



# Mass Transit Authority is busier than ever. Here's how SD-WAN helps them keep up the pace.

For many people of Flint, Michigan, the Mass Transit Authority (MTA) is critical to getting them where they need to go. Running on a legacy network that impacted their customer experience, MTA partnered with Windstream Enterprise for modern solutions to get back on track.

## At a glance



MASS TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

### Industry

Public transportation

### Customer

9 locations in Flint, MI

650 employees

### Challenges

Frequent outages

Insufficient bandwidth

Lack of redundancy

No VPN capability for work from home

PBX reaching end-of-life

Costly and challenging maintenance

Expensive and unreliable POTS lines

Legacy fax service

Poor customer experience

### Solutions

SD-WAN

Managed Network Security (MNS)

OfficeSuite UC®

LAN Services (Cloud-Managed Switches)

Secure eFax

Cellular Broadband

High-bandwidth Ethernet

WE Connect customer portal

### Results

Increased reliability and resiliency

Reduced outages

VPN capability for work from home

Advanced voice features

Significant cost savings

Improved employee productivity

Enhanced customer experience

## All paths lead to technology

Technology has transformed the world in countless ways, from the most specialized advancements—like robotic surgery and flight navigation—to the industries and organizations that at first glance may not seem “high-tech” but rely on the latest technology solutions to operate. A prime example is public transportation provider Mass Transit Authority (MTA) of Flint, Michigan, which is powered by a behind-the-scenes network to keep its people and communities moving at full speed.

MTA operates city buses on regular schedules, as well as on-demand “Your Ride” paratransit services for people with disabilities who are unable to use the fixed route transit service. For many people, MTA is a critical resource, and they are highly dependent on these services to get to work, school, doctor’s offices or other locations. With traffic congestion, rising fuel prices and other challenges of commuting by car, more people are discovering that public transportation is a more economical, reliable, safe and earth-friendly alternative.

As the number of passengers increases, so does MTA’s need for seamless communications and always-on connectivity across their 9 locations and 650 employees. The organization was behind the curve on technology, operating on a legacy network that was unreliable and slow. So, MTA turned to Windstream Enterprise for solutions that

would enable network efficiency, reliability and speed—the same qualities that their customers expect from their transportation services.

## Catching up from behind the curve

MTA’s legacy network created countless operational hurdles, including inflexibility, insufficient bandwidth, poor quality voice service and frequent outages, which resulted in lost employee productivity and a very poor customer experience. Weather issues, especially in winter, caused many of the outages, and could leave a location down for days at a time. Issues with network and voice service led to consistently high numbers of trouble tickets, which demanded time from the IT team and hindered their focus on strategic priorities.

**“The Windstream Enterprise support team is outstanding. They are quick to respond and escalate our requests, and they give us access to experts, when needed. In the past, we didn’t receive this personal touch with major carriers.”**

**Rod Evans**

Chief Technology Officer

Windstream Enterprise deployed SD-WAN at all 9 locations with a primary Ethernet connection and secondary cable broadband in an active-active configuration. This gave MTA the reliable, resilient and scalable network solution they needed. Now, outages are very rare and are isolated to a single location. The additional bandwidth has significantly improved the performance of the applications employees require to stay productive and deliver an improved customer experience. The IT team also benefits from the improvements, with less time spent on trouble tickets and more time devoted to projects to improve operations.

MTA also lagged behind in supporting work-from-home needs for their employees. The aging, on-premises firewalls lacked VPN capabilities for remote access, which would have crippled operations during the pandemic. Fortunately, the partnership with Windstream Enterprise came just in time, and Managed Network Services (MNS) with VPN capability deployed just weeks before the forced shift to work from home in March of 2020.

A key advantage of MNS is its centralized management via the WE Connect customer portal, which ensures all security policies are consistently applied across all locations and for remote users. The portal also helps the IT team perform at peak efficiency, using it to run weekly reports on key performance metrics, troubleshooting diagnosis and to submit and track service requests.

## The increasingly vital role of voice

Voice is a mission-critical application for MTA, and of increasing importance as the number of passengers—and the number of incoming calls—continues to climb. But MTA's end-of-life, on-premises PBX system presented more challenges as time went on—inflexibility, cumbersome maintenance, the lack of soft phone capability and other advanced VoIP features, non-integrated collaboration tools and zero disaster recovery options. And the POTS lines troubled MTA with two impossible-to-ignore drawbacks: They were expensive and unreliable.

MTA plans to replace their PBX system with Windstream Enterprise OfficeSuite UC®. This next-generation solution will include more than 150 phones connected to the SD-WAN network using Cloud-Managed Switches, a component of LAN Services. Soft phone capabilities will allow employees to work from home, as well as utilize more advanced features, including call forwarding and auto-attendant. Collaboration will be enhanced with a fully integrated solution to provide video conferencing and other services. Finally, the cloud-based voice service will help improve their disaster recovery process.

MTA also replaced their legacy fax service with Secure eFax. This move, combined with the implementation of OfficeSuite UC, will enable them to eliminate 90% of their POTS lines, resulting in significant costs savings—all while relieving them of the maintenance burden.

## Gearing up for the road ahead

By partnering with Windstream Enterprise for advanced network solutions, MTA is well-equipped to meet the rising demand and provide excellent customer experience—whether on the phone or on the road—now and in the future.

***“We count on Windstream Enterprise to bring us leading-edge network and security capabilities to enhance our technology solutions.”***

**Rod Evans**  
Chief Technology Officer

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