

# INSIGHTS

Metro Transit's weekly employee newsletter

September 17, 2021



Light rail technicians recently finished swapping out more than 13,000 cloth seat backs and bottoms with new, custom-designed plastic seats that are easier to keep clean and dry. Efforts to install the new blue seats began in 2020. Some of the technicians involved in the installation of plastic seats include, from left to right: Brent Lucus, Bill Cathey, James Wallisch, John Paul Luc and Brad Peterson. Read more at [metrotransit.org/ridersalmanac](https://metrotransit.org/ridersalmanac).

## What to know this week

**Construction beginning soon at Northtown Transit Center:** Construction at the Northtown Transit Center is scheduled to begin on Monday, Sept. 20, shifting operations as efforts to reconfigure the site are underway. During construction, all customers will use a temporary stop just north of the existing transit center, on the west side of the ring road around Northtown Mall. The change affects routes 10, 25, 805, 824, 831 and 852. During construction, contractors will remove a passenger area on the east side of the ring road. New shelters, benches, real-time signs, and improved lighting will be added to an area south of the ring road this fall. When construction is complete in mid-December, all customers will use this area.

**Ridership continues to climb:** Ridership rose for the fifth consecutive month in August, to just over 98,400 average weekday rides. In January, average weekday ridership was around 81,000 rides. More than 20.1 million rides have been provided through the end of August. The total is down about 24% compared to the same period last year, which included almost three months of pre-pandemic ridership.

**Aerosol certification training in October:** Operators who need to be recertified to carry an approved aerosol device while on duty should see their coordinator to sign up for a training class in October. To remain eligible to carry an aerosol device, operators must recertify every two years.

**Rider surveys underway:** Through October 31, contractors hired by the Metropolitan Council will be surveying customers on routes 2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 18, 19, 21 and both BRT and LRT lines. Surveyors will wear a blue safety vest and a badge indicating they are conducting transit research. When a surveyor boards, please press the "C" key to record their ride and allow them to board without a fare.

## Climate commitments are more important than ever

From Marilyn Porter, Director-Engineering & Facilities

The Twin Cities just recorded one of its driest and hottest summers on record, with 26 days exceeding 90 degrees and reports of roads becoming so hot they cracked open.



In other parts of the country, communities faced deadly heat, wildfires, and hurricane-driven flooding – destructive events once thought to only occur once every 100 years.

The extreme weather we're seeing here and around the world is a sobering and stark reminder of our responsibility to reduce our emissions while readying ourselves for the local impacts of climate change.

Statewide, residents are being called to similarly reflect on the urgent need to act on climate change next week, declared Climate Week by Gov. Tim Walz.

At Metro Transit, our commitment to sustainability is clearly reflected in the services we provide and in our efforts to make transit more widely available and attractive in our region. But we cannot stop there.

Helping our region become more environmentally sustainable is one of the five primary goals in our new Strategic Plan, which should inform and inspire all our work.

The most publicly visible symbol of our sustainability commitment is the ongoing effort to bring more electric buses into our fleet.

Today, we are in the process of buying eight 40-foot electric buses, adding chargers to our new Minneapolis Bus Garage, and returning the METRO C Line's electric buses to service as soon as possible. We'll have a plan to continue transitioning our bus fleet to low- and no-emission models completed by next year.

On the facilities side, we are establishing baseline information to show how much electricity, natural gas, and water we're consuming and to measure savings from

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building improvements like the use of LED lights.

Our new Minneapolis Bus Garage will be our most energy-innovative support facility ever, using natural light, rooftop solar panels and technology that can convert solar energy into heat for the building.

Moving forward, these and other sustainability efforts will be championed by a new working group that includes staff from several departments and new sustainability leaders in Engineering & Facilities.

We will also continue to support work to create the Council's first Climate Action Plan, which will set climate-related strategies and goals for all divisions.

This is big, important work that is only becoming bigger and more important every year.

But amid all the sobering news, I hope we can think not only of the immense challenges we're facing but of the immense opportunities we have to help make things better.

Making the most of those opportunities is imperative for the future of our organization, the communities we serve and the world we all inhabit. Thank you for recognizing and responding to this urgent call to action.

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Submit your proof of COVID-19 vaccine today

If you have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, please submit your proof of vaccination through Employee Self Service as soon as possible. Acceptable proof of vaccination includes:

- The COVID-19 vaccination card received at your vaccination appointment
- Immunization record from the Minnesota Department of Health
- Vaccination record from your doctor's office

To submit this information, visit [pspec.metc.state.mn.us](https://pspec.metc.state.mn.us) and navigate to the form: Main Menu > Self Service > Personal Information > MetC Vaccination Card.

For information about accessing a digital copy of your vaccination records, visit [health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/miic/records.html](https://health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/miic/records.html). A photo of your vaccination card is also acceptable.

When your submission has been approved, you'll receive a confirmation email. For questions about ESS, email [ESS.HRIS@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:ESS.HRIS@metc.state.mn.us).

### Learn more

All employees are invited to join an upcoming

CUSTOMERS TELL US HOW WE'RE DOING

## "I am so happy to be on the bus again"

All Metro Transit bus operators received a commendation from a customer who appreciates all they do.

*I just wanted to say I am so happy to be on the bus again. I missed the friendly and dedicated Metro Transit bus drivers who get me downtown safely. I take the 515, 535 and 14. I thought of them often during the pandemic when I went 15+ months without using transit. They are frontline workers who do much more than drive a bus. They enforce and assist. My hat's off to them for making it through and continuing to persevere.*

Sloane M.

Q&A about the COVID-19 vaccination requirement and testing procedures. The events will be held on:

- Monday, Sept. 20, 11 a.m. to noon (ID 683172193)
- Wednesday, Sept. 22, 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. (ID 604971061)

If you would like an email invite, please contact [mary.anderson@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:mary.anderson@metc.state.mn.us). To call into the meeting, dial 763-600-8619 and enter the IDs listed above.

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Congratulations to these employees who celebrated their 20-year work anniversaries in August

Henry Steward, Fare Collections Specialist  
Timmy Webber, Operator-Nicollet  
Michael Miller, Foreperson, Signals  
Tacy Sandifer, Fare Collections Specialist

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Welcome to these recent new hires

**Andrew Hostetler**, Engineer, Green Line Extension. Andrew is an Iowa State University graduate who previously worked for MiTek, providing technical engineering support and managing a research and development lab. Andrew lives in Eagan with his wife Amy and dog Grizz. His hobbies include guitar and watching football.

**Hollie Clancy**, Bus Technology Systems Specialist. Hollie previously worked in the City of Orlando's Traffic Management Center and for Seminole County, Florida, where she focused on traffic signals and timings. Hollie is a mom of two cats and a Star Wars fanatic.

**Stephen Smith**, Senior Project Coordinator, Support Facilities. Stephen previously worked at HNTB and was involved with work on the METRO Gold Line. In his new role, he will work on the Minneapolis Bus Garage and lead an HVAC replacement and upgrade program. Outside of work, Stephen spends as much time as possible with his wife and two daughters, enjoys swimming, walking his dog (Milo), gardening and spending time with friends and family.

**Josiah Magnusson**, Electro Mechanic Technician. Josiah spent 8 years with the U.S. Air Force where he worked on aerospace equipment. Outside of work, he likes to trade stocks in Crypto, play the piano, and explore different parts of the Twin Cities.