

**June 12 , 2008**

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## **Metro Rail Ridership Surges as Drivers Do the Math and Bypass Gas Pump**

- **Metro offers cheap, fast alternative**

Metro Rail ridership last month shot up 6 percent over May 2007, one of the highest one month spikes on record, as commuters and others parked their cars and trucks and took advantage of fares that are about one fourth the cost of a gallon of gas. The surge was led by gains in subway ridership and the Metro Gold Line, which saw more riders than ever traveling from downtown Los Angeles to Pasadena (23,141 average weekday boardings).

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. That number will grow exponentially as the Metro Rail system, now spanning 73 miles of track, expands by six miles about a year from now with the opening of the Eastside extension of the Metro Gold Line to East Los Angeles, a region with a population that is heavily transit dependent, and with the opening of the Expo light rail line from downtown Los Angeles to Culver City, expected in 2010.

The popular Metro Orange Line, a 14-mile busway that operates like a "train on rubber wheels" from North Hollywood to Woodland Hills in the San Fernando Valley, boosted ridership by 1.3 percent over last year, which was a strong ridership period.

The combination of cheap fares and fast service competitive with driving is luring more riders, according to Metro officials.

"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."

Snoble also noted that Metro is getting strong interest in its other rideshare programs including subsidized vanpools and carpools. Moreover, Metro's employer pass programs are taking off as more employers partner with Metro to buy annual transit passes for their workers and realize tax benefits for their companies.

More than 1.2 million passengers boarded Metro buses on an average weekday in May, slightly above April's levels, however, comparing ridership for the full calendar month of May year over year, bus ridership is down 5.37 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 though Metro Rail has consistently gained riders eager to avoid pain at the gas pump.

Go to [Metro.net](http://Metro.net) to access the 24/7 Metro trip planner and learn more about Metro rideshare programs or call 1-800 Commute for information.

### **Metro-102**

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