



Twin Cities Traffic Congestion Lower than in many peer regions

The 2009 Urban Mobility Report

Transit for Livable Communities is a Twin Cities' based non-profit organization.

Through advocacy, organizing, and research, TLC promotes a balanced transportation system with a greater reliance on public transit, walking, bicycling, and more compact development patterns.

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Report released in July 2009

The Texas Transportation Institute at Texas A & M University issued its *2009 Urban Mobility Report* in July. The report estimates peak period highway congestion and its costs in urban areas in the U.S. The report also estimates the value of public transit and “operational treatments” such as ramp meters in relieving congestion. The data is for 2007.

Summary of findings:

- Congestion nationally has been relatively flat during the period 2004–2007. For the Twin Cities region: Annual delay per peak hour traveler dropped from 43 hours in 2005 to 39 hours in 2007 (5 minutes morning and 5 minutes pm on weekdays). The Travel Time Index was 1.24, down from 2005.

Year	Hours of Delay
2003	43
2004	40
2005	43
2006	40
2007	39

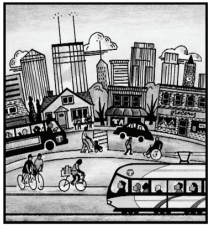
- The Twin Cities congestion ranking was lower than many peer regions. While our region is the 16th most populous, our congestion ranking was:
24th using the index for delay, 28th using the index for time, & 23rd using its index for wasted fuel.

- The highest congestion levels are found in Los Angeles (70 hours), Washington, DC (62 hours), Atlanta (57 hours), Houston (56 hours), San Francisco/Oakland (55 hours), and Dallas (53 hours).
- The Twin Cities' region ranked 9th in the rate of congestion growth over the past 25 years (1982 to 2007) primarily because the Twin Cities region had one of the nation's lowest rates of congestion in 1982.
- The estimated annual cost of congestion in the Twin Cities region (fuel and time lost) was \$1.1 billion. The majority of the estimated congestion cost is time not fuel.
- The estimated value of congestion relief from 1) public transit in the Twin Cities' region was \$80 million and 2) operational treatments, including ramp meters, was \$110 million.



Findings from the 2009 Urban Mobility Report

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Additional briefs from TLC:

- *Seattle Washington: Dramatically Expanding Transit*
- *Denver Colorado: the Next Transit Metropolis*
- *Highway Lane Miles in Peer City Regions*
- *Most Regions Fund Transit with Sales Tax*
- *Sources of Funding for Transit in Peer City Regions*
- *Subsidies for Roads and Transit*
- *Transit Fares in Peer City Regions*

Detailed findings:

1. Transit reduces congestion

The *Mobility Report* estimates public transit's role in reducing delay. For the Twin Cities region, it found that transit reduced delay by nearly 4 million hours in 2007 for an estimated congestion savings of \$80 million.

Sixteen US regions get a greater congestion relief from transit due primarily to those region's more extensive public transit systems. Transit in Seattle saved \$261 million in 2007 - 200% more than transit in the Twin Cities region, Denver saved \$102 million - 13% more, Portland transit saved \$98 million - 9% more, San Francisco saved \$659 million - 600% more.

These estimates of congestion savings do not include a financial estimate of transit's value in serving people without access to a car, reducing the need for parking, reducing air and water pollution, and influencing development patterns.

2. "Operational Treatments" reduce congestion

The report also measures congestion savings from operational treatments including ramp metering, incident management, traffic signal coordination, and arterial street access management. The *Mobility Report* found that in the Twin Cities region, operational treatments reduced delay by 5.5 million hours for an annual estimated savings of \$110 million.

When compared with other regions, the Twin Cities region ranks high 14th in estimated savings from operational treatments – scoring higher than several larger regions.

3. Recommended solutions from the *Urban Mobility Report*

To reduce the rate of congestion growth, the authors recommend a broad range of strategies tailored to each region including:

- Getting the most from the roads one has through incident management, signal timing, intersection design, and adding short roadway sections
- Add capacity in crucial corridors using rail, bus or roadway expansion.
- Change the usage patterns using flexible hours and the internet
- Provide choices including additional modes, lanes, or tolls
- Diversify development patterns by increasing density, providing a mix of jobs, shops, homes to provide more options for walking, bicycling or transit.
- Realistic expectations—large urban areas will be congested as will key activity centers.

For a copy of the *Mobility Report* see <http://mobility.tamu.edu>

MnDOT also produces an annual congestion report which can be found at <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/hottopics/CongestionReport2007.pdf>