

# TRANSIT SERVICES

This chapter discusses public transportation and corresponding ridership (shares) by provider in the St. Cloud Metropolitan Area. Specific ridership, service hour, capital resources, revenue, financial trend information has been provided, as appropriate for St. Cloud Metro Bus fixed route and paratransit service, Tri-CAP and RiverRider rural bus systems. Additional information has also been included regarding Northstar Commuter Coach and Jefferson Lines intercity bus service, and intercity passenger and Northstar commuter rail service.

Below is a brief description of how Plan policies and SAFETEA-LU planning factors are being addressed in this chapter through current activities and how in the future the APO will continue to be vigilant toward policies and planning factors. The policies and planning factors addressed in this chapter are also illustrated to the right.

The APO is working to better promote and support multimodal solutions by investing a minimum 10 percent of Plan projected revenues on bike/pedestrian and transit services. This investment will help maintain and preserve existing transit service, improve access and mobility of people and freight by reducing the number of vehicles on area roadways, and improve the quality of life in the St. Cloud Metropolitan Area by providing investments for a balanced transportation system.

APO staff is currently involved on the Metro Bus Route Restructuring Study and study results will allow Metro Bus to restructure its fixed route system to maximize ridership and transit investments, while helping to improve the safety and security of the entire system. Restructuring routes for maximum efficiency will help reduce overall bus vehicle emissions, therefore minimizing impacts on the environment. APO staff is also involved with the area Transit Committee, which is looking at ways to improve transit services in this area.

In the future, APO staff will assess and incorporate “Transit Services” action items listed in Chapter 13: Implementation as appropriate into the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to continue to work toward addressing Plan policies and focus on SAFETEA-LU planning factors.

## Background

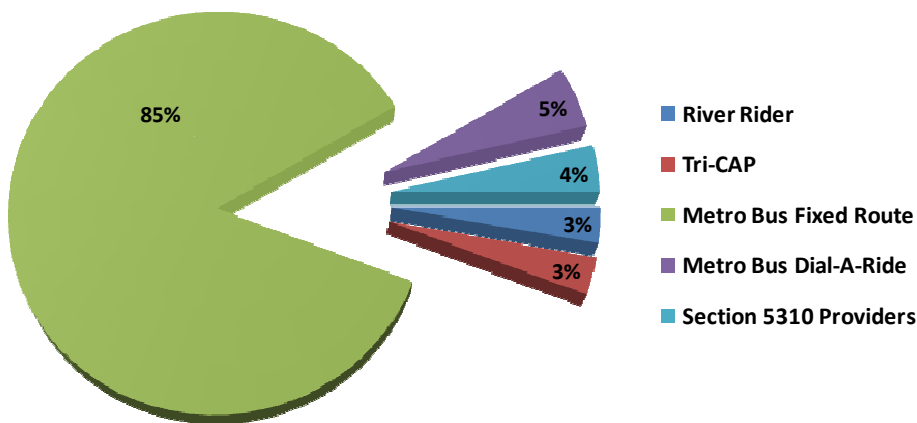
The availability of transit services in the St. Cloud Metropolitan Area has continued to increase over the last several years. The region is currently served by one urban bus provider, two rural bus systems, intercity motorcoach service, private non-profit providers, and private for-hire carriers. Figure 8-1 illustrates the total ridership shares of publicly funded bus providers in the St. Cloud Metropolitan Area. Metro Bus is the largest transit operator in the region providing fixed route and Dial-A-Ride services within the urban St. Cloud Area. River Rider and Tri-CAP are smaller rural bus systems that operate outside the Metro Bus service area and Section 5310 programs encompass private non-profit entities that provide transportation services for the elderly and disabled populations within the greater St. Cloud Area.

Addressing Plan Policies & SAFETEA-LU Planning Factors	
<b>Policy 1:</b> Improving Access & Mobility of Entire Transportation System	<b>Planning Factor:</b> Metropolitan Vitality
<b>Policy 2:</b> Maximize Transportation Investments for Movement of People & Freight	<b>Planning Factor:</b> Safety
<b>Policy 3:</b> Promote & Support Multi-Modal Solutions	<b>Planning Factor:</b> Security
<b>Policy 4:</b> Improve the Safety of All Transportation Modes & Users	<b>Planning Factor:</b> Accessibility & Mobility
<b>Policy 5:</b> Minimize Social, Economic & Environmental Impacts	<b>Planning Factor:</b> Energy & Environment
<b>Policy 6:</b> Promote System Preservation	<b>Planning Factor:</b> System Connectivity
	<b>Planning Factor:</b> System Management
	<b>Planning Factor:</b> System Preservation

Additionally, a commuter coach service, Northstar Link, was initiated in 2009 to complement Northstar Corridor Commuter Rail that currently provides passenger rail service from Big Lake to Minneapolis.

Furthermore, Amtrak provides intercity passenger rail service as part of their Empire Builder route. Planning also continues for expanded passenger rail opportunities in anticipation of an extension of the Northstar Corridor Commuter Rail service from Big Lake to St. Cloud.

**Figure 8-1  
Total Ridership Shares of Publicly Funded Bus Providers**



### Urban Bus System

Metro Bus is a transit authority, created in 1969, as a political subdivision of the State of Minnesota. It is responsible for daily management, operation, and maintenance for both Fixed Route and Paratransit systems. Employing over 115 part-time and full-time personnel, Metro Bus provides stable, consistent and comprehensive transit services for the cities of St. Cloud, Sartell, Sauk Rapids, and Waite Park.

The Metro Bus service area provides excellent coverage throughout the greater St. Cloud Area including providing connections between and among neighborhoods, businesses, and retail centers. Many of the areas served satisfy traditional transit needs based on income, elderly populations, high density residential neighborhoods, employment and commercial centers, and single and/or zero vehicle households. Metro Bus fixed route service operates seven days per week and includes 15 regular routes as well as a system serving St. Cloud State University that includes four daytime routes, one shuttle route, three late night routes, and one point deviated evening route. The system includes three transit centers: a Downtown Transit Center, which is served by many of the regular routes as well as the evening routes; the Crossroads Transit Center, which is served by several regular routes; and a transfer stop at the Miller Learning Resources Center of St. Cloud State University, which is served by all of the SCSU routes. A future transit hub may evolve in Sartell at the developing Epic Center properties.



Large Metro Bus  
Fixed Route Transit



Young Riders Enjoying  
Rides on Metro Bus

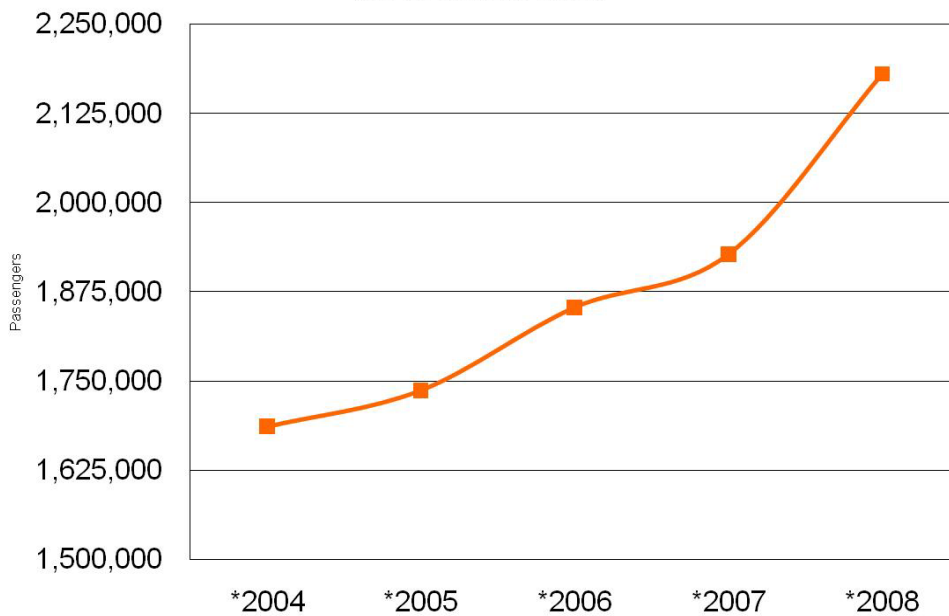
Figure 8-2 below illustrates the location of the fixed route network as it operates within the transit service area. In providing future transit services to the growing metropolitan area, Metro Bus will be faced with many challenges, 1) increased demand from high-density neighborhoods, 2) St. Cloud State University; traditional transit users in the core, 3) servicing growth areas, 4) and new transit service member areas.

**Figure 8-2  
Metro Bus Fixed Route System:**

<http://www.stcloudmtc.com/userfiles/file/schedules//System%20Map%202008.pdf>

In response to the ever growing and changing transit needs in the region, Metro Bus embarked on a “Transit System Performance Analysis, System Redesign, Market Study and Long Range Plan Update” for their operations. The analysis and outcome of this endeavor is available in detail in the completed report which can be found at [Insert link when metro bus completes](#). Figures 8-3 and 8-4 show the increased trends in the Metro Bus fixed route ridership and service hours in the past five years. The Financial Capacity Analysis and Capital Plan for Metro Bus can be found in Table 8-4 on the last page of this chapter.

**Figure 8-3  
Metro Bus Fixed Route Ridership: 2004-2008**

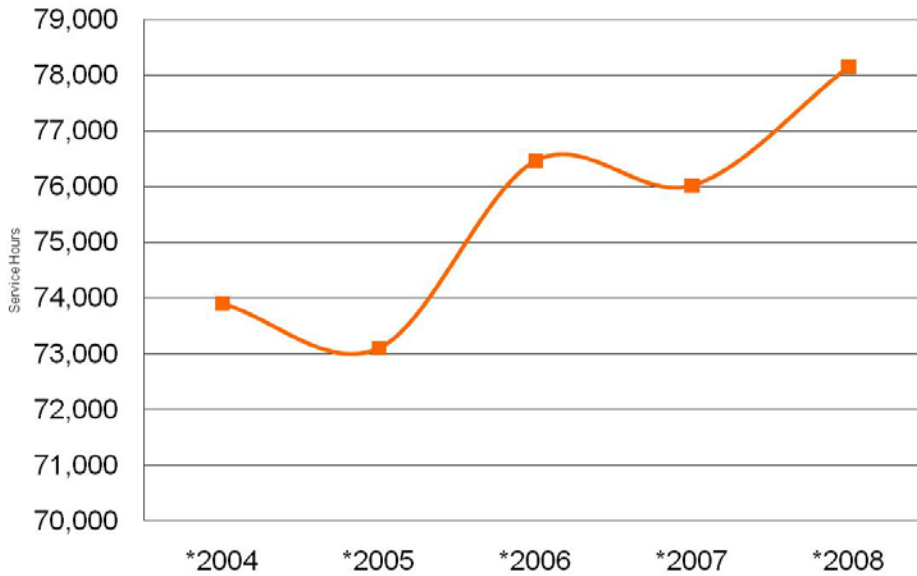


Metro Bus Shelter



Metro Bus Husky Fried Ride  
Fixed Route Bus

**Figure 8-4  
Metro Bus Fixed Route Service Hours: 2004-2008**



### Urban Paratransit Service

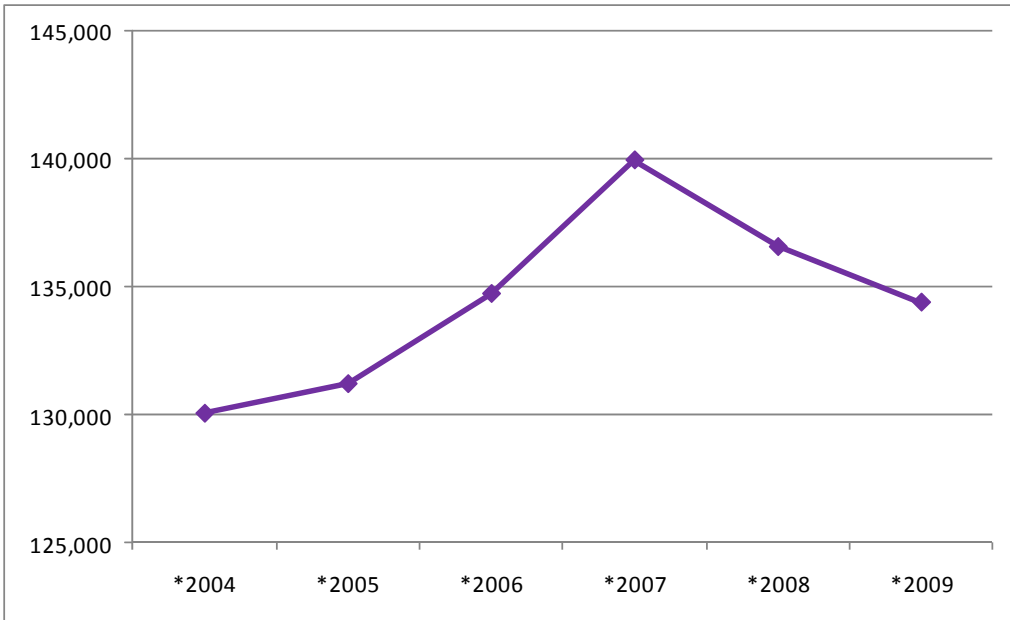
In addition to general public services, Metro Bus directly operates demand responsive complementary paratransit service, as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act through its Dial-a-Ride system. Dial-a-Ride service is provided throughout the four-city area utilizing 25-foot heavy-duty Orion II low-floor transit buses. Four unique services are provided by the Dial-a-Ride system: specialized service, later weeknight, extended area, and Sunday services. Specialized Service is available throughout the regular fixed route service area and an extended service area (reaching beyond the region served by the fixed routes) from Monday through Friday from 5:30 AM to midnight, Saturdays from 8:00 AM to 6:30 PM, and Sundays from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Dial-A-Ride is also available to the general public in the extended service area (not served by the fixed routes) Monday through Friday from 5:30 AM to midnight, and in both the extended service area as well as Sartell on Saturdays from 8:00 AM to 6:30 PM.

Additionally Dial-A-Ride service is available to the general public Monday through Friday from 9:00 PM to midnight (or after fixed route service is no longer available in a given area), and from 6:00 PM to midnight in Sartell. Dial-A-Ride service is available to everyone in St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids, Waite Park, and Sartell from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Sundays. Figures 8-5 and 8-6 show the increased trends in the Metro Bus Dial-A-Ride (DAR) ridership and service hours in the past five years.



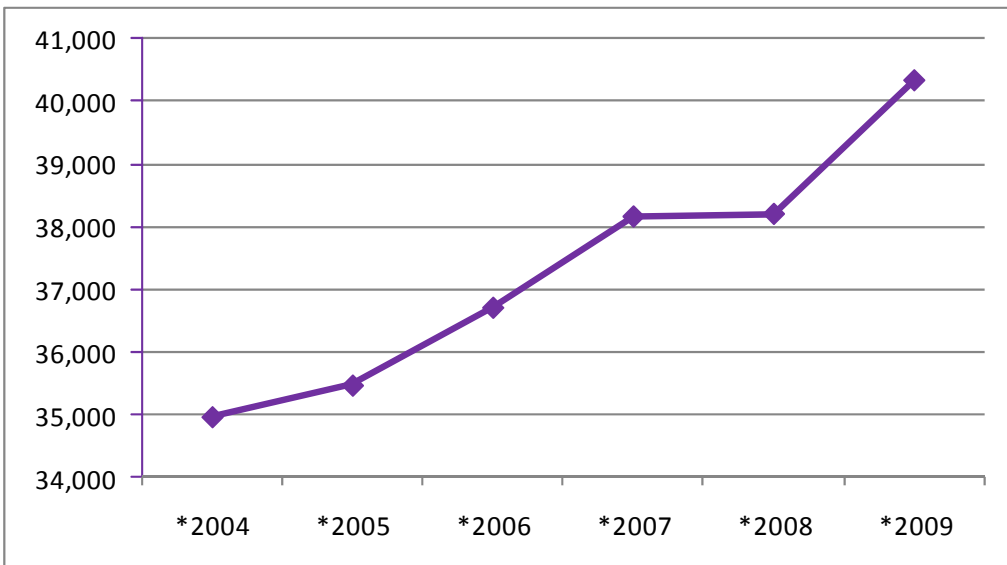
Metro Bus Dial-A-Ride Bus

**Figure 8-5**  
**Metro Bus Dial-A-Ride Ridership: 2004-2009**



**Metro Bus Dial-A-Ride Bus:**  
**Serving the Needs of the Community**

**Figure 8-6**  
**Metro Bus Dial-A-Ride Service Hours: 2004-2009**



## Metro Bus Capital Resources

Metro Bus' capital resources include buses, bus stops, shelters, supervisory and maintenance vehicles, and property including the Metro Bus garage at 665 Franklin Avenue NE, St. Cloud, which houses the Metro Bus administrative offices. Metro Bus currently owns 56 bus shelters and 13 benches throughout the service area. Over the past four years, Metro Bus has invested approximately \$1.7 million in improvements to its maintenance and storage facility, \$855,000 for vehicle replacement, \$140,000 on bus stop amenities (including shelters and benches), and \$140,000 for Intelligent Transportation Systems and Dial-A-Ride communications systems.

The Metro Bus vehicle fleet includes buses, paratransit vehicles, and rubber-wheeled trolleys used in revenue service as well as non-revenue vehicles that are used for supervisory personnel and maintenance purposes. The peak requirement for service is 25 fixed route vehicles and 15 demand response vehicles, resulting in spare ratios of 40% for fixed route vehicles and 47% for demand response vehicles.

The current capital program in the 2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) includes the purchase of new vehicles for Dial-A-Ride, fixed route, and Northstar Link services, a new operations vehicle and maintenance truck, continued funding for improved bus stop amenities, the construction of two park and ride lots for the Northstar Link, relocation of the Transit Center, Intelligent Transportation System projects, additional storage at the maintenance facility, and several other projects.

## Composition of Metro Bus Revenue Fleet

The current Metro Bus fleet contains 59 vehicles, including 35 fixed route vehicles, two rubber-wheeled trolleys, and 22 paratransit vehicles. The fixed route fleet consists primarily of low floor, 35-foot, diesel transit buses, most of which were manufactured since 2001. The demand response fleet consists mostly of 25-foot paratransit vehicles built between 1986 and 1995; however, it should be noted that although the average age of the demand response fleet appears old, a vehicle replacement program is currently underway. All Metro Bus vehicles are wheelchair accessible in accordance with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Table 8-1 shows a summary of the Metro Bus cost and revenue history from 2004 to 2008.



Metro Bus Facility Garage

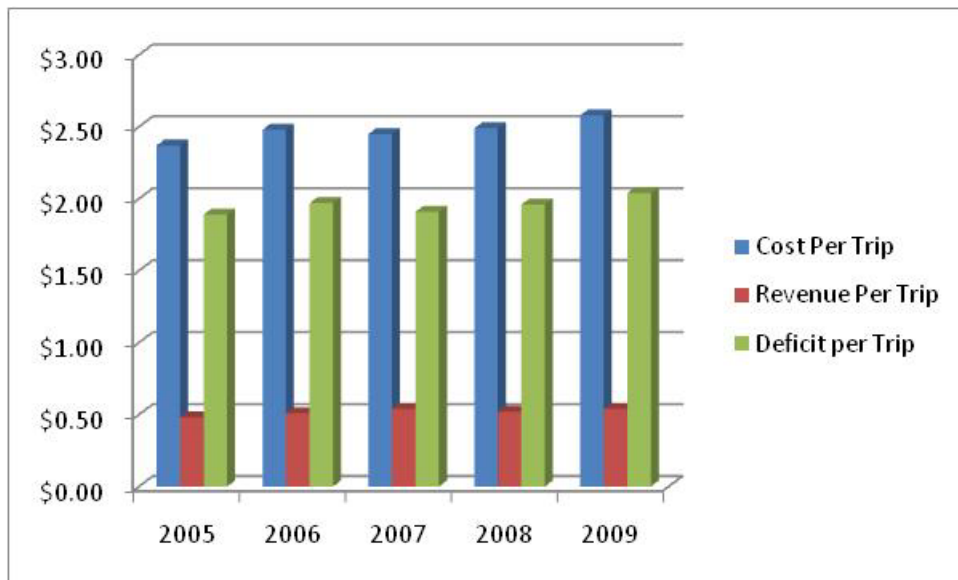


Metro Bus Large Bus:  
Advertising Wrap Display

**Table 8-1  
Metro Bus Cost & Revenue History: 2005-2009**

Fixed Route	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009
<b>Total Cost</b>	\$4,086,275	\$4,537,842	\$4,631,464	\$5,440,089	\$5,803,103
<b>Fare Box/ Contract Revenue</b>	\$831,746	\$927,278	\$1,021,984	\$1,131,182	\$1,222,375
<b>Total Passengers</b>	1,723,166	1,832,885	1,889,824	2,186,992	2,247,033
<b>Revenue Hours</b>	69,500	70,991	70,461	75,801	80,334
<b>Revenue Miles</b>	977,061	1,008,867	1,008,406	1,069,858	1,130,602
<b>Cost Per Trip</b>	\$2.37	\$2.48	\$2.45	\$2.48	\$2.58
<b>Revenue Per Trip</b>	\$0.48	\$0.51	\$0.54	\$0.52	\$0.54
<b>Deficit per Trip</b>	\$1.89	\$1.97	\$1.91	\$1.96	\$2.04

**Figure 8-7  
Metro Bus Trip Costs: 2005-2009**



### Financial Trends

Recent financial trends indicate that both the cost of service and amount of funding received by Metro Bus over the last five years has been growing. In terms of costs, vehicle operation costs have increased substantially each year since 2004 for a total increase of 49% over five years. Vehicle maintenance costs have been somewhat inconsistent, fluctuating between approximately \$800,000 and \$1,000,000 per year. Non-vehicle maintenance costs have increased steadily each year, with

a total five-year increase of 24%. Additionally, general administrative costs have increased by 34% over five years. Funding has kept up with the cost of running the system. Metro Bus receives funding through a combination of local, state and federal sources, along with directly generated revenues (fare box recovery); directly generated revenues have increased each year, with a total increase of 55% over five years. Local, state, and federal revenue levels have fluctuated over the five-year period: in 2005 state revenues increased, while local and federal revenues declined; federal revenues more than doubled in 2006 while local and state revenues declined; local and state revenues increased in 2007 which offset a decline in federal revenues that year, and in 2008, revenues increased from local, state, and federal sources.

Table 8-8 at the end of this chapter outlines St. Cloud Metro Bus' 2035 Expense and Revenue Capital Forecast. As illustrated in this table, projected capital expenses are expected to equal projected capital revenue over the 2035 forecast period.

### Anticipated Public Transit Needs

The following discussion regarding anticipated transit needs is excerpted from the Metro Bus Performance, Redesign, Market Study and Long Range Plan Update, Draft Technical Memorandum 5 regarding Route Planning. The following medium and long term recommendations are proposals that will enhance the route network by providing additional services in the region. These are based on the need to meet the needs of the area in the future as the area grows. These medium and long term concepts are vaguely phased in order provide Metro Bus with the ability to meet the area needs without committing to specific services. Below are the medium and long term concepts for system expansion.”

**Transit Hubs** – The route proposals outlined above create a system of major transfer points outside of downtown. These include Crossroads, The Miller Learning Resources Center at Saint Cloud State University, Coborn’s in Sauk Rapids, and the new Wal-Mart in Sartell. Investment in these transfer sites should be pursued to improve the customer experience for transferring passengers.

**Town circulators** – New town circulators, either fixed route or demand response, can be developed to provide service to various neighborhoods in the service area that currently are not served. These town circulators would interface with regular routes to provide service to Downtown Saint Cloud and other locations throughout the region.

**Additional services to serve new areas** – Metro Bus should continue to evaluate service to new generators and areas within the service area for possible new services. Some possible new areas to serve as they grow could be the airport, Bel Clare Estates, Colleeville and Saint John’s University, as well as new routes and connections within the current service area. Part of these additional services may be the need to provide commuter express services to outlying areas. This may be done in cooperation with Tri-Cap and RiverRider services.

### Ridership Estimates

This section presents the estimated annual ridership for this plan. The modified route network will affect ridership on all services that Metro Bus



Tri-CAP Bus

operates. Below are the assumptions used for estimating ridership for each route:

- Ridecheck data was used to distribute ridership from existing routes to the proposed routes.
- Ridership changes were calculated based on applying 35% of the passengers per hour for each route to the difference in revenue hours for each phase<sup>1</sup>.
- Fare changes are not accounted for in these ridership projections as recent fare changes have demonstrated that fares have very little impact on ridership, and the fact that fare change impacts would have an impact on ridership at the beginning of each phase while ridership figures are presented for the end of each phase.
- Background ridership growth of 3% was assumed based on the recent pattern of ridership changes as presented in Tech Memo 3. This 3% is more conservative than recent history due to an assumption that ridership will continue to grow but not at as rapid of a rate. This background growth accounts for new generators and connections.
- The ridership estimate and projections compare ridership for all of the fixed routes. The ridership estimate is based on annual ridership.
- The annual ridership presented for each phase in Table 8-2 below assumes the transition phase will be fiscal year 2011, Phase 1 will be fiscal year 2012, Phase 2 is fiscal year 2017, and Phase 3 is fiscal year 2025.

**Table 8-2  
Ridership Projections by Route Number and Implementation Phase**

Route Number	Current Ridership	Transition Phase	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
1	235,036	238,145	245,289	284,358	396,728
2	234,135	195,584	201,451	233,537	334,184
3	156,725	162,047	179,602	213,110	301,864
4	80,381	74,607	85,814	100,753	152,557
5	68,403	102,002	130,651	155,970	209,055
6, 7 & 8	153,686	159,398	169,953	259,812	392,860
9	74,846	86,831	91,920	109,980	165,666
10	27,232	103,755	106,868	140,867	185,389
11	257,796	92,660	111,522	132,742	201,207
12	19,191	182,439	222,983	259,757	333,698
21, 22, 23	130,019	134,076	138,098	187,922	264,573
31	27,385	13,484	14,618	16,947	23,610
32	0	30,786	31,710	40,932	53,990
33	89,593	56,766	62,846	75,500	116,339
41	0	0	0	14,824	25,487
51	0	0	0	11,103	14,065
81	58,586	60,344	72,300	83,816	106,175
82	54,632	56,271	58,663	68,007	86,178
83	68,223	70,270	72,378	83,906	106,289
84	39,423	40,606	41,824	48,485	61,420
85	61,118	62,962	0	0	0
91	301,369	310,410	319,722	370,646	469,523
92	45,472	46,836	48,241	55,925	70,844
93	44,932	46,280	47,668	55,261	70,003
94	6,142	6,326	6,516	7,554	9,569
95	9,833	10,128	10,432	12,093	15,319
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,244,158</b>	<b>2,343,002</b>	<b>2,471,071</b>	<b>3,023,805</b>	<b>4,166,590</b>

*\*The following routes would be "new" routes: #32-West Metro, #41-St. Joseph, #51-St. Augusta. The existing Route # 85-Clipper West would be eliminated in*

Phase 2, however the area would continue to be served by other route alignments.

The following Table 8-3 illustrates the estimated impacts for Phase 3 of the service plan. For the purposes of showing the order of magnitude subsidy required to operate the Metro Bus fixed route system by Phase 3, an average fare of \$0.45 per boarding passenger was assumed, thus meaning that there would be no fare increases by Phase 3. Clearly, this deficit estimate is therefore conservative in that there would likely be some future increase in the average fare by the time Phase 3 is implemented (i.e.,2025).

**Table 8-3  
Revenue & Deficit Project by Route Following  
Phase 3 Implementation**

Route Number	Operating Cost	Revenue	Deficit
1	1,190,070	178,528	1,011,542
2	119,070	150,383	1,039,687
3	1,048,680	135,839	912,841
4	825,660	68,651	757,009
5	848,700	94,075	754,625
6, 7 & 8	1,386,360	176,787	1,209,573
9	776,340	74,550	701,790
10	816,390	83,425	732,965
11	738,000	90,543	647,457
12	902,070	150,164	751,906
21, 22, 23	1,563,750	119,058	1,444,692
31	522,990	10,625	512,366
32	655,110	24,296	630,815
33	898,380	52,353	846,027
41	664,380	11,469	652,911
51	345,600	6,329	339,271
81	142,830	47,779	95,051
82	70,380	38,780	31,600
83	158,940	47,830	111,110
84	71,550	27,639	43,911
91	246,240	211,285	34,995
92	137,340	31,880	105,460
93	147,150	31,501	115,649
94	35,100	4,306	30,794
95	45,810	6,894	38,916
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,427,890</b>	<b>1,874,966</b>	<b>13,552,924</b>

Source: Metro Bus Performance, Redesign, Market Study and Long Range Plan Update: Draft Technical Memorandum 5

## Rural Bus Systems

Tri-CAP and RiverRider are two rural transit systems that operate within the APO Planning Area. These two rural systems are exclusively funded and programmed through Mn/DOT's Region 7W and District 3 ATP. Although these transit systems do not receive funding through the APO, they do provide an invaluable service and function for transit users within the St. Cloud Metropolitan Area. Tri-CAP and RiverRider both serve residents in the greater St. Cloud region; Tri-CAP serves the non-urban areas west, north and north-east of St. Cloud, while RiverRider serves much of the area to the south and southeast of St. Cloud.

Tri-County Action Program, Inc., (Tri-CAP) has been operating rural transit services since 1975 when a needs assessment found that transportation was a significant unmet need in Central Minnesota. Beginning as a service for elderly and disabled under the Older Americans Act, the transit program evolved into general public service during the early 1980's. As a general public provider, Tri-CAP began with a very small fleet serving Benton and Stearns Counties. Over time, the program evolved into the Tri-CAP Transit Connection in Benton and Stearns County and MorrTrans in Morrison County. Rural productivity averages about 3.77 passengers per hour. All of Tri-CAP busing works in cooperation with the St. Cloud Metro Bus program and is operated for residents outside of the Metro Bus service area.

Tri-CAP provides rural area bus service to the region surrounding the City of St. Cloud. This includes Dial-A-Ride service, which operates from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday, available throughout Benton and Stearns Counties outside of the Metro Bus service area and within a 20 mile radius of the Stearns County Government Center. Additional Dial-A-Ride services are available in Stearns County within Melrose (Monday through Friday, 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM, including service to Sauk Centre), and within Sauk Centre (Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM). Tri-CAP also provides deviated route service in Stearns and Benton Counties, connecting Sauk Centre, Foley, and intermediate communities to St. Cloud. Detailed information regarding the Tri-CAP schedule can be found on their website at: [http://www.tricap.org/bus\\_services.html](http://www.tricap.org/bus_services.html). Tri-CAP fares are \$1.25 for a one-way trip within one city, or \$3.00 for a one-way trip for rural/intercity trips.

Tri-CAP does not provide bus service on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and offers limited service on Good Friday and the Friday following Thanksgiving. Table 8-4 includes a summary of Tri-CAP operations from 2004 to 2008, while Figures 8-8, 8-9 and 8-10 illustrate trip costs, ridership and service hours.

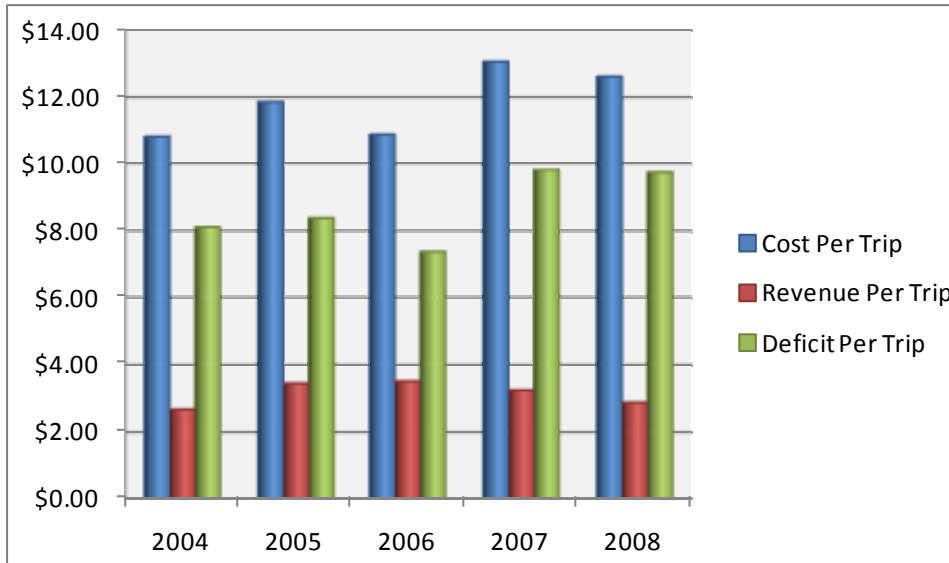


Tri-CAP Administrative Offices & Waite Park Bus Storage Facility

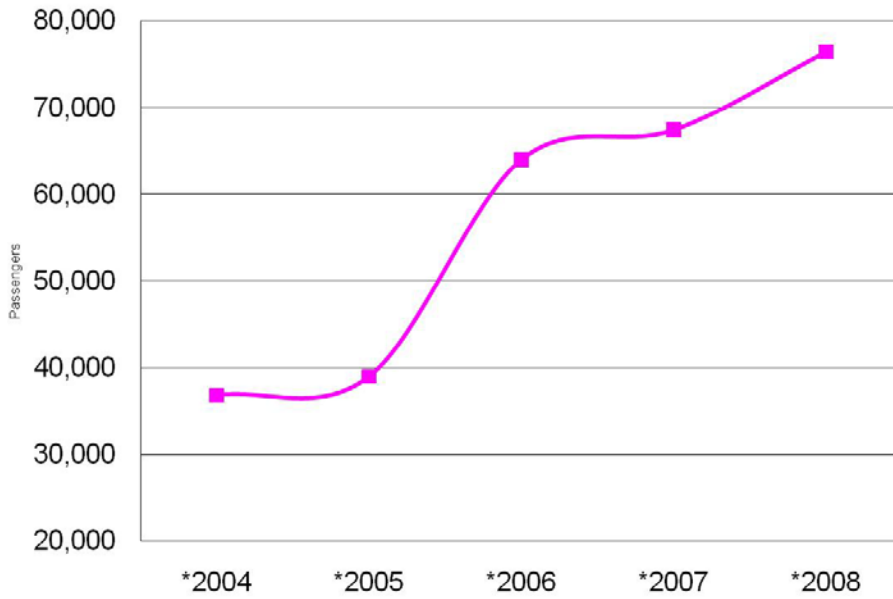
**Table 8-4  
Tri-CAP Operations**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>Total Cost</b>	\$399,385	\$458,362	\$692,338	\$872,980	\$963,174
<b>Fare Box &amp; Contract Revenue</b>	\$ 98,876	\$134,550	\$224,671	\$219,463	\$220,463
<b>Total Passengers</b>	36,819	38,970	64,014	67,433	76,416
<b>Revenue Hours</b>	12,742,	12,928	18,814	20,293	20,249
<b>Revenue Miles</b>	200,327	198,892	244,895	257,702	306,146
<b>Cost Per Trip</b>	\$10.83	\$11.85	\$10.89	\$13.06	\$12.63
<b>Revenue Per Trip</b>	\$ 2.69	\$ 3.45	\$ 3.51	\$ 3.25	\$ 2.89
<b>Deficit Per Trip</b>	\$ 8.14	\$ 8.40	\$ 7.38	\$ 9.81	\$ 9.74

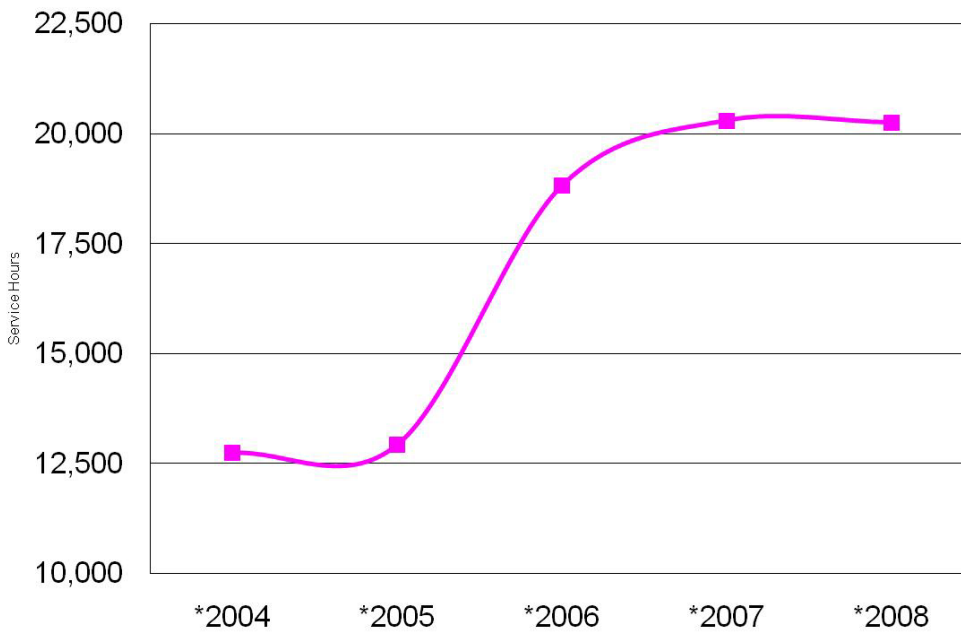
**Figure 8-8  
Tri-CAP Trip Costs: 2004-2008**



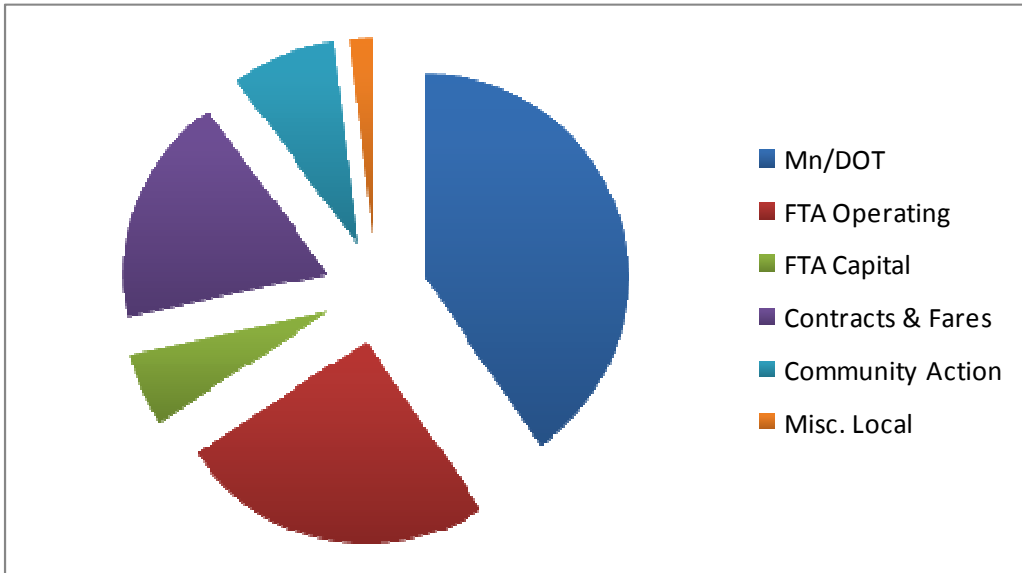
**Figure 8-9**  
**Tri-CAP Ridership: 2004-2008**



**Figure 8-10**  
**Tri-CAP Service Hours: 2004-2008**



**Figure 8-11**  
**Tri-CAP Anticipated 5-Year Revenue by Source: 2009-2013**



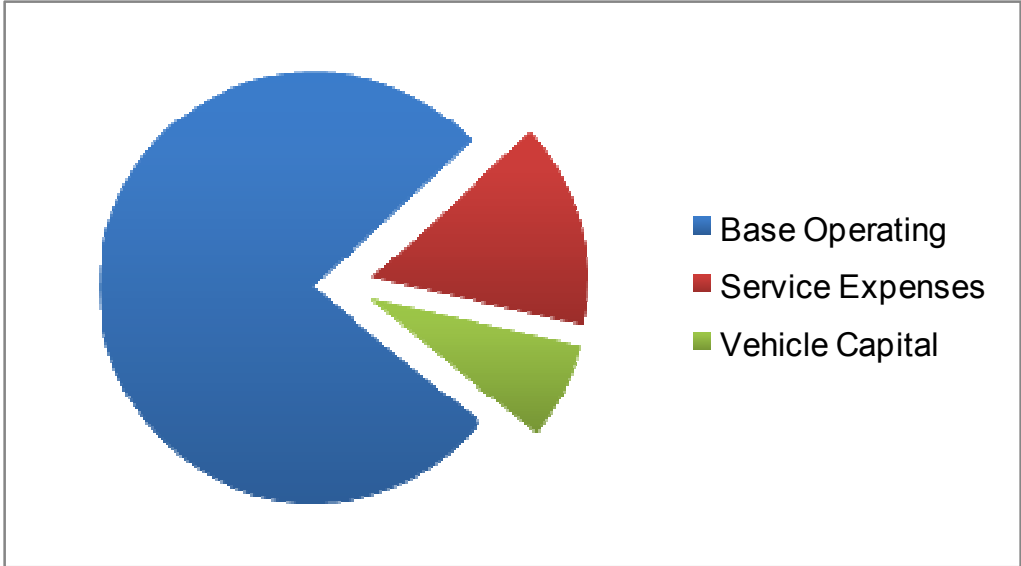
**Table 8-5**  
**Tri-CAP Anticipated Revenue Sources: 2009-2013**

REVENUE SOURCES	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Mn/DOT	\$480,670	\$499,897	\$519,893	\$540,688	\$562,316
Federal Operating	\$300,480	\$312,499	\$324,999	\$337,999	\$351,519
Federal Capital	\$49,264	\$0	\$54,400	\$112,000	\$162,400
Contracts & Fares	\$216,959	\$225,637	\$234,663	\$244,049	\$255,000
Community Action	\$106,956	\$100,000	\$104,000	\$108,000	\$112,000
Miscellaneous Local	\$12,967	\$11,912	\$25,987	\$33,013	\$36,865
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$1,167,296</b>	<b>\$1,149,945</b>	<b>\$1,263,942</b>	<b>\$1,375,750</b>	<b>\$1,480,100</b>

### Tri-CAP Financial Trends

Tri-CAP revenue is generated indirectly through a combination of local, state and federal resources along with directly generated revenue from fares and contract agreements. Operating and capital expenses are programmed on an annual basis, with the table above illustrating the forecasted revenue based on recent programming history.

**Figure 8-12**  
**Tri-CAP Anticipated 5-Year Operating & Capital Expenditures:**  
**2009-2013**



**Table 8-6**  
**Tri-CAP Anticipated Operating & Capital Expenditures: 2009-2013**

<b>CAPITAL &amp; OPERATING</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Base Operating	\$919,000	\$955,760	\$993,990	\$1,033,750	\$1,075,100
Service Expenses	\$186,716	\$194,185	\$201,952	\$202,000	\$202,000
Vehicle Capital	\$61,580	\$0	\$68,000	\$140,000	\$203,000
<b>Total Operations</b>	<b>\$1,167,296</b>	<b>\$1,149,945</b>	<b>\$1,263,942</b>	<b>\$1,375,750</b>	<b>\$1,480,100</b>

## RiverRider Transit

RiverRider functions under a Joint Powers Agreement between Sherburne and Wright counties. RiverRider provides Dial-A-Ride services in the cities of Annandale, Big Lake, Buffalo, Cokato, Delano, Elk River, and Monticello. The mission of the River Rider Joint Powers Transit System is to provide quality, efficient transportation service for the residents of Sherburne and Wright Counties, with an annual goal of achieving or maintaining financial self sufficiency, independent of County-funded tax dollars.

RiverRider provides rural public demand response transit circulation, with buses primarily operating in Big Lake and Elk River in Sherburne County and Buffalo and Annandale in Wright County. RiverRider also provides deviated route service for Functional Industries of Buffalo and Options, Inc. of Big Lake. Additional deviated route service is also provided for Buffalo Adult Daycare. Table 8-7 shows a summary of River Rider operations from 2004 to 2008 while Figures 8-13, 8-14 and 8-15 illustrate trip costs, ridership and service hours.

Trips scheduled in advance are \$1.25 each way, while same-day fares are \$2.00 per person. For additional information on RiverRider services please visit their website at <http://www.riverridertransit.com/index.html>.

There is no formal coordination between RiverRider and Metro Bus services; however, RiverRider will coordinate trips with Metro Bus when bringing passengers to/from St Cloud.

**Table 8-7  
River Rider Operations**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>Total Cost</b>	\$550,473	\$571,119	\$644,971	\$813,651	\$819,848
<b>Fare Box &amp; Contract Revenue</b>	\$160,059	\$163,506	\$181,744	\$209,639	\$180,278
<b>Total Passengers</b>	67,021	66,477	73,330	77,772	72,483
<b>Revenue Hours</b>	12,625	12,577	14,023	18,118	17,015
<b>Revenue Miles</b>	205,680	192,540	211,529	274,918	253,509
<b>Cost Per Trip</b>	\$ 8.21	\$ 8.59	\$ 8.79	\$10.46	\$11.31
<b>Revenue Per Trip</b>	\$ 2.39	\$ 2.46	\$ 2.48	\$ 2.70	\$ 2.49
<b>Deficit Per Trip</b>	\$ 5.82	\$ 6.13	\$ 6.31	\$ 7.76	\$ 8.82

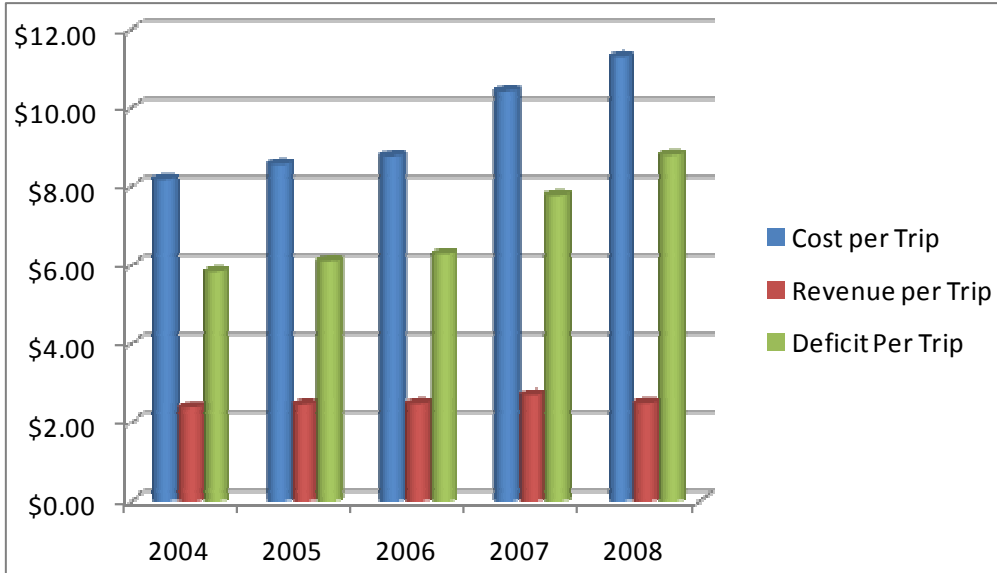


RiverRider Bus

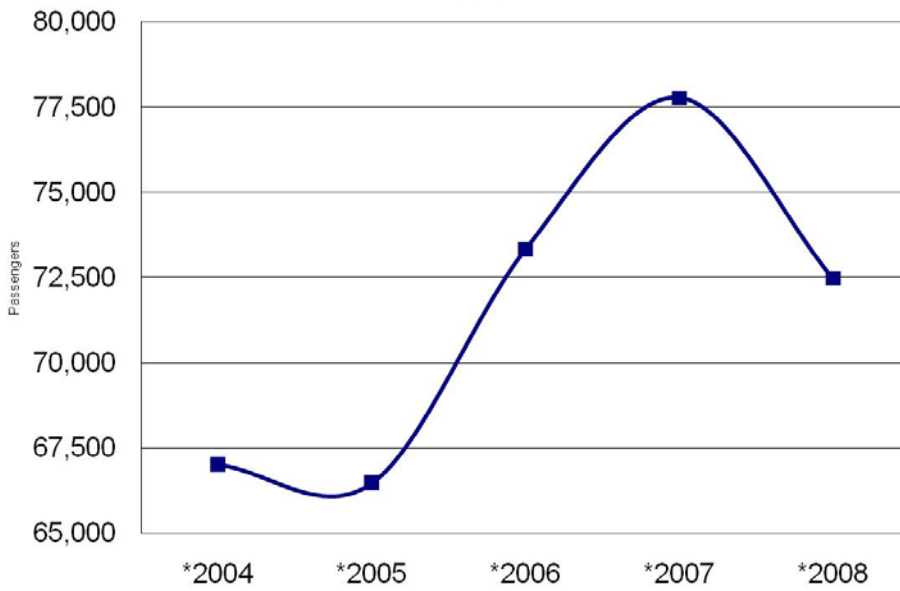


Red Hat Ladies Taking Advantage of RiverRider

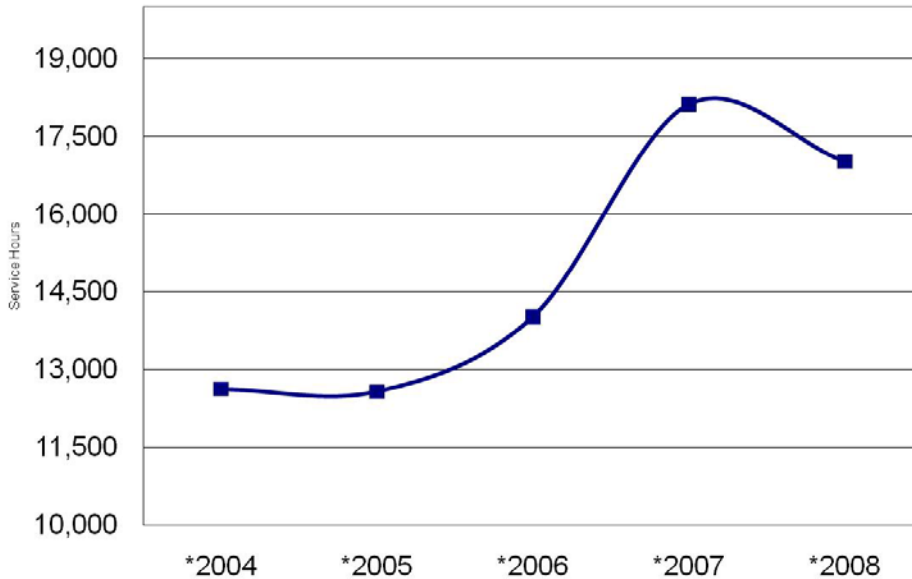
**Figure 8-13  
RiverRider Trip Costs**



**Figure 8-14  
RiverRider Ridership: 2004-2008**



**Figure 8-15  
RiverRider Service Hours: 2004-2008**



### **Additional Bus Transportation Services**

#### **Northstar Commuter Coach**

The Northstar Link bus is operated by St Cloud Metro Bus under contract with the Northstar Corridor Development Authority (NCDA). The primary service is between a park and ride lot at Trunk Highway 10 and Lincoln Avenue SE in East St Cloud. A few of the Northstar Link trips provide access to St Cloud State University and Downtown St Cloud. Reverse commute service is available on all bus trips from Big Lake. However, there is only one reverse commute train from Minneapolis. Planning for the Northstar Link connection was a part of the St. Cloud Metro Bus route planning process, since the Northstar Link Park and Ride facility will eventually serve as part of the main St. Cloud commuter rail station.

The Metro Bus route planning process proposes that the Clipper Northeast (Route 83) serving the Northstar Link Park and Ride lot, provide a connection to the St. Cloud State University campus. Local bus service from the Park and Ride lot to downtown is proposed to be a part of either the East Side route (Routes 6 and 7) or the Southeast route (Route 9). Currently, bus service to downtown St. Cloud and St. Cloud State University is operating in two manners: the first is a modification of the East Side bus routes for two trips during the AM period; the other is via extensions of the Northstar Link buses into downtown on select trips. Many of the early AM Northstar Link trips depart St Cloud prior to the beginning of the Metro Bus service day.

## Intercity Bus Travel

Jefferson Lines provides intercity bus travel throughout the Upper Midwest. Service to and from the St. Cloud area is available via a fixed route interconnected market between St. Cloud, Bemidji, Fargo, Grand Forks, and Winnipeg. Jefferson Lines connects with Greyhound in Minneapolis/St. Paul to provide connecting bus service throughout the country.

In St. Cloud, Jefferson Lines uses the Metro Bus Transit Center as its bus station. Not only does cooperative use of the Metro Bus Transit Center allow Metro Bus to feed passengers to Jefferson Lines buses, but it provides one central facility for trip arrivals, departures, and connections within the Area. The Transit Center also serves as an amenity to Jefferson Lines passengers by providing a comfortable waiting area and direct ticket sales for Jefferson Lines service.



Jefferson Lines Bus

## Rail Transportation

Providing transportation opportunities via our nation's rail system has been gaining popularity in recent years, particularly through support from the Obama Administration for expanding high-speed passenger rail service throughout the United States. Minnesota is a member of the multi-state Midwest Regional Rail Initiative and is actively pursuing rail funding as a member of that coalition.



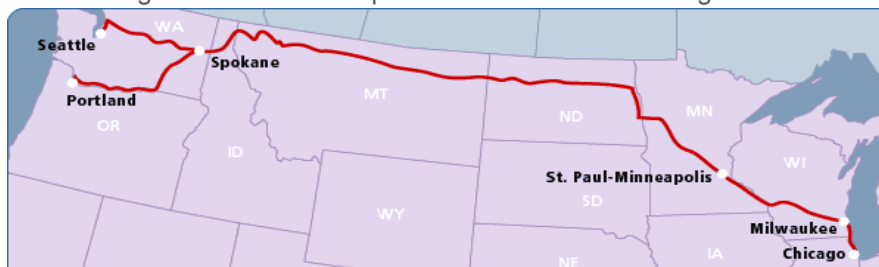
## Intercity Passenger Rail

Amtrak provides intercity passenger rail services once daily from St. Cloud; passengers can ride via the Empire Builder route from St. Cloud west to Seattle/Portland or south to Chicago.

While Amtrak is anticipated to continue operation of the existing Empire Builder intercity passenger rail service, funding was recently allocated for further development of a new high-speed passenger rail line between Chicago and Madison-Milwaukee. The State of Minnesota is pursuing an extension of that high-speed rail line to the Twin Cities, which would further expand the horizon for passenger rail opportunities throughout Minnesota; ideally with future connections from the Twin Cities to St. Cloud, continuing to the Fargo-Moorhead region. While funding for extension of a high-speed intercity passenger rail line to the St. Cloud Area is not within the scope of the APO's plan at this time, the APO will continue to remain an active participant in efforts to explore the feasibility of extending this mode of transportation to the St. Cloud region.



Midwest Regional Rail Initiative Potential Routes



Source: <http://www.amtrak.com/>

## Commuter Rail



The Northstar Corridor Development Authority (NCDCA), a joint powers board consisting of 30 counties, cities, townships and regional rail authorities, was established in 1997 for the purpose of planning for multimodal transportation

improvements in the Northstar Corridor and for promotion and facilitation of related land use and development.

The entire Northstar Corridor Commuter Rail project is an 82-mile transportation corridor that parallels Trunk Highway 10, which serves as one of the primary highway links between the Minneapolis - St. Paul and St. Cloud metropolitan areas. NCDCA originally intended to build the rail project in its entirety; however, in 2000, due to several factors, the original proposal was truncated into two phases, Phase I was identified as Minneapolis to Big Lake and the portion extending north of Big Lake was identified as Phase II.

Construction of Phase I of Northstar began in 2007 and the line opened in November 2009. The commuter rail schedule offers five morning departures from Big Lake with station stops in Elk River, Anoka, Coon Rapids, and Fridley, as well as one morning reverse commute from Minneapolis to Big Lake. In addition, Northstar provides a connection to the Hiawatha light rail transit (LRT) corridor in Downtown Minneapolis. Hiawatha provides direct connections to the Veterans Hospital, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, and the Mall of America. The Northstar afternoon schedule includes five departures from Minneapolis and one reverse commute from Big Lake. The trains are stored and maintained at the vehicle maintenance facility in Big Lake.

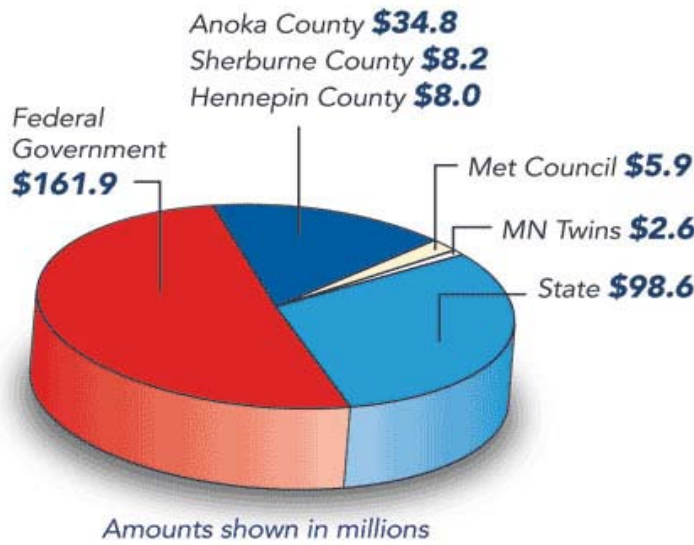


Each Northstar train-set consists of a locomotive and four ADA compliant passenger cars that can accommodate approximately 140 passengers on three seating levels. The trains include amenities such as work stations, electrical outlets, restrooms, and bicycle storage. Each of the suburban train stations are located with park-and-ride facilities, and platforms sites are equipped with security cameras, emergency telephones, enclosed shelters, heating and other amenities.

## Northstar Rail Timeline

<b>November 2009</b>	Northstar Commuter Rail opens for service on November 16!
<b>August 2009</b>	A groundbreaking ceremony is held for the Northstar Link Commuter Coach Project and the Park and Ride Lot construction begins.
<b>June 2009</b>	Northstar's passenger cars arrive in Big Lake and testing begins.
<b>December 2008</b>	Construction of the Vehicle Maintenance Facility in Big Lake is completed.
<b>October 2008</b>	The first of five locomotives arrives in Big Lake from Motive Power, Inc. in Boise, Idaho.
<b>Spring 2008</b>	Passenger vehicles are ordered.
<b>January 2008</b>	\$32 million in bonds are sold so payments can be made to BNSF Railway for easements that will allow for the use of its train tracks.
<b>December 2007</b>	Federal, state and local officials sign the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) for Northstar Commuter Rail. The FFGA committed \$156.8 million in federal matching funds and released \$97.5 million in state bonding money for Northstar construction and trains.

**Figure 8-16 - Breakdown of Northstar Phase I Funding by Agency**



**Figure 8-17 Northstar Commuter Rail Line: Phase I**



<b>April 2007</b>	Stearns County joins the NCDCA. The NCDCA agrees to study a second phase of Northstar, possibly extending commuter rail service in the future from Big Lake to Becker, St. Cloud and Rice.
<b>March 2007</b>	The State of Minnesota, NCDCA and BNSF complete negotiations and sign key agreements finalizing terms and conditions for commuter rail service.
<b>February 2007</b>	President Bush recommends federal funding for construction of Northstar as part of his FY 2008 budget.
<b>September 2006</b>	The FTA grants Northstar permission to enter the final design phase.
<b>June 2006</b>	Minnesota authorizes \$60 million for Northstar, completing the state's capital commitment needed to seek final federal funding.
<b>July 2005</b>	U.S. Congress authorizes \$80 million for Northstar.
<b>April 2005</b>	Minnesota Legislature approves \$37.5 million for Northstar in final bonding bill.

### Northstar Commuter Rail (Phase II)

The NCDA and its project partners are committed to completing Phase II of Northstar Commuter Rail. Ongoing planning and development efforts are underway to complete Phase II, extending service from Big Lake to St. Cloud. Funding needs for the extension of Northstar Commuter Rail are estimated at \$150 Million, and federal and local funding sources are being explored. The expansion of Northstar to St. Cloud is a critical transportation priority for the St. Cloud Metropolitan Area.

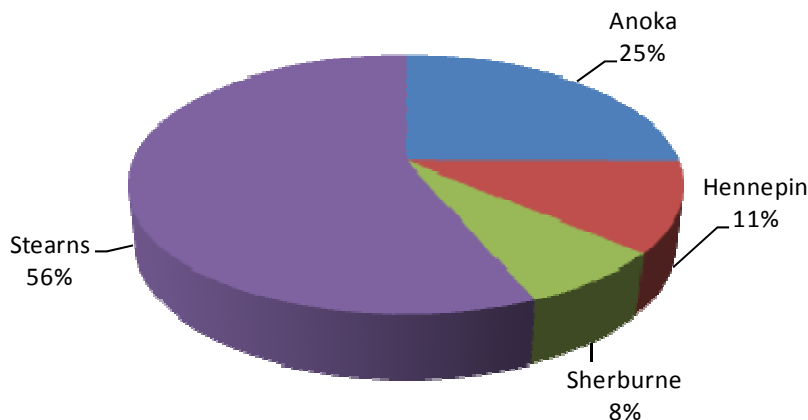
The St. Cloud to Twin Cities growth corridor has experienced tremendous growth over the last twenty years. This growth is expected to continue into the foreseeable future, placing considerable strain on TH 10 and Interstate 94. The extension of Northstar from Big Lake to St. Cloud will significantly enhance mobility in this growth corridor by providing regularly scheduled convenient transportation service linking these two companion metropolitan areas. Providing this improved access between the two metropolitan areas will enhance opportunities for employment and new economic development. To that end, reverse commute service from the St. Cloud area to Minneapolis is a priority for the Northstar Phase II project.

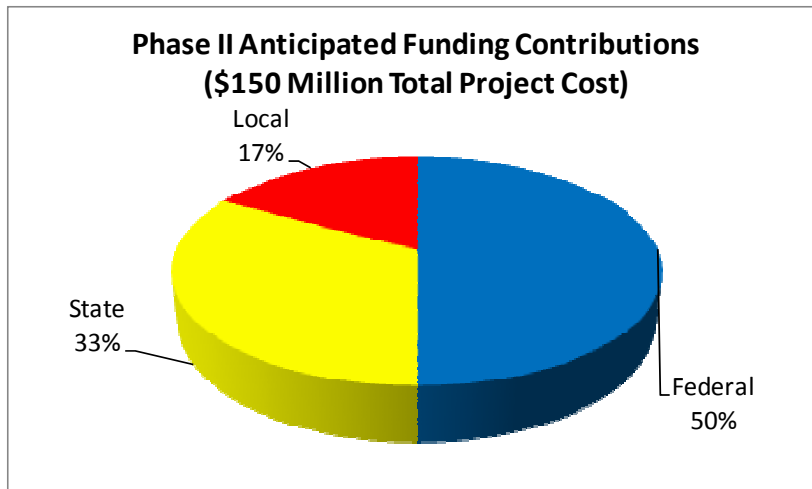
The Northstar Corridor – St. Cloud extension will connect major attractions and facilities of the St. Cloud and Twin Cities metropolitan areas. The seven colleges and universities of the St. Cloud area would be conveniently linked to the more than twenty colleges and universities of the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. In addition to educational links, medical care campuses will be linked, including veterans’ hospitals, in each metropolitan area. Convenient connections to existing transit modes are part of the implementation plan for the Northstar Corridor - St. Cloud project. The commuter rail line will provide connections between the St. Cloud area Metro Bus system and the Twin Cities Metro Transit system, which includes bus routes and the Hiawatha LRT.

August 2004	Governor Pawlenty announces a \$2.5 million funding plan to secure \$10 million in federal money.
January 2004	Governor Pawlenty includes \$37.5 million in funding for Northstar in his bonding proposal.
December 2003	Northstar meets new, more rigorous FTA cost effectiveness criteria for a Phase One route from Big Lake to Minneapolis.
June 2000	The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) authorizes NCDA to begin preliminary engineering and awards Northstar a “Recommended” rating.
May 1997	Northstar Corridor Development Authority (NCDA) established

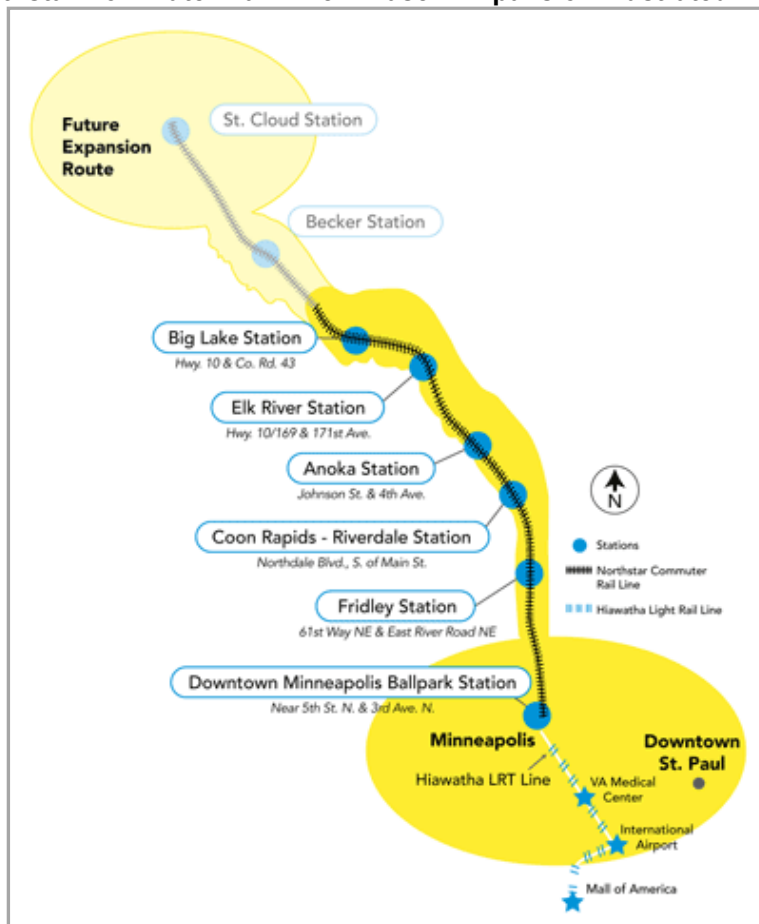
Source:  
<http://www.northstartrain.org>

**Northstar Phase II  
Net Contribution by County**





**Figure 8-18**  
**Northstar Commuter Rail Line: Phase II Expansion Illustrated**



Source: NCD Phase II Materials

### Other Transit Services

In addition to the publicly supported agencies within the St. Cloud region, there are numerous private non-profit carriers and a thriving for-hire transit service industry in the St. Cloud Area.

Table 8-8:  
Metro Bus Financial Capacity Analysis



2035 Transit Plan Update Updated 3/2010		2035 TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE ST. CLOUD METROPOLITAN TRANSIT COMMISSION TRANSIT PLAN FINANCIAL CAPACITY ANALYSIS (Thousands (000) of Actual MTC Fiscal Year Dollars)																										
Expense Category	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	
<b>Capital</b>	Base																											
Op.Center Office/Storage Addition			1,500																									
Operations Ctr Misc Improvements							50					100				50					75							
CNG Fueling Station				1,500																								
Transit Center Misc. Improvements								25				25					25					25					25	
Transit Center Expansion/Renovation			1,312																									
Secondary Transit Hubs							100							100														
Large Bus Replacements	1,400				8,100	2,250							1,000	2,000				9,000	2,500							1,250	2,500	
Large Bus Expansion			800							315			640				325											
Bus Shelter/Transit Amenities Program	350			30	20	25	20	20	20	20	150	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Small Bus Purchases	1,251			280	280	320	480		500	500	500			350				600	600	600						600	600	
Trolley Lease	39	38																										
Farebox/Video Upgrades										250			700						500									
ITS Projects	200		25	25	25	25		25		25		25		25		25					25							
Fiber Optic Communications	60																											
Office Equipment & Computers	20	25	35	25	25	25	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Operations Vehicle	18				20					25						25												
Maintenance Vehicle	30										45										45							
Maint. Bus Hoist Replacement							100					100					100											
Maintenance Bus Washer	200																	150										
Maintenance Tools & Equipment	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
<b>Total Capital</b>	<b>3,578</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>3,682</b>	<b>1,870</b>	<b>8,480</b>	<b>2,655</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>1,180</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>2,400</b>	<b>2,535</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>9,810</b>	<b>3,660</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1,910</b>	<b>3,185</b>	
<b>Capital Revenue Sources</b>																												
Local 20%	84	15	276	374	1,696	531	159	23	113	236	148	62	480	507	17	27	102	1,962	732	146	32	17	12	12	12	382	637	
Federal 80%	335	58	1,106	1,496	6,784	2,124	636	92	452	944	592	248	1,920	2,028	68	108	408	7,848	2,928	584	128	68	48	48	48	1,528	2,548	
Federal ARRA 100%	3,159		2,300																									
<b>Total Capital Revenue</b>	<b>3,578</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>3,682</b>	<b>1,870</b>	<b>8,480</b>	<b>2,655</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>1,180</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>2,400</b>	<b>2,535</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>9,810</b>	<b>3,660</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1,910</b>	<b>3,185</b>	