

Metro Transit

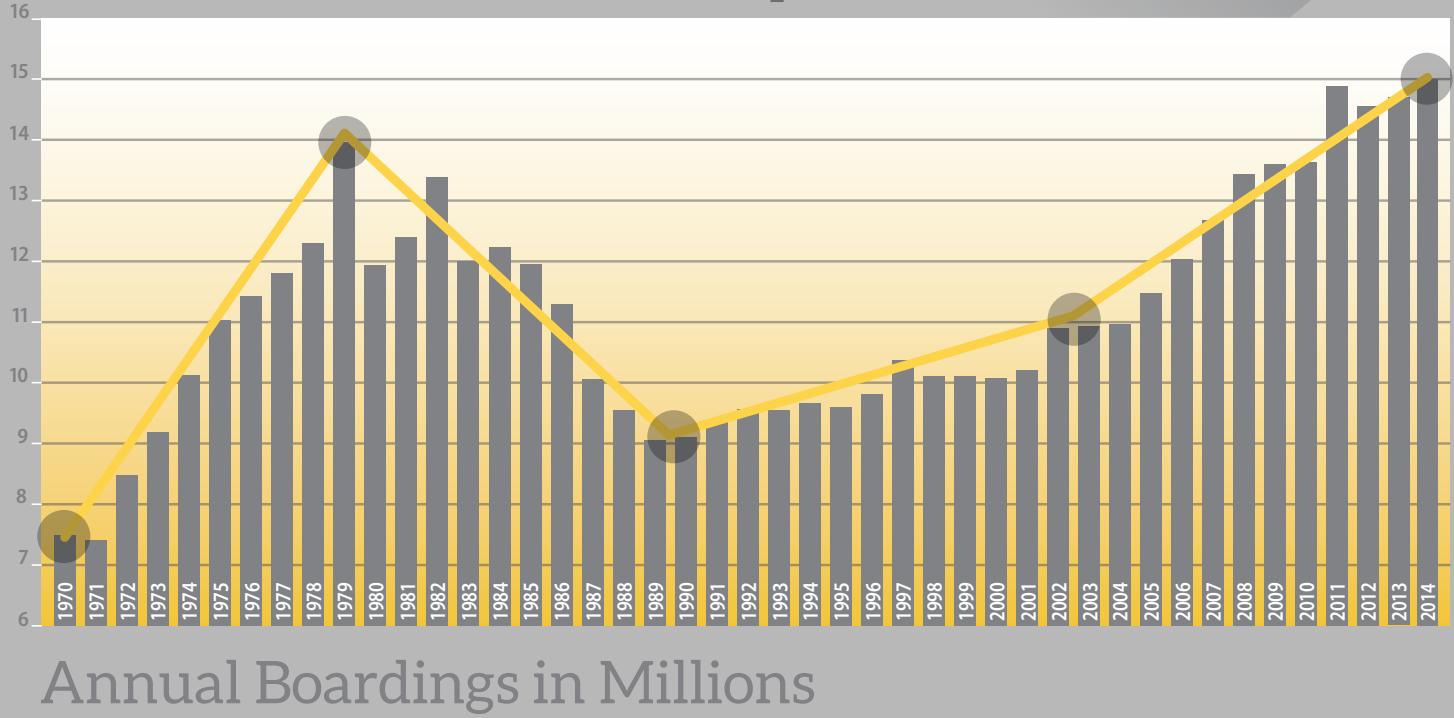
2014 in Review





Metro Transit

Annual Fixed Route Ridership 1970 - 2014



2014 Annual Report

Metro Transit experienced another successful and record-breaking year in 2014.

In contrast to what is occurring at other transit systems throughout Wisconsin, Metro Transit set another ridership record in 2014. Metro tallied more than 15.2 million rides last year, compared to 14.7 million rides in 2013. This ridership is the first time Metro has surpassed more than 15 million rides in a single year.

Metro Transit's continued increase in ridership can be attributed to a number of factors some of which include an overall increase in population density, an expansion of downtown high rise apartment buildings, and a large level of Millennials living in Metro's core service area.

According to a 2014 report *Millennials in Motion* released by the U.S. Public Interest Research Group (U.S. PIRG), the Millennial generation is less car-focused than older Americans and previous generations of young people. Young Americans drive less and use public transportation more.

With the University of Wisconsin and an ever-increasing number of start-up tech companies centralized in the downtown area, along with software company Epic Systems in neighboring Verona, Madison is becoming the type of community where young people want to live.

In addition, the use of smartphones to plan trips and track buses continues to make it easier and more efficient to ride the bus each year.

Challenges Due to Ridership

Along with its success in 2014, Metro is also faced with a new set of challenges that is different than other systems around the state.

Metro's two largest passenger complaints are that buses are overcrowded and drivers are not able to maintain their schedules. As a result, riders are not able to make their connections to other routes or are late to jobs or appointments. With this ever-increasing ridership, more and more people are boarding and exiting the bus, which causes delays at each stop. Each delay causes the bus to get further and further behind to the point it can no longer make connections with other routes.

Peak-Hour Service Expansions No Longer Possible

Another factor that has attributed to high ridership and sets Metro apart in Wisconsin is that Metro has been adding, not reducing, service in the past years to keep up with demand.

In 2013, service was added to serve underserved neighborhoods, help address overcrowding in Madison's busy downtown corridor, and accommodate additional service requests from Epic Systems in Verona.

In 2014, Metro again increased service out to the Epic Campus. A new Route 49 was also created adding service out to Fitchburg. Additional service was also added to Metro's busy Route 50.

In 2015, Metro is planning to add service to the UW Health at The American Center hospital facility on Madison's far east side.

Following this 2015 service addition, Metro expects that its ability to expand service during peak hours has come to an end. Due to lack of funding for additional buses or a much-needed bus garage, and with no regional authority funding structure in place, Metro will not be able to accommodate requests from its customers or contracting partners for additional peak-hour service.



Need for Regional Transit Authority

More than ever before, Metro Transit is in need of funding to grow the transit infrastructure in the Madison area. Staff are seeking the approval of a potential regional transit authority, which would further provide the funding and governance structures needed to better serve the increasing transit needs of the community.

Continued Need for a Bus Rapid Transit System (BRT)

To address issues created by this ever-increasing demand for service, Metro Transit staff continue to explore the possibilities of implementing a Bus Rapid Transit System (BRT) in the Madison area.

A BRT is a high-frequency limited-stop transit system that offers faster more direct service using larger vehicles to increase capacity.

Transit Development Plan

In 2013, the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board (MPO) released a report that outlined the framework of its long-range regional transportation plan for Madison. This *2013-2017 Transit Development Plan for the Madison Urban Area* recommended that a BRT could help the City achieve its long-term strategic transportation planning and urban development goals.

Metro is looking for the Madison Common Council to accept this report in the coming year and authorize Metro to move forward on next phases of development, environmental evaluation, and project implementation of this type of system.

Bus Size Study

In 2014, a bus size study was also completed that examined the efficiency and effectiveness of Metro's vehicle size.

The purpose of this study was to determine if Metro could use larger or smaller buses to address overcrowding, operate more efficiently, and better serve the community. Historically, Metro Transit has used only one standard bus size to meet the transit needs of the Madison area.

The study included an analysis of existing bus services and identified routes that, based on ridership, could warrant the use larger articulated buses or could be better served with smaller, more fuel efficient buses.

In addition, the study assessed the financial and operational impacts that could result from developing a transit fleet which features varied bus sizes and seating capacity.

Finally the study made recommendations on next steps that Madison should take as it decides whether or not to introduce vehicles of different sizes.

This study specifically recommended the purchase of 40 larger articulated buses to help address schedule and capacity problems.



U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin Announces \$300,000 in TIGER Grant Funding for Madison Transportation Project

In 2014, Senator Tammy Baldwin announced that the City of Madison had been awarded \$300,000 in TIGER grant funds for the *UrbanFootprint Transit-Oriented Development Station Area Planning Initiative*.

"The UrbanFootprint Initiative will set the stage for the expansion of a Bus Rapid Transit System in Madison, remove transportation barriers and increase economic mobility throughout the city, improving the quality of life for Madison residents," Baldwin said in a news release.

This TIGER grant allows the City of Madison to undertake scenario planning and prepare detailed transit-oriented neighborhood and station area corridor plans for three key areas to be served by a bus rapid transit system.

Need for New Maintenance Facility

In addition to addressing Metro's ridership challenges through the creation of a BRT, Metro is also in need of additional funding to undertake the construction of a much-needed bus garage.

Metro currently houses 214 full-sized buses and 17 paratransit vehicles in a garage designed to only hold 160 vehicles. Even if funding were available to purchase extra buses, Metro currently does not have the space to store them.

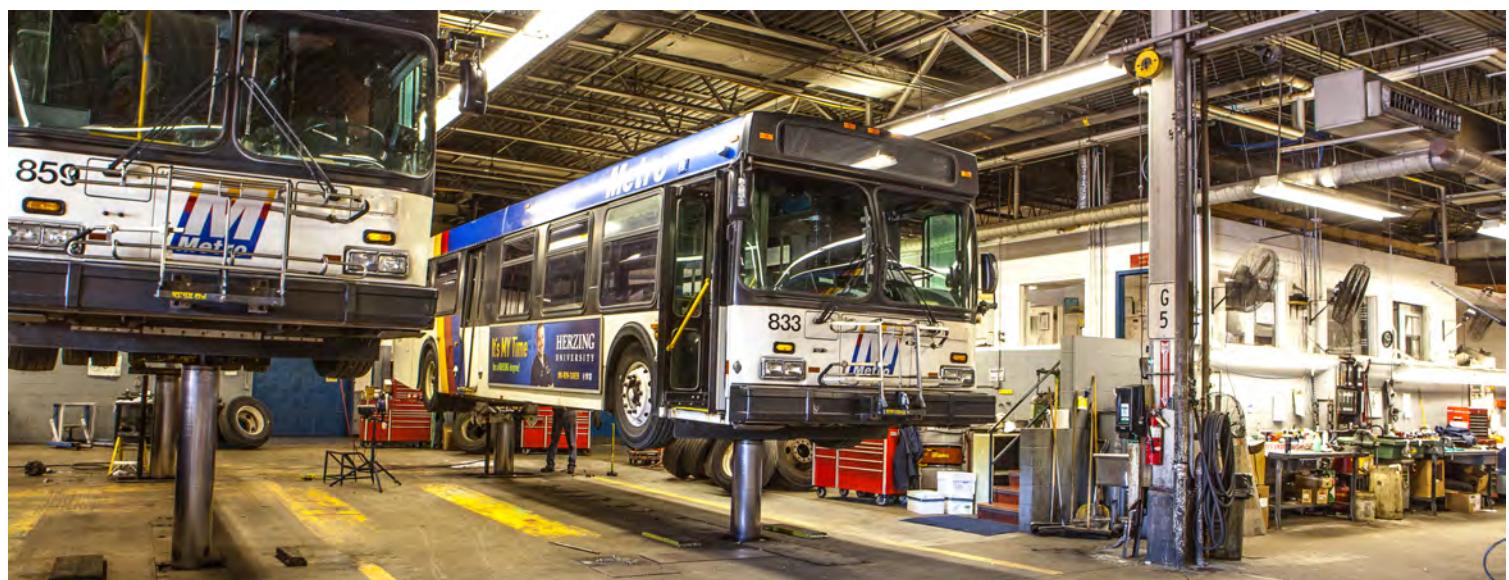
Potential Site on Nakoosa Trail

Staff have identified a site on City of Madison property on the east side of Madison for a potential facility. The possibilities of a maintenance facility on this site are currently making their way through the City's planning and building process.

This site is not shovel-ready, but is in planning stages. Metro staff are working to identify additional TIGER grant funding to finance its construction. This potential facility is expected to hold approximately 70 buses, and staff hope it will be completed in the next three to five years.

Search for Temporary Facility to Lease

In addition to this property, Metro staff are also looking for existing garage space to lease for approximately 10-15 buses until a larger facility can be built. Conversations on this project are ongoing with the Mayor's office and City of Madison staff.



Bus Stop Consolidation Project

In 2014, staff also began looking at ways utilizing existing resources to address its chronic schedule issues resulting from high ridership and overcrowded buses.

Based on an analysis of bus stop spacing along Madison's central transit corridors, it was determined that there are a number of stops placed excessively close together. These stops result in a higher number of starts and stops that increase travel time. To streamline the number of stops in the system and attempt to slightly improve on-time performance in these areas, Metro staff began implementing a bus stop consolidation program.

Stop reductions on certain street segments have been implemented. Others have been placed under review for public comment. After public comment, decisions are made on whether to remove or maintain these particular stops at their current locations.

Paratransit Service Implements In-Person Assessments

In the Spring of 2014, Metro updated its strictly paper-orientated paper paratransit application process by introducing in-person assessments to determine eligibility. Switching to in-person assessments removed many different factors that had the potential to negatively affect a person's ability to be certified for para-transit service.

Some of these potential factors include inability to type, poor handwriting, lack of skill in filling out forms, and/or inexperienced caregiver staff that might just be learning the process of getting someone certified.

To make the process more fair to the applicant, Metro hired and trained a staff person to conduct in-person assessments at Metro's administration offices.

In-person assessments involve a short paper application and a brief in-person interview with this staff person. This process allows the applicant an opportunity to discuss their mobility needs and abilities before an eligibility determination is made.

In-person assessments are now being used for all new eligibility determinations as well as for the recertification process of current riders.



New Fareboxes

Using federal grant money awarded in 2011 aimed at modernizing the nation's transit infrastructure, new electronic fareboxes were installed on all fixed-route buses in June.

New fareboxes replaced units that were more than 20 years old and had exceeded their useful life. These new fareboxes are expected to help lower maintenance costs, increase customer convenience with quicker boardings, improve ridership data, and give the opportunity to upgrade sometime in the future to smart card technology.

Quick Tix Trade-In

As part of this new farebox installation, it was determined that paper quick tix couldn't be used in the new equipment's bill acceptor. As a result, customers were asked to trade in quick tix for magnetic strip cards that would be compatible with the farebox. Drivers accepted paper quick tix through October to allow passengers time to trade in their remaining inventory.



Safety Initiatives

Safe Streets Press Conference

On November 3, Mayor Paul Soglin and Metro Transit General Manager Chuck Kamp held a press conference to release a video compiled of safety-related incidents captured by bus surveillance cameras.

Mayor Soglin and Chuck Kamp discussed incidents seen in this video to raise awareness and encourage everyone in the community to share Madison streets safely.

The goal of this press conference is to increase safety for everyone, and prevent accidents," Kamp said at the event. "If by releasing this video we were able to raise awareness enough to even prevent one bad accident, then we would consider this outreach a success."

Metro plans to use bus surveillance video for future public outreach in an attempt to help minimize serious accidents to the point that they rarely or never happen again.

Audible Turn Signals

Another safety initiative Metro undertook in 2014 was the installation of audible turn signals on all buses. When signaling a turn in traffic or pulling into a stop, buses now make an audible chirp. This equipment was installed on Metro's entire fixed-route fleet throughout the year.

Safe Ride Partnership

Metro continued its safe ride partnership with MillerCoors Brewing in 2014 by providing free rides on Metro buses on University of Wisconsin Homecoming Saturday as well as New Year's Eve. Metro values its continued partnership with MillerCoors in providing a safe transportation alternative on these two festive event days.



Service Snapshot		Performance Measures	
		Paratransit Service	Fixed Route
Transit Partners			
Fixed Route:			
City of Madison			
City of Middleton			
City of Fitchburg			
City of Verona			
Town of Madison			
University of Wisconsin – Madison			
Madison Metropolitan School District			
Madison College			
Meriter Hospital			
Edgewood College			
Epic			
St. Marys Hospital			
The American Center			
Paratransit Service:			
Village of Shorewood Hills			
Service Area			
72 square miles			
253,075 population			
Annual Operating Budget			
\$55,340,587			
Employees			
Administrative employees: 38			
Operations employees: 352			
Maintenance employees: 78			
Total (FTEs): 468			
Transit Service			
63,003 passenger trips on an average weekday, during the school year			
36,421 passenger trips on an average weekday, during the summer			
214 fixed-route buses			
17 paratransit vehicles			
5 transfer points			
208 shelters			
2,068 bus stops			
68 fixed-routes			
403,466 annual fixed-route revenue hours			
5,040,007 annual fixed-route revenue miles			
Ridership			
15,492,317 annual fixed-route and paratransit riders			

Revenues & Expenses

Revenue

Fare Revenue	\$13,318,991
Local Share*	\$19,981,088
Federal Assistance	\$6,338,075
State Funds	\$16,677,514
Other Funds	\$493,544
Total Revenues	\$56,809,212

* City budget, revenues from contracting partners, and MA Waiver.

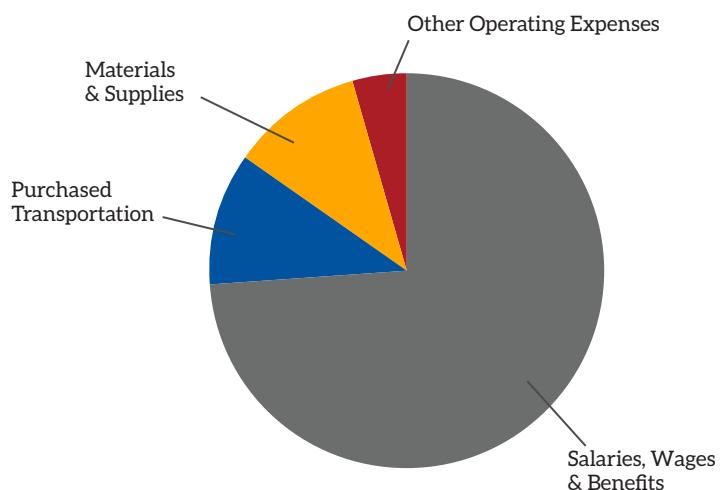
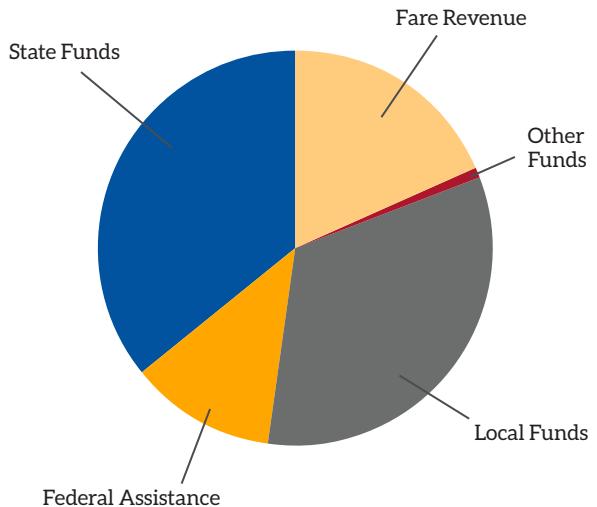
Net operating income or deficits are added to or subtracted from Metro's contingent reserve. Metro's contingent reserve balance at 12/31/2014 was \$5,017,659.

Expenses

Salaries, Wages & Benefits	\$38,852,886
Purchased Transportation	\$4,598,846
Materials & Supplies	\$6,506,463
Other Operating Expenses	\$2,050,379
Total Expenses	\$52,008,574

Annual Operating Budget: \$55,340,587

Source: National Transit Database



Transit & Parking Commission Members

City of Madison
Paul Soglin, Mayor

2014 Transit and Parking Commision Members:

Gary Poulson - chair
Margaret Bergamini
Alder Chris Schmidt
Wayne Bigelow
Dave Tolmie
Ken Golden
Ann Kovich
Alder Lucas Dailey
Alder Sue Ellingson
Alder Anita Weier
Alternates:
Kate D. Lloyd
Amanda White

Mission Statement

It is the mission of Metro, through the efforts of dedicated, well trained employees, to provide safe, reliable, convenient, and efficient public transportation to the citizens and visitors of the Metro service area.



Metro Transit System

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Madison, Wisconsin 53703
608-266-4904
www.mymetrobus.com