



Annual Update

About the DTA



Duluth Transit Authority (DTA)

- Created by the Minnesota State Legislature as a Public Mass Transit Authority
- Serve the cities of Duluth, Superior, and portions of Proctor, Hermantown, and Rice Lake.
- Fixed-route and complementary paratransit service (STRIDE)
 - 15 routes, 7-days a week, running generally from 4:30 AM to 12:00 AM.
 - 75 large buses, 12 smaller buses
- Over 150 employees
 - Managed by ATE Management of Duluth
 - Bus Operators and Maintenance staff represented by the Teamsters General Local Union No. 346.
- Governed by the DTA Board of Directors

History of Excellence

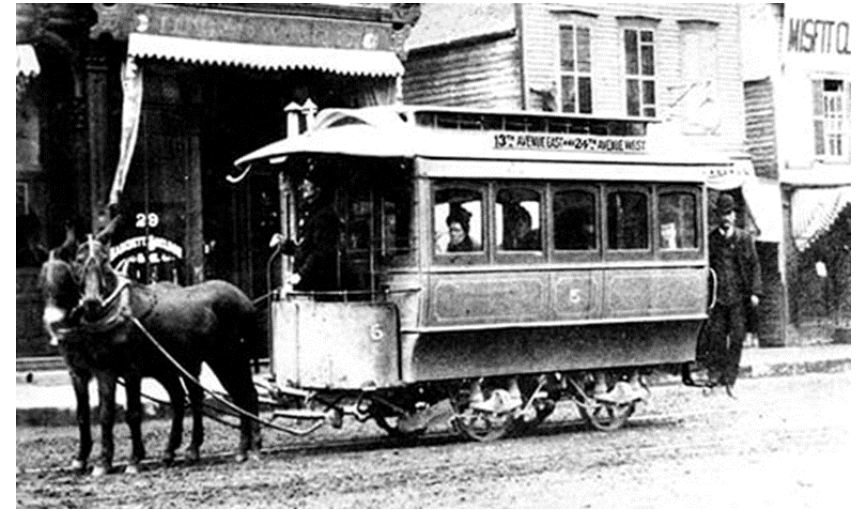
- A top transit system nationally, ranking high in many metrics.
 - Of MPOs of 100k-250k in population, Duluth ranks 4th out of 128 transit agencies by AllTransit.
- Greater Minnesota's largest transit system (over 1/3 of non-metro statewide ridership)
- Recognized many times for a variety of accolades.
 - Safety records, innovation, and community stewardship.



Long, Storied History

Transit has been in the Twin Ports since 1883 and was a catalyst to its development.

- ▶ 1881 - Duluth Street Railway was incorporated.
- ▶ 1890 - The first electric streetcar went into service.
- ▶ 1924 - The first gasoline powered bus went into service.
- ▶ 1939 - The last streetcar and the Incline Railway service were discontinued.
- ▶ 1969 - The DTA was Legislatively created.
- ▶ 1981 - The DTA's Operations Center opened.
- ▶ 2016 - The Duluth Transportation Center opened.
- ▶ 2018 - DTA began service with seven Electric Battery Buses.
- ▶ 2023 - DTA launches an entirely new fixed-route transit system.



Funding



Fixed Route Operations Funding (2023)

	Minnesota		Wisconsin	
	Funding	% of Revenue	Funding	% of Revenue
Local Share*	\$3,964,080	20%	\$676,264	42%
State and Federal Share	\$15,856,320	80%	\$947,422	58%

In 2023, the Minnesota State Legislature decreased the local match requirement to only 5% for 2024 and 2025.

*Local share is made up of fare revenues, tax levies, and other locally raised funds.

Fare revenues in Superior were only 4.4% of all revenues, which was the lowest out of 26 similar sized systems. The WI average is 16.3%.

Fixed Route Funding in Minnesota Vs Wisconsin

	Minnesota		Wisconsin	
	2011	2023	2011	2023
Local Share	\$1,986,000	\$3,964,080	\$432,417	\$676,264
State Share	\$7,076,000	\$14,118,320	\$340,994	\$297,711
Federal Share	\$868,000	\$1,738,000	\$408,520	\$649,711
State and Federal Share	\$7,944,000	\$15,856,320	\$749,514	\$947,422

In Minnesota, the combined State and Federal share dollar amount increased 100% from 2011 to 2023. In Wisconsin, by comparison, State and Federal share increased by 26% in that same time frame.

During that time, service has been expanded in Minnesota, while remaining flat in Wisconsin.

FTA Small Transit Intensive Cities

STIC is a performance-based funding formula used to allocate funds to high-performing transit systems.

- There are 6 performance factors. Agencies above the national average on a metric receive funding for that metric. The DTA meets 4 of the 6 factors. Funding from this source continues to grow as a percentage of federal funding received.
- In 2023, DTA received **\$2,201,623**. Only 21 other agencies (out of 320) receive more in funding from this program than the DTA.
- DTA ranks **#23** in the nation for passenger trips per capita and **#17** for hours of service per capita.

Recent Initiatives



Better Movement

BETTER BUS STOPS

- Signage
- ADA Improvements
- Shelters
- Lighting
- Over \$2M planned

BETTER TECHNOLOGY

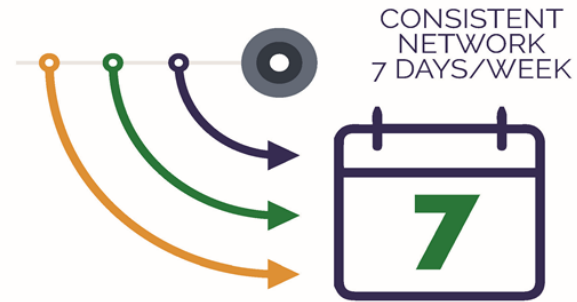
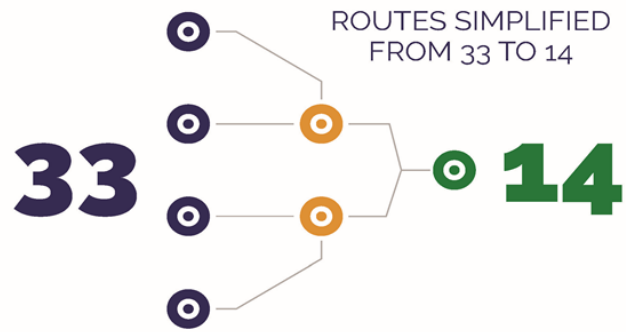
- Mobile App
- Live Bus Tracking
- Signal Priority
- New Fareboxes
- Website

BETTER **BUS** **BLUEPRINT** *IMPROVING TWIN PORTS TRANSIT*

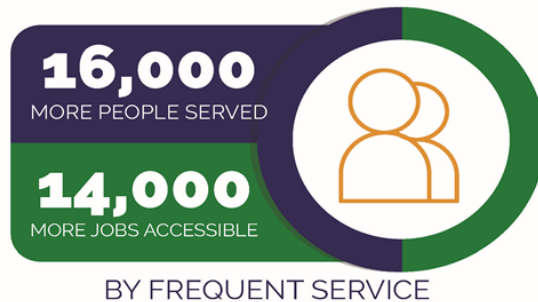
- New Bus Network
- Frequent Service
- More Weekend Service
- Simplified
- First Step to BRT



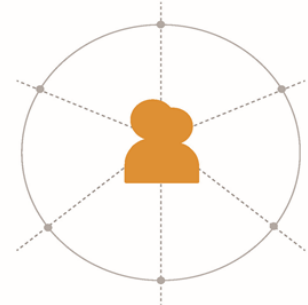
BENEFITS OF THE RECOMMENDED DRAFT NETWORK



8+ ADDED MILES OF HIGH FREQUENT (PRE-BRT) SERVICE



OF EXISTING RIDERSHIP SERVED



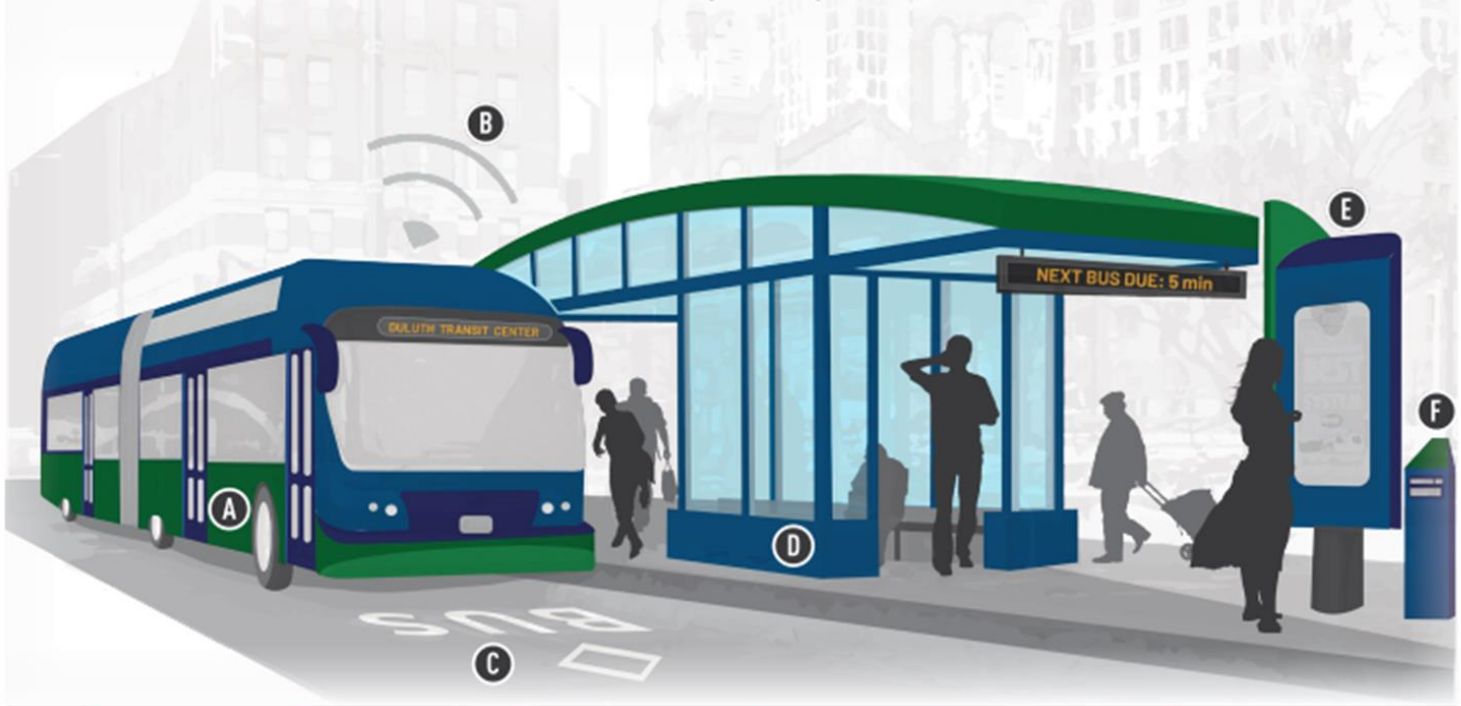
RIDERS CAN RELIABLY ACCESS MORE LOCATIONS

TRIPS WITH SIGNIFICANT TRAVEL TIME IMPROVEMENTS

GO-Lines, Future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

A Step Toward the Future

The addition of Go Line service is the first step towards providing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to Twin Ports' residents. The DTA is actively looking to expand and improve Go Line service to include more BRT features in the future! Examples of potential BRT features are shown below.



Bus Rapid Transit is a higher quality bus service that is often compared to rail. BRT provides frequent, fast, and reliable transit service with fewer stops. BRT commonly includes features like improved customer amenities, enhanced bus stops, branded vehicles, and special road accommodations.

- A. Specialized Vehicles
- B. Transit Signal Priority/Signal Enhancements
- C. Dedicated Transit Lanes
- D. Enhanced Stops/Stations
- E. Branded Infrastructure
- F. Off-Board Fare Collection

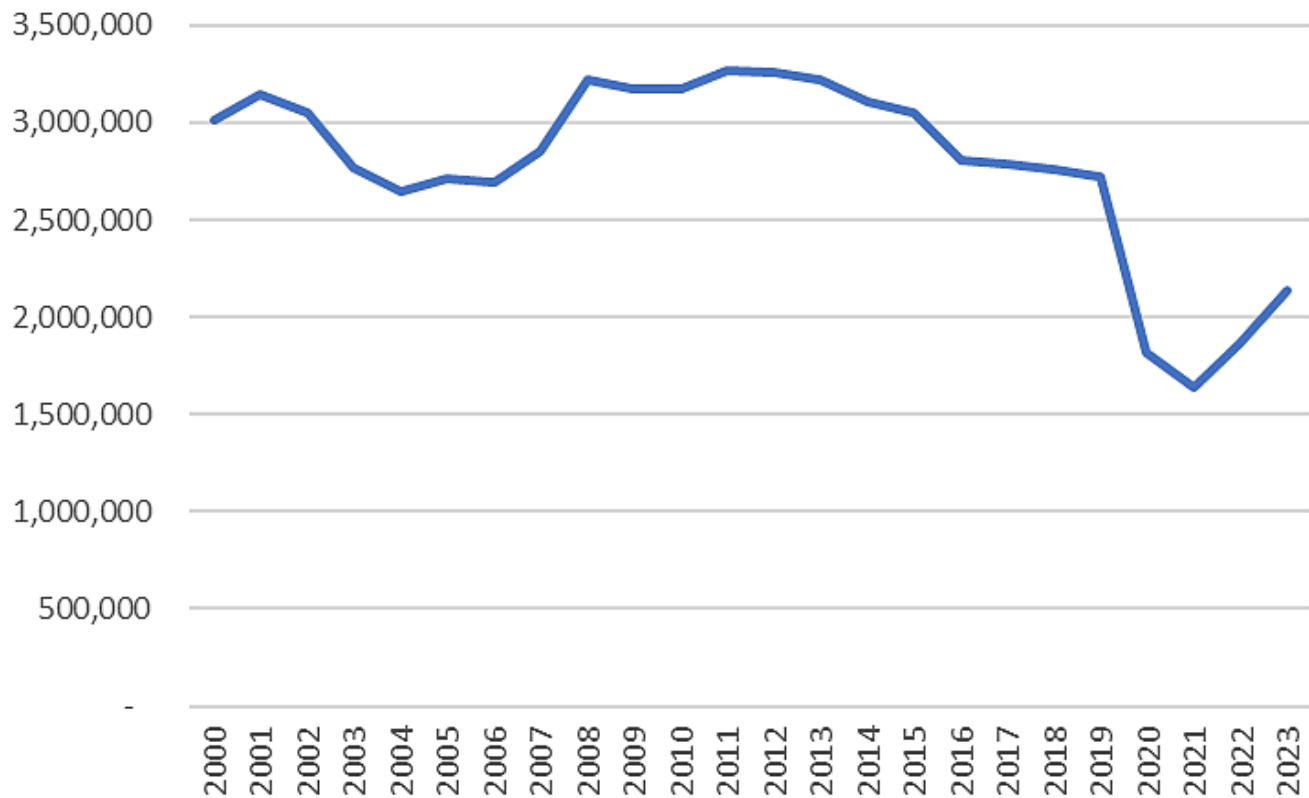
Ridership Trends



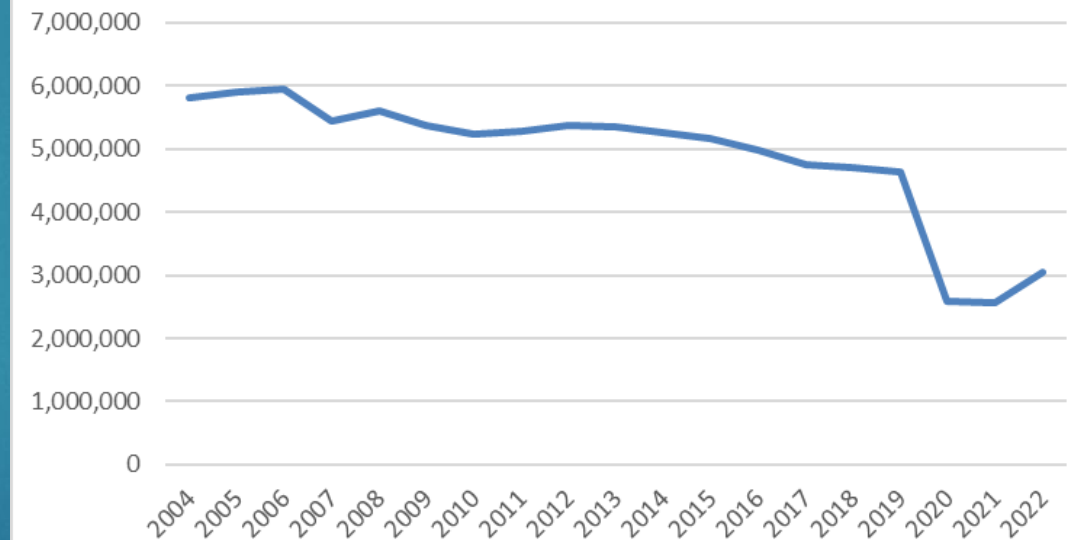
Historic Trends, DTA and Nationally



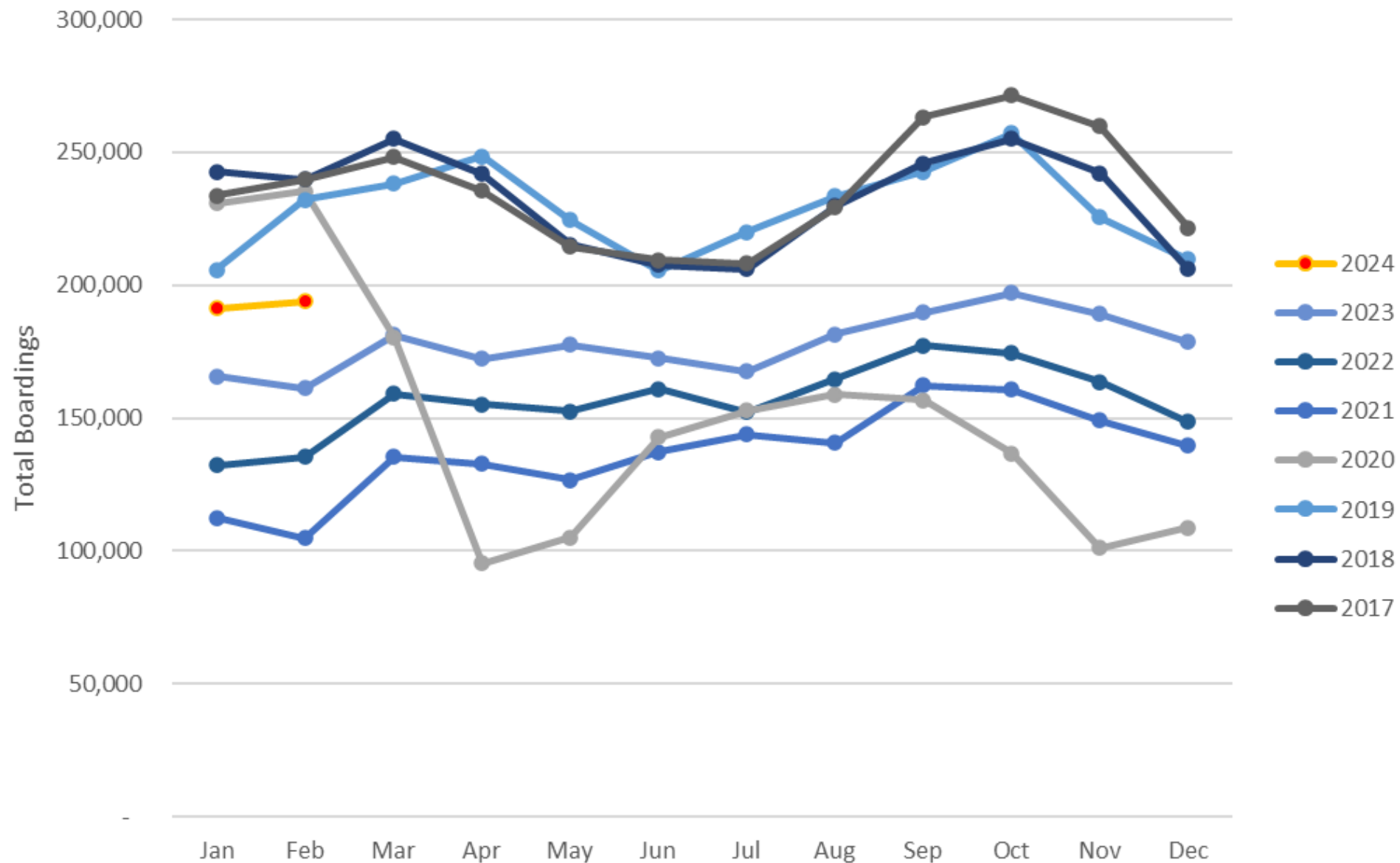
DTA Historic Ridership



National Bus Ridership Trend (in Billions)



Monthly APC Boarding Counts



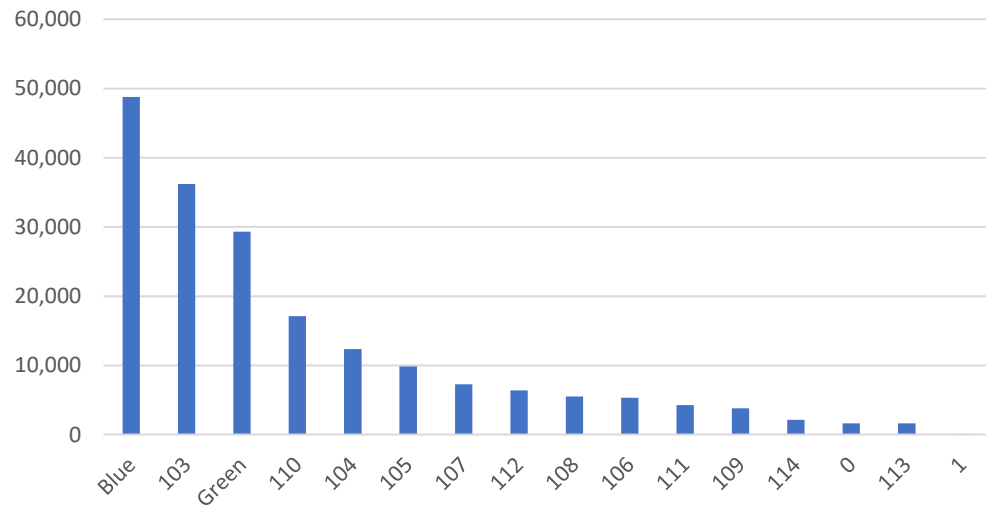
6 months of BBB - Ridership Change from Year Prior

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
2022/23:	177,329	174,370	163,695	148,589	165,613	161,305
2023/24:	189,708	197,083	189,144	178,608	191,171	193,997
Percent Change:	+7%	+13%	+16%	+20%	+15%	+20%

Total Boardings by Route

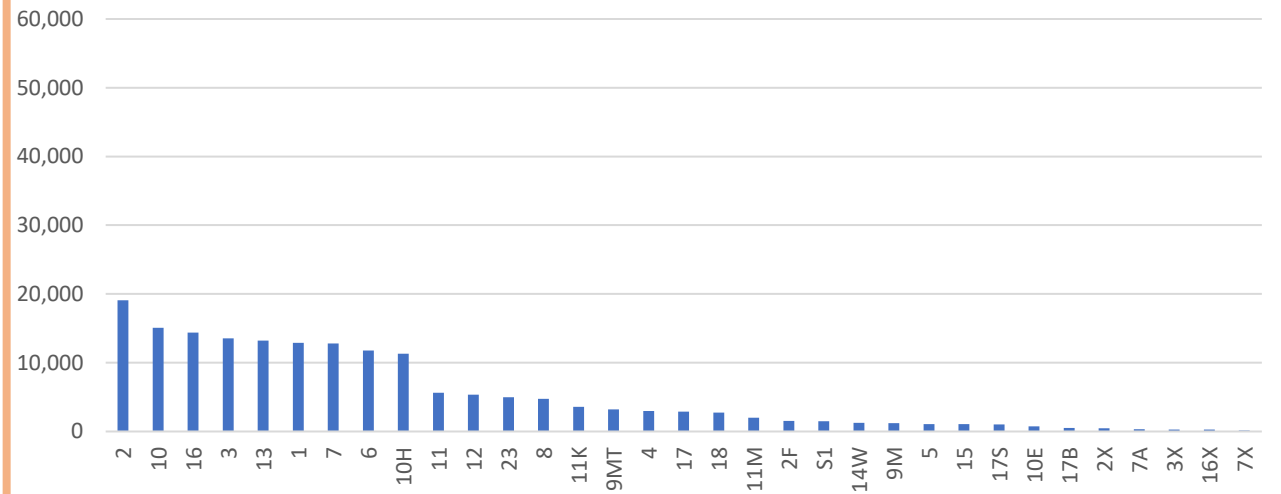
October 2023

Total Boardings



October 2022

Total Boardings



Ridership Change In Superior

September 1 – February 28		
2023/24	119,016	+14 %
2022/23	104,101	

Route 110 is our top performing route by ridership per hour of service.

Despite performance issues due to construction-related congestion on Garfield Ave, Route 110 has been very popular.

Ridership by Days of the Week (February 2024 Vs 2023)

Weekdays

17%

Saturdays

22%

Sundays

56%



Bus Operator Shortage



DTA temporarily canceling some routes

4 weekend routes will be affected



The Duluth Transit Authority is launching a new program that will shakeup bus routes for customers. (Alex Laitala)

By Matt McConico

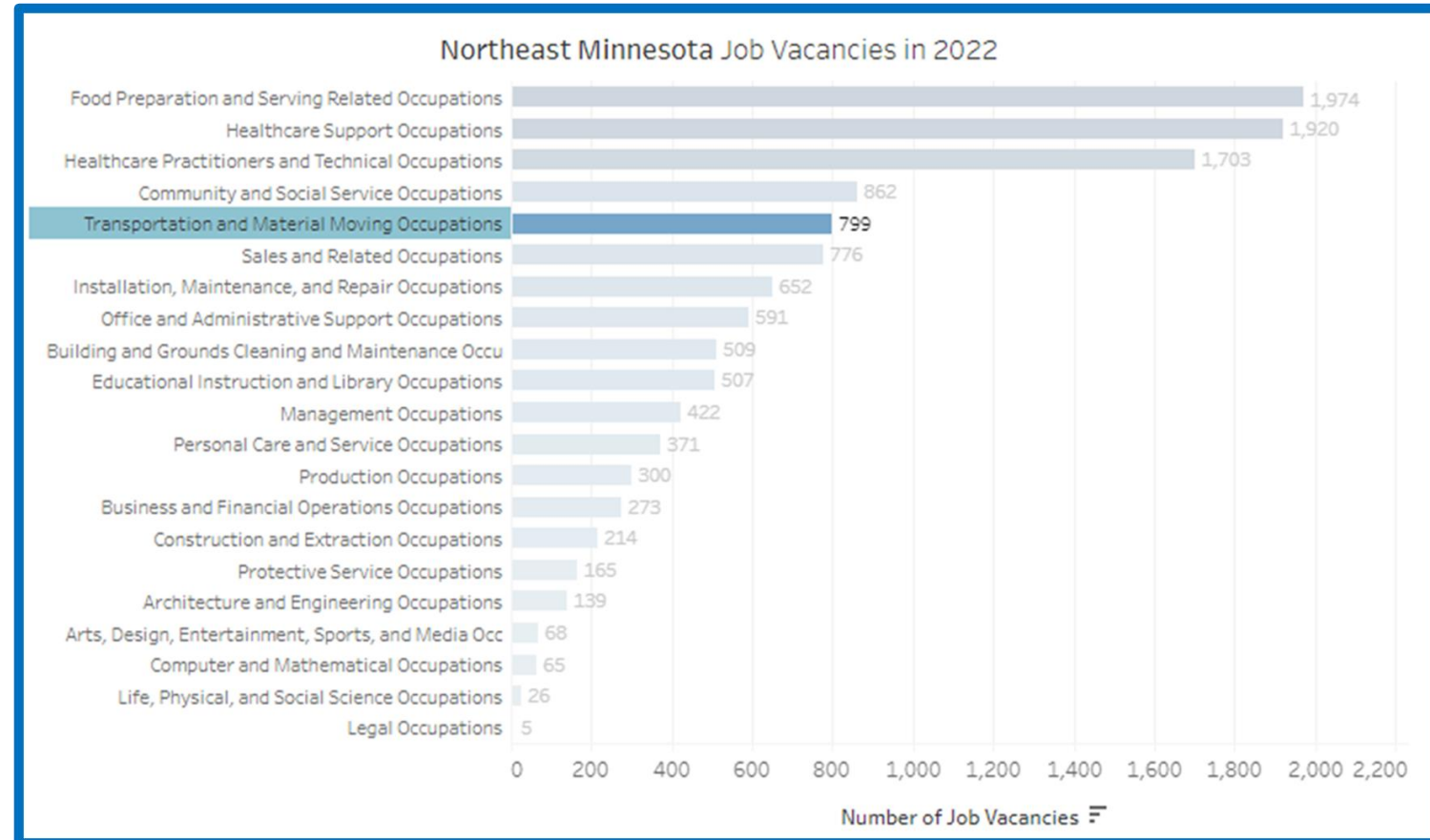
Published: Oct. 13, 2023 at 1:22 PM CDT

National Labor Shortage Issues

96% of transit agencies in the nation are reporting staff shortages. Many continue to reduce service to fit with their driver availability.

Not being able to meet the transportation needs of a community decreases transit usage, increases reliance on a personal car.

DTA is currently needing around 15 additional Drivers to run the full budgeted service.



Other Initiatives



ISD 709 (Duluth Public Schools) Pilot Program

Several educational institutions locally have agreements for pass partnerships – U Pass (local Colleges and Universities), Harbor City International School, and Superior Public Secondary Schools.

ISD 709 and the DTA entered into an agreement early 2024 to pilot a free rides pass program for enrolled high-school students and all District staff. Students of staff simply show the Driver their school issued ID while boarding the bus. They can ride anywhere, anytime.

From in the first month, the DTA provided **8,241** rides to district students with an average of 291 rides per day provided on weekdays and an average of 158 rides on Saturdays and Sundays. The second month had 8,774 rides counted, for a total of **over 17,000 rides so far**.

Bus Stop and Accessibility Improvements

- Superior bus stop improvements
 - 30 bus stop locations to see pavement improvements and/or shelter updates
 - Funded with Transportation Alternatives and FTA Funds
- Duluth bus stop improvements
 - Miller Hill Mall Bus Hub
 - St. Louis County Improvements
 - Recently awarded Transportation Alternatives funds to improve pavement and shelters around the city in 2028.

Bus Stop Signage

- All bus stop signage was replaced with signage for the new routes and a modern design.
- Each new stop sign includes a unique ID number.
 - You can text that ID number to the phone number provided on the sign to get real-time arrival information for all buses serving that stop for the next 90 minutes.
 - A very popular tool – over 10,000 texts and 2,000 calls a month and growing rapidly.



New Bus Rapid Transit Buses



DTA Operations Center Remodel





Additional Initiatives

- Created a Transit Ambassador Program – Partnership with Clean and Safe Team
- Exploring options for a Joint Development project
- Innovative fare programs and pass partnerships
- Your Turn to Drive hiring events
- Bus stop bench installations
- Solar lighting at bus stops
- Public art
- Potential pilot project with a local start up company to try new real-time information signage technology
- Easier scheduling and reminders for STRIDE passengers
- More preservation, maintenance, and safety projects
- Fat Tire bike racks

Transit Matters



A solution

Economy:

- \$5 to \$1 return on investment
- Using transit can save a family \$13,000 annually by living with one less car.
- Of all riders, 71% are employed and 7% are students.

Environment:

- Transportation #1 contributor to GHG in MN
- 87% of all trips in the US are done in a personal automobile. 40% of all person trips are a single person alone driving a car.
- Vehicle Miles Traveled continues to dramatically increase.

Safety and Public Health:

- Traveling by public transportation is 10 times safer per mile than traveling by automobile.
- Taking transit usually adds walking into your daily routine.

Fiscal Cliffs

The Transit Death Spiral:



MCTS BUS SERVICE IS AT RISK OF FACING MAJOR CUTS

To Everyone Living and Working in Milwaukee County:

Great cities rely on great public transit. If you live or work in one of the 19 municipalities that make up Milwaukee County, I hope you'll help us save transit.

The Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) is facing a crisis whose ripple effects would touch the entire community. MCTS is confronting a projected \$26.5 million budget shortfall in 2025 after relief funds provided during the COVID-19 pandemic run out. Despite our ongoing efforts to control costs (which have us ranked second among our peer systems in cost-per-vehicle and third in cost-per-passenger) we are hurtling toward a fiscal cliff.

Without a sustainable funding solution, MCTS bus service will shrink by more than 20 percent which represents nearly one half of all routes in the system.

Failing to invest in transit will have cascading, cross-sectoral ramifications for all of us—setting back the regional economy, exacerbating labor shortages, and impacting education and health outcomes. And the harm done by such drastic reductions would fall on those least able to absorb additional burdens.

Most large cities invest in their transit systems with sustainable funding, like a local sales tax, that is indexed to grow year over year. MCTS receives local funding through a combination of property taxes and a vehicle registration fee—both of which don't match the scale of the gap we face. Without a reliable source of local funding, the proposed transit funding cuts would cripple Milwaukee County. We need allies like you to help position MCTS for growth.

Here's how you can help:

- Let the state legislature know that you support Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley and the Move Forward MKE coalition to create sustainable local funding for local priorities through at least a 1 percent local sales tax. (Sample e-mails and a directory of legislators can be found at ridemcts.com/savethebus)
- Put an MCTS "#SaveTheBus" logo on your website and social media pages. (Download at ridemcts.com/savethebus)
- Register your company for the MCTS Commuter Value Pass (CVP) program. Enrolling your employees not only provides a business tax deduction, it also frees up parking spaces, supports sustainability and equity goals, and more. Get the details at cvp@ridemcts.org.

The bottom line: MCTS helps support and grow our economy by getting employees to their jobs and customers to local businesses. Every strong community in the U.S. has and needs a strong transit system.

We hope you'll join MCTS, support our great city and county, and help #SaveTheBus!




Denise Wandke
President and Interim Managing Director
Milwaukee County Transit System


Donna Brown-Martin
Director of Transportation
Milwaukee County

Non-Partisan Issue

POLITICAL LEANINGS



26%

24%

26%

What's working against us

Increased usage of Rideshare and Micromobility:

- Ridership has been shown to drop due to uber and lyft.
- Low-income residents and commuters are using scooters more frequently.
- Pittsburg Study on Scooters and Bike Share (2022)
 - 48% of trips were for commuting purposes, 19% for essential errands
 - Almost half of riders fall under median household income levels and 1/3rd report having no access to a vehicle, while another 18% say they have occasional access to a vehicle.
 - Taking away trips that would have typically been on mass transit.
- All of this to say, this isn't a bad thing for communities, but it is not a replacement for good transit. Choice in travel mode is important for cities.

Work Trends:

- A 2023 Pew Research Center survey found that **41 percent of remote-capable workers now follow hybrid schedules, up from 35 percent in January 2022.** During that time, the number of people working from home full time decreased from 43 to 35 percent, but this is still significantly higher than the 7 percent who worked from home pre-pandemic. **Worldwide, over one-third of office desks remain unoccupied throughout the week,** though Asian and European employees have returned to workplaces faster than their U.S. counterparts.

What's working against us

Detours:

- Force us to operate on roads not designed for large buses.
- Adds a lot of confusion, we cannot update our passenger information very well.

Parking:

- Just like making the bus easier to use generates more usage, an abundance of cheap and available parking increases single occupancy car usage.

Sidewalks and Accessibility

- Condition, gaps, and ADA.
- Winter accessibility.



What's working against us

Global Supply Chain Issues:

- Delivery for new vehicles is 1-2 years wait
- Parts have been very difficult to find, forcing some vehicles to be parked for long periods of time.

Inflation:

- Labor and fuel costs have increased significantly.

Funding:

- Uncertainty of long-term funding.
- Ongoing uncertainty in Wisconsin.



Opportunities

- Additional pass programs.
- College enrollment.
- Northern Lights Express.
- Continued development along transit corridors.
- Fewer parking requirements for new developments.
- Additional funding for alternative modes of transportation.
- Great partners like you!





Questions or Comments?

Thank you!

Chris Belden – Director of Planning and Grants - DTA

Fun Facts

- 70% of DTA's operating budget is labor expenses. Fuel is 10-15% of expenses.
- Vehicle size has little to no impact on cost. In fact, larger vehicles is the most efficient for the DTA.
- The average number of people on a bus at any given time is over 5. While some trips may carry very few, others carry 60 or more.
- Large DTA buses have a minimum life of 12 years or 500,000 miles.
- DTA has a maximum voter approved property tax levy in the City of Duluth of more than \$7,300,000 but only levies \$2,174,408.
- Bus shelters and relatively inexpensive. The expensive aspect is the maintenance required – regular cleaning, snow removal, glass replacement, graffiti removal...
- DTA has had 7 electric battery buses since 2018.
- DTA's Operations Center is build over the top of Miller Creek.
- The DTA has a full-time Bomb Dog and a Police Officer companion.
- DTA is authorized to issue parking tickets in the City of Duluth.