Why Transit?

Transit connects people to jobs, family, schools, shopping, health care centers, sports and cultural events. Transit is an alternative to driving that can reduce congestion, fuel consumption, and greenhouse emissions.

MnDOT Role in Twin Cities Area Transit:

MnDOT contributes to transitways by providing transit advantages on state highways. Transit advantages facilitate moving more people faster along existing corridors by bypassing peak-hour congestion.

MnDOT also assists the Metropolitan Council and county transit authorities in planning, designing, financing and constructing light rail and commuter rail lines.

Planning for Transitways

Planning and funding for Commuter Rail, Light Rail Transit (LRT), and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a collaborative effort involving staff from FTA, MnDOT, Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit and representatives of the counties, cities and in some cases townships along transitways.

Transitways

Transitways include bus and rail transit that enable fast, reliable travel times and an improved passenger experience on high-demand corridors in the region. Transitways help travelers avoid congestion by providing a dedicated right-of-way or other transit advantages such as ramp meter bypasses, signal priority or bus-only shoulders. Transitways link major employment centers and destinations in the region and promote transit-oriented development patterns.

Commuter Rail

Commuter Rail is a passenger train service that carries riders within a metropolitan area, typically between urban areas and their suburbs. They usually operate on freight rails or dedicated tracks. Customers primarily are travelling between work and home. These trip-to-work services usually offer concentrated frequencies primarily during rush hour, with suburban station spacing typically every five miles. Average speeds are 18 to 55 mph. The Northstar Line from Big Lake to Minneapolis is the first example of commuter rail in Minnesota.

Light Rail Transit

Light Rail Transit is generally defined as electric rail cars that operate in short trains. Powered from an overhead wire, LRT can run on exclusive, semi-exclusive or shared alignments, with or

without grade crossings, or even in traffic lanes on city streets. LRT typically operates with frequent stops spaced one-half-mile to one-mile apart in dense urban environments at speeds of 20 to 50 mph. The Hiawatha Line from the Bloomington to downtown Minneapolis is an example of LRT.

Bus Rapid Transit

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a transitway mode that uses buses while incorporating many of the premium characteristics of light rail or commuter rail. BRT offers frequent and quick service with travel times that can be as fast or faster than traveling alone in your car. With the help of transit advantages, BRT buses operate on roads and highways that are designed to give them a travel time equal to or greater than cars traveling along the same route. This may be accomplished in a number of ways including by operating in exclusive lanes, bus-only shoulders or with other vehicles operating in High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes. BRT operates at greater speeds and provides greater reliability than traditional bus service.

Other Transit Advantages

Bus-only Shoulders

The bus-only shoulders (BOS) look and operate like any other shoulder but certain buses are permitted to use the shoulders in designated areas in order to bypass congestion. MnDOT Team Transit coordinates the BOS.

Park and Ride Lots

Park and Ride Lots are a common location (e.g. parking lot) for individuals to transfer from their car to a transit vehicle.