains under Sec. 5310). The consolidated program will increase the level of resources available for elderly and disabled transportation programs.

The law also authorizes increased funding for Rural Area Grants (Sec. 5311), to fund public transportation activities in rural areas. The Sec. 5311 Rural Formula program is funded at \$599.5 million in FY 2013 and \$607.8 million in FY 2014 as compared to an estimated \$547.3 million in FY 2012. The authorization also provides for rural job access and reverse commute activities to now be funded under this section.

The new law adopts proposed "100 bus rule" language. This provision allows transit systems in urbanized areas with populations greater than 200,000 to utilize portions of their 5307 funding for operating assistance if their system operates 100 or fewer buses in peak service.



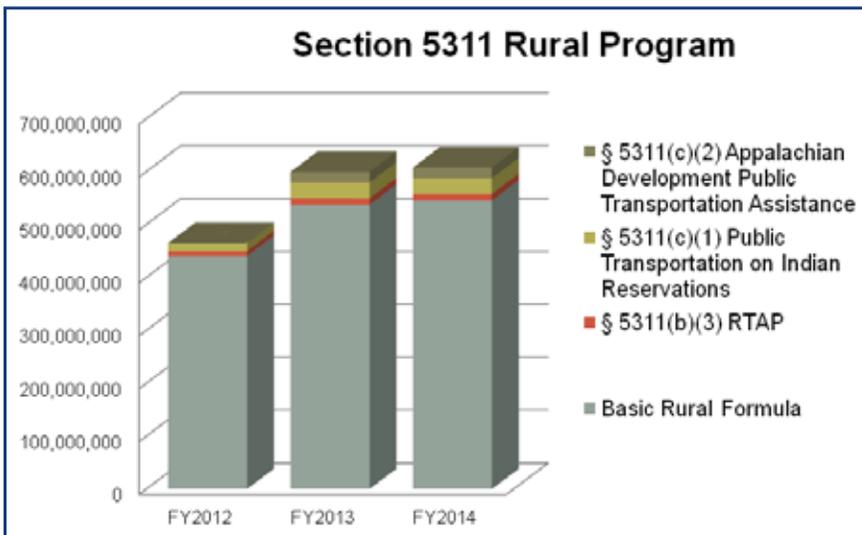
MAP-21 consolidates New Freedom Program and Elderly and Disabled Program, requiring 60 percent of funds to be designated recipients in urbanized areas with a population over 200,000, 20 percent to states for small urbanized areas and 20 percent to states for rural areas.

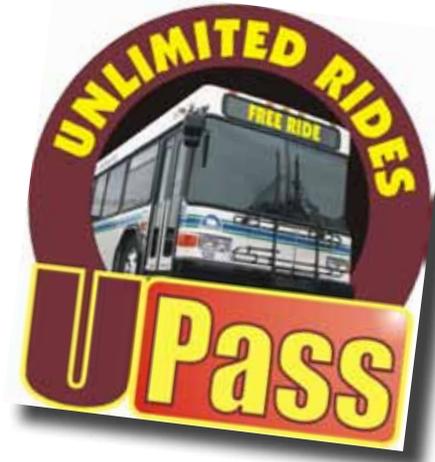
Funds will be apportioned based on the number of seniors and individuals with disabilities and 55 percent must be used on capital projects that are intended to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable. 45 percent may be used for PT projects

that exceed ADA, that improve access to fixed-route service, or provide alternatives to public transportation. Funds may be used for operating assistance.

More action will occur at the federal level after the November 6th elections. Congress did not pass a FY2013 Transportation Appropriations act but instead passed a continuing resolution that keeps the program operating through March 27, 2013. The Continuing Resolution allows the transit and highway programmatic changes made under MAP-21 to be implemented, but does not provide for the increased inflationary funding that MAP-21 authorizes. However, it is expected that when a final FY2013 appropriations bill is passed, it will compensate for the reduction so that full funding will be at the authorized level by the end of the year.

Stay tuned as more information becomes available regarding the implementation of MAP-21 here in Minnesota.





U-PASS ridership at UMD for the 2011-2012 school-year breaks all-time record

By TOM ELWELL, Duluth Transit Authority

The DTA has begun its 12th year of the U-Pass Program at UMD and expects the trend of increasing ridership year after year to continue.

The DTA transported 569,361 U-PASS riders at UMD during the 2011-2012 school-year — the highest school year total since the U-PASS Program began in 2000. The record-breaking U-PASS ridership for UMD's 2011-2012 school-year included consecutive monthly records from September 2011 through February 2012 and in April 2012. Ridership at UMD during the 2011-2012 school-year was up nearly 5 percent over the previous school-year.

Total ridership at UMD since the U-PASS began in 2000 currently tallies 4,736,407 riders, with the 5 millionth rider projected to occur before the end of the year.

U-PASS ridership at UMD has increased steadily since 2000 and accounts for nearly 12 percent of the DTA's over-all ridership during the same time period. However, during fall and spring semesters, U-PASS ridership at UMD accounts for nearly 20 percent of DTA's system-wide ridership.

Prior to the establishment of the U-PASS Program in 2000, DTA ridership at UMD averaged just 4,000 a month. By 2011, enrollment at UMD had increased by more than 30 percent to nearly 12,000 students. The U-PASS Program has been instrumental in accommodating the transportation needs of off-campus students since 2000. The only expansion of on-campus housing since 2000 was an addition to Griggs Hall in September of 2011. Since 2000, more than 700 campus parking spaces have been eliminated, due to on-campus expansion and no additional parking lots have been constructed on campus. Today, more than 4,000 UMD students, faculty and staff are riding the DTA every two days.

U-PASS ridership at UMD reached the 1 millionth rider milestone in March of 2004; the 2 millionth rider in February of 2007; the 3 millionth rider in March of 2009; and the 4 millionth rider in March of 2011.





In September SouthWest Transit, Metro Transit, First Transit, Schmitt & Sons, Lorenz Bus Company and Maple Grove Transit provided bus service to a special event honoring fallen firefighters.

Transit providers participate in fallen fire fighter memorial event at state Capitol

BY LINDA SPEVECK, SouthWest Transit

The names of Minnesota's 207 fallen firefighters are now etched on a memorial, dedicated on Sunday, September 30, a place at the Capitol to honor their sacrifice. Transit had the honor of being a part of this momentous event.

To allow firefighters, families and friends to easily attend the event, several area transit providers collaborated to provide bus service to the Capitol. SouthWest Transit, Metro Transit, First Transit, Schmitt & Sons, Lorenz Bus Company and Maple Grove Transit all participated. Transit staff members were at each location along with a firefighter to assist in boarding the buses.

After the event, Steve Koering, Assistant Fire Chief Operations, Eden Prairie Fire Department, said, "From the Foundation, and from me personally as the Logistics Chief I would like to recognize the performance of all the transit providers who played a vital role in making this event a reality. It exemplifies the essence of giving back to our communities that so many of us talk about but never really follow through with. The bus rides were greatly

appreciated. This event was truly one of the greatest stories in Minnesota Fire Service history and each of you played a part in its success. The true story was really the families who for the first time got to see their loved one recognized appropriately for their sacrifice. Thanks again for the monumental role you played; whether you transported 1 or 100 each of those people made a difference in this history making event."

Mark Windschitl, Mayor of Chaska, St. Louis Park Deputy Fire Chief and son of one of the fallen firefighters being recognized said, "I would also like to say thank you for all the transit providers' efforts to make Sunday the special day it was. We were hoping for a bus or two and for all the transit agencies and providers to step up was tremendous. In the fire service partnerships are vital and I learned in the busing industry apparently it is the same. I applaud you for your efforts."

Record ridership for SouthWest Transit State Fair service



SouthWest Transit provided over 71,000 rides during the 12 days of the recent Minnesota State Fair, more than any other previous year.

Monday through Friday, all State Fair express buses ran from Wooddale Church in Eden Prairie. Saturday, Sunday and Labor Day we were able to utilize our three park and ride facilities in Eden Prairie and Chanhassen.

Every year the challenge is to provide this additional service on weekdays while still providing our regular daily riders the service they have come to expect. Staff works long hours to make this happen.

Maple Grove Transit to design Phase II of Parkway Transit Station, seeks additional construction funds

BY MIKE OPATZ, Transit Administrator
City of Maple Grove

Maple Grove Transit completed Parkway Transit Station in February 2011. Phase I of this project included a 498-stall surface park-and-ride lot, dedicated bus way and indoor passenger station. The project was funded with federal, state and city transit funds. In anticipation of future growth, Phase I included the footings and foundation for a future one-level parking structure. Parkway Station, located on Maple Grove Parkway across the street from the Maple Grove Hospital, is served by Route 785, which currently has nine express trips to and from Minneapolis.

Presently, 70 percent of the Phase I stalls are occupied by commuters due to strong ridership growth on the Route 785. As a result, Maple Grove Transit sought to move forward with the design of Phase II. This phase would include a one-level parking structure over half of the existing lot providing an additional 210 parking stalls. The 2012 State Legislature approved \$2.3 million in Regional Transit Capital (RTC) bond funds that the City can apply toward the design and construction of Phase II. These grant funds are administered by the Met Council. The estimated construction cost for Phase II is \$3,946,000.

The Maple Grove City Council and the Metropolitan Council approved the use of \$421,500 of the \$2.3 million in RTC bond funds for a professional services agreement with LSA Design to include the following: pre-design, design, grant administration, construction administration, and materials testing oversight.



The remaining RTC balance of \$1,878,500 will be reserved by the Metropolitan Council for construction costs until the final amount of \$2,067,500 in construction funding is identified and secured. Maple Grove Transit will seek this additional funding at the 2013 State Legislature. Maple Grove Transit feels having the Phase II project fully designed and ready for a bid release may assist in securing the final funding needed to build Phase II. The design and bid documents should be complete by March 2013. At this point, no construction timeline is being projected, but if the necessary construction funds are approved by the 2013 State Legislature, a fall 2013 construction start is conceivable.

A third phase to construct a parking structure on the remaining half of the parking lot will be examined in a few years as ridership grows and funding becomes available.



Rochester's new bus storage facility opened in October

BY TONY KNAUER, Rochester Public Transit

Rochester Public Transit (RPT) will begin use of its new bus storage facility Friday, October 26, 2012. This completes the last construction phase of the City's Transit Operations Center. The administrative, dispatch, drivers training and maintenance areas were completed and occupied on July 1, 2012. The new indoor bus storage provides indoor fueling and drive through wash. The project was funded with FTA, State and local funds.



MVTA wins national marketing and communications award

BY ROBIN SELVIG, MVTA

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) announced that Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) has won a first place prize in the 2012 Annual AdWheel Award competition for its “pennant” in the “Promotional Materials” category. The AdWheel Awards honor outstanding excellence in public transportation advertising, marketing, and communications. MVTA

developed the pennant as a give away at area parades. It depicts scenes along MVTA bus routes and can be colored by children of all ages.

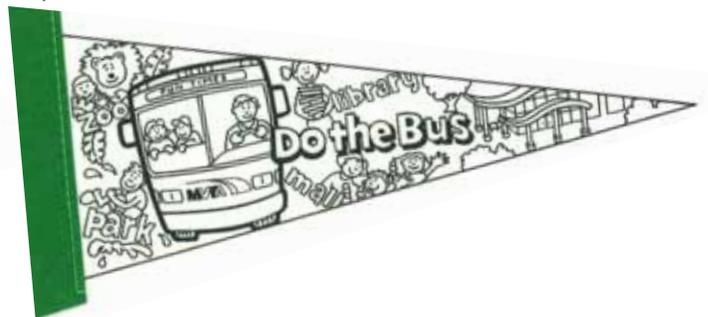
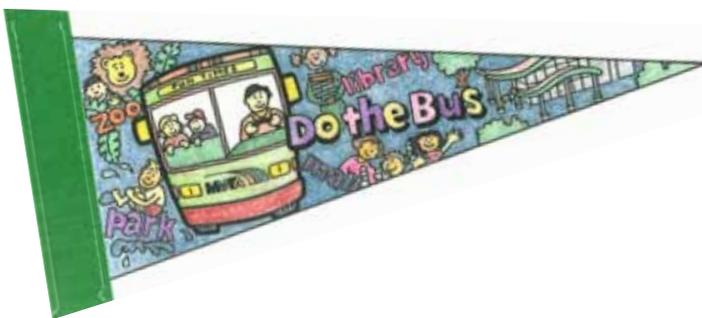
“Recipients are creative, imaginative leaders, who set the bar for extraordinary public transit communications,” says APTA President & CEO Michael Melaniphy. “We celebrate their remarkable ability to

create engaging materials and messages to advance public transportation.”

Nearly 500 entries competed in this year’s competition and winners were named at a special ceremony on October 1 in Seattle, WA as part of APTA’s 2012 Annual Meeting & EXPO.

“The MVTA is excited to receive this national award,” said Customer

Relations Manager Robin Selvig. “The pennants were a fun piece to develop and distribute at parades. We also have a number of pennants on display at the Apple Valley Transit Station thanks to students at Cedar Park Elementary School; please drop by to see them (and the get to know the Transit Station).”



Next issue: January 2013

We want to hear from your transit agency.

We want to hear from you. It can be as simple as a photo and a paragraph. Submit news items & photos to: bertahartigcommunications@gmail.com.



From left: Mike Thorsteinson, Amy Repinski, Alexandra O'Donnel and Cheri Dee McManus, Three Rivers Hiawathaland; Willis Branning, MVTA Board member; Jan Homan, Metro Transit; Lori Van Beek, MATBUS; and Dennis Jensen, Duluth Transit Authority.

MPTA recognizes individuals with transit awards

Transit System of the Year:

Three Rivers Hiawathaland

Distinguished Career:

Dennis Jensen, Duluth Transit Authority

Friends of Transit:

Willis E. Branning, MVTA Board Member
Senator John Pederson
Senator Roger Reinert

Transit Professionals of the Year:

Lori Van Beek, Moorhead MATBUS
Jan Homan, Metro Transit

Minnesota Bus Operator of the Year:

Cheri Dee McManus, Three Rivers Hiawathaland



Tony Knauer
Rochester Public Transit



Helen Pieper
Timber Trails Transit

MPTA Board Elections

At the Minnesota Public Transit Association
Annual Meeting

Elected to at Large Board Seats for 3 Year Terms beginning January 1, 2013 were:

Dave Jacobson,
SouthWest Transit

Marc Hall,
Pipestone County Transit

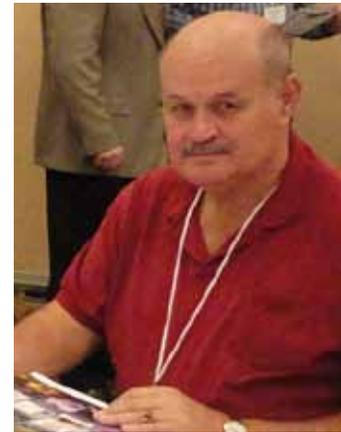
Craig Rempp,
Chisago-Isanti Heartland Transit

President Kellen recognized outgoing Board Members:

Tony Knauer
1997 to 2012 Rochester Public Transit

Helen Pieper
2010-2012 Timber Trails Transit
2003-2005 Mille Lacs County Transit

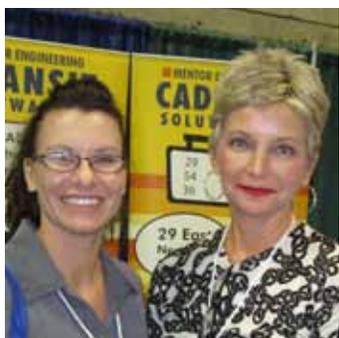
2012 FALL CONFERENCE



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metro council.org

Rail~Volution sets the stage

Conference focuses on integrating land use and transportation investments. [Read message from Met Coucil Chair Susan Haigh](#)

Commuter survey shows solo drivers less satisfied with their commute

About 76 percent of commuters drive alone to work, but those who use an alternative to driving alone are more likely to be very satisfied with their commute, by a margin of 70-57 percent. And even those who drive alone are likely to support a broad range of transportation investments, including bus and rail transit.

These are among the findings of Metro Transit's 2012 State of the Commute Survey. [Read more.](#)

Metro Transit tweaks plan for increased bus service to connect with Green Line

New Lexington Parkway bus service extended to Como Park and nearby neighborhoods. [Read more.](#)



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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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Central Corridor Making Tracks News

[Read News](#)

Central Corridor LRT Update

**Making
Tracks**

