

Vision



Hennepin County and the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority are helping to ensure regional mobility into the future. Light rail and bus rapid transit are essential pieces of our county transportation network.

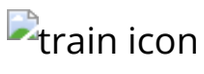
We envision an efficient, fully built-out transit system that works with roads, bridges, bikeways and walkways to get people where they need to go safely and efficiently, however they choose to move.

Benefits of transit



Supports population growth

The Twin Cities metro area is expected to add another 700,000 people by 2040. More people mean greater transportation demand on an already stressed system.



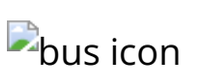
Provides mobility options

Millennials and baby boomers, the largest workforce and population segments, want access to reliable, affordable transit options, as do seniors and people with disabilities.



Fosters economic growth

Transit attracts major employers, new businesses and investments, and helps employers recruit and retain a talented workforce.



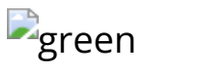
Helps ease road congestion

Limited resources will fund road and highway maintenance, not expansion. Transit moves more people, more efficiently, and increases the capacity of the current road network for those who need to drive.



Connects people to jobs and opportunities

Existing or proposed transitways serve 11 of Minnesota's 17 Fortune 500 company headquarters.

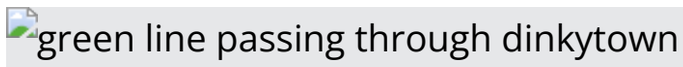


Reduces environmental impacts

Light rail systems produce 62% less greenhouse gas emissions per passenger mile than an average single-occupancy vehicle, improving air quality and benefitting the health of residents and the environment.

Learn more about transit planning in Hennepin County

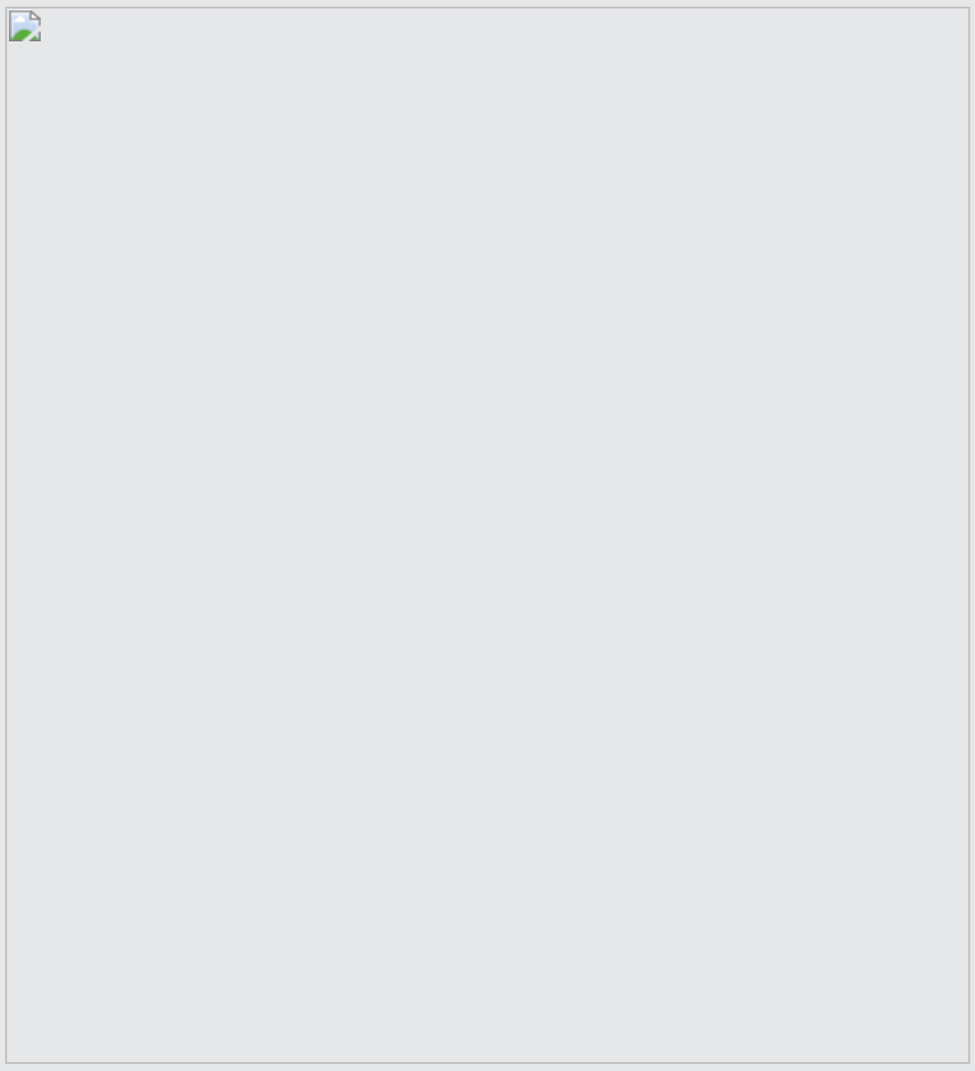
Investments



Credit: Metro Transit

Hennepin County, the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority and our transit funding partners have made significant investments in transitways that provide quick, convenient, economical access to jobs, schools, medical facilities and entertainment areas in the county.

Hennepin County-funded transitways



Learn about the full Metropolitan Council transit system

Up and running

- 2 light rail transit lines: METRO Blue Line (Hiawatha), METRO Green Line (Central Corridor)
- 1 bus rapid transit line: METRO Red Line (Cedar Avenue)
- 1 commuter rail line: Northstar

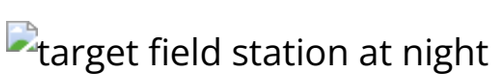
Next to build

- 2 light rail transit line extensions: METRO Green Line extension (Southwest), METRO Blue Line extension (Bottineau)
- 1 additional bus rapid transit line: METRO Orange Line (I-35W)

Under study

- 1 additional transitway (modern streetcar recommended): Riverview

Impacts



Hennepin County and the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority are committed to smart transit planning and investments that serve the county's residents and businesses.

9.4 million rides

Taken on light rail from January to August in 2023. Transit ridership is continuing a strong rebound from the pandemic as more and more people are again relying on transit to get where they need to go safely and efficiently.

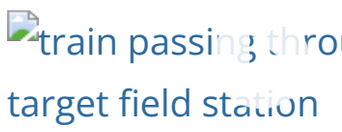
375,000 jobs

Near existing and planned LRT stations on the METRO Blue and Green lines, and planned Southwest and Bottineau LRT line extensions.

13.7 billion dollars

In development has been permitted near high frequency transit between 2009 and 2021, including 41% of the region's multifamily housing development.

Signature achievements beyond the rails


train passing through target field station

Target Field Station

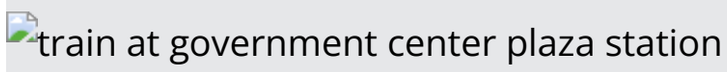
Serves nearly 500 trains each day while welcoming culture and community through public gathering spaces, cutting-edge environmental features and bike amenities.


greenway, sidewalk and housing

Hennepin County Community Works

Partners with cities, other organizations and communities to build long-term value around transitways through housing, jobs and placemaking.

Funding

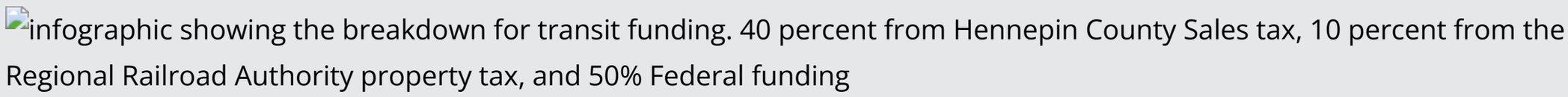

train at government center plaza station

Transit projects that serve Hennepin County have been funded through a combination of local, state and federal dollars. Reliable and flexible local funding like Hennepin County's Transportation Sales and Use Tax is critical to ensuring we continue to grow a modern successful transit system to carry our region into the future.

Funding covers capital costs to build transit lines and also operating costs to run the lines.

- Local funding comes through cities, counties and regional railroad authorities.
- State funding comes through the Minnesota Legislature.
- Federal funding comes through the Federal Transit Administration.

Typical funding of a new line


infographic showing the breakdown for transit funding. 40 percent from Hennepin County Sales tax, 10 percent from the Regional Railroad Authority property tax, and 50% Federal funding

Hennepin County sales tax

The county's half-cent transportation sales tax and $20 excise tax on motor vehicle sales became effective on October 1, 2017. The county adopted a plan on June 13, 2017 to identify eligible uses of this sales tax revenue. The Hennepin County Transportation Sales and Use Tax Implementation Plan was updated and adopted in November 2023. See the adopted sales and use transportation tax implementation plan – 2024 (PDF, 1MB)

Regional Railroad Authority property tax

The 2023 HCRRA budget is $31.8 million, with a property tax levy of $32 million.

Regional Railroad Authority


train in front of government center

Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority was established in 1980 to preserve, improve and implement local rail service in the county. It has been key to expanding regional transit options and driving the vision for a complete network of successful transitways.

The railroad authority has been a leader in recent major transit improvement projects:

- Purchasing land and old rail corridors to make the METRO Blue Line (Hiawatha), METRO Green Line (Central Corridor) and the Midtown Greenway a reality
- Preserving options for the METRO Green Line Extension (Southwest) and METRO Blue Line Extension (Bottineau) alignments
- Helping to get the Northstar commuter rail line up and running

Other activities

The railroad authority currently owns 55 miles of former railroad corridors for potential future transit use. In the interim, recreational trails have been constructed on all 55 miles – increasing transportation and recreational opportunities for residents. These trails are maintained by the City of Minneapolis or Three Rivers Park District.

Although it is a legally separate entity, the railroad authority's activities are integrated with Hennepin County projects and initiatives. It works closely with other agencies including the Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit, Minnesota Department of Transportation, and Hennepin County cities.

Learn more about Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority

Transit funding partners

Collaboration between the railroad authority, other agencies and a variety of public and nonprofit partners promotes transit development.

- Federal Transit Administration
- Anoka County Regional Railroad Authority
- Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority
- Metro Transit
- Metropolitan Council
- Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority

Contact us

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