

MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

2024 Transportation Plan



**Submitted by the Minnesota State Agricultural Society
Board of Managers
Aug. 1, 2024**

OVERVIEW

In 2024, Chapter 104 was enacted in which Sec. 109 “Minnesota State Fair Transportation Planning” specifically requires:

“By August 1, 2024, the board of managers of the State Agricultural Society, in consultation with the Metropolitan Council, must develop a multimodal Minnesota State Fair transportation plan for implementation at the 2024 Minnesota State Fair and must submit a copy of the plan to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over agriculture and transportation policy and finance.”

This plan is submitted in accordance with this law.

INTRODUCTION

Every year, the Minnesota State Fair develops a multilayered, complex and comprehensive plan to safely transport more than 1.8 million guests, livestock exhibitors, employees, vendors, performers, volunteers and others to and from its 322-acre fairgrounds; this can amount to between 120,000 and 240,000 people per day, the equivalent to two to four sold-out Vikings games.

The fair’s transportation and parking plan is built on decades of expertise, marked by significant milestones such as the introduction of the free Park & Ride system in 1974 and the full prohibition of car parking on fairground streets during the fair since 1992. In 2004, the fair embarked on a 20-year strategic plan, which included the construction of a Transit Hub on the west end of the fairgrounds in 2014. This hub moved buses off Como Avenue, opening up this main road and the parking lots south of Como Avenue to vehicles and creating a safer route for pedestrians to get from their cars to the entrance gates.

From 2014 through 2019, between 46 and 51 percent of fair guests arrived via mass transit. The fair was canceled in 2020, and ridership dropped to 28 percent in 2021 due to pandemic concerns. Ridership rebounded to 39 and 40 percent in 2022 and 2023 as people became more comfortable congregating on buses.

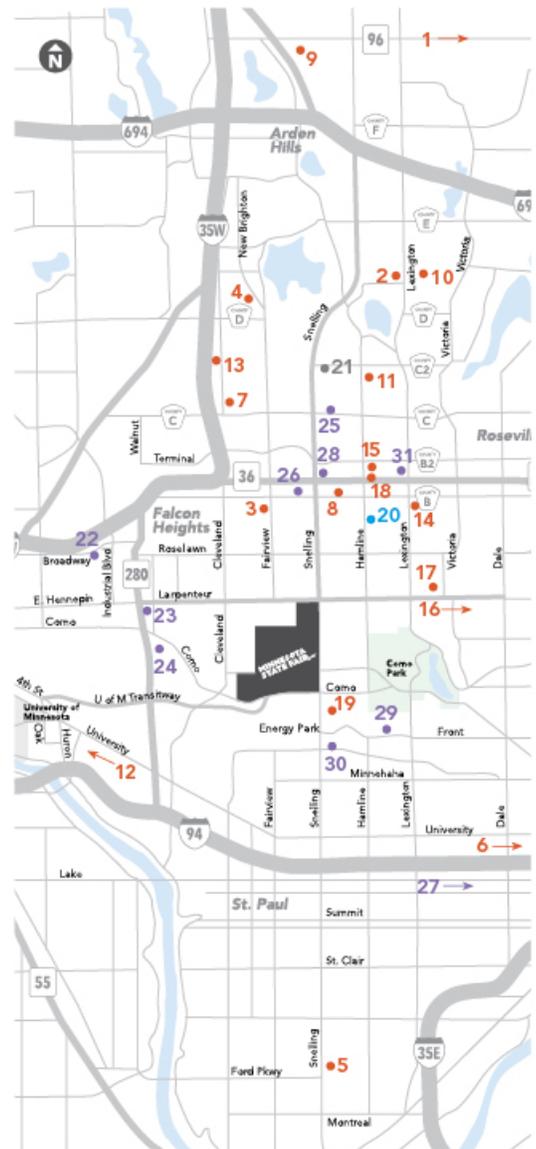
The State Fairgrounds’ unique urban location, midway between two major metropolitan areas and bordered by residences, small businesses, light industrial and the University of Minnesota, creates challenges and inevitable congestion. Our team is well-equipped to continually evaluate, revise and improve our transportation and parking operation, always keeping the guest experience top of mind. We work year-round, year over year with partners such as Metro Transit, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority, SouthWest Transit, Lorenz Bus Company, transportation network companies such as Uber and Lyft, more than 30

contracted organizations and businesses that own lots used for Park & Ride locations, surrounding municipalities and their neighborhood task forces, public safety agencies, and contractors including an aerial photographer. At this writing, the State Fair is in the process of hiring 20 parking and 75 other related department employees to work the fair’s 12 days. Joint powers agreements are being negotiated with the City of Saint Paul for the services of the Saint Paul Police Department for traffic control and with other entities and public safety services to ensure efficient and safe travel to and from the fairgrounds.

The Minnesota State Fair is financially self-supporting and fully funds its annual multimillion-dollar transportation and parking operation. This document provides an overview of what the State Fair has in place as we look to roll out the welcome mat for all who travel to the 2024 Great Minnesota Get-Together.

STATE FAIR FREE PARK & RIDE SERVICE

- Every year since 1974, the State Fair has provided a Park & Ride service that enables guests to park free and ride a free shuttle to and from the fairgrounds from 8 a.m. until after the fair closes at 11 p.m. daily (9 p.m. on Labor Day).
- The fair secures approximately 30 parking lots of varying size in relatively close proximity to the fairgrounds. The number of lots has ranged from 29 to 34 over the past 10 years.
- In 2024, the fair has secured 31 lots, the same number as 2023. Total parking capacity is increasing because, in partnership with Metro Transit, one of the largest Park & Ride lots – the I-35W & Co. Rd. C Park & Ride Ramp at 2000 Iona Lane in Roseville – has expanded from limited availability as a five-day lot in past years to usage for the full duration of the fair – all 12 days this year. (See Appendix for list of lots.)
- In 2024, the Park & Ride service provides 14,000 parking spots among the 31 lots; at some lots, overflow parking bleeds into neighborhoods and surrounding areas, increasing the capacity. These lots are serviced daily by 80 to 105 buses that run continuously; Lorenz Bus Service has been the sole provider of this service since 2009. (From 1974 to 2008, Metro Transit provided this bus service.)

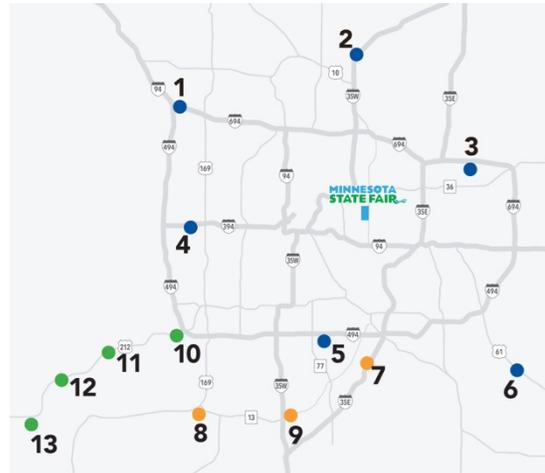


- In 2023, State Fair Park & Ride ridership was 940,000 (total State Fair attendance was 1.836 million). In 2022, ridership was 1 million (State Fair attendance was 1.842 million), up from 483,200 in 2021, when people were hesitant to congregate in buses post-pandemic (2021 State Fair attendance was 1.3 million). In 2019, State Fair Park & Ride service provided 1.13 million rides (total State Fair attendance was 2.127 million).
- The State Fair contracts with each lot annually and works year-round to secure lots and research potential lots. Each lot meets a set of logistics criteria, including the ease of buses to move in and out of a lot, number of spaces, if the lot is or may be for sale, coordination with lot management, nearby construction, and availability based on lot owners' usage (for example, churches provide Monday to Saturday use and open later on Sundays, the University of Minnesota lots are not available on Gopher football game day, and businesses may restrict parking during their business hours). All lots have designated accessible parking spaces, and some have bike parking, including the largest lots at the University of Minnesota and at I-35W & Co. Rd. C.
- This Park & Ride service also includes the lot at Oscar Johnson Arena off Energy Park Drive, which is reserved for those with accessibility parking certificates or license plates and is serviced by special wheelchair-accessible buses. This bus drops off and picks up at Gate 9, the Loop Gate on Como Avenue. In addition, accessible service extends to all Park & Ride lots this year, with at least one bus per route being ADA-accessible. To facilitate this, Lorenz Bus Service utilizes the largest private accessible bus fleet in the country.
- In addition to the 31 lots, the State Fair provides free Park & Ride service for fair and vendor employees and volunteers at a dedicated parking ramp. (In 2023, ridership to/from this lot was nearly 22,000.)
- Each Park & Ride bus route drops off or picks up at either the Transit Hub (for entry at Gate 16) on the west end of the fairgrounds or on Midway Parkway & Snelling Avenue (for entry at Gate 5) on the east end (with the exception of Oscar Johnson Arena, which services Gate 9 on Como Avenue).
- Park & Ride lots are staffed by State Fair employees or fundraising groups.
- The expense of lot usage, bus service and staffing are paid for entirely by the State Fair.
- For an overview of the 2024 State Fair Park & Ride service, along with location addresses and a map, visit mnstatefair.org/get-here/free-park-and-ride/ (also included in the Appendix).

STATE FAIR EXPRESS BUS SERVICE AND METRO MOBILITY

- The State Fair Express Bus Service began as a partnership with area transit providers in 1992. Metro Transit, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) and SouthWest Transit all provide service to and from the fairgrounds from lots in farther-out Twin Cities suburbs where guests park for free and ride an Express Bus directly to the fair for a small fee.

- In 2024, Metro Transit will service six Express Bus routes (up from four in 2023) - Blaine, Bloomington, Cottage Grove, Maplewood (added in 2024), Minnetonka and Maple Grove (added in 2024). All lots except Maple Gove will operate the entire 12 days of the fair; Maple Grove will be open weekdays and Labor Day. Before the pandemic, Metro Transit operated nine Express Bus service locations; due to a severe driver shortage, they decreased to three in 2021 and 2022 and increased to four in 2023. Round-trip bus fares remain the same as 2023. Metro Transit maintains a dedicated page on its website for State Fair information at metrotransit.org/statefair.



- In 2024, MVTA will provide service to and from their transit stations in Burnsville, Eagan and Shakopee. This service has remained steady for the past several years. Round-trip bus fares remain the same as 2023. MVTA maintains a dedicated page on its website for State Fair information at mvta.com/statefair.
- In 2024, SouthWest Transit will service four Express bus locations (up from three in 2023) – Carver Station (added in 2024), Chanhassen, Chaska and Eden Prairie. Also new in 2024, bus service will be available from all lots every day except Labor Day, Sept. 2, when no service is available; this is an increase to 11 days from nine days of service provided in 2023. Round-trip bus fares remain the same as 2023. SouthWest Transit maintains a dedicated page on its website for State Fair information at swtransit.org/events/mn-state-fair.
- Express Bus service is coordinated and operated by the individual partner transit providers in consultation with the State Fair, and all organizations meet to share details, coordinate logistics and discuss the geographic distribution of their routes to service wider swaths of the Twin Cities and surrounding areas. Each provider selects their locations, sets schedules and bus ride pricing, and provides drivers. Each partner publishes a State Fair-dedicated webpage detailing their services; the State Fair gives an overview of the services and links to each provider on its website at mnstatefair.org/get-here/. (See Appendix for list of lots.)
- Express Bus ridership has seen an increase as people become more comfortable congregating on buses post-pandemic. In 2023, Metro Transit reported ridership of 241,000 people, an increase of 33 percent over 2022, partially due to the addition of one lot. MVTA reported 113,000 rides in 2023, 19 percent higher than 2022.

SouthWest Transit reported ridership of 77,300 in 2023, a 13 percent increase over 2022.

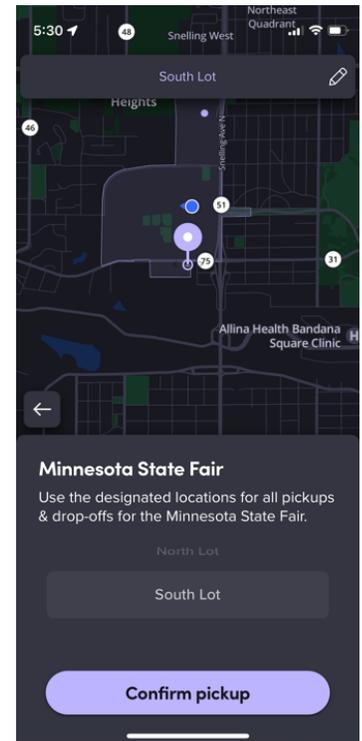
- All buses servicing Metro Transit, MVTA and SouthWest Transit Express Bus routes are ADA-compliant, and accessible and bike parking is available at all locations.
- Also part of the Express Bus program, Metro Mobility is a public transportation service of the Metropolitan Council for certified riders unable to use regular route buses due to a disability or health condition. Riders pay a fee for the service. The fair provides two designated drop-off and pick-up locations (Gate 2 on the north end off Hoyt Avenue and Gate 9 on the south end at Gate 9 on Como Avenue) and works with Metro Mobility operations to coordinate communication and logistics. In 2023, Metro Mobility ridership was 1,740. This compares to 1,820 in 2022 and a high of 2,160 in 2019.
- On July 3, 2024, State Fair staff representing operations, accessibility guest services and marketing attended the monthly meeting of the Metropolitan Council's Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee to give an overview of accessible transportation options available for the 2024 State Fair. Committee leadership and fair staff continue to correspond and follow up on ideas and suggestions discussed at the meeting.

METRO TRANSIT REGULAR BUS SERVICE

- Metro Transit operates three regular bus routes that run adjacent to the State Fairgrounds: METRO A Line rapid bus line on Snelling Avenue, Route 3 on Como Avenue and Route 61 on Larpenteur Avenue.
- Throughout the fair, Metro Transit actively monitors regular route service and has additional buses on standby. To ensure buses are arriving at scheduled intervals, the standby buses are put into service if/when there are delays due to heavy traffic on local roads. To provide the most capacity possible, the agency also maximizes the use of larger 60-foot buses and three-car train sets. Additional adjustments are made to accommodate fair time, including moving the drop-off and pick-up spots outside the fair's main gate (Gate 5) on Snelling Avenue.
- In 2023, ridership on Metro Transit regular bus routes to the fair was 49,600. This compares to 36,500 and 25,660 in 2022 and 2021, respectively, and 52,600 in 2019.
- Metro Transit provides information on riding their regular route service, including the METRO Green Line light rail, on a dedicated website page at metrotransit.org/state-fair-regular-routes. The State Fair links to this page from its Get Here website page (mnstatefair.org/get-here/free-park-and-ride/).

RIDESHARE & TRANSPORTATION NETWORKING COMPANIES (UBER, LYFT, ETC.) AND TAXIS

- State Fair staff coordinate with Uber and Lyft companies to geofence the fairgrounds, giving users the choice of two drop-off and pick-up locations at the fairgrounds: Gate 2 on the north end off Hoyt Avenue and outside Gate 7 on the south side of Como Avenue. Using two designated locations helps ease congestion and confusion regarding where guests could get dropped off and where to meet their rides on the perimeter of our large fairgrounds footprint. These lots are staffed by fair employees daily 11 a.m. to midnight.
- In 2024, to improve use of the Uber and Lyft services, the rideshare drop-off and pick-up location on the south side of Como Avenue is reconfigured with expanded staging space for waiting vehicles
- State Fair staff engaged with several new-to-market transportation network companies and will continue to be open to working with more services.
- Taxis have a dedicated staging area on the south side of the fairgrounds, outside Gate 9, the Loop Gate on Como Avenue.



ON-SITE PARKING FOR GUESTS

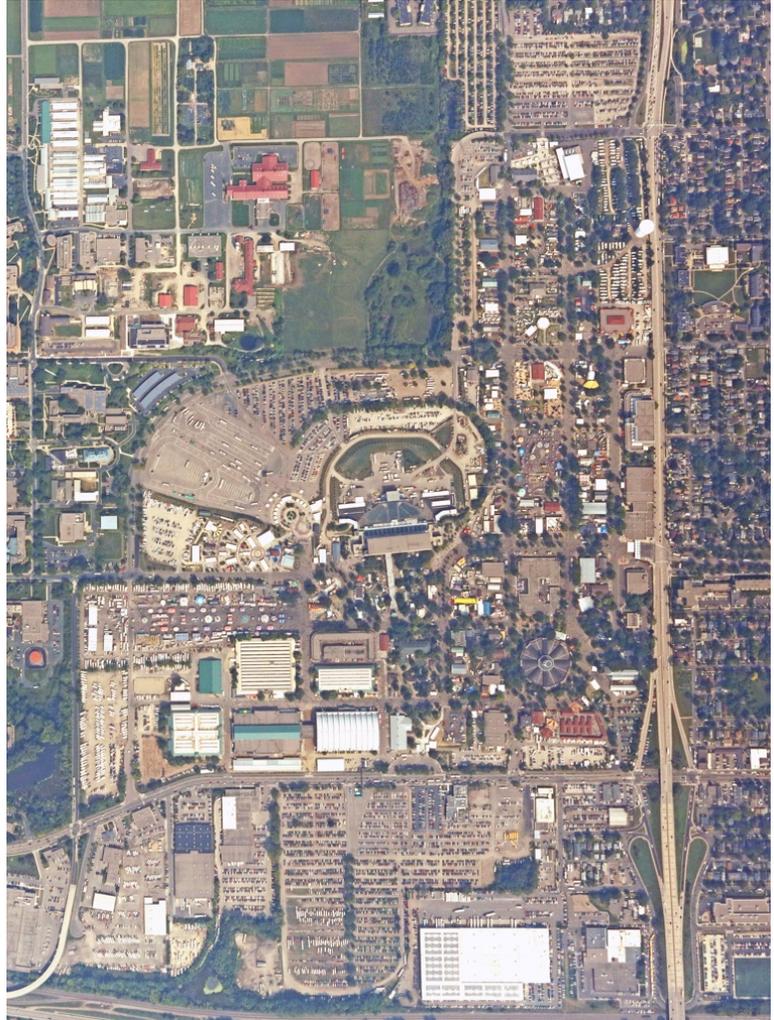
- On-site parking options for guests include car, motorcycle and bike parking.
- Approximately 5,000 parking spots are available for the public in lots on the north, west and south ends of the fairgrounds. Lots open at 6 a.m., one hour prior to the opening of the fairgrounds in order to move traffic off surrounding streets.
- Of the 5,000 spots, approximately 800 are designated as accessible parking spots.
- Public parking lots can be accessed via Larpenteur Avenue, Hoyt Avenue from Snelling Avenue, and Como Avenue.
- Bike Parking: Up to 930 free bike parking spots are available in three fenced-in, secure and monitored bike lots located near entrance gates:
 - South Bike Lot (Gate 9 on Como Avenue): Space for up to 600 bikes; with the redevelopment of the Gate 9 area, this bike lot moved from Gate 6 to Gate 9 in 2023, enabling its capacity to more than double from 200-250 spots
 - North Bike Lot (Gate 2 on Hoyt Avenue): Space for up to 200 bikes
 - West Bike Lot (Buford Avenue near Gate 16): Space for up to 130 bikesTo facilitate more efficient storage, especially in the South Bike Lot, which greatly expanded last year, the State Fair purchased additional bike racks for use in 2024.
- Motorcycle Parking: A dedicated motorcycle parking lot, with a capacity of 150 motorcycles, is located on the south side of the fairgrounds on Como Avenue with a

reduced-rate parking fee of \$15, unchanged from 2023. In 2023, 1,442 motorcycles utilized this lot, which has not reached capacity on any single day.

- Charter Bus Parking: Charter buses are directed to a dedicated lot where they can park free north of the Grandstand and drop guests off at Gate 18.
- We work with the Saint Paul Police Department on traffic control in the area, which may include prohibiting left turns, opening lanes and exits when needed, adjusting traffic light timing, monitoring pedestrian crossings and other tactics to safely minimize congestion.

ON-SITE PARKING FOR LIVESTOCK AND HORSE EXHIBITORS AND COMPETITORS

- The popularity of the Minnesota State Fair's livestock and horse exhibitions have made the fair one of the largest showcases in the Midwest. Over the fair's 12 days, approximately 4,450 livestock and horse exhibitors bring their animals to the State Fair: 4-H - 2,600; Open class and FFA - 1,500; horse – 350. Tow vehicles, trailers, campers and cars are accommodated on-site.
- There are 220 overnight livestock parking sites that also must hold deadhead tow vehicles; 80 daily auto parking spots, and 27 spots for livestock and Coliseum staff. Approximately 150 parking credentials are given to judges, staff and contractors. 4-H staff are able to park at the University of Minnesota's Continuing Education and Conference Center lot on the St. Paul Campus.
- Livestock departure and arrival occurs every four days of the fair (Sunday, Thursday, Monday) when animals vacate the barns and new animals arrive to participate in the fair. Through a carefully planned, staggered process to minimize traffic impact and enable fair guests to still safely move around the barns on departure days, exhibitors who live the farthest from the fairgrounds begin departing first using color-coded,



time-stamped cards distributed in each barn. When the process is complete, the barns are cleaned and readied for the next wave of livestock to arrive the next day. To minimize the disruption to fair guest traffic and to keep trailers off Como Avenue, arriving livestock vehicles line up in the south part of the Como Lot, then follow a route to the Canfield Gate, and are not permitted to turn directly from Como on to Canfield.

- Horse exhibitors arrive and depart each night, again to minimize the disruption to fair guest traffic in the area during the day.
- Hundreds of competitors who drop off and pick up flowers and vegetables for judging during the fair are restricted to parking in a designated lot. Almost all other competitions require drop off and pick up of entries before and after the fair.

ON-SITE PARKING FOR VENDORS, SUPPLIERS & OTHER RELATED GROUPS

In order to adequately and efficiently maintain fair and vendor operations, the concessions & exhibits department facilitates the usage of hundreds of parking spaces throughout the fairgrounds for credentialed vehicles. Examples include:

- 800 spaces in 12 on-grounds lots for concessionaire vehicles, including cars, vans, SUVs, stock trucks, refrigerated trucks, portable storage units, cargo trailers and more; this is a mix of overnight and daily in/out vehicles. This number increased in 2023 as a result of the Gate 9 redevelopment project.
- Thousands of credentials are needed for staff and vehicles who come and go each day, managing fair programs such as: inspections by the Departments of Health, Agriculture and Revenue; media; touring promotional exhibits; sponsorships; garden maintenance; night-time sanitation staff for grease clean-out and building cleaning; fundraising groups for sanitation; and others. Each credential designates a parking lot assignment but not a parking space, including the Greenhouse, Tiger, Fox, Owl lots and others.
- Dozens of spaces are allocated for wholesale supply vehicles that remain on-site for the duration of the fair.
- Transport, supply and employee vehicles owned by the operators of Mighty Midway and Kidway rides and games, in addition to Adventure Park thrill rides, are housed in a designated lot west of the midway.
- The State Fair's fleet of 134 vehicles includes those used for fairgrounds building and grounds maintenance, transport and police. In addition, the fair rents more than 100 golf carts and additional vehicles for use fair-time. Parking space for all of these is available at 1880 Como Avenue and lots throughout the fairgrounds, depending on vehicle usage.
- Traffic and parking restrictions are in place for the safe and efficient movement of vehicles: All service, exhibitor and vendor vehicles are permitted on the grounds 11 p.m. to 8 a.m. only; load-in and resupplying must wait until 11 p.m. daily. Other restrictions include no access to Gate 7 between 1 and 3 p.m. due to the daily

parade and lineup, which takes place across from the fairgrounds south of Como Avenue; and limited access to the north Fox Lot from 9 to 11 p.m. due to fireworks setup and launching following the nightly Grandstand show.

ON-SITE PARKING FOR ENTERTAINMENT & EDUCATION

- The extensive lineup of free entertainment presented by the fair - upwards of 22 performing groups every day on six stages, six high school marching bands each day in the parade, visual artists creating on-site and others – along with equipment and production staff are a logistical challenge to maneuver to the fairgrounds throughout each day. In some cases, fair entertainment runners transport artists and equipment from area hotels to and from the fair; in other cases, adhering to a tightly controlled plan of who can park where, a handful of designated parking spaces are provided in small lots located throughout the fairgrounds near the various stages, including the Bandshell, Family Fair Stage, International Bazaar Stage, Schell’s Stage, The North Woods, and Arts A’Fair areas.
- Transportation, parking and loading in and out arrangements are coordinated for all groups that present programming in Dan Patch Park and other areas. Typically, staging, escorting onto the fairgrounds and loading-in occurs in the early morning hours so vehicles are off the roads and fairgrounds before the fair opens each day. These groups include those who coordinate STEM Day, Governor’s Fire Prevention Day, Hubbard Broadcasting Day, Minnesota State Patrol Day, Indigenous People’s Day, Mental Health Awareness, Military Appreciation Day, Theater Day, UCare Stretch & Stroll Day, MPR Day, Pan-Latino Day, and Hmong Minnesota Day.
- The State Fair issues hundreds of parking credentials for a variety of groups whose participation in the fair is vital to the educational programming offered free for guests; these include Purebred Dog Breeders, Cambria Kitchen demonstrators, veterinarians, The DIRT Stage presenters, Joyful World mural artists, Alphabet Forest staff and authors, and other educational exhibits.
- Production of the nightly Grandstand concerts and fireworks shows requires its own tailored transportation and parking arrangements, including artist and equipment transportation and parking for production sound, lighting and stage crews, security, catering, and others.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKING

- Parking in the surrounding communities is an important option for fair guests and participants. Each municipality establishes its respective street, lawn and business parking regulations.
- At the invitation of neighborhood groups, State Fair leadership attends meetings of the City of Falcon Heights State Fair Task Force and the Como Neighborhood Safety

Initiative. Through ongoing communication, we work with our neighbors to address traffic and parking concerns.

- The State Fair places 160 trash barrels at locations designated by the surrounding neighborhoods and at Park & Ride lots, and the fair empties these nightly. The State Fair also provides the neighborhood groups with 400 lawn signs that read, “Please Be Good to Our Neighborhood! Pick up litter. Dial down noise. Be courteous.”

ROAD CONSTRUCTION

State Fair operations staff are in communication with appropriate state, county and city departments regarding nearby road construction projects, and they monitor if work has the potential to be ongoing during the fair; in some instances in the past, construction has been paused during the State Fair. Our staff also monitors the progress of projects in the surrounding areas using government websites that give status updates.

- In 2024, there will be no construction on Cleveland Avenue, and this major access route to the west side of the fairgrounds will be open. In 2023, Cleveland Avenue was closed.
- At the time this report is submitted, we continue to monitor the progress of two projects close to the fairgrounds: Highway 36 (<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/hwy36roseville-littlecanada/index.html>) and County Road B construction (cityofroseville.com/3580/County-Road-B-Reconstruction-2024). We reached out to the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and their staff report that they will lift all restrictions on Highway 36 during the State Fair.
- Links to these projects and other information on nearby construction are posted on this page of the fair’s website so guests can learn more about routes that may impact their travel to the fair: mnstatefair.org/general-info/avoiding-construction/

COMMUNICATION

Each year, the State Fair uses a robust, multipronged strategy to publicize the many transportation and parking options. This year, the communication plan includes:

- Coordinated communication with Metro Transit, MVTA and SouthWest Transit to ensure comprehensive, accurate information is conveniently available to the public beginning July 22, one month in advance of the fair’s opening day.
- Dedicated pages on the State Fair’s website under a “Get Here” tab that give details on Park & Ride, Express Bus, on-site parking, rideshare, motorcycle and bike options (mnstatefair.org/get-here/). In preparation for a publicity push, the fair’s parking and transportation website pages were reorganized and consolidated for easier navigation and published on July 22.

- “Get Here” tab on the home page of the Official MN State Fair App leads to the same list of options noted above. (The new app will be available in the App Store and in the Google Play Store beginning Aug. 1.)
- News release to 550+ media outlets, e-blast to the fair’s general interest email subscription list of 66,000, and a social media post on the fair’s Facebook, Instagram and X accounts (combined followers of 790,000) on July 22 highlight the many low-cost or free transportation and parking options available to fair guests; this release is coordinated with the fair’s Express Bus transit partners.
- The expanded State Fair Express Bus lots and Park & Ride options and the new app are promoted as part of the State Fair’s “New at the Fair” news release on Aug. 1.
- Transportation and parking options are included in the summer e-newsletter on July 29 and the Plan Your Visit e-blast on Aug. 15 to the fair’s general email list of 66,000.
- Each of the State Fair Express Bus partners (Metro Transit, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority and SouthWest Transit) promotes their State Fair service to their riders and geographic areas through their own publicity channels, as well as coordinated efforts with the State Fair, which include ticket giveaways, jointly produced video on “how to ride the Express Bus” for social media, bus wraps and signage, plus other tactics. Each partner also maintains and promotes a dedicated State Fair Express Bus page on their respective websites, and the State Fair and Metro Transit provide links to other providers’ information.
- Timely Park & Ride “lot full” information is maintained on a dedicated page included on the fair’s “Updates” page accessed from the fair’s website home page (mnstatefair.org/updates/parking/); this same information is communicated to WCCO Radio, who broadcasts parking and traffic updates throughout the day. Notices of full lots and other disruptions in service are communicated by each of the State Fair Express Bus service providers via their website and/or social media.
- The State Fair staffs a phone operator crew of five that answers phone calls to the general information line (651-288-4400) pre-fair and 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily during the fair; operators are continuously notified of “lot full” updates so they can share this information with callers. A general fairinfo@mnstatefair.org email is also available to provide timely answers to questions about getting to the fair.
- Messaging focusing on “there are many options for getting to the fair” and “have a Plan B and C in case your first choice is unavailable” are key talking points of the fair spokesperson and CEO when they give media interviews.
- Parking specifics for non-guest audiences such as employees, vendor staff, livestock exhibitors, entertainers, and others are given directly to these groups via handouts in packets, targeted emails and other tactics, depending on the group.

CONCLUSION

While there is no possible way to eliminate traffic congestion and parking back-ups for an event the size of the Minnesota State Fair, the fair and its many partners work tirelessly year-round to minimize negative experiences and to provide as many safe, convenient, efficient and low-cost or free options to get to the fair as possible – for guests, vendors, employees, exhibitors, performers, demonstrators, media members and any other participants.

In particular, in accordance with the “Minnesota State Fair Transportation Planning” legislation, improvements in 2024 include:

- In consultation with transportation service providers, expansion of the total number of Express Bus lots serviced by Metro Transit, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority and SouthWest Transit from 10 to 13, adding options in the northwest, east and southwest areas of the Twin Cities for greater geographic distribution.
- In partnership with Metro Transit, the expanded availability of a large free Park & Ride lot, which will now be open for the full 12-day duration of the fair; this lot was previously only available for five days.
- Work with local governments to monitor construction projects; Cleveland Avenue will be open, relieving congestion and improving access to the entire west side of the fairgrounds. Staff at the Minnesota Department of Transportation report that all traffic restrictions will be lifted on the nearby Highway 36 project.
- Increased bike parking at bus lots with the addition of three Express Bus locations and the 12-day Park & Ride lot; transportation service providers have advised the fair of bike rack and storage facilities available at their lots, as well as carrier racks on bus fronts to transport bikes if needed.
- The purchase of additional bike racks by the State Fair to facilitate more efficient storage in its three free on-site bike lots; the fair more than doubled capacity in these lots in 2023.
- Continued availability of Uber and Lyft services, facilitated with the help and support of the Legislature for this increasingly robust mode of travel for guests to and from the fair.
- Reconfigured and expanded staging space for waiting vehicles at the designated drop-off and pick-up location on the south side of Como Avenue to facilitate easier, safer and more efficient service by rideshare and transportation network companies.
- Improved communication with thousands of livestock exhibitors, vendors, employees and other participants who travel to and park at the fairgrounds.
- Communication and partnership with the City of Falcon Heights and the Como Neighborhood Safety Initiative.
- Addition of a “Getting to the Fair” news release and publicity push in coordination with Metro Transit, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority and SouthWest Transit one month from opening day.

- Expanded coordination, communication and promotional partnership initiatives with the Express Bus companies and ongoing encouragement of fair guests to take the bus, carpool and use transportation network companies.

As in the past, planning for the following State Fair begins during the current fair, as our team continuously evaluates and strategizes to address not only immediate issues but plans for future improvement as well. We appreciate the support and interest of the legislature in our efforts to ensure that all who visit and participate in the Great Minnesota Get-Together have the outstanding, unparalleled experience we are known for and have delivered for 160+ years.

APPENDIX

The following items are included:

- Printable overview of the free State Fair Park & Ride and Express Bus services and maps available on the State Fair’s website at mnstatefair.org/get-here
- News release highlighting the many “Getting to the Fair” options, released in coordination with transportation service providers on July 22, 2024
- Compilation of news coverage of the July 22 “Getting to the Fair” news release, showing TV and radio coverage of 25 mentions and audience reach of 839,000 and links to examples of TV, radio and online print coverage
- Select samples of media coverage referenced in the compilation overview, including articles in the Star Tribune and online at MPR.org
- Recap of “Getting to the Fair” social media posts on July 22 and analytics for Facebook, Instagram, X and LinkedIn

Take a **BUS** to the **STATE FAIR**

MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

Twelve Days of **FUN** Ending Labor Day



Park & Ride Information - Aug. 22 to Labor Day, Sept. 2, 2024

Park for free. Ride for free. Serving 31 Twin Cities locations, most of which are close to the fairgrounds.

Free rides from 8 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. (9:30 p.m. on Labor Day). Buses run regularly. Times vary based on traffic and crowds. Grandstand shows typically end between 10 and 11 p.m. (On Labor Day, the Grandstand show ends at approximately 4:30 p.m.; fireworks at 9 p.m.). Accessible buses serve each route, frequency subject to availability. Visit the Updates page of our website for parking lot updates, mnstatefair.org/updates/parking. Please note: If lots fill, they will reopen throughout the day as space becomes available. All information subject to change.

EVERY DAY, AUG. 22 - SEPT. 2

PICK UP AND DROP OFF AT TRANSIT HUB

- 1** Calvary Church - White Bear Township
4604 Greenhaven Dr., White Bear Township, 55127
Highway 96 west of Centerville Road
(Open Sundays at 1 p.m.)
- 2** Catholic United Financial
3499 Lexington Ave. N., Arden Hills, 55126
Lexington Ave., two blocks south of Co. Rd. E
- 3** Church of Corpus Christi
2131 Fairview Ave. N., Roseville, 55113
Southwest corner of Co. Rd. B and Fairview Ave.
(Open Sundays 1 p.m.)
(Note: Potential construction on Co. Rd. B)
- 4** Gathering Place
3245 New Brighton Rd., Arden Hills, 55112
North of Jerrold Avenue
(Open Sundays at 1 p.m.)
- 5** Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
700 Snelling Ave. S., St. Paul, 55116
One block north of Ford Pkwy. on Snelling Ave.
(Open Sundays at 1 p.m.)
- 6** Grace Lutheran Church
1730 Old Hudson Road, St. Paul, 55106
North of I-94, west of White Bear Avenue
(Open Sundays at 1 p.m.)
- 7** I-35W & Co. Rd. C Park & Ride Ramp
2000 Iona Ln. W., Roseville, 55113
Parking ramp east of I-35W at Co. Rd. C & Cleveland Ave.
(Bike racks available)
- 8** MN Office Plaza (formerly MN Dept. of Education)
1500 Hwy. 36, Roseville, 55113
(Note: Potential construction on Highway 36)



(Park & Ride Bus Service, continued on next page)

- 9 North Heights Lutheran Church
1700 Highway 96 W., Arden Hills, 55112
Enter from Highway 96 (Open Sundays at 1 p.m.)
- 10 Presbyterian Church of the Way
3382 Lexington Ave. N., Shoreview, 55126
Lexington Ave., three blocks south of Co. Rd. E (Open Sundays at 1 p.m.)
- 11 Roseville Covenant Church
2865 Hamline Ave. N., Roseville, 55113
Hamline Ave. & Co. Rd. C2 (Closed Sundays)
- 12 U of M Minneapolis Campus
Various surface lots near Huntington Bank Stadium along 6th St. SE & 8th St. SE open at 8 a.m. daily.
4th St. Ramp and Gold, Gateway and C58 lots open 4 p.m. weekdays and 8 a.m. weekends & Labor Day.
(All U of M lots are NOT available Thursday, Aug. 29)
(For U of M Parking Lots Map, go to <https://assets.mnstatefair.org/pdf/24-umn-park-ride-lots.pdf>)
(Bike racks available at parking lots.)
- 13 2955 Centre Pointe Dr., Roseville, 55113
South of County Road D, west of Cleveland Avenue

PICK UP AND DROP OFF AT GATE 5 (on Snelling Avenue)

- 14 Calvary Church - Roseville
2120 Lexington Ave. N., Roseville, 55113
South of Co. Rd. B on Lexington Ave. (Note: Potential construction on Co. Rd. B)
(Open Sundays at 1 p.m.)
- 15 Grace Church of Roseville
1310 Co. Rd. B2, Roseville, 55113
One block east of Hamline Ave. on Co. Rd. B2
(Open Sunday, Aug. 25, at 5 p.m.; open Sunday, Sept. 1, at 1 p.m.)
- 16 Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church
1669 Arcade St. N., St. Paul, 55106
Arcade St. (Hwy. 61) & Larpenteur Ave. (Open Sundays at 1 p.m.)
- 17 New Life Presbyterian Church
965 Larpenteur Ave. W., Roseville, 55113
Larpenteur Ave. & Victoria St. (Open Sundays at 1 p.m.)
- 18 St. Christopher's Episcopal Church
2300 Hamline Ave. N., Roseville, 55113
East of Hamline Ave. & and north of Hwy. 36 (Open Sundays at 1 p.m.)

PICK UP AND DROP OFF AT GATE 9 (on Como Avenue)

- 19 Oscar Johnson Arena
1039 De Courcy Cir., St. Paul, 55108
North of Energy Park Dr., east of Snelling Ave.
(Reserved for wheelchair-accessible parking for persons with disability parking certificates or license plates and their companions; all buses are wheelchair accessible)

EVERY DAY EXCEPT SATURDAYS

PICK UP AND DROP OFF AT GATE 5 (on Snelling Avenue)

- 20 St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church
2048 N. Hamline Ave., Roseville, 55113
Two blocks south of Co. Rd. B on Hamline (Note: Potential construction on Co. Rd. B)
(Open Sundays at 1 p.m.)

(Park & Ride Bus Service, continued on next page)

EVERY WEEKDAY EXCEPT LABOR DAY

PICK UP AND DROP OFF AT TRANSIT HUB

- 21 Centennial United Methodist Church
1524 W. Co. Rd. C2 W., Roseville, 55113
One block east of Snelling on Co. Rd. C2

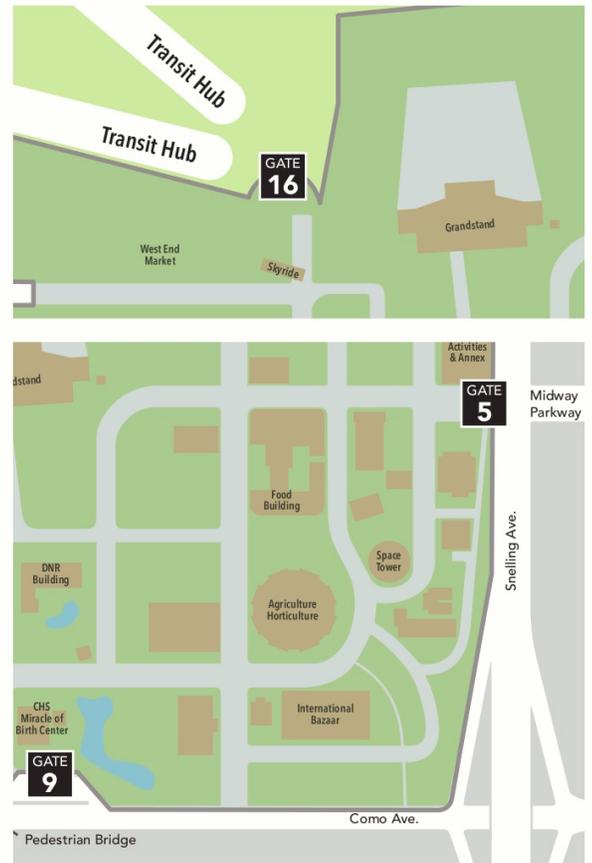
WEEKENDS & LABOR DAY, AUG. 24 - 25 and AUG. 31 - SEPT. 2

PICK UP AND DROP OFF AT TRANSIT HUB

- 22 Broadway East/West
3433 Broadway St. NE, Minneapolis, 55413
and 1300 Godward St. NE, Minneapolis, 55413
South of I-35W and west of Highway 280
- 23 Children's Home Society & Lutheran Social Service
1605 Eustis St., St. Paul, 55108
North of Como Ave. on Eustis
- 24 HealthPartners Como Clinic
2500 Como Ave., St. Paul, 55108
Southeast corner of Como Ave. & Hwy. 280
- 25 Rosedale Corporate Center/Roseville Ramp
2700 Snelling Ave. N., Roseville, 55113
East of Snelling Ave. and north of Co. Rd. C
- 26 Rosedale Towers
1700 Hwy. 36 W., Roseville, 55113
North of Co. Rd. B, west of Snelling
(Note: Potential construction on Co. Rd. B)
- 27 Saint Paul College
235 Marshall Ave., St. Paul, 55102. South of I-94 on Marion St.
- 28 Waters Edge
1500 Co. Rd. B2 W., Roseville, 55113
On Co. Rd. B2, east of Snelling Ave.

PICK UP AND DROP OFF AT GATE 5 (on Snelling Avenue)

- 29 Bandana Square
1021 Bandana Blvd., St. Paul, 55108
North side of Energy Park Dr., east of Snelling Ave.
- 30 ETC
1450 Energy Park Dr., St. Paul, 55108. South of Energy Park Dr.,
east of Snelling Ave.
- 31 Roseville Area High School
1240 County Road B2 West, Roseville, MN 55113
North of Highway 36, west of Lexington Avenue



(Express Bus Service, continued on next page)

State Fair Express Bus Service

Featuring free parking and a direct bus ride to the fairgrounds for a small fee from farther-out suburbs around the Twin Cities, State Fair Express Bus service is provided by Metro Transit, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority and SouthWest Transit. Drop off and pick up are at the Transit Hub at Gate #16 on the west end of the fairgrounds. Bike parking, accessible parking and accessible buses are available at all locations. Fares, discounts and hours vary by service provider. For more information, visit the websites for each operator listed below. All information subject to change.

METRO TRANSIT STATE FAIR EXPRESS BUS SERVICE

Park free and ride a bus for a small fee from six locations throughout the Twin Cities noted by numbered **blue** dots on the map on next page. Round-trip tickets can be purchased in advance through Metro Transit's app or website for \$5; cash-only fares can be purchased at boarding locations for \$6. For information on locations, schedules, bus ride pricing, how to conveniently buy bus tickets and more, go to metrotransit.org/statefair.

- 1 Maple Grove Transit Station (available weekends and Labor Day, Aug. 24-25 and Aug. 31-Sept. 2) - New in 2024: 12350 Main Street N., north of I-94 and west of Hemlock Lane N.
- 2 Blaine (open every day, Aug. 22 - Sept. 2): 95th Ave. Park & Ride, northwest corner of I-35W & 95th Ave. NE
- 3 Maplewood Transit Center (open every day, Aug. 22 - Sept. 2) - New in 2024: 1793 Beam Ave., north of Beam Avenue and west of White Bear Avenue near the southwest corner of Maplewood Mall
- 4 Minnetonka (open every day, Aug. 22 - Sept. 2): I-394 & Co. Rd. 73 Park & Ride, 1100 Hopkins Crossroad, southwest corner of I-394 and Co. Rd. 73
- 5 Bloomington (open every day, Aug. 22 - Sept. 2): 30th Ave. Park & Ride, 8101 Winstead Way, northwest corner of 30th Avenue and 82nd Street (Note: No service at 82nd St. & 24th Ave. S. site)
- 6 Cottage Grove Park & Ride (open every day, Aug. 22 - Sept. 2): 7500 West Point Douglas, along Hwy. 61 on W. Point Douglas Rd. between 80th St. & Jamaica Ave.

MINNESOTA VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY EXPRESS BUS SERVICE - EVERY DAY, AUG. 22- SEPT. 2

Serving the south metro area, MVTA provides free parking and direct bus service each day of the State Fair from three locations noted by **gold** dots on the map on the next page. Tickets are \$6 round-trip and can be purchased in advance on the RideMVTA App, with exact cash, or with credit cards. Children 5 and under, disabled veterans with a "Service Connected" ID, State Fair employees with ID, and law enforcement officers with ID ride free. For details on locations, schedules, bus ride pricing, how to conveniently buy bus tickets and more, check out mvta.com/statefair

- 7 Eagan Transit Station: Yankee Doodle & Pilot Knob Rd. at I-35E
- 8 Shakopee: Southbridge Crossings Park & Ride, 1401 Crossings Blvd., Shakopee
- 9 Burnsville Transit Station: Hwy. 13 & Nicollet Ave.

SOUTHWEST TRANSIT EXPRESS BUS SERVICE - AUG. 22 - SEPT. 1 (No service Labor Day, Sept. 2)

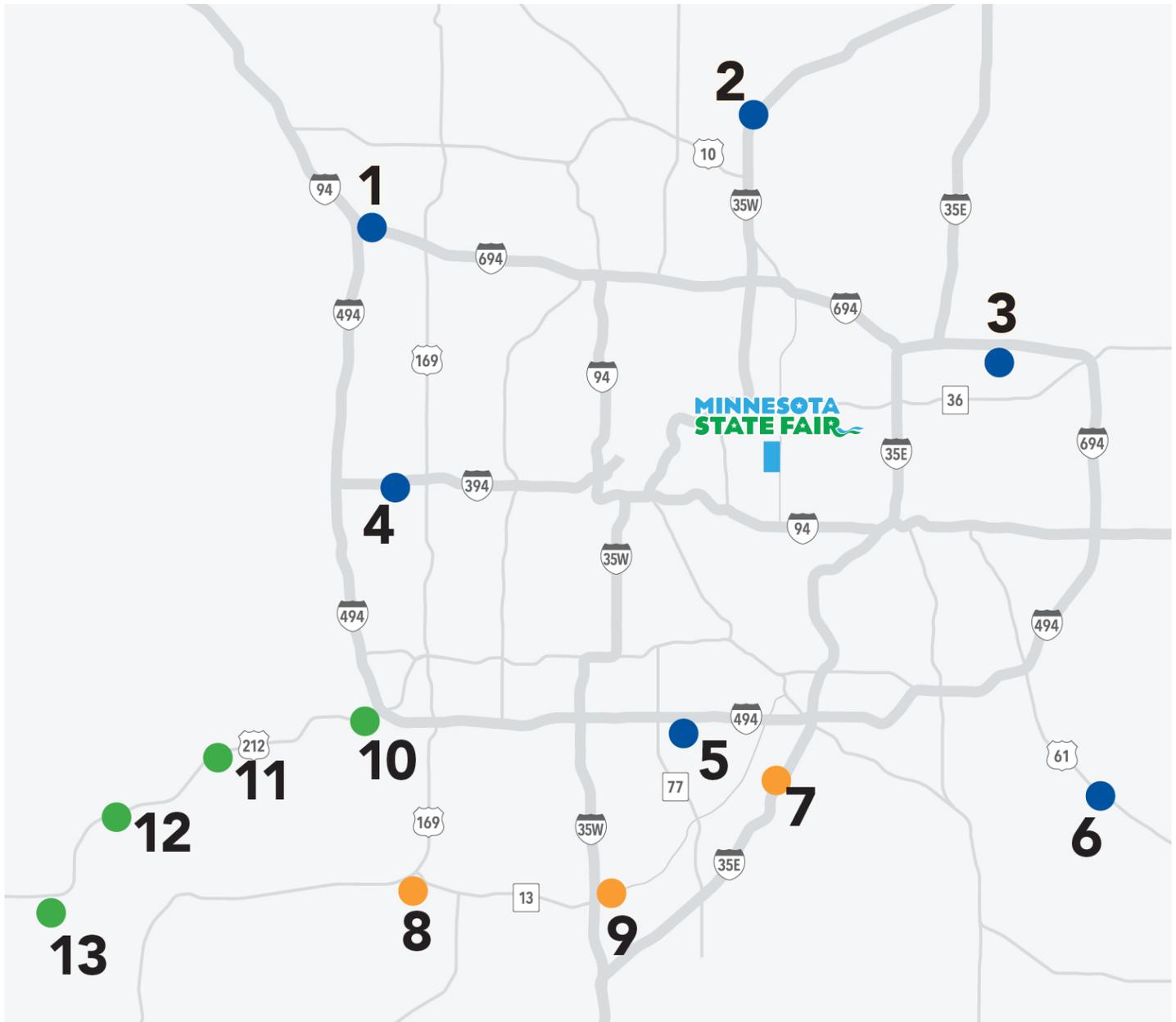
SouthWest Transit provides free parking and direct bus service to the State Fair from four locations noted by **green** dots on the map on the next page. New in 2024, bus service is available from all lots every day except Labor Day, Sept. 2, when no service is available. Round-trip fare is \$6 for adults; discounts are available on Seniors Days and Military Appreciation Days; disabled veterans and children 5 and under ride free; additional fare discounts available. Tickets can be purchased through the Token Transit App or at Express Bus stations. For more information on locations, schedules, bus ride pricing, how to conveniently buy bus tickets and more, check out swtransit.org/events/mn-state-fair

- 10 Eden Prairie: SouthWest Station, 13500 Technology Dr., Eden Prairie, 55344
- 11 Chanhassen: SouthWest Village, 650 SouthWest Village Drive, Chanhassen, 55317
- 12 Chaska: East Creek Station, 2120 Chestnut St. N., Chaska, 55318
- 13 Carver Station - New in 2024: 1607 Hartwell Drive, Carver, 55315, Jonathan Carver Parkway and Ironwood Dr.

(State Fair Express Bus Service location map on next page)

State Fair Express Bus Service Locations (see previous page for details)

Serviced by Metro Transit, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority and SouthWest Transit



For more transportation and parking options, go to mnstatefair.org/get-here.

MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Lara Hughes • Marketing & Communications Manager • Media Hotline: 651-288-4321 • Media Email: media@mnstatefair.org

Opening Day Is One Month Away: Free or Low-Cost Options for Getting to the 2024 Minnesota State Fair

Note: Minnesota State Fair CEO Renee Alexander is available for interviews about the fair's transportation plan on Monday, July 22, 8:30-11:30 a.m. and 1:30-4:30 p.m. Please reach out to media@mnstatefair.org with requests.

July 22, 2024

St. Paul, Minn. – The 2024 Minnesota State Fair's opening day is exactly one month away, and today, details about the many free and low-cost options for getting to the fairgrounds during the upcoming 12 days of fun, Aug. 22 - Labor Day, Sept. 2, are available so guests can start planning. The State Fair is one of the largest, best-attended events in the region, and nearly half of its more than 1.8 million guests use some form of public transportation to get to and from the event. With bus ridership growing post-pandemic, the fair continues to partner with several transportation organizations – Lorenz Bus Service, Metro Transit, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) and SouthWest Transit – to provide and expand the free or low-cost bus options to bring guests from locations throughout the Twin Cities directly to the fair's gates. For those wishing to drive and park on-site, the daily parking fee of \$20 remains the same as 2023. Visit mnstatefair.org/get-here/ for complete transportation and parking information.

“On an average fair day, attendance can be more than 150,000 – equivalent to two-and-a-half sold-out Vikings games,” Minnesota State Fair CEO Renee Alexander said. “We understand our guests want to get to the fair as safely and conveniently as possible so they can make the most of their day, and our goal is to make that happen as efficiently and affordably as possible.” She added, “We are proud of the year-round planning done by our team of staff and partners to provide transportation options for not only guests, but livestock exhibitors, employees, vendors, performers, volunteers and other fair participants as well.” Alexander went on to advise, “On some days and at certain times, we know that traffic and parking can get congested, so we encourage guests to have a Plan B and C if their preferred lot or route is unavailable. There are many options to choose from, and we encourage fair fans to explore all of them ahead of time.”

Transportation and parking options for 2024 include:

State Fair Free Park & Ride Service:

- Guests can park free and ride a free shuttle to and from the fairgrounds beginning at 8 a.m. daily. The free Park & Ride service consists of 31 lots within a short distance of the fairgrounds; this includes the expanded availability of one of the larger Park & Ride locations – the I-35W & Co. Rd. C Park & Ride Ramp (2000 Iona Lane, Roseville) – now available for the full duration of the fair (previously available for only five of the 12 days). For a list of Park & Ride locations, hours and other details, visit mnstatefair.org/get-here/free-park-and-ride/.
- “Lorenz Bus Service has been the transportation provider for the State Fair's free Park & Ride service since 2009,” Benjamin Canine, chief operating officer of Lorenz Bus Service Inc., said. “We are proud to have partnered with the State Fair to build the service into what it is today – a nationally lauded, independent transportation network servicing over 30 locations. On average, nearly one million fairgoers take a Lorenz bus to the fair each year. Our team always finds providing this service for guests of the Great Minnesota Get-Together to be a rewarding, meaningful experience.”
- For those with accessibility needs, the Park & Ride service includes the Oscar Johnson Arena lot, located close to the fairgrounds off Energy Park Drive, reserved for those with accessibility parking certificates or license plates and serviced by special wheelchair-accessible buses. In addition, accessible service extends to all Park & Ride lots this year. Canine explained, “We pride ourselves on having the largest private accessible bus fleet in the nation – with at least one accessible bus servicing each State Fair parking location.”

- Since 1974, the State Fair has provided a free Park & Ride service, with the expense of the lots, bus services and staffing funded entirely by the State Fair.
- Recent years' Park & Ride ridership numbers: 940,000 in 2023 (State Fair attendance was 1.836 million); 1 million in 2022 (State Fair attendance was 1.842 million); 483,200 in 2021 (State Fair attendance was 1.3 million); State Fair was canceled in 2020; and 1.13 million in 2019 (State Fair attendance was 2.127 million).

State Fair Express Bus Service:

- State Fair Express Bus service is offered by Metro Transit, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) and SouthWest Transit from farther-out sites throughout the Twin Cities area. Guests can park at these locations for free and ride a bus directly to and from the fairgrounds for a small fee; fares and discounts vary by service provider. All service providers are keeping their fares the same as 2023. For more information and a list of State Fair Express Bus service locations, visit mnstatefair.org/get-here/metro-transit/.
- In 2024, Metro Transit has increased its State Fair Express Bus service to six area Park & Rides (up from four in 2023). Those Park & Rides are located in Blaine, Bloomington, Cottage Grove, Maplewood (new in 2024), Minnetonka and Maple Grove (new in 2024). All lots except Maple Gove will operate the 12 days of the fair; Maple Grove will be open weekends and Labor Day. Round-trip tickets can be purchased in advance through Metro Transit's app or website for \$5; cash-only fares can be purchased at boarding locations for \$6. "The Great Minnesota Get-Together is all about showcasing the best our state has to offer, and that includes transit," Metro Transit General Manager Lesley Kandaras said. "We're excited to expand our offerings as we continue the tradition of providing safe, reliable and convenient trips to and from the State Fair in 2024." In 2023, 241,000 rides were provided to and from the fair on Metro Transit Express Buses, an increase of 33 percent over 2022. For more information, visit Metro Transit at metrotransit.org/statefair.
- In 2024, MVTA will offer three State Fair Express Bus routes – from Burnsville Transit Station, Eagan Transit Station and Southbridge Crossing Park and Ride in Shakopee – with 15-to-20-minute frequency all days of the fair and dropping off at the Transit Hub at the fairgrounds. Tickets are \$6 round-trip and can be purchased in advance on the RideMVTA App, with exact cash, or with credit cards. Children 5 and under ride free. "MVTA is excited to facilitate access to this year's State Fair for our south metro communities," said MVTA Chief Executive Officer Luther Wynder. "Last year, we achieved record ridership with over 110,000 rides to the fair, and we look forward to another successful year serving our communities." For more information, visit mvta.com/statefair.
- In 2024, SouthWest Transit has expanded its service to four stations (up from three in 2023) in Carver (new in 2024), Chanhassen, Chaska and Eden Prairie. Also new in 2024, bus service is available from all lots every day except Labor Day, Sept. 2, when no service is available. (This is an increase to 11 days from nine days of service provided in 2023.) Round-trip fare is \$6 for adults; discounts are available on Seniors Days and Military Appreciation Days; disabled veterans and children 5 and under ride free; additional fare discounts available. Tickets can be purchased through the Token Transit App or at Express Bus stations. "We're proud to provide expanded State Fair service from the Southwest Twin Cities suburbs this year for 11 days of the fair (every day except Labor Day), plus a new park and ride location in the City of Carver. Every one of our coach-style buses features comfy seats, cold A/C and convenient Wi-Fi access," said Erik Hansen, Southwest Transit CEO. In 2023, more than 77,000 people boarded SouthWest buses to the fair, up from 68,500 in 2022. For more information, visit swtransit.org/events/mn-state-fair/.
- All buses servicing Metro Transit, MVTA and SouthWest Transit Express Bus routes are ADA-compliant, and accessible and bike parking is available at all locations. With the addition of three State Fair Express Bus locations and two additional days of service, more bike parking is now available to guests in the farther-out suburbs.

Metro Transit Regular Bus Route Service:

- Metro Transit operates three regular bus routes that serve stops near the fairgrounds – the METRO A Line on Snelling Avenue, Route 3 on Como Avenue and Route 61 on Larpenteur Avenue. Trips on these routes run frequently throughout the day and into the evening. Fairgoers traveling on regular routes are encouraged to purchase an All-Day Pass in advance using the Metro Transit app. An All-Day Pass can be used for unlimited rides until 2 a.m. on the date after purchase.
- Throughout the fair, Metro Transit actively monitors regular route service and has additional buses on standby. To ensure buses are arriving at scheduled intervals, the standby buses are put into service if/when there are delays due to heavy traffic on local roads. To provide the most capacity possible, the agency also maximizes the use of larger 60-foot buses and three-car train sets. For more information visit metrotransit.org/statefair.

- Ridership on Metro Transit regular bus routes continues to increase. In 2023, ridership was 49,600. This compares to 36,500 and 25,660 in 2022 and 2021, respectively.

Rideshare – Uber, Lyft and Taxi Service:

- App-based ride services such as Uber and Lyft have two designated drop-off and pick-up points located on the north and south ends of the fairgrounds. The fairgrounds is geofenced for the Uber and Lyft apps to guide users to these locations to facilitate less-confusing drop-offs and pick-ups.
- In response to growing usage of ride-hailing and transportation network companies to get to and from the fair, the rideshare drop-off and pick-up locations were recently expanded, and this year are reconfigured to allow more staging space for waiting vehicles.
- During the State Fair, taxi drop-off and pick-up is located at the Loop Gate (#9), on Como Avenue on the south end of the fairgrounds.
- Visit mnstatefair.org/get-here/taxi-and-rideshare/ for more information.

On-Site Parking for Cars, Bikes and Motorcycles:

- There are approximately 5,000 parking spots available for the public in lots on the north, west and south ends of the fairgrounds. Of those spots, approximately 800 are designated as accessible. The parking fee on-site is \$20, the same as 2023.
- Three free secure and monitored bike parking areas are available on the north, west and south ends of the fairgrounds with space for up to 930 bikes. The largest bike lot, located at Loop Gate (#9) on Como Avenue, was more than doubled in size in 2023 from a capacity of 250 bikes to 600. In 2024, the fair purchased additional bike racks to more efficiently park bikes in these lots. Visit mnstatefair.org/get-here/bicycle/ for more information on biking to the State Fair.
- Motorcycle parking is available for \$15 in a secure lot on the south side of Como Avenue.
- Visit mnstatefair.org/get-here/vehicle/ for a map of State Fairgrounds parking lot locations.

Neighborhood Parking:

- The neighborhoods surrounding the fairgrounds provide parking options for guests, including private residences, lots and on-street parking.
- Each city sets its own parking policies, and guests should be mindful of various restrictions.
- The State Fair also asks our guests to help the fair be a good neighbor by not littering, being loud, or blocking driveways, alleys or emergency lanes with their vehicles.

During the State Fair, parking and transportation updates for State Fair lots will be posted on the Updates page of the fair’s website at mnstatefair.org/updates/parking/.

The State Fair is financially self-supporting and fully funds its multimillion-dollar transportation and parking operation without receiving state appropriation. Our transit partners also commit sizeable resources in addition to maintaining their regular route service.

The Minnesota State Fair is one of the largest and best-attended expositions in the world. Showcasing Minnesota’s finest agriculture, art and industry, the Great Minnesota Get-Together is 12 Days of Fun Ending Labor Day, Aug. 22 through Sept. 2. Visit mnstatefair.org for more information. Follow along on Facebook, X, Instagram and TikTok @mnstatefair for year-round updates.

- MSF -

Getting to the Minnesota State Fair New Release on July 22, 2024 - Media Coverage

TV and RADIO

Media Value from Critical Mention for TV and Radio Only



KSTP TV

- <https://kstp.com/kstp-news/local-news/organizers-announce-updates-to-transportation-options-for-2024-state-fair/>
- https://kstp.com/kstp-news/top-news/free-and-low-cost-transportation-options-released-for-the-minnesota-state-fair/?utm_campaign=snd-autopilot&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter KSTP

KARE TV

- <https://www.kare11.com/article/entertainment/events/minnesota-state-fair/minnesota-state-fair-parking-2024-free-low-cost/89-bb4fac93-63db-4ebb-b8d1-6f118c68ae99>

FOX 9 TV

- <https://www.fox9.com/news/minnesota-state-fair-transportation-options-2024>

WCCO TV (no links available)

- On the July 22 5 p.m. newscast anchor Frank Vascellero talked about how to get to the fair and then on the July 23 morning show anchors Heather Brown and A.J. Hilton talked about getting to the fair.

MPR

- <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2024/07/22/new-returning-transit-options-for-the-2024-minnesota-state-fair>

WDIO TV in Duluth

- <https://www.wdio.com/other-news/getting-to-and-from-the-minnesota-state-fair/>

KAAL TV in Rochester

- <https://www.kaaltv.com/news/minnesota-state-fair-expands-travel-options-talent-auditions-began-monday/>

CCX Media (West Metro Community Television)

- <https://ccxmedia.org/news/state-fair-express-bus-service-returns-to-maple-grove/>

PRINT and ONLINE

Star Tribune

- All inclusive transportation story – online: <https://www.startribune.com/minnesota-state-fair-parking/600382766/>
- Maple Grove addition – print and online: <https://www.startribune.com/state-fair-park-and-ride-bus-maple-grove/600382751/>

Bring Me The News

- <https://bringmethenews.com/minnesota-lifestyle/state-fair-2024-transportation-options-include-new-express-bus-routes>

Austin Daily Herald

- <https://www.austindailyherald.com/2024/07/new-returning-transit-options-for-the-2024-minnesota-state-fair/>

City of Maple Grove

- <https://maplegrovern.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=230>

StarTribune

Local Sports Business Opinion Variety  Obituaries Classifieds Autos Things To Do

LOCAL

Planning on going to the State Fair? Here's how to get there and what to consider

Here is your transportation guide for getting to the Great Minnesota Get-Together, which runs Aug. 22 to Sept. 2.

By Tim Harlow (<https://www.startribune.com/tim-harlow/6370615/>) Star Tribune

JULY 22, 2024 — 7:02 AM

One month from today is opening day for the Minnesota State Fair with all its pronto pups, stage shows, Midway rides, giveaways, exhibits and, of course, crowds and traffic.

"On an average fair day, attendance can be more than 150,000 — equivalent to two-and-a-half sold-out Vikings games," said Minnesota State Fair CEO Renee Alexander. "We understand our guests want to get to the fair as safely and conveniently as possible so they can make the most of their day, and our goal is to make that happen as efficiently and affordably as possible."

To help you plan your visit to the Great Minnesota Get-Together, here is a guide to get you to the fun, whether driving, taking a shuttle or express bus, biking, walking, scooting or taking a rideshare car.

On-site parking

The fair has about 5,000 on-site parking spots, including 800 for those with disabilities. Lots are located on the north, south and west sides of the fairgrounds. It will cost you \$20 to park on-site, the same as last year. Lots open at 6 a.m., an hour before the gates do. The spots often fill up early and stay occupied until evening, so be prepared to have a back-up plan.

To keep up with availability, go to mnstatefair.org/updates/parking (<http://mnstatefair.org/updates/parking/>).

Nearby parking options

Neighborhood streets near the fairgrounds offer free parking, but beware, restrictions may be in place so it's not a guarantee. And fair officials remind those choosing this option to be a good neighbor by keeping noise to a minimum, not blocking driveways, emergency lanes or alleys and taking their trash with them.



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ADVERTISEMENT

Property owners often offer their lots and lawns to those who drive and don't mind hoofing it a few blocks to the gates, but prices vary and hours may, too.

Lots with shuttle bus service

Close to 1 million people parked in remote lots in each of the past three years and took a free shuttle to the fair. This year, bus service will be offered from 31 lots within a short distance of the fairgrounds every day of the fair beginning at 8 a.m. Return trips will run until 11:30 p.m. (9:30 p.m. on Labor Day).

This year, the I-35W and County Road C Park and Ride in Roseville with 460 spaces will be open all 12 days, instead of the usual five.

The University of Minnesota will have parking available in lots and ramps near Huntington Bank Stadium, but some lots won't be available until after 4 p.m. or at all on Aug. 29 due to a Gophers football game.

Other options with ample parking include Roseville High School, Bandana Square, St. Paul College, the Minnesota Office Plaza (formerly the Minnesota Department of Education) and Oscar Johnson Arena, north of Energy Park Drive east of Snelling Avenue. Buses run from many churches, too, but many curtail parking on Sundays until after 1 p.m. or have other limited hours. The complete list is available [here](https://www.mnstatefair.org/get-here/free-park-and-ride/) (<https://www.mnstatefair.org/get-here/free-park-and-ride/>).

Express buses from the suburbs

Metro Transit has a park and ride lot at the Maplewood Transit Center and service from Blaine, Cottage Grove, Bloomington and Minnetonka. Buses will run every 30 minutes from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The last return trip departs at 11 p.m. daily.

Riders who buy tickets in advance using [Metro Transit's mobile ticketing app](https://www.metrotransit.org/app) (<https://www.metrotransit.org/app>) can save \$1, making the roundtrip fare \$5. Tickets can also be purchased through Metro Transit's website or at express bus park and ride sites for \$6 cash. Ticket sales begin Monday. There is no charge to park at the lots.

Metro Transit also has regular-route service to the fair, including the A-Line, 3 and 61.

[Minnesota Valley Transit Authority](https://www.mvta.com/news-items/state-fair/) (<https://www.mvta.com/news-items/state-fair/>) will run buses to and from the Burnsville and Eagan transit stations, and the Southbridge Crossings Park and Ride in Shakopee for \$6. Trips will depart roughly every 15 to 20 minutes, but hours vary depending on location and from weekdays to weekends and Labor Day. The last return trip is at 11:30 p.m. (9:30 p.m. on Labor Day).

[Southwest Transit](https://swtransit.org/events/mn-state-fair/) (<https://swtransit.org/events/mn-state-fair/>) will provide service every day except Labor Day from 6:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. from SouthWest Station in Eden Prairie, SouthWest Village in Chanhassen, East Creek Station in Chaska and Carver Station in Carver. Round-trip fare is \$6. The last return trip is at midnight.

Maple Grove Transit (<https://www.maplegrovern.gov/415/Transit>) will operate on weekends and Labor Day from 8 a.m. to midnight. Trips running every 30 minutes will depart from the Maple Grove Transit Station, 12350 Main Street. Round-trip fare is \$6.

Rideshare and taxi

App-based rides will pick up and drop off at designated points on the north and south ends of the fairgrounds. The fairgrounds is geofenced for the Uber and Lyft apps to guide users to these locations to facilitate less-confusing drop-offs and pick-ups, fair officials said.

Bicycling and motorcycles

The fair bought additional bike racks to accommodate those arriving on two wheels for its three free secured lots on the north, south and west ends of the fairgrounds. The largest lot with room for 600 bikes is near Gate 9 on Como Avenue. In total, the fair has room for 930 bicycles.

Motorcycle parking is available for \$15 in a secured lot on the south side of Como Avenue.

The State Fair runs Aug. 22 to Sept. 2. A map and additional information is available [here \(https://www.mnstatefair.org/general-info/maps/\)](https://www.mnstatefair.org/general-info/maps/).

Tim Harlow covers traffic and transportation issues in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, and likes to get out of the office, even during rush hour. He also covers the suburbs in northern Hennepin and all of Anoka counties, plus breaking news and weather.

tim.harlow@startribune.com 612-673-7768

State Fair

MPR News Staff · July 22, 2024 4:14 PM

New, returning transit options for the 2024 Minnesota State Fair



People crowd Liggett Street on the opening day of the Minnesota State Fair in 2023. Ben Hovland | MPR News

Save 

SHARE

The Minnesota State Fair is approaching fast, and the hundreds of thousands of people who'll be attending this year's fair will have some new options for

getting there.

Monday marked one month until the start of the fair — scheduled to run from Aug. 22 through Labor Day, Sept. 2 — and fair officials outlined transportation arrangements for the 2024 event.

Among the changes for this year:

- ▶ Metro Transit will be offering its [State Fair Express Bus service](#) from six park & ride lots, up from four in 2023. New this year is service from Maplewood Mall each day of the fair, and from the Maple Grove Transit Center on weekends and Labor Day. Those two options join existing service from Blaine, Bloomington, Cottage Grove and Minnetonka.
- ▶ SouthWest Transit is adding [State Fair Express Bus service](#) from Carver to the fairgrounds this year, along with the previous service from Chanhassen, Chaska and Eden Prairie. Those routes will operate for 11 days of the fair — every day except Labor Day — up from nine days last year.
- ▶ The State Fair’s [Free Park & Ride shuttle](#) will again operate from 31 lots — but one of them, the I-35W and County Road C Park and Ride Ramp in Roseville, will be open for all 12 days of the fair, up from five days last year.

Fair officials said nearly half of fairgoers use some form of public transportation to reach the fairgrounds each year.

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“We are proud of the year-round planning done by our team of staff and partners to provide transportation options for not only guests, but livestock exhibitors, employees, vendors, performers, volunteers and other fair participants as well,” Minnesota State Fair CEO Renee Alexander said in a news release.

“On some days and at certain times, we know that traffic and parking can get congested, so we encourage guests to have a Plan B and C if their preferred lot or route is unavailable. There are many options to choose from, and we encourage fair fans to explore all of them ahead of time.”

2024 Minnesota State Fair transportation and parking options

More information, including locations, schedules and fees, for various State Fair transportation options:

- ▶ [State Fair Free Park & Ride service](#)
- ▶ [Metro Transit State Fair Express Bus service](#)
- ▶ [Minnesota Valley Transit Authority State Fair Express Bus service](#)
- ▶ [SouthWest Transit State Fair Express Bus service](#)
- ▶ [Metro Transit regular bus routes](#)
- ▶ [Taxi and rideshare options](#)
- ▶ [On-site parking for cars](#)
- ▶ [On-site parking for motorcycles and bikes](#)

Parking is also available in neighborhoods near the fairgrounds. Each community has its own parking policies.

Fair officials are asking people parking in those neighborhoods “to help the fair be a good neighbor by not littering, being loud, or blocking driveways, alleys or emergency lanes with their vehicles.”

State Fair transit ridership

Also Monday, fair officials provided recent ridership numbers for various transit options.

- ▶ The fair’s Free Park & Ride service served about 940,000 riders in 2023, down from about a million in 2022 and 1.13 million for the pre-pandemic fair in 2019.
- ▶ Metro Transit’s State Fair Express Bus service drew about 241,000 riders in 2023, an increase of 33 percent over the previous year.
- ▶ Minnesota Valley Transit Authority’s State Fair Express Bus service set a record with 110,000 riders last year.

- ▶ SouthWest Transit’s State Fair Express Bus service carried more than 77,000 riders in 2023, up from 68,500 the previous year.
- ▶ Ridership on regular Metro Transit bus routes to the fairgrounds was about 49,600 last year, up from 36,500 in 2022.
- ▶ [‘Foodiest foodie fair ever:’ A critic dishes on new 2024 Minnesota State Fair foods](#)
- ▶ [Behind the scenes of the new State Fair foods: How do vendors get picked?](#)
- ▶ [Ready, set, eat: Here are the new foods that'll be at the 2024 Minnesota State Fair](#)

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Interactions

Like	Love	Haha	Wow	Care	Angry
98	23	4	15	1	0
6	4				

Reactions	1,234
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Home	18,469
Other	4,852
Profile	313
Explore	59

Engagement ⓘ

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