



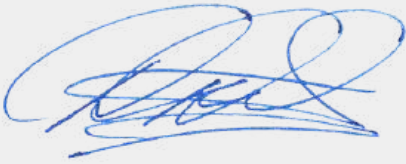
Community Driven

2024 Report to the Community

A LETTER FROM OUR LEADERSHIP



Dawn Distler, CEO



**Mark Derrig,
Board President**



Dear Friends and Supporters of METRO,

What an exciting year it has been for METRO and the communities we serve! We are thrilled to share our 2024 Annual Report, a celebration of the incredible people and milestones that have made this year truly unforgettable.

METRO broke ground on our new Maintenance and Operations Facility—a transformative project that will help us deliver even better service for years to come. We also saw an amazing 23% increase in ridership, one of the highest in the nation! These milestones are a testament to the growing role METRO plays in connecting people to jobs, schools, healthcare, and more, all while fostering a stronger, and more connected community.

What makes METRO truly special, however, are the people behind the numbers. From our operators, police officers, and operations supervisors to our customer care window specialists who greet riders with a smile, and the dedicated team members working tirelessly behind the scenes, it is their hard work and dedication that fuel our success. And let's not forget our passengers—each with their unique stories that inspire all we do. This report highlights their contributions and the shared victories that make our mission so rewarding.

As we look to the future, we're filled with excitement about the opportunities to grow and continue serving as a vital resource for our region. None of this would be possible without your support. Whether you are a rider, partner, or advocate, your contributions have been essential to our progress, and for that, we thank you.

We invite you to explore this year's report, celebrate our achievements, and join us as we envision an even brighter future for public transportation in our community. Together, we can continue building a stronger, more connected region.

Thank you for being an integral part of the METRO family.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



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Board President,
City of Akron



Dana LaGarde
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Gary Spring
City of Stow

2024 AT A GLANCE



5,325,403 Boardings



75 Community Events
Attended



593,231 Social Media
Impressions



5,770,303 Miles
Traveled



2 New Electric Buses



42 Operators Reached Safe
Driving Milestones

OUR MISSION

METRO Regional Transit Authority enhances the quality of life for our community by providing innovative transportation that is safe, dependable, cost-effective, and customer-focused... now and into the future.

2024 RIDERSHIP SOARS

METRO’s transit-loyal riders boarded METRO buses more than five million times in 2024. They rode to work, school, to medical appointments, events, to visit family, and to enjoy all our community has to offer throughout the service area.

In 2023, METRO introduced Reimagine METRO, a complete system redesign, in which the riding public has benefited from the changes. Free fare weekends in the summer gave METRO riders more opportunities to learn new routes and to go to different places using METRO Direct and METRO ADA services.

During the pandemic, METRO lost riders due to the nature of the directives to stay home, to isolate, and to be socially distanced. The ridership surge of 2024 further highlights the essential nature of METRO riders and their continued impact in our community.

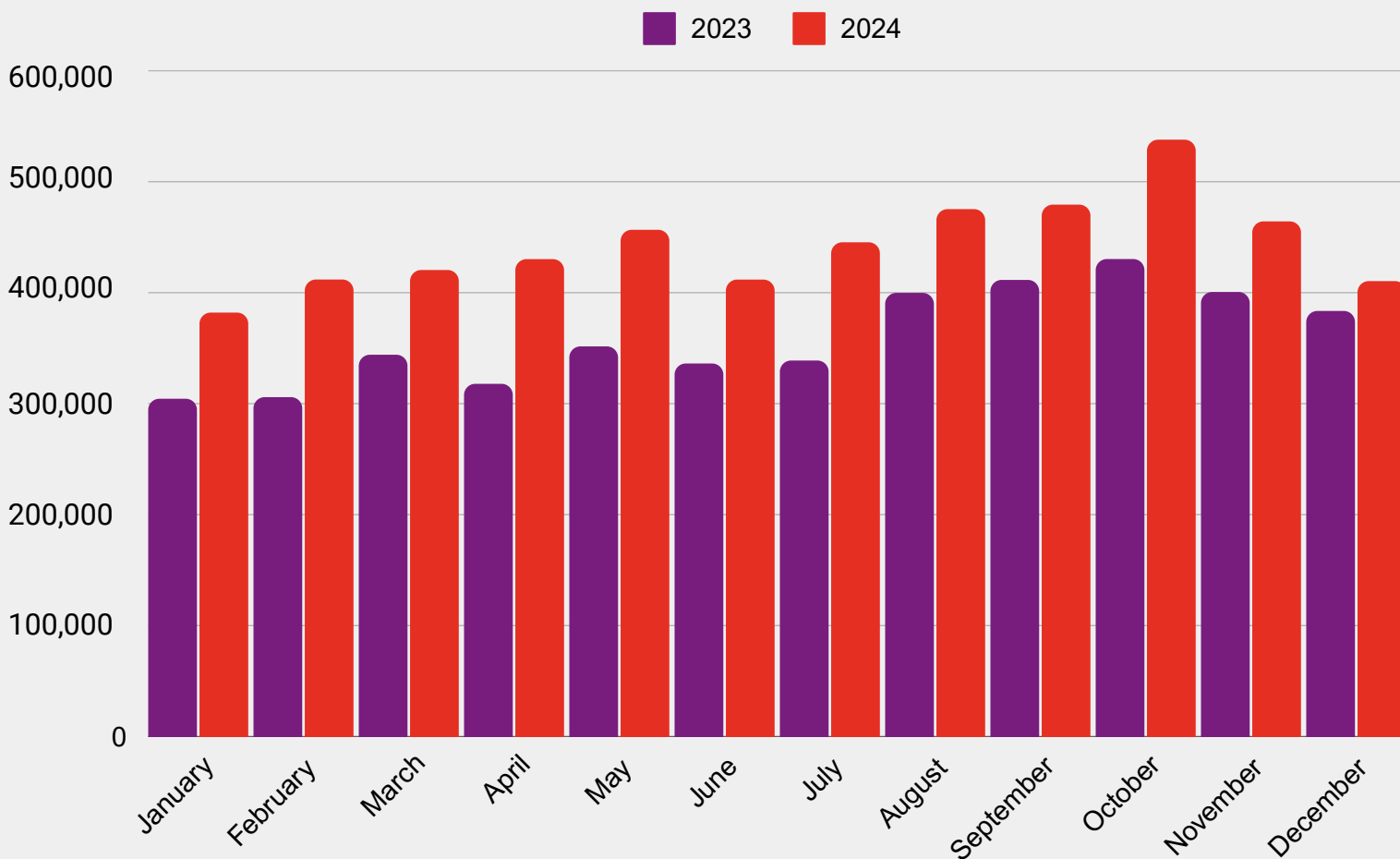


5.3 MILLION

TRIPS TAKEN ON METRO SERVICES IN 2024



RIDERSHIP BY THE NUMBERS



At METRO, our commitment to the community drives everything we do. We prioritize sustainability, accessibility, reliability, and equitable transportation to improve the overall quality of life. Through ongoing innovation, we strive to play a crucial role in connecting and supporting community growth, making transportation more than just a service.



AKRON PRIDE FESTIVAL & EQUITY MARCH

This year, METRO was honored to join the annual PRIDE Festival and Equity March, proudly supporting the LGBTQ+ community. Celebrating love, equity, and inclusion with our community reinforces our commitment to creating an inclusive environment.



METRO attended 75 events, engaged with residents, shared service information, and showed our commitment to the communities we serve.



FREE FARE WEEKENDS

For the past three summers, METRO has offered free weekend fares on METRO Direct and ADA services. This fun initiative allowed METRO riders to enjoy summer with less stress and offered more freedom to explore.



“I want to say thank you for the free bus rides this summer. This is the third summer you offered this program, and I took full advantage of it. Every Saturday, I went some place different and even went a few places I had not been to in a while.”
-Nickie, METRO Rider

FOREVER R CHILDREN

METRO RTA donated a bus to Forever R Children, a local nonprofit supporting the unhoused community. This bus was renovated into a mobile shower unit with two full bathrooms. It now provides essential services at regular stops, including the Robert K. Pfaff Transit Center. Scan the code to learn more about Forever R Children!



ELECTION DAY FREE FARES

To support our community, METRO offered free rides on Election Day so voters could get to polling stations without worrying about transportation costs.



SOUTH STREET MINISTRIES

The METRO Transit Police participated in South Street Ministries' Open Gym Night, a program offering basketball, meals, and conversations with youth from the Summit Lake community.



SUMMIT STORIES

METRO proudly showcases the stories of our passengers, employees, and community members through Summit Stories on Facebook and Instagram.



HAVE A HEART RADIOTHON

The 98.1 KDD Radiothon gave patients and families a platform to share their stories, inspiring listeners to support Akron Children's Hospital. METRO team members joined the effort, answering calls to help make a difference.



COMMUNITY USE AT THE RKP TRANSIT CENTER

The Robert K. Pfaff Transit Center is a vital community hub, offering transportation options, health fairs, and essential services through partnerships with local organizations.

Minority Health Fair



Summit County Public Health hosted their annual health fair at the Transit Center in April 2024.

Bookmobile at RKP



The Akron-Summit County Library Bookmobile visited the Transit Center every Thursday in the summer.

NAACP Voter Registration



The Robert K. Pfaff Transit Center was a great place for community members to register to vote!

CareSource Health Fair



CareSource hosted a Health & Wellness Fair at the RKP Transit Center in October 2024.

LIBRARY ON THE GO

The Akron-Summit County Public Library launched "Library on the Go" at the Robert K. Pfaff Transit Center in January 2024, giving transit riders access to books, magazines, digital resources, and METRO information with their library cards.



OUTSTANDING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION CEO



Dawn Distler, CEO of METRO RTA, has dedicated 38 years to public transportation, showcasing her passion for innovation and community engagement. She kicked off her career as an Operator at the METRO Regional Transit Authority in Akron, Ohio, where she quickly moved up the ranks to become the SCAT (Paratransit) Operations Manager. This early experience helped her develop essential skills in team management, budget oversight, and working with stakeholders. She then took on a significant role at the Davidson Transit Organization in Nashville, Tennessee, leading operations and maintenance efforts to improve service quality and expand infrastructure in the area.



Dawn has rolled out transformative projects that are reshaping public transportation in the METRO's service area. She's led efforts for a comprehensive network redesign, integrated electric vehicles into the fleet, and introduced customer-focused technologies to enhance the overall experience for riders. Beyond her role in transit, she's a strong advocate for diversity and community engagement, taking active leadership roles with the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and local organizations.

Her career is a great example of her dedication to improving public transportation and positively impacting the communities she serves.



Dawn was awarded the Outstanding Public Transportation CEO Award in October 2024 at the American Public Transportation Association's TRANSform Conference in Anaheim, California.



LEADERSHIP AKRON



Jarrod Hampshire, Chief of Staff, was named to Leadership Akron's Signature Class 41. This 10-month program enhances leaders' community impact and teamwork skills. His selection highlights his dedication to professional excellence and community service.



Officer Dietra Goggins from the METRO Police Department was selected for Leadership Akron's ninth Diversity on Board class, it prepares diverse talent for nonprofit board service through training, coaching, and networking.



OPTA AWARDS

We proudly celebrate Eugene Mitchell, a dedicated Operator, honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Ohio Public Transportation Association (OPTA) for his exceptional service and lasting impact on our community.

APTA LEADERSHIP 2024



METRO's Chief Protection & Development Officer, Shawn Metcalf, represented our team at the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Leadership Class of 2024.



Our team continues to strive for excellence, showing commitment, resilience, and collaboration. This dedication drives our success and ensures we consistently provide equitable transportation to our transit-loyal riders.

ZENITH AWARDS

METRO RTA and the Akron Art Museum won the Pinnacle Partnership award at the 2024 Zenith Awards for bringing world-renowned art to public spaces. By transforming buses and shelters with Keith Haring's work, we showcased Summit County as a hub for art and culture. We look forward to future community collaborations.





NEXT STOP: YOUR CAREER!

METRO continued its commitment to recruiting top talent with a hands-on hiring event at the Stark State College Akron Campus, building on the success of the 2022 "Come Drive with (B)us" event.

Prospective Operators had the chance to apply, interview, receive mobility device training, and even test drive a bus. The event saw great turnout, with 97 attendees and over 100 resumes from individuals eager to join the METRO team. We're excited to welcome new talent to help us better serve our community.

We'll save a seat for ya!

DOMINO EFFECT

Each METRO team member plays a crucial role in our success, as the effectiveness of our entire organization relies on the contributions and coordination of every individual. When even one person is out of sync, it can affect the whole team. We deeply appreciate the dedication and hard work of our team members, not only for their contributions to METRO, but also for the positive impact they have on our local community.

This year, we made it a priority to recognize their efforts by celebrating them weekly with a Domino's gift certificate and highlighting their commitment and excellence on social media.



SAFE DRIVING MILESTONES

In 2024, 42 Operators reached safe driving milestones.

These Operators maintained clean driving records, showing great skill and care every day on the job. Their dedication not only protects their passengers, but also keep our community safe.



APPRENTICE PROGRAM

METRO's Apprentice Mechanic Program had another great year. This two-year program gives new mechanics hands-on training with our experienced team. This year, 4 apprentices graduated, and 3 started the program.

The program is a key part of METRO's commitment to building a skilled workforce while ensuring our fleet remains in great condition for the communities we serve.



THAT'S A WRAP!



**Akron-Summit County
Public Library**

Vote Bus

City of Akron Bicentennial

This year, METRO worked to strengthen partnerships with local community organizations, including some great collaborations on bus wraps. The Akron-Summit County Public Library, Akron NAACP and its affiliates, and the City of Akron Bicentennial Committee each designed incredible full wraps for our fleet, adding their unique touch to our buses.

HOLIDAY INITIATIVES

Throughout the year, METRO supported both our team and the local community through various impactful events.

Transit Employee Appreciation Day: Celebrated our METRO team members.

Veterans Day: Free fares on METRO Direct and ADA services, while honoring our veteran employees.

Halloween Festivals & Events: Designed a haunted bus, handed out treats at events, and joined in on trunk-or-treats throughout our service area.

Giving Tuesday: Hosted an event at the RKP Transit Center with coats, hats, gloves, and scarves for those in need.

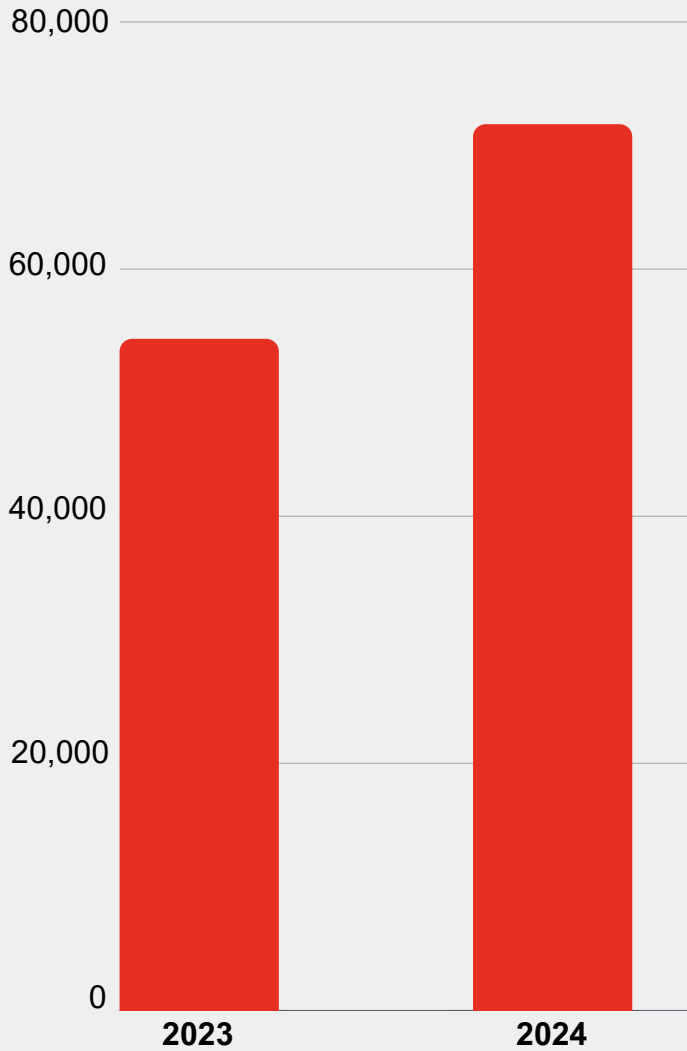
Akron Children's Holiday Tree Festival: Participated to raise funds for Akron Children's Hospital.

Christmas with a Cop: Local kids got to shop for Christmas with help from the METRO Transit Police Department.

Toys for Tots Drive: Collected toys to spread holiday cheer to kids in need.



HOLIDAY RIDERSHIP



In 2024, METRO continued offering 365 days of service to our loyal passengers, many of whom rely on public transportation daily. By maintaining regular schedules on holidays, we ensure riders can get to work, access medical care, complete essential tasks, and move throughout the community as needed.



32 % INCREASE IN HOLIDAY RIDERSHIP

THINK OUTSIDE THE BUS

In 2024, the Think Outside the Bus podcast continued to explore all things METRO, from spotlighting team members and departments to sharing updates on the happenings around METRO buses. We also feature conversations with riders and community leaders to gather their insights. Tune in with hosts Tatia and Molly for the latest METRO news and stories!



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Rebuild

METRO will be undergoing major upgrades, enhancing its fleet, offices, and maintenance building to improve efficiency and service quality.

- **Fleet Replacement:** \$40 million
- **Main Office Rehab:** \$500,000
- **Maintenance & Operations Facility:** \$59 million



Improve

METRO will implement upgrades to shelters and enhance safety measures to improve the comfort and security of passengers and Operators.

- **Shelter Amenities:** \$1 million
- **Safety:** \$700,000



Expand

METRO plans to expand its operations with new services and developments, increasing accessibility and providing enhanced transportation options for growing communities.



- **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT):** \$400 million
- **Transit Oriented Development:** \$76 million
- **Zone Service:** \$500,000
- **Super Stops:** \$3.5 million
- **Service Expansion:** \$1.75 million

Modernize

METRO aims to modernize its operations by adopting new technologies that enhance efficiency, improve the rider experience, and upgrade its transportation systems.

- **Technology:** \$4 million



Total Investment Over Next Ten Years:

\$580,700,000

METRO will use new and existing funding sources from federal, state, local, and private partnerships to pay for these investments.



PARTNERSHIPS

Access, Inc.
Adult Protective Services
ADM Board
Age Friendly Akron
Akron Art Museum
Akron Blind Center
Akron Children's Hospital
Akron Civic Theatre
Akron Metropolitan Area Transit Study
Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority
Akron NAACP
Akron Police Department
Akron Public Schools
Akron-Summit County Public Library
Akron-Summit Age Friendly
Akron Urban League
Akron Zoo
Allstate
American Heart Association
American Public Transportation Association
Arts Now
Association of Travel Instruction
Barberton Public Library
Bridges of Summit County Initiative
Bridges Out of Poverty
CANAPI
City of Akron Commission on Aging
Cleveland Clinic Foundation
Community Action Akron Summit
County of Summit ADM Board
CSE Credit Union
Cuyahoga Falls Public Library
Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad
Dementia Friends

Department of Job and Family Services
Delta Dental
Direction Home Areawide Advocacy Council
Domino's Pizza
Downtown Akron Partnership
Elevate Greater Akron
ESI Employee Assistance Group
Everside Health
Fairlawn Area Chamber of Commerce
Forever R Children
Full Term First Birthday
GAR Foundation
Goodwill Industries of Akron
Greater Akron Chamber
Highland Square Neighborhood Association
International Institute of Akron
Jobs for Ohio's Graduates
Kenmore Neighborhood Alliance
Leadership Akron
Life Services
Lincoln Financial
Living Green Task Force
Local Emergency Planning Committee
Medical Mutual of Ohio
NEORide
New York Life
Northeast Ohio Travel Trainers
Northwest Group
Ohio Erie Canal and Railway
Ohio Public Transit Association
Ohio Transit Risk Pool
Project Ujima

RAISE Good Jobs for Greater Akron
Reentry Coalition of Summit Portage & Medina
Red Cross
Safe Kids
Senior Independent Living Council
South Street Ministries
Stow-Munroe Falls Public Library
Stark State College
Summa Health Summit County Adult Protective Services Interdisciplinary Team
Summit County Public Health
Summit County Suicide Prevention Coalition
Summit County Drug Task Force
Summit County Stand Down
Summit Metro Parks
Summit Lake CDC
Summit County Probate Court
Taylor Oswald
The International Welcoming Center
TL Worldwide Transportation
Towpath Credit Union
Twinsburg Public Library
The University of Akron
Women's Transportation Seminar
Vantage Aging
330ToGo





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