Metro Transit

News Release

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METRO TRANSIT ANNOUNCES NEW INNOVATIONS IN ELECTRONIC TRIP PLANNING

Metro Transit is excited to announce new innovations in electronic passenger information that will make riding easier and more environmentally friendly to ride the bus than ever before.

Google Maps

Metro trip planning information is now available in Google Maps. Google Maps makes navigating Metro's more than 60 routes and 2,200 bus stops throughout Madison, the Town of Madison, Fitchburg, Middleton and Verona much simpler and more user friendly.

"Making our information available in Google Maps is going to be great for the transit-riding community," said Metro Transit General Manager Chuck Kamp. "We provided more than 13.6 million rides last year and our ridership is up more than 18% in the last five years. With tools like this, we hope our ridership will grow even more in the future."

There are several features of Google Maps that Metro staff hope will go beyond providing convenience to its existing riders, but make it easier for more people than ever before to change their commuting habits and try riding the bus.

Besides being easy and convenient to the everyday transit user, Google trip planning information is available in 12 different languages including Spanish and there is also an interface that is easily accessible by screen readers.

"We think this new trip planning information will help us expand ridership by making our information more accessible to more people in the community," Kamp said. "It makes it simple and understandable to ride, including for those residents and visitors who may not speak English or are visually impaired."

Some other benefits of this new trip planning tool are:

- Customization of routes and trips with three options
- Walking directions to and from the bus stop
- Allows use of business names or names of places rather than an address
- Street view imagery of locations
- Multiple languages
- Accessible for visually impaired users
- Access from mobile applications such as iPhone, Blackberry, Windows Mobile, S60, and other Java enabled phones.

To plan your trip in Google Maps, visit **www.maps.google.com** or **mymetrobus.com/google**.

- more -

Third Party Smart Phone and PC Apps

In the past year, Metro Transit has been approached on more than one occasion by students or other programmers looking to develop PC and other mobile applications using Metro's real time GPS data.

Embracing a national trend where transit systems are working with these third party developers, Metro is now promoting a list of applications that staff have tested and feel will provide a benefit to its riders.

Currently, there are two applications listed: "Bus Radar – Madison" available for Android and "Locomatix" available for iPhones and Blackberry.

Both show real-time bus arrival estimates and location information for all of Metro's 2,200 bus stops.

The use of Google Transit and other third party transit applications help Metro further its continued environmental efforts which currently includes using hybrid buses, ultra-low sulfur fuel and clean Green energy.

"In this age of heightened national focus on environmentalism and our own green endeavors, we hope the ease of trip planning on PCs and mobile devices will greatly reduce our need for paper schedules," Kamp said. "This will help our overall operating cost, and by not using paper, we are reducing the amount of pollution in the air by reducing our need for paper production."

For more information or to plan your trip, visit www.mymetrobus.com or email mymetrobus@cityofmadison.com.

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Google Trip Plan Information

- maps.google.com
- mymetrobus.com/google
- m.google.com/maps (mobile devices)

Phone Applications (mymetrobus.com/apps)

- Bus Radar – Madison (Android Market); Designer: Aleksandr Dobkin   adob321@gmail.com
- Locomatix (Download from iTunes);   Designer: Jignesh Patel   jignesh@locomatix.com

- Metro Transit Tracker (mymetrobus.com/mobile)