

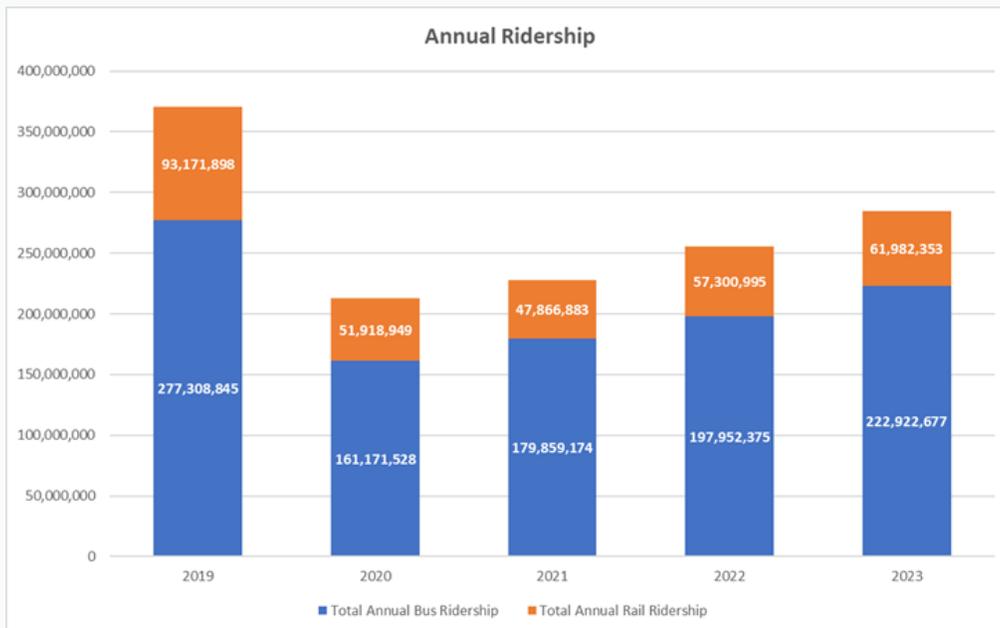
LA Metro Saw Highest Ridership Levels Since Pandemic, Celebrated 12 Months of Continuous Ridership Growth in 2023

Tracy Smith February 12, 2024

Increased Safety, Improved Service, Leisure Travel Key Factors in Ridership Growth

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) today announced that the agency saw a total of 284,905,030 boardings on its buses and trains in 2023, an 11.6 percent increase over 2022 ridership numbers, and the highest numbers since the pandemic, with some weekend days exceeding pre-pandemic numbers.

“Metro is making the system safer, more welcoming and accessible. The ridership numbers reflect that,” said Los Angeles Mayor and Metro Board Chair Karen Bass. “I want to recognize our Board of Directors and the Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins for leading the agency to this point and putting our riders first.”



“We’ve been working hard over the last couple of years to put people first and make our system cleaner, safer, more reliable and easier to use than ever before,” said Stephanie Wiggins, CEO of Metro. “Because of all our improvements, Angelenos are increasingly making Metro their mode of choice to get to their favorite destinations, especially on weekends. We look forward to building on the success of 2023 and

making 2024 an even better year for Angelenos and our agency.”

Factors Influencing Ridership

Increased Safety

Recognizing that safety means different things to different people, in 2023 Metro began implementing a transformational human-centric multilayered approach to safety consisting of law enforcement, Metro Transit Security, private security, Metro Ambassadors and care teams. These layers have worked together to provide a more visible presence on the system, address and prevent crime, provide an enhanced customer experience and connect people to the appropriate services.

Some of the key areas of focus for law enforcement have been an emphasis on reducing trespassing and drug use on the system, which resulted in a sharp decrease of such incidents — nearly 30 percent, with efforts continuing in 2024.

On the customer experience front, Metro officially launched the Metro Ambassador pilot program, which saw Metro introduce more than 325 ambassadors who help customers navigate stations and routes, answer questions and provide directions.

The final layer of the multi-layered system consists of Metro’s 24 multidisciplinary outreach teams, made up of six community-based organizations, whose focus is connecting people experiencing homelessness on the rail and busway system with resources like permanent housing. Since July, these teams have successfully connected more than 650 people with housing solutions.

Metro also began an innovative pilot station experience program at Westlake/MacArthur Park, a station with one of the highest levels of crime, which paired environmental design interventions with care-based strategies resulting in a sharp decrease in crime and more than 95 percent of those who used the station reporting they feel safer while waiting on the platform for the next train. The improvements included lighting upgrades, rightsizing entrances, increased ventilation, station music, reinforced fare gates, mobile health clinic, homeless outreach teams, crisis interventionists and public restrooms.

Improved Cleanliness

Along with improved safety, Metro prioritized improved cleanliness on our buses and trains and in both public and non-public areas of our stations. As part of that, Metro replaced the cloth seats on all the buses and trains with vinyl seating and hired additional custodians and cleaning staff to increase the frequency of cleaning the buses and trains, including improved end-of-line and station cleaning throughout our service hours.

Improved Service

Throughout the year, Metro improved reliability and frequency of service, added additional late-night service, opened bus-only lanes, provided additional service when needed for special events and hired more than 1,000 additional bus and rail operators

joined Metro.

Bus service was fully restored to pre-pandemic levels in December 2022, making many bus lines faster and more frequent. Metro now has more than 50 miles of bus priority lanes throughout the City of Los Angeles, including the newly opened bus-only lanes on Venice Boulevard and La Brea Avenue.

Improvements were also seen on Metro Rail. The opening of the Regional Connector in June with the newly reconfigured A and E Lines, marked seven months of operation by year's end and combined saw a 33.4 percent ridership increase in December 2023 over December 2022 when operating as three lines (A/E/L).

In September, Metro added more frequent service to the B and D subway lines, with service improving to 12 minutes from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays and every 12 minutes on weekends from 8:15 a.m. – 7 p.m. In the shared section of the B and D tracks, between Wilshire/Vermont and Union Station, trains are now running every six minutes during those core hours.

In December, the light rail lines saw improved frequency on the A, C, E and K lines and additional late-night trains on its A and E lines. For the A and E lines peak hour trains (5-9 a.m. and 3-7 p.m.) improved frequency to every eight minutes during weekdays and every 10 minutes during midday on weekdays and on weekends from 9 a.m. – 7 p.m. Additional trains added on these lines extended service by an extra 40 minutes each night.

The C and K lines also saw improved service in December. Weekday midday trains began operating every 10 minutes, with C line extending that frequency improvement to its weekend service as well. (K line frequency will improve to that level in May 2024 once the work and testing is complete for connecting the C and K lines and the forthcoming LAX/Metro Transit Center Station, set to open in late 2024.)

The fire under the I-10 Freeway, which necessitated the closing of the freeway to vehicles for over a week, increased ridership on the E Line, which runs directly parallel to the I-10 freeway, during the closure period over the previous week.

Increased Leisure Ridership

Reflecting the evolution of post-pandemic ridership patterns, Metro's weekend ridership continues to lead overall ridership growth. Leisure riders are using the service for weekend events and throughout the year activities such as Taylor Swift Eras Concerts, the Hard Summer Music Festival, college football and Rams and Chargers games, Dodgers games and holiday celebrations like Grand Park's NYELA Countdown to 2024, and Christmas Eve and Christmas Day celebrations.

For many of these special events the agency provided additional late-night service and shuttle buses. On Christmas and New Years Eve Metro provided free service to all riders.

A More Affordable Metro

Metro has introduced several programs that support making Metro more affordable for all its riders.

Riders who use Metro's reduced-price transit pass programs, such as the student GoPass pilot program, which offers free transit passes to K-12 and community college students, and its Low-Income Fare is Easy (LIFE) program, which provides free rides and reduced fares to low-income customers, are utilizing the benefits.

In 2023 the GoPass Pilot Program saw 17,687,286 total boardings versus 11,699,879 in 2022, a 51 percent increase. The LIFE Program had a strong year observing a 52 percent increase over 2022 ridership with 14,557,528 boardings in 2023 compared to 9,556,191 in 2022.

In June, Metro introduced a fare capping policy under which riders who pay with a TAP card pay no more \$5 a day or \$18 over seven days. Once they've reached those limits, they ride free for the remainder of the day or seven-day period.

And Metro's Mobility Wallet Pilot Program gives in-need Angelenos the freedom to choose the mode that best suits their needs by providing a debit card with \$150 per month to spend on transportation. The card can be used to take the bus, ride the train, use bike share, take Metro-Micro and more.

Information on all Metro's reduced fare programs, including discounts for seniors, persons with disabilities and college students can be found at: metro.net/riding/fares/

About Metro

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is building the most ambitious transportation infrastructure program in the United States and is working to greatly improve mobility through its Vision 2028 Plan. Metro is the lead transportation planning and funding agency for L.A. County and carries more than 900,000 boardings daily on a fleet of 2,200 low-emission buses and six rail lines.

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