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[Safety](#)[Pressroom](#) (web)[Ask the CEO](#)[CEO Forum](#)[Employee Recognition](#)[Employee Activities](#)[Metro Projects](#)[Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)[Archives](#)[Events Calendar](#)[Research Center/
Library](#)[Metro Classifieds](#)[Bazaar](#)

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The Metro Gold Line makes tracks through the rush hour on the 210 freeway. Photo by Deniz Durmus.

Metro Rail Ridership Surges, Reflecting National Trend Toward Transit

- Red, Purple, Gold lines lead growth of 6 percent
- Check it out: [APTA ridership report](#)

By NED RACINE

(June 17, 2008) Reflecting a national movement toward public transit ridership, Metro Rail ridership last month shot up 6 percent over May 2007, one of the highest one month spikes on record.

The surge was led by gains in subway and Metro Gold Line ridership. The Gold Line reached its highest ridership between Los Angeles and Pasadena. Average weekday boardings totaled 23,141.

Earlier this month the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) announced that Americans took 2.6 billion trips on public transportation in the first three months of 2008, almost 85 million more trips than the first quarter 2007.

More than 1.2 million passengers boarded Metro buses on an average May weekday, slightly above April's levels. Comparing ridership for the full calendar month of May year over year, however, bus ridership is down approximately 5.4 percent.

Metro schedulers explained that in May 2007, Metro bus ridership jumped dramatically as gas prices peaked before the summer driving season, and Metro bus ridership was impacted by the fare increase last July with riders taking fewer discretionary trips.

Over seven million riders in May

During May 2008, 7,625,541 passengers boarded Metro's two subway lines and three light rail surface lines. That compares to 7,192,173 boardings in May 2007.

The Metro Orange Line carried 1.3 percent more riders along its 14-mile route than it did in May 2007.

"The cost of a gallon of gas now is only slightly less than a \$5 Metro Day Pass, good for unlimited rides day and night on Metro buses and trains," said Metro CEO Roger Snoble. "When you factor in the cost of fuel, vehicle depreciation, maintenance, insurance and parking, hard-pressed consumers can easily save well over \$6,000 a year by going Metro and getting rid of one of the average family's 2.5 cars and trucks."

Nationally, although bus ridership increased 2 percent, APTA reported the bus ridership increase trailed light rail, commuter rail and heavy rail ridership growth. Light rail led all ridership increase among all modes, showing a 10.3 percent increase for the first quarter.

APTA also reported that in the first quarter of 2008, public transportation rose by 3.3 percent. In contrast, the Federal Highway Administration reported that the vehicle miles traveled on United States roads declined by 2.3 percent in the first quarter.

Commuter rail ridership increased

Commuter rail posted the second largest ridership increase at 5.7 percent.

Heavy rail (subways and elevated trains) ridership increased by 4.4 percent. The heavy rail systems with the highest increases in ridership for the 2008 first quarter were Staten Island, NY (12.3%); Boston (8.8%); Jersey City, NJ (6.5%); Los Angeles (5.4%); New York City (5%); Baltimore (4.9%); and San Francisco (4.5%).