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Resources

[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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Metro makes gains beyond the pump.

Public Transit Helps Recession-Strapped Commuters Save

- L.A. Metro Ridership on Upswing Despite Falling Gas Prices

By MARC LITTMAN

(Nov. 18, 2008) In a press release issued Monday, Metro announced that bus and rail ridership has increased on a year-over-year basis despite plunging gas prices.

Average weekday boardings on Metro Rail jumped 16.62 percent in October 2008 compared with the same period last year while Metro Bus ridership is up 4 percent. October weekday ridership on the Metro Orange Line in the San Fernando Valley is up 6.72 percent compared to last year.

Overall, there were 301,262 average weekday boardings on the Metro Red, Purple, Blue, Gold, and Green lines last month compared to 258,333 boardings a year earlier.

Subway ridership on the Metro Red and Purple lines between downtown Los Angeles and North Hollywood with a spur to Wilshire and Western led the way with 154,935 boardings, up 20.87 percent.

The Metro Blue Line from downtown Los Angeles to Long Beach followed with 80,577 boardings, up 9.34 percent. Next came the Metro Green Line between Norwalk and El Segundo, averaging 41,746 weekday boardings, up 9.93 percent. The Metro Gold Line linking downtown Los Angeles and Pasadena had 24,004 boardings, up 29.87 percent.

Directly operated Metro Bus ridership in October 2008 averaged 1,222,589 boardings compared to 1,175, 256 in October 2007. That's up 4.03 percent. The Metro Orange Line transitway averaged 25,428 boardings last month, up 6.72 percent over last year.

The ridership increases come in spite of the sharp drop in gasoline prices and is a strong indication that L.A.'s public transit system continues to be a low-cost transportation solution for more Angelenos faced with a troubled economy. The fare to ride Metro bus and rail lines is only \$62 a month, or \$744 a year.

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) recently reported that a person living in Los Angeles could save \$856 per month, or \$10,268 per year by taking public transit instead of driving based on current gas prices and parking rates. APTA's report reveals how much a person can save by taking public transportation and living with one less car in his or her household. Metro also offers vanpool and carpool programs that, likewise, save commuters significant transportation dollars.

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