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Public Transportation Ridership Continued to Climb Nationwide in 2006

- Metro's rail and bus ridership also increased

(Jan. 10, 2007) The American Public Transportation Association reports that public transportation ridership nationwide has increased by nearly 3 percent in the first nine months of 2006, as Americans took 7.8 billion trips on public transit.

"Even as gas prices declined, more and more people decided to ride public transportation," said APTA President William W. Millar. "This continued increase in transit ridership demonstrates that when people have transportation choices, they use them."

Light rail had the highest percentage of growth among all modes of transportation with an increase of 5.4 percent.

The areas reporting double digit increases in light rail ridership were Salt Lake City with 23.3 percent, Minneapolis with 22.6 percent, New Jersey with 16.3 percent, Philadelphia with 11.9 percent and Sacramento with 10 percent.

In Los Angeles, ridership on the Metro Blue Line increased 7.5 percent in the first nine months of 2006 over ridership during the same period of 2005. Green Line ridership grew by 12.6 percent, while ridership on the Gold Line shrank by 2.3 percent.

Although no year-to-year comparison could be made for the Metro Orange Line, which opened in October 2005, ridership in the first nine months of operation reached a remarkable 4.57 million on the 14-mile transitway.

Subway ridership up nationwide

Heavy rail ridership on subways nationwide increased in the first nine months of 2006 by 2.8 percent.

The largest increases in heavy rail were in Boston with 12.9 percent, Los Angeles with 12.2 percent on the Metro Red Line, Jersey City – Port Authority of NY/NJ with 9.9 percent and Staten Island, N.Y. with 9.5 percent.

Metro Red Line ridership in the first nine months of 2006 totaled 31.5 million, while ridership on Metro's three light rail lines reached almost 32 million for a total rail ridership in Los Angeles during that period of 63.5 million.

Bus ridership in small, medium, and large communities all showed increases. Nationally, bus ridership increased by nearly 3 percent in the

first nine months of 2006.

The largest bus agencies showing the highest increases were located Seattle with 11.7 percent, San Antonio with 11.7 percent, Dallas with 10.7 percent, Houston with 8.1 percent, Miami with 6.9 percent and Saint Louis with 6.8 percent.

Ridership on Metro’s directly operated bus lines increased by 3.9 percent in the first nine months of 2006 over the same period in 2005. Total ridership grew from 278.3 million to 289.2 million in that period.