

A bimonthly newsletter published by the Minnesota Public Transit Association.

# intransit

**September 2017 Edition**

**It's Not Too Late To Join Us In St. Cloud!**

*[Visit our website](#) for MPTC registration and more information*



Sessions focused on tech and the future



Vendor Expo - 20+ vehicles on display



Educational tours and trainings



Engaging keynote speakers

# President's Column

## Craig Rempp



Autumn is here and that means it's time for the Minnesota Public Transit Conference! We have a great event planned that you don't want to miss. In addition to great training sessions and updates on issues that you need to know, the event provides a great opportunity to catch up with fellow transit professionals and learn from others about what is working in our changing transit world.

This year the conference will be held October 16-18th in St. Cloud. We want to thank St. Cloud Metro Bus for all of their assistance with this year's event. There is a lot to learn from what is happening in St. Cloud so be sure register today: [Minnesota Public Transit Conference](#).

MPTA continues to work during the legislative interim on new initiatives and outreach efforts. We are working with the Office of Transit to set in motion a process for transit systems to work with professional consultants on developing a comprehensive, individual 5-year plan. Look for more information on this effort at the transit conference. We're also working with the RTAP committee to provide important training programs that will benefit all rural systems.

We know that all politics is local so we'll be working to organize local meetings with legislators. These are always important for strengthening relationships and keeping legislators informed regarding the impact of transit service on their communities. We appreciate your participation in these local events.

Our MPTA Annual Meeting will be held in conjunction with the Transit Conference. The Annual Meeting allows members to bring up issues of concern and ideas for making the association more valuable for you. It's also your chance to vote for MPTA Board members and officers so be sure to attend this year's meeting on October 16th at the River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud.

We also have new leadership in Minnesota guiding transit agencies. The Metropolitan Council is now chaired by Alene Tchourumoff. Nick Thompson is the head of Metropolitan Transportation Services while Brian Lamb continues to direct Metro Transit. We'll get an update on the latest developments from the Metropolitan Council at the Transit Conference.

For the Office of Transit, new leadership is taking over as we bid a sad farewell to Mike Schadauer who is retiring in early October. We have appreciated Mike's leadership and his work with MPTA over the years. Tim Sexton, who has served as Construction and Operations Section Director with MnDOT, working on environmental stewardship, will be the Interim Director for the Office of Transit for six months. We welcome Tim to the Office of Transit and look forward to working with him. You can get to know Tim at the Transit Conference.

As always, MPTA is busy working for you. With your support and participation, we can all work to support each other and provide the best transit service for our riders. You'll be receiving information about MPTA activities and proposed dues for next year. Please plan to continue to receive all of the benefits of membership.

Thank you and see you in St. Cloud!

*Craig Rempp, President*





# 2017 MN Public Transit Conference Schedule

## Monday, October 16 - Registration Opens At 10:00 am

11:00 am – 3-Hour Training Session I: Fundamentals of Transit Supervision (*includes lunch, pre-registration required*)

1:00 pm – 3-Hour Training Session II: Enhancing Independence through Travel Training and Community Outreach (*pre-registration required*)

3:00 pm – CEO Summit (*invitation only*)

4:30 pm – MPTA Annual Meeting

5:30 pm – Transit Awards Ceremony

6:30 pm – Welcome Reception

## Tuesday, October 17

7:00 am – Breakfast and Registration

8:30 am – Welcome and Keynote Speaker: **Matt Thornhill** from SIR's Institute for Tomorrow

**10:00 – 11:00 am Break in expo area**

11:00 am – 12:00 pm – Concurrent Sessions

**12:00 – 2:30 pm – Vendor Expo and Lunch**

2:45 pm – Mobility Training Center and Operations Center Tour (*pre-registration required*)

6:00 pm – 22nd Annual First Transit Reception feat. Lizzy the Dream Girl and Tommy Ryman

## Wednesday, October 18

7:30 am – Breakfast and Registration

8:00 – 9:15 am – General Session: MnDOT and Metropolitan Council Updates

9:30 – 10:45 am – Concurrent Sessions

11:00 am – 12:00 pm – Concurrent Sessions

12:00 pm – Closing Lunch: **Anne Grady** on Navigating Change

2:00 – 4:00 pm – New Flyer Plant Tour (*pre-registration required*)



## **Buses moved back to Transit Center; agency makes improvements to facility**

Metro Bus customers returned to a cleaner and safer Transit Center on September 25th. Customer boarding was temporarily moved to the Lady Slipper Lot this summer when reconstruction of 5th Ave. prevented bus accessibility to the facility.

“The construction project presented the opportunity for us to make improvements to our property,” said Ryan Daniel, Metro Bus CEO. “These small changes will create a better environment for our customers.”

- Reorganization of bus lanes increases safety: Buses park around the perimeter of the building in designated lanes so that customers can easily find their routes. The spaces have been reconfigured to reduce the need to move buses while drivers are on break. The reduced movement of buses decreases the chance for accidents.

- Smoke-free property enhances air quality: Metro Bus has made the entire property smoke-free to improve air quality and safety for everyone. The smoking shelter by the alley has been removed and an outdoor ashtray has been installed at the northwest edge of the property.

- Updated landscaping promotes cleanliness: Mulch, bushes and decorative grass has been replaced with crushed granite rock, a cleaner alternative. The new open landscaping also improves visibility and safety.

- New vending machines provide healthier options: The snack machine will be replaced with a refrigerated model that includes items such as cheese snacks, boiled eggs and fresh fruit. Chips and candy will continue to be available. Beverage options also will be expanded to include items such as sparkling water.

- Revised Code of Conduct provides guidance: Metro Bus is making a greater effort to communicate its expectations to customers, which will create a more positive bus riding experience for everyone. The agency has revised its Code of Conduct to cover more topics and is increasing the visibility of the Code with new signs at the Transit Center, Mobility Training Center and on all buses. A multi-lingual brochure is also available with the Code in English, Spanish and Somali.

“We appreciate the efforts of the City of St. Cloud, the St. Cloud Police Department and surrounding businesses for their help during this process,” said Daniel. “Together, we are creating a safer and healthier community.”

### **Statewide Transit News**

[Heartland Express to add buses, routes](#) - Isanti County News, September 27

[New rapid bus line to include battery-electric buses](#) - Metropolitan Council, September 25

[Semcac hiring Transportation Compliance & Marketing Manager](#) - September 14

[New county transit provider begins Jan. 1](#) - Pipestone County Star, September 13

[Public transportation in Mille Lacs and Kanabec Counties](#) - Mille Lacs Messenger, September 9

[State Fair, Green Line see record ridership](#) - Metro Transit’s Rider’s Almanac blog, September 7

[Stewartville to start sharing Rolling Hills Transit bus with Chatfield](#) - Rochester Post Bulletin, August 23

[Huebsch coming aboard as transit director](#) - Wadena Pioneer Journal, August 11

[6 things to know about Rochester's planned bus garage expansion](#) - Rochester Post Bulletin, August 3

[Transit service up and running in Hermantown](#) - Duluth News Tribune, August 1

## Dial-a-Ride Garage Addition Ribbon Cutting on September 26th

- Increased storage capacity for Dial-a-Ride buses by 40% and replaced roof

- \$2.1 Million total cost, funded by MnDOT and local taxpayers

- Come see it for yourself during the Tuesday afternoon tour during the conference!



SCMB Project Team, from left to right: Gene Deering, Ryan Daniel, Ed Yorek, Gary Korneck, Steve Williams, Paula Mastey, Dale Abraham and Tom Cruikshank.



Interior of addition.

Thanks Berta Hartig for contributing photos!

## Transit-Related Hurricane Harvey Relief

APTA is partnering with the Texas Transit Association (TTA) and South West Transit Association (SWTA) to help our fellow colleagues who have lost their homes and their belongings. TTA and SWTA are seeking gift cards they can distribute to the agencies for employees in need. Please send the gift cards to:

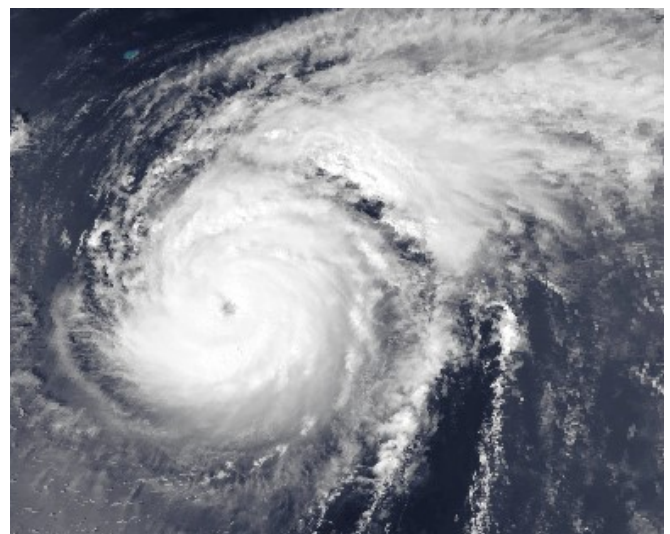
TEXAS Harvey Relief/TTA

ATTN: Meredith Greene

106 E. 6th Street, Suite 900

Austin, TX 78701

Please visit [this webpage](#) for more information.





# News



## DTA Introduces Five New Bus Routes in 2017

The Duluth Transit Authority (DTA) is introducing five new bus routes in 2017. Route 5 (West to Mall Area), Route 21 (Lakeside to Miller Hill Mall via UMD), Route 22 (Lincoln Park to Lakeside) and Route 23 (UMD Circulator) went into effect on August 27, 2017. The new Route 20 (Downtown to United Healthcare and Airpark) will go into effect on December 3, 2017.

This new service is being funded by a grant the DTA received from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). It is part of a MnDOT two-year pilot program that funds public transit initiatives throughout “Greater Minnesota.” Initial ridership data has been strong and the DTA has received positive feedback from their passengers.

The DTA’s Director of Planning & Grants, Sophia Parr, believes that these new routes meet a need in the community and that ridership will reflect this demand.

“The DTA’s new bus routes were developed using rider input, historic travel patterns and recent trends in housing and business development throughout the city. With the new routes, the DTA was able to address areas like London Road, a newly developing commercial and residential corridor, and frequency of service between the UMD campus and the Hillside neighborhood which houses a large majority of students.” Parr said. “Additionally, with two new routes that access the city’s mall area directly from the western and eastern ends of the city, the DTA was able to tackle a bigger issue, how to transport people throughout Duluth without needing to go into downtown,” continued Parr.

Two of the new routes provide direct service to the Miller Hill Mall without traveling through downtown. The new Route 5 provides service to the mall on weekdays from as far west as Fond du Lac and New Duluth. On the weekends, it travels from West Duluth to the mall and then proceeds to the Duluth International Airport. This route previously only ran on weekends. Ridership through September 15th was 4,292.

The new Route 21 provides service to the mall on weekdays from Lakeside in East Duluth and stops at the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD). Now, UMD students have a direct connection to the mall with a trip time of only 25 minutes. Before Route 21 was introduced, students going to the mall had to transfer onto a Route 8 or Route 10 bus at the Duluth Transportation Center (DTC) downtown with a trip time of about an hour. Ridership through September 15th was 2,091.

The new Route 23 is a circulator route with 30-minute headways that travels in both directions UMD students living off-campus in the East Hillside neighborhood can still conveniently get to the mall by transferring from Route 23 onto a Route 21 bus at the Kirby Plaza Bus Hub. Students can ride the “Maroon” Route 23 to campus and arrive ten minutes before their class begins. Then, they can ride the “Gold” Route 23 home shortening their total transit time. Ridership through September 15th was 6,794.

The new Route 22 originates at the Lincoln Park Middle School. *Article continues on the next page*





*Continued from the previous page* The school has had accessibility issues since it was built in 2010 due to its isolated location perched up on the hillside. Now, the new route 22 provides both parents and students a convenient option for getting to the school. Once Route 22 travels through the DTC in downtown Duluth, it proceeds along London Road passing the new mixed-use ENDI Complex and Glensheen Mansion. East High School and Lakeside are also provided service with Route 22. Ridership through September 15th was 2,942.

Much like the Lincoln Park Middle School, United Healthcare and the Airpark are isolated due to their geographic locations. Once the new Route 20 begins in December, it will give employees who work in these areas a convenient option for commuting to work. Route 20 originates at the DTC downtown and travels through heavily populated neighborhoods before going past the St. Louis County Public Safety building on its way to United Healthcare and the Airpark.

These five new routes improve a transit system that already provides comprehensive service throughout the Twin Ports. Duluthians now have 23 different DTA bus routes to choose from which provide convenient access to major destinations across the city. However, continued strong ridership will be key in sustaining these routes beyond the two-year pilot program.

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Send submissions for the next *InTransit* to [laura@transportationalliance.com](mailto:laura@transportationalliance.com).

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