

## Transportation study report for LWV - N.O., WBL, Mahtomedi area

At its Annual Meeting in May 2009, the members of the White Bear/North Oaks/Mahtomedi Area League of Women Voters voted to conduct an examination of the availability and effectiveness of public transportation services in the communities we serve. The original questions for the study were brief;

What public transportation services exist in our area?  
How well do those services seem to be meeting the needs of people in our communities?  
If there is unmet need, what might it take to fill the gap?

Members of the committee were: Sharon Guiser, Judy Ottman, Isabel Rife, Mary Santi, Ashok Sabherwal, Jean Tews and Carolyn Wensman

Each member was assigned one or more communities to call and Jean wrote up the questions we were to ask in each of the interviews.

What transportation services are available to citizens in your city/county?  
Are these services adequate?  
What is the ridership data?  
What are your priorities and plans for the future?  
What is included in your comprehensive plan regarding transportation?  
What transportation service costs are borne by the city/county?

As you will see in the report we had limited success in answering these questions; We were generally able to find out what was or was not available for public transportation, but none of the communities was able to provide information on ridership, future plans or whether there is unmet need for transportation. Apparently there are not large numbers of people making demands of city councils for more transportation. Most of the people interviewed referred us to the Met Council for any of the user data. Met Council was contacted and we had a few replies but to date, no data on ridership, but, since the whole system of local transportation has been reformed in the past year, some of that information may be irrelevant.

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Metro Transit Commuter Service: 6 - 9 am and 3 - 6 pm

The following routes are available in the general area:

Route 265 serves St. Paul to Maplewood Mall and White Bear Ave. to Lake Square and around Birch Lake. There is a park and ride at 61 and Whitacre.

Route 219 serves White Bear Co. Rd. E to Maplewood Mall or Woodbury Hwy 94 via Century Ave. Park and ride at the Mall transit center.

Route 270 serves Mahtomedi, Willernie, and Birchwood to downtown Minneapolis or St. Paul via Mall transit center. Stops are at Maple st. and the triangle.

Route 275 serves Lino Lakes, Centerville, WBL and WB township to downtown St. Paul via 35E. Park and rides at Cub Foods, 96 and 35E, and Township Theater, Centerville and Co. Rd. J.

Route 62 serves North Oaks, Shoreview, Vadnais Heights, traveling on Hodgson Rd. and Rice St.

Of the 11 Communities polled, Hugo, Grant and Dellwood have no access to transit unless they drive to White Bear Lake, the closest park and ride. Mahtomedi has a bus but no park and ride lot to leave a car.

Arden Hills is not served directly by any bus but they can access the Met Transit system in New Brighton, Rt 4 and 141 to Minneapolis.

Vadnais Heights and North Oaks have 2 routes leaving from either Shoreview Community center or Little Canada Transit center; #62 or #262 to St. Paul. see [metrotransit.org](http://metrotransit.org) or call 612-373-3333.

#### Suburb to Suburb:

There are several Met Transit routes that serve the suburb to suburb function, including Rt 223 between Roseville and Maplewood and Rt 219 between Maplewood and Oakdale. "Unfortunately these routes do not perform as well as radial routes that connect to downtown and denser development patterns within the central cities. In our current environment of limited funding for transit operations, combined with existing development and local land use policies that are not always supportive of transit, it is difficult to justify a larger investment in this type of service." according to Lisa Barajas of the Met Council.

## Local Transport Service

Most communities in the area have not had much in the way of transit service up to this point, except for the mandatory service to the handicapped. This situation is due to change in the next few months.

At present all communities are served by some type of Metro Mobility, which is door-to-door service for residents of all ages with permanent disabilities that prohibit using standard transit services. In Washington Co. it is called HSI and may have other names in other areas.

White Bear is also served by the Lion Mobile which operates within the WB School District, including Waverly Gardens which is in the N.E. corner of North Oaks, and can transport people in wheelchairs. This is a door-to-door service for 60+ seniors or the disabled. It is operated by the WB Senior program and funded by the school district and the Lion's Club.

The handicapped service is not due to change at this time

## Lake Area Bus

The Lake Area Bus was a Dial-a-Ride, door-to-door service scheduled by appointment.

It was funded by the local communities in which it operated. White Bear and Mahtomedi, Birchwood and Vadnais Heights.

This service is being phased out and replaced by Transit Link starting sometime in March 2010 serving the entire 7 county Metro Area, including all of Washington Co. and St. Paul. The Washington Co. service area includes Afton, Stillwater, Bayport, Cottage Grove, Grant, Forest Lake and Hugo, Lake Elmo, Marine on St. Croix, Newport, Oakdale, Oak Park Heights, Pine Springs, St. Croix Beach, St. Mary's Point, St. Paul Park, Scandia, White Bear Lake and Township and Woodbury. The following Ramsey Co.

cities will also be served by the Wash. Co. service: Gem Lake, Little Canada, Maplewood, North Oaks, North St. Paul and Vadnais Heights. Anything west of Hodgson Rd. (Arden Hills, Shoreview) will be in the Anoka Co. service area and the schedule may be different for starting date.

This new service may be a way of providing suburb to suburb service as people can transfer between routes and with regular transit where available.

All of the smaller cities which did not fund the Lake Area bus will now be included in the service and it will be funded entirely by the Met Council.

It will run 6am to 7pm and the number is 651-602-5465.

Fares are based on the distance traveled. For trips less than 10 miles, the price is 2.25 each way. For trips of 10 to 20 miles the fare is 4.50 each way. For trips over 20 miles passengers will pay 6.75 each way. Transfers are free, and discounts are available for group trips. ADA-certified riders pay maximum of 4.50 per direction, regardless of distance.

## Future Plans

Metro Transit reviews requests for service from local governments and citizens on an ongoing basis. When requests have merit, they are added to the agency's Service Improvement Plan and implemented as funding for service expansion allows. Current budget projections do not allow for added service in the near future.

### Rush Line

The Rush Line Corridor is a transportation corridor extending 80 miles from Hinckley to the Union Depot in downtown St. Paul. The Rush Line Corridor Task Force has undertaken an Alternatives Analysis to study longer-term transit options, which includes bus and rail. Federal and state funds have been used to upgrade/construct park and ride lots and transit centers. At present development of this corridor is on a very long-term track, although there is an express peak period bus service between Forest Lake, Columbus and St. Paul for a 1 yr. period starting in late 2009. There is a stop at the White Bear township theater at County Rd. J and 35E.